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THE STUDY OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

Linguistics is the study of language. It is put together and how it functions. In linguistics there are various branches which are given their own name, some of which are described in this paper. Linguistics is also not about prescribing what grammar is "correct". Rather, we describe language and its flexibility. If someone is a native speaker of a language, their grammar cannot be "wrong". So Southern English, standard American English, African American Vernacular English, London English, Cockney English, etc. are all legitimate grammars with their own regular rules. To put it simply, linguistics is the scientific study of language. Linguistics aims to understand how the language faculty of the mind works and to describe how language itself works. Linguists observe patterns within a language and across languages to try to understand what principles drive our brains' comprehension and production of language. Syntax is the study of sentence structure. English and many western European languages have a phenomenon called "wh-movement." Wh-words are the question words - who, which, what, where, when, why, and how. Think about the sentence "I eat an apple" as a possible response to the question "What do you eat?" The word what corresponds to apple, but it shows up at the beginning of the sentence.

INTRODUCTION

"The field of linguistics, the scientific study of human natural language, is a growing and exciting area of study, with an important impact on fields as diverse as education, anthropology, sociology, language teaching, cognitive psychology, philosophy, computer science, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence, among others. Indeed, the last five fields cited, along with linguistics, are the

key components of the emerging field of cognitive sciences, the study of the structure and functioning cognitive processes."

In spite of the importance of the field of linguistics, many people, even highly educated people, will tell that they have only a vague idea of what the field is about. Some believe that a linguist is a person who speaks several languages fluently. Others believe that linguists are language experts who can help you decide whether it is better to say

“It is I” or “It is me”. Yet it is quite possible to be a professional linguist without having thought a single language class, without having interpreted at the UN, and without speaking any more than one language.

TYPES OF LINGUISTICS

Linguistics are divided into many different types and some of them are,

- General Linguistics
 - Theoretical Linguistics
 - Descriptive Linguistics
 - Comparative Linguistics
 - Applied Linguistics
 - Historical linguistics
- Among all these types of applied linguistics has some special feature.

THE SENTENCE STRUCTURE

The sentence structure is nothing but the part of that studies sentence structure. Syntax is not about the meaning; sentence can have no sense and still be grammatically correct. The word “syntax” consists of two word-elements, *syn-*, the Latinized form of the Greek preposition ‘sun’ which means together and *-tax* derived from a Greek root which to put in order. The meaning of syntax is, thus, putting things together in an orderly manner. In brief, it is the grammar of sentences, a study of the way in which word can be strung together to form acceptable sentences. Since native speaker of a language cannot have memorized each phrases or sentence of their language, given that the set of phrases and sentences is infinite, their linguistic knowledge cannot be characterized as a list of phrases or sentences. That a speaker’s linguistic knowledge can be characterized as a grammar consisting of a finite set of rules and principles that form the basis for the speaker’s ability to produce and comprehend the unlimited number of phrases and sentence of the language. The rules and principles of the grammar also serve to capture regularities in the language.

It is perhaps best to define syntax negatively, as the study of the combinations of such morphemes as are not bound on the levels of either inflection or derivation.

According to this definition, the syntactical combination should involve only the free morphemes, but it is not possible in all cases as some morphemes are bound by phrase or clause. So, simply, syntax deals with sentences and their constituents. It is the level at which the students study how words combine to form phrases, phrases join to form clauses make sentences. It also deals with the different parts of speech and their functions in the sentence.

For example:

- The word order:
I want these books

*want these I books.

Agreement – subject and verb, determiner and noun, often most agree:

He wants this pencil.

*He want this pencil.

I want these pencils.

*I want this pencil.

How many components, which prepositions and forms (cases):

I give Siva a pen.

*I see Siva a pen.

I see her.

*I see she.

The girl is beautiful.

Raj filed a case against the girl.

In the first sentence, the word ‘girl’ functions as subject of the sentence. In the next, ‘girl’ functions as the object. The syntactic structure of a sentence should be in such a way that it should be grammatically correct as well as meaningful. Syntax is divided into two distinct areas. One is related to morphology and the other to the units of a much higher rank than those studied in morphology. In that sense, it can be said that syntax begins where morphology ends. It cannot be distinguished from syntax.

English and many western European languages have a phenomenon called “wh-movement.” Wh-words are the question words who, which, what, where, when, why, and how. Think about the sentence “I eat an apple” as a possible response to the question “What do you eat?” The word what corresponds to apple, but it shows up at the beginning of the sentence. In many languages, though, the wh-word corresponds to the same position as the word it refers to. For example, in Chinese you would say “I eat apple” in response to “You eat what?” We say then that in languages like English, wh-movement has occurred and the structure is: “What do you eat what?” A lot of other properties of a language are predicted by whether it has wh-movement or not, but we’ll have to leave those to another time!

Phonetics - the study of the acoustics and sounds of languages

A phonetician might, for example, look at how stress manifests in a language. In English, the stressed word in a normal sentence is louder and higher pitched: “Arun likes bananas.” If we ask a question though, it’s pronounced with a lower pitch: “Arun likes bananas?”

Phonology - the study of sound systems and how they pattern

The first t is pronounced with a puff of air, but the second is not and it sounds like the d in “coded.” This sound is called a tap because your tongue taps the roof of your mouth briefly and it is

very similar to the tapped r sound in languages like Spanish or Japanese (this leads to misperceptions of the English middle t as an r for speakers of these languages).

Semantics - the study of meaning and formalizing it into a logical form

English and many western European languages have a phenomenon called “wh-movement.” wh-words are the question words who, which, what, where, when, why, and how. Think about the sentence “I eat an apple” as a possible response to the question “What do you eat?” The word what corresponds to apple, but it shows up at the beginning of the sentence. In many languages, though, the wh-word corresponds to the same position (called in-situ) as the word it refers to. For example, in Chinese you would say “I eat apple” in response to “You eat what?” We say then that in languages like English, wh-movement has occurred and the structure is: In English, the wh-word moves to the front of the sentence. A lot of other properties of a language are predicted by whether it has wh-movement or not, but we’ll have to leave those to another time

Psycholinguistics - the study of how language manifests in the brain

Psycholinguists carry out experiments to observe the reaction of the brain’s different areas to different stimuli, and they’ll try to relate the findings to the more abstract linguistic theories. An example is tracking people’s eye movements when they read the

sentence “The old man the boat.” This is known as a garden path sentence, because readers are led down a “false path.” The reader does a double take once s/he reaches “the”, having expected a verb to appear. The second time around, the reader realizes that “man” is a verb and then parses the sentence correctly. These garden path sentences provide insight into how sentence parsing occurs in the brain.

Sociolinguistics - the study of the intersection of language with society

Sociolinguists might look at attitudes toward different linguistic features and its relation to class, race, sex, etc. For example, one of the fathers of sociolinguistics, William Labov, carried out an experiment in New York City in which he visited three department stores--a low end one (S. Klein), a mid-end one (Macy’s), and a high-end one (Saks Fifth Avenue)--and inquired where a department was in order to prompt the answer “fourth floor.” The higher end the store, the more likely the “r” was pronounced, and when asked to repeat, it was only Saks Fifth Avenue and Macy’s where the “r” became much more likely to be pronounced the second time around. The study also had implications for the ability in different communities to code switch to a prestige dialect.

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