

ENGLISH CLAUSES

— GRAMMAR AND USAGE —

BY HUANG ZIWEN

黄子文 编著

英语子句

— 语法和惯用法

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PREFACE

This book concerns itself with that part of grammar and usage which bears on the various kinds of clauses in English sentences. A general book on grammar does touch on clauses, too, but, being general, it can hardly be expected to deal with them in such detail as to cover every usage concerning each type of clause. The present work is a special treatise which presents as comprehensively as possible both the grammar and the usage peculiar to clauses of given types. Now, apart from the main clause, a clause may appear in an English sentence in the form of a coordinate clause, a relative clause, a noun clause, an adverbial clause, a comment clause, or a focal clause. Each form or type has its own peculiarities, which are gone into in detail in this book. Besides, a special section is devoted to the discussion of coordination and subordination, particularly the latter, which is an important art to master in the successful use of clauses in a sentence.

The book is intended for those students of English who, having already had a general grammatical knowledge, wish to know more about the composite sentence (which is composed of clauses) than the information they can gather from a general book on grammar.

Although the book has been compiled by referring to works of well-known authors, the compiler has left the beat-

en track in approaching quite a number of the questions. And, if a certain phenomenon of grammar or idiom is accounted for other than conventionally, it is because he believes his way of explanation seems to be the more probable interpretation than the conventional one. Errors of judgement are, of course, inevitable. Comments and suggestions will, therefore, be appreciated.

In acknowledgement, the compiler must mention the following original works, from which he has often obtained suggestive ideas and drawn useful materials in compiling the book:

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C. E. Eckersley and J.M. Eckersley (1961): *A Comprehensive English Grammar for Foreign Students*

J. C. Nesfield (1929): *Idiom, Grammar & Synthesis for High Schools, Book IV*

John Millington-Ward (1955): *The Use of Tenses in English*

Frederick T. Wood (1975): *Current English Usage*

H. W. Fowler (1980): *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (Second edition revised by Sir Ernest Gowers)

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INTRODUCTION

So far as its structure is concerned, a sentence may be simple, compound or complex. A simple sentence contains only a single clause. A compound sentence in its simplest form contains two independent clauses, the second of which is usually said to be coordinate to the first. This being the case, the term "coordinate clause" is conveniently used in this book to refer mainly to the second clause, to the exclusion of the first. A complex sentence in its simplest form contains a main clause and a subordinate one which forms a component part of the former and does the work of a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. As to clauses in the concrete, there are the "and," "but," "or" or "for" coordinate clause, the relative clause and different kinds of nominal and adverbial clauses. There is also the class called comment clause, which is neither a coordinate nor a subordinate clause, but one that is a disjunctive or inserted remark and hence an independent element in the sentence. The focal clause forms yet another class, which is also peculiar. All the kinds of clauses mentioned will be discussed in Part One of this book with reference to grammar and usage.

As the students of English who use this book are supposed to have already possessed a general knowledge of grammar, the rudiments of grammar of the clause itself

may not be touched upon. Likewise, there is not much to say about the main clause of a complex sentence. The discussion of various clauses is made in Part One with relation to their functions in the sentence. For the sake of directness and clarity, the example sentences are usually given in their simplest forms. Of course, sentences may actually be more complicated, but Part One does serve to show us how to make up the average type of sentence by using different kinds of clauses.

Part Two, which shows how related ideas may be combined by coordination, or better still, by subordination, is added as a sort of generalization and extension of Part One. What has been dealt with in Part One is reviewed and enlarged on in Part Two, with the exception of the comment clause, which is hardly concerned with subordination or coordination, and of the focal clause, which appears to have already been set out clearly enough in itself. Coordination and subordination may, of course, occur in one and the same sentence. Such a sentence may be called a compound-complex or mixed sentence, and, as is often the case, more than one coordinate and more than one subordinate clause may be contained in it by the proper use of subordination and coordination. Part Two demonstrates the ways separate ideas may be best subordinated or otherwise incorporated in a single sentence. Emphasis is laid on the importance of subordination, because it is by subordination that we build our sentence, i.e., express our ideas, most effectively. Now, subordination may be achieved by means of a phrase, as well as by means of a clause. It is here in connection with subordination that

the simple sentence is touched upon; for separate sentences representing separate ideas may also be combined into a single simple sentence by means of appropriate phrases.

Attached to each chapter of Part Two is one or more than one exercise, the doing of which, it is hoped, will help to master what has been discussed. Keys for reference are supplied as appendices to Part Two.