PGEG S2 02

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

SEMESTER 2

ENGLISH

BLOCK 2: MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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SEMESTER 2
MA IN ENGLISH
COURSE 2: LANGUAGE, LINGUISTICS AND GRAMMAR
BLOCK 2: MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

DETAILED SYLLABUS

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BLOCK 2: INTRODUCTION

This Block contains five units that deal mostly with Morphology, Syntax and Semantics.

Unit 6 discusses the concept of Morphology, which refers to the study of forms of words. However, to understand the concept of Morphology, it is pertinent to begin with a more familiar concept of the Word. The 'morpheme' has been seen as the smallest functioning unit in the composition of words. Thus, this unit helps you to look at morphemes in detail so that you can have a more comprehensive idea of the concept of Morphology.

Units 7 & 8 shall take up the different constituents of the sentence and look at the ways by which their constituents are structured. We shall see how structural linguistics has attempted to describe the structure of sentences by using structuralist tools. The *Immediate Constituent Analyses* or I C Analyses, as it is called, is essentially a structuralist approach to the analysis of sentence structure. Structural linguistics applied what is known as the *discovery procedure* in its attempt to search for a set of operations for the correct description of a language structure. By the time you finish reading the unit, you will be making use of different techniques of presenting sentence structures.

Units 9 & 10 shall help you to read about yet another major branch of Linguistics, which is called Semantics. We all know that we use language to express meaning so that what we say or write is understood by others. This unit will help you to identify different types of meanings. By the end of the unit, you will learn that there are several approaches to the study of meaning in language. In this unit, we shall be concerned with the linguistic approach to the study of the semantic properties of languages.

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in "LET US KNOW" along with the text. We have kept "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The hints for the answers to these questions are given at the end of the unit. We strongly advise that you answer the questions immediately after you finish reading the section in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the "FURTHER READINGS" which will be helpful for your further consultation. The books referred to in the preparation of the units have been added at the end of the block. As you know the world of literature and criticism is too big, we strongly advise you not to take a unit to be an end in itself. Despite our attempts to make a unit self-contained, we advise that you read the original texts of the authors prescribed as well as other additional materials for a thorough understanding of the contents of a particular unit.

UNIT 6: MORPHOLOGY

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Definition of Morphology

6.4 The Morpheme

- 6.4.1 Free Morphemes
- 6.4.2 Bound Morphemes
- 6.4.3 Morphs and Allomorphs

6.5 Morphological Analysis of Words

- 6.5.1 Lexical Words and Grammatical Words
- 6.5.2 Simple, Complex and Compound Words
- 6.5.3 Affix, Stem and Root

6.6 Inflectional and Derivational Morphology

- 6.6.1 Inflectional Morphology
- 6.6.2 Derivational Morphology

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6.8 Let us Sum up

6.9 Further Reading

6.10 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

6.11 Possible Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define a morpheme
- distinguish between the morpheme and the word
- identify the structure of words
- distinguish inflectional and derivational morphology
- discuss the different processes of word formation in English

6.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of Block 2. In this unit, we shall discuss the concept of morphology. Morphology is a term used in linguistics to refer to

the study of forms of words. Hence, in order to understand the concept of morphology, it may be helpful to begin with a more familiar concept — the concept of the *word.* You all know what a word is. It is a unit of expression both in spoken and written language. We consider it be the smallest unit functioning alone in a sentence. Interestingly enough, you will find that there are some words that are made up of a single letter of the alphabet. The word 'a' in This is a book has one letter. However, there are words that are made up of a large number of letters. The word unforgettable has thirteen letters. On the other hand, the word enthusiastically has fourteen letters. If we say, forget is one word, we wonder if we can say that forgettable or unforgetfulness is actually more than one word. It was felt that words could be quite complex in structure and there was a need for a single concept to interrelate such notions as prefix, suffix, root, stem of a word. In order to address these needs, the term 'morpheme' has been made use of. It was taken to be the central concern of morphology. The morpheme, accordingly, was seen as the smallest functioning unit in the composition of words. Thus, this unit helps you to look at morphemes in greater details so that you can have a more comprehensive idea of the concept of morphology.

6.3 DEFINITION OF MORPHOLOGY

Read the following definition of morphology by Professor David Crystal: (1985)

"The branch of Grammar which studies the structure of forms of words, primarily through use of the morpheme construct. It is traditionally distinguished from syntax which deals with the rules governing the combination of words in sentences."

Here is another definition by John Lyons (2002)

"Morphology includes not only inflections but also derivations, it handles both inflections and derivations by means of rules operating upon the same basic unit — morpheme." (p 103).

Let us look at the definition by George Yule (2009)

"The term which literally means 'the study of forms', was originally used in biology, but since the middle of the 19th century, has also been

used to describe the type of investigation that analyses all these basis 'elements' used in a language. What we have been describing as 'elements' in the form of a linguistic message are technically known as morphemes.'' (pp 62-63).

From the above definitions, it is seen that most appropriately morphology is the study of morphemes and their different forms and the way they combine in word-formation. Thereby, morphology is distinguished from syntax, which is concerned with the study of the structure of sentences.

Morphology is generally divided into two fields (Note the definition of Lyons): the study of inflections which is also known as *Inflectional Morphology* and the study of word-formation which is known as *Lexical* or *Derivational Morphology*. We shall look at these two terms in greater details when we look at the section on word-formation in English.

6.4 THE MORPHEME

The term 'morpheme' in morphology refers to the smallest meaningful unit of a language. Thereby, it implies that the word is not the smallest unit of a language in terms of form. A morpheme is described as a minimal and meaningful unit of grammatical analysis.

The key words in the definition are "minimal" and "meaningful". Minimal means the smallest linguistic unit that cannot be broken down any further without destroying the meaning. Moreover, a morpheme has to be meaningful. To illustrate the notions of minimal and meaningful, let us take the word carpet. It is a single morpheme word; it cannot be broken down any further without destroying the meaning of the word. You may like to think that carpet consists of two words car and pet. However, the meaning of carpet has nothing to do with the individual meanings of car and pet. The word carpet is a minimal and meaningful unit in itself.

In this context, you may like to consider the term *phoneme, which* is the smallest unit in the sound system of a language. A morpheme is meaningful but a phoneme is not so; it is considered to be distinctive, thereby indicating that is has no meaning of its own. It can only bring about a difference in the meaning of a word when we replace one phoneme with

another in a word. You will see that the replacement of /p/ with /m/ in the word pen gives the word men. Individually, /p/ and /m/ are abstract concepts having no meaning of their own. However, the replacement of one with the other in a word creates a new word with a difference in meaning.

The concept of the morpheme as minimal and meaningful can be further illustrated by referring to two categories of morphemes namely, free morphemes and bound morphemes. We shall discuss these two terms in the sub-section that follows.

6.4.1 Free Morphemes

The term 'free morpheme' is used in morphology to refer to those morphemes that can stand on their own as independent words. These are single morpheme words like dog, jump, tall etc. These words are made up of single morphemes and cannot be broken down any further. Let us consider the morphological structure of the three words referred to above:

dog : [dZg] + [z]

jump : [d¥Λmp]

tall : [t]:l]

You see that these three words are made up of single morphemes yet; they enjoy the individual status of words. Such types of morphemes are referred to as free morphemes.

6.4.2 Bound Morphemes

The term bound morpheme refers to those morphemes that cannot stand on their own as independent words. They always have to be attached to free morphemes. For example, we consider the morphological structure of the words dogs, jumped and taller. These words consist of the following structures:

dogs : [dZg]

jumped : [d¥Λmp] + [t]

taller : [t]:l] + [C]

The plural ending –s [z], the past tense ending –ed [t] and the comparative degree ending –er [ ] do not have individual status

of words. They have to be attached to free morphemes and hence, they are called bound morphemes.

Thus, a morpheme–, which may be a free morpheme, or a bound morpheme– is invariably minimal and meaningful.

So far, we have looked at the terms free morpheme and bound morpheme. When we discuss the terms morpheme, we have to consider another important term in morphology. It is the term morph. In fact, the term morphology is made up of morph – which means 'form' and '-ology', which means 'the study of'. We shall look at the term in the following sub-section.

6.4.3 Morph and Allomorph

In our discussion on the 'morpheme', we have found that a morpheme is a minimal grammatical unit of a language. We have seen that

- In the word dogs, -s is a bound morpheme; it is meaningful because it carries the notion of the plural form.
- In the word jumped, -ed is a bound morpheme; it is meaningful because it carries the notion of the past tense form.

From the above two examples we learnt that a morpheme is a minimal grammatical unit of a language. On the other hand, a morph is its orthographic or phonological shape. For example, in cats, the initial morph is cat and the final morph is–s; in horse, the initial morph is horse and the final morph is–es. The final morpheme of cats and horses is the same– it is plural morpheme. However, let us consider the morphological structure of these two words.

cats : [kæt] + [s]

horse : [hɔ:s] + [z]

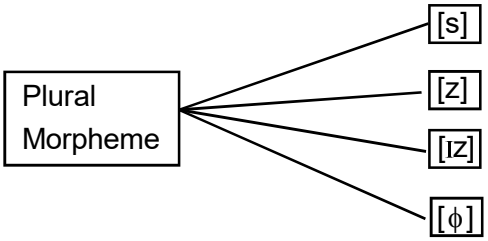
Thus, the final morph of cats and horses is not the same. Thus, we can say that a morph is the phonological or the orthographic realization of a phoneme.

From the example of cats and horses, we have seen that a morpheme is not always represented by the same morph; it may be represented by different morphs in different environments. We

take four other words cup, boy, rose and sheep to show how morphs have different realizations.

Singular	Plural
cup	cups
boy	boys
rose	roses
sheep	sheep

In the first three words the –s ending has the same meaning; it means 'more than one'. However, in cup it is realized as [s], in boys as [z] and in roses as [iz]. On the other hand, in the plural form, sheep has no morphological realization at all. Let us diagrammatically represent the information taken



From the above diagram, we can say that /s/, /z/ and /z/ are various realized morphs of the plural morpheme. The variously realized morphs of a morpheme are known as allomorphs of the morpheme.

In the case of sheep, we have found that there is no realization at all. We use the symbol // to indicate non-realization. The nouns that do not show any change of form for the plural are said to have zero allomorphs of the plural morpheme as in the case of sheep. // is the symbol of zero morph.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words:

a) Morphology includes not only ..... but also derivations.

b) Morphology is generally divided into two fields: inflectional morphology and .....

c) The symbol // is called .....

d) ..... refer to those morphemes that cannot stand on their own as independent words.

e) The term ..... means that an element cannot be broken down any further.

f) When two or more lexical words are represented by the same phonological word, we get .....

Q 2: Say whether the following statements are true or false

a) The word carpet consists of two morphemes; car and pet. (T/F)

b) The final morph of cats and horses is the same. (T/F)

c) Words belonging to the categories of articles, pronoun, auxiliaries, conjunctions etc. are called lexemes. (T/F)

d) The word conceived as a structure of phonological sounds is called lexical word. (T/F)

e) The plural morpheme is not always realized as /s/. (T/F)

f) /wd/ is a past tense bound morpheme. (T/F)

6.5 MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WORDS

In section 6.2 of this unit, we described the word as a unit of expression both in spoken and written language. In speech, a word can be a sound or a sequence of sounds; it can also be represented in writing by making use of the phonetic script. The word table can be represented as /teibl /. We can call the word represented thus as phonological word. The word in the general written form makes use of the letters of the alphabet. In the present context, you have seen that the word table is given in small letters. We can call the word represented thus as orthographic word.

When you examine the relationship between phonological words and orthographic words, you discover a very interesting phenomenon in the case of a few words. Look at the representation below:

In the first case, you have seen that the phonological word /si:n / has two orthographical words. In the second, you have seen that the orthographic word read has two phonological words. The first example is an example of

a homophone; the second is an example of a homograph. Read the two entries in the box below.



LET US KNOW

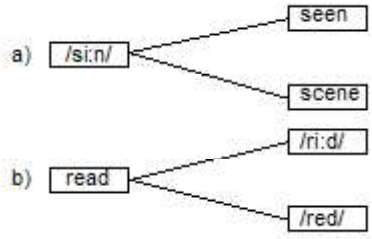
Homograph: words which are written in the same way but which are pronounced differently and which may have different meanings. e.g. Does this road lead to the station? Lead is a heavy metal.

Homophone: Words which sounds alike but are written differently and often have different meanings. e.g. no and know are pronounced /n/ Homophones are sometime called homographs.

6.5.1 Lexical Word & Grammatical Word

Several general classifications of words have been proposed notable among which is the sub-classification that distinguishes between lexis or lexical words and grammatical words.

Lexical words are words, which are viewed in relation to their meaning i.e. in relation to things, qualities, states or actions in the world. Accordingly, these words fall into grammatical categories like noun, verb, adjective and adverb.



Secondly, depending upon its grammatical category, a lexical word may be realized by a set of grammatical forms:

- A noun may be realized as singular, plural and possessive forms e.g. girl, girls, girl's, girls'.
- A verb may be realized as present, past and participle forms e.g. take, takes, took, taken, taking.
- An adjective may be realized as positive, comparative and superlative forms eg. strong, stronger, strongest.
- An adverb may be realized variously in a clause structure as manner, time, place, reason etc.

It is notable that the realization (e.g. Takes, took etc.) structure as manner, time, and place, reason etc. It is the lexical word alone that occurs as the headword in a dictionary entry.

Thirdly, it is important to note that the lexical words are characterized by having semantic content. In order to explain semantic content of lexical words let us take the word table. The phonological word /'teibl/ may be treated as two orthographic words as the basis of meaning expressed in the following two examples:

(i) A book on a table (a piece of furniture)

(ii) A table in a book (display of information in columns)

So 'table' may be regarded as two or more semantic words. However, the form 'table' as a noun takes the plural s in both the meanings stated above.

Lexical words or lexis are variously known as content words, full words etc. and are distinguished from those words that are known as grammatical words, function words or form words.

Grammatical words are words that occur in a grammatical paradigm. For example, the form taking has certain properties which determine its use in a sentence which requires that it must be preceded by a form of 'be' i.e. am, is, are, was, were. These forms of the 'be' verb are grammatical words that do not have a semantic content but are used with other words in order to establish the grammatical framework or the structure in which the lexical words operate. The different categories of grammatical words include determiners, auxiliaries, pronouns, prepositions etc. These grammatical words are devices for fitting lexical words in an English sentence structure.

6.5.2 Simple, Complex and Compound Words

It has long been recognized that words must be classed into at least two categories — simple and complex. However, the formation of a new category of words by the process of compounding of simple words has resulted in the recognition of another category of words termed as compound words. Some morphologists often

refer to a fourth category of words—the compound– complex words where the compounding is affected by making use of complex words. However, for the present, we shall refer to only three categories of words — the simple, complex and compound words.

1. Simple words: The term simple words refers to a linguistic unit, which consists of a single free morpheme. A simple word such as book, city, tree etc. seems to be a minimal unit; there seems to be no way to analyse it, or break it down further into meaningful parts. These are words having a single free morpheme.

2. Complex words: A complex words refer to words consisting of two parts — the stem and the affix attached to the stem. The morphological structure of a few complex words is given below:

- books: book + s (one free morpheme + one bound)
- uneasy: un + easy (one bound + one free)
- conceive: con + ceive (both bound)

3. Compound words: Compound words are linguistic units of two free morphemes or three or more morphemes of which at least two are free morphemes.

(a) Two free morphemes:
   i) verb + noun: pickpocket, tell-tale
   ii) adjective + noun: blackboard
   iii) verb + adverb: farewell
   iv) noun + adjective: skyblue
   v) noun + noun: goldsmith

(b) Two free & one bound morphemes
   i) N + V + ing: bird watching
   ii) N + V + or/er tax collector

(c) One free, one bound & one free
   V + ing + N: working girl

(d) Three free & one bound
   N + N + V + er football player.

By looking of the forms of the compound words, it can be concluded that they are important processes of word formation in English.

6.5.3 Affix, Stem and Root

The terms affix, stem and root are associated with different parts of complex and compound words. The stem or base form is that part of the word to which an inflectional affix is added. The stem of a word may be

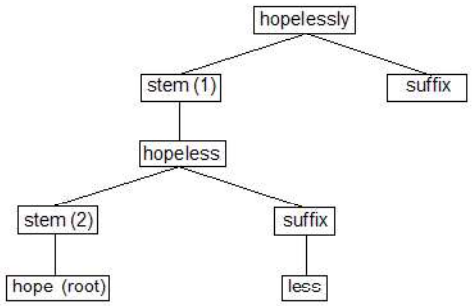
a) A simple stem consisting of only one free morpheme. Such a stem is called root.
b) A root and derivational affix e.g. worker (work + er)
c) Two to more roots e.g. work + shop = workshop.

Affixes: Complex words in English are made up of stem and affixes. An affix is a bound morpheme attached to the stem of a word. The affix attached to the front of a stem is called prefix. When it is attached to the end of a stem, it is called a suffix. It is possible to have more than one bound morpheme in a word structure. Look at the morphological structure of the following words:

a) unhappy = un + happy
b) disbelief = dis + belief
c) goodness = good + ness
d) nicely = nice+ ly
e) unlikely= un + like + ly
f) imitations = imitate + ion + s
g) hopelessly = hope+ less + ly

You will find that the affixes are underlined. In the first two examples the affixes, un and dis are prefixes. In (c) and (d) the affixes ness and ly are suffixes. In (e) you will see both a prefix and a suffix attached to the stem like. In the last two examples you find two suffixes. A stem consisting of only one free morpheme as in like in unlikely is called a root.

The morphological structures of (g) need to be examined more clearly with the help of a tree diagram. That will help us to understand the status of the two bound morphemes suffixed to the stem.



The diagram makes it clear that stem (1) is not the root. It is made up of a free morpheme and a bound morpheme. On the other hand, stem (2) consists of a free morpheme only which cannot be broken down any further and hence it is the root. In this word, both -less and –ly are bound morphemes while hope is the free morpheme.

6.6 INFLECTIONAL AND DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY

Morphology is generally divided into two fields: the study of inflections and the study of word formations. The study of inflections is known as inflectional morphology and the study of word formation is known as lexical or derivational morphology. In this section, we shall look at these two concepts to enable us to distinguish between the two of them.

6.6.1 Inflectional Morphology

Inflectional morphology is concerned with the study of the way in which words vary or inflect in order to express grammatical contrasts in sentences by making use of inflectional affixes. The following are some of the characteristics of inflectional affixes:

(1) Inflectional affixes never change the word class of the stem. The stem book is a noun. The addition of the plural affix s, makes the word books without changing the class of the word.

(2) Inflectional affixes are all suffixed to the stem. They are never prefixed.

(3) Once the inflectional affix is attached to a stem, no other affixes can be attached after the inflectional affix.

Let us now look at ways by which inflectional morphemes operate in modification of the stem of words of different classes.

(a) Inflections of Nouns: in nouns, infections operate at the levels of (i) number and (ii) genitive.

(i) ***Numbers***: Common nouns can have inflections in terms of singular-plural reference, e.g.

cat = cat + plural = cats /kF"ts/

dog = dog + plural = dogs /d›"gz/

horse = horse + plural = horses / 'h›"siz/

(ii) ***Genitive***: Genitive refers to one of the forms taken by a word usually a noun or a pronoun to express grammatical relationship by means of inflections.

- a tiger's tail (i/e. the tail of a tiger)
- a girls' hostel (i.e. a hostel for girls)
- John's book (i.e. a book of John)

The genitive inflection operates in singular and plural nouns besides proper nouns.

(b) Inflections of Verbs*:* In verbs, inflections operate at the levels of (i) person and number (ii) tense and (iii) aspect and (iv) voice (active-passive)

Person and Number: English verbs undergo modification of form depending upon the person (1^{st}, 2^{nd} and 3^{rd}) and number (singular/ plural)

- Full verb : I take / we take / you take / they take /he/she/ it takes /
- Primary verb 'be' changes the form completely: I am / we are / you are/ He is /They are

Tense: The past form of regular verbs is always the stem and the –ed (past tense morpheme) suffixed to it.

- stop = stop + past tense – stopped
- play = play + past tense = played
- want = want + past tense = wanted

In case of some irregular verbs, it is seen that they form past tense by a change of vowels, e.g.

- eat = eat + past tense = ate
- give = give + past tense = gave
- ring = ring + past tense = rang

In case of certain irregular forms, it is seen that these irregular verbs do not change their form in the past tense.

- cut = cut + past tense = cut
- hit = hit + past tense = hit

Aspect

i. **–ing form** : The – ing form is produced by adding the infection – ing to the base form of the verb irrespective of whether it is a regular verb or are irregular verb.

- play + play + ing = playing
- swim = swim + ing = swimming

ii. ***Participle Form:*** The past participle form of regular verbs is similar to the past tense form; the –ed morpheme is suffixed to the base form in order to make the past participle form

- have worked
- have played
- have waited

The morphological criteria of irregular verbs are similar to the past tense forms.

iii) ***Voice***: The passive voice form is realized by the use of the passive participle, which is produced by adding – ed to the regular verbs and a change of vowels to the irregular verbs generally ending with –en. Thus the passive participle is realized as be+en / be + ed.

- The book was taken
- The smoke was killed

Inflection of Adjectives: Inflection of adjectives takes place at the levels of comparative and superlative degrees.

i) ***Comparative Degree:*** The comparative degree of an adjective is formed by suffixing the bound morpheme – er to the base form

- tall – tall + er = taller
- He is taller than his brother

ii) ***Superlative Degree:*** The superlative degree of an adjective is formed by suffixing the bound morpheme – est to the base form

- tall – taller — tall + est = tallest
- He is the tallest boy in the class.

(iii) ***Irregular Forms***: In certain adjectives the above –er/-est inflections do not operate in forming the comparative and superlative degrees. Instead, there is a complete change in the shape of the word in its various inflated forms e.g.

good — better — best.

This type of irregularity in degrees is known as suppletion.

6.6.2 Derivational Morphology

Derivation is a process of word formation by the use of derivational affixes. The distinction between inflectional and derivational affixes in English is based on a number of factors.

a) Inflectional affixes never change the class of the word. In contrast, there are some derivational affixes that change the class of a word. These affixes are known as *class changing derivational affixes*. However, there are some derivational affixes also that do not change the class of a word. These derivational affixes are known as *class maintaining derivational affixes*.

b) Inflectional and derivational suffixes occur in a certain relative order within words as observed by Akmajian et al (2001). This means that inflectional suffixes follow derivational suffixes. If an inflectional suffix is added to a stem, no further derivational suffixes can be attached to the inflectional suffix.

c) Inflectional affixes are invariably suffixes whereas derivational affixes can be both prefixes and suffixes.

d) The occurrence of inflectional affixes takes place with members of a given class. For example, the plural inflection occurs only with nouns or past tense inflection occurs only with verbs. On the other hand, derivational affixes can occur in more than one word class.

Class Changing Derivational Affix: Derivational affixes like –ly, -ness, -ful, ize etc. change th class of a word. e.g.

a) Kind is an adjective; kindness is a noun. Hence – ness is a class changing derivational affix (CCDA)

b) Kind is an adjective; kindly is an adverb. Hence, -ly is a class changing derivational affix.

c) Beauty is noun; beautiful is adjective. Hence –full is CCDA.

d) Computer is noun; computerize is verb. Hence –ize is CCDA.

Class Maintaining Derivational Affix: Derivational affixes like un, dis-, re-, ir-, -dom, etc. create new words but do not change the class of the word. e.g.

a) Kind is adjective; unkind, which is a different word is also an adjective. Un- is class maintaining derivational affix (CMDA)

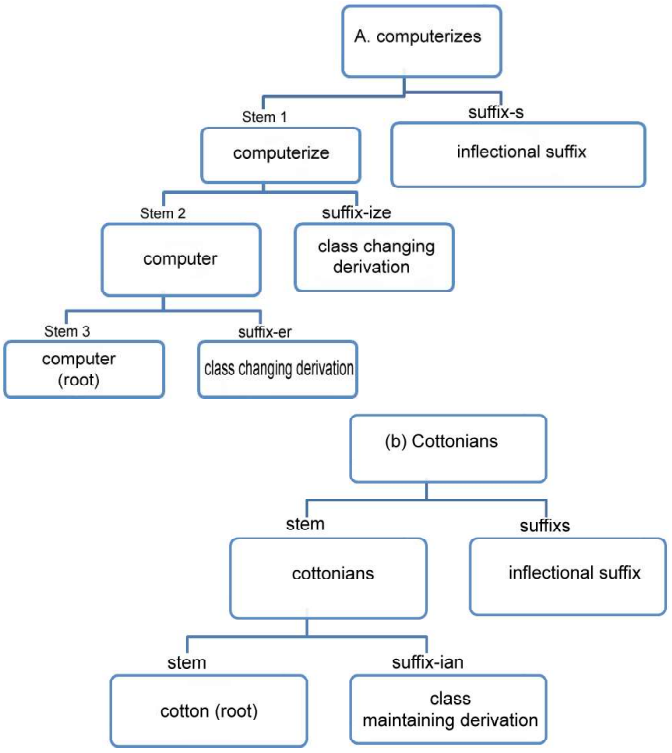
b) Like is a verb; dislike is also a verb. Hence, dis- is a CMDA.

c) Call is a verb; recall is also a verb. Hence, re- is a CMDA.

d) Relevant is an adjective; irrelevant is also an adjective. Hence, ir- is a CMDA

e) King is a noun; Kingdom is also a noun. Hence, dom is CMDA

Below two examples are given to show how we can perform morphological analysis of words with the help of tables drawn from inflectional and derivation morphology.





CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Fill in the blanks:

a) 'Phonological word' contrasts with .....

b) Lexical words are words that are viewed in relation to things, qualities, states and .....

c) Table may be regarded as two or more .....

d) Complex words consist of a stem and .....

e) When a stem cannot be broken down any further, it is called .....

f) Inflectional affixes never ..... the word class.

g) 's is an example of .....

h) -ness is a class ..... derivational affix.

6.7 WORD FORMATION

The words or lexical items in English as stated in 4.5.1 can be classified into lexical words and grammatical words. While the grammatical words are a closed set, it is invariably the open set class of lexical words that we consider in our task of word formation. That is, the new words that we produce are basically lexical words. The different processes of word-formation are discussed below.

Affixation: Affixation is a very ancient method of word formation, which involves the adding of prefixes and suffixes to a stem or a base form. Affixation of suffixes like –dom, -ship, -ish etc. has given us words like freedom, friendship, clownish etc. Likewise, affixation of prefixes like be –de-, dis- etc. has given us words like belittle, decontrol, disbelief etc.

Conversion: Conversion refers to a process of word formation by converting a word from one class to another class in a sentence. Thus, from the word park which is an open space where cars may be left, is coined the verb to park. Similarly, from the noun pocket we get the verb to pocket. Nouns signifying the principal pats of the body eg head, hand, stomach, back etc. can nearly all be used as verbs. He can head a ball, hand in a letter etc.

Compounding: This point has been discussed at 6.5.2 (c).

Reduplication: It refers to a process of word formation by reduplicating or imitating certain sounds. This process of word formation has given us words like bang, pop, buzz, click, whizz, rumble, mumble, hiss, giggle and so on. The name of the song–bird of spring the cuckoo is most certainly an attempt to reduplicate its call.

Clipping: The process of clipping of parts of a word to create new words has given us a number of new words. Clipping has given words like pop (as in pop music) with the end portion (ular) clipped off. Other examples of new words formed by clipping of end positions include pub from public house, cab from cabriolet, mob from mobile etc. clipping at the beginning of a word has given us bus from omnibus, phone from telephone, wig from periwig etc. In some cases, clipping off portions of the front and the back by retaining only the middle portion, has given us flu from influenza, fridge from refrigerator etc.

Acronyms: Acronyms refer to the coinage of new words by using the initial letter of a series of words eg BBC for British Broadcasting Corporation. AIR from All India Radio, NATO from North Atlantic Treaty Organization and so on. The acronyms are initials-turned – words and are pronounced as if they are distinct words.

Blends: Blends refer to words that are formed by combining a part of one word with a part of another in order to form a new word carrying with it the meaning of both the original words from where parts were taken to form the new word. Examples include:

- motel / n / a hotel especially built for travelling motorists with facilities for parking cars. The word is a blend of motor and hotel.
- brunch / n / a late breakfast, an early lunch or a combination of the two, The word is a blend of breakfast and lunch.
- smog / n/ a mixture of smoke and fog very common in industrial cities. The word reminds one of T.S. Eliot's lines: "Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon / you have the scene arrange itself…."

  Other examples includes electrocute, Interpol, telecast etc.

Back Formation: It is a process of word formation resulting from a

misunderstanding. The principle and the way in which it works can be explained by taking a few examples.

- groveling (adv) in abject manner, on the ground. The terminal –ing was mistaken for the present participle form as a result of which the verb to grovel was coined.
- beggar (n) The word in this form has created the impression that –ar is a suffix attached to the stem beg, thus creating the verb beg.
- Other words of this category include editor, hawker, dancer, writer and so on.



6.8 LET US SUM UP

From this unit we have learnt that Morphology is the study of morphemes and their different forms and the way they combine. Morphology is divided into two fields: inflectional morphology and derivational morphology. Morpheme is the smallest unit of grammatical forms. A morpheme is minimal and meaningful. Morphemes are realized as morphs. The variously realized morphs of a morpheme are the allomorphs of the morpheme. Morphemes can be free and bound. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are lexical words. They are distinguished from grammatical words that are used in a sentence structure to establish a grammatical framework. Simple words are single morpheme words and contrast with complex words consisting of a stem and an affix. Compounding is a process of word-formation in English. Inflectional affixes do not change the class of a word and are suffixed to the stem. Inflections take place in nouns, verbs, adjectives, aspect, and voice. Derivation is a process of word formation by the use of derivational affixes. Derivational affixes can be class changing and class maintaining. There are various techniques of word formation in English, affixation, conversion, clipping, reduplication etc. being some of them.



6.9 FURTHER READING

Akamaijan, Adrien. et al. (2001). *Linguistics* (5th Edn). Prentice Hall of India. pp 11-64.

Lyous, John. (2002). *Language & Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter-IV pp 100-135.

Richards, et al. (1985). *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics.* Longman.

Verma, S. K, & Krishnaswamy N. (1989). *Modern Linguistics*. Oxford University Press. pp 58-79.

Wood, F.T (1969). *An Outline History of English Language*. (2nd Edn). Macmillan. Chapter VI pp 109-148.

Yule, George. (2006). *The study of Language.* Cambridge pp 62-72.



6.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1: a) inflections, b) derivational morphology, c) zero morph, d) Bound morphemes, e) minimal, f) homophones

Ans to Q 2: a) False b) False c) False d) False e) True f) True

Ans to Q 3: a) orthographic word, b) action, c) semantic words, d) affixes, e) root, f) change, g) genitive inflection, h) changing



6.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: Write short notes on:

a) allomorph b) lexeme c) affixes

d) compounding e) back formation f) suppletion

Q 2: Write a brief note on derivational affixes. Give five examples of class changing derivational affixes.

Q 3: Discuss five processes of word-formation in English.

Q 4: Morphologically analyse the following words using appropriate taxes of inflectional and derivational morphology

a) hopelessly b) unlikely c) imitations

* * *

UNIT 7: SYNTAX I

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 What is Syntax?

7.4 Different Elements of Syntax

- 7.4.1 Constituents of a Simple Sentence
- 7.4.2 Constituents of a Noun Phrase
- 7.4.3 Constituents of a Verb Phrase
- 7.4.4 Constituents of a Prepositional Phrase
- 7.4.5 Constituents of Adjective and Adverb Phrases

7.5 Let us Sum up

7.6 Further Reading

7.7 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

7.8 Possible Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concept of syntax with reference to English
- enlist different syntactic constituents in a sentence structure
- identify different kinds of relationships of the constituents in a sentence structure
- discuss the relationship between syntax and semantics

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall take up the different constituents of the sentence and look at the ways by which these constituents are structured. We have already discussed the structure of words in our unit on Morphology (Unit 6). Here the attempt will be to see how these constituents like *words* form part of longer constituents like *phrases* and *clauses* and even *sentences*. We shall see how structural linguistics has made an attempt to describe the structure of sentences by using structuralist tools. The *Immediate*

Constituent Analysis or I C Analysis is essentially a structuralist approach to the analysis of sentence structure. Structural linguistics applied what is known as the *discovery procedure* in its attempt to search for a set of operations for the correct description of a language structure. However, with the newer thinking about language as a rule-governed creative process, or a rule-governed activity, there have appeared newer models of sentence analysis. The transformational framework initiated by Noam Chomsky had provided an alternative approach to the study of syntactic structure. We shall take up a discussion on this approach to syntactic structure in a later sub-unit. You will note that we will be making use of different techniques of presenting sentence structures. In most cases, we shall be using the *tree diagram* and in certain cases we shall be making use of the *box diagram* especially in IC analysis.

A tree diagram is a two-dimensional diagram used as a means of displaying the internal *hierarchical structure* of sentences. The *root* of the tree diagram is at the top of the diagram, consisting of the initial symbol 'S'. From the topmost point or *node*, branches descend to the categories that are the constituents of the sentence or 'S' and necessary labels have to be given to different branches as shown in the example below. The term *sub-tree* is used for a sub-section of a tree diagram isolated for the purpose of discussion. For example the section marked NP with its branches ? Det + N is a sub-tree. Points like NP, VP from where branching takes place, are referred to as *branching nodes*.

Box diagrams can also be used to display the hierarchical structure of a string of elements. The internal structure of the sentence *The boy kicked the ball* can be shown in a box diagram as follows:

Both these techniques have been used in this unit to display the structure of a string of elements. The same information can be displayed by using different types of brackets– square, round and curly brackets as in generally done in Mathematics. However, the bracketing technique is not used here and hence we have not described it here. We shall begin our unit with a discussion on the concept of syntax in the next section of the unit.

7.3 WHAT IS SYNTAX?

The term *syntax* is used in linguistics as a level of linguistic description along with *phonology, morphology* and *semantic*. The term is used for the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language. A syntactic analysis of a language is a description of the sentence structures. It associates with morphology, the study of word-structure to study the ways words are structured and arranged to express relationship of meaning sometimes within and sometimes between sentences. Earlier generation of linguists like Bloomfield (1933) had rightly observed *grammar* as an umbrella term with *morphology* and *syntax* as constituents. (Language, 184). We shall build on that observation in our study of syntax.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is a tree-diagram? What is its purpose?

Q 2: What is a sub-tree diagram? What is its purpose?

Q 3: What is a branching node?

Q 4: What is meant by hierarchy?

Q 5: Draw I C analysis of the following–

a) All the boys.

b) A temple stood on the hill.

c) A very old temple.

d) The boy broke the window.

e) The little girl lost her doll.

Q 6: What is an ultimate constituent?

Q 7: Give two weaknesses of I C analyses.

Q 8: What is I C analysis?

7.4 DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF SYNTAX

In our attempt to explore the different elements of syntax in this section, we should note how the principles of I C analysis operate in order

to present a description of the basic linguistic units of a sentence structure. It is notable that the system of I C analysis is a tool of structural linguistics for working out a “discovery procedure” which when applied to the data of an unknown language would yield the correct description of the language. The term *discovery procedure* refers to a set of techniques which can be automatically or mechanically applied to a sample of language and which will produce a correct grammatical analysis.

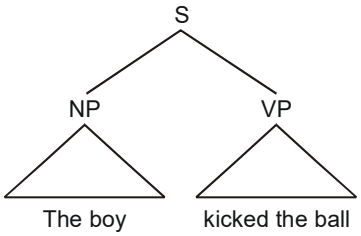
However, it has been found that it is never possible for discovery procedure to identify with certainty all the factors which lead us in the direction of a particular analysis. Besides, newer models of syntactic analysis have been evolved. In this context, the celebrated work of Noam Chomsky titled *Syntactic Structures* (1957) requires special mention. In this book Chomsky present three models of grammar, namely (a) *finite state grammar*, (b) *phrase structure grammar* and (c) *transformational grammar*.

Chomsky observes that the finite state grammar is an extremely simple kind of grammar. It is incapable of accounting for many important processes of sentence formation. As an alternative, he suggests the possibilities of Phrase Structure grammar as a marked improvement over I C analysis as well as Finite State grammar. Phrase Structure (PS) grammar considers the sentence as a linear sequence of elements. The aim is to formulate a set of *P.S. rules* by following certain conventions and notations in formal terms (against functional). Let us now look at the different elements of syntax. For this purpose, we need to see how these elements are structured in the sentence. In other words, we will be looking at the building blocks of sentences. We will also attempt to formulate the P S rules which describe how sentences and their constituents are structured. We shall begin with the simple sentence structure.

7.4.1 Constituents of a Simple Sentence

Let us take the sentence *The boy kicked the ball* once again. We had used this sentence for an I C analysis wherein we had used functional labels. By using formal labels we now say that the sentence (S) consists of a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase

(VP). We shall identify the elements of the NP and the VP in due course, but presently let us represent the constituents of the sentence with a tree diagram:



We can formulate a rule to state that a sentence (S) consists of an NP and VP.

$$S \rightarrow NP + VP$$

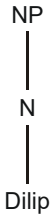
Here, S, NP, VP are called category symbols; the arrow '®' stands for 'consists of' or 'is rewritten

as'. The two triangles under NP and VP indicate that we are not analysing their elements at this stage.

In sub-section 7.4.2, we shall explore the elements of the NP.

7.4.2 Constituents of a Noun Phrase

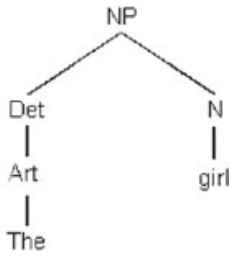
(a) In a sentence structure, the noun phrase (NP) is a kind of construction with a single constituent which could be a noun or a noun equivalent (pronoun, demonstrative, wh-word). This information is diagrammatically represented as follows:



Rule: NP'!N

(b) The NP could be a construction with other elements preceding the N. eg.

(ii)

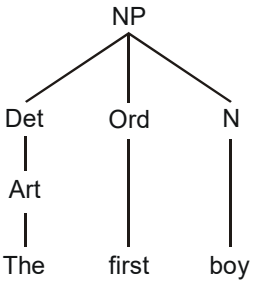


Rule : NP' → Det + Ord + N

Det' → (Art) (Dem) (Poss) (wh–det)

[Det = determiner, Art = article, Dem = demonstrative, Poss = possessive, wh-det = what, which]

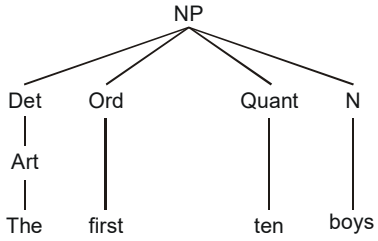
(iii)



Rule : NP' → Det + Ord + N

[Ord = ordinal eg. first, second, last etc.]

(iv)

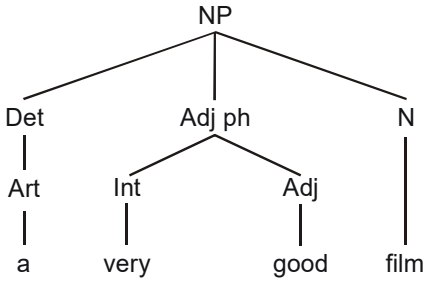


Rule : NP' → Det + Ord + Quan + N

Quan ' → One, two, ten etc.

[Quant = quantifier]

(v)

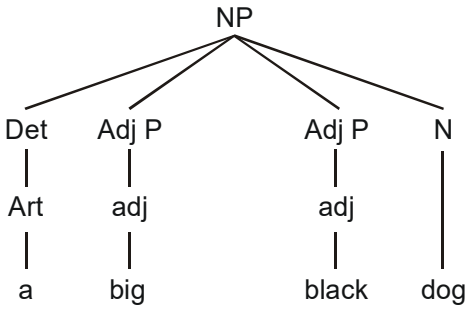


Rule : NP' → Det + Adj ph + N

Adj ph ' → Int + Adj

[Int = Intensifier, Adj = Adjective]

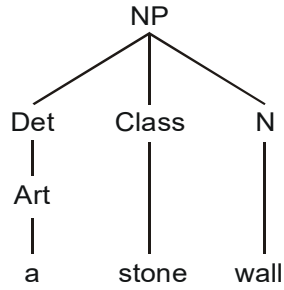
(vi)



Rule : NP' → Art + Class + N

[Class = Classifier]

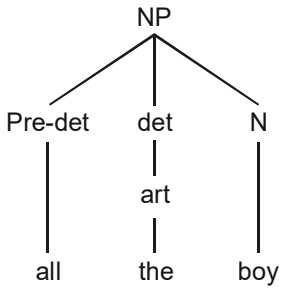
(vii)



Rule : NP' → Art + Class + N

[Class = Classifier]

(viii)



Rule: NP' → Pre det + det + N

Pre det' → pre-determiner (all, half of etc.)

If we frame a rule for the elements in the NP based upon the examples from (i) to (vii), we can say

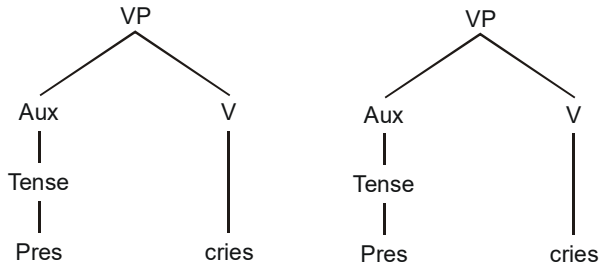
NP' → (Pre-det) + (Det) + (Ord) + (Quen) + (Adj ph) + N

7.4.3 Constituents of a Verb Phrase

In an active, affirmative and declarative English sentence, the verb phrase (VP) immediately follows the NP. The VP may have different constituents, it could be a single constituent like *cried* or *cries* or it may be a group of verbs out of which one is the main verb and the others are auxiliaries. Some forms of the VP are discussed below :

a) In a VP a single constituent like cried/cries in a sentence like *The baby cried/cried*. The constituent is not exactly single. It consists of an auxiliary which in this case is a realization of the tense. e.g.

i) *cries* ii) *cried*

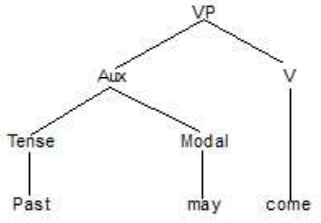


Rule : VP' → Aux + V

Aux' → Tense (pres/past)

b) VP, having a group of verbs out of which one is the main verb :

i) might come

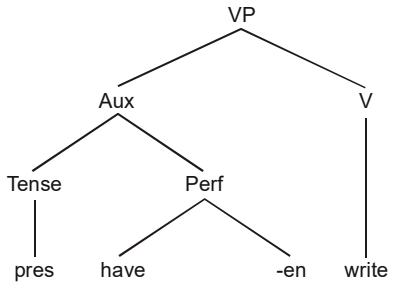


Rule : VP' → Aux +

Aux' → Tense + Model

(Both Tense and model are constituents of the VP)

ii) *have written*

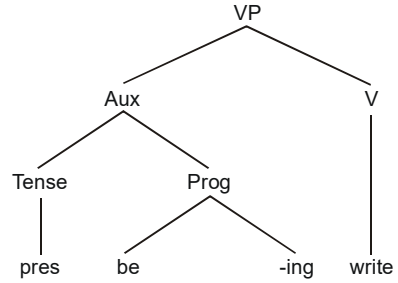


Rule: VP' → Aux + V

Aux' → Tense + Perf

Perf' → have + en

iii) *is writing*

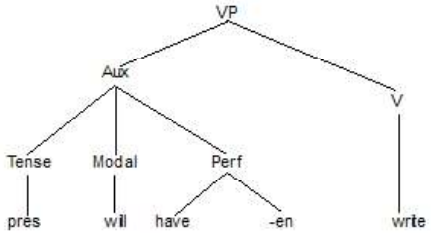


Rule: VP' → Aux + V

Aux' → Tense + Prog

Prog' → be + -ing

iv) *will have written*

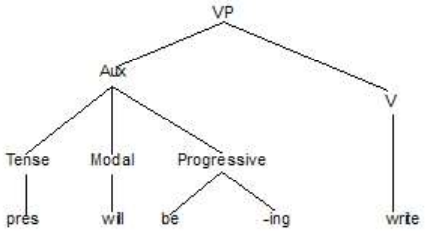


Rule: VP' → Aux + V

Aux' → Tense + Model + Perf

Perf ' → have + -en

v) *will be writing*

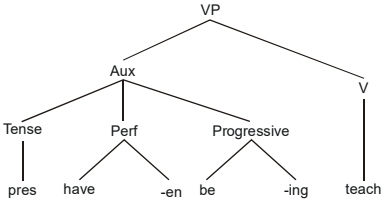


Rule: VP' → Aux + V

Aux ' → Tense + Mod + Prog

Prog ' → be + –ing

vi) *have been teaching*



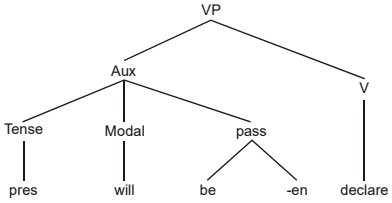
Rule : VP' → Aux + V

Aux ' → Tense + perf + prog

Perf ' → have + –en

Prog ' → be + –ing

vii) *will be declared*



Rule: VP ' → Aux + V

Aux' → Tense + Modal +Pass

pass' → be + –en

From the above discussion, we now know that the basic constituents of the VP include the auxiliary and the main verb eg.

VP' → Aux + V. The constituents of the Aux include the following constituents:

Aux' → Tense + (Modal) + (Perf) + (Prog) + (Pass)

The constituents in brackets indicate that they are optional elements while the constituent *Tense* which is not in brackets is the obligatory element in the VP.

7.4.4 Constituents of the Prepositional Phrase

When you look at the basic clause structure of English (also known as the seven basic sentence patterns), you will see how the constituents in each pattern is structured. Look at these patterns :

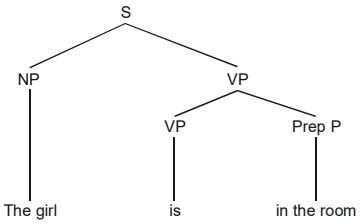
1) Subject + Verb (Intransitive)
2) Subject + Verb + Adverbial
3) Subject + Verb + Object
4) Subject + Verb + Complement
5) Subject + Verb +Object + Adverbial
6) Subject + Verb + Object + Complement
7) Subject + Verb + Object + Object

In the above account, we have used functional labels like subject, object, complement, adverbial. When we look at their forms, we find that the subject and the objects are generally *noun phrases*. The complement can be a *noun phrase* or an *adjective phrase*. On the other hand the *adverbial* in the structure *Subject + Verb + Adverbial* and the structure *Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial* are invariably prepositional phrases, e.g.

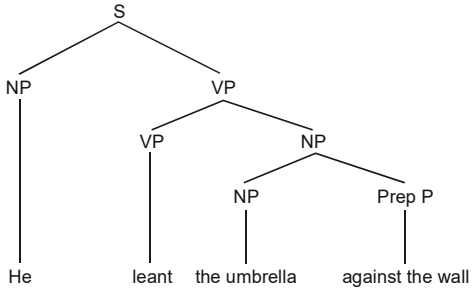
a)	*The girl*	*is*	*in the room*.	
	sub (S)	verb (V)	adverbial (A)	
b)	*He*	*leant*	*the umbrella*	*against the wall*
	S	V	Object	A

Let us look at the constituents with the help of a tree diagram:

a) *The girl is in the room*

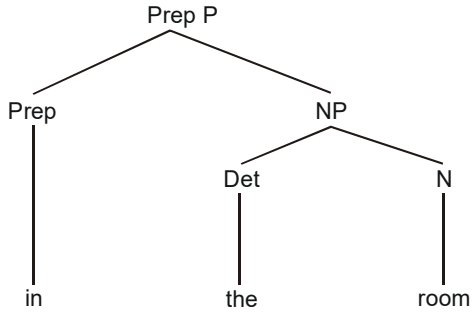


b) *He leant the umbrella against the wall*



In our earlier sections, we have discussed the constituents of the NP and the VP. Let us take up the prepositional phrase construction here.

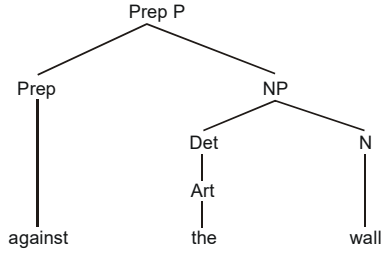
i) *in the room*



P.S. Rule : Prep P' → Prep + NP

NP' → Det + N

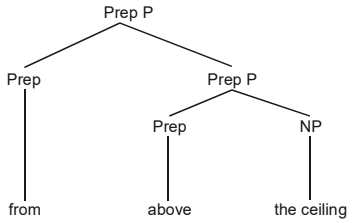
ii) *against the wall*



P.S. Rule : Prep P' → Prep + NP

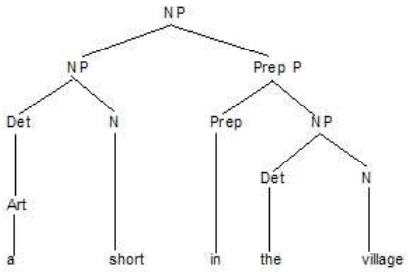
NP' → Det + N

ii) Prepositional phrases containing another prep p e.g. from above the ceiling



P.S. Rule : Prep P ' $\rightarrow$ P +

iv) Prepositional phrases within NPs e.g. *A school in the village*



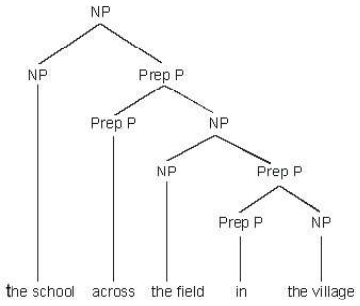
P.S. Rule : NP' $\rightarrow$ NP + Prep P

NP' $\rightarrow$ Det + N

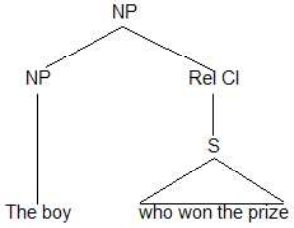
Prep P' $\rightarrow$ + NP

v) There may be more than one Prep Ps in an NP e.g. *the school* *across the field* *in the village*

NP Prep P Prep P



These forms of the NP are also possible. Interestingly we can even have sentences within NPs esp. relative clause e.g. The boy *who won the prize*



7.4.5 Constituents of Adjective and Adverb Phrases

In our discussion on the constituents of the NP at 7.4.2, we had noted that the adjective phrase (Adj P) can be a constituent of the NP. In fact there may be more than one adjective phrase as constituents in the NP. An Adj P can consist of only one adjective e.g. the adjective *old*.

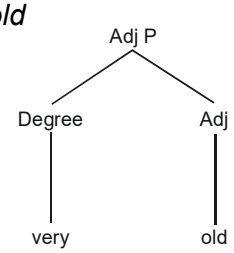
i)



P.S. Rule : Adj P' → Adj

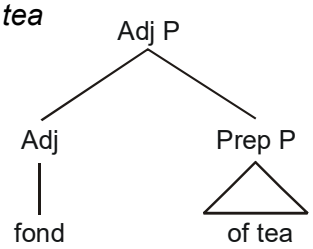
However, we shall see that an Adj P can have other constituents as well.

ii) *very old*



Rule : Adj P' → Degree + Adj

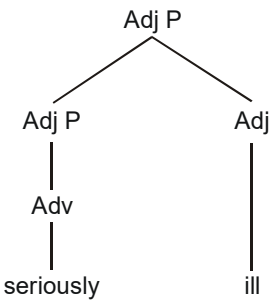
iii) *fond of tea*



Rule: Adj P' → Adj + Prep P

Prep P ' → Adj + NP

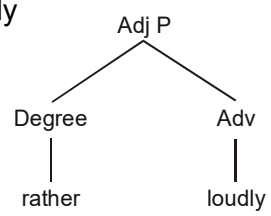
iv) *seriously ill*



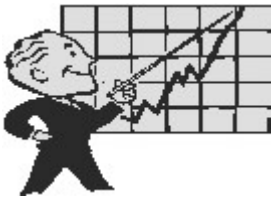
Rule : Adj P ' → + Adj + (Prep P)

v) The Adv P at (iv) above can have other elements too

rather loudly



Rule : Adv P' → (Deg) + Adv



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: Draw tree diagrams of the following syntactic constituents and formulate the P.S. rules.

Noun Phrases:

i) The last lesson

ii) The first three months

iii) All the boys who came yesterday

iv) The tired, old man who lives in the village

Verb Phrases in the following sentences:

i) I saw the film

ii) I have seen the film

iii) She has been reading since morning

iv) The train had left

Prepositional phrases:

i) at the station

ii) for an hour

iii) from above the clouds

iv) in the morning

Sentence:

i) The girl wrote the poem

ii) John is a singer

Q 10: Write short notes on

i) discovery procedure

ii) Determiner

iii) Ordinal

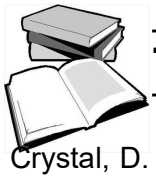
iv) Quantifier

Q 11: Give examples of the seven basic sentence patterns.



7.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we looked at the different constituents of the sentence structure and identified different techniques of presenting sentence structures by making use of *box diagrams* and *tree diagrams*. In this unit, we learnt the hierarchical structure of syntactic constituents in terms of sentence'!clause'!phrase'!word'!morphome. We learnt the technique of I.C. analysis and noted its strengths and weakness. We learnt the different elements of syntax in terms of the sentence, the NP, the VP, the Prep P, the Adj P, the Adverb P, the Complex NP. We learnt the formulation of P.S. Rules and T. Rules. We noted the concepts of deep structure and surface structure. We also understood the relationship between syntax and semantics.



7.6 FURTHER READING

Crystal, D. (1984). *First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. London:* Andre Deutch.

Lyons, John. (2002). *Language and Linguistics.* Cambridge.

Prakashan, V. & Abbi, A. (1986). *Semantic Theories and Language Teaching,* Allied, India.

Radford, Andrew. (2007). *Transformational Grammar.* Cambridge.

Syal, P & Jindal D. V. (1999). *An Introduction to Linguistics.* Prentice Hall of India.

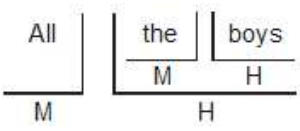
Verma, S. K., & Krishnaswami. (1999). *Modern Linguistics.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.



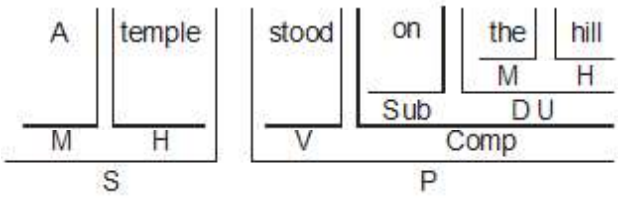
7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1-4: See *Introduction* to this unit.

Ans to Q 5: a)



b)

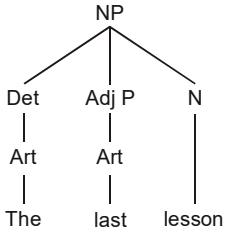


c)– (e) try yourself

Ans to Q 6-8: See Section 5.3.2

Ans to Q 9: *Noun Phrases*

i) *The last lesson*



P.S. Rule: NP' → Det + Adj P + N

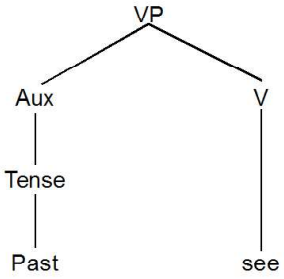
Adj P' → Adj

Det' → Art

ii) – (iv) Try yourself

Verb Phrase

i)I *saw* the film

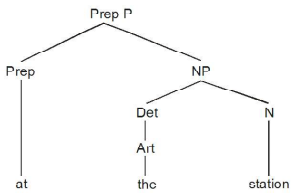


P.S. Rule: VP' → Aux + V

Aux' → Tense

Prep Phrase

i) *at the station*



P.S. Rule: Prep P' → Prep + NP

NP' → Det + N

Det' → Art

Sentence

P.S. Rule: S' → NP + VP

NP' → Det + N

VP' → VP + NP

VP' → Aux + V

(Note VP: The bar on the top indicates a lower category than the VP without the box)

Ans to Q 10-11: Try yourself



7.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: Write a note on I C Analysis.

Q 2: Discuss the limitations of I C Analysis.

Q 3: How do you account for the hierarchical structure of English sentences?

Q 4: Write notes on:

a) Noun Phrase

b) Verb Phrase

c) Prepositional Phrase

d) Adjective Phrase

Q 5: What is T. G. Grammar?

Q 6: Derive the following interrogative sentences from their kernels :

a) Did the girl write the poem?

b) Have you read the book?

* * *

UNIT 8: SYNTAX II

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Different Elements of Syntax

8.4 I.C. Analysis

8.5 T.G. Grammar

- 8.5.1 Distinctions of Traditional Grammar with TG Grammar
- 8.5.2 Deep and Surface Structure
- 8.5.3 Transformational Analysis

8.6 Syntax and Semantics

8.7 Let us Sum up

8.8 Further Reading

8.9 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

8.10 Possible Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- understand the different elements of syntax
- appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of I.C. Analysis
- understand the techniques underlying T. G. Grammar
- distinguish between the features of syntax and semantics.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit is a continuation of Unit–7 titled Syntax–I wherein we discussed the term syntax as a level of linguistic description. We discussed in that unit how constituents like the word combine to form phrases, clauses and sentences. We discussed the constituent structures of the NP, VP, Prep P, Adj P and Adv P. In this unit we shall discuss the constituents in terms of the hierarchical structure of the language by taking the morpheme as the smallest and the sentence as the largest unit forming a hierarchy.

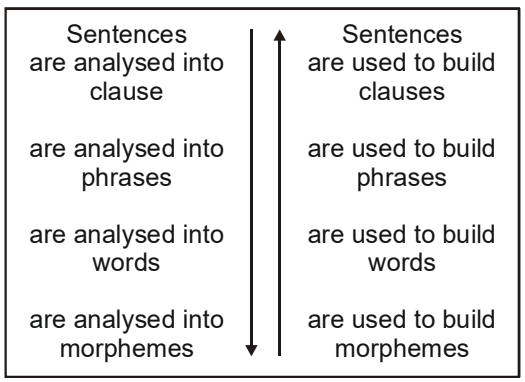
Next, we discuss the concept of Immediate Constituent Analysis or I C Analysis which is essentially a structuralist approach to the analysis of

sentence structure. Structural linguistics applied what is known as the discovery procedure in its attempt to search for a set of operations for the correct description of a language structure. In our presentation of I C analysis, we shall use the tree diagram as a convenient way of description of the constituents.

We shall note that with the later development on the study of language as a rule-governed creative process, there had appeared an alternative approach to the study of syntactic structure known as transformational generative grammar commonly called TG grammar initiated by the American linguist Noam Chomsky. His model of grammatical description proposed in *Syntactic Structures* (1957) was further revised in his book *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). The theory of grammar as presented in the book was called the Standard Theory. Chomsky presented three models of grammar namely, Finite State grammar, Phrase Structure grammar and Transformational Grammar along with a set of Rewrite rules or Phrase Structure rules (P.S. Rules) and transformational rules. We shall introduce you to the operations of TG grammar and conclude the unit with a discussion on the distinction between syntax and semantics.

8.3 DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF SYNTAX

The term *syntax* in Greek means 'arrangement'. The different elements of syntax refer to the constituents or units that are arranged to form larger constructions: the *phrase,* the *clause* and the *sentence*. These constituents of syntax form a hierarchical structure of five ranks which can be shown as follows:



In the description above, the morpheme is the smallest unit of grammatical inquiry. In the hierarchical structure, it is placed at one end of the scale while the sentence is placed at the other end. In between them, there are several syntactic constituents related to one another in a hierarchy. The point can be illustrated with the following example:

(1) The passengers had noticed that the train had been running very late.

This sentence contains the following two clauses:

a) The passengers had noticed

b) that the train had been running very late.

Clause (a) contains the following phrases:

i) The passengers

ii) had noticed

Clause (b) contains the following phrases:

i) the train

ii) had been running

iii) very late.

The sentence contains a few words made up of more than one morpheme:

- passengers = passenger + plural morpheme ‘s’.
- noticed = notice + past tense morphome ‘–ed’.
- had = have + past tense.
- been = be + past participle ‘–en’.
- running = run + present participle ‘–ing’.

(Note that ‘that’ is a subordinator in the sentence.)

The above discussion makes it clear that the sentence contains a hierarchical structure of a number of constituents belonging to a restricted set of categories. By considering the nature of categories, we postulate a two level theory of categories.

(1) Word level category: Noun (N), Verb (V), Adjective (Adj.), Preposition (P), Adverb (Adv.), Modal (Mod.), Determines (Det.) etc.

(2) Phrase level category: Noun Phrase (NP), Verb Phrase (VP) Adjective Phrase (Adj. P), Preposition Phrase (PP), Adverbial Phrase (Adv. P).

8.4. I.C. ANALYSIS

In this unit we attempt to discuss how the principles of immediate constituent analysis, commonly called I C analysis operates in a description of the basic linguistic units of a sentence structure. It is notable that the system of I C analysis is a tool of structural linguistics for working out a "discovery procedure" which when applied to the data of an unknown language would yield the correct description of the language. The term *discovery procedure* refers to a set of techniques which can be automatically or mechanically applied to a sample of language and which will produce a correct grammatical analysis.

One of the important contributions of structural linguistics to the theory of syntax has been the analysis of immediate constituents of a sentence structure. Immediate constituent analysis, commonly known as I C Analysis is an approach for the analysis of sentence structures. It works through a process of pure segmentation, dividing a sentence structure into its immediate constituents in a series of steps up to a stage when no further divisions can be made. As in the case of words (see the unit on Morphology) there is a hierarchy of structuring in sentences. Through I C analysis we can discover how units are layered in sentences, each lower-level division can be seen in terms of a constituent that is part of a higher level constituent. Let us takes the sentence *The boy chased the dog* and analyse the hierarchy of structuring of constituents:

In order to break up the constituents to its smallest unit known as the *ultimate constituents*, we followed the following steps.

a) Identifying the two major constituents of the sentence: *The boy* and *chased the dog*.

b) Dividing the next bigger constituent into *chased* and *the dog*.

c) Continue dividing the constituents into two until no further division can be made *The boy* into *The* and *boy*, *chased* into *chase* and *ed*, *the dog* into *the* and *dog*.

Thus, we have *the*, *by*, *chase*, *ed*, *the*, and *dog* as the ultimate constituents of the sentence. They are ultimate constituents because these

constituents cannot be broken down any further at the morphological level. Each of these units is a morpheme.

Having broken up a sentence into its constituents of different levels of hierarchy, we can start labelling the constituents. Structural linguistics has provided several models of labelling of I C Analysis. Some structural linguists group constructions in terms of the *function* of the constituents namely:

- The structure of Predication (Subject + Predicate)
- The structure of Modification (Modifier + Head)
- The structure of Complementation (Verbal + Complement)
- The structure of Sub-ordination (Subordinator + Dependent unit)
- The structure of Co-ordination (Independent unit + Co-ordinator + Independent unit)

Each of these structures is briefly illustrated below:

(a) The Structure of Predicate: In the I C analysis framework, the structure of a simple sentence can be analysed in terms of the structure of predication i.e. in terms of *subject* (S) and *predicate* (P). The sentence– *The boy kicked the ball* can be analysed in terms of S and P by using the box diagram as follows:

(**b) The Structure of modification:** The structure implies that a noun phrase (NP) construction can be analysed in terms of Modifiers and Head or M+H. In an NP, the head-word may be a noun which is called Head and the determiner that precedes it is called Modifier. We take the subject NP of The boy kicked the ball i.e. The boy

The boys
M H

When the NP consists of additional elements, as in All the boys, the analysis can be mode as follows.

All the boys
M H
M H

Here the pre-determiner modifies the NP the boys.

(c) The Structure of Complementation: This structure implies that the predicate part of a sentence can be analysed in terms of verbal and complement or v+c as in

The boy kicked the ball
v c

Traditionally, in the above sentence, 'the ball' is the object of the sentence. The use of v+c here indicates that in I C analysis a distinction between the object and the complement is not felt necessary. The term complement is used to cover both object and complement.

(**d) The Structure of Subordinator:** This structure of subordination implies that a prepositional phrase construction within a sentence can be analysed in terms of subordinator and dependent unit or sub + DU. Generally, the preposition element in a prepositional phrase construction is a subordinator as in the prepositional phrase in the room which is analysed below:

in the room
M H
Sub DU

We can now take a complete sentence to break up the elements in a binary structure

The man lives in this village
M H
sub D U
M H V C
S P

(e) The Structure of Co-ordination: The structure can be illustrated with a sentence construction having two independent units that are linked by or co-ordinated by a conjunction or a co-ordinator or iu +co+iu. It is natable that while in other analyses a binary pattern is used, it is only in the structure of co-ordination that a non-binary pattern is considered acceptable. These independent units may be:

(i) two independent clauses that traditionally constitute a compound sentence:

He is a teacher but his wife is a nurse
iu co iu

(ii) two noun phrases linked by a coordinator

An old man and his two grandsons

iu co iu

iii) two nouns linked by a co-ordinator

Jack and Jill

iv co iv

Weaknesses of IC analysis:

One of the major weaknesses of IC analysis is that it fails to distinguish between *object* and *complement* in its analysis and treats sentences like *She is a teacher* and *She wrote the letter* both in terms of S+V+C construction. Thereby, it confuses object and complement in its analysis.

Secondly, the binary divisions do not hold good for yes no type interrogative sentence patterns as in: *Is he coming?*, *Are you coming?* etc. since the 'be' is a part of the verb phrase construction. One has to make use of other divisions such as:

is he coming

Such descriptions are rather difficult to comprehend.

Thirdly, depending upon meaning, an ambiguous sentence or a phrase like *old men and women* would require more than one analysis. For example,

a) When both men and women are old :

Old men and women

lU CO lU

M H

b) When only the men are old :

Old men and women

M H

lU CO lU

Fourthly, I C analysis fails to reveal the relationships between sentence types such as active and passive, affirmative and negative, statement and questions, simple, complex and compound sentences.

Moreover, there are several models of I C analysis. The earliest model was developed by Bloomfield but was later modified by Kenneth Pike and

systematized by other linguists subsequently. With so many models available to us, one is likely to get confused with models.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Draw I C analysis of the following:

(a) All the boys

(b) A temple stood on a hill

(c) A very old temple

(d) The boy broke the window.

(e) The little girl lost her doll.

8.5 T. G. GRAMMAR

Transformational generative grammar generally known as TG grammar is a model of grammatical description proposed by the American linguist Noam Chomsky in a book titled *Syntactic Structures* (1957). A radically revised form of the model appeared in his book *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965) where Chomsky presents three models of grammar, namely (a) *finite state grammar*, (b) *phrase structure grammar* and (c) *transformational grammar*.

Chomsky observes that the finite state grammar is an extremely simple kind of grammar. It is incapable of accounting for many important processes of sentence formation. As an alternative, he suggests the possibilities of Phrase Structure grammar as a marked improvement over Finite State grammar. Phrase Structure (PS) grammar considers the sentence as a linear sequence of elements described through a set of *P.S. rules* by following certain conventions and notations in formal terms (against functional) and lexical rules. In addition Chomsky proposed transformational rules (T rules) as we shall see here.

8.5.1 Distinctions of Traditional Grammar with TG Grammar

Basically, grammar is a way of talking about how we use words to make units called phrases, clauses and sentences that communicate meaning. The meaning of a sentence is greater than

the meaning of individual words that make the larger units. Words are elements or units that enter into relations with other words to form new units at different levels of complexity. Grammar makes statements about linguistic units and their relations. For example, let us take the sentence that we had used in our description of I.C. Analysis: *The boy kicked the ball.* Traditional grammar will analyse the sentence as follows:

The boy / / kicked / the ball.

Sub pred

(a) The boy : subject

(b) kicked the ball : predicate

(c) kicked : verb

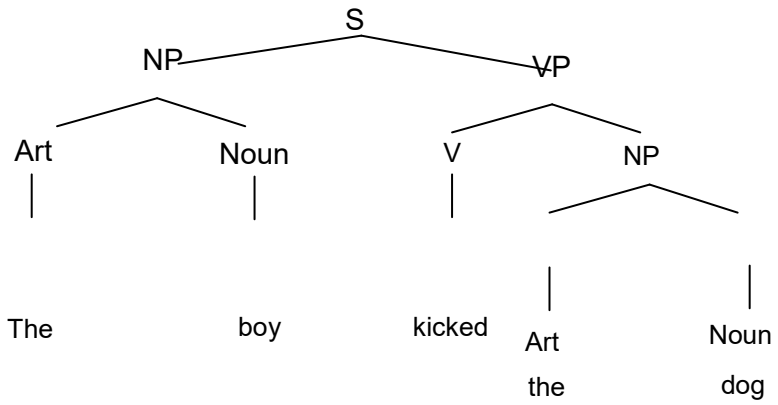
(d) the ball : object

Let us now take the same sentence for a description in the framework of structural linguistics. In structural linguistics the analysis would indicate that the sentence in question is an instance of an English sentence pattern of the form:

Det + noun + verb + det + noun

Here det stands for determiner. The first noun in the pattern functions as the subject and the second noun as the object.

Now let us try to find out how the analysis made by transformational generative grammar, briefly called TG grammar will look like. In TG grammar the analysis of the sentence 'The boy kicked the dog' will look like this:



We can explain the rules underlying the way the sentence is made. These rules called phrase structure (PS) rules and lexical

rules are a marked improvement over I C analysis by considering the sentence as a linear sequence of elements. PS rules are formulated by following certain conventions and notations in formal terms (against functional). The PS rules operating in the above sentence are as follows:

(a) *PS Rules*

S $\rightarrow$ NP + VP

NP $\rightarrow$ Det + N

VP $\rightarrow$ V + NP

(b) *Lexical rules*

Det $\rightarrow$ the

N $\rightarrow$ boy, ball

V $\rightarrow$ kicked

Although the information given in the three different analyses namely traditional grammar, structural linguistics and TG grammar is essentially identical, the three approaches differ substantially in their mode of presenting the information.

(a) In traditional grammar the relation between words is highlighted. That is, the words are grouped into units whose relative function is indicated by the terms subject, verb and object

(b) The structural pattern is almost the opposite. It directly identifies the basic units by parts of speech but does not itself indicate the relations the words enter into to form larger units.

(c) The TG analysis directly identifies the parts of speech of the individual words and at the same time, shows the abstract units formed by relations between words.

But this is not the only strong point about TG grammar. If there were no more than this to TG grammar, the kind of analysis presented here would be merely a revised version of traditional grammatical description presented diagrammatically. TG grammar is fundamentally different from both traditional grammar and structural linguistics in two ways:

(i) TG grammar provides a two-stage analysis. The analysis with the help of a tree diagram followed by the PS rules, constitute the first stage.

(ii) The second stage may add new elements to the string of words in the first analysis, it may delete words from the string, or it may rearrange the words of the string into a new order e.g. active – passive.

These changes are called transformations. New sentences in the language are generated through the process of transformations and it is from this process of generating sentences that the term *transformational generative grammar* is taken. One group of transformations changes certain types of active sentences into a corresponding passive sentence. For example, let us look at the following pairs of sentences:

1. The boy kicked the ball.
2. The ball was kicked by the boy.

These sentences have the same meaning; but they are different arrangement of words. Sentence 2 has reversed the two noun phrases of sentence 1, added the verb *be*, changed the verb *kicked* into *was kicked* and added the preposition *by*. Thus one of the basic ideas of TG grammar is that more than one second stage sentence can be produced from a single first stage sentence.

8.5.2 Deep and Surface Structure

In TG grammar each sentence is considered to have two levels of structure: deep structure and surface structure. The surface structure is generally the syntactic structure of the sentence which a person speaks, hears, reads or writes. Look at these pairs of sentences:

1. The police arrested the thief.
2. The thief was arrested.

The string of words given in sentence 1 is called a *deep structure* that contrasts with the term *surface structure*.

The term *deep structure* refers to the "abstract syntactic representation of a sentence – an underlying level of structural organization which specifies all the factors governing the way the sentence should be interpreted" (Crystal). The first string "The police arrested the thief" is the deep structure while its passive form in the string of words given in sentence 2 is the surface structure. The deep structure analysis not only provides parts of speech information about the individual words but also shows the way words are related to form more abstract units.

Lexical items are inserted into syntactic forms, with the application of "selection restrictions" and concepts such as *subject, object* are defined. By applying the principles of 'selection restriction'– a term from semantics– we avoid semantic anomalies. The rules prevent the generation of un-meaningful or anomalous sentences such as **Colourless, green ideas sleep furiously* or combinations such as **silent noise*. We are prevented from saying **The man killed* instead of saying *The man died*.

8.5.3 Transformational Analysis

As the term TG grammar suggests, this category of grammar is both transformational and generative. What is distinctive about this grammar is that it first takes up the P.S. component by analysing the sentences, dividing them into parts and showing their relative functions. But more than that, it completely rearranges them and shows the interrelatedness between sentences. Let us see how T.G. Grammar operates by taking the sentence:

a) The boy read the book.

The deep structure of the sentence is realized in a number of surface structures:

i) The boy did not read the book.
(Surface structure, *negative)*

ii) Did the boy read the book?
(Surface structure, *interrogative*)

iii) Didn't the boy read the book?
(Surface structure, *negative interrogative*)

iv) What did the boy read?
(Surface structure, *interrogative*)

v) The book was read by the boy.
(Surface structure, *affirmative passive*)

vi) The book wasn't read by the boy.
(Surface structure, *negative passive*) etc.

The surface structure sentences are to be treated as transforms of the deep structure. Thus, if we are talking about *interrogative* transforms, we shall present the following derivations:

The boy read the book Did the boy read the book?

The boy read the book Didn't the boy read the book?

Transformational analysis not only shows the interrelations between sentences but also explains the ambiguities between sentences that appear identical but are transforms. Here is a very common ambiguous sentence:

The police stopped drinking by midnight.

The sentence is ambiguous in view of the fact that one deep structure is realized as two different surface structures. We cannot tell whether the police was drinking and stopped doing so or other people were drinking and were stopped from doing so. We can however resolve the ambiguity by showing that the same sentence can be analysed as being transforms of two different sets of deep structures e.g.

a) Some people were drinking. The police stopped this act by midnight.

b) The police were drinking. They stopped drinking by midnight.

Let us now get back to the deep structure once again:

The boy read the book.

Here is an analysis of its surface structure in the interrogative. The PS rules and lexical rules are as follows:

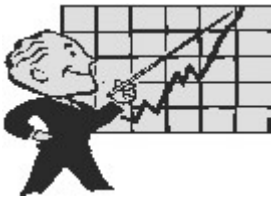
(Copy the tree diagram at the bottom of page 126 original along with the transforms)

Interrog Past – the boy – read – the book

Do support Past – do – the boy – read – the book

Affix switch – the boy – read – the book

By applying the T rules of interrogatives we switched the tense to the front. But since tense (-ed) is a bound morpheme it cannot be attached to a noun and hence there was the need for a do support.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: State how the following sentences are ambiguous:

(a) The shooting of the hunter was terrible.

(b) The chicken is ready to eat.

(c) I saw her in the street.

(d) I like money more than my wife.

8.6 SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

The study of meaning which is the core of semantics became the subject of renewed interest in syntax especially with the development of the Transformational generative model of grammar. However, in the early version of Transformational grammar in the 60s, meaning was virtually ignored. It was then felt that syntactic rules operated independently of meaning. It was with the publication of a paper by Katz and Fodor (1963) titled “The Structure of a Sentence Theory”, that marked a basic change in the approach of syntax to address issues on meaning.

To Katz and Fodor, a sentence in isolation does not convey meaning. Hence, a semantic interpretation of a construction must attain priority over syntactic theories. They observed that to achieve a semantic grasp on a piece of text, two sub-components are of utmost importance :

a) a dictionary of lexical items of the language, and

b) the projection rules which operate on full grammatical description of sentences and on dictionary entries to produce semantic interpretation for every sentence in the language.

The primary contention of the theory of Katz and Fodor is that meaning is a matter of great theoretical concern to syntax. To substantiate the point Katz and Fodor make a reference to (a) *Semantic ambiguity* and (b) *semantic anomaly*. They observe that—

- semantic ambiguity occurs when an underlying structure contains an ambiguous word or words that contribute its or their multiple sense to the meaning of whole sentences, thus enabling that sentence to be used to make more than one statement, request, query etc.
- Semantic anomaly is the limiting case of exclusion by the operation of selection restriction. Semantically anomalous sentences occur when the meanings of the component words of a sentence are such that they cannot combine to form a coherent and directly intelligible sentence, (Katz, 1966).

One of the major concerns of TG grammar has been to explain ambiguities and paraphrase relationships. This is an area where syntax and semantics come together. in the terminology of TG Grammar, an ambiguity results when two different deep structures happen by accident to end up with exactly the same surface structures. For example, by different transformations the two unrelated deep structure sentences *Planes which fly can be dangerous* and *For a person to fly planes can be dangerous* can have the same surface structure:

Flying planes can be dangerous.

Why is this sentence ambiguous? The ambiguity of this sentence occurs from the fact that there are at least two meanings of this sentence:

a) Planes which fly can be dangerous. (They may hit eagles, other planes and cause a variety of other disasters to passengers.)

b) For a person to fly a plane, i.e. a pilot, the activity is dangerous. (It is not exactly like riding a bicycle in the backyard of your house).

In T.G. grammar, a paraphrase relation results when one deep structure sentence can be turned into two or more different surface sentences by applying different transformations. In sentence (a) above we have the following transformation to resolve the ambiguity:

(i) Planes fly. They can be dangerous.

In sentence (b) above we have the following transformation to resolve the ambiguity:

(ii) Some people fly planes. This can be dangerous.

On the other hand, semantic anomaly is a case of wrong use of collocations. Katz observes that there is a distinct *projection rule* for each distinct grammatical relation. The adequacy of a dictionary entry or a projection rule depends on how well it plays its role within the overall descriptive system. The term "projection" in T.G. Grammar refers to the capability of a grammar to extend the analysis of any given set of sentences so that it applies also to the potentially infinite numbers of sentences in the language as a whole. Projection rules are established as part of the semantic component. Their function is to assign a semantic interpretation to each string of grammatical element generated by the syntactic component.



8.7 LET US SUM UP

The unit begins with a hierarchical presentation of the constituent structures of the morpheme, word, phrase clause and the sentence by taking the morpheme as the smallest and the sentence as the largest unit forming a hierarchy. Next, we discussed the Immediate Constituent Analysis or I C Analysis which is essentially a structuralist approach to the analysis of sentence structure. Structural linguistics applied what is known as the discovery procedure in its attempt to search for a set of operations for the correct description of a language structure. We learnt the technique of analysing the elements of the sentence structure by using the tree diagram. Next, we discussed transformational generative grammar commonly called TG grammar initiated by the American linguist Noam Chomsky. We learnt that this model of grammatical description was proposed by Chomsky in a book titled *Syntactic Structures* (1957). A radically revised form of the mode appeared in his book *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). We discussed the distinction between traditional grammar, structural grammar and TG grammar in three models of grammar namely, Finite State grammar, Phrase Structure grammar and Transformational Grammar along with a set of

Rewrite rules or Phrase Structure rules (P.S. Rules) and transformational rules. We discussed TG grammar by drawing a distinction between deep structure and surface structure. We concluded the unit with a discussion on the distinction between syntax and semantics by addressing the issue of semantic ambiguities and semantic anomaly.



8.8 FURTHER READING

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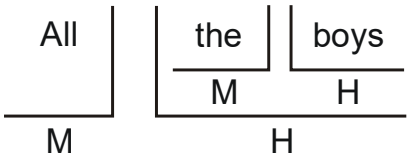
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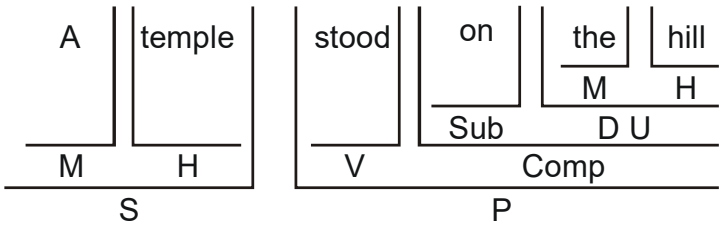
8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1:

a.



b.



(c) – (e) Try yourself

Ans to Q 2:

(a) to (d) Try yourself.



8.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions.

(a) Briefly explain the term ‘ultimate constituent’.

(b) Give an example of a subordinator.

(c) Name the elements in the structure of complementation.

Q 2: Write short notes on

(a) PS Rules

(b) Syntactic constituent

(c) Semantic ambiguity

(d) Semantic anomaly.

Q 3: Answer the following questions.

(a) Discuss the distinctive features of I.C. analysis.

(b) Discuss the terms ‘deep structure’ and ‘surface structure’.

(c) Give an example of a pair of sentences, which differ in surface structure but have the same underlying deep structure.

(d) Analyse the sentence ‘Did the teacher come to class?’ showing the transformation rules that have been used.

* * *

UNIT 9: SEMANTICS I

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Scope of Semantics

9.4 Different Elements of Meaning

- 9.4.1 Conceptual Meaning
- 9.4.2 Connotative Meaning
- 9.4.3 Social & Affective Meaning
- 9.4.4 Reflected and Collocative Meaning
- 9.4.5 Thematic Meaning

9.5 Componential Analysis

9.6 Let us Sum up

9.7 Further Reading

9.8 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

9.9 Possible Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of semantics as a level of linguistic description
- appreciate the scope of semantics as a science of meaning
- distinguish the different elements of meaning
- understand the concept of componential analysis.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we propose to introduce you to the term *semantics* as a level of linguistic description. It is a major branch of linguistics that is concerned with the study of meaning in language. We use language to express meaning so that what we say or write is understood by others. In this unit on semantics our primary concern will be to discuss the concept from a historical perspective by stating that though the term semantics is

fairly new, the subject is very old. In your unit of semantics, you will find that there are several approaches to the study of meaning in language. The study of meaning has a long tradition. It can be traced back to classical Greece to the philosophers Plato and Aristotle. We shall focus our attention to this brief history by mentioning the contributions of Michel Breal, C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards. We next move on to the different elements of meaning beginning with conceptual meaning also known as denotative meaning. You will find that a word is analysed in terms of its different components on the basis of which we provide meaning to a word. Next, we discuss connotative meaning to refer to the meaning which is attributed to a given word or expression by its users. Other elements of meaning that we are taking up in this unit are social and affective meaning to refer to what is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/writer. In our discussion on reflected meaning, we refer to what is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression. While referring to collocative meaning we refer to what is communicated through association with words which tend to occur in the environment with another word. Further, we take up thematic meaning to refer to what is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis. The unit also discusses the concept of componential analysis of meaning. it is an extremely interesting way of formalizing, or making absolutely precise, the sense relations that hold among different lexemes. The other related issues of meaning are being taken up in Unit 10 that follows.

9.3 SCOPE OF SEMANTICS

In very simple terms, semantics is the study of meaning. The term did not come to be widely used until the 20th century, but the subject that it represents is very old, reaching back to the writings of Plato and Aristotle and attracting the special interests of philosophers, logicians and linguists. In Greek studies while the philosophical approach to meaning was to examine the relation between linguistics expressions and the phenomena in the world to which they refer, the logical approach was to study meaning

in terms of logical systems of analysis. The approach of these philosophers to meaning was to investigate the relation between linguistic expressions in words and the things, actions events and qualities they stand for. Such relation, e.g. the relation between the word 'dog' and the 'animal' is seen as referent relation.

However, our concern in this unit is the linguistic approach to meaning. Our primary focus is on the approach of the linguists to the study of the semantic properties of natural languages. Linguists have investigated, for example, the way in which meaning in a language is structured. They have distinguished between different types of meaning. We shall discuss these types here along with the sense and reference relation as well.

From a survey of the literature available in the field, it is found that it was Michel Breal (1832-1915), French philologist who in the year 1893 had coined the French word 'semantique' from the Greek word 'semantikos'. Professor Frank Palmer observes that in 1894, the word 'semantics' was used for the first time in a paper read at the American Philological Association entitled ''Reflected Meaning: A point in Semantics''. In 1900, there appeared Breal's book Semantics : Studies in the science of Meaning (1983- p1). It is one of the earliest books on linguistics as we understand it today in view of the fact that it treated semantics as the science of meaning.

One of the most famous books on the subject is *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards. But In this book the authors hardly use the term 'semantics' though primarily the book deals with topics that touch semantics. Chapter IX of the book ''The Meaning of Meaning'' is exclusively devoted to meaning concepts. In this chapter, the authors list no less than sixteen different meanings of the word 'meaning' (pp 186-187). Here are some of them:

1) An intrinsic property of some thing
2) A unique unanalyzable relation to other things
3) The other word annexed to a word in a dictionary
4) The connotation of a word
5) An essence
6) An activity projected into an object

7) An event intended

8) That which is actually related to a sign by a chosen relation.

These definitions of meaning can be taken as a basis for a discussion on the different aspects of meaning. In our next section of this unit we shall consider some of them.

9.4 DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF MEANING

When we discuss the different elements of meaning we have to understand that meaning cannot be assumed to exist independent of the conceptualization which is shared by the members of a speech community. Taking the definitions of Ogden and Richards, or more appropriately, a follow up of their work, G. N. Leech (1981) brings out seven aspects of meaning which appears to us to be fairly comprehensive for a study of meaning and meaning relations of words. These seven aspects have been discussed below:

9.4.1 Conceptual Meaning

The term 'conceptual meaning' is also known as denotative meaning or logical meaning. This is the literal meaning of a word indicating the idea or concept to which it refers. The idea or concept is the minimal unit of meaning which is referred to as 'sememe' that correlates with phoneme which is the smallest unit of language (written). Lyons (1977) uses the words 'semes' and 'classemes' (p 326) to refer to the minimal distinctive features of meaning. Indeed, there is a similarity between a 'sememe' and a phoneme in the structure and organization of concepts. A phoneme can be described by using three terms labels likes the following ones:

i) /p/ = - voiced + bilabial + plosive

ii) /b/ = + voiced + bilabial + plosive

In the same way a concept can be described in terms of its structure of meaning by making use of three-term labels as follows. Such an analysis of meaning is called componential analysis.

i) man = + human – female + adult

ii) girl = + human + female - adult

iii) cow = + bovine + female + adult

iv) boar = +porcine - female + adult

If any of these conceptual features change, the concept also changes. For example, in (ii) above, if - adult is changed to + adult, the concept of the 'girl' changes to 'woman'. In other words, the change of one minimal quality or 'sememe' changes the concept itself. Hence, it may be stated that conceptual meaning deals with the core meaning of words.

9.4.2 Connotative Meaning

The term connotative meaning is used to refer to the meaning which is attributed to a given word or expression by its users. Connotative meaning is undoubtedly the additional meaning that a concept carries. Leech (1981) defines it as the ''communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to over and above its purely conceptual content''. That is, apart from its denotative meaning, a further meaning is attached to a word, which comes from its reference to other things in the real world.

It is most certainly a fact that in the real world the denotative meaning of a word may be associated with some other features or attributes. For example, the conceptual meaning of cow is : + bovine + female + adult. The connotative meaning of cow is that it is a sacred animal. Thus, connotative meaning is not part of what is conceived, it is part of what is being perceived. The fact that the cow is a sacred animal is part of the connotative meaning of the word cow.

Indeed, connotative meaning consists of the attributes associated with a concept. These association come into use over a period of time in a particular culture and can change with change in time. Thus, though the connotative meaning of cow as a sacred animal is applicable in a particular cultural context, in another cultural

contest it may not hold good. In other words, denotative meaning remains stable since it defines the essential attributes of a concept. But connotative meaning changes as it is based on associations made to the concept. These associations are often subject to change.

9.4.3 Social and Affective Meaning

Social meaning is the meaning that is conveyed by a word or an expression by taking into account the socio-cultural background of the users of a language. The term social meaning is generally used to refer to the sum total of the social circumstances in which a piece of language is used. The social circumstance can be determined by the geographical region or social class. We recognize some words or pronunciation to be regionally or socially at variance.

Secondly, the meaning of that piece of language can be understood according to the different style and situation in which the word is used. For example, though the words 'pal' and 'friend' refer to the same person – that is, their denotative meaning is the same – each of these words belongs to a particular situation of use. The word 'pal' is used in an informal situation, while the word 'friend' is used in a slightly formal situation. Hence, the two words cannot co-occur in the same situation.

Social meaning derives from an awareness of the style in which something is written or spoken and of the relationship between speaker and listener. The relationship which can be formal, semi-formal or informal, largely determines the meaning of a piece of discourse. To illustrate the point, let us take the following sentences:

a) We were somewhat dismayed by his lack of response to our invitation

b) We were rather fed up that he didn't answer when we invited him.

The first utterance is fairly formal unlike the second one which is less formal. The choice of words and phrases determines the stylistic a social level of meaning. Leech (1981) lists four words

meaning ‘a place where one lives’ to illustrate varying degrees of formality :

i) domicile : very formal, official

ii) residence : formal

iii) abode : poetic

iv) home : general

From this, it is only a small step to the consideration of how language reflects an individual’s personal feelings or attitudes to a statement or an utterance. The meaning of that utterance grows out of the listener’s or reader’s response to what he hears or reads, Depending upon his feelings, he ascribes meanings beyond the literal lexical meaning of the piece of text. This is what Leech calls affective meaning (p15). For example a polite remark made to someone in the reading room of a library. ‘‘Why are you making a noise?’’ is not to be interpreted as an information question but the affective meaning which expresses annoyance should be understood.

9.4.4 Reflected and Collocative Meaning

Reflected meaning refers to the meaning, which arises in case of multiple conceptual meaning, when one sense of a word forms part of the response to another sense. As an example, let us take the word ‘simple’ which has several dictionary meanings eg. plain, easy to understand, natural and naïve or easily deceived. In a statement like ‘‘His responses are ‘simple’ and straightforward’’, the speaker may have used the word ‘simple’ to mean ‘natural’. But the meaning ‘naïve’ may be reflected upon the intended meaning.

Reflected meaning of a word is fairly close to collocative meaning. A word can acquire meaning under the collocative influence of the word which it co-occurs with. Collocative meaning consists of the meaning acquired by a word under the influence of the collocated word. The words *pretty* and *handsome* share common ground in the meaning ‘good-looking’ , but may be distinguished by the range of nouns with which they are likely to co-occur or collocate.

- The word pretty can collocate with: girl, boy, woman, flower, garden, colour village, etc.
- The word handsome can collocate with: boy, man, car, overcoat, vessel etc.

The ranges may at times overlap as in the case of boy both the adjectives are preferable although they suggest a different kind of attractiveness because of the collocative association of the two adjectives.

We take another example to show how collocation can bring about new meanings to a word. The word 'make' for example attains different meanings under the influence of collocation eg.

a) make friends : develop friendship

b) make money : earn money

c) make tea : prepare tea

d) make up one's mind : decide

e) make up a story : to create an imaginative story

Thus, collocation confers meaning to a word.

9.4.5 Thematic Meaning

'Thematic meaning' refers to the meaning conveyed by the structure of the discourse or utterance where concepts like topic of discourse and focus of discourse are identified. Topic or theme is what we talk about; focus is the new information we give to the listener or reader. For example, here are two sentences:

a) The Principal gave away the prizes.

b) The prizes were given away by the Principal.

In sentence (a) Principal is the topic or theme and the prizes is the focus– the new information. On the other hand, in sentence (b) the prizes is the topic and the Principal is the focus. It is seen that an active sentence such as (a) ab9ve has a different meaning from its passive counterpart (b) although in conceptual content they seem to be the same. As active and its passive equivalent have

different communicative values in the sense that they suggest different contexts: the active sentence seems to answer an implicit question : 'What did the principal give away?, while the passive sentence seems to answer an implicit question: 'Who gave away the prizes?'

Thematic meaning, as Leech observes, is mainly a matter of choice between alternative grammatical construction as in:

(c) A man is waiting at the gate.

(d) There's a man waiting at the gate.

The choice is determined by the speaker's effort towards focusing attention on that word that contains the new information against a background of what is already assumed to be known.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Say whether the following statements are True or False.

a) The study of meaning is a recent phenomenon. (T/F)

b) The term 'semantics' was not widely used until the 20th century. (T/F)

c) The term 'semantics' was coined by Leonard Bloomfield. (T/F)

d) The literal meaning of a word is known as connotative meaning. (T/F)

e) Concepts like 'Topic of discourse' come under the purview of reflected meaning. (T/F)

Q 2: Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences :

a) The word ..... refers to the minimal unit of meaning.

b) The ..... meaning of cow is that it is a sacred animal

c) The term ..... meaning is generally understood in the context of the use of language in society.

d) A word can acquire meaning under the ..... influence of the word at co-occurs with.

Q 3: Give a componential analysis of

a) woman b) boy c) bull

Q 4: What is collocation?

Q 5: Explain the term sememe.

9.5 COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

In our discussion on conceptual meaning at 9.4.1, we made a reference to the concept of componential analysis. In this sub-section, we would like to elaborate on the term a little more considering its value in analysis of meaning. componential analysis can be defined as an approach to formalizing or making absolutely precise, the sense relations that hold among lexemes. As the name implies componential analysis involves the analysis of the sense of a lexeme into its component parts.

In 9.4.1, we gave examples of componential analysis of a few words: man, girl, cow and boar. You will note that the first two words are human beings. We can therefore extract from the sense of each of them the common factor '+human'. Similarly we cn extract from 'man' the factor '-female' while in the case of girl, we extract the factor '+female'.as for 'man' we can extract another factor '+adult' while for girl we extract the factor '-adult' in the same principle, the sense of the words woman and boy can be analysed as follows.

woman = +human +female +adult

boy = + human -female - adult

As for 'horse', 'stallion', 'mare', 'foal', 'sheep', 'ram', 'ewe', 'lamb', bull', 'cow', 'calf'; these and many other sets of words can be analysed in the same way by substituting +equine, +ovine, +bovine, +porcine etc, as the case may be for +human.



9.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the concept of semantics as a major branch of linguistics that is concerned with the study of meaning in language. We discussed the concept of semantics from a historical perspective by tracing its origins to the philosophers Plato and Aristotle. From that point , we moved on to the twentieth century to bring out the concern of meaning at different times. We made an attempt to show how words derive meaning by considering their conceptual or denotative features. We made an attempt to bring out a contrast between conceptual meaning and connotative meaning. We also showed how meaning is conveyed by a word by taking its socio-cultural background. Besides, we noted the distinctions of reflected and collocative meaning and thematic meaning.



9.7 FURTHER READING

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9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1: a) False b) True c) False d) False e) False

Ans to Q 2: a) Sememe, b) Connotative, c) Social, d) Collocative

Ans to Q 3: a) woman = + human + female + adult

b) boy = + human – female + –adult

c) bull = + bovine – female + adult

Ans to Q 4: see 9.4.4

Ans to Q 5: see 9.4.1.

Ans to Q 6: A

Ans to Q 7: a) move – walk, run, shift,

b) game – football, hockey, tennis

c) sport – swimming , boxing, jumping

d) tree – oak, sal, neem

e) dress – sari, shirt, gown.

Ans to Q 8-9: Try yourself.



9.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: Write short notes on:

a) Conceptual meaning

b) Connotative meaning

c) Social meaning

d) Affective meaning

e) Reflected meaning

f) Collocative meaning

g) Thematic meaning

Q 2: Define the term semantics.

Q 3: Discuss the contribution of Ogden and Richards to semantics.

Q 4: Explain componential analysis. Give a componential analysis of woman, mare, boar.

* * *

UNIT 10: SEMANTICS II

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Meaning Relations

- 10.3.1 Antonymy
- 10.3.2 Synonymy
- 10.3.3 Polysemy
- 10.3.4 Hyponymy
- 10.3.5 Homonymy

10.4 Collocation Restriction

10.5 Sentence Meaning

10.6 Theories of Semantics

- 10.6.1 The Verification Theory
- 10.6.2 The Truth Conditional Theory

10.7 Let us Sum up

10.8 Further Reading

10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress (Hints Only)

10.10 Possible Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- explain the concept of meaning relations in terms of antonymy, synonymy etc.
- appreciate the concept of sentence meaning
- appreciate collocation restriction of words
- discuss the different theories of semantics

10.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the last unit of Block 2. This unit is a continuation of unit 9 of this Block titled Semantics I, wherein we discussed the different elements

of meaning beginning with conceptual meaning. We begin this unit by further exploring the elements of meaning with a distinction between lexical meaning of words and their grammatical meanings and move on to different meaning relations that exist in relation to different words in terms of *antonymy, synonymy, homonymy, polysemy* and *hyponymy.* We begin this unit with a discussion on the antonyms in terms of their gradability (big — small), non-gradability (male — female), relational oppositeness (buy — sell) and binary oppositeness (single —married). Next, we move on to a discussion on the synonyms in terms of absolute synonymy (which is rare in English), partial synonymy (big — large) and near synonymy (handsome — pretty) etc. Other meaning relations that are being taken up include homonymy in terms of absolute homonymy (lead, the name of a metal – lead, show the way) and partial homonymy. We tried to establish a contrast between homonymy and polysemy which refers to a case of a single lexical item having multiple meanings. Then we moved to hyponymy which refers to the inclusion of word in a lexical set. The unit also attempts to discuss collocation restriction of words by showing how some words do not collocate with some words and vice versa. This discussion is followed by a discussion on sentence meaning which is basically the sum of the meaning of the words and other constituents that compose it. We see how a change of a word in a sentence can affect the sentence meaning. Lastly, we present a brief discussion on a few theories of semantics that can account for the meaningfulness of sentences. They include the verification theory of meaning and the truth conditional theory of meaning, both related to sentence meaning.

10.3 MEANING RELATIONS

You will recall that in our discussion on the different elements of meaning at 9.4, we had noted that one of the problems for language users lies in their attempts to discover the difference between what is said and what is meant. The major part of meaning of what we say or write is located in the words that we use to express an idea or to provide information. The term ‘word’ is technically known as ‘lexeme’. The noun ‘lexeme’ is related to

the adjective 'lexical' and another noun 'lexical' which means vocabulary. A 'lexeme' is a lexical unit having a meaning. The meaning conveyed by a lexeme is lexical meaning. 'Lexemes' like nouns, full verbs, adjectives and adverbs have lexical meanings. They are distinguished from the form words or function words which are a close-set of words that are also known as grammatical word and contribute to grammatical meaning. The distinction between lexical and grammatical meaning derives from the distinction between the vocabulary of a language and its grammar. Function words provide the grammatical structure for lexical words to form meaningful sentences.

However, it is the lexemes and lexical meaning that will be at the centre of our attention here. The lexical meaning of words/lexemes is its conceptual meaning which is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication. We shall see here how lexical meanings can build up meaning relations that exist among different words. These relations can be described in terms of antonymy, synonymy, homonyms, polysemy and hyponymy.

10.3.1 Antonymy

Antonymy refers to all kinds of semantic opposites. It is basically a study of oppositeness of meaning. This study can be made in terms of gradable antonyms, non-gradable antonyms, relational opposites and binary opposites.

We begin with gradable antonyms. The concept of gradability refers to the possibility of comparison and grading of lexical items. In semantics gradable terms can be best illustrated by means of pairs of words like

large –small	wide-narrow
big-small	high-low
old-young	good-bad
hot – cold	fat – thin

All these lexical items are adjectives and have in common the feature of gradability. Being gradable, they express degrees of

quality involved. Thus, a road may be wide or very wide and one road may be wider than another. It is possible to make a gradation of width, age, height etc. e.g.

wide	wider	widest
small	smaller	smallest
old	older	oldest
tall	taller	tallest,
big	bigger	biggest

When we say that one road is wider than another, we are actually placing them in a graded scale of comparison by using -er, -est, more or most with the adjective.

When can we say that something is wide or narrow? In order to say so, we require some norms. The norm is set by the object that is being described. For example, a stripe in a shirt may be considered to be very wide when it is only two inches wide. But to call a road wide, it has to be several metres wide. This accounts for the apparent paradox of a small elephant being bigger than big mouse.

Non-gradable antonyms include pairs of words that do not have a gradability, We do not have expressions like alive – aliver – alivest. Examples of non-gradable antonyms include:

male	female
married	single
alive	dead

These items are complementary to each other. That is, when a person is married, it implies that he or she is not single. These antonyms are call non-gradable because it is not possible to use comparative or superlative degrees to say very dead or more dead. In these antonyms, no comparative and superlative degrees are possible. Besides, intermediate terms showing gradation do not exist with such category of adjectives.

The antonyms that are classified as relational opposites are found with pairs like husband-wife, buy-sell, parent-child and so on. The kinship terms like father-mother, son-daughter, uncle-aunt, nephew-niece belong to this category. These terms in a pair are inter-dependent, one pre-supposes the other.

However, there are other antonyms too that show temporal relationships like ask-reply come-go, offer-accept etc. Their relationship is primarily binary and hence we can call them binary opposites. Examples include: employed-unemployed, rich-poor, alive –dead etc.

10.3.2 Synonymy

Synonymy in semantics refers to a major type of sense relation between lexical items. Lexical items that have the same meaning have been referred to as synonyms and the relationship between them is referred to as synonymy. For two lexical items to be synonyms, they should be identical in meaning. That is, they should be interchangeable in all contexts. Lyons (1996) identifies several categories of synonyms which he describes in terms of absolute synonymy, full-synonymy, total synonymy, complete synonymy, partial synonymy, near-synonymy and so on. He observes that absolute synonymy is extremely rare in natural languages. What we have is partial synonymy and near synonymy. He argues that the words referred to as synonyms do not exactly have the same meanings.

freedom	liberty
hide	conceal
broad	wide
beautiful	pretty
answer	reply
buy	purchase
foe	enemy
begin	commence

Professor Palmer (1983) holds a similar view that there is no real synonymy in English, that no two words have exactly the same meaning. He argues that it would seem unlikely that two words with exactly the same meaning would have survived in a language. What a thesaurus lists as synonyms, may not be absolute or full synonyms. There are at least five different ways in which they can differ, thereby negating the idea that these words are synonyms in English.

The first principle is that if two words belong to two different dialects of the language, they cannot be called synonyms. The words 'autumn' and 'fall' refer to the third season of the English year. But, these two words cannot be called synonyms because they belong to two different dialects of English– American English and British English each of whose use is confined to its own speech communities.

The second principle is that if two words belong to two different registers, they are not synonyms. Thus, though smell, effluvium and stink have the same meaning, they belong to different registers or situational language use. A nasty smell in a formal register can be an obnoxious effluvium whereas in an informal register, it can be an 'orrible stink'. Hence, they are not synonyms.

Thirdly, the synonymy of words is dependent on its emotive meaning or evaluative meaning besides the cognitive meaning. Are politician and statesman synonymous? From a cognitive point of view politics and statesmanship are synonymous. But from the point of view of emotive and evaluative meaning, it is found that politician and statesman, hide and conceal, liberty and freedom have different meanings from the emotive and evaluative points of new.

Fourthly, for two words to be synonyms, they must not have collocational restrictions. Some words with the same meaning are collocationally restricted, that is, they occur in conjunction with other words. Palmer examines two words rancid and addled– both meaning spoilt. But they are not synonyms because while rancid

collocates with butter and not with eggs or brains, addled collocates with eggs or brains but not with butter. We shall discuss collocation in a sub-unit of this unit.

Fifthly, those words which dictionaries of synonyms list as synonyms are not fully synonyms. Take synonyms like big, large, mature, ripe etc. and you will find that if they were synonyms, they could have been interchangeable. You can say, the boy has grown quite big, but you cannot use large in place of big.

By taking into account these principles, we can see the strength of the argument that there are no real synonyms in English, that no two words have exactly the same meaning. In other words, there is hardly any absolute synonymy in English. What we have is partial synonymy and near synonymy.

10.3.3 Homonymy and Polysemy

Homonymy in semantics refers to lexical items having the same form but differing in meaning. They are different words sharing the same form. Let us take the two meanings of bat: (1) winged mammal and (ii) implement for striking a ball.

These are not two different meanings of the word bat. On the contrary bat meaning a winged mammal is one word and bat meaning implement for striking a ball are two different words in English. They are absolute homonyms.

Lyons (1996) observes that absolute homonymy must satisfy the following three conditions:

(i) Their forms must be unrelated in meaning

(ii) All their forms must be identical and

(iii) Identical forms must be syntactically equivalent.

Absolute homonymy is common enough in the following groups of words:

(a) bank 1 : financial institution

bank 2 : side of a river

(b) sole 1 : bottom of foot or shoe

sole 2 : a kind of fish

(c) pen 1 : writing device

pen 2 : enclosure for keeping animals.

Such words that have the same form with the same pronunciation but are different words having different meaning are absolute homonymy.

But there are some homonyms that are called partial homonyms. For example, the word found meaning 'establish' and the word found as the past tense of find belong to this category of homonyms. They share the same form as illustrated below.

a)	Find (discover)	found	found	finding
	present tense	past	past part	Pres Part
b)	Found (establish)	founded	founded	founding
	present	past	Pre part	Pres part

The past tense form of find and the present tense form of found share the same form found but not in other tense forms. Now found as the past tense form of find is not syntactically equivalent to the present tense form of found (establish). They only satisfy the first condition their forms are unrelated in meaning. Hence, they are partial homonyms.

Whereas homonymy, either absolute or partial is a relation that holds two or more lexemes, polysemy—which means 'multiple meanings' is a property of single lexemes. The word plain can mean (i) clear (ii) unadorned (iii) obvious etc. Plain is a polyseme having a range of different meanings. The difference between the two can be shown thus :

- Homonymy is a case of two or more different words having different meanings and sharing the same form.
- Polyseme is a case of single lexical item having multiple meanings.

But when we draw this distinction, we also recognize that the border line between homonymy and polysemy is sometimes fluid. It becomes difficult to ascertain whether what has been considered the same form of two or more different words (homonymy) can even be the same word (hence, the same form) with different meanings. It has been noted that there is a good deal of agreement among native speakers as to what counts as homonymy. We can identify two criteria to draw a distinction between homonymy and polysemy as follow :

a) Closeness of the relationship between the meanings in question.

b) Etymology of the lexical items concerned.

Let us examine (a) above by taking the two meanings of bat: (i) winged mammal and (ii) implement for striking a ball. The relationship between the two meanings is very remote– in fact, there is no relation at all. Hence, this is a case of homonymy. i.e. bat to mean winged mammal and bat to mean implement for striking a ball' are two different words.

On the other hand, the word 'foot' to mean 'the end of the leg' and 'the bottom part of a mountain', 'the base' share a closeness of the relationship between the meanings in question. So, we cannot have foot-1 and foot-2. Foot is a single lexical item with several meanings.

The second feature etymology requires us to look at is the history of words. At different stages of its use, a word undergoes changes or modification in form and meaning and in the process it may adopt a form which is used in another lexical item e.g. bat-1 and bat-2. If you check the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* edited by C.T. Onions (1966), you will find that bat1 and bat2 are entirely different words that had different forms at different times.

a) bat : a club, stout stick from Old English batt.

b) bat : a winged mammal from Middle English bakke.

10.3.4 Hyponymy

Hyponymy refers to the relationship between two words, in which the meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other word. If the meaning of one word includes the meaning of another word, the meaning relation between such words is known as hyponymy. Hyponymy involves the notion of inclusion in the sense shown below:

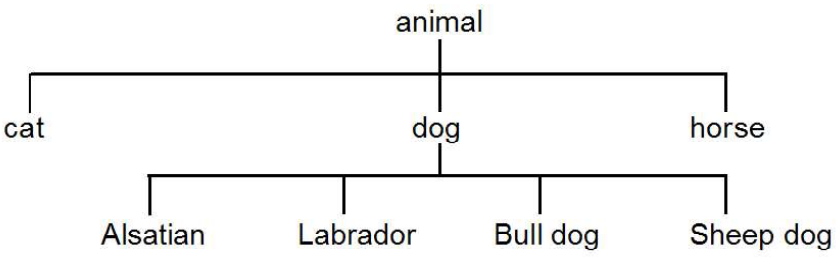
- marigold and rose are included in 'flower'
- tiger and elephant are included in 'animal'
- table and chair are included in 'furniture'
- potatoes and cabbages are included in 'vegetables' etc.

Inclusion is thus, a matter of class membership. The upper term is the superordinate and the lower term is the hyponym. A few examples of hyponyms are cited below:''

Superordinate terms	**hyponyms**
furniture	chair, table, bed
horse	mare, pony, colt
bird	sparrow, cuckoo, duck
colour	red, blue, green
fruit	apple, orange, mango
vegetable	carrot, cabbage, brinjal
transport	bus, train, car

The hyponyms of a superordinate term are called co-hyponyms. Thus, the meaning relation between chair, table, desk is the relation of co-hyponymy.

An interesting point about hyponyms is that very often the hyponym of a superordinate term can itself become a superordinate



The above description shows that the dog is the hyponym of animal but is the superordinate term for Alsatian, Labrador, etc.

So far, we have discussed antonymy, synonymy homonymy, polysemy and hyponymy. The relation of words with other words is often referred to as sense relation. Sense relation thus includes relations of antonymy, synonymy etc. They are distinguished from reference which is the indication of relationship between a word and a concept or object in the external world.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Answer the following questions:

(a) What are function words? Give examples.

(b) What are gradable antonyms. Give examples.

(c) Read the sentence: ''If two words belong to two different dialects of the language, they cannot be synonyms''.

In the sentence, dialect means (choose the alternative)

i. a variety of a language e.g. British English/ American English/ Australian English.

ii. an undeveloped language

iii. a language that has no written form

(d) Register means. (Choose the correct alternative)

i. formal, semi-formal, informal use of language in different situations.

ii. regional variety of language

iii. social class variety of language

(e) Give the hyponyms of the following superordinate term

a) move b) game c) sports

d) tree e) dress

10.4 COLLOCATION RESTRICTION

Let us go back for a moment to Unit 9, to the section 9.4.4, wherein we discussed the term collocative meaning. We had stated that a word can acquire meaning under the collocative influence of the word which it co-occurs with. We can define collocation as the way words combine in a language to produce natural sounding speech and writing. In other words, we can say that the term collocation refers to the restrictions on how words can be used together. For example, in English we say strong wind but heavy rain. It means that strong collocates with wind but not with rain. We do not say strong rain. Similarly, we see that heavy collocates with rain and not with wind as we do not say heavy wind.

The Oxford Dictionary of Collocations shows the types of word combinations that are possible in English. The word *light* for example, can be preceded by different adjectives, quantifiers, verbs etc.

- adjective + noun: *bright/harsh/intense/strong* light
- quantifier +noun (... of): a *beam/ray* of light
- verb + noun: *cast/emit/ give/ provide/ shed* light
- noun + verb: *light gleams/glows/ shines*

Collocation is essentially about the syntagmatic relationship that exists between lexemes.

We use the term syntagmatic relations to refer to the relations that hold among elements that can occur in combination with one another in well-formed syntagms. The term syntagm refers to a structurally significant combination of two or more units in a language. A syntagm may consist of collocationally restricted words in combination. For example: blond and hair, addled and brain, rancid and butter, are collocationally restricted words. That is, the use of the word blond collocates with or is restricted to hair; we cannot say a blond shirt or a blond car. Similarly, we say that high collocates with probability but not with chance.

(a) There is a high probability that he will get the job.

(b) There is a good chance that he will get the job.

We do not say high chance or good probability. Collocation restrictions allow only high probability and good chance.

10.5 SENTENCE MEANING

In our discussion on word meaning so far, we had noted that componential analysis is a technique for analyzing the meaning of lexical items or lexemes. There are other techniques for analyzing meaning too. We discovered that the meaning of a lexeme is determined by various other factors notably the antonymous, synonymous, hyponymous factors besides factors like collocation restrictions that hold between the lexeme and its neighbours in the same lexical field or semantic field. The term 'lexical field' refers to the organization of related words and expressions into a system which shows their relationship to one another. For example, kinship terms like father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt belong to a lexical field whose relevant features include generation, sex, membership of the father's or mother's side of the family and so on.

When we attempt to discuss sentence meaning there are various other factors to be considered. That is, there will be other sources of meaning. Let us consider a few of them. First, you will note that the major part of meaning of what we say and write is located in the words that we use. Let us consider the following pair of sentences:

a) Dilip likes to play tennis.

b) Dilip likes to play badminton.

We discover the meanings of the two sentences, rather in the differences of the two sentences from the two lexical items tennis and badminton. These two words contain the major part of the meaning of these two sentences. The meaning here is lexical.

Let us consider two other sentences:

a) Dilip is a teacher

b) Is Dilip a teacher?

We discover the meaning of the two sentences from a grammatical source. The first is a statement– an assertive sentence, while the second

one is a straightforward yes no type question– an interrogative sentence. We discovered the meaning from grammar.

Here are two other sentences/utterances.

a) Adity is a teacher.

b) Adity is a teacher?

The source of meaning of these two sentences is intonation. The first sentence is uttered in a falling tone in the nucleus while the second sentence is uttered with a rising tone in the nucleus. The intonation decides the meaning.

Sentences, in order to fulfil the norm of being sentences, have to be grammatical. We have seen from the above discussion that grammar is a major source of sentence meaning. Sentences can be either meaningful (semantically well-formed) or meaningless (semantically ill-formed). Utterances in our speech, says Lyons (1996 p. 135) may be either grammatical a ungrammatical, Lyons gives these two examples

a) I want him to come.

b) want that he come.

while the first is a grammatical sentence, the second is ungrammatical. Though it is ungrammatical, it is not difficult to deduce the meaning of the sentence : it can be translated into another language which would also be applicable for the correct version too.

But, sometimes grammatically well-formed sentences may not be meaningful at all. Let us examine these sentences :

a) Colourless green ideas sleep furiously (Chomsky)

b) The blue cows were smoking brown bananas.*

(*N. Krishnaswami, in one of his very hilarious linguistics classes at CIEEL which the writer attended.)

They are grammatically correct sentences. But they are semantically ill-formed. We have to go back to explore some of the theories of meaning in the next section which will help us to account for the meaning of sentences.

10.6 THEORIES OF SEMANTICS

In this section, attempt will be made to introduce you to some of the theories of semantics that can account for the meaning of sentences. While merely a brief introduction is given to the first three theories here two others are given slightly detailed treatment in the sub-sections that follow.

1. **The Referential Theory**: Also called denotational theory, the theory implies that meanings of certain words can be defined by identifying or making a reference to the item or idea that the lexeme stands for. For example, the reference to the lexeme 'dog' always denotes the same class of animal whereas 'the dog' and 'my dog' refer to different members of the class on different occasions of utterance. But the lexeme is also related to other lexemes– 'the co-hyponemes of the superordinate term dog'.

2. **The Ideational Theory**: Also called the mentalistic theory, the theory implies that the meaning of a lexeme or an expression is the idea or concept associated with it in the mind of a person who knows the expression. There is no direct link between the lexeme and the 'concept' that the lexeme stands for. The idea links the lexeme and the concept.

3. **The Behaviourist Theory:** The theory developed by Bloomfield (1933) holds the view that the meaning of an expression is either the stimulus that evokes it or the response that it evokes, or a combination of both, on particular occasions of utterance. He observes that we can deduce the meaning of an utterance by observing the events that accompany it.

10.6.1 The Verificationist Theory

The verificationist theory of meaning or 'verificationism' for short, as the name suggests, has to do with truth. The theory implies that the meaning of a sentence/utterance can be determined by its verificability in term of its propositions. The term proposition refers to the basic meaning which a sentence expresses. Propositions consist of

a) something which is named or talked about (known as the argument, or entity)

b) an assertion or predication which is made about the argument.

A sentence may express or presuppose more than one proposition. Let us closely look at this sentence:

Dilip's friend Raja, who is an engineer, plays tennis.

The sentence contains the following propositions:

- Dilip has a friend
- The name of that friend is Raja
- Raja is an engineer
- Raja plays tennis.

The meaning of a sentence can be deduced from pre suppositions as well. Here is an exchange between two speakers, A and B:

Speaker A : What about inviting Deepak tonight?

Speaker B : What a good idea; then he can give Disha a lift.

Here the pre suppositions are amongst others, that

- Speakers A and B know who Deepak and Disha are
- Deepak has a car.
- Speakers A and B are planning some party on that night.

Thus, the propositions contribute to the meaning of the sentence.

10.6.2 The Truth Conditional Theory

The truth conditional theory of meaning implies that to know the meaning of a sentence is to know the conditions under which the sentence is true or false of the situation, or state of the world that it purports to describe. The theory works by giving an account of the meaning of a sentence by specifying the conditions under which it would be true or false of the situation. In other words, we say that to know the meaning of a sentence is to know the conditions under which it would be true or false. Let us take an example to see how this theory operates.

a) Krishna is a bachelor.

To get the meaning of this sentence we must look at

(i) the truth value of the sentence and (ii) its truth conditions.

- The notion of truth value implies that a sentence is either true or false.
- The notion of truth condition implies a precisely specifiable account of the conditions which determine the truth value of the propositions conveyed by the sentence.

Getting back to the marital status of Krishna, on the basis of presuppositions, we can state that

b) Krishna is not married

Or even

c) Krishna in unmarried.

Both the sentences (b) and (c) have the same truth condition as (a) above. If they have the same truth conditions, we say that they have the same propositional content.

On close scrutiny we discover that sentence (a) Krishna is a bachelor differs from (b) and (c) from the point of truth condition. The notable point is that not every unmarried individual is a bachelor. For example, an unmarried woman is not a bachelor. The theory thus indicates that it is not easy to decide whether two expressions are necessarily true or of the same class of entitles. There grows the necessity of specifying the conditions under which a sentence would be true or false.



10.7 LET US SUM UP

A continuation of unit 9 of this Block, we began this unit by further exploring the elements of meaning with a distinction between lexical meaning of words and their grammatical meanings. Next, we moved on to different meaning relations that exist in relation to different words in terms of

antonymy, synonymy, homonymy, polysemy and hyponymy. We discussed antonymy in terms of their gradability (big—small), non-gradability (male — female), relational oppositeness (buy — sell) and binary oppositeness (single —married). We discussed synonymy in terms of absolute synonymy (which is rare in English), partial synonymy (big — large) and near synonymy (handsome—pretty) etc. We also discussed homonymy in terms of absolute homonymy (lead: the name of a metal – lead: show the way) and partial homonymy and contrasted homonymy with polysemy which refers to a case of a single lexical item having multiple meanings. Then we moved to hyponymy, which refers to the inclusion of word in a lexical set. Next we discussed collocation restriction of words, how some words do not collocate with some words and vice versa. Next, we took up sentence meaning, which is basically the sum of the meaning of the words and other constituents that compose it. We noted how a change of a word in a sentence can affect the sentence meaning. Lastly, we briefly discussed a few theories of semantics that can account for the meaningfulness of sentences. We took up for discussion the verification theory of meaning and the truth conditional theory of meaning, both related to sentence meaning.



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10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS (HINTS ONLY)

Ans to Q 1:

Refer to 9.5 and try yourself.

(a) Refer to 10.5.1.

(b) A

(c) A

(d) move : walk, run, shift
game : football, hockey, tennis
sport : swimming, boxing, jumping
tree : oak, sal, neem
dress : sari, suit, gown



10.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give brief answers to the following questions:

(a) Define gradable antonyms with two examples.

(b) Define non-gradable antonyms with two examples.

(c) Define the term homonym with an example.

(d) Explain the term polysemy with an example.

(e) Define collocation restriction.

Q 2: Answer the following questions.

(a) Explain the term hyponomy by providing examples.

(b) Give the appropriate collocation in the blanks of the following sentences.

(i) The doctor _____ the operation.

(ii) The committee _____ a discussion.

Q 3: Answer the following questions.

(a) "It can however be maintained that there are no synonyms in English". Discuss the statement.

(b) Write a note on verificationist theory of semantics.

(c) Discuss how the truth conditional theory works.

* * *

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