

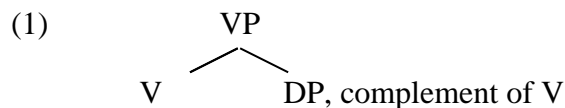
Embedded clauses

Important things you will learn in this section:

- Embedded clauses in English
- The difference between German main clauses and embedded clauses
- Different types of German embedded clauses

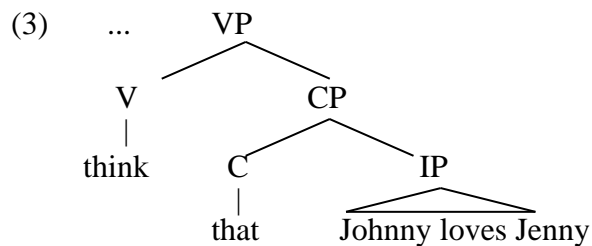
1 Embedded clauses in English

Some verbs can take clauses as complements, instead of or as well as DPs as complements. These complement clauses are just one example of clauses embedded in the larger clause [clause [clause]]. These **embedded clauses** (or: subordinate clauses) in English are exactly the same as matrix clauses (= main clauses). If a clause is the complement of a verb in a higher clause, it occurs in exactly the same position as a DP complement would, namely, as the sister of V:



If the complement is a clause, all we have to do is put a CP there instead of the DP. So this gives the following structure for a clause as a complement, such as:

(2) Joan must think that Johnny loves Jenny



All we do is put a CP in the place that a DP complement would go.

Notice that the **complementizer** *that* occupies the C position. This is why we call this projection the **complementizer phrase**. The idea is that the category *that* (also *whether*, *if* ...) turns the following clause into the **complement** of the verb.

So all we do is embed one clause inside another. The CP is the interface which sticks them together. Since the 'downstairs' clause can take another clause as its complement, we can have recursive embedding.

(4) [_{CP1}Jack believes [_{CP2}that Mary thinks [_{CP3}that Joe said [_{CP4}that Millicent loves Jenny]]]]

The V *believes* takes CP2 as its complement. But CP2 contains the verb *thinks*, which takes CP3 as its complement. And so on. Easy-peasy. Now to German

2 The position of embedded clauses in German

The trouble is that German verb phrases are head-final. So their complements, even clausal complements, should *precede* them (= appear on their left). DP complements do this . . . :

- (5) Martina hat diese Lüge verbreitet
Martina has this lie put.about
'Martina has put this lie about.'

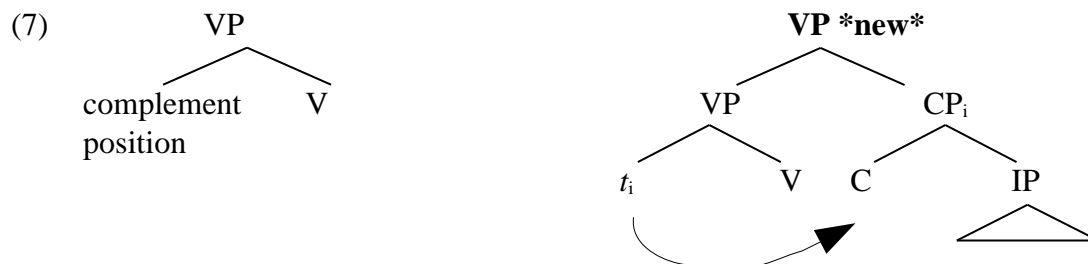
. . . but clausal complements do not:

- (6) a. *Martina hat [dass Joachim Marlene liebt] verbreitet
Martina has [that Joachim Marlene loves] put.about
b. Martina hat _____ verbreitet, [dass Joachim Marlene liebt].
Martina has _____ put.about [that Joachim Marlene loves]
'Martina has put about that Joachim loves Marlene.'

Having a long heavy constituent in the middle of a clause is awkward, making the sentence difficult to plan and difficult to understand. We have to wait until after the embedded clause to find out what the verb in the matrix clause is. And the subject is miles from the main verb.

- (7) *Martina hat [dass Joachim das schicke Mädchen mit den langen Haaren liebt] verbreitet
Martina has [that Joachim the smart girl with the long hair loves] put.about
'Martina has put about that Joachim loves the smart girl with the long hair.'

So complement clauses are **extraposed** (=put outside). They move from the sister of V position to adjoin to the VP. As adjuncts, they are daughters to a new VP outside the old one.



In fact it is not surprising that German extraposes complement clauses; it is normal for languages to extrapose heavy components to make structures simpler. English does it too. For example, we would normally put the DP *present* before the PP *to Harry*, but if the present is very long, for instance a list, we can, in fact we must, put it afterwards.

- (8) a. Laura gave the present to Harry.
b. Laura gave ____ to Harry [a gold ring, a book of baking recipes and a striped silk tie].

English also puts adjectives without complements before the head noun, but adjectives with complements after the head noun.

- (9) a. the proud father vs *the father proud
b. *the proud of his children father vs the father proud of his two children

Another way that German gets round this problem is to have a pro-form (a 'correlate') in the complement position inside the VP, which **stands in for** the clausal complement. The

correlate is in the normal position, but the clause itself is adjoined outside (10). This leaves a light component inside the clause, and the heavy clausal complement outside.

- (10) a. Werner hat **darauf**_i bestanden, [dass man sein Motorrad bewundert]_i
 Werner has on.it insisted that one his motorbike admires
 'Werner insists that people admire his motorbike.'
 b. Wendy hasst **es**_i vor allem, [dass sie an Schultagen nicht ausreiten darf]_i
 Wendy hates it above all that she on school.days not go.riding is.allowed
 'Wendy hates above all (the fact) that she can't go riding on school days.'

3 The structure of German complement clauses

In German main clauses, the finite verb always moves from V to I to C and some XP moves to spec-CP. This explains the verb-second quality of German main clauses: the finite verb is a fixed point.

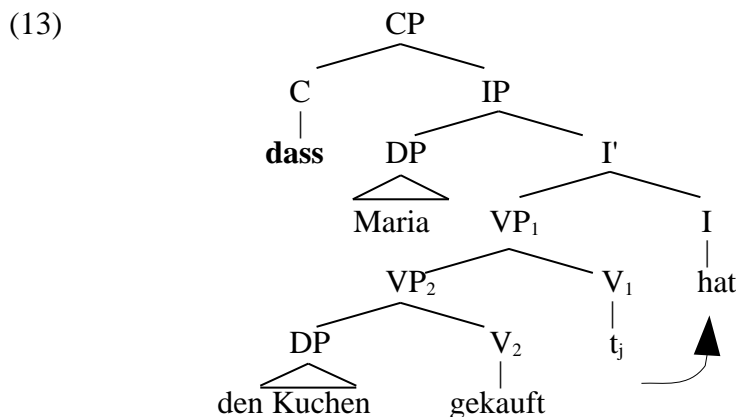
But what about embedded clauses (= subordinate clauses)? In these structures the finite verb does not appear in second position, but in final position.

- (11) a. ... dass Maria gestern den Kuchen gekauft **hat**
 ... that Mary yesterday the cake bought has
 '... that Mary bought the cake yesterday.'
 b. ... ob Wendy gestern auf Penny ausgeritten **ist**
 ... whether Wendy yesterday on Penny ridden is
 '... whether Wendy went for a ride on Penny [her horse] yesterday.'

We must conclude that in these structures the verb is raised from V to I, but not from I to C. They thus appear at the end of the clause, in the I position.

Why do they not move on up to C? **Because** this position is already filled. Words such as *dass* ('that'), *ob* ('whether'), *obwohl* ('although') and *wenn* ('if') are **complementizers**, the category C. When they introduce a clause, **they occupy the C position**, which means that the finite verb cannot move there. We therefore find the verb-final pattern whenever the clause starts with a complementizer.

- (12) Er weiß nicht, [_C **dass/ob**] [_{IP} [_{VP} Maria den Kuchen gekauft t_i] hat_i]
 he knows not that/whether Mary the cake bought has
 'he doesn't know that/whether Mary bought the cake'



We can tell that it is the effect of the complementizer, because the equivalent structures **without** a complementizer, do not show the same effect. The verb can raise to C, the embedded structure is exactly the same as a main clause.

- (14) a. Er denkt, [_C **dass**] [_{IP} [_{VP} Maria den Kuchen gekauft t_i] hat_i]
 he thinks that Mary the cake bought has
- b. Er denkt, [_{spec-CP} Maria_j [_C **hat_i**] [_{IP} [_{VP} t_j den Kuchen gekauft t_i] t_i]
 he thinks Mary has the cake bought

Many linguists have discussed whether it is likely that there can be a position C, into which we can put **either** a finite verb **or** a complementizer. This seems a strange pair; usually we can only put things of roughly similar type into the same place. One answer to this is that the verbal category (V or I) which is moved to C and the complementizer, which is generated in C, do have a function in common: they both determine the sort of clause which follows. The C position is only filled with a verbal head in questions in English, and precisely the complementizer distinguishes between questions (Eng. *whether*, Germ. *ob*) and statements (Eng. *that*, Germ. *dass*). In a question, C thus contains an interrogative feature [interrog+] which needs to attach to something, either a complementizer, or a verb.

Exercises

1. Elizabeth thinks that Richard likes pizza.
2. Do you think that Monica will come?
3. Diese Nachricht bedeutet, dass die Welt bald zu Ende geht.
 this news means that the world soon to end goes (=that the world will soon end)
 'This news means that the world will soon end.'
4. Die Kälte zeigt, dass der Winter kommt
 the cold shows that the winter comes
 'The cold shows that winter is coming.'
5. Der Kandidat sagt, er wird die Wahl gewinnen.
 the candidate says he will the election win
 'The candidate says he will win the election.'
6. Jakob meint, er wird kommen können.
 Jacob thinks he will come can
 'Jacob think he will be able to come.'
8. Franz bezweifelt, dass er kommen können wird.
 Francis doubts that he come be.able.to will
 'Francis doubts that he will be able to come.'
7. Die Kanzlerin behauptet, sie habe keine Wahl gehabt.
 the chancellor claims she has no choice had
 'The chancellor claims she had no choice.'
9. Ob diese Vögel den Winter überleben?
 whether these birds the winter survive
 'Will these birds survive the winter?'
10. Margareta schwört, sie isst keine Pizza.
 Margaret swears she eats no pizza
 'Margaret swears she does not eat pizza.'
11. Sam says that this course has finished.