

**ENG 203**  
**Introductory English Morphology and Syntax**

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

**Ibadan Distance Learning Centre Series**

**ENG 203**  
**Introductory English Morphology and Syntax**

**By**

**Alo, M. A. Ph.D**

Department of English  
University of Ibadan



Published by  
Distance Learning Centre  
University of Ibadan

© Distance Learning Centre  
University of Ibadan  
Ibadan

*All rights reserved No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.*

First published in 2007

ISBN 978-021-281-7

*General Editor:* Prof. Francis Egbokhare  
*Series Editor:* O.I. Adeyemo and O.O. Akisanya

Typeset @ Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

Printed by: University of Ibadan Printery, Atiba Road Second Gate, U.I., Ibadan.

## Table of Contents

	Page
Vice-Chancellor's Message ... ..	vi
Foreword ... ..	vii
General Introduction and Course Objective ... ..	viii
Lecture One: Basic Concepts and Approaches ... ..	1
Lecture Two: Grammatical Units and Systems ... ..	8
Lecture Three: Words ... ..	16
Lecture Four: Introducing Morphology (Morphemes) ... ..	21
Lecture Five: Inflectional Morphology ... ..	27
Lecture Six: The Morphology of English Verbs ... ..	32
Lecture Seven: Derivational Morphology... ..	37
Lecture Eight: Vocabulary and Word Formation Processes (1) ... ..	43
Lecture Nine: Vocabulary and Word Formation Processes (2) ... ..	47
Lecture Ten: Syntax: Methods of Syntactic Analysis ... ..	53
Lecture Eleven: Syntax: Immediate Constituent Analysis ... ..	60
Lecture Twelve: Syntax: Phrase Structures Grammar ... ..	66
Lecture Thirteen: Syntax: Transformations ... ..	73
Lecture Fourteen: Syntax: Functional Analysis ... ..	81
Lecture Fifteen: Syntax: Functional Relations ... ..	96

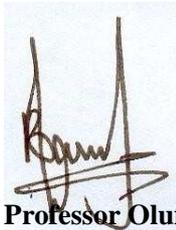
## Vice-Chancellor's Message

I congratulate you on being part of the historic evolution of our Centre for External Studies into a Distance Learning Centre. The reinvigorated Centre, is building on a solid tradition of nearly twenty years of service to the Nigerian community in providing higher education to those who had hitherto been unable to benefit from it.

Distance Learning requires an environment in which learners themselves actively participate in constructing their own knowledge. They need to be able to access and interpret existing knowledge and in the process, become autonomous learners.

Consequently, our major goal is to provide full multi media mode of teaching/learning in which you will use not only print but also video, audio and electronic learning materials.

To this end, we have run two intensive workshops to produce a fresh batch of course materials in order to increase substantially the number of texts available to you. The authors made great efforts to include the latest information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly. It is our hope that you will put them to the best use.



**Professor Olufemi A. Bamiro, FNSE**

*Vice-Chancellor*

## Foreword

The University of Ibadan Distance Learning Programme has a vision of providing lifelong education for Nigerian citizens who for a variety of reasons have opted for the Distance Learning mode. In this way, it aims at democratizing education by ensuring access and equity.

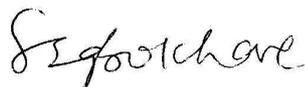
The U.I. experience in Distance Learning dates back to 1988 when the Centre for External Studies was established to cater mainly for upgrading the knowledge and skills of NCE teachers to a Bachelors degree in Education. Since then, it has gathered considerable experience in preparing and producing course materials for its programmes. The recent expansion of the programme to cover Agriculture and the need to review the existing materials have necessitated an accelerated process of course materials production. To this end, one major workshop was held in December 2006 which have resulted in a substantial increase in the number of course materials. The writing of the courses by a team of experts and rigorous peer review have ensured the maintenance of the University's high standards. The approach is not only to emphasize cognitive knowledge but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The materials have had the input of experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind, since such people can often feel isolated from the community of learners. Adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

The Distance Learning Centre also envisages that regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks will find these books very useful. We are therefore delighted to present these new titles to both our Distance Learning students and the University's regular students. We are confident that the books will be an invaluable resource to them.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.



**Professor Francis O. Egbokhare**

*Director*

## **General Introduction and Course Objective**

This course is an introduction to the analysis of English morphological and syntactic processes. It provides a description of English words and sentences using modern linguistic models like the structural approach, transformational grammar and systemic-functional grammar.

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

## LECTURE ONE

# Basic Concepts and Approaches

### Introduction

In this introductory lecture, you will learn some basic terms and concepts that will facilitate your understanding of MORPHOLOGY (that is, word structure) and SYNTAX (sentence structure) in the English Language. This course embraces two components of language study that are embodied in GRAMMAR. The lecture also includes a brief overview of different approaches to the study of grammar.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. understand some basic terms like grammar, word, morphology, syntax and what they stand for;
2. recognise the relationship between word and grammar; and
3. recognise the different uses of the term grammar.

### Pre-Test

1. How can you define the term 'grammar'?
2. Why do you think grammar is important in language study?
3. Name other aspects of language study that you know.
4. Re-arrange the following strings of words to make a meaningful sentence:  
This book Saturday on John Mary gave to
5. What have you learnt from this exercise in relation to sentence construction in English?

## CONTENT

### Word and Grammar: their Relationships

Word and grammar are related to each other in a number of ways. Firstly, words constitute the building blocks for constructing sentences. Secondly, words are expected to come in a given order in a grammatical structure like the phrase, clause or sentence. Thirdly, the occurrence of certain words in a particular sentence may lead to bad grammar. Fourthly, there is a varying degree of grammaticality of the sentence. This depends on the nature of words used. The study of words is therefore central to the understanding of a language works.

You will discover that some of the problems of constructing sentences derive partly from inadequate knowledge of how words behave in a language. A particular word has its meaning but its grammatical function is determined by how it is used in a sentence. Many words in the English Language have more than one meaning and often have different meanings. Which meaning a word carries in a given sentence depends on the sentence in which it occurs – on its relationship to other words in that sentence. The examples below indicate different meanings for the word ‘house’:

- a. The driver went to his house.
- b. The President went to the White House.
- c. The House of Representatives is on vacation.

In the sentences (a) and (b) above, the word ‘house’ has two different senses of ‘dwelling’. ‘House’ in sentence (c) is completely different from (a) and (b), meaning a special group of people rather than a dwelling.

### What is Grammar?

The term grammar is often used by different people to mean different things. First, grammar can be considered to be a branch of language study which deals with the construction of sentences which are intelligible and acceptable. Secondly, grammar may be used to refer to the quality of the knowledge of a language possessed by a speaker as inferred from the nature of what he speaks. On the basis of this, we can judge the grammar of the speaker of the utterances below as ‘poor’:

The girls is here.\*

The women is expected to be seated.\*

Thirdly, grammar has been defined as

*a finite set of rules which enumerates (generates) an infinite number of grammatical (or well formed) sentences of a language and no ungrammatical ones and assigns to each sentence generated its proper structural description” (Koutsoudas 1966:4)*

From this last definition, grammar is seen to be rule-governed. Thus, a sentence like “This is a house” is grammatical whereas “This are a house” is not. There is a set of rules which govern how units of a language may be combined to form acceptable sentences. Knowledge of grammar ensures appropriate usage in language. A learner who has mastered the grammar of a language is one who has mastered and can apply its rules in an acceptable way.

### **Word Order**

- a. When I entered the house, a big dog ran out and barked at me.
- b. House I the when entered, barked ran out big a and at dog me.

These are two strings of words – the same words but in different order. Anyone who knows English will see at once that the first string of words makes sense, whereas the second is a meaningless list of words. What makes the difference is grammar. The first string is grammatical; the words are placed in patterns that belong to the grammar of English. The second string is not so much ungrammatical as totally lacking in grammar; it is a random collection of words placed in random order. Sentences are not simply random words strung together

Word order is an essential feature of the grammar of every language. The fact that English sentences can be of the type “Femi goes to school” and not “School to Femi goes” reveals that words even when some can co-occur habitually or collocate’ cannot be put together in just any order. The total meaning of a sentence may depend in part simply on word order, as in the English pair of sentences. “The dog killed the snake” and “The snake killed the dog.”

## **Different Approaches to Grammar**

**a. Traditional Grammar** refers to the type of grammar before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on Latin grammar, traditional grammar was conceived as a universal standard for the study of other human languages, for example English. This approach to grammar has been criticised by modern scholars for various reasons will be examined later

**b. Diachronic Grammar:-** a record of statements on the historical development of a language through a particular period of time e.g. the grammar of English written to cover a specific period of time, e.g. Old English to Middle.

**c. Synchronic Grammar:-** contrasts with diachronic grammar. It studies the structure of a language at a particular point. It is usually descriptive.

**d. Contrastive/Comparative Grammar:-** makes systematic comparisons and statements about the structure of two different languages in order to show the areas where the two structures are similar and where they are different.

**e. Pedagogical Grammar:-** usually written for the main purpose of teaching language skills and usages that are considered elegant in that language. Thus, pedagogical/teaching grammars are designed purposely for teaching or learning a language. Characteristically, pedagogical grammars have lots of prescriptive statements about what should be used and what should not.

## **g. Universal Grammar**

Another more recent type is universal grammar. It involves investigations which go beyond the study of individual languages. Its focus is to attempt to establish the universal characteristics that define human language in general. It studies the universal properties of language and how these are expressed in particular languages.

## **f. Descriptive Grammar**

This is a modern linguistic approach concerned with the description of units of language structure and the rules which state how language elements may or may not be combined. For the language scholar, grammar embraces morphology (word formation) and syntax (combination of structures larger than words, for example, phrases and clauses) and the rules underlying their constructions. The descriptive approach of the modern linguist opposes the prescriptive emphasis of the traditional grammarian. This course is concerned with descriptive grammar which embraces morphology and syntax.

### **What is Morphology?**

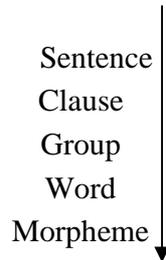
Morphology is one of the dimensions of grammar and is concerned with the formation of words and their structural properties. There are two main dimensions in the study of morphology: (a) inflectional morphology and (b) derivational morphology (for further discussion, see lectures 3, 4 and 5).

### **What is Syntax?**

Syntax is the second dimension of grammar. Syntax or syntactic analysis is concerned with the study of the ways in which words are put together to form sentences and the principles underlying them. Words are assembled into phrases and phrases are put together to form sentences. For example, the noun phrases, "This shirt" and the verb phrase 'is very nice' may be put together to form the sentence, "This shirt is very nice". In syntax, the component parts of a sentence are determined. Then the parts are described grammatically. Syntax embraces the two related tasks of (a) breaking down sentences into its constituents and (b) assigning grammatical labels to each constituent. Stating what type of constituent or grammatical category it is and what grammatical function it performs.

### **Grammatical Units**

There are five grammatical units which are hierarchically organized as follows:



The sentence is the highest category while the morpheme is the lowest or smallest (for more discussion of these, go to lecture 2)

#### **Post-Test**

1. Explain the terms (i) morphology, syntax, grammar and structure?
2. In your own words, try to give some idea of word order in English.

#### **Summary**

This introductory lecture provides the background to the basic concepts for understanding word structure in a language. Grammar embraces word structure (morphology) and sentence structure (syntax). Morphology is thus concerned with the formation of words and their structural properties, while syntax deals with the way words and phrases are joined together to form sentences. There are five major units that carry grammatical patterns. These are sentence, clause, phrase or group, word and morpheme. These display a kind of arrangement that is hierarchical.

## References

Matthew, P. H. (1974) *Morphology: An Introduction to the Theory of Word*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tomori, S. H. (1977). *The Morphology and Syntax of Present day English: An Introduction*. London: Heinemann.

Koutsoudas, A. (1966). *Writing Transformational Grammars*. London: Longman

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

## LECTURE TWO

# Grammatical Units and Systems

### Introduction

The previous lecture introduced you to some basic concepts and terms relevant to this study. In this lecture, you will learn about the arrangements of elements of language into grammatical patterns and units. Grammatical units are sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. You are also introduced to the systems underlying patterns in each grammatical unit.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. recognise the nature of grammatical organisation and its systems;
2. identify and characterise each grammatical unit in English; and
3. explain the relationship between grammatical units.

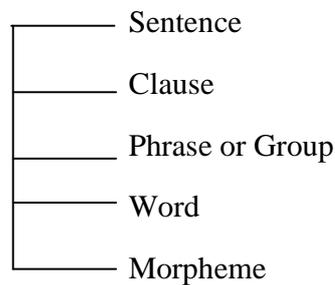
### Pre-Test

1. State whether each of the following expressions is a clause, a phrase or a group
  - i. She danced.
  - ii. On the table
  - iii. If you are interested.
  - iv. Don't leave the room open.
2. What is the difference between a phrase and a clause?
3. What is a sentence?

## CONTENT

### The term 'Unit'

The category 'unit' accounts for stretches of language of varying lengths and composition which themselves carry grammatical patterns or which operate in a grammatical structure. The diagram below shows the five grammatical units:



As units belonging to different ranks, a sentence may consist of one or more than one clause, a clause may consist of one or more than one phrase, a phrase may consist of one or more than one word, and a word may consist of one or more than one morpheme. Morphemes are the minimal, indivisible units in grammar. Conversely, we may also say that one or more than one morpheme may constitute a word, one or more than one word may form a phrase, one or more than one phrase may form a clause, and one or more than one clause may form a sentence.

### The Sentence

The sentence has been defined in different ways, including the following:

- i. Based on spoken substance (speech):-

'A sentence is as much of the uninterrupted utterance of a single speaker' ... (N. Francis, 1958)

- ii. Based on graphic substance (writing):

A sentence means one of those portions of words which are divided from the rest by a single dot which is called a period, or full stop.

iii. Scientifically defined; -

'a sentence could be scientifically defined as any stretch of utterance between breath intakes ' (Whitehall, 1956) Structural Essentials of English)

iv. Emphasis on grammatical independence;- .

'Each sentence is an independent linguistic form, not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form'. ( Bloomfield, 1933 Language )

Of all these, Bloomfield's definition has been accepted as the basis of a scientific definition of a sentence.

### **The Clause**

The 'Clause' refers to a grammatically coherent text that has a verb. Clauses are grammatically either 'free' as in "The man was arrested" or 'dependent' as in "When he fell down" in "The man was caught when he fell down." Thus, this sentence is made of two clauses.

### **The Group**

The 'group' refers to a group of words that occupies a distinctive grammatical slot in a linguistic structure. For instance, the following sentence has four groups, namely subject, verb, object and adverbial:

I (subject) saw (verb) the pretty girl (object) yesterday (adverbial).

### **The Word**

The 'word' appears to be a universal concept. Speakers of a language are often able to identify what words are as they tend to associate a word with a single piece of meaning. Although intuitively, what constitutes a word is fairly obvious, an exact definition of 'word' has proved difficult.

1. The Spoken word: The spoken word contrasts with the orthographic word. Phonologically defined, a word is a segment of speech which can be isolated for independence in its own right such that it carries the primary stress, and can enter into syntagmatic or linear relationships with other such units within the syntactic framework of the language.

2. The Orthographic word; In English, each word is a letter or a group of letters of the alphabet written between two obligatory spaces in the horizontal axis:

When/ the/ police/ men/ reached/ the/ station / they/ interrogated/ the/ suspect. /

A word can be defined from a variety of perspectives: as a phonological unit, as an irreducible terminal element of syntactic structure, morphological unit and as the basic element of the lexicon. A word is recognised as the smallest unit that can stand on its own. The best-known definition of word was proposed by the American linguist Bloomfield, who defined it as a minimal free form that can occur by itself. Bloomfield's definition of course works well for written English where we conventionally leave a space for either side of a word. The word by Bloomfield (1933) is referred to as a minimal free form that can be included in other non-minimal free forms.

### **The Morpheme**

The morpheme (from morph, a Greek word meaning "shape" or "form") is the minimal unit of meaning. Words, sentences, and even entire paragraphs can all be regarded as being built ultimately out of morphemes.

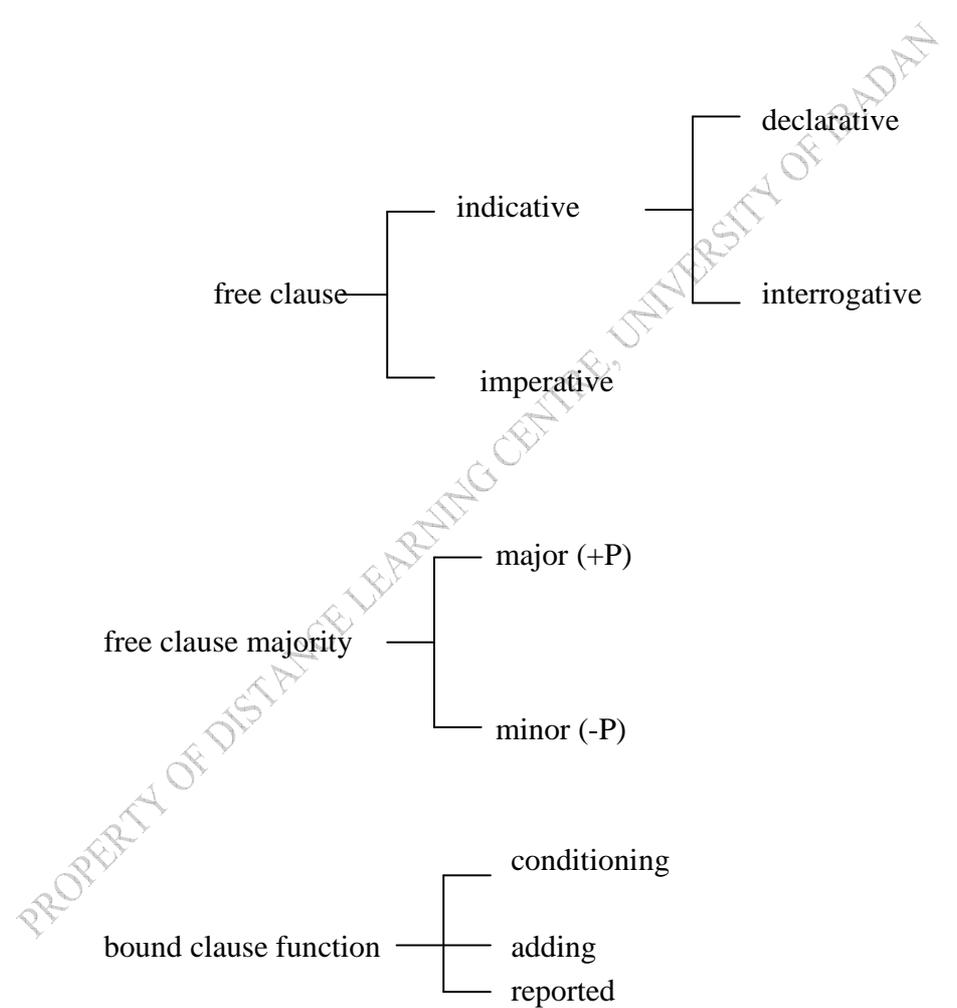
"Minimal" means that an utterance cannot be divided into other, smaller meaningful units. Still another definition of morpheme is that it is a sequence of sounds that has function in a word. "distrustfulness" has four structural or functional parts: dis, trust, ful, and ness. All the four parts of this word can function in other words such as disprove trusty, beautiful, and happiness. We should notice, too, that these parts cannot be broken into smaller meaningful units. Each segment below is an instance of the morpheme:

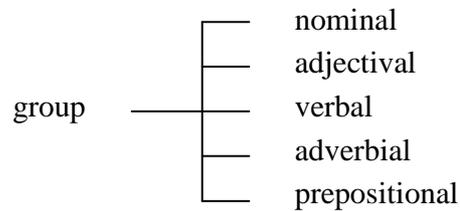
When/ the/ police/ men/ reach/ed/ the/ station/, they/ interrogate/d/ the/ suspect/.

### **Grammatical System**

The category "system" accounts for the range of choices which are available within a unit, and any given range of possible options is known

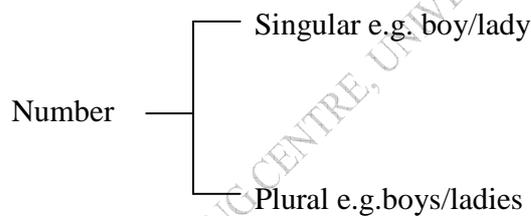
as a set of 'terms'. Two important properties of a system are that the list of terms contained in it is finite and that the options are all mutually exclusive, so that if a new term is added the meaning of at least one of the existing terms is affected. For example, the relations between the terms from the system of mood (sentence types) may be set out as follows:



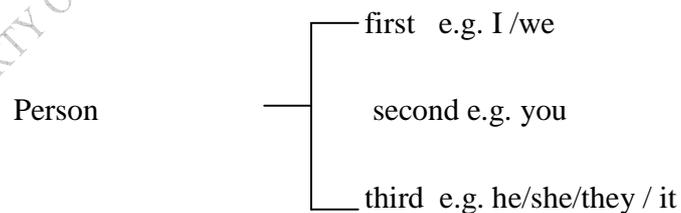


Now here are some of the systems which can be applied to verbal groups:

**Number** can be defined as a system of special forms by which it is denoted whether a referent is one (singular) or more than one (plural). The distinction between singular and plurals in English nouns is morphological. (See lecture four)

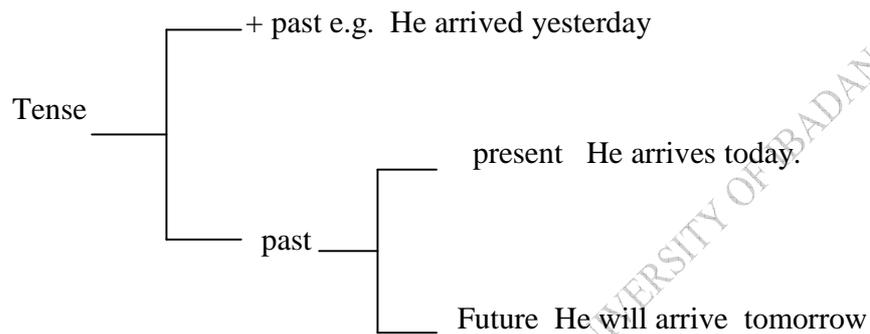


**Person** is a way of classifying referents in relation to the speaker; it occurs in various forms but the one found in English pronouns is distinguished between first person singular (speaker), second person (person(s) addressed) and third person (referent or person spoken of)

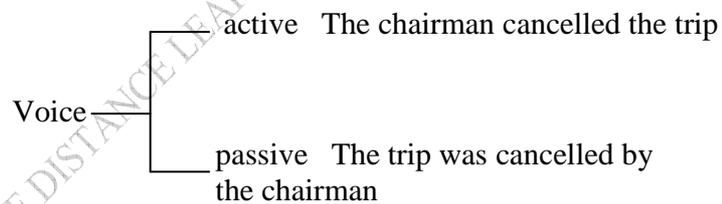


**Tense is** a major grammatical system in English. In English, reference to the time of action or event, which is, whether the action or event being described took place in the past, is taking place in the present or will take

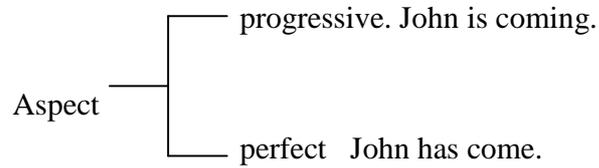
place in the future, is made in the verb. Tense in English is marked by morphological changes in the form of the verb. Modern English grammar recognises two terms in the system of tense as can be seen in the following diagram:



**Voice** can be defined as any one of the forms by which the relation of the subject to the action is indicated. There are two terms in the system of voice as seen below:



**Aspect** is any one of the several groups of forms in the conjugation of the verb which serve to indicate the manner in which the action denoted by the verb is considered as been carried out. See the diagram below:



### **Summary**

You have seen in this lecture that language has structure and systems. These have been described and explained. You are now in a position to distinguish phrase, clause and sentence, and the systems in them.

### **Post-Test**

1. Distinguish a phrase from a clause?
2. Distinguish between sentence and clause

### **References**

Francis, W. N. (1958). *The Structure of American English*. New York.

Francis, W. N. (1967). *The English Language: An Introduction*. London: The English University Press Ltd.

Strang, B. M. H. (1969). *Modern English Structure*. London: Edward Arnold.

## LECTURE THREE

# Words

### Introduction

This lecture will, first of all, consider the problem of defining and identifying words. Then, it will discuss how words are classified into parts of speech. Finally, you will learn about the characteristics of the different parts of speech/word classes.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. determine what a word is;
2. recognise different types of words in English; and
3. relate classes of words to their form and grammatical function.

### Pre-Test

1. What is a word?
2. What are nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives?
3. Determine whether the second word in each of the following phrases is an adjective or not:  
(a) a shoe box (b) a listening exercise
4. “We can say a round table” and “He rounded off the lecture.”  
What is the part of speech of “round” and “rounded?”

## **CONTENT**

### **The Word**

As noted earlier, the word has been one of the most difficult units to define in modern linguistic terms. This is partly because of the difficulty of capturing the distinctive features of both the spoken and the written word in one definition.

### **Major Word Classes**

What evidence is there that words belong to various categories of different types like Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Modal, Determiner, and so forth? As we shall see, evidence in support of this assumption comes from a wide range of sources.

### **Traditional approach**

Notions inherited or borrowed from Latin were applied to the English language; hence English language was cast in the classical mould of Latin grammar. This is seen in the definition of all the parts of speech and the grammatical categories of English. The use of definitions which were usually, notional or subjective, in character was one of the most common methods of traditional grammar. Some of these definitions, however, anticipate modern definitions. For example, a sentence is defined as an assemblage of words, expressed in proper form, and arranged in proper order, and concurring to make *complete sense*. This idea still persists today but the problem is what exactly is a *complete sense*?- a word, phrase or sentence can be. Now, consider the following definitions of the parts of speech.

1. Verbs denote actions (go, destroy, buy, eat, kick, etc).
2. Nouns denote entities, referring to persons, objects or things (e.g. cars, cat, mountain, Obasanjo, Abuja etc).
3. Adjectives denote states (happy, rich etc).
4. Adverbs denote the manner in which something is done (badly, slowly, painfully, cyclically, etc).
5. Prepositions denote location (under, over, inside, outside, in, on, etc).

6. Determiners serve to specify (e.g., the, a, an as in **the book**. This specifies which book).

These definitions are not particularly reliable because they are notionally based. The word “assassination” denotes an action but is a noun, not a verb. “Illness”, denotes a state but is a noun not an adjective

### **Modern Definitions: Word Classes.**

Parts of speech or word classes in modern grammar are identified and characterised by the following features:

1. specific morphological markers;
2. the grammatical categories inherent in words;
3. syntactic functions; and
4. specific meaning.

Let us illustrate these features with the class of nouns in English. English nouns display some of these features.

### **Characteristics of Nouns**

- a. Nouns are words that are used to make reference to persons, places animals, objects, ideas etc.
- b. Only nouns can take determiners such as ‘the’ ‘a’ or ‘an’ as in ‘a house’, ‘the child’
- c. Nouns are changed into the plural forms by the simple addition of plural markers ‘-s’, ‘-es’, ‘-ies’. Examples are: boy (singular), boys (plural). Certain nouns can still be pluralised through other means by changing the internal vowel as in: “foot” – “feet”. There are some nouns with no change in form e.g “sheep” – “sheep”
- d. Only nouns indicate their possessive forms by taking apostrophe (’) plus ‘s’ e.g
 

Ordinary form	Possessive form
Doctor	Doctor’s
- e. Nouns can be formed through the addition of certain morphological markers called derivational suffixes. (-tion; -ion; -or; -ness; -hood; -(i)an; -ity; -ment; -ist; -ation).

- f. Nouns can be modified by adjectives in English. For instance, we can have:

The beautiful young girl (here, 'beautiful' and 'young' modify the noun 'girl')

- g. The first letter of a proper noun must be written in capital wherever the noun occurs in the sentence, e.g. I went to see the President of Nigeria.

In a similar way, other word classes like pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions can be characterised in formal, morphological and syntactic terms. Words are classified into word classes partly on account of their syntactic behaviour and partly on the basis of their morphological form. That is, words from the same word class are likely to fit into the same slot in a sentence, and to be inflected in similar ways.

### **Simple and compound words**

On the basis of morphemic structure, we can divide words into simple and compound words. **Simple words** are the lexical units which contain only one base. The simplest consist of nothing but a single free base with possible inflectional variants. Any free base, therefore, can be a simple word. Simple words can also have a complex structure consisting of a base and one more derivational suffix. Examples of these are "friendly and "unkind" **Compound words** are lexical units that have more than one base, with or without derivational affixes, and a pattern of arrangement which is not a normal syntactic construction. The difference may lie in the way the bases or simple words which are the parts of the compound are stressed. In *blackboard*, the stronger stress is on the noun head, as in *black board*. Therefore *blackboard* is a compound word while *black board* is a construction of two simple words.

### **Open (content) words versus closed (function) words**

The open word classes often referred to as content words comprise lexical items with definite dictionary meaning. In dealing with open word classes, the dictionary provides clear definitions e.g. man - a male adult. On the other hand, the close word classes comprise mainly function or grammatical words, for example, the, at, etc. In isolation, such words have no clear meaning until they are used to show the relationship between

other words in utterances. An important distinction between the open and close word classes is that the latter have far fewer members

### **Summary**

Scholars see a word as a minimal free form that can occur by itself. Different criteria are used to identify words. Phonologically, words can carry stress and tone and different syllables in different languages for contrasts. Words are identified according to their syntactic behaviour and morphological form or shape. There are words that can carry certain grammatical endings i.e. inflections. For example, verbs in English carry inflection endings for specific grammatical functions such as past, present and continuous tenses

### **Post-Test**

1. In your own words, write clear definitions of nouns, adjectives, adverbs based on their position and form
2. What are the differences between function words and lexical or content words?
3. Identify function words in the following:
  - a. Before you leave the room, you should switch off all of the electrical appliances, and close all the windows and the main door.

### **References**

- Quirk, R. (1962). *The Use of English*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (1999). *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. England: Person Education Ltd.
- Wiredu, J. F (1998). *Organized English Grammar*. Accra: Academic Publications Ltd.

## LECTURE FOUR

# Introducing Morphology (Morphemes)

### Introduction

In this lecture, you will be introduced to an important concept for analysing and describing the internal structure of words, that is, MORPHEME.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. recognize different word elements known as morphemes;
2. identify different types of morphemes;
3. recognise elements such as roots, stems and affixes; and
4. analyse the internal structure of words.

### Pre-Test

1. How many word elements can you recognise in the following:  
processor, procession, objection, impression.
2. Give three different ways in which the term 'word' might be used.
3. What is the difference between a phonological or spoken word and a written word?

## CONTENT

### Segmentability of Words

Any word that has more than one morpheme has its own constituents linked in a linear relationship. There are three types of linear ordering of segments.

- a. Transparent Cases:- In this type, words can be divided neatly into its composite morphemes i.e. the components are clear e.g. respectable from respect -able , adapt/able, count /able, establish /ment.
- b. Non-transparent cases involving words that cannot be segmented clearly, eg.  
retention from retain and tion  
detention from detain and tion  
redemption from redeem and tion
- c. Opaque cases:- these involve words which have two different forms that are semantically related, eg.  
man vs men  
go vs went  
child vs children

These involve the singular and plural morphemes and the past tense morpheme. Such words are classified as having irregular forms.

### **Roots and Affixes**

The core of a word is called its root, for example, the root in the word 'combination' is the verb 'combine'. Affixes refer to certain word parts or forms which are added at the beginning or end of a root word. Affixes which appear before roots are called prefixes and those which occur after root words are called suffixes.

### **Morpheme**

The morpheme is the minimal linguistic element that is meaningful. It is also significant for grammar. As a minimal element, a morpheme cannot be further divided into smaller grammatical components, e.g. goat is one grammatical unit while goats have two elements. "Goats" is made up of the base 'goat' and the signal for plural represented by '-s'.

All languages have morphemes. The minimal meaningful sound unit is called a morph, and the study of morphs is called morphology. A word may be one morph, like the word 'boy' for instance. A word may contain two or more morphs, as in the word 'boys' or the word 'imbalance'. The morphs may be isolated and the groups of the morphs may be classified. In

other words, words are formed of single morphs or groups of morphs combined according to patterns.

### **Morph and Allomorph**

Morph is the actual form used to realize morphemes. Thus, the form 'cat' is a single morph realizing a lexical morpheme. The form 'cats' consists of two morphs, realizing a lexical morpheme and an inflectional plural morpheme 's'. Just as there are 'allophones' of a particular phoneme (minimal sound segment), we can recognize allomorphs of a particular morpheme. Morphemes have variants and these variants are called allomorphs. An allomorph on the other hand is a member of a family of a morph. As we have already pointed out a morpheme is a realized morph, so we can also say that an allomorph is a member of a family of a morpheme. The term allomorph derives from the fact that in English, for example, certain morphemes change their nature from one word environment to another. For instance 's' as we have shown above, is a plural morpheme.

### **The Plural Morpheme**

Here are two lists of words in English:

Cat /kæt/	cats /kæts/
Top /top/	tops/ tops/
Month/məʊnθ/	months/ məʊnθs /
Book /buk/	books /buks/

The plural morpheme 's' can be attached to a number of lexical morphemes to produce structures like 'cat + plural's' above. Since a morph is one occurrence of a minimal meaningful sound combination, we know that each word in the first list is a morph. All the possible occurrences of a morph that carry the same meaning and are formed by the same sounds can be grouped together into a category called an allomorph. Now, the actual forms of the morphs which result from the plural morpheme 's' turn out to be different. Yet they are all allomorphs of one morpheme. One allomorph of 'plural' is a zero-morph, as in 'sheep': 'sheep + Ø' allomorph. Other examples are deer/deer, furniture/furniture etc. The so-called 'irregular' forms of plurals in English are described as having individual morphological realization rules. Thus, 'man + plural' is analysed as 'men'.

### **Phonological Conditioning**

The plural morpheme in English changes its nature depending on the environment (technically called phonological environment) in which it occurs. The plural 's' can be:

/s/ as in cats;

/z/ as in boys;

/ɪz/ as in buses.

The difference in sound formation in the three allomorphs of the plural morphemes can be accounted for and predicted. The 's' pronunciation of the plural suffix occurs after the voiceless consonant sounds /p/, /t/, /f/ and /θ /; that is, after all voiceless sounds except /s/, /tʃ /, and /dʒ/. The /z/ pronunciation occurs after all vowel sounds (all of which are voiced) and after /b/, /d/, /g/, /v/, /ð/, /l/ /m/, /n/, /ŋ /, and /r/; in other words, after all VOICED sounds except /z/. The /ɪz/ pronunciation (which is an extra syllable) occurs after the sibilants /s/, /z/, / ts /, and after the affricates / tʃ / and / dʒ/. The pronunciation of the plural morph is **CONDITIONED** by the sound that immediately precedes it. We can predict, then, that the regular plural morpheme will occur as /s/ after all UNVOICED consonants except the sibilants and affricates, as /z/ after all vowels and all VOICED consonants except the sibilants and affricates, and /ɪz/ (an EXTRA SYLLABLE) after the sibilants and affricates.

Note that allomorphs relate to the phonological aspects of grammatical analysis. In line with phonological practice therefore, the various allomorphs which are phonologically conditioned are enclosed in slanting lines.

### **The Possessive Morpheme**

The practice whereby the morpheme 's' is added to a word in English goes beyond the issue of plural formation in nouns. It includes the formation of possessives such as: boy- boy's (singular): boys - boys' bags (plural)

The 's' that forms the possessive of nouns in English follows the same pattern of phonological conditioning that we have seen in the regular form of the plural morpheme. Example:

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
Pat's /paets/	Henry's/henriz/	Alice's /aelisiz/
Philip's /filəps/	Fred's /fredz/	Roses/rowziz/

The third-person-singular present-tense morpheme

In the present tense of the verb, the s-ending that occurs in the third-person-singular form of the verb also follows the same pattern of phonological conditioning. Example:

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
He eats /i:ts/	he sees /si:z/	he dresses /dresiz/
He laughs /laefs/	he pulls /pulz/	he dozes /douziz/

At least four options can readily be found for the term word elements. These options are word constituents, word segments, word structure and word parts. The technical term that covers these five terms is morphology- the study of word structure and the principles and rules which govern morphological processes in natural languages. To understand word elements in English, we need to understand three key terms which feature in morphology: morpheme, morph and allomorph. A morpheme is generally described as the smallest meaningful unit of grammatical analysis. It sometimes coincides with the term word but at other times it remains as the item next below in rank. A morph is the exponent of a morpheme. It relates to a morpheme in that it is an abstraction while a morpheme itself is its realization – its signification. When a word is at a point in which it cannot be further broken down into parts without destroying its essence, then that word can also be said to be a morpheme. The most important thing to be noted with word elements therefore is meaning or essence: word elements are meaningful parts of words. If we take the words boys and books, we see that we can split each into two meaningful parts:

boy - s;  
book -s.

The word boy has meaning in English – a male youth; -s has meaning in English – the indicator of plurality here. The word book has meaning in English – a source through which we can derive knowledge: - s has meaning in English- the indicator of plurality here. Each of the elements: boy and –s: book and –s is a morph having the exponents (or morphemes):

(boy) and (s);

(book) and (s).

In line with the usual practice in morphology the morphemes are enclosed as above, in braces ( ).

### **Summary**

Morphology is the study of word structure and the rules which govern the ways words are used. The term morpheme refers to the smallest meaningful unit in grammar. Morphemes cannot be divided into other smaller meaningful units. Morphemes are basically divided into two; free and bound. Affixes are either added to the beginning of a word (prefix) or at the ending of a word (suffix). The plural morpheme in English changes its nature depending on the environment (technically called phonological environment) in which it occurs.

### **Post-Test**

1. What is a morpheme?
2. Explain and illustrate the phenomenon of phonological conditioning?
3. Distinguish between morpheme, morph and allomorph?

### **References**

Yule, G. (1985). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aitchison, J. (1992). *Linguistics*. London: Hodder Headline.

## LECTURE FIVE

# Inflectional Morphology

### Introduction

In the last lecture, you were introduced to morphology (morpheme) and some principles underlying word structure. Many words in English can be segmented into recognisable units, which can perform different grammatical functions. In this lecture, you will learn one important unit of word structure called INFLECTIONAL SUFFIX and its grammatical functions.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. analyze units or morphemes making up a particular word; and
2. explain the grammatical function of inflectional suffixes

### Pre-Test

1. Give the usual plurals for the following nouns:  
Brother, sheep, cat, crisis, roof, man, child, focus
2. Give the usual past tense and past participle for the following verbs: look, help, teach, put, sing and broadcast.

## CONTENT

### Paradigmatic Relations

A paradigm is 'the system of morphemic variations which is correlated with a parallel system of variations in the environment '\_' (Francis 1958:187). Essentially, a paradigm is a sort of table of related words from

which a choice may be made in accordance with the morphological rules of the language. Egs. Paradigms of verbal forms

<u>Present</u>	<u>progressive</u>	<u>past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
talk	talking	talked	talked
work	working	worked	worked
take	taking	took	taken
drive	driving	drove	driven

### **What is Inflection?**

Inflection can be defined as a change made in the form of a word to express a relation to other words in a sentence. Inflections are those forms which are added to such words as nouns, verbs, adjectives, to influence the grammatical function of the resultant word form. The concept of inflection is concerned with the aspects of word structure that relate to the grammatical system of English.

### **Inflectional suffixes**

In the last lecture, we examined the plural morpheme, the possessive morpheme and the third-person-present tense morpheme. These are all inflectional suffixes. They carry grammatical meaning but do not change or affect the part of speech of the word to which they are joined. Inflectional suffixes always come at the end of the word; no other suffixes can be added after them.

### **Inflectional suffixes and the English Verb**

Verbs in English can be recognised by the fact that they have up to five distinct forms. They have an uninflected base form, and may take as many as four different inflections (the present tense -s, past tense -d, participle -n, and gerund-ing inflections), as illustrated in the Table of Verb Forms (13) below:

(13)	<b>Base</b>	<b>Participle</b>	<b>past</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Gerund</b>
	hew	hewn	hewed	hews	hewing
	mow	mown	mowed	mows	mowing
	prove	proven	proved	proves	proving
	sew	sewn	sewed	sews	sewing
	shave	shaven	shaved	shaves	shaving
	show	shown	showed	shows	showing
	strew	strewn	strewed	strews	strewing

Like most morphological criteria, however, this one is complicated by the irregularity of English inflectional morphology: for example, many Verbs have irregular PAST OR PARTICIPLE forms, and in some cases either or both of these forms may not in fact be distinct from the base form, so that a single form may serve two or three functions.

The picture becomes even more complicated if we take into account the Verb be, which has eight distinct forms! In fact, the most regular Verb inflection in English is the-ing inflection, which can be attached to the base form of almost any Verb in English to form a gerund.

**Verbal Inflections** of Tense are found in the following examples: come/ comes, talk/ talks/talked. (for more details, see Lecture Six on the morphology of English verbs)

### **Inflection: Adjectives**

Adjectives can be defined as words that describe or limit the meanings of nouns that they go with. Some English Adjectives take inflectional suffixes to express comparison; these suffixes are -er, and -est for 'comparative' and 'superlative' degrees, respectively. Adjectives usually precede the nouns they modify. Adjectives take inflection (-er, est) to express 'comparative' and 'superlative' degrees.

*For example:*

<b>Base/Root</b>	<b>Comparatives(er)</b>	<b>Superlatives (est)</b>
small	smaller	smallest
tall	taller	tallest
weak	weaker	weakest

Some inflected adjectives undergo changes in their spellings. Some take double consonants before the suffixes '-er' and 'iest':

big	bigger	biggest
hot	hotter	hottest

Some adjectives are inflected by changing the ending/consonant '-y' to 'i' before adding '-er' and '-est' suffixes.

happy	happier	happiest
angry	angrier	angriest

It is necessary to explain the meaning of 'er' as a comparative form meaning "more than" from its other uses. For the words 'longer', 'wider', 'broader', it has the meaning of being 'more than'. But the form 'er' in 'lodger' and 'longer' are not the same morpheme even though they have identical form. It is to be noted that while '-er' in the former case (lodger) is used usually with verbs to signify agent or doer, the '-er' in the latter (longer) is added to adjectives (especially adjectives of length, size and quality) to denote "more than". Thus we have: small+er. big+er. smart+er. handsome+er.

An easy way of identifying these morpheme types is to consider the word classes into which the base of such word-forms belong, whether adjective or verb. There are English adjectives which do not take inflectional suffixes, but instead, go with the comparative and superlative forms 'more' and 'most'.

difficult	more difficult	most difficult
splendid	more splendid	most splendid

Yet English has a limited number of adjectives which take irregular forms

little	less	least
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst

### **Summary**

The term inflection refers to the change made in the form of a word to express its relation to other words in a sentence. Such forms are added to word classes like nouns, verbs and adjectives. Inflections indicate number and possession in nouns, and tense and aspect in verbs. In speech, the plural morpheme has three variants /-s/, /-z/ and /-iz/.

### **Post-Test**

1. Affixes tend to restrict words to particular grammatical functions. Discuss and illustrate.
2. What are the functional morphemes in the following sentence  
*The old men sat on the benches.*
3. What are the inflectional morphemes in the following structures  
*The teacher's books*  
*It's raining*  
*He jumped over the wall*
4. What would you consider as allomorph of the morpheme "plural" from the set of English words below?  
*Bags, oxen, deer, sheep, curricula*

### **References**

- Yule, G. (1985). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aitchison, J. (1992). *Linguistics*. London: Hodder Headline.

## LECTURE SIX

# The Morphology of English Verbs

### Introduction

Inflection plays an important role in the morphology of English words. In the case of the verb in particular, it relates to tense and time. In this lecture, you will learn more about the morphology of the English verbs and how inflectional suffixes help to realize such grammatical functions as tense and aspect.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. demonstrate the grammatical functions of inflectional suffixes in English verbs; and
2. determine whether a verb is expressing past time, past participle or progression.

### Pre-Test

1. What is inflectional suffix?
2. What is tense?
3. What is the relation between tense and time?

### CONTENT

You will remember that certain types of inflection (i.e. grammatical ending) are attached only to specific categories. For example, verbs in English can be recognised by the fact that they have up to five distinct forms: an uninflected base form and four different inflections (the present tense-s, past tense -d, participle -n, and -ing inflections).

### **Inflection: Verbs (Tense and Person)**

English verbs take inflections to reflect certain grammatical functions (such as tense and person). The grammatical system of tense is based on the verb and verbal inflections. English verbs form the past tense by adding the form /t/ /d/ or /id/ according to the final sound of the verb. In writing, the past tense morpheme is written as (ed,- look/looked laugh/laughed, etc.) The principle of phonological conditioning we have just considered in the discussion of the morphemic structure of plural nouns in English also applies to English lexical verbs. Both regular and irregular verbs in English take the past tense morpheme; written as ‘-ed’. In speech, however, the (–‘ed’) being phonologically conditioned, has three realizations as /d/ /t/ /id/:

look	look(ed)	realized as /t/
pack	pack(ed)	realized as /t/
add	add(ed)	realized as (id)
pad	padd(ed)	realized as (id)
pat	patt(ed)	realized as (id)

As with the plurals of nouns, English has a small number of verbs with irregular past tense formation: cut/cut, sleep/slept, creep/crept, etc. In addition to the past tense, English verbs have a form called the parexpress plurality as in the case of nouns, the inflectional suffix ‘-s’ is added to verbs when they are preceded by a singular noun subject: e.g. He reads; He goes.

### **The Past Tense Morpheme**

A similar pattern of phonological conditioning is seen in the pronunciation of the regular past-tense ending of the verb. (The irregular formation of the past tense and the past participle compose many allomorphs of the past-tense and past-participle morphemes.)

Let us look at regular formation of the past tense. (In the regular verb, the same sounds are used for making the past tense and the past participle, and the same phonological patterns can be seen. However, the past-tense marker and the past-participle marker are members of two different morphemes because their meanings are different.) Examples are:

miss /mis/  
laugh /laef/

missed /mist/  
laughed /laeft/

The past-tense morpheme in the verbs above is pronounced /t/. The /t/, then, is one allomorph of the past-tense morpheme. Another allomorph of the past-tense morpheme is /d/:

Brag /braed/  
love /lʌv/

bragged /bragd/  
loved /lʌvd/

The third allomorph that we shall examine is /ɪd/ (which is an EXTRA SYLLABLE). This occurs after the sounds /t/ and /d/:

Need /ni:d/  
Demand /dɪmaend/

needed /ni:did/  
demanded/dɪmaendɪd/

The /t/ allomorph of the past-tense morpheme occurs after all UNVOICED consonants except /t/; the /d/ allomorph occurs after all vowels and all VOICED consonants except /d/; the /ɪd/ allomorph occurs only after the sounds /t/ and /d/.

### **Third Person Singular and Present Participle**

Like nouns, verbs have a number of formal features. One is the form that occurs after singular noun subjects, like *goes*, *thinks*, *imagines*, *emancipates*. These are usually called “third person singular forms,” but this term, besides being rather jargonish, is somewhat misleading. English words do not express singular and plural; we do not have one form that means “imagine once” and another which means “imagine several times.” We have just a form *imagines* occurring after subjects like *he*, *Sam*, *the man* and a form *imagine* occurring after *I*, *you*, *they*, *Sam and Emily*, *the men*.

Phonemically, this form is constructed just like the regular plural of nouns. We add /s/ when the base form ends in /P/, /t/, /f/: stops /staps/,

hates /heɪts/, kicks /kɪks/, laughs /lɑːfs/; we add /ɪz/ after /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/: misses /mɪsɪz/, supposes /səˈpəʊzɪz/,

Apart from the verb *be*, which is altogether special, there are only three verbs which make this form irregularly. These are *has-have* /hæz-hæv/, *do-does* /duː-dəz/, and *say-says* /sei-seɪz/. If these were regular, they would be /hævz/, /duwz/, and /seɪz/.

### The Past Tense Past Participle

A third feature is the past tense. As with plural of nouns, we have one large regular formation and a number of small irregular ones. Regular verbs form the past tense by adding /t/, /d/, or /ɪd/, according to the final sound of the simple verb. If the simple form ends in /p/, /k/, /f/, /s/, /S/, or /ts/ we add /t/: *stopped* /st'ɒpt/, *talked* /t'ɔːkt/, *laughed* /lɑːft/, *missed* /mɪst/, *smashed* /smaest/, *hatched* /haetst/. If the single ones end in /t/ or /d/, we add /ɪd/: *hated* /heitɪd/, *ended* /endɪd/, *emancipated* /əmaensəpeɪtɪd/. If it ends in anything else, we add /d/: *cleaned* /kliːnd/, *watered* /wətəd/, *bagged* /bægd/, *snubbed* /snʌbd/, *snowed* /snowd/, *dried* /draɪd/.

### Agreement between Subject and Verb

The phenomenon of agreement in English grammar presents serious difficulties to learners. The term agreement is used to refer to the relationship between the inflectional forms of different elements within a sentence. For instance, verbs agree with their subjects in number and person by means of the inflectional suffix '-s'. A singular subject requires a singular form of the verb: (e.g. He goes) and a plural subject requires a plural form of the verb (They go). Errors of agreement are not only found among primary school leavers; even advanced learners in tertiary institutions are not free from such errors. Errors in agreement occur when the relationship between subject and verb or a pronoun and its antecedent, is violated. Learners encounter difficulties in the following cases:

- a. Singular subject followed by a plural modifier takes a singular verb, e.g.. The cause of the riots is yet to be known.
- b. Compound subjects take plural verbs without regard to the number of their individual members, e.g.
  - i. The woman and her child are waiting,

- ii. The woman and her children are waiting.
- c. When one subject is singular and the other is plural, the simplest solution is to let the verb agree with the one closer to it, e.g.
  - i. Neither the leaders nor the opportunity was available,
  - ii. Neither the opportunity nor the leaders were available.

**Collective nouns:** collective nouns designate a group of entities or people, e.g. team, crowd. In their singular forms they usually take singular verbs and are referred to by singular pronouns, provided the group is considered as a unit. But if the group is regarded as a number of individuals then the verb and the pronoun should be plural.

- i. The team is leaving tomorrow.
- ii. The team are dressing for the game.
- iii. The team is leaving tomorrow. It will arrive at 8 p.m.
- iv. The team are dressing for the game. They will be on the field by 9 p.m.

#### **Summary**

In the lecture you have seen the role of inflection in the way English verbs relate to the grammatical function of tense, time and aspect. The range of inflections permissible in the morphology of specific verbs categories in English is identified. Clearly, it is shown that inflections perform important grammatical functions in the use of verbs in English (e.g. agreement or concord, tense and aspect )

#### **Post-Test**

- i. How will you distinguish between regular and irregular verbs
- ii. What is tense?
- iii. What is aspect?

#### **References**

- Tomori, S. H. (1977). *The Morphology and Syntax of Present day English: An Introduction*. London: Heinemann.
- Yule, G. (1985). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## LECTURE SEVEN

# Derivational Morphology

### Introduction

In the last lecture, we considered inflectional morphology with particular reference to the English verb. In this lecture, you will learn more about word structure, in particular, how new words are derived from existing ones by means of DERIVATIONAL MORPHEMES.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify different types of derivational morphemes and their meanings;
2. analyse the structure of derived words like nouns, verbs, adjectives etc; and
3. form new words from existing words in English.

### Pre-Test

How many morphemes can you identify in each of the following:

*remember, comprehensibility, encouragement, deforestation, Post-structuralism, de-colonization, and irredentism.*

## CONTENT

### What is Derivation?

In examining the structure of lexical words in English, we use the term derivation. Derivation is concerned with the process by which new words are formed from other words. The process involves the attachment of a

derivational affix (prefix and suffix) to a free morpheme. There are two main classes of derivation: (a) a class-changing derivation and (b) a class-maintaining derivation. A class-changing derivation is the one in which the word class for the resultant or derived word has changed. Nouns may be derived from verbs by the addition of a derivational suffix, e.g. '-age' or '-ance' as in breakage (noun) and conveyance (noun). Nouns may also be derived from other nouns.

*nation (concrete noun) - nationhood (abstract noun)*  
*mother (concrete noun) - motherhood (abstract noun)*  
*man (concrete noun) - manhood (abstract noun)*

Adjectives may be derived from nouns by adding derivational suffixes like -ful, -less, -y, -like, -ish, -ly, -able and so on as in these examples: hopeful, childless, boldly, childlike, hairy, foolish, tolerable, friendly and so on. A derived word may become the base of another derivation: friend (noun) - friendly (adjective) - friendliness (noun), god (noun) - godly (adjective) - godliness (noun).

In examining the structure of lexical words in English, we use the term derivation. Derivation is concerned with the process by which new words are formed from other words. The process involves the attachment of a derivational affix (prefix and suffix) to a free morpheme.

**A derivational suffix** is a morpheme that usually changes the word class of the word to which it is added. In other words, the addition of a derivational morpheme to a word results in a derived word, which usually belongs to another word class.

Other examples are

- a. -ly added to quick becomes quickly  
Word class adjective becomes adverb
- b. -ion added to educate becomes education  
Word class verb becomes noun
- c. -ative added to inform becomes informative  
Word class verb to adjective.

It is possible to have more than one derivational suffix in a word.  
Example:

nature -al -ize -ation. (root + three der. Morphemes)

private -ize -ation (root + two der. Morphemes)

educate -ion -ial -ist (root + three der. Morphemes)

respect -abl -ity (root + two der. Morphemes)

There is also a class-maintaining derivation. In this case the class of a word does not change after derivation. Examples are, “mother” (concrete noun) becomes “motherhood” (abstract noun) with the addition of the derivational suffix “hood”.

### Types of derivational morphemes

English words can be classified into two morphological types:

1. Base words: for example, *nature, private, educate*
2. Derived words: (a) one root + bound morpheme(s)

A base word is one that has only one root and no additional free or bound morpheme; a derived word is one that consists of at least one root and a number of bound or free morphemes.

### Derived verbs

The following are the main morphological markers of derived verbs:

1. *-ate*: this suffix is used to form derived verbs from a certain number of nouns – for example, *salivate* from *saliva*.
2. *ise* / *-ize*: suffix used to derive verbs from certain nouns and adjectives – for example, *nationalize, mobilize*, from *national* and *mobile*.
3. *-fy*: suffix used to form verbs from certain nouns and adjectives – for example, *beautify* from *beauty*, and *falsify* from *false*.
4. *-en*: used to form derived verbs from adjectives – for example, *brighten* from *bright*.
5. *en, em*: used to form verbs from certain nouns, verbs and adjectives – for example, *enslave, enclose, embitter*.

## Derived nouns

### 1. Nouns formed from verbs:

- age, as in *storage*
- ance, as in *disturbance*
- er/ -or/ -ar, as in *teacher, sailor, liar*
- ment, as in *commandment*
- ster, as in *trickster*
- tion, as in *consumption, construction*
- ing, as in *dancing* (is easy).

### 2. Nouns derived from adjectives:

- ce, as in *abundance, innocence*
- cy, as in *consistency*
- ity, as in *feasibility, depravity*
- ness, as in *happiness*
- ster, as in *youngster*
- hood, as in *falsehood, manhood*

### 3. Nouns derived from other nouns

- cy, as in *advocacy*
- dom, as in *kingdom*
- er, as in *liner*
- ess, as in *hostess*
- hood, as in *fatherhood*
- ian, as in *librarian, technician*
- ism, as in *gangsterism*
- ist, as in *chemist*
- ship, as in *leadership*
- ster, as in *ganster*

### 4. Diminutives - a number of bound morphemes are used to show diminutive forms in English. Some of them are:

- let, as in *booklet*
- ock, as in *hillock*
- ling as in *duckling*
- ette, as in *cigarette* (= a small cigar)

## Derived adjectives

### 1. Adjectives formed from nouns:

- y, as in *frosty, healthy*
- al, as in *intentional*
- ful, as in *hopeful*
- less, as in *senseless*
- ary, as in *legendary*
- ic, as in *democratic*
- ish, as in *childish*
- en, as in *wollen*
- ed, as in *ragged*
- ly, as in *friendly, brotherly, orderly* – which are adjectives and not adverbs, in spite of the -ly termination.

## Derived adverbs

1. Adverbs derived from adjectives:
  - ly as in *quickly, beautifully*; this suffix forms the largest number of adverbs in the English language.
2. Adverbs formed from certain nouns, verbs and adjectives with the prefix *a-*, as in *ahead, adrift, aloud*.
3. Adverbs from certain nouns:
  - with-wise, as in *lengthwise*
  - with-ward as in *backwards*.
4. Adverbs formed from certain determiners, as in *everywhere, anywhere, etc.* (that is determiner + *-where* – for example, *some* + *where*).

### **Summary**

The lecture deals with the use of derivational morphemes in the formation of words in English. Derivational affixes (suffix and prefix) are used in the process. Derivational process can be a class-changing or class-maintaining one. When the addition of an affix to the root word changes the word class of a word, it is called a derivational morpheme. Four main morphological possibilities are discussed. These are derived verbs, derived nouns, derived adjectives and derived adverbs. The derivational affixes are attached to free morphemes for new words to be derived.

### **Post-Test**

1. Distinguish between inflection and derivation?
2. List four derivational suffixes which form nouns from adjectives
3. List four derivational suffixes which form adjectives from nouns.
4. Analyse the following words into their constituent morphemes and classify each morpheme as: base, prefix, or suffix: Unfriendly, hopelessly, unimaginativeness, immovable, reclassify, notification.
5. Break each of the following words into their component morphemes and explain how they are derived: *uselessness, accomplishment, masterminds, rootlessness, universalism, antidemocratic, disenchantment and multifariousness.*

### **Reference**

Tomori, S.H.O. (1977). *The Morphology and Syntax of Present-day English: An Introduction*. London: Heinemann.

## LECTURE EIGHT

# Vocabulary and Word Formation Processes (1)

### Introduction

In the last lecture, you learned how words may be derived from existing words in a language. You will now learn some other kinds of word formation processes in this lecture and the next one. You will learn some regular word formation processes and the technical terms used to describe those processes.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify word formation processes currently in use in English;
2. explain the various processes through which new words come into existence in a language; and
3. analyse the structure of new coinages in English.

### Pre-Test

1. Define the term “derivation”.
2. Why do you think new words are needed in a language?

### CONTENT

In view of the constant evolution of new terms for new experiences and new uses of old words, a language is shaped by the needs of its users. Let us consider the ways in which new words come into existence in a language.

## **Borrowing**

One of the most common sources of new words in English is the process simply labelled **borrowing**, that is, the taking over of words from other languages. Throughout its history, the English language has adopted a vast number of loan-words from other languages. The English vocabulary contains a high percentage of borrowed words from French, Latin, Greek and other languages.

Examples of words that came into English from **Latin roots** are:

*Actus* (do, drive): act, agent, agile, transact

*Audire, auditus* (hear): audible, audience, auditory, audit, auditorium;

*Omitscribere Scriptus* (write): transcribe, inscribe, subscription, scribble;

*Scibevocare Vocatus* (call): vocal, convocation, revoke, provoke, vocation;

*Logui Locutus* (speak): *soliloquy, loquacious, elocution, colloquy, eloquent*;

Examples from **Greek roots** are:

*Auto* (self): autobiography, autointoxication, autohypnosis;

*Bio* (life): biology, biogenesis, biolysis;

*Hyper* (over, too much): hypersensitive, hyperacidity, hyperemia;

*Micro* (small): microbiology, microcosm, microphone;

*Tetra* (four): tetragram, tetrameter, tetratomic;

Examples from other languages including alcohol (Arabic); boss (Dutch); croissant, restaurant, chagrin and bonhomie (French), lilac (Persian), Piano (Italian), Pretzel (German), robot (Czech). Tycoon (Japanese), yogurt (Turkish) and zebra (Bantu).

Other languages, of course, borrow terms from English. The following examples have been identified in English words that have come into Yoruba.

Bóksà, kón dóktò, rìpíàrà, lébìrà (boxer, conductor, repairer, labourer) Yoruba versions of the following are also derived; washerman, plumber, lawyer, learner, vulcanizer, rewirer, magician, photographer, driver, carpenter, mistress, teacher, bricklayer, mason, tutor, surveyor, signaller, cashier, barber, panel-beater, governor, painter.

## Coinage

One of the least common processes of word-formation in English is **coinage**, that is, the invention of totally new terms. Our fanciful creation of some would be one example. Words like aspirin and nylon, originally invented trade names, are others. Familiar recent examples are kleenex and xerox, which also began as invented trade names, and which have quickly become everyday words in the language.

## Loan Translation (Calque)

A special type of borrowing is described as **loan translation**, or **calque**. Calque is a type of word formation whereby the morphemic constituents of the borrowed words or phrases are translated ITEM by item into equivalent morphemes in the new language. In this process, there is a direct translation of the elements of a word into the borrowing language. An interesting example is the French term un gratte-ciel, which literally translates as a 'scrape-sky', and is used for what, in English, is normally referred to as a skyscraper. Other examples are *power politics* from German *Machtpolitik* and *superman* from *übermensch*. Nowadays, some Spanish speakers eat perror calientes (literally 'dogs hot'), or hot dogs.

### Summary

In this lecture, a recap of the previous lecture on word formation processes is first given. It then looks at other word formation processes such as coinage and borrowing with illustrative examples. You are made to know the different coinages and their processes. Based on that, you should be able to analyse the structures of new coinages in English.

## Post-Test

1. In your own words give a clear definition of the following: Borrowing, blend, clipping and compounding.
2. Give two instances of the following in English: compounding, blends, and borrowing.
3. Can you find out, by consulting a dictionary, which of the following words are borrowed and from the languages they came?

4. *assassin, cobalt, zero, scatter, cockroach, laundry, physics, advantage, ranch, violent, wagon, crime, pony, caravan, cash and measles.*

### **References**

Yule, G. (1985). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adams, V. (1971). *An Introduction to Modern English Word Formation*. London: Longman.

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

## LECTURE NINE

# Vocabulary and Word Formation Processes (2)

### Introduction

This is a continuation of the last lecture on word formation processes. As in the last lecture, you will be guided to recognize the structure of new words. You will also learn how new words are formed through such processes as compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion and acronym.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. analyse the structure of new coinages in English; and
2. explain the various processes through which new words come into existence in a language.

### Pre-Test

1. Explain the term “borrowing”.
2. Why do you think new words are needed in a language?
3. Distinguish between ‘loan translation’ and ‘borrowing’?

## CONTENT

### *Other Word Formation Processes*

#### **a. Compounding**

Compounding refers to the combination or joining of two or more free forms, or words that have independent existence into a single morphological unit or form. For example, *Lehn* and *Wort* are combined to produce *Lehnwort* in German. This combining process, technically known as **compounding**, is very common in languages like German and English, but much less common in languages like French and Spanish. Obvious English examples would be *bookcase*, *fingerprint*, *sunburn*, *wallpaper*, *doorknob*, *textbook*, *wastebasket*, *waterbed*, *bathroom*, *skyscraper*, *blackmail*, *wristwatch*, *scapegoat*, *man-made*, *waterproof*, *brainwash* and *gearbox*.

This very productive source of new terms has been well- documented in English and German, but can also be found in totally unrelated languages, such as Hmong, in south East Asia, which combines *hwj* ('pot' + *kais* ('spout') to produce *hwjkais* ('kettle'). The forms *pajkws* (flower' + 'corn' = 'popcorn') and *hnab looj tes* ('bag' + 'cover' + 'hand' + 'glove') are recent creations.

Compounding can be joining two nouns together, a verb and a noun, a noun and a verb, an adjective and a noun and so on. Examples are:

Noun + noun	book + shelf (bookshelf)	foot + ball (football)
Verb + noun	pick + pocket (pickpocket)	kill + joy (killjoy)
Noun + verb	nose + bleed (nosebleed)	moon + shine (moonshine)
Adjective + noun	soft + ware (software)	slow + coach (slowcoach)
Particle + noun	in + crowd (in-crowd)	after + taste (aftertaste)
Verb + particle	claw + back (clawback)	drop + out (dropout)
Phrase compounds	gin-and-tonic	forget-me-not.

#### **b. Blending**

The combination of two separate forms to produce a single new term is also present in the process called **blending**. However, blending is typically accomplished by taking only the beginning of one word and joining it to the end of the other word to form a single linguistic unit (blend). In some

parts of the United States, there's a product which is used like gasoline, but is made from alcohol, so the 'blended' term for referring to this product is *gasohol*. If you wish to refer to the combined effects of smoke and fog, then, there is the term *smog*. Some other commonly used examples of blending are *brunch* (breakfast/lunch), *motel* (motor/hotel) and *telecast* (television/broadcast). The British have, for a number of years, considered the feasibility of constructing a tunnel under the English Channel to France, and newspaper inevitably refer to this project by using the blended expression Chunnel. A fairly recent invention, based on the blending process, was President Regan's version of economic policy, which is Reaganomics.

*Other commonly used examples of blending are:*

Transfer + resistor	—————→	Transistor
Foreign + exchange	—————→	Forex
Fantastic + fabulous	—————→	Fantabulous
Channel + tunnel	—————→	Chunnel
Selectors + electorate	—————→	Selectorate
Swear + curse	—————→	Swurse

Here, the initial and terminal segments of two words are joined to create a new word.

Some Nigeria blends are

Mobile + Police	—————→	Mopol
Buka + Cafeteria	—————→	Bukateria

### c. Clipping

The element of reduction which is noticeable in blending is even more apparent in the process described as **clipping**. This occurs when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form, often in casual speech. Clipping involves the deletion of initial morphemes or final words-segments. The term *gasoline* is still in use, but occurs much less frequently than *gas*, the clipped form. Common examples of clipped words are 'ad' (advertisement), 'fan' (fanatic), 'bus' (omnibus), 'plane' (aeroplane), 'prof' (professor), 'lab' (laboratory), 'flu' (influenza), 'phone' (telephone),

'photo' (photograph), 'van' (caravan), 'piano' (pianoforte), 'fridge' (refrigerator), 'taxi' or 'cab' (taxicab).

#### d. Back-Formation

A very specialized type of reduction process is known as **back-formation**. It is a process of word formation where a shorter word is derived by deleting an imagined affix from a longer form present in a language. Typically, a word of one type (usually a noun) is reduced to form another word of a different type (usually a verb). A good example of back-formation is the process whereby the noun "television" first came into use and then the verb "televise" was created from it. Other examples of words created by this process are: *edit* (from 'editor'), *donate* (from 'donation'), *opt* (from 'option'), *emote* (from 'emotion'), *enthuse* (from 'enthusiasm'), *opine* (from 'opinion'), *posit* (from 'position'), *typewrite* (from 'typewriter'), *liaise* (from 'liaison'), *housekeep* (from 'housekeeper'), *prof* (from 'professor') and *doc* (from 'doctor').

#### e. Conversion

A change in the function of a word, as for example, when a noun comes to be used, as a verb (without any reduction) is generally known as **conversion**. According to Leech (1981), conversion is a change in the syntactic function (and usually the meaning) of an item without a corresponding change in the morphological form. Other labels for this very common process are 'category change' and 'functional shift'. A number of nouns, such as pocket, net, paper, butter, bottle, vacation, can via the process of conversion, come to be used as verbs, as in the following sentences:

- i. He *pocketed* the change. (He put the change into his pocket)
- ii. He *netted* the ball. (He put the ball into the net)

*Other examples are*

He's *papering* the bedroom walls.

Have you *buttered* the toast?

We *bottled* the home-brew last night.

This process is particularly productive in Modern English, with new uses occurring frequently. The conversion can involve verbs becoming nouns, with guess, must and spy as the sources of a guess, a must and a spy. Or adjectives, such as dirty, empty, total, crazy and nasty, can become the verbs to dirty, to empty, to total, or the noun a crazy and a nasty.

We should note that these items have come to belong to a new word-class without a change in their forms.

#### **f. Acronyms**

Some new words are formed from the initial letters of a set of other words. These acronyms often consist of capital letters, as in NATO, NASA or UNESCO, but can lose their capitals to become everyday terms such as laser ('light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation), radar ('radio detecting and ranging') and scuba ('self contained underwater breathing apparatus'). You might even hear a 'SNAFU' which is reputed to have its origins in 'situation normal, all fouled up'.

*Examples of acronyms are:*

- WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants)
- BASIC (Beginners All-Purpose Symbolic Instruction Code)
- LASER (Light Amplification by Stimulate Emission of Radiation)
- AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)
- GSM (Global System of Mobile Communication)
- EEC (European Economic Community)
- MIT (Massachussetts Institute of Technology)

We should note that the last three types of acronyms above (GSM, MIT, EEC) are examples of alphabetism. Alphabetism is a type of acronym pronounced as a series of letters of the alphabets.

Examples of some acronyms peculiar to the Nigerian environment are

INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission)

NEPA (National Electric Power Authority)

JAMB (Joint Admission and Matriculation Board)

NOUN (National Open University of Nigeria)

EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission)

### **Summary**

This lecture takes you to the more complex processes of word formation, which involve combining words, reducing words and changing the class and function of words. Some of these processes are: compounding, which entails joining two independent words to form one. Blending combines the beginning and the ending of two words to make one; clipping involves reducing a multisyllabic word to the shortest pronounceable syllable; backformation is a reduction that changes one class into another. Conversion is another change in the class and function of words, but has no reduction effect. Acronyms produce words out of the first letters of a group of other words.

### **Post-Test**

1. What kind of word formation processes can you identify in the following?  
Brunch, Cablegram, Dictaphone, broomstick, horse-tail, bus conductor, cease fire, car park, horse-shoe, dinner jacket, umbrella tree, sponge cake, and
2. Analyse the components of these words.

### **Reference**

Yule, G. (1985). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## LECTURE TEN

# Syntax: Methods of Syntactic Analysis

### Introduction

In this and subsequent lectures, you move from morphology to syntax (analysis of sentence structure). First, you are introduced to methods of doing syntactic analysis. In other words, you will learn the techniques of representing elements of sentence structure, using a set of symbols and diagrams. The study of syntax proceeds from what is regarded as the largest unit of syntactic description (that is, the sentence) and ends at the smallest meaningful unit (that is, the morpheme). This is called a top to bottom analysis. The units smaller than the sentence are referred to as clauses, phrases, words and morphemes.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. represent constituents of a sentence using techniques such as bracketing, labelled bracketing and tree diagrams; and
2. analyse the constituents of the sentence .

### Pre-Test

1. What is a sentence?
2. How does one recognize a sentence?
3. How many types of sentences can you recognize? Give one example of each sentence type.

## **CONTENT**

### **What is Syntax or Syntactic Analysis?**

Syntax or syntactic analysis seeks to:

- a. determine the relevant components of a sentence; and
- b. describe these parts grammatically.

The component parts of a sentence are called constituents. In other words, syntax involves the two closely related tasks of:

- a. breaking down the sentences into constituents; and
- b. assigning some grammatical labels to each constituent, stating what type of constituent (or grammatical category) it is, and what grammatical function it has.

Constituents are like building blocks which pattern in certain ways to form larger units, the largest unit being the sentence. Each constituent (except the smallest) can be broken down into its component parts. The purpose of doing syntax is to discover the ways in which constituents combine to form the structure of sentences.

### **Representing Constituent Structure**

We have already introduced some grammatical units and systems (see chapter nine). There are abbreviations and symbols for syntactic analysis. Examples are 'S' (= sentence), "N" (= noun), 'Art' (= article) and so on. We need to introduce three more symbols, which are commonly used. The first of these is in the form of an arrow  $\rightarrow$ , and it can be interpreted as 'consists of'. It will typically occur in the following format: NP  $\rightarrow$  Art + N.

This is simply a shorthand way of saying that a noun phrase (e.g. the book) consists of an article, 'the' and a noun 'book'.

The second symbol used is in the form of parentheses, or round brackets- ( ). Whatever occurs inside these brackets will be treated as an optional constituent. Perhaps an example will make this clear. You can describe an object as the book, or as the green book. We can say that both 'the book' and 'the green book' are examples of the category, noun phrase. In order for a noun phrase to occur in English, you may require an article (the) and a noun (book), but the inclusion of an adjective (green) is optional. You can include an adjective, but it is not obligatory. We can capture this aspect of English syntax in the following way:

NP  $\rightarrow$  Art (Adj) N

This shorthand notation expresses the idea that a noun phrase consists of an obligatory article and an obligatory noun, but may also include an adjective in a specific position. The adjective is optional.

The third symbol used is in the form of braces, or curly brackets – { }. These indicate that only one of the elements enclosed within the brackets must be selected. They are used when there is a choice from two or more constituents. For example, we have already noted, in lecture 9, that a noun phrase can consist of an expression like the woman (Art N), or she (pronoun). Or Kathy (proper noun). We can, of course, write three single rules, as shown on the left below, but it is more succinct to write one rule, as shown on the right below, which incorporates exactly the same information:

NP $\rightarrow$ Art N	
Art N	
NP $\rightarrow$ pronoun $\rightarrow$	}
NP $\rightarrow$ proper noun	
	NP    pronoun proper noun

It is important to remember that, although there are three constituents in these curly brackets, only one of them can be selected on any occasion. We can present a list of symbols and abbreviations commonly found in syntactic descriptions:

S	sentence	N	noun	Pro	pronoun
PN	proper noun	V	verb	Adj	adjective
Art	article	Adv	adverb	Prep	Preposition
NP	noun phrase	VP	verb phrase		preposition phrase

- = 'ungrammatical sequence'
- $\rightarrow$  = 'Consists of'
- ( ) = 'Optional constituent'
- { } = 'one and only one of these constituents must be selected'

There are two common ways of representing information about constituent structure, namely:

- a. by labelling and bracketing
- b. by Tree diagram

### Labelling and Bracketing

#### **Bracketing**

The syntactic structure of a sentence may be represented by marking off each constituent from sentence level to word level by square brackets [ ]:

[[[[The] [policemen] [[arrested] [[the] [suspects]]]] [and] [[[interrogated] [them]]]]].

#### **Labelled Bracketing**

The system of bracketing above can be made clearer by means of labelling or adding an appropriate grammatical label to each pair of square bracket:

[S<sub>1</sub> [S<sub>2</sub> [NP [Det The ] [N policemen ] ] [ VP [ v arrested ]

[NP [Det the] [ N[suspects] ] ] ] ,  
[conj and]

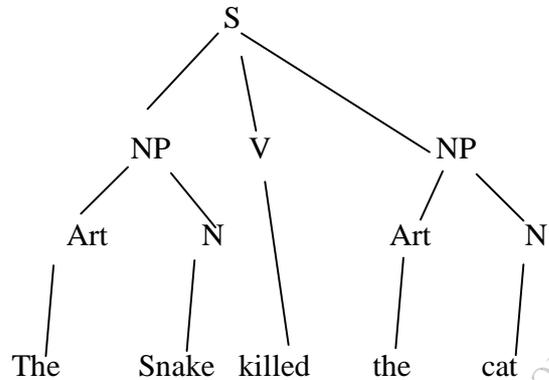
[S<sub>3</sub>[NP [them]]]

[VP[v interrogated] [NP[them] ] ] ] ].

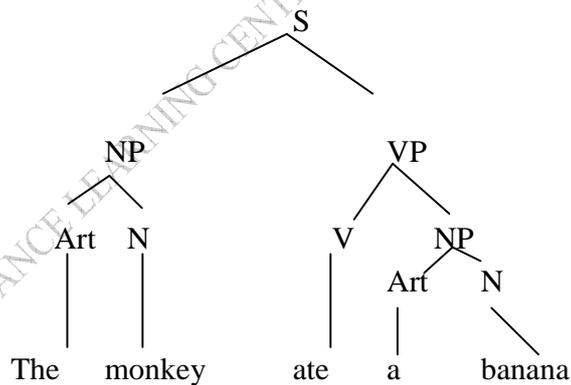
#### b.\_ Tree Diagram

#### **The Concept of Family Tree**

Family tree terminology is often used to describe the relationships between items. Thus, the tripartite representation of the structural description of the sentence *The snake killed the cat*, as NP V NP, can be represented in a tree diagram below



This type of tree diagram representation contains not only the grammatical information but also shows more explicitly the fact that there are different levels in the analysis. That is, there is a level of analysis at which a constituent such as NP is represented and a different, lower level at which a constituent such as N is represented. Here's how a whole sentence would look like in a tree diagram:



If you start at the top of this tree diagram, you are starting with a sentence (S) and then dividing the sentence into two constituents (NP and VP). In turn, the NP constituent is divided into two constituents (Art and N).

Finally, one word is selected which fits the label Art (the), and another which fits N (monkey).

Although the diagram (a) above reflects the tripartite division, it does not show the actual relationship between the NPs and the verbs, but it is used to describe family tree relationships. Thus, NP, V, and NP are

daughters of S, the leftmost NP being the left daughter and the rightmost NP the right daughter. Analogously, the leftmost NP is the left sister of V (both being daughters of the same mother) and the rightmost NP is the right sister of V, for the same reason.

A tree diagram is also called a *phrase marker*. The whole process of drawing tree diagrams is a Derivation.

### **Advantages of Tree Diagram Method**

The crucial factor of the tree diagram method is its hierarchical structure. The sentence is analysed into immediate constituents. The hierarchical nature of the analysis illustrates or adequately reflects what appears to be a universal principle of the organization of human languages, the fact that they have hierarchical syntactic structures.

Secondly, a hierarchical analysis shows that the relationship between any pair of constituents must be considered in terms of relationships established within the tree as a whole; mere contiguity is not necessarily a particularly interesting relationship. Thus, in the above diagram, there is a close relationship between the contiguous items the and monkey, they are constituents of NP but there is no immediate relationship between monkey and ate even though they are contiguous. Rather, the verb ate has a relationship with NP a banana, since both are constituents of the VP.

Finally, adopting a hierarchical analysis makes it easy to identify the occurrence of the 'same' constituents at different structural positions within constituent structures.

### **Summary**

Syntax identifies and describes the relevant parts or components that make up a sentence. Component parts are called constituents. The sentence is made up of smaller units: clauses, phrases, words and morphemes. These units, except the smallest – morpheme – can be broken down into its component parts. You are introduced to the methods of syntactic analysis. Symbols such as ‘S’, ‘N’, ‘Art’, are used as abbreviations for the grammatical analysis. Other symbols used in syntactic analysis are: S – Sentence, N – Noun, Pronoun, PN – Proper Noun, V – Verb, and Adj - Adjective, Art – Article, Adv – Adverb and Prep – Preposition. Bracketing is a way of analyzing the structure of a sentence. Another explicit way of looking at the structure of a sentence is labelled bracketing. Tree diagram is useful for hierarchical analysis of sentence structures. It is also useful in identifying the occurrence of the ‘same’ constituents at different structural positions.

### **Post-Test**

1. What are constituents?
2. What is the goal of syntactic analysis?
3. Distinguish between bracketing and labelled bracketing using illustrative examples from English.
4. What is a tree diagram?
5. What is the role of tree diagram in syntactic analysis?
6. Draw a tree diagram to illustrate the sentence below.

*The cat ate the rat.*

### **References**

Herman Wekker and Liliane Haegeman (1985). *A Modern Course in English Syntax*. London: Croom Helm.

Aitchison, Jean. (1992). *Linguistics*. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group

## LECTURE ELEVEN

# Syntax: Immediate Constituent Analysis

### Introduction

This lecture introduces you to the constituent analysis approach to syntax and the kind of arguments that are used to support analysis of this kind.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. break down a sentence into its constituents; and
2. describe the parts of the sentence grammatically.

### Pre-Test

1. Divide each of the following into two immediate parts and identify the construction type to which it belongs:  
rainy weather, flat tyres, my friend, old car,
2. Divide each of the following into two immediate parts and give each part a name:  
the cloud sky, my new shirt, all the brothers, her blue dress,
3. Divide each of the following into two parts and give each part a grammatical name:
  - a. A man bought a new car
  - b. Swimming is a good exercise.
  - c. Seeing is believing.
  - d. People in trouble need help.

## CONTENT

### The Notion of Constituent

The term 'constituent' is basic in syntactic analysis. It refers to a linguistic unit which is a component of a larger construction. Hence, a constituent is seen as a subpart of a sentence. Consequently, a constituent structure analysis of language tells how to break sentences down into their constituent parts, that is, their **immediate constituents**. This involves deciding which strings of words are, and which ones are not considered to be constituents. This constituent analysis process is continued until no further sub-divisions are possible. Put differently, the analysis tells you how the smallest constituents can combine to form other larger constituents, until we have constructed a sentence. The major divisions that can be made within a construction at any level are called **immediate constituents** (ICs) of that construction. The elements that cannot be further reduced, resulting from this ICs analysis are called the **ultimate constituents** of the construction.

From this, we expect that there are different types of constituents and we need to know the degree of similarities and differences between the different types. We also need to recognise which constituents can combine with other constituents to make sentences, the order in which constituents can, or must occur, etc. This process involves the naming of different types of constituents for purposes of easy identification.

Consider the following construction:



grammatical tie

Sentences are made up of smaller units linked by a grammatical connection. The units so connected are called **constituents**. Sentences are a construction type whose constituents are subject and predicate e.g. “The dog barked” and “I entered the room.”

### Immediate Constituent Analysis

Well's formulation of the theory of IC analysis is a well-known approach in this area. Its main practice is the analysis of linguistic texts into two immediate parts, named 'constituents'. There may also be analysis into three, or four, parts. A constituent is part of a constituent. A constituent at one stage of analysis may be a constituent of a larger constituent.

*The main principles of the analysis are as follows:*

1. There is a basic dichotomy in actor – action parts of a full sentence type in English; these two parts can be exemplified by the sentence *John worked*. This is referred to as a fundamental sentence type.
2. Sentences that are longer than *John worked* for example become 'expansions' of the fundamental sentence type, *subject* and *predicate*. For instance, the sentence *The students have finished their term papers* is taken to be an expansion of the shorter sentence, because *The students* can take the place of *John* grammatically, and *have finished their term papers* can take the place of *worked* as predicate.
3. Thus, the analysis into ICs is guided by three conditions. It must preserve the same grammatical meaning, fit in the greatest number of environments (subject and predicate), and belong to a form-class with the greatest possible variety of content.

### Identifying constituents

As we have seen, every sentence can be broken down into successive layers of constituents. However, not all sentences can be analysed with as little trouble as *The duck bit the burglar*. Consider the sentence:

*The mouse ran up the clock.*

How should this be analysed? Should we bracket [*ran up*] together, on the assumption that these words could be replaced by a word such as *climbed*? Or should we bracket [*up the clock*] together, noting that the phrase could be replaced by a single word such as *upwards*? Problems of this type are solved by seeing whether the groups of words in question belong together as a constituent elsewhere, since words that are grouped together in one sentence are likely to recur as a single constituent in other sentences. One way of checking this is to construct sentences in which the original words occur in a different order.

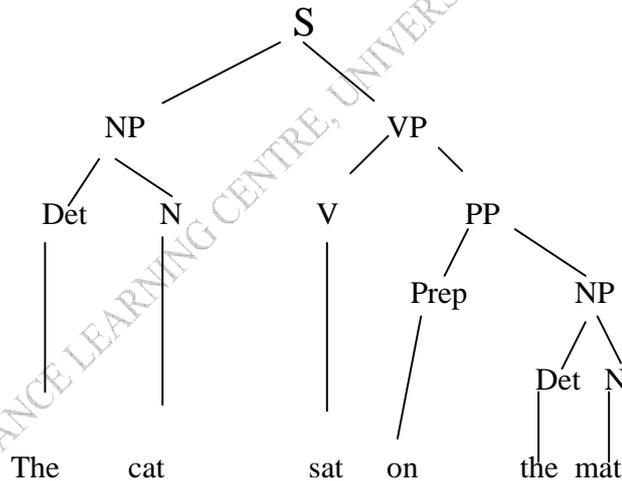
*Up the clock ran the mouse.*  
 \**The mouse ran the clock up.*

These sentences suggest that words *up the clock* should be bracketed together, since they can be moved as a chunk to the front of the sentence. We may therefore analyse the sentence as

[*The mouse*] [*ran*] [*up the clock.*]

and draw the tree diagram.

Immediate constituent analyses can be illustrated in the tree diagram below.



This analysis divides the sentence into a number of chunks, each of which is then subdivided until we reach the smallest constituents with which the analysis is concerned. Each chunk, or subdivision within a chunk, is a constituent. The analysis explicitly sets out what can be considered as constituents.

### **Labelled Bracketing**

The process of grouping constituents together is known as 'bracketing'. In addition to bracketing constituents together, each constituent is assigned to a syntactic category- a process known as 'labelling'. Each word is labelled

as a member of a word class: 'cat' and 'mat' are N(ouns), 'on' a Prep(osition), 'sat' a V(erb) and 'the' a Det(eterminer). When words have been brought together into phrases, these too are labelled: N(oun) P(hrase), P(repositional) p(hrases) and V(erb) P(hrase). The structure as a whole is assigned to the category S(entence). See the labelled bracketing below.

$$S \rightarrow [NP[Det^{(the)} N^{(cat)}][VP[V^{(sat)} PP[ Prep^{(on)}][NP[Det^{(the)} N^{(mat)}]]]]$$

We have considered some of the requirements, which would have to be met by a complete syntactic description. However, this area of linguistic analysis has some limitations, for the only relevant issues are syntactic ones. That is, how to describe structures independently of 'meaning' considerations. The concept of word is important in IC analysis, being a vital means for determining word boundaries. Well's IC analysis recognises the need for analysis into multiple constituents. In this, it foreshadows later developments in syntactic analysis, for example, Pike Tagmemics and Chomsky's Transformational Grammar.

Well's and Pike's work have contributed a lot to linguistic studies. Well's formulation of the theory of immediate constituents (IC) analysis was the best known of its kind. IC analysis involves the analysis of linguistic texts into two parts: subject and predicate. All others are expansions of these two. Although IC theory, as a whole, was not a highly formalized theory of grammar, it has contributed to progress in grammatical analysis. A very important contribution made by IC analysis to grammatical analysis is the recognition of the division of grammar into morphology and syntax. The notion of 'constituent' is basic in syntactic analysis

**Summary**

The analysis of sentence structure has been done in different ways. One of the earliest forms of analysis is Immediate Constituent Analysis. This is the procedure which tries to divide the sentence into constituents or components along binary lines. It has made a significant contribution to syntactic analysis even though it has its limitations.

### **Post-Test**

1. What is immediate constituent analysis, and how useful is it to syntactic analysis?
2. What is a tree diagram, and why is it useful?
3. Make a tree diagram and constituent analysis of each of the following:
  - a. A man bought a new car.
  - b. She was singing a song.
  - c. The snake killed the rat.
  - d. The snake swallowed the rat.
  - e. The boy ate the rat.
4. Convert the tree diagrams into labelled bracketing.

### **References**

- Aitchison, J. (1992) *Linguistics*. London: Hodder Headline Plc.
- Tomori, S. H. O. (1977). *The Morphology and Syntax of Present-Day English: An Introduction*. Ibadan: Heinemann.

## LECTURE TWELVE

# Syntax: Phrase Structure Grammar

### Introduction

The last lecture introduced you to one of the earliest approaches to syntactic analysis. This is Immediate constituent analysis. You were also introduced to the process of labelling constituent structures; you will now learn a new approach called **phrase structure grammar**. At the level of Phrase structure, a sentence is represented by a set of strings or sequence of words, not by a single string. Each set has its own system of rules known as phrase structure rules. Phrase structure grammar therefore provides rules for constructing phrase structures like Noun phrase, Verb phrase and Prepositional phrase.

### Objective

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to recognise different phrasal categories in English and analyse their internal structures.

### Pre-Test

1. Can you think of any two-word, three-word, and four-word utterances of English?
2. Can you identify them with their grammatical names?

### CONTENT

#### Phrase and Its Constituents

A phrase is lower than a clause but higher than a word in the grammatical hierarchy. Simply defined, a phrase is a group of words with no subject or

predicate of its own. Different kinds of phrases can be identified: (a) noun phrase (for example, the boys, the two cars; the cleaner in the office), (b) verb phrase (for example, go, can go, must have gone); (c) Prepositional phrase (for example, in the office, behind the bar, on the table), (d) adjective phrase (for example, very happy, too tired) and (e) adverbial phrase (for example, very soon). As we can see, phrasal categories have their internal structure which will normally be defined in terms of lexical or other phrasal categories that go together to form them. Identifying phrasal categories is to a large extent a lexical (word class) and morphological matter.

As you already know, grammar is to provide a systematic account for the distribution of forms into classes. So far, we have found the following constituent structures.

A sentence (S) has as constituent	NP + VP
A verb phrase (VP) has as constituent	V + NP
A verb phrase (VP) has as constituent	V
A noun phrase (NP) has as constituent	DET + N
A noun phrase (NP) has as constituent	N
A noun phrase (NP) has as constituent	PN (Personal noun)
A noun phrase (NP) has as constituent	Pronoun

You will discover that the membership of each class of mutually substitutable paradigms of a word (e.g. N) enter a form class, e.g. (NP)

### Recognising Phrasal Categories

Corresponding to each of the major lexical categories, N(oun), V(erb), P(reposition), is a phrasal category of NP (Noun Phrase), VP (Verb Phrase), PP (Prepositional Phrase) and so on. Every lexical category or word used in an utterance HEADS a phrase. Thus, we have Noun phrase in "tall children" headed by the noun "children" as head word.

The phrasal category of NP contains as a minimum, an N, which may co-occur with other specified lexical or phrasal categories, as in the following:

- NP: N, e.g.: boy, dogs, vermin, people  
 PN (personal noun), e.g.: John, Mary, Harry  
 Det N, e.g.: the-boy, those-dogs

Det Adj N, e.g.: the-big-boy, those-little-girls

Det N PP, e.g.: the – girl – with a big bag, the – cat – with a long tail.

On similar lines, we can establish a category of VP – it will consist minimally of a verb, which may optionally co-occur with other constituents. So, for example, any of the following will co-occur as VPs in English:

VP: V PP, e.g.: sat – on the mat; lay – on the table

V AdjP, e.g.: seemed – clever; was – big; became – fat

V NP NP, e.g.: gave – the boy – a bar of chocolate; sent – his mother – a Christmas present

V. e.g.: died, laughed, smiled

By the same procedure, we can establish the internal structure of other phrasal categories in English. The P(repositional) P(hrase) will have as constituents a Prep(osition), usually followed by an NP.

PP: Prep NP, e.g.: on – the mat; near – the door

Prep, e.g.: down (cf. he – fell down); up (cf. he – came up)

We can also establish an A(djective) P(hrase) which will consist minimally of an Adj(ective) optionally preceded by an Int(ensifier):

AP: Adj, e.g.: big, small, happy, etc.

Int Adj, e.g.: very – happy, extremely – big

### **Tree Diagram and Phrase Structure Rules**

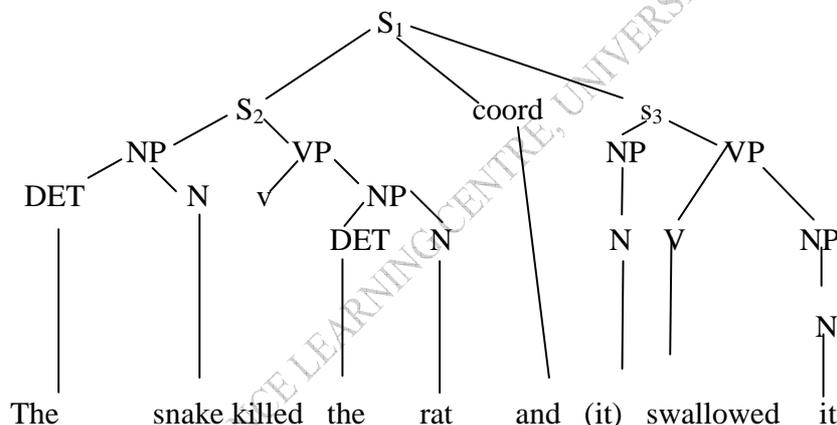
The tree diagram is a notational device which is entirely equivalent to label bracketing: although it looks different, it provides the same sort of information about the syntactic structure of the sentence. While labelled bracketing takes up little space and provides relevant information, tree diagram also provide the same information but shows more clearly the syntactic information.

Each label on the tree, other than the lexical items at the bottom, is called a node. So S<sub>2</sub> is a node; S<sub>3</sub> is another node; NP is a node; VP is a

node. We say that a node dominates all the nodes below it in the tree that are connected to it by downward branches. So, S<sub>2</sub> in this tree dominates every other node in the tree, but NP, for example, dominates only DET and N. DET and N dominate no other node. We say that nodes immediately dominated by another node are DAUGHTERS to that node, and that node is the MOTHER. So NP, for example, is mother to DET and N, who are daughters to NP. We say that daughters of the same node are sisters. We call the lexical items along the bottom of the tree the terminal string. Every node in the tree is also called a **constituent**, so NP is a constituent, as is DET, as is N, and so forth.

The following (simplified) tree diagram illustrates the above

The snake killed the rat and (it) swallowed it;



We can view this tree diagram format in two different ways. In one way, we can simply treat it as a static representation of the structure of the sentence at the bottom of the diagram. We could propose that, for every single sentence in English, a tree diagram of the type could be drawn. The alternative view is to treat the diagram as a ‘dynamic’ format, in the sense that it represents a way of ‘generating’ not only that one sentence, but a very large number of sentences with similar structures.

### Phrase Structure Rules

This alternative approach is very appealing since it enables us to generate a large number of sentences with only a small number of rules. These ‘rules’ are usually called **phrase structure rules**, and they present the

information of the tree diagram in an alternative format.

In phrase structure rules, there must be only a single symbol on the left-hand side of the arrow while the right-hand side may have one or more symbols as in the following:

1.  $S \rightarrow NP + VP$

The rule is then read as-‘a sentence consists of a noun phrase followed by a verb phrase’. In addition to rules of this type which generate structures, we can also have **lexical rules** which indicate the word to be used for constituents such as N. For example:

$N \rightarrow (\text{boy, girl, dog.....})$

This means that N is rewritten as boy, or girl, or dog. We can create a set of extremely simple (and necessarily incomplete) phrase structure rules which can be used to generate a large number of English sentences.

2.  $VP \rightarrow V + NP$

V

3.  $NP \rightarrow DET + N$

PN

Pro

#### Lexical Rules

4.  $Det \rightarrow \{\text{the, ....}\}$

5.  $N \rightarrow \{\text{boy, hunter, elephant ....}\}$

6.  $PN \rightarrow \{\text{John, Uche ....}\}$

7.  $VT \rightarrow \{\text{chase, kill, devour....}\}$

8.  $VI \rightarrow \{\text{sleep, yawn ....}\}$

Rules 1 – 3 are called constituent (phrase) structure rules since they introduce and develop constituent structures. The first symbol S is called the *initial* symbol because it is the one that is expanded first and the derivation of the whole sentence starts with this symbol. The symbols DET, N, PN, VT (transitive), VI (intransitive) are *Terminal* symbol. The constituent structure of these rules cannot develop them further. VP and NP can be further developed by the rules, and they are *non terminal*.

The lexical rules given above enumerate the class membership of each terminal symbol. Alternatively, the lexical rules of the lexicon provide this information. This is a preferred method, so the lexical rules in 4 – 8 can be eliminated. A lexicon is an unordered list of words. A general rule of lexical insertion is used to fill in the terminal node. Lexical insertion rule selects from the lexicon a word that describes the class named by the terminal symbol in question. Note that the lexical insertion rule is, in formal terms, a different rule from the constituent structure rule as it is not a re-write rule, like the PS rules.

### Rule Conflation

This involves the reduction of the number of rules by bringing together similar rules and avoiding unnecessary repetition. For example, instead of stating two rules VP as (a)  $VP \rightarrow V + NP$  and (b)  $VP \rightarrow V$ , we can express the same thing as (c)  $VP \rightarrow V (NP)$ , using the relevant symbols. Consider also the following:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 S \rightarrow NP VP \\
 NP \rightarrow \left( \begin{array}{l} \text{Art (adj) N} \\ \text{PN} \end{array} \right) \\
 VP \rightarrow V NP (PP) (Adv) \\
 PP \rightarrow \text{Prep NP} \\
 N \rightarrow (\text{boy, girl, horse}) \quad V \quad (\text{saw, followed, helped}) \\
 PN \rightarrow (\text{George, Myrna}) \quad \text{Prep} \quad (\text{with, near}) \\
 \text{Art} \rightarrow (\text{a, the}) \quad \text{Adv} \quad (\text{yesterday, recently}) \\
 \text{Adj} \rightarrow (\text{small, crazy})
 \end{array}$$

These rules will generate the grammatical sentences shown below as (1) to (7), but will not yield the ungrammatical sentences shown as (8) to (10).

1. The girl followed the boy.
2. A boy helped the horse.
3. The horse saw a girl
4. Myrna helped George recently.
5. George saw a horse yesterday.

6. A small horse followed Myrna.
7. The small boy saw George with a crazy horse recently.
8. \* Boy the Myrna saw.
9. \* Helped a girl.
10. \* Small horse with girl.

### Summary

Thus far, you have been looking at linguistic units primarily in 'categorical' terms. Categories like nouns or noun phrases can be identified in terms of their internal structure and constituents (see lecture 11). Phrase structure grammar addresses syntax in terms of the distribution of items into categories within structures. There are different phrasal categories. These are: Noun phrase, Verb Phrase, Prepositional Phrase, Adjectival Phrase and Adverbial Phrase. What is important in these groups is that the part of speech mentioned (like noun, verb, adjective, etc.) will be the head of the group.

### Post-Test

Draw at least four different tree diagrams, using the PS rules below:

1. S  $\longrightarrow$  NP – VP
2. VP  $\longrightarrow$  V – ({NP})
3. NP  $\longrightarrow$  Det-N

Insert lexical items at the terminal nodes of the trees. We suggest that you choose from the following:

- a. the, a, this, that for the category Det
  - b. policeman, professor, girl, student for the category N
4. What are rewrite rules?

### References

Dona Jo Napoli (1990). *Linguistics: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Herman Welker and Liliane Haegeman. (1985). *A Modern Course in English Syntax*. London: Croom Helm.

## LECTURE THIRTEEN

# Syntax: Transformations

### Introduction

In this lecture, we approach English syntax from the point of view of basic sentence types. We shall also consider a few variations and combinations of these basic types. Such variations and combinations are arrived at by a process called **transformation**. The analysis will involve the discovery of certain types of basic sentences and the kinds of transformations involved in producing many different kinds of sentences in English. The lecture is based mainly on the works of Noam Chomsky and his followers.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture you should be able to:

1. recognize basic sentence types and structural patterns in English;
2. recognize the relationship between pairs of sentences;
3. transform English sentences into other possible variations and combinations; and
4. explain transformational processes.

### Pre-Test

1. What is a declarative sentence? Give three examples.
2. What is an interrogative sentence? Give three examples.

## **CONTENT**

### **Basic Sentence Types**

According to the transformationalists, all English sentences are derived by various changes and combinations from a few basic sentence types. Basic sentence types are fundamental and provide for many possible sentences.

The basic sentence types are all STATEMENTS, and the fundamental syntactic relationship is that of predication: there must be a SUBJECT and a PREDICATE. In the basic sentence, the subject is ordinarily a noun or pronoun, with or without a determiner, but the predicate may contain any of a variety of patterns:

#### **Pattern one:**

N + V (Birds fly)

D + N + V + ADV (The boys walked slowly)

N + V + ADV (They shouted loudly)

#### **Pattern two**

D + N + V + ADJ (The girl looks sad)

#### **Pattern three**

N + V + N (Cows eat grass)

#### **Pattern four**

D + N + V + D + N (The boy kicked the ball)

#### **Pattern five**

D + N + V + D + N + D + N (The man gave the boy some money)

#### **Pattern six**

N + V + N + D + N (He called him a fool)

**Pattern seven**

N + V +N +N (We appointed John secretary)

**Pattern eight**

N + BE + ADV (He is there)

**Pattern nine**

D + N + BE +ADJ (The policeman is happy)

**The Process of Transformation**

Certain kinds of operations can be performed on the basic sentences to yield new sentence types or to yield phrases and clauses that may be combined with other sentences to form more complicated structures.

Sentences of all languages have both a deep structure, which gives the meaning of the sentence and a surface structure, which gives the form of the sentence as it occurs in an utterance. Thus, deep structure is an abstract phenomenon which one assumes on the basis of the meaning of a sentence and its syntax. A surface structure is closer to physical reality in the sense that it concretely specifies the syntactic structure of an utterance, that is,



Transformations relate deep structures to surface structures. They relate deep structure trees or phrase-markers to surface structure trees or phrase-markers. More specifically, they transform one phrase-marker into another. If more than one transformation is necessary, intermediate structures will be generated by each transformation until the surface structure is formed.

The description of a transformation consists of (a) the structural description (SD) and (b) the structural change (SC). The structural description specifies which trees are to be affected by the rule (the input trees (corresponding to the deep structure)) while the structural change

associates each input tree with an output tree, that is, a tree that has undergone the rule specified.

Human language makes use of three elementary transformational processes viz: adjunction, substitution and deletion.

### Transformational Rules

The transformational part of the grammar operates on the deep, abstract structures as specified by the PSR's of the grammar. Transformational rules operate on bits and pieces of the deep structure: these rules may delete constituents, add constituents, or change constituents around (e.g. the Question Transformation). We will follow as much as possible, the transformational rules as specified in *Aspects of Syntax* by Noam Chomsky.

### Question Transformations

Question Transformation: English has various types of questions. These include:

1. *Yes – No* questions, e.g.: Did you measure the distance?
2. *Wh*-questions e.g.: Why did you measure it?

The following is a more abstract representation of the rule involved in question transformation from a declarative to interrogative sentence.

**Declarative:** [<sub>s</sub> [NP I] [VP [shall] [show my rude drawings]]  
+Present

**Interrogative:**

BASIC SENTENCE		TRANSFORMED SENTENCE
You are busy	→	Are you busy?

In sentences with the verb **be**, you form questions by reversing the positions of subject and verb. Here are some more Question Transformations of this type:

He is at school.      \_\_\_\_\_→      Is he at school?  
 They are ready.      \_\_\_\_\_→      Are they ready?  
 I am right      \_\_\_\_\_→      Am I right?

In the case of all verbs other than **be**, to make the Question Transformation you follow one of two procedures different from the above. One is the procedure when the verb occurs without any helping verb; in this case, you must supply a helping verb- always do (does, did). The transformation consists of starting the question with the do-type helper (inserting it before the subject) and changing the main verb to its simple form.

He reads fast.                      Does he read fast?  
 He heard a noise.                Did he hear a noise?  
 They went home                 Did they go home?

Here is the second procedure for performing Question Transformations with verbs other than **be**: if the verb in the basic is expanded with one helping verb or more, you simply start the question with the first helping verb (place it before the subject) and keep the rest of the sentence in its basic form. Thus

He is going now.                Is he going now?  
 They might have been cold.    Might they have been cold?  
 You have remembered.        Have you remembered?

### **Passive Transformations**

Passive Constructions: Given a structure of the form NP – Auxiliary) – V – NP, move the object NP to the front of the sentence so that it becomes the subject; take the former subject, adjoin *by* to form a PP and move this to the end of the sentence; add the ‘passive auxiliary’, an appropriate form of BE, to the verb group so that it immediately precedes the main verb, which must now itself appear in the ‘passive participle’ form.

E.g. John wrote a letter/ A letter was written by John.

### **John broke the window. The window was broken by John**

The passive transformation can be performed only on basic sentences that contain transitive verbs, here you transfer the object of the verb (complement) to the subject position, supply the proper form of **be** as a helping verb, change the verb to the past participle form, and complete the new sentence by adding the subject (the actor) of the basic sentence preceded by the preposition **by**. These operations produce a sentence in the passive form when performed on a basic sentence with a transitive verb.

### **More examples**

It was the window that John broke.

What John broke was the window.

What John did to the window was to break it.

The window, John broke it.

John broke it, the window.

This is the window John broke

This is the window (which was) broken by John

John's breaking of the window (caused a stir on campus).

The breaking of the window by John (signalled an end to the violence).

For John to break the window (was a mistake).

(It was said) that John broke the window.

Some sentences may appear to have identical structure but when examined more closely they are found to have distinct structures. The two sentences, now classics, that generative grammarians use to illustrate this tendency are the following:

1. John is easy to please.
2. John is eager to please.

### Transformations and Complex sentences

The various elements of complex sentences, such as *Having won every game, Ade was expected to beat every player who challenged him*, can be shown to be derived from the basic sentences thus,

#### BASIC SENTENCES

Ade has won every game

X expected Ade to X

Ade beats every player

Every player challenged him

#### DERIVED SENTENCES

Having won every game

Ade was expected

to beat every player

who challenged him

#### Summary

This lecture introduces you to a modern theory of grammar known as Transformational Generative grammar, propounded by Noam Chomsky. In his original / earliest formulation, Transformational Grammar is a theory of language concerned with the relationship between sentences. Transformational Generative grammar demonstrates the relationship between sentences by employing a set of transformational rules to generate surface structures, (that is, actual sentences produced) from the deep structure. Various transformations are derived from a list of basic sentences in English.

#### Post-Test

1. Convert the following sentences into questions:
  - a. She bought a car.
  - b. She is happy.
2. Convert the following affirmative sentences into negation
  - a. I am ready.
  - b. She bought a car.
  - c. They run quickly.

## **References**

Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic Structures*. Mouton: The Hague.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, MIT Press: Cambridge.

Herman, Wekler and Liliane, Haegeman. (1985). *A Modern Course in English Syntax*. London: Croom Helm.

Huddleston, R. (1976). *An Introduction to English Transformational Syntax*. New York: Longman.

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

## LECTURE FOURTEEN

# Syntax: Functional Analysis

### Introduction

In the remaining two lectures on this course (fourteen and fifteen), you will learn an alternative method of syntactic analysis. You will learn about form-function method of analysis as developed by Michael Halliday and others. This approach will enable you to analyse the form and functions. In this type of syntax, your attention will be focussed on sentence types, clause elements and their functions.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. analyse and describe the elements of clause structure; and
2. Identify and describe grammatical and semantic functions of clauses in English.

### Pre-Test

1. What is the distinction between a phrase and a clause?
2. What is the distinction between a clause and a sentence?

### CONTENT

#### Grammatical Form and Function

During the latter half of the 1960s; M. A. K. Halliday's work became increasingly influenced by ideas of the functional, semantic and contextual nature of language as held, for example, by B. Malinowski. With emphasis on the semantic dimension of language, syntactic analysis no longer held

the same focus of attention as before. Thus, systemic-functional model began to account for the nature of the linguistic system and options available to the language user for carrying out specific communicative functions.

### **The Notion of Function**

Language functions can be considered at two major levels: the macro and the micro. At the macro level, Halliday identifies three meta-functions - *experiential*, *interpersonal* and *textual*. At the micro level, language functions are grammatically described in such terms as: subject, object, complement, adverbial, etc.

### **Macro functions**

- a. **The experiential function** of language is used to communicate ideas. It is the function whereby a speaker expresses the content elements of his utterance. In operating this function, he refers to people, objects, places, actions, events, states, qualities and circumstances. Consider the following sentences:
  1. We constructed a boat yesterday  
The sentence has the following experiential details:  
speaker +action, past - construct + object - boat + time- yesterday.
  2. Your hands are cold  
The experiential information in this sentence includes object, plural-hand, possession- address; + state, present – cold.
- b. **The interpersonal function** of language can be seen at three levels. First, it is used to establish and maintain social relations. This is found in greetings and various forms of phatic communion. Consider the following examples:
  3. Good morning
  4. I'm pleased to meet you
  5. Good byeAll these are typical examples of greetings serving to open, respond to or close social contact.

Secondly, it is used to influence people's behaviour and get things done. This can be seen in the examples below:

6. Request: Could you pass the salt please?

7. Instruction: Turn left at the junction and take the first turning right etc.

Thirdly, it is used to express the speaker's feelings, attitudes and opinions towards and assessment of the ideational content of what is being said. It is thus referred to as the personal function and serves to moderate the mainstream idea in the sentence, as seen in the following examples.

8. They may have got the information.

9. She has probably arrived by now.

c. **The textual (or discourse) function** according to Halliday is used to create texts. It is the function which gives coherence and cohesion to a passage.

Language, thus, is a mixture of network of systems and functions, just as the human being is made up of different parts with different functions. English clauses can be seen to realise these macro functions.

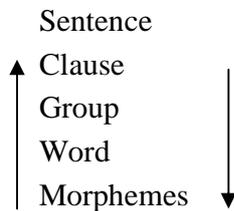
### **Theoretical Categories of Grammar**

The categories are Unit, Structure, Class and System.

a. **Unit:** Unit is the category set up to account for the stretches that carry grammatical patterns in a language. These are five in number, namely, sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme (see lecture 2).

### **The Notion of Rank**

The idea of rank relates to the grammatical units. This shows the hierarchical ordering and relation of the units recognised in the grammar of a language. The units can be arranged either in ascending or descending order. In the arrangement order, the morpheme is the least while the sentence is the highest. The arrangement also gives room for a lower rank. This arrangement of the structural units can be graphically demonstrated.



i. Sentence

Example: //I am seriously weak in science subjects//.  
 //My mother is sick//.

ii. Clause

Example: //if somebody wants to read medicine//.  
 //What I m trying to tell them//.

i. Group

Example: /is not teaching/.  
 /would like to do/.

ii. Word

Example: ‘mother’, ‘letter’, write’, ‘science’, subject’, tell’

iii. Morpheme

Example: ‘write + ing= writing’  
 “interest + ed= interested”  
 “subject + s= subjects”  
 “happy +ness= happiness”

b. **Structure:** This category accounts for differences in the pattern of utterances or sentences. It explains the way the stretches within the sentence or utterances have been combined to project the intended message. Structure caters for what constitutes a unit in relation to functional element there in.

For the sentence or clause unit, the structure is always SPCA or SVOCA. For SPCA, we have Subject, Predicator, Complement and Adjunct. An expanded version of this is SVOCA, which has Subject,

Verb, Object, Complement and Adverbial. These are the elements of the clause or simple sentence.

Under the unit “group”, we have the Nominal group, the verbal group and so on. The structure for Nominal Group, for instance, is MHQ (which is modifier, head word and qualifier) while the verbal group structure has the element auxiliary and the lexical verb. In this structure, auxiliary is optional; the lexical verb. For example, the structure of a verbal group can take any of these forms:

// are going// (as in// we are going to our mother’s house//).

//was// (as in// my mother was sick//).

- c. **Class:** This is the category set up for any set of items that have the same possibilities of operating in the structure. In fact, such items will be similar in structures, functions and their combination with other units of the same rank. Thus, the classes of nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns and so on.
- d. **System:** This is a central category used to express a simple set of choices available at a particular place in the structure. In other words, this category accounts for the range of choices that are available within a unit (Halliday 1985, 1995). More importantly, the unit of items contained in the system is finite and the addition of a new term affects the meaning of at least one of the existing terms.

### Elements of Clause structure and Functions

There are seven elements of clause structure. These are: Subject (S), Verb (V), Direct Object (O), Indirect Object (Oi), Subject Complement (C), Object Complement (Co), Adverbial.

Now, consider the clause element functions within the clause, i.e. what it is and what it does.

### Subject

In terms of its meaning, the **subject** is normally the element which performs the action in the **verb**. In terms of clause structure, it comes first in the clause.

## Verb

In terms of its meaning, the **verb** element expresses the action performed by the **subject**. The 'action' may not however, be particularly active, being sometimes more a matter of *being* or *feeling* or *becoming* – states of existence – rather than performed actions like *singing* and *dancing*

## Direct Object

Some clauses are made of **subject**, a transitive **verb** and a third element. The third element is the **direct object** (O) and such clauses can be called SVO structures. In terms of its meaning, the **subject** (the 'actor') typically does something (the 'action') to an **object**. In terms of *clause structure*, the **direct object** achieves its identity because of its position relative to the **verb**. For example, we could reverse the element in that clause.

## Subject Complement

In terms of its *meaning*, **subject complement** says what the SUBJECT is, or is feeling, (e.g. becoming, seems, etc.) In terms of the clause structure, we need once again to look at the **verb**. Just as an extensive verb can result in a clause having a **direct object**; so the **subject complement** (C) co-occurs with an intensive verb. The most common of the verbs is the 'Be' form.

## Indirect Object

In terms of the meaning of the clause: *I gave Tom a piece of my mind*

We find a **direct object** (*a piece of my mind*) which is given to a recipient (Tom). The recipient is the **indirect object** (Oi) and such clauses are known as **SVOO** structures.

In terms of clause structure, the **indirect object** is made necessary, as are other kinds of clauses, by the nature of the **verb**. This time, it allows two objects to be used within the clause. It is not possible to have a clause with only a **subject**, **verb** and **indirect object**. This would result in clauses like:

*I gave Tom*

And although out of context, it is unlikely we would ever use such a structure, it is easy to imagine a context in which this would become a perfectly understandable SVO clause:

*I gave two kittens called Tom and Tim. I wanted to give one away, so I gave Tom.*

### **Object Complement**

In terms of its meaning, this one is fairly hard to describe. The **object complement** (Co) is what someone or something is or becomes as a result of an action performed by someone or something else.

### **Adverbial**

In terms of its meaning, the **adverbial** (A) generally tells where, when, why, or how the action in the verb happened.

### **The Clause as Representation of Meaning**

The clause involves three kinds of elements. These are

- a. a process
- b. people and things that participate in the process and
- c. Circumstances that are associated with the process in some ways

### **Kinds of processes: doing, saying, sensing and being**

These four general kinds of processes are described in terms of “clause representation”. For example, sequences of events may involve people in various kinds of actions, as well as speaking in dialogue: people’s reactions to events can include words that express their feelings.

#### **a. Doing: focusing on activities**

The “doing” process represents the material actions: what people do, or what happens. These are particularly found in sequences of events in stories. Examples are:

- i. I asked him some questions.
- ii. I kicked the ball.

Other verbs of “doing” include: carry, fly, catch, etc

**b. Sensing**

Sensing is another type of process. The process of sensing is a mental one. Examples are

- a. Mary was pleased with the gift.
- b. She likes oranges.

Other verbs of sensing are: fear, wonder, enjoy, amazes, frightens, puzzles, forget

**c. Being: Focussing on Entities**

Being as a process is a relational one. Examples are

- i. Ade is wise.
- ii. Mice are timid creatures.
- iii. (iii)The baby turned into a pig.
- iv. (iv)Your story sounds funny.

**d. Saying**

Saying as a process is a verbal one. Examples are

- i. John said "I am sick".
- ii. My watch says it's half past ten.
- iii. (iii)The notice tells you to keep quiet.

**Summary**

This lecture is concerned with another model of grammar which emphasizes the meaning and function of grammatical forms. A major focus of the lecture is the clause in terms of its experiential, interpersonal and textual functions. As a representation of experience, the clause performs a variety of functions such as process, participation and circumstances. This grammar is called Systemic-Functional grammar (SFG).

**Post-Test**

1. Classify the following verbs into their various process functions; Slap, know, cook, believes, admire, exclaim, mind.

2. Evaluate Systemic Functional Grammar as a model for syntactic analysis

**References**

Halliday, M.A.K. (1973). *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1994). *Functional Grammar*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: Edward Arnold.

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

## LECTURE FIFTEEN

# Functional Relations

### Introduction

In this last lecture, you will continue with form-function method of syntactic analysis by looking at the constituents of the sentence, namely, VP, NP, Adjective Phrase (AdjPs) Adverb Phrase (AdvPs), and Prepositional Phrase (PPs) and the functional relations within each constituent.

### Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. recognise the constituents within the Verb Phrase and Noun Phrase and the functional relations between constituents;
2. describe the grammatical functions of elements within the verb phrase and the noun phrase; and
3. analyse more complicated sentence structures in English.

### Pre-Test

1. Define and explain the following concepts: metafunctions, predication, and complementation.
2. Identify the grammatical function (GF) in the following sentences and indicate the word constituents that are realised.
  - a. John worded the letter very carefully.
  - b. Paul lent Arthur his old bicycle.

## **CONTENT**

Syntax is concerned not only with the word order in a sentence in a language, but also with the internal structure of the words showing how one word influences the other word in the sentence and the relationships that bind the words together to form an acceptable sentence. In this lecture, we are concerned with functional relationships within the sentence. This is an important functional relationship to be found in any language that concerns the verb and its relationships with various NP and PP constituents with which it occurs.

### **Identifying Participants**

There are linguistic resources concerned with how participants in the clause are identified. Participation comprises a thing or person that can be classified, described and qualified in the clause structure. Grammarians look at elements of clause from the perspective of function. From a grammatical perspective, participants are realized by 'nominal groups; that is, groups of words that are built up around a noun.

### **Identifying People and Things: The Nominal Group Functions**

Nominal groups are built up around what Halliday calls the Thing: this can be a proper name or pronoun (Mary, I) or a noun (girl, man, and structure). Names and pronouns have enough information to identify a participant, as we have seen, so the name or pronoun can stand on its own. With nouns, additional information is often added. The thing can be classified by a Classifier, described by an Epithet, qualified by a Qualifier, and counted or measured by a Numerative: and it can be determined, telling us who or what we're talking about, by a Deictic. Halliday's term for these various kinds of 'modifiers' are outlined in Table 3.11 along with a question that glosses the kind of information they provide, and the typical word class or part of speech that realize them.

Deictic "Which?"	Enumerative "how many?"	Epithet "What like?"	Classifier "What kind?"	Thing "What?"	Qualifier "What else?"
Determiners	Numerals	Adjectives	nouns	nouns	Phrase/clauses
A			farm	Girl	
A		Young		Man	in his twenties

A		Top	security	structure	
The	first			time	
	three			Years	
The		Early		Hours	of the morning
the			police	officer	Who applied for it
The				Decisions	They came to

### Syntactic Relationships

We have looked at phrases as groups of words bound by a syntactic relationship. There are four major syntactic relationships in English. These are (a) modification (b) predication, (c) complementation and (d) co-ordination.

A. **Modification:** this is the relationship in which a word, phrase or clause is used as a modifier (M) of a noun. The smallest and simplest of noun phrase structures is a noun. A noun phrase may also consist of a modifying element (or modifier) and a noun as headword; for example 'The dogs'. This kind of structure is termed modification. There are two forms of modification; (a) pre-modification classes of words like determiners (the, a, an), adjectives, (young, old), numerals (two, three, etc), and nouns precede the headword, noun, to modify it. Post modifiers also called qualifiers come after the headword to modify it.

#### a. The unmodified type:

*Dogs* bark      *Men* are here.

B. The Modified types

1. Modifier + Headword  
The man  
Our friends
  
2. Modifier            Modifier            Headword  
    (Determiner)      (Adjective)            (Noun)  
The                    white                    house  
Some                  beautiful                flowers
  
3. Headword            Qualifier  
Ladies                with long hairs (PP)  
Candidates            who scored less than fifty percent (Rel. Clause)
  
4. Modifier            Headword            Qualifier  
    The                book                    I love to read  
    The                car                      which was newly bought  
    The                lady                     in white

**b. Predication**

This is the relationship between the subject(S) and verb (V) in the sentence.

**Verb functions**

As a rule, verbs express activities of some kind (but the term 'activity' is to be interpreted here in a fairly wide sense, to include such events, happenings, states of affairs and situations as are expressed by verbs like *die, dream, fall, hate, possess, resemble*). Activities usually involve one or more participants. The activity 'kill' for example, expressed by the verb 'kill' involves two participants: the Agent and the Patient. In order to refer to the activity of 'killing', we must therefore also refer to these two essential participants. In the sentence *John killed the tramp*; the Agent is

expressed by *John*, the Patient by *the tramp*. The constituents *John* and *the tramp* are respectively the Subject of S and the Complement of V. thus, a sub-categorisation frame can be seen as a grammatical specification of a verb, which also reflects the *semantic content* (that is, the meaning) of the verb.

### c. Verbs and Complementation

Lexical verbs can be classified according to the type of complementation they take; that is to say, according to the way in which the verb combines with different types of dependents or complements. In order to appreciate the organisation of this system, it is necessary to understand something of the various types of complement element which occur. The complement element in clause structure may be subdivided into extensive ( $C^e$ ) and intensive ( $C^i$ ) complements. An extensive complement, with the exception of reflexive forms, is a nominal entity which is distinct from the subject; it thus corresponds to the traditional grammatical notion of object.

Examples:

*John visited the doctor.*

*Bill has a new job.*

*The manager gave me a gold watch.*

An intensive complement on the other hand, is an entity or feature which is co-referential with the subject and which indeed in traditional grammar would also be referred to as a complement.

### Summary of Complementation Types

Here is a summary of the classification of verbs according to their complementation

Verbs	Frames	Examples
a. Intransitive, e.g. <i>laugh</i>	[ <sub>vp</sub> ----]	He laughed.
b. Copula, e.g. <i>seem</i>	[ <sub>vp</sub> -----NP ] AdjP PP	He seemed [ <sub>AdjP</sub> very cheerful]

- c. Monotransitive, [VP\_\_NP]  
 e.g. *kill* S He killed [<sub>NP</sub> the mouse]
- d. Ditransitive [VP-----  
 e.g. *give* NP-NP] He gave <sub>NP</sub> the girl  
 [<sub>NP</sub> a book]  
 NP-PP]
- e. Complex Transitive, [VP-----  
 e.g. *call* AdjP] He called <sub>NP</sub> him.  
 NP - NP] [<sub>NP</sub> a fool]
- f. Intransitive + PP VP-----PP He leaned [<sub>PP</sub> towards  
 the girl]
- g. Transitive + PP [VP ---NP- PP] He put <sub>NP</sub> his head  
<sub>PP</sub> on the table]

#### d. Coordination

This is the relationship in which two or more words filling the same grammatical function are linked by a coordinating conjunction such as 'and', 'or' 'but' or a pause. Coordination may be found at the level of words (lexical co-ordination), phrase (phrasal co-ordination) and clause (clausal coordination). See examples below:

Boys and girls ... (lexical)

Old men and young ladies... (phrasal)

John is a teacher and Mary is a nurse (clausal)

#### Summary

This lecture is concerned with the constituents that go with verb phrase and noun phrase, as well as the functional relations between constituents. It also discusses verb functions, in addition to verbs and complements (complementation types). Nominal groups and nominal group functions are also discussed.

### **Post-Test**

3. Define and explain the following concepts: metafunctions, predication, and complementation.
4. Identify the grammatical function (GF) in the following sentences and indicate the word constituents that are realised.
  - c. John worded the letter very carefully.
  - d. Paul lent Arthur his old bicycle.

### **References**

Morley, G.D. (1985). *An Introduction to Systemic Grammar*  
London: Macmillan.

Francis, W.N. (1970) *The English language: An Introduction*.  
London: The English universities Press

PROPERTY OF DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN