

Nonfinite clauses as direct object

(from S. Greenbaum and R. Quirk, *A Student's Grammar of the English Language* [16.23])

We distinguish five types of nonfinite clauses that function as direct object in monotransitive complementation:

- (1) Wh-infinitive clause: The Curies discovered *how to isolate radioactive elements*.
- (2) subjectless infinitive clause: Ruth prefers *to go by bus*.
- (3) subjectless *-ing* participle clause: They like *talking about their work*.
- (4) To-infinitive clause with subject: Charles wants *you to stand for election*.
- (5) *-ing* participle clause with subject: I hate *them/ their gossiping about our colleagues*.

The status of these clauses as direct object is confirmed when they are replaced by a coreferential pronoun *it* or *that*; for example the sentence in (1): *The Curies discovered that*. Another indication of their status is that they can be made the focus of a pseudo-cleft sentence: *What Ruth prefers is to go by bus*.

Many monotransitive verbs take more than one type of nonfinite complementation. Common verbs are listed below for the five types:

- (1) *decide, discuss, explain, forget, know, learn, remember, say, see, tell, think*.
- (2) *ask, dislike, forget, hate, help, hope, learn, like, love, need, offer, prefer, promise, refuse, remember, try, want, wish*.
- (3) and (5) *(can't) bear, dislike, enjoy, forget, hate, (can't) help, like, love, (not) mind, miss, need, prefer, remember, (can't) stand, start, stop*.
- (4) *(can't) bear, dislike, hate, like, love, prefer, want, wish*.