A Critical Analysis of Verb Phrases in English Language

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ABSTRACT

Verb phrases in English language play an important role in communication. English language develops with the changing times using verb phrases. There are different critical analyses of verb phrases in English language. Verb phrases generally fall into two types: finite, in which the head of the phrase is a finite verb; and nonfinite, where the head is a nonfinite verb, such as an infinitive, participle, or gerund. The verb phrase is understood in terms of a traditional distinction between the categories of modality, tense, aspect, and voice. The study concluded that verb phrases in English language are distinguished by the kinds of marking they can take and what they can co-occur with. Verb phrases in English language are easily identified as they have an auxiliary verb followed by an action or main verb. However, a verb phrase is a syntactic unit consisting of an auxiliary (helping) verb preceding the main verb. It often contains a head verb, complements, objects, and modifiers as its dependents. One of the recommendations made was that students should improve their English language skills in order to be able to use verb phrases effectively in their sentences.

KEYWORDS: Critical Analysis, Verb Phrase and English Language

Introduction

Verb phrases in English language play an important role in communication. English language develops with the changing times using verb phrases. The more often English language is used, the faster its development. According to Ekasani, Artawa, Putra Yadnya, and Mas Indrawati (2018), the verb phrase in English language is divided into two types: simple verb phrases and complex verb phrases. The simple verb phrase consists of only one verb element, whereas the complex verb phrase consists of a core verb with all the complementary elements, such as auxiliary, complement, and modifier, consisting of adjective phrases (AdjP), noun phrases (NPs), and adverbial phrases (AdvP), such as the following pattern: VP → V (AdjP) (NP) (AdvP) (Quirk, 2005). The complexity of the structure of the verb phrase in question is a complex verb phrase where the verb phrase consists not only of a single head verb but may comprise a verb (V) element along with all the complementary elements, such as auxiliary, complement, and modifier, consisting of an adjective phrase (AdjP), noun phrase (NP), and adverbial phrase (AdvP). The use of verb phrases in procedural texts such as recipes is very common, and verb phrases are more likely to dominate their use in the way they are made.

According to Rodríguez-Navarro (2010), there have been two different critical analyses of the verb phrase in English language. One, which has been promoted, among others, by transformational grammarians, includes as elements of this structure both the verb and its complementation. The popular transformational division of the unit sentence into NP and VP, which actually involves the underlying distinction between subject and predicate, usually widens the idea of VP to more than one phrase. There is a second analysis that restricts the term verb phrase only to the verbal element of the sentence, without paying attention to its possible complementation; that is to say, the term is used to refer to the unit that has also been referred to in other grammars by the name verb or verbal group, which is formed by two elements: the main verb and the auxiliary system. In English language, the verb phrase is the locus of a wealth of information about the events, states, processes, etc. that a clause or sentence denotes (Lund University, 2021). For example, a verb phrase referring to an event may contain information about such crucial elements of meaning as whether we know the event to have happened, when the event took place, whether or not the event was completed, and other similar aspects of meaning. The verb phrase is understood in terms of a traditional distinction between the categories of modality, tense, aspect, and voice.

Concept of Verb

Verbs are words that express action or a state of being. A verb is a doing word that shows an action, an event, or a state. A sentence may have either a main verb or a helping verb, or both. In other words, a verb is a word that informs about an action, an existence of something or an occurrence (Idioms 2021). A verb is the action or state of being in a sentence. Verbs can be expressed in different tenses depending on when the action is being performed. A verb is a word that is characteristically the grammatical center of a predicate and expresses an act, occurrence, or mode of being, that in various languages is inflected for agreement with the subject, for tense, for voice, for mood, or for aspect, and that typically has rather full descriptive meaning and characterizing quality, but is sometimes nearly devoid of these, especially when used as an auxiliary or linking verb (Merriam-Webster 2021). A verb is a word or a combination of words that indicates an action or a state of being or condition. A verb is the part of a sentence that tells us what the subject performs. Verbs are the hearts of English sentences (Learn English 2021). Examples:

- ❖ Jacob *walks* in the morning. (A usual action)
- ❖ Mike *is going* to school. (A condition of action)
- ❖ Albert *does not like* to walk. (A negative action)
- ❖ Anna *is* a good girl. (A state of being)

Verbs are related to a lot of other factors, like the subject, person, number, tense, mood, voice, etc. Verbs are an important part of the English language (Dictionary 2020). Simply put, a verb can be defined as a word that expresses an action or a state of being. Most verbs provide key information about the subject of a sentence and are central to the sentence's predicate. Whether a verb is literally performing the action in the sentence or merely linking the subject to the rest of the information, they're always "doing" something. Verbs are the busybodies of sentences that serve to bring the entire thought to completion. Leech

(2002) states that a verb is a doing word that refers to an action, such as went, give, move, sit, etc. verb is the most complex parts of speech because its varying arrangements with nouns determine the different kinds of sentences-statements, questions, commands, exclamations.

A verb (from Latin verbum "word") is a word (part of speech) that in syntax conveys an action (bring, read, walk, run, learn), an occurrence (happen, become), or a state of being (be, exist, stand). In the usual description of English, the basic form, with or without the particle, is the infinitive. In many languages, verbs are inflected (modified in form) to encode tense, aspect, mood, and voice (Wikipedia 2019). A verb may also agree with the person, gender, or number of some of its arguments, such as its subject or object. Verbs have three tenses: present, to indicate that an action is being carried out; past, to indicate that an action has been done; and future, to indicate that an action will be done. Nordquist (2020) stated that a verb is customarily defined as a part of speech (or word class) that describes an action or occurrence or indicates a state of being. Verbs are the action words in a sentence that describe what the subject is doing. Along with nouns, verbs are the main parts of a sentence or phrase, telling a story about what is taking place (Ginger 2021). In fact, without a verb, full thoughts can't be properly conveyed, and even the simplest sentences, such as Maria sings, have one. Actually, a verb can be a sentence by itself, with the subject, in most cases, implied, such as, "sing and drive". However, a verb is a general notion or idea for conception.

Concept of Verb Phrase

A verb phrase is a syntactic unit consisting of an auxiliary (helping) verb preceding the main verb. It often contains a head verb, complements, objects, and modifiers as its dependents (Literary Devices 2021). In linguistics, a verb phrase (VP) is a syntactic unit composed of at least one verb and its dependent objects, complements, and other modifiers, but not always including the subject. Thus, in the sentence "A fat man put the money quickly in the box," the words "put the money quickly in the box" are a verb phrase; it consists of the verb "put" and its dependents, but not the subject "a fat man." A verb phrase is similar to what is considered a predicate in more traditional grammars (Wikipedia 2021). Verb phrases generally fall into two types: finite, in which the head of the phrase is a finite verb; and nonfinite, where the head is a nonfinite verb, such as an infinitive, participle, or gerund. Phrase structure grammars acknowledge both types, but dependency grammars treat the subject as just another verbal dependent, and they do not recognize the finite verbal phrase constituent. Understanding verb phrase analysis depends on knowing which theory applies in context.

A verb phrase is a phrase whose head contains a verb; it is a lexical verb along with any associated auxiliary verbs. The main verb phrase consists of a verb and any auxiliaries attached to it, at least one of which must be in the present or past tense. Jacobs (1995) in Anggraeni (2019), says every verb phrase contains at least one constituent, a verbal, and therefore considers the verbal to be the primary constituent of a verb phrase. In the same line, the verb element is always a verb phrase. A verb phrase can consist of one verb or more than one verb, and if it consists of more than one verb, the phrase consists of a head

verb preceded by one or more auxiliary verbs. Biber (2009) stated that a verb phrase is one that contains a lexical verb or primary verb as the head or main verb, either alone or accompanied by one or more auxiliaries. However, in this study, the term "verb phrase" is used to refer to the main verb and its auxiliaries, excluding the rest of the predicate. A verb phrase is a group of words with the main verb (main verb) and auxiliaries as the central element (head). According to Carnie (2006), a verb phrase consists of a single verb. This means that the minimum verb phrase consists of one verb element and can be formed according to the pattern of VP → V.

Types of Verb Phrase

Finite Verb Phrase: Finite verb phrase is a form of a verb that (a) shows agreement with a subject and (b) is marked for tense (Nordquist, 2019). A finite verb phrase is the form to which a number and a person belong. In other words, those with an inflected number and person. The verbs were originally said to be finite if their form limited the possible person and number of the subject. The Dictionary (2021) stated that a finite verb is the main verb in a sentence. It's the root word that drives the rest of the sentence. Almost every verb in the English language can be used as a finite verb as long as it has these qualities in a sentence. Anggraeni (2019), A finite verb phrase is a verb phrase containing a finite form of the verb. In a verb phrase, the finite form of the verb shows a tense distinction between "past" and "present," and it is associated with person: first, second, and third person, as well as number: singular or plural. This function is performed by the operator (the first auxiliary in verb phrases).

❖ *Modal Verbs:* Modal verbs are used to show necessity, capability, willingness, or possibility. Unlike most verbs, there is only one form of these verbs. Typically, verb forms change to indicate whether the sentence's structure is singular or plural (Stone & Airth, 2019). Most verbs also indicate whether something happened in the past, present, or future. This is not the case with most modal auxiliary verbs, which makes them simpler to understand and use correctly. Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs (such as can, must, might, may) that are characteristically used with a verb of predication and express a modal modification; in English, they differ formally from other verbs in lacking-s and-ing forms (Merriam-Webster 2021). Modal verbs are used to express certain hypothetical conditions, such as advice, capability, or requests (there's a full list in the next section). They're used alongside a main verb to change its meaning slightly. Because they're auxiliary verbs, they can't necessarily be used on their own.

Nonfinite Verb Phrase: A nonfinite verb phrase is a type of verb that does not distinguish between number, person, or tense and cannot normally stand alone as the main verb in a sentence (Nordquist, 2019). A nonfinite verb is a verb that is not finite. Nonfinite verbs cannot perform action as the root of an independent clause. Most nonfinite verbs found in English are infinitives, participles, or gerunds (Wikipedia 2018). They are sometimes called "verbal," but that term has traditionally applied only to participles and gerunds. Additional nonfinite forms found in some other languages include converbs, gerundives, and supines.

❖ *Infinitive Phrases:* An infinitive phrase is a group of words that use an infinitive ("to" + verb). An infinitive is a verbal (a word that expresses action); so, an infinitive phrase has the same role of expressing action in a sentence. An infinitive phrase starts with an infinitive and includes other modifiers or objects (Dictionary 2021). Like infinitives themselves, infinitive phrases can act in three different capacities: as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. An infinitive is formed from a verb but functions as a noun, adverb, or adjective (7ESL 2021). It is composed of two words, "to" and "a verb". The two words function as nouns, adverbs, or adjectives.

❖ *Participial Phrases:* A participial phrase is a phrase that looks like a verb but actually functions as an adjective; it modifies a noun in the same sentence. Phrases like this can "spice up" a noun and provide an added description of what it's doing or what it looks like. A participle is a verb that functions as a modifier. Participles provide further information about the noun or nouns in a sentence, just like an adjective or adverb. A participle is a verb or a word derived from a verb that expresses a state of being and ends in "-ing" (present tense) or "-ed," "-t," "-n," or "-ne" (past tense) and serves as an adjective. According to East Stroudsburg University (2021), a participle phrase is a group of words containing a participle, a modifier, and a pronoun or noun phrase.

❖ *Gerund Phrases:* A gerund phrase is a phrase that consists of a gerund, its object, and any modifiers. A gerund phrase is a phrase that begins with a gerund and functions as a noun. Let's break down this definition to understand it better. A gerund is a verb ending in –ing, but it works as a noun and can act as a subject, object, or complement in a sentence (English Sentences 2021). Meanwhile, a phrase is a group of words that contains either a subject (noun) or a verb (but not both). A gerund phrase can also act as a subject, object, or complement, while adding more details to the sentence. According to the Dictionary (2021), gerunds are verbs that end in "ing" but function as nouns. Many sentences can include a gerund, meaning that gerunds can function as subjects, direct objects, indirect objects, objects of prepositions, and predicate nouns.

Examples of Verb Phrase

A verb phrase is the portion of a sentence that contains both the verb and either a direct or indirect object. A verb phrase can be the predicate of the clause or sentence. It functions as the verb in a sentence, even when it has more than one word (Dictionary 2020). Following are some verb phrase examples where the verb phrase is the predicate of a sentence. In this case, the verb phrase consists of the main verb plus any auxiliary, or helping, verbs.

❖   She *was walking* quickly to the mall.
❖   He *should wait* before going swimming.
❖   Those girls *are trying* very hard.
❖   Ted *might eat* the cake.
❖   You *must go* right now.
❖   You *can't eat* that!
❖   My mother *is fixing* us some dinner.

- ❖ These cards *may be worth* hundreds of dollars!
- ❖ The teacher *is writing* a report.
- ❖ You *have woken* up everyone in the neighborhood.
- ❖ *Will* you get me a marker?
- ❖ Rhonda *has been asking* for help.
- ❖ My little brother *will blow* out his candles.
- ❖ *Are* they *accusing* me of a crime?
- ❖ The team *should shake* hands with their opponents.
- ❖ Dad *has tried* to change my tires before.

Conclusion

The study concluded that verb phrases in English language are distinguished by the kinds of marking they can take and what they can co-occur with. Verb phrases in English language are easily identified as they have an auxiliary verb followed by an action or main verb. However, a verb phrase is a syntactic unit consisting of an auxiliary (helping) verb preceding the main verb. It often contains a head verb, complements, objects, and modifiers as its dependents.

Recommendations

1. Students should improve their English language skills in order to be able to use verb phrases effectively in their sentences.

2. Students should promote an interest in analyzing the forms, functions, and meanings of verb phrases used in English language.

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