

Grammar and Lexicon

Grammatical units

discourse

(sentence)

If I wash up all this stuff somebody else can dry it

clause

If I wash up all this stuff somebody else can dry it

phrase

If I wash up all this stuff somebody else can dry it

word

If I wash up all this stuff somebody else can dry it

morpheme

If I wash up all this stuff somebody else can dry it

phoneme/grapheme



Repetition

- difference of written and spoken texts
- spoken texts – repetition is more often
- the longer a text is, the more often words repeat

Q: Is repetition more common in academic texts or fiction?

Word Types

- 1) lexeme
- 2) grammatical words

1) Lexeme

= a group of related words sharing the same meaning and belonging to the same parts of speech

think x thought = one lexeme* (=> THINK)

is x was = one lexeme* (=> BE)

2) Grammatical words

- GW - divided according to their grammatical behaviour (in different contexts)

e.g.: THAT – demonstr. pronoun (**That**'s right!)

- conjunction (I was quite confident **that** I would stay...)

Grammatical Words

- A) lexical words
- B) function words
- C) inserts

A) Lexical Words

- main carriers of meaning in a text (e.g. headlines)
- in a speech – generally stressed
- represent open class (=new words can be added)
- usually: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs

B) Function Words

- bind the text together
- wide range of meanings
- serve to indicate relationship between lexical words and larger units
- closed system (new words are rarely added)
- usually short, lack of internal structure
- unstressed in speech
- auxiliaries, prepositions, conjunctions

C) Inserts

- inserted rather freely in the text
- marked off by intonation, pauses, punctuation marks in writing
- emotional meaning
- frequent in spoken texts
- important in communication
- e.g.: **Yeah**, I will. **Bye**.
Hm hm, very good.

Structure of Words

- In most cases words consist of a single **morpheme** (= smallest unit carrying meaning)
- Functional words & Inserts – single morpheme
- Lexical words – single morpheme BUT they are often more complex (processes of *inflection*, *derivation*, *compounding*)

Inflection

= adding ,something' to a word

- doesn't change the identity of the word
- * suffixes – sometimes similar function as functional words (the girl's mother x the mother **of** the girl OR commoner x **more** common)

Other examples of inflection

- Nouns: boy x boys (plural)
- Verbs: live x lives x lived x living
- Adjectives: dark x darker x darkest
- Adverbs: soon x sooner x soonest

Derivation

- used to form new lexemes => change of the meaning x word class
- e.g.: prefixes: **ex**-president, **unknown**
suffixes: boy**hood**, green**ish**

Compounding

= base + one or more affixes => new lexeme

N+N => girlfriend

ADJ + N => bluebird

V+N => playboy

N+ADV => care-free

Note! compounds are stressed on the 1st element :

a **bluebird** = kind of a bird

a **blue bird** = a bird of a blue colour

Lexical Words

4 classes

- 1) nouns
- 2) verbs
- 3) adjectives
- 4) adverbs

1) Nouns

- **a) common nouns** – book, girl, gold,...
- **b) proper nouns** – Sarah, Oslo

Characteristics:

a) morphological – nouns are inflected for
(=skloňují se)

* number – one book, two books

* case – Sarah's book

Note: uncountable nouns are NOT inflected for number => information x ***informations***

b) syntactic – nouns = heads of noun phrases
(e.g.: new information I found)

c) semantic – nouns – refer to people, things, qualities, states (=freedom, friendship)

2) Verbs

Characteristics:

a) morphological – verbs vary for:

- tense
- aspect – simple x continuous
- voice – active x passive

b) syntactic – verb= main verb of verb phrases

e.g.: has **written**

c) semantic – denoting actions, processes...etc.

3) Adjectives

- dark, heavy, guilty...

Characteristics:

a) morphological – inflected for comparison

e.g.: dark x darker x darkest (not possible with all adj. – e.g.: home-made)

b) syntactic – head of adj. phrases

c) semantic – description qualities of people, things (e.g.: a heavy box)

4) Adverbs

- clearly, however, now...

Characteristics:

- a) morphological – formed from adj. by endings –LY (not all of them, e.g.: **now**)
- b) syntactic – head of adv. phrases
- c) semantic – function of modifiers & adverbials

Function Words

Function words can be broadly grouped as follows according to the units they are most closely related to:

grammatical unit	function word class
noun phrase	determiners, pronouns, numerals, prepositions
verb phrase	primary auxiliaries, modal auxiliaries, adverbial particles
phrase/clause	coordinators
clause	subordinators, <i>wh</i> -words, the negator <i>not</i> , existential <i>there</i> , the infinitive marker <i>to</i>

Determiners

- definite article – **the** (sth. known to the speaker & the addressee)
- indefinite article – **a x an**
- demonstrative determ. – **this, that...**
- possessive determ. – **my, your...**
- quantifiers – **much, many, some...**

Pronouns

- used instead of full noun phrases

Classes:

- personal – I must tell you about **it**.
- demonstrative – Look at **this**!
- reflexive – I hurt **myself**.
- reciprocal – They kissed **each other**.
- possessive – I brought my camera. Did you bring **yours**?
- indefinite – **Everything** in here is old.

- relative – My sister, **whom** you met yesterday, owns a house **which** was built in the 18th cent.
- interrogative – **Who** wrote this letter?

Primary Auxiliaries

- do
- have
- be

Modal Auxiliaries

- reject ,do' insertion => *Do you can swim?*
- express ABILITY, PERMISSION, NECESSITY, OBLIGATION

Prepositions

- introduce prepositional phrases
- connect noun phrases with other structures

Adverbial Particles

- about, across, back, down, over, under, up...
- closely linked to verbs (phrasal verbs)

Coordinators = Conjunctions

- build coordinate structures
- meaning of ADDITION, CONTRAST...

Subordinators

- serve to introduce dependent clauses (since, thought, while...)

Wh- Words (+ how & that)

- introduce clauses
 - a) interrogative clause markers
e.g.: **When** are you leaving?
 - b) introduce relative clauses
e.g.: ..the car **which** she had abandoned...

Some more: existential THERE, the negator NOT,
the infinite marker TO, numerals

Inserts

- interjections – Oh dear!
 - greetings – Good bye.
 - discourse markers – Right, we can do this.
 -
 -
 -
- etc.

Reference list

Biber, D. et al.: Longman grammar of spoken and written English, Longman, 1999.