

-1- Syntax & Morphology

Content

- What is Syntax, Morphology, Grammar, and Morphemes?
- Types of grammatical units.
- Introduction to "words".

Definitions

- **Syntax:**
the description of how words, phrases, and clauses are constructed and combined in a language.
- **Morphology:**
the part of grammar explaining how morphemes are put together to construct words.
- **Grammar:**
the analysis of the structure of phrases and sentences.
- **Morphemes:**
are parts of words, i.e. stems, prefixes, and suffixes. For example, un + friend + ly contains three morphemes: a prefix un, a stem friend, and a suffix ly.
- **** The part of grammar dealing with different grammatical units (words, phrases, clauses, and sentences) is known as Syntax.
- *** The part of grammar dealing with morphemes is known as Morphology.

Types of grammatical units

- We first need to identify the types of grammatical units, such as words and phrases, before describing the internal structure of these units, and how they combine to form larger units. Grammatical units are meaningful elements which combine with each other in a structural pattern. Essentially, grammar is the system which organizes and controls these form-meaning relationship.
- **The types of grammatical units can be graded according to size of units.....example:**
- *** If I wash up all this stuff somebody else can dry it.
- (Sentence - clauses - phrases - words - morphemes)

Types of grammatical units

- A **clause** consists of one or more phrases.
- A **phrase** consists of one or more words.
- A **word** consists of one or more morphemes.
- Grammatical units are described in terms of four factors: their structure, their syntactic role, their meaning, and the way they are used in discourse.

A- Structure:

units can be described in terms of their internal structure: e.g. words in terms of bases and affixes, phrases in terms of heads and modifiers, and clauses in terms of clause elements.

B- Role:

units can be described in terms of their syntactic role (subject, object...etc.) Example, In November, Susie won those tickets.

C- Meaning:

units can be described in terms of meaning. For example, adverbs (a class of words) can express information about time, place, and manner.

D- Use (discourse function):

units can be described in terms of how they behave in discourse (register and frequency).

Introduction to "words"

- **"Words"** are generally considered to be the basic elements of language. They clearly show up in writing , and they are the items defined in dictionaries. Yet the definition of 'word' is not simple.

- Different senses of the word 'word':

- A- Orthographic words.
- B- Grammatical words.
- C- Lexemes.

- Three major families of words

- A- Lexical words.
- B- Function words.
- C- Inserts.

Introduction to "words"

A. Lexical words:

Lexical words are the main carriers of information in a text or a speech act.

- They can be subdivided into the following parts of speech: (nouns, lexical verbs, adjectives, and adverbs).
- Lexical words are the most numerous, and their number are growing all the time (**open classes**).
- They often have a complex internal structure and can be composed of several parts: e.g. unfriendliness = un + friend + li + ness.
- Lexical words can be the heads of phrases: e.g. the noun completion is the head of the noun phrase (the completion of the task).
- They are generally the words that stressed most in speech.
- They are generally the words that remain if a sentence is compressed in a newspaper headline: e.g. Elderly care crisis warning.

B. Function words:

- Function words can be categorized in terms of parts of speech such as prepositions, coordinators, auxiliary verbs, and pronouns.
- They usually indicate meaning relationships and help us interpret units containing lexical words, by showing how the units are related to each other.
- Function words belong to (**closed classes**), which have a very limited and fixed membership. For example, English has only four coordinators: and, or, but, and (rarely) nor.
- Individual function words tend to occur frequently, and in almost any type of text.

C. Inserts:

- Inserts are found mainly in spoken language..
- Inserts do not form an integral part of the a syntactic structure, but tend to inserted freely in a text.
- They are often marked off by a break in intonation in speech, or by a punctuation mark in writing: e.g. Well, we made it.
- They generally carry emotional and discourse meanings, such as oh, ah, wow, used to express a speaker's emotional response to a situation, or yeah, no, okay, used to signal a response to what has just been said.

- Inserts are generally simple in form, though they often have an atypical pronunciation (e.g. hm, uh-huh, ugh, yeah).

Introduction to "words"

*** Closed and open classes

- Closed class contains a limited number of members, and new members cannot be easily added. For example, it is not easy to create a new coordinator or a new pronoun.....those word classes have a fairly fixed set of members.
- The membership of open classes is indefinitely large, and can be readily extended by users of the language. Lexical classes such as nouns and adjectives are open class. For example, we can easily form new nouns with the suffix **-ee** (retiree), **adjectives with -ish** (yellowish), **verbs with -ize** (periodize), and **adverbs with -wise** (fanwise).

*** The structure of words: morphology:

- Lexical words can consist of a single morpheme (a stem, such as go, book, cat), or they can have a more complex structure created by a **process of inflection, derivation or compounding**.

A- Inflection:

Lexical words can take inflectional suffixes to signal meanings and roles which are important to their word class, such as 'plural' in the case of nouns, and 'past tense' in the case of verbs. Examples.....

- * **Nouns** boy plural (boys), genitive (boy's, boys')
- * **Verbs** live, write S.P.T (lives, write), P.T (lived, wrote), ing- participle (living, writing)
- * **Adjectives** dark comparative (darker), superlative (darkest)
- * **Adverbs** soon comparative (sooner), superlative (soonest)

B- Derivation:

- Derivation, like inflection, usually involve adding an affix, i.e. a morpheme attached to the beginning of a word (**a prefix**) or to the end of a word (**a suffix**).
However, this process is different from inflection because inflection does not change the identity of a word(it remains the same lexeme), while derivation creates new nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Derivation changes the meaning or word class (parts of speech) of a word, and often both, and in effect creates a new base form for the word:
- Prefixes: **ex** + president, **un** + kind, **re** + read, **a** + broad
- Suffix: boy + **hood**, central + **ize**, green + **ish**, exact + **ly**

- Words can be built up using a number of different prefixes and suffixes, and can thus contain several morphemes:
- industri + **al**, industri + **al** + ize, industri + **al** + **iz** + **ation**

C- Compounding:

- Inflection and derivation result in complex words, with a stem plus one or more affixes. Another form of derivation is compounding, which also leads to more complex words. Words that are compounds contain more than one stem. Examples are:
- noun + noun: chair + man, girl + friend
- verb + noun: cook + book, guess + work
- adjectives + nouns: blue + bird, flat + fish
- noun + adjective: head + long, water + tight
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Notes:
