The English Verb Forms in Noun Phrase

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Abstract: *English verbs are of various types and various form ranging from full verbs, linking verbs, modals and auxiliary to bare infinitive, infinitive with to, infinitive with -s, preterite, present participle, and past participle. Those verbs may serve in a sentence, clause, or even in a phrase specially in noun phrase. As a modifier a verb takes the form of non-finite form. At the level of clause both the finite and non-finite forms apply whereas at the level of sentence the finite form is a must. This article tries to review the possibility of the finite verb form in the construction of noun phrase.*

In order to meet the original data some sources are taken from various sentences collected in COCA for they are authentic materials. Thus, the descriptive qualitative method is used to analyze the data. In this kind of analysis, a single data is worthful as a lack of single data may affect the whole structure. In the description of a man, the absence of body part the nose for example can harm the quality of the man as being an imperfect person. Similarly, the presence of a single distinctive data can be a worthful information.

The result of the analysis is that many kinds of English verb forms are applicable to the modifiers of noun phrase. Among of them are infinitive with to, present and past participle as explained in some grammar books. One thing, which is rarely discussed is the presence of a modal must in a pre-modifier. This fact is found in some sources especially magazine.

Keywords: *finiteverb, non-finite verb, modal, modifier.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A verb plays an important role in syntax where it can appear in a phrase, clause, as well as in a sentence. A kind of verb i.e., a finite verb, always exists in a sentence (Dykes:1933 ; Quirk:1985 ; Gelderen:2010 ; Borjar:2010). Without it, a sentence is not complete to be sentence(Borjar:2010). At the level of clause, the finite verb becomes an optional for there is a finite clause and also a non-finite clause (Gelderen:2010). At the level of phrase, especially noun phrase, no finite verb is found. This article tries to find out if a finite verb can appear in a noun phrase.

The idea of finite verb comes from the relationship between the subject of a sentence with its verb called concord or agreement (Dykes:1933). The verb indicating the tense of the sentence is said to be a finite verb. All verbs whether linking verbs, auxiliary verbs, modal verbs, or full verbs may fall into a finite verb

(1) Tom is a doctor.

(2) Tom's son will be a doctor.

(3) The train left for London.

(4) The train did not leave for Lancaster.

(5) The train is leaving for London.

(6) The train has left for London.

(7) The trains leave for London.

(8) The train leaves for Landon.

(9) Tom wants to leave for London.

In (1) the linking verb *is* can be said to be a finite verb due to its capacity to convey the simple present tense whereas in (2) the linking verb *be* is a non-finite verb because it is preceded by a modal verb *will*. In (3) the only verb in the sentence is *left* and therefore it is the finite verb. In (4) there are two kinds of verbs, the full verb *leave* and the auxiliary verb *did*. In this case only *did* shows the tense, so it is the finite verb. In (5) there are also two verbs, *is* and *leaving for*, and the finite verb is the first verb. Together with the main verb, they constitute the present continuous tense.Furthermore, in (6) there are also two verbs *has* and *left*, which form the present perfect tense where the first verb is a finite verb and the second is the non-finite verb. The verb *leave* in (7) is a finite verb and it is the only verb in the sentence, which shows the simple present tense. The other only verb in the sentence is found in (8) where the stem plus *s* verb function as a finite verb. In (9) the finite verb *wants* in its stem plus *s* form and it is followed by the non-finite verb to *leave for*. In other words, all verbs coming next to a noun or noun phrase functioning as the subject of a positive sentence are finite verbs.

All modal verbs and auxiliary verbs coexist with a full verb in the infinitive form (Borjar:2010).. They are finite verbs and come after the subjects of the respective sentences. The modal verbs include will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must, and ought to, coexist with an infinitive verb while the auxiliary verbs include do, does, did, have, has, is, am, are, was, and were. They are also finite verbs, which coexist with an infinitive verb.

The case of the infinitive form *leave* in (4) is different from that of the infinitive form *leave* in (7). The former is a non-finite verb and latter is a finite verb. This is the split form of finite and non-finite verb forms. Other verb form such as Verb-ing form, V-to infinitive form, and V past participle form are non-finite verb forms while the preterite and stem plus *s* form are finite verb forms.

The non-finite verbs in the above mentioned sentences function as the completion of tense making such as found in (2), (5), and(6) to form simple future tense, present continuous tense, and present perfect tense. Besides the above functions, the non-finite verb can serve as pre-modifiers and post modifiers in a noun phrase (Quirk:1985). The following non-finite verbs are found in noun phrases functioning as pr-modifiers.

(10) a tiring journey

(11) a walking stick

(12) a sleeping cat

(13) the written document

The word *tiring* in (10) is an adjective derived from a verb. In other words, it is a verb-like adjective and it is worth discussing in the pre-modifier. The word *walking* in (11) is a verb functioning as a noun. Although it appears as a verb, it is not a verb in its function. This sentence can be associated with:

(14) a stick for walking

In (12) the word *sleeping* is a verb functioning as an active participle or present participle. This noun phrase can be associated with:

(15) a cat, which sleeps, or

(16) a cat, which is sleeping

The noun phrase (14) shows a non-finite verb form in the past participle. The phrase can be associated with the following:

(17) a document, which is written

The case of (17) is that it reveals a passive voice form, which is, of course, different from the previous non-finite verb forms. In other words, there are only two non-finite verb forms, which serve as pre-modifiers.

Non-finite verb forms can also serve as post-modifiers in the noun phrase. The following phrases may show the facts.

(18) a boat sailing to the beach

(19) the temple built in 900s

(20) the dog to watch the house

(21) the house to sell

From the above-mentioned noun phrases, there are three non-finite verb forms, which include the present participle, past participle, and the to-infinitive verb forms. Those phrases can have their equivalence as the followings:

(22) a boat, which sails to the beach

(23) the temple, which was built in 900s

(24) the dog, which will watch the house

(25) the house, which will be sold

In (22) the phrase indicates an active voice while in (23) it shows a passive voice. Like the pre-modifiers, the verb-ing form functions present participle but it does not serve as a gerund. In addition to the two verb forms functioning as post-modifier, the infinitive with to also functions as post-modifier. In this case there two interpretations concerning the use and all of these refer to future meaning. The noun phrase in (24) represents the phrase in (20), which shows an active voice while the phrase (25), which represents the phrase in (21), indicates a passive voice.

To sum up, the verb forms functioning as modifier, it can be said that there are only two verb forms serving as pre-modifier and there are three verb form functioning as post-modifier. As stated in the previous part, this article tries to find out a finite verb form, which serves as a pre-modifier or post modifier.

2. METHOD

The data observed in this article are the forms of verbs, which suggest a qualitative approach to deal with. The qualitative approach is an approach to manipulate data in the form of words, phrases, and sentences to get clear understanding of problem involving non-numeric data. The data concerned in this article are the finite verbs, which include modals, auxiliaries, and full verbs in infinitive and preterite forms. The source of data is taken from authentic texts in COCA, which are real English. The data collection is done by accessing COCA to find out finite verbs functioning as modifiers. In order to prove them, the data are analyzed through a series analysis. Since language is linear and English follows the word order, the series analysis is necessary to check the data. In other words, the position of a word or phrase determines its syntactic role. Besides the analysis, the classification of words is also important to determine the role.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The presence of a verb in a sentence, clause or a phrase can be a single appearance or simultaneous with other verbs. When a group of verbs appear in a sentence or a clause forming a finite clause or sentence the initial part of the group is the finite verb such as seen in (2), (5), (6), (9), (16), (17), (23), (24), and (25). The verb groups *will be* in (2) the finite verb is the modal *will*, is leaving for in (5) the finite verb is the helping verb *is*. Similarly, the verb group *hasleft for* in (6) contains one finite verb *has* at the initial part of the group. Moreover, sentence (9) shows a verb group *wants to leave* with the finite verb at the initial part of the verb group. In sentence (16) and (17) the verb groups is sleeping and *is written* show a helping verb *is* as the finite verb. In (23) the verb group *was built* reveals *was* as the initial part of the group, which is a finite verb. The modal *will* in (24) and (25) also proves that a verb whatever the type whenever appears at the initial part of a verb group it is a finite verb.

The verb group in this article refers to a group of verbs coming together to form a complete idea of a tense or voice. This term is different from the idea of a verb phrase where in the latter there are other word classes involved such as found in a noun phrase, prepositional phrase adverbial phrase etc. The verb phrase constitutes the verb itself and a noun as an object of which their relationship is said to be complementation. Thus, an object completes the verb where the object cannot stand alone and their relationship cannot be separated. The verb *take*, for example, requires an object and each of the subject and verb cannot stand by themselves.

Different from complementation, modification shows a loose relationship. In this case the presence of other parts of speech in a linguistic unit tends to add information. Now let us compare (23) with

(26) the temple built in 900s

In (23) the relationship between *which* and *was built in 900s* is said to be complementation whereas in (26) it is a kind of modification. So, *built in 900s* is said to be a post modifier.

The discussion of a verb group as proposed above involves an auxiliary verb and a modal. Both a modal and an auxiliary verb have the capacity of being an operator i.e. they precede a subject in an interrogative sentence. The main distinction of a modal is that its presence adds a mood to the subject of the sentence or clause. An auxiliary, on the other hand, serves as an obligatory part of a verb group to form a tense.

All non-finite verb in a noun phrase functions as modifiers either a pre-modifier or a post-modifier. The existence of a modal in a noun phrase is an exception. The modal *must*, for example, is the only modal that may serve as a pre modifier together with a bare infinitive. The noun phrase

(27) the must taste food

is a clear example of the modal must functioning as a pre-modifier. No other modals can serve as a pre-modifier.

4. CONCLUSION

Grammarians describe that, non-finite verbs may serve as both pre-modifiers in a noun phrase as well as post-modifiers. The finite verbs can serve as a post-modifier in a relative clause. All modals and auxiliary verbs serve as finite verbs and cannot function as modifiers except the modal verb *must*. Like a bare infinitive verb, the modal must can function as finite as well as non-finite verb. Its appearance in a noun phrase is unique and need be introduced to English learners.

The discussion ofnoun phrase witha verb as modifiers and complements is interesting because their relationship are unique.

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