

Complement Clauses

Sentential- Complement Clauses

We observed that noun phrases can take various forms. For example, the direct-object slot in the following sentences can be filled by many different kinds of constituents, including one that we have not previously seen:

- Darlene believed me [NP = Prop]
- Darlene believed the story [NP = Art + N]
- Darlene believed Mark and Betsy [NP + Cco + NP]
- Darlene believed that Max broke the type writer [NP = that + S]

In the last sentence, the object noun phrase, the thing that Darlene believed , is a entire clause. Such clauses are called COMPLEMENT CLAUSES or SENTENTIAL COMPLEMENT CLAUSES, because they are clauses that complement (or complete) the main clause. They are also called NOMINAL CLAUSES because they function as noun phrases.

- **Sentential-complement clauses can occur either as subjects or as objects of sentences:**
- *That* Tom remembered the appointment amazed the doctor.
- The doctor warned *that* nicotine causes cancer.

The word that, which introduces the complement clauses in the two sentences, is called COMPLEMENTIZER or COMPLEMENTIZING CONJUNCTION (CCI). Notice that the word that in these sentences has no meaning by itself, but rather it acts as a kind of verbal signpost, altering the listener or reader that a complement clause is about to follow.

- We will represent complement clauses by the abbreviation (CompP). The **P** in the abbreviation stands for PHRASE. **The following additional NP rule expresses our discovery that a noun phrase can be an entire complement clause:**

NP -----> CompP

- That Tom remembered the appointment amazed the doctor.
- The doctor warned that nicotine causes cancer.

- Notice that in the first sentence, something amazed the doctor. The something could have been a simple noun phrase (such as the trick), but instead what amazed the doctor is expressed in a complete sentence, namely, that Tom remembered the appointment. We can observe then, that each of the two complement clauses consists of the COMPLEMENTIZER (*that*) and an S-Clause.

We can state this observation in the following rule:

CompP -----> CCI S

With the above rules, we can draw the complete trees for the previous sentences:

- That Tom remembered the appointment amazed the doctor.
- The doctor warned that nicotine causes cancer.

Nominal- Complement Clauses

In a sentence with a sentential-complement clause, the complement clause acts as a noun phrase:

- That the neighbors threw a wild party angered Mark.
- In the following sentences, however, complement clauses follow (and complement) noun:
- The fact that the neighbors threw a wild party angered Mark.

Adjectival-Complement Clauses

In the previous example, the nominal-complement clause follows a noun and completes the noun's meaning. Now consider the following examples:

- Mark was angry that the neighbors threw a wild party.
- Linda is confident that she knows the correct answer.

In these examples, the italicized clause complements (explains) the adjective angry and the adjective confident. As you have probably guessed, clauses that complement adjectives are called ADJECTIVAL-COMPLEMENT CLAUSES. Together, the adjective and the complement clause constitute a phrase, which we will call an ADJECTIVAL PHRASE (AdjP).

Therefore, we should consider the following rule:

AdjP -----> Adj (CompP)

Mark was angry that the neighbors threw a wild party.

Linda is confident that she knows the correct answer.

Notes: