Day 17: Syntactic properties

Ling L303: Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

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17 July 2012

1. *Syntax*

2. *Productivity / compositionality*

3. *Grammaticality*

4. *Co-occurrence relations*
   - Arguments and adjuncts
   - Agreement

What is syntax?
What syntax is…

Syntax

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What syntax is…

Syntax

Definition (Syntax)

The study of how sentences and other phrases can be constructed out of smaller phrases and words

Productivity / compositionality
Sentences are built productively

Consider:

- "I learned a new word today."

Productivity / compositionality
Sentences are built productively

Consider:

- "I learned a new word today."

what about

- "I learned a new morpheme today."

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- we don't learn, store, or memorise sentences as such
- instead?

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Sentences are built productively:

- we don't learn, store, or memorise sentences as such
- instead? we store words (mental lexicon) and rules that combine them

Productivity / compositionality
Example

This is the priest all shaven and shorn
  that married the man all tattered and torn
   that kissed the maiden all forlorn
    that milked the cow with the crumpled horn
     that tossed the dog
      that worried the cat
       that killed the rat
        that ate the malt
         that lay in the house that Jack built.

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- one sentence
- "infinitely long", creative
- productive
- formed based on rules
- systematic

Grammaticality

Definition (grammaticality)

whether a string of words forms a sentence in a language

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- Assessed based on [native-speaker] grammaticality judgement
- Grammatical or ungrammatical?
  - The cat is on the mat.

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- This shows that word order is important.

Grammaticality

Grammatical or not?

- This sentence no verb.
- Contains a verb.

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You can conclude that....

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- This sentence has cabbage six carrots.

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Grammaticality
and the separation of semantics and syntax

Grammatical or not?

- Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.

Grammaticality
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- Furiously sleep ideas green colorless.

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So...

Grammaticality
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- Grammaticality and sense/meaning can be independent of one another.

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Watch Human Language series clip on syntax/colourless.

Outline
Syntax
Productivity / compositionality
Grammaticality
Co-occurrence relations

Arguments and adjuncts
Agreement

Arguments and adjuncts

Arguments

Definition (argument)

an expression whose occurrence is necessitated by the occurrence of some other expression

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- *We watched.
- We watched a video.

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Example

- *We watched.
- We watched a video.

Here... *a video* is an argument of *watch*
So... The verb *watch* requires a noun phrase argument

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Adjuncts

Definition (adjunct)

an expression whose occurrence with a another expression is entirely optional

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Definition (adjunct)

an expression whose occurrence with a another expression is entirely optional

- We watched a video.
- We watched a video about syntax.

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> ### *Definition (adjunct)*
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- We watched a video.
- We watched a video about syntax.
- We watched a video about syntax in class.

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Definition (adjunct)

an expression whose occurrence with a another expression is entirely optional

- We watched a video.
- We watched a video about syntax.
- We watched a video about syntax in class.
- We watched a video about syntax in class a few minutes ago.

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- Arguments
  - are obligatory
  - have to occur only the number of times specifically required
  - cannot be ordered freely (with exceptions...)

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- Adjuncts
  - are optional
  - can occur any number of times
  - can be ordered freely with respect to one another (with exceptions...)

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Grammatical or not?

- We likes learning about syntax.
- The class like learning about syntax.
- Yo vas a la escuela.
- Tú amo el lingüística.
- ¿Has viste la perro penqueña?

Definition (agreement)

when distinct expressions are required to have the same value for a grammatical feautre

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Exercises: p.230-1, #2, #3, #4, #5