

Chapter 14 To Be or Not To Be: Coordination and Subordination

Additional information and practice

A bit more on restrictive/non-restrictive relative clauses

As you know by now, relative clauses can be restrictive or non-restrictive, and the difference has to do with whether the information in the clause is essential or not. To tease apart this essentialness business, work through the following sentences and identify the following:

- the relative clauses
- the relative pronoun
- essentialness of the relative clause (restrictive, or non-restrictive)
- punctuation requirements (is a comma needed? Note that we have left commas off entirely for now)

(1) My professor whose area of expertise is grammar wrote a textbook. (sE)

(2) We invited Rose whom you met last night to the party. (sE)

(3) The report which identifies the chemical compound is on my desk. (sE)

Do you have your answers for those three sentences? If so, compare them to what we outline below.

(1a) My professor whose area of expertise is grammar wrote a textbook. (sE)

- relative clause: *whose area of expertise is grammar*.
- relative pronoun: *whose*. *Whose* provides information about something the antecedent possesses, in this case, expertise in grammar. This is more easily seen when the relative clause is separated out as its own sentence, because then a possessive determiner precedes the noun:

- My professor wrote a textbook.
- *Her* area of expertise is grammar.
- restrictive. It identifies exactly which professor wrote a textbook: the one with expertise in grammar.
- No commas.

(2a) We invited Rose, whom you met last night, to the party. (sE)

- relative clause: *whom you met last night*.
- relative pronoun: *whom*.
- non-restrictive, i.e., non-essential. It adds parenthetical information. It could, however, be determined by the writer to be essential if it disambiguated two different persons named Rose.
- Commas needed (unless you interpret it to be restrictive, in which case you would not use commas).

(3a) The report that identifies the chemical compound is on my desk. (sE)

- relative clause: *that identifies the chemical compound*.
- relative pronoun: *that*.
- restrictive. The writer is making it crystal clear that the relative clause is essential via the choice of relative pronoun *that*.
- No commas.

Supplemental information about questions in ChE

In ChE, embedded questions do not require subject-auxiliary inversion. Embedded questions are those questions that are contained within a larger sentence. We have italicized the embedded questions and emboldened the verbs below.

- (4) Then they asked them *where **did** they **live***.¹
- (5) And he told them *who **was** it*.²
- (6) I don't know *what color **are** we*, but it doesn't matter.³

Keep in mind that these formats are not exclusive to any one dialect, but they've been documented for AAE and ChE.

More practice from Exercise 11

Identify all *to*-clauses in the sentences below. Then, label their function in the overall sentence, or phrase (if embedded in a phrase).

- a) The prosecutor proposed to meet her before the trial. (sE)
- b) It'll just be a-runnin', a-drippin' off his chin when he gets to catch them.⁴ (AE)

More practice from Exercise 14

Putting it all together. Take a moment to contemplate how much information you now know about English sentences and clauses. For each sentence below (all sE), do the following:

- Identify the overall sentence pattern first (e.g., S-V, S-V-DO) by bracketing each component and labeling it.
- Name the type of verb for each sentence (e.g., transitive, intransitive, ditransitive).

¹ Fought, C. (2003), *Chicano English in Context*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 97.

² Fought, C. (2003), *Chicano English in Context*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 98.

³ Fought, C. (2003), *Chicano English in Context*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 98.

⁴ Christian et al. 1988, cited in Matyiku, S. (2011), 'A-prefixing', *Yale Grammatical Diversity Project: English in North America*. (Available online at <http://ygdip.yale.edu/phenomena/a-prefixing>. Accessed on 2024 -02-24).

Updated by Tom McCoy (2015) and Katie Martin (2018).

- Identify any and all clauses. That means you have to label them correctly (e.g., adverbial clause, relative clause, *that*-clause, nominal relative clause, *to*-clause, *ing*-clause, past participle clause).
- Identify the function of each of those clauses (either at the sentence level or the phrase level, depending on where it occurs).

Here are your sentences:

- a) Cats raised in the wild sometimes struggle to adjust to a new home with new owners.
- b) Daisy May and Norma Jean love to wedge themselves between Derek and me at night.
- c) Wedging themselves between us is something they apparently love doing all night long.
- d) For our cat's happiness, we will do whatever it takes.
- e) It is kind of funny that we have adopted four cats from shelters over the years.