THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NOUN PHRASE AND VERB PHRASE

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Abstract

Among words classes or parts of speech a noun and a verb or precisely a noun phrase and a verb phrase play a very important role in syntax. In English, they mark the presence of sentence. The relationship between them is very close that one may cause the presence of another. This is often called a subject-predicate relationship and their degree is a bilateral dependency i.e. the verb phrase determines the noun phrase called valence and the noun phrase determines the verb through agreement (Bussman, 1996:1139). Other relationships among different phrases are one-sided or in the form of modifiers, subordinators, or complementizers, one is more important than others.

This paper attempts to discuss a noun phrase and a verb phrase as the main part of a sentence. Some special characteristics of the noun phrase and the verb phrase are discussed. This paper also tries to see if other sentence elements such as an adjectival, adverbial, and prepositional phrases can have an emphasis in a sentence.

Key words: phrase, complementizer, valence, agreement.

A. Introduction.

A traditional sentence analysis often involves the terms such as *subject*, *predicate*, *object*, *complement*, and *adverbial.* Such terms are said to be inconsistent because a noun can function as a subject, object, complement, or an adverbial. So does a verb, it can serve as a subject, object, and an adverbial. The terms representing a word class are now preferred. Thus, the terms *noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase,* and *a prepositional phrase* are used to represent functions in a sentence.

The term *phrase* is used in a somewhat different way from the so-far accepted idea that it is always a group of words. The term *phrase* here is adopted from Gelderen (2010:36) view that a noun phrase is something built around a noun. A pronoun because of its capacity of representing a noun and a relative clause together with its noun head can be said to be a noun phrase (NP). This applies to other four phrases.

The use of the above mentioned terms makes it possible to describe syntactic problems clearly. In spite of that, the terms especially a NP need a further description. This is due to the different roles of the NP. As a sentence is described as consisting a NP followed by a verb phrase (VP) (Yule, 1985 :86), it is important to identify the NP. Not all NPs are suitable for a certain VP. Consider the following sentence.

    (1) The cat studies linguistics.   (Yule, 1985:93)

Although the above mentioned sentence is grammatically correct, there is a lack of semantic feature. Beside that different syntactic functions may have the same role. The following sentences may be good examples.

    (2) The door opened.   (Comrie, 1981:58)
    (3) The key opened the door.
    (4) John opened the door with the key.

In the above sentences the NP *the door* traditionally serves different functions in the respective sentences. In (2) it serves as the subject of the sentence. In (3) and (4) it serves as the object of the sentence. Basically, it serves the same semantic role. The NP the door is an affected entity or the patient (Aarts, 2006:157). It confirms that there is a close relationship between the NP and the VP and the relationship is not affected by their function sentences.

The VP in (2-4) determines a number of dependent elements called valents such as *the door*, *the key*, and *John*. In (1) the feature of the NP *the cat* dos not fulfill the criteria of the verb's valent. In other words, the VP *studies* does not govern the NP *the cat*. Thus, it is necessary to provide the syntactic rule with the semantic role of both the NP and VP.
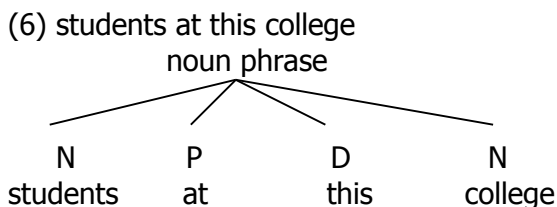
B. Immediate Constituent.

In a sentence analysis, finding the direct part or immediate constituent (Dinneen, 1995:93) of a sentence or a phrase is very important. Hierarchically Leech (2006:104) says, 'A sentence consists of one or more clauses. A clause consists of one or more phrases. A phrase consists of one or more words. A word consists of one or more morphemes.' The immediate constituent of a word is a morpheme. The following words may illustrate the idea of constituency.
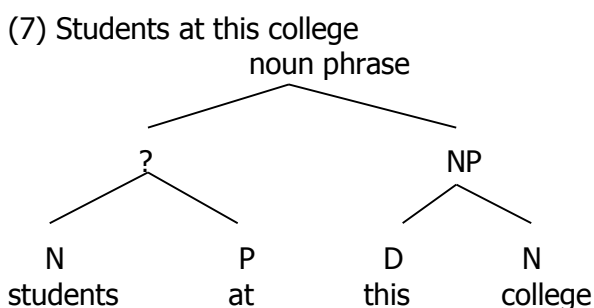
    (5a) enlarge   (5b) encounter
       word   word

     en   large   *en   *counter

In (5) the word *enlarge* is composed of a prefix or a bound morpheme *en-* and a free morpheme *large.* These two morphemes are immediate constituents of the word *enlarge.* Each unit in (5a) constitutes a meaning and they are related one to another. In (5b), on the other hand, the word *encounter* is a single linguistic unit. It is not composed of *en-* and *counter*. They are not part of the word *encounter* because their meanings are not related.
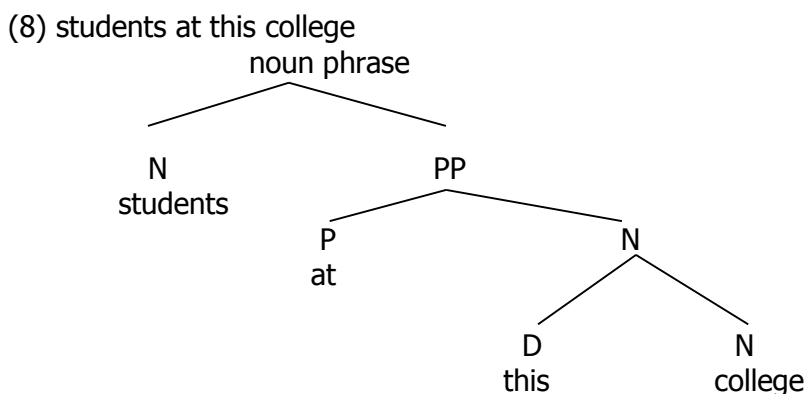
At the level of phrase the same procedure of finding an immediate constituent applies. The following different analyses of a noun phrase may be a good example.

(6) students at this college
noun phrase

```
        N          P          D          N
    students      at        this      college
```

The above analysis is a rough analysis because it fulfills an idea only. The idea is that a phrase consists of words. It does not allow that a phrase may contain another phrase. When the idea that a phrase may contain other phrases is accepted, the grouping of words needs a careful judgment. Each phrase within the phrase should be grouped according to the immediate constituent. According to Radford (2004:40) an immediate structure or constituent structure follows two principles i.e. headness principle and binarity principle. In the headness principle, of the group of morphemes and words there is one, which the most important unit functioning as a head. In the binary principle every linguistic unit joins and comprises a unit consisting of two members. The analysis in (6) does not follow the binarity principle as mentioned above. The following analysis is said to be misleading because the combination of a noun and a preposition is not possible in (7). None of them becomes a head.

(7) Students at this college
noun phrase

```
          ?                     NP

    N          P          D          N
 students     at        this      college
```

The usual grouping is the preposition precedes the noun and it makes a prepositional phrase as found in (8).

(8) students at this college
noun phrase

```
        N                  PP
    students
                    P                    N
                   at
                              D                 N
                            this            college
```

Thus, a noun phrase may consist of a noun and a prepositional phrase and the prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and another noun phrase, which consists of a determiner and a noun.

C. **Complementizer**.

At the syntactic level the headness and binarity principles should also be followed. In order to see the importance of those principles it is better to follow the traditional way of analyzing a sentence. A compound sentence in the traditional view is composed of two or more independent clauses. Those clauses are joined together with a conjunction. The conjunction is put at the same level as the clauses it joins. The following diagram of a compound sentence does not show the principles of headness and binarity

(9) I admire her reasoning but I reject her conclusion.   (Quirk, 1985:988)
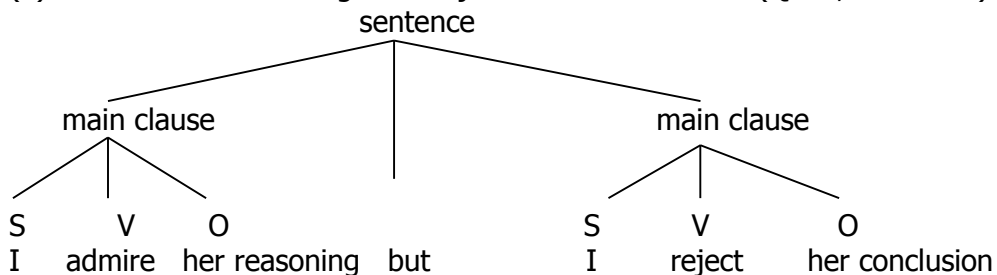
It is clear that the above analysis does not obey the headness and binarity principles. The binarity principle does not allow three branching. The presence of three branching does not show which head among the three elements or constituents is. The headness and binarity principles would operate as the following.

(10) I admire her reasoning but I reject her conclusion.   (adapted to Gelderen, 2010:138)
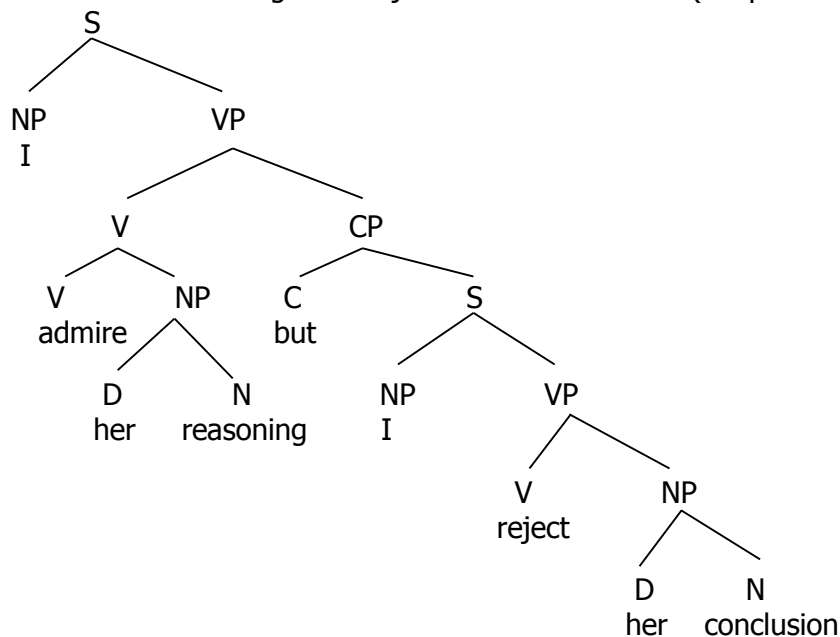
The above mentioned diagram introduces a coordinator phrase (CP), which consists of a coordinator and a sentence. The term *sentence* here is used in a narrow idea. According to Chomsky (in Crystal, 2008:368) a sentence consists of a VP and an NP. Thus, the construction *I reject her conclusion* is said to be a sentence, which is a member of a CP. In this case the status of the CP is a member of

the VP, which precedes it. Now the term *coordinator* is reduced to a complementizer (C) because it modifies the VP. The status of coordinator *but* in the above diagram becomes a complementizer, which joins two categories.

The similarity between a coordinator and a subordinator is that both of them join two categories. The first is considered to join similar categories while the second joins subordinate categories (Gelderen, loc. cit.: 20). The coordinator *but* in the sentence, which is supposed to join two independent clauses as described in (9) tends to join two different categories. This is in accordance to the headness principle. The presence of the word *but* with its succeeding category depends on the clause *I admire her reasoning*. Without it or any such a construction the word *but* cannot suddenly appear in a sentence. Though a coordinator and a complementizer are classified as different word classes by Gelderen, they have the same function. As the idea of similar categories weakens and one category completes another, the nature of coordinator subdues and the use of the term complementizer strengthens. Thus both the coordinator and subordinator are classified as a complementaizer.
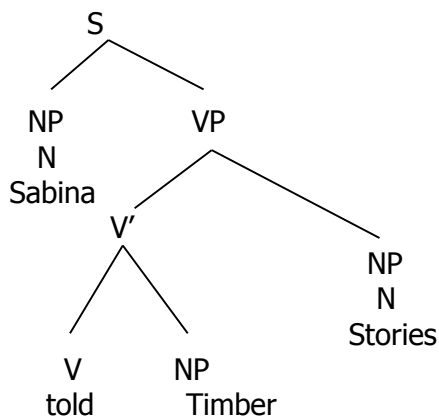
Another case of three branching is found in Gelderen's (Loc. Cit.: 125) sentence:
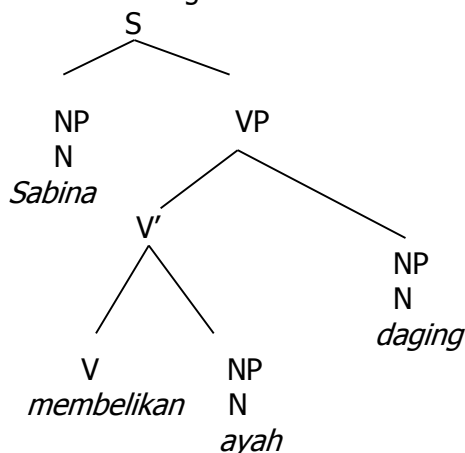
(11) Sabina told Timber stories.
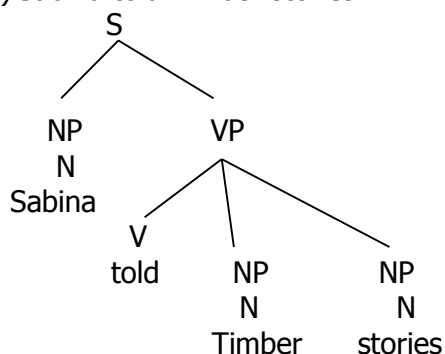
The above mentioned diagram shows three branching, which is against the binary principle and headness principle.

(12) Sabina told Timber stories.

From the above diagram, it is clear that the verb *told* requires two NPs. If the sentence stops at the first NP the sentence will make no sense. The case is best illustrated in Indonesian language. Consider the following.

(13) *Sabina membelikan ayah daging.*
  'Sabina bought father meat.'

```
                  S
               /     \
            NP          VP
            N         /     \
          Sabina   V'         NP
                  /  \         N
                 /    \      daging
                V      NP
            membelikan  N
                       ayah
```

The verb *membelikan* in Government Binding theory governs two NPs. The sentence cannot stop at say **Sabina membelikan ayah,* which is in English **Sabina bought father*. It means, when the NP following the verb is inanimate, the sentence can stop at it. Thus, the following sentence can stop at the NP following the VP or can stop at the NP following the PP.

(14) Sabina told stories to Timber.

```
              S
           /     \
         NP         VP
         N        /     \
       Sabina   V'        PP
               /  \      /   \
              V   NP    P     NP
            told   N    to     N
                 stories      Timber
```
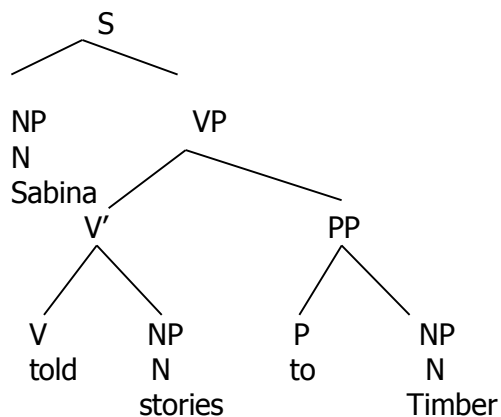
The following sentence is an illustration of two really independent clauses joined with a coordinator. They are really independent because they have no connection one to another. In this case the presence of the coordinator is under question.

(15) Phoenix is a city in Arizona and the moon is made of cheese. (Gelderen, 2010:138)

```
                              S
              ┌───────────────┼───────────────┐
              S               C                S
           ┌──┴──┐           and         ┌─────┴─────┐
          NP     VP                      NP          VP
        Phoenix  │                    ┌──┴──┐    ┌───┴───┐
               ┌─┴─┐                  D     N   VGP      PP
               V   NP                the  moon  ┌┴─┐   ┌──┴──┐
               is  │                         is made  of  cheese
                 ┌─┴─┐
                 D   N'
                 a ┌─┴──┐
                   N    PP
                  city ┌─┴──┐
                       P    NP
                       in  Arizona
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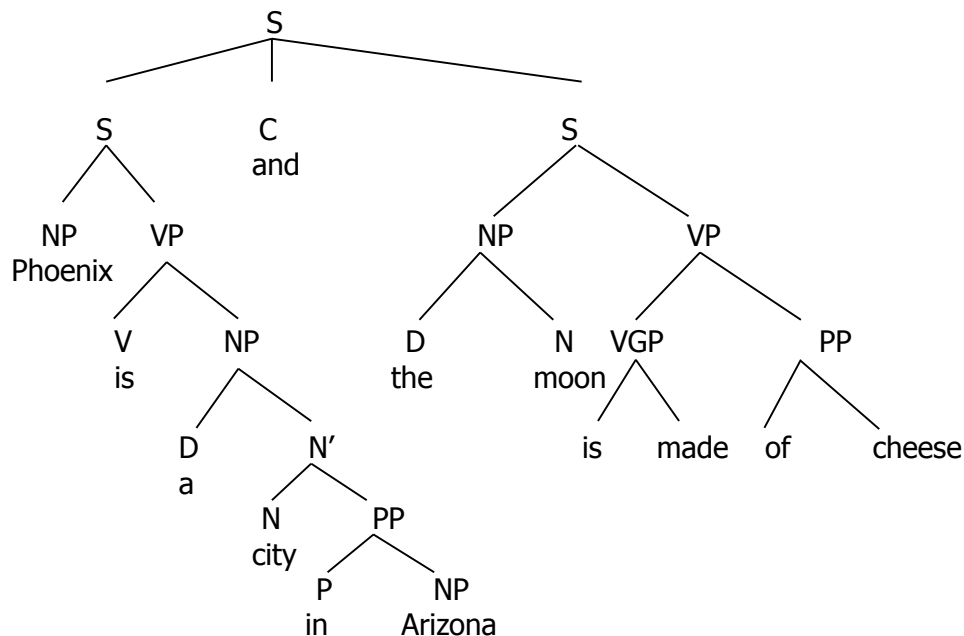
D. Phrase and Sentence

In spite of the use of the term *phrase* in a broader sense, this term is used especially for groups of words, of which the head is a word such as a noun, verb, preposition, adjective, and an adverb. Thus, the terms a noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), prepositional phrase (PP), adjective phrase (AdjP), and adverb phrase (AdvP) are commonly used for grammatical description (Greenbaum, 2002:46). Of the five phrases, PP contains a preposition, which belongs to a closed class or a word that receives no affixation. Some grammarians classify it as a grammatical or functional word. So, a PP is a functional phrase. In PP a preposition precedes an NP and becomes the head. Other functional words such as determiners, auxiliary verbs and modals, and conjunctions can also precede other phrases. A determiner precedes a noun to form a determiner phrase (DP). An auxiliary including a modal can precede a verb to form a tense phrase (TP) and a conjunction precedes a sentence to form a complementizer phrase (CP) (Gelderen, Loc. cit: 35).

In grammatical perspectives, the functional phrase, the term PP is more widely used than three other functional phrases i.e. the DP, TP, and CP. The first needs little elaboration while the DP, TP, and CP require some elucidations. A determiner, which is one of word classes, can be considered as a head followed by a noun or noun phrase to form a DP (Crystal, 2008:140). It is said to be the head because it determines the kinds of nouns following it.

A TP is a special term given to functional words accompanying a full or lexical verb (Crystal, Loc. cit.: 479). They include modals (M), perfect markers (pf), progressive markers (prog.), passive markers (pass), and dummy *do* (Gelderen, 2010:105). The following diagram shows words accompanying a full verb.

(16) Might have been seeing the horse   (Gelderen, Loc. Cit. 107)

```
                        VP
            ┌────────────┴────────────┐
          VGP                          NP
    ┌──────┼──────┬──────┐        ┌─────┴─────┐
  Modal    pf    prog    V        D           N
  might   have   been  seeing    the        horse
```
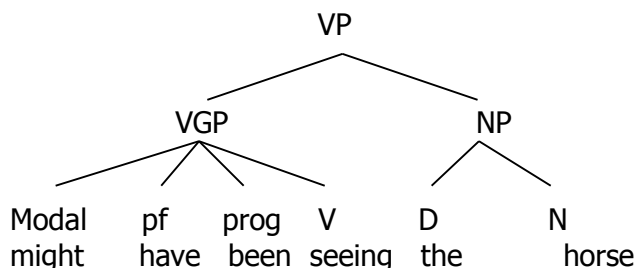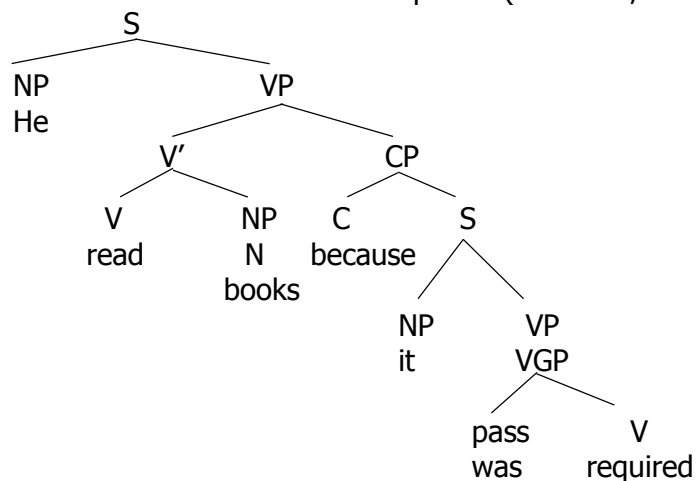
The tense phrase (TP) in the above diagram includes the words *might*, *have*, and *seen*, which accompany the full word *seeing*. Gelderen calls the phrase a verb group and other grammarians name it an inflectional phrase or just inflectional. Though the diagram does not show the binarity principle, it is enough to say that the verb group or TP constitutes a phrase different from the phrase formed by the verb and the noun phrase *seeing the horse*. In the latter instance, the verb governs the NP while in the earlier instance, the markers modify the verb.

Another functional word, a complementizer, introduces a sentence. The idea of a sentence here is adopted in the sense of both a clause and a sentence. Furthermore, the idea develops into the one involving embedded sentences. It is a matter of fact that the terms *sentence* and *clause* are used in a similar way. Both terms are used to represent a linguistic unit containing a subject and a verb but the sentence is considered to be a higher unit. Leech (2006:104) says, 'A sentence consists of one or more clauses. A clause consists of one or more phrases. A phrase consists of one or more words.' According to the above mentioned quotation a clause is only a part of a sentence. This notion seems obscure when applied to a simple sentence. In a simple sentence, where only one subject and one verb are found, the sentence is said to have only one clause i.e. the sentence itself. Thus, the term *clause* and *sentence* are used interchangeably. Furthermore Quirk (1985:) uses the term *clause structure* to represent what is usually called a sentence pattern.

In order to overcome such ambiguity Gelderen offers an idea that a sentence consists of two important elements, an NP and a VP, which are sisters to the sentence (Gelderen, 2010:43). At elementary level the relationship between the two is shown by a concord. The traditional simple sentence always shows a concord, so does a traditional dependent clause. The independent clause and dependent clauses or the first and the second sentence are seen in the following.

(17) He read books because it was required. (Gelderen, 137)

```
                     S
          ┌──────────┴──────────┐
         NP                      VP
         He            ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                      V'                    CP
                 ┌────┴────┐          ┌─────┴─────┐
                 V         NP         C           S
               read        N       because    ┌───┴───┐
                         books                NP       VP
                                              it      VGP
                                                   ┌───┴───┐
                                                  pass      V
                                                  was    required
```

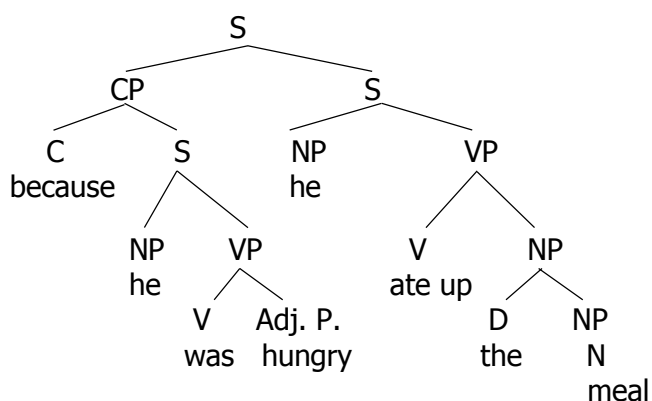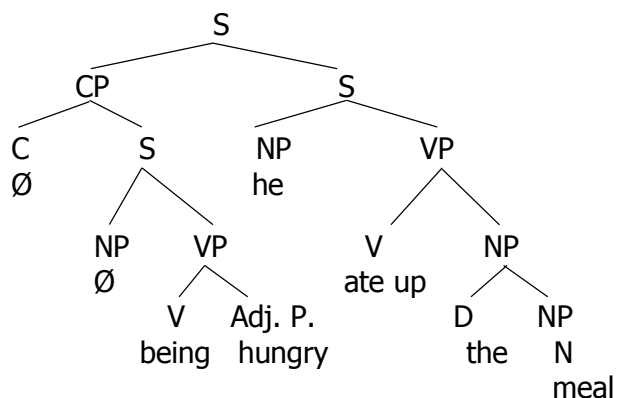The Relationship between Noun Phrase And Verb Phrase - JapenSarage

In the first sentence in (16) the NP *he* has a concord with the verb *read* and in the second sentence the NP *it* shows an agreement with the VGP *was required*.

At a more complicated level the relationship between the NP and VP as a sentence can be found in in what we usually call non-finite clause, and a verbless clause. Toward these terms, one can consider them as sentences. Consider the followings.
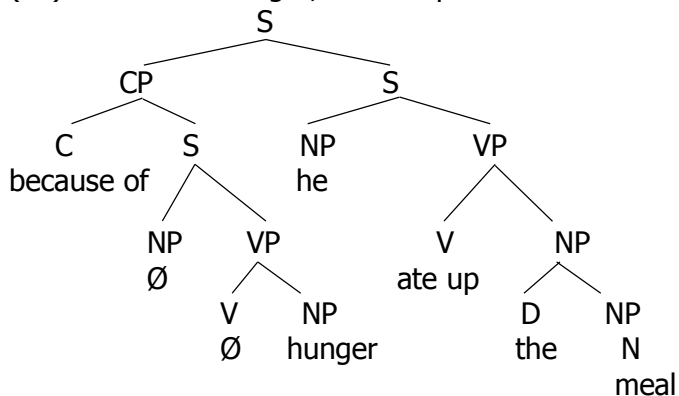
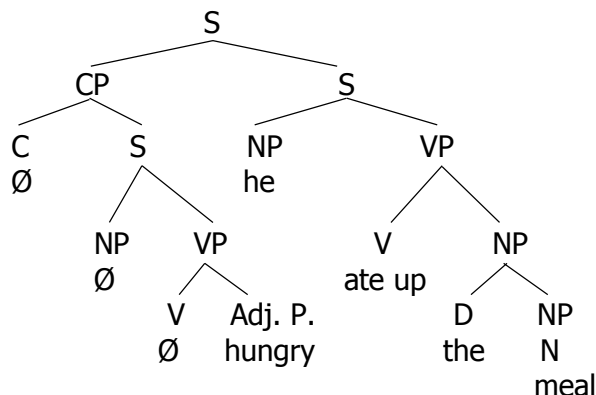(18) Because he was hungry he ate up the meal.

```
                        S
              ┌─────────┴─────────┐
             CP                    S
          ┌───┴───┐          ┌─────┴─────┐
          C       S         NP           VP
       because ┌──┴──┐      he       ┌────┴────┐
              NP     VP              V         NP
              he  ┌──┴──┐         ate up    ┌──┴──┐
                  V   Adj. P.                D     NP
                 was  hungry                the    N
                                                  meal
```

(19) Being hungry, he ate up the meal.

```
                        S
              ┌─────────┴─────────┐
             CP                    S
          ┌───┴───┐          ┌─────┴─────┐
          C       S         NP           VP
          Ø    ┌──┴──┐      he       ┌────┴────┐
              NP     VP              V         NP
              Ø   ┌──┴──┐         ate up    ┌──┴──┐
                  V   Adj. P.                D     NP
                being hungry                the    N
                                                  meal
```

(20) Because of hunger, he ate up the meal.

```
                        S
              ┌─────────┴─────────┐
             CP                    S
          ┌───┴───┐          ┌─────┴─────┐
          C       S         NP           VP
     because of ┌──┴──┐      he       ┌────┴────┐
              NP     VP              V         NP
              Ø   ┌──┴──┐         ate up    ┌──┴──┐
                  V     NP                   D     NP
                  Ø   hunger                the    N
                                                  meal
```

(21) Hungry, he ate up the meal.

In (17) the two sentences are connected by the complementzer *because*. Both sentences have complete NPs and VPs whereas in (18), (19), and in (20) there are embedded parts. In (18) the complementizer is omitted due to the embedding process of the NP. In (19) the complementizer is present accompanied by the embedding process of the NP and VP. And in (20) all the three parts, the NP, VP, and the complementizer are omitted resulting the presence of the Adj. P. Only.

E. Conclusion.

The above brief discussion leads us to a conclusion that despite the use of different grammatical categories, there is a possibility to consider a sentence as a compact unit isolated from other sentential units. If they are related they are connected by complementizers, whose functions complete the first sentence. The term *subject* and *verb* do not match because the first refers to function while the second refers to category. The NP and VP constitutes a sentence but the NP that comes after a VP becomes the member of it. Embedding processes joins sentences in an understandable pattern i.e. the presence of the embedded parts are easily understood by competence speakers.

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