Paraphernalia for Doing Immediate Constituent Analysis

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Abstract
The Immediate Constituent Analysis, a tool of Structuralists for syntactic analysis, is a convenient way of teaching and acquisition of English Sentence Patterns. It is learner-friendly and easily comprehensible. It can capture the attention of the learners easily and motivate them to learn new syntactic patterns of English. The graphic presentation of English sentences with this analysis is very impressive and attractive. This can impress them very easily and encourage them to learn more. Immediate constituents and binary division constitute the core of this analysis. The five structures capture the hierarchical interrelations and layering of the constituents of the English sentences. This analysis is visually effective and can be quickly understood.

Keywords: I C Analysis, Structuralists, functional interrelations, predication, modification, complementation, subordination, coordination, teaching implications

Introduction:
It is the widely acclaimed fact that English has boldly emerged as a lingua franca in the present century because of its most fascinating appeal. Its magnitude is being discerned in the scenario of dissemination of every dimension and form of education. In our beloved country India, a multilingual country, English has assimilated into the veins of our school, college and university curricula in a dominant way. Now most students feel an irresistible urge to learn English but the ground reality is that they encounter various problems in the different domains of English. They find it very difficult to master the structural patterns of English sentences. This poses a stumbling block to the arena of their employment. Owing to acute lack of knowledge about the structural patterns of the sentences they remain unable to write correctly in English. There are various effective ways of helping them out of the crisis. The Immediate Constituent Analysis (I C Analysis in short) may be looked upon as a potent means of teaching the learners the grammatical structures of the language in a comprehensible way.

Definition of I C Analysis:
There are three approaches to the study of grammar. They are a) Traditional, b) Structural and c) Transformational Generative. In Structural linguistics or structural approach to the study of grammar, language is considered primarily as a system of structures. The term structure refers to “relationships between the elements and constituent parts of a language, and their arrangement, determining its character and organization.” (B. Arts, et.al) There have emerged two schools of structuralism: a) American School Of structuralism and b) European school of structuralism. The latter is said to have begun with Leonard Bloomfield who is credited with setting forth the I C Analysis, an important framework of syntactic analysis.

Rationale for I C Analysis:
The rationale for the I C analysis is concerned with capturing with the interrelations the immediate constituents in a sentence or a clause. This approach analyses a sentence as a hierarchical organization of layered structures and each layered structure in terms of its immediate constituents. According to this analysis, immediate constituents are the building blocks of a sentence. In other words, a sentence may be likened to a multistoried building and the constituents of a sentence may be likened to the bricks of a building. What is most important is that 5the parts of a building are interdependent and likewise the constituents of a sentence are interrelated and interdependent. Thus, from the point of view of syntax, the I C Analysis is a taxonomic approach because It tries to describe a grammatical sentence by identifying and classifying its interrelated parts.

Constituency and immediate constituents:
Constituents are parts of a grammatical construction. They are placed in a meaningful grammatical sequence and hence can form a grammatical sentence. Constituency is the relation “between a unit which is part of a larger unit and the whole of which it is part.” In the I C Analysis, the concepts constitute and constituent are of wider significance as they constitute the core of the analysis. An immediate constituent denotes one of the two constituents which together form a grammatical construction directly. In “A child is playing”, the immediate constituents are “A child” and “is playing” because they can directly form the grammatical construction. Again in “A child” we find the two immediate constituents: A and child and in “is playing “we find also the two immediate constituents: is and playing. What is more important is that in the above sentence we find four constituents but they are not immediate constituents. in the sentence “A child” and “is playing “are immediate constituents because they are placed just before or after each other in a grammatical sequence. The term immediate connotes placement or position. Immediate constituents indicate the hierarchical interrelations embedded in a grammatical construction.

Mechanism of I C Analysis:
The I C Analysis, there is an interrelation between a upper level constituent and a lower level constituent. The mandatory principle of the I C Analysis is binary division. In other words, a grammatical sentence is divided into two immediate constituents
and then again, these immediate constituents are divided in further immediate constituents and this process of division continues until all the immediate constituents of the sentence in question are identified and their grammatical interrelations are captured. The I C Analysis explores the hierarchical structuring of the immediate constituents. These constituents are layered i.e. each lower-level constituent is dependent on each higher-level constituent. This shows several levels of a sentence. According to the I C Analysis, a sentence is not a linear string of constituents but it is formed out of layers of linguistic units. We must know where and how to make the binary cuts. There are two factors of division: Expansion and Distribution.

**FACTORS OF DIVISION**

**EXPANSION**  
**DISTRIBUTION**

The concept of expansion indicates that a sequence of linguistic units is construed as an expansion of a linguistic unit if the latter can be substituted for the former in a grammatical construction. In the long sentence “A very honest man with much erudition has been steering the century-old multinational company” the immediate constituents can be separated by substituting the subject noun phrase *A very honest man with much erudition* with a single linguistic unit or element like Ram or Lakshman or John or Mary. Likewise, the verb phrase can be substituted with a single verb like developed or destroyed. The concept of distribution is also of much importance as it helps in identifying the immediate constituents. It denotes the position and function of a constituent in a sentence. In the sentence “Aditya likes to draw pictures” we are not sure about the place of binary division – whether to divide the phrase “likes to draw” into likes and to draw or into likes to and draw. However, we can solve the problem by identifying the phrase to play as a constituent.

**Representation of layering of constituents:**
The hierarchical layering of linguistic constituents can be graphically presented in five ways:

**The Tree Diagram:**

```
                      The man is honest
                        /     \
                       /       \ 
                     The            is
                       man          honest
                           \\        |
                         [the](man)   (is)(honest)]
```

**Candle –stick diagram:**

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The man is honest
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**Bracketing:**

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[(the)(man)(is)(honest)]
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**Box diagram:**

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[The man is honest]
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**Topless box diagram:**

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The man is honest
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**Functional interrelations and learning of sentence patterns:**
The five important structures used in the I C Analysis immensely help in the learning of the structural patterns of English sentences in an understandable way. They focus on the core aspects of the making of English sentences in a precise way. Through them structures of phrases, clauses, and sentences of English can be taught graphically and impressively. In the I C Analysis we find a combination of categorial labeling (noun, verb, adjective, etc.) and functional labeling (subject, predicate, etc.). Here the five structures have evolved in terms of five sets of functional interrelations.

**Structure of Predication:** The structure of predication is a binary structure. In this structure the two immediate constituents are Subject and Predicate. The subject is a noun or pronoun which says who or what does the action that the verb refers to. The Predicate is what is said about the subject of a sentence. In the following examples S stands for Subject and P stands for Predicate:

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Harry asked his mother to go there
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Ram is very brilliant
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The structure of Predication is graphically presented in the I C Analysis, which undoubtedly facilitate the learning the concepts and their position in a sentence. The learning of the two concepts pave way for knowing and understanding complex English sentences.

**Structure of Modification**: The structure of Modification is a binary structure having two immediate constituents Head and Modifier. A modifier is said to perform the function of an adjective or an adverb. In English the three articles are treated as Adjectives. Sometimes nouns, prepositional phrases and the constituents of the verbal group and subordinate clauses can perform the function of a modifier. Determiners also function like modifiers. The Head is modified by the modifier. Here H stands for Head and M for Modifier.

The graphic presentation of the structures is most appealing and vivid and can easily pass into memory. This is learner-friendly and can be taught and learned easily through this picturesque presentation, the position of the head and the modifier can be easily hammered home and can be stored in memory for a quite long time.

**Structure of Complementation**: The structure of Complementation is also a binary structure with the two immediate constituents – Verbal and Complement. By the term Verbal we mean the be-type verbs e.g. be, look, appear, etc. or the become-type verbs e.g. turn, become, get, grow, etc. and transitive verbs e.g. give, take, etc. and transitive verbs e.g. give, take, etc. The complement is a grammatical element without which the sentence remains far from being completed, meaningful and grammatical. Thus, a complement is an obligatory element but an adjunct is not an obligatory element – an adjunct is optional. The object of a transitive verb functions as a noun complement. the be-or become type verbs take adjective complements and an infinitive after the main verb may be used as a verb complement. we find subjective complement and objective complement When a verb that requires a complement is intransitive or passive, the complement needed to make the verb’s sense complete must relate to the subject and this is why this kind of complement is known as the Subjective Complement. Such intransitive verbs are called the Intransitive verbs of Incomplete Predication. The name ‘intransitive verbs of incomplete predication “is given to those Intransitive verbs which do not make a complete sense by themselves but require a Complement to supply what the verb left unsaid.” (J.C.Nesfield)
The Subjective Complements to the intransitive verbs may be:

a) Noun: A cow is a domestic animal. The person was elected chairman. The rich person became a famous leader.

b) Noun Phrase: The rich man became a very great leader.

c) Noun Clause: The report was that the criminal committed the crime.

d) Adjective: The child fell sick. The boy went mad. The teacher became angry. The teacher was generous.

e) Adjective Phrase: The hermit’s lectures are easy to follow.

f) Adverb: The man has fallen asleep; the man has returned home.

g) Adverb Clause: The child is where it was. The outcome is what they have expected.

h) Participle: The condition has become alarming. The girl appeared satisfied. The deer continued frisking. The director appeared pleased.

i) Preposition with object: Her sarees are of many colours. The tool proved of no use.

j) Infinitive: The colour seemed to be fading. The student appeared to have committed a mistake.

k) Possessive: This book is Ram’s.

According to Rowe and Webb, there are some intransitive verbs that take a complement after them: The rich man laughed me to scorn. The old man coughed himself into a fit. The inspector looked the accused in the face. The nurse sang the child to sleep. The girl cried her eyes out. I talked him over. The assassin ran him through. The gentleman spoke her fair. You have played me false. He drank himself drunk.

When the verb that requires a complement is transitive and active, the complement relates to the object and such a complement is called the Objective Complement. The direct and indirect objects are treated as complements of the transitive verb. The Objective Complements to the Transitive Verbs may be:

a) Noun: The people called him a traitor. They made him king. I know him as a good man (sometimes the objective complement is signaled by as).

b) Noun phrase: They considered him a very great scholar.

c) Noun clause: We make ourselves what we are. We have made him what he is.

d) Adjective: Let me alone. The police set the accused free.

e) Adjective phrase: the Teacher made his lecture easy to follow.

f) Adverb: He found his son asleep. The police drove him home.

g) Adverb clause: we found him where we had left him.

h) Participle: The robber struck him wounded. The father found the child weeping.

i) Preposition with object: The General kept his troops in reserve. The incident filled us with horror.

j) Infinitive: I heard him say it (bare infinitive). I like a robber to be punished.

k) Possessive: He made my cause his own.

According to Pam Peters, complements have in common the fact that they refer to a structure which is obligatorily required by the syntax of the clause or lexically determined by the head of the phrase. The head may be a noun phrase, an adjectival phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase. Within a prepositional phrase, the noun or the noun phrase which is placed just after the preposition is called the complement to the preposition.

Noun phrase: an earnest attempt to pass the exam.

Adjectival phrase: fond of eating.

Verb phrase: rely on their efforts.

Prepositional phrase: without their help.

“Adjective Complements can be that-clause, to-infinitive and prepositional phrases.”(Leech and Svartik): They were glad that the boy passed the exam (that-clause). They were glad the boy passed the exam (zero -that-clause). They were glad to hear of the boy’s success. They were glad of his success. “The prepositional phrase itself consists of a preposition of and its complement. The complement is usually a noun phrase.”(Leech and Svartik): The leader argued about the implementation of the policy. The leader argued about what might be the mode of the implementation (wh-clause as a complement to the preposition). The leader argued about implementing the policy. The man put the ball on the table (two complements: the noun phrase (the ball) and the prepositional phrase (on the table).

There are some adverbs which can serve the function of complements. They are adverbials of Time or Place: The meeting will be on Monday. The members are in the club. They were ahead. The milk seemed off. We once imagined ourselves ahead. The President declared the session over. The radio is on. The police let the accused off. The transport to Haldia is by ferry. The wife is for her husband. The price hike was because of the COVID 19 situation. The seem-like verbs are complemented by the adverbial clause beginning with as if: The lady looked as if she had seen an alien. The boy behaved like a prisoner of conscience.
Verbs like *Be* can take a noun phrase or a locative as their complements: the man is a football player. The man is in the field. Di-transitive verbs have more than one complement.

Finite Complement: It is the complement containing a finite verb (a finite verb carries tense): Aditya told me that the village fair was fantastic. Kaushiki did not ask me whether I went to the fair. They knew where the President had gone.

Non-finite Complement: It is the complement containing a non-finite verb i.e. infinitives, participles, etc.: The boy wanted to enjoy the movie. The boy continued working at home.
Difference between modification and complementation:
Modification differs from complementation in some aspects. In modification, a head is accompanied by an optional element – the element not obligatorily required by the head but in complementation, a head is accompanied by an element obligatorily required by the head: a) The child on the bed is sleeping. b) The child sleeping is on the bed. Here in (a), the prepositional phrase on the bed is a modifier as it modifies the noun phrase The child. Without the prepositional phrase the sentence is semantically complete. But the same prepositional phrase in (b) is the subjective complement because it relates to the noun phrase the child. Prepositional phrases can operate as adverbials that are the complements: My brother resides in Diamond Harbour. The man went past the bus stop. Prepositional phrase can be adjectival: The naughty boy is out of breath (breathless). What you have said is of no importance (unimportant).

Structure of Subordination: Like the preceding structures, this is a binary structure having two immediate constituents: Subordinator and Dependent unit. Subordinators are nothing but subordinating conjunctions, particles and prepositions. The apostrophe (‘s) and the infinitival particle to are treated as particles in this structure. Subordinators introduce the dependent units. Subordinators suggest dependence.

Prepositions: at, by, on, upon, down, by, over, above, behind, etc.
Subordinating conjunctions: if, that, because, since, as, that, lest, unless, provided, as if, whether, although, though, than, till, after, while, when, etc.

NB: Go meaning “travel from one place to another” is a prepositional verb of motion and the PP is an obligatory complement. But when it means “depart” it is not a prepositional verb.
The structure of Coordination is not a binary structure though it has two immediate constituents: Coordinator and Independent Unit. Here the independent units are words, phrases, or whole sentences or clauses. Coordinating conjunctions and commas join independent units. Coordinators are coordinating conjunctions. Commas can serve as coordinators. (CO for coordinator and IU for Independent Unit)

Disambiguation through I C Analysis: Immediate Constituent Analysis is a very interesting tool with which sentences and phrases can be disambiguated easily.

1. I got a book from my mother --- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) The PP(Modifier) from my mother functions as an adverbial modifying the Head got a book: where did you get it from?
   b) The PP as a Modifier modifies the Head a book meaning the book is from my mother, not from anyone else.

2. I met a man in London --- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) The PP (Modifier) in London modifies a man (Head) meaning I met a man who was living in London.
   b) The PP in London operates as an adverbial, modifying met a man (Head): Where did you meet a man? – in London.

3. Calcutta history teacher --- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) In one interpretation, history (Modifier) modifies teacher (Head) and then Calcutta (Modifier) modifies history teacher (Head) meaning the teacher of history belongs to Calcutta.
   b) In the other interpretation, Calcutta (Modifier) modifies history (Head) and then Calcutta history (Modifier) modifies teacher (Head) meaning the teacher of history of Calcutta.

4. The man chased the thief with a stick --- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) In one interpretation, the PP with a stick (Modifier) modifies the Head chased the thief meaning The man had a stick and with it he chased the thief.

N.B: Go out is a phrasal verb, so the particle out is an obligatory part of the phrasal verb.
b) In the other interpretation, the PP *with a stick* (Modifier) modifies the Head *the thief*, meaning *the man chased the thief and the thief has a stick*.

5. The lady gave her dog biscuits--- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) In one sense, the sentence means “Her dog was given biscuits by the lady.”
   b) In the other sense, the sentence means “She was given dog biscuits by the lady” — very insulting.

   a) In one sense, the phrase means *the beautiful hostel for girls* --- beautiful (Modifier) modifies the Head *girls’ hostel*.
   b) In the other sense, the phrase means *the hostel for beautiful girls*. — here the Modifier *beautiful girls’* modifies the Head *hostel*.

7. After her husband’s death , she pined for a second--- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) In one interpretation, the sentence means *after her husband’s death she pined for a second husband* — here the PP ‘for a second’ operates as a Complement and ‘pined’ is the Verbal.
   b) In the other interpretation, the sentence means *after her husband’s death she pined for a second, a unit of time* — here the PP for a second’ (Modifier) modifies ‘pined’ (Head).

8. They can fish---- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) In one interpretation, the sentence means *They have the ability to catch fish* — here the modal can (Modifier) modifies the Head *fish (Verb)*.
   b) In the other interpretation, the sentence means *they put fish in a can* — here can is the Verbal and fish is the Complement.

9. They are cooking apples----- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
   a) In one interpretation the sentence means *Apples are being cooked by them* — here *cooking* is the Verbal and *apples* is the Complement.
   b) In the other interpretation, the sentence means “ *They refer to the apples for cooking* ”. Here *they* refer to the inanimate things: cooking (Modifier) modifies the Head *apples*.

10. The doctor told him not to smoke daily--- syntactically and semantically ambiguous.
    a) In one interpretation, the sentence means *The man smoked daily and the doctor told him not to smoke daily* — here *daily* (Modifier) modifies the Head *smoke*.
    b) In the other interpretation, the sentence means *The man smoked and daily the doctor told him not to smoke*.

**Teaching Implications of the Immediate Constituent Analysis:**

The Immediate Constituent Analysis plays a significant and impressive role in describing, analyzing, and teaching structural patterns and grammar of English. Its utility is realized in a variety of ways. The analysis is a very useful approach and model to graphically describe the sentence patterns and their functional interrelations. The most significant aspect of the I C Analysis is its ‘focus on form’. Through the analysis the focus on form can be reinforced and learning the sentence patterns through this can gain a big impetus. This analysis can be resorted to when the grammatical patterns of English are taught systematically. In the I C Analysis the division is scientifically determined and easily comprehensible. Another important advantage of it is that such precise division or cutting completely analyze, describe and present the sequence and hierarchies of the structures in a very convenient way. The functional and categorial labeling are invaluable both to the teacher and the learners. However, it is admitted that such analysis has some drawbacks. For example, we find it difficult to deal with interrogative, imperative, and negative sentences through this analysis.

**Conclusion:**

From the point of view of teaching and learning English sentence structures, the I C Analysis is a most effective, practical, and convenient tool. The graphical representation of sentences with this tool is mind-boggling indeed and the minds of the learners remain glued to it. It is learner-friendly. Hence, the I C Analysis is of wider significance in ELT parlance (English Language Teaching).

**References:**

Declaration

“The paper entitled Paraphernalia for Doing Immediate Constituent Analysis
is my original work which is not published anywhere and has not been sent for publication anywhere else.”

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