



EXPLANATION OF SYNTAX WITH THE HELP OF SIMPLE EXAMPLES

Masharipova Adolat
Master student of SamSIFL

Annotation

This article explains the definition of syntax, content words and functional words, syntactical construction and its types.

Keywords: syntax, content words, function words, syntactical construction, immediate constituents, ultimate constituent, types of syntactical construction, endocentric construction, exocentric construction, sub-types of endocentric and exocentric construction

Syntax expresses to the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology and sometimes also phonology and semantics. It includes the syntax, but it's not limited to that. The syntax of a language is also defined as, the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language, the grammatical structure of words and phrases to create coherent sentences.

Syntax is roughly about word order. Grammar has two sections. One part of grammar is called Morphology. It has to do with the combination between word and affixes. So a word like requirements has three morphemes (require, -ment, -s) and it put together with morphology. The other section is called Syntax. It has to do with the construction of sentence, including word order, agreement; like the sentence for him to dance with my sister would be a bad idea and its syntactic transform It would be a bad idea for him to dance with my sister. That's syntax. English grammar is mostly syntax.

From the other point of view, the syntax is referred as the study of arrangements of words into phrases, clauses, and sentences or syntactical constructions. The smallest units of syntax are words. When two or more words are combined in a certain way, the result refers to syntactical construction. In other words, it can be said that a syntactical construction is a construction in which its immediate constituents (IC-a) are words (or free morphemes). An immediate constituent (IC) is explained as an element, that directly form the construction. As has been mentioned above, the indivisible units of syntax are words.

Based on one perspective, grammarians classify the words into eight types of parts of speech in the English language: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection. The part of speech indicates how the word functions in meaning as well as grammatically within the sentence. A word can be used in different circumstances by doing more functions in a speech. Understanding parts of speech is important for determining the correct definition of a word when using the dictionary.

However, structural linguists classify words into two great classes: content and function words. The first class is known as content words and the second one is known as function words. The first group include: (1) nouns, (2) verbs, (3) adjectives, and (4) adverbs. Whereas, the second group include words such as (1) auxiliary words (can, may, must, shall, and will), (2) determiner articles (a, the, this, that,



many, some, etc), (3) prepositions (of, at, on, into, etc), (4) qualifiers (enough, too, quite, etc), interrogators (where, when, whom, etc), (5) negators (not, never), (6) subordinators (is, as, although, etc), and (7) coordinators (with, however, or, but, etc). Both content words and function words are used to form syntactical constructions.

Content words differ from function words in some cases. These content words have some characteristics as follows. Content words have precise lexical meanings, namely: meanings of words as found in a dictionary or when they occur in isolation such as meanings of 'Kumushoy', 'drew', and 'pictures'. 'Kumushoy', for instance, refers to 'a certain human being called 'Kumushoy', 'drew' means 'drawing something which happened in the past time', and 'pictures' refers to 'more than one drawn picture'; whereas, function words do not have clear lexical meaning such a word 'with.' 'with' may mean 'to be together' (for instance, my sister with dad).

Content words have some differences than function words concerning their frequencies of occurrence. The former has a low frequency of occurrence, and the latter has a high frequency of occurrence. For instance, a certain kind of content words like 'table' (noun), 'run' (verb), 'pretty' (adjective), and 'beautifully' (adverb) are not always found or used in conversation or a writing activity. On the other hand, a certain kind of function word like 'of' (preposition) is often used in utterance or discourse, both when people speak and write.

The difference between content and function words concerns their numbers. The former is said to be high in number, and the latter is known as those which are limited in number. In this relation, we cannot imagine the number of nouns or verbs. There must be many words categorized as nouns or verbs (also, adjectives or adverbs). On the other hand, the number of 'auxiliary words' can be easily counted by hand.

The difference between content and function words concerns their formal markers. The former has formal markers. A noun, for instance, can be identified by using its formal markers such as inflectional suffixes (for example, -s in flowers), derivational suffixes (for example, -ment in requirement), and its position after noun determiners (for instance, this in this gate). Whereas, the latter do not have formal markers that can be used to identify them. In this relation, we do not have 'a marker' or 'a means' to determine a word 'in'; there is nothing in the word 'in' that tells that it is a preposition.

The last difference between content and function words in what we often call open and closed classes of words. This is to say that the former is said to be open classes of words, and the latter are known as closed classes of words. When words are open, they mean that they may change from time to time; the number of contents can increase in line with the development of culture and technology. When words are closed in nature, they mean that they hardly ever increase in their number.

Syntactical Constructions

Syntactical construction may be in the form of phrases, clauses, or sentences. A phrase or sentence can be analyzed based on its immediate constituents(IC-s). This term was introduced by Bloomfield, who illustrated how it was possible to a sentence (Happy girl ran away) and split it up into two IC-s (Happy girl and ran away) and each IC can be further analyzed into its IC-s. So Happy girl consists of Happy



and girl; and ran away consists of ran and away. When the constituent(s) can be further analyzed into its(their) IC-s, the constituent(s) are identified as ultimate constituent(s). In this relation, it can be said that Happy, girl, ran, and away are the ultimate constituents of the sentence Happy girl ran away.

Types of Syntactical Constructions

There are two types of syntactical constructions. They are (1) endocentric construction and (2) exocentric construction. An endocentric construction is a construction in which at least one of the IC-s belong to the same form class as the whole construction. For instance, a construction 'red apple'. To identify whether this construction is endocentric or not, we can test by using the following sentence. Red apple is on the tree. When we delete 'apple,' the sentence will be: Red is on the tree * Of course, and the sentence is not accepted because there is a sentence with an adjective as its subject. When we delete 'red,' the sentence will be: Apple is on the tree. This sentence is acceptable. This shows us that one of the IC-s of the construction 'red apple' e.g. 'apple' belongs to the same form class as the construction 'red apple'. In other words, an IC 'apple' can replace the position of 'red apple'. Therefore, the construction is called 'endocentric construction'.

An exocentric construction is a construction in which none of the IC- s belongs to the same form class the whole construction. For instance, we have a construction '...in the sofa'. We can test in the same way as we did before. We use 'in the sofa' in a sentence: Cats rested in the sofa. Let us pay attention to 'in the sofa.' When we delete 'in', the sentence will be: Cats rested the sofa (*) This is not a complete sentence, and therefore, it is not accepted. When we delete 'the sofa', the sentence will be: Cats rested in (*) The sentence is also not complete and therefore, it is not accepted. Because none of the IC-s belongs to the same form class as the construction 'in the sofa', it is called 'exocentric construction'. In this case, we can say that either 'in' or 'the sofa' can replace the position of the construction 'in the sofa'.

Sub-types of Endocentric Construction

There are three sub-types of endocentric construction: (1) attributive construction, (2) appositive construction, and (3) coordinative construction.

An attributive construction is a construction that consists of two IC-s. The first IC is called 'a modifier (M)' and the second one is called 'a head (H)' such as in the construction 'light room'. An IC 'light' is a modifier and an IC 'room' is a head. Some words that can be functioned as 'modifiers' are adjectives, verbs in past participle and verbs in present participle, and nouns such as 'pretty' in 'the pretty girl', 'finished' in 'You should show your finished homework', and 'swimming' in 'he is swimming in the swimming pool', and 'stone' in 'a stone house' respectively. English has four possible ways of making attributive construction:

- 1) M – H such as 'yellow flower', 'his sister', 'swimming pool', etc,
- 2) H – M such as 'number five', 'the cat playing there', etc.,
- 3) M – H – M such as 'as soon as possible', 'the worst habit of his', etc.,
- 4) H – M – H such as 'do not work', 'will never come', etc.



An appositive construction is a construction that consists of two IC-s. The first IC is a noun or noun phrase, and the second one is a noun or noun phrase. The function of the second one is to clarify the first one. In a written form, the first noun or noun phrase and the second one are separated by a comma (,) such as a construction 'Munira, the student of UrSU, is always on time'.

A coordinative construction is a construction that consists of two IC-s. The first one is combined with the second one by using coordinators such as 'and, or, but, both...and, either...or and neither.... nor'. The example of the construction is 'Jane and Anne will attend the meeting.'

Sub-types of Exocentric Construction

There are three sub-types of exocentric construction (1) directive construction, (2) complementation construction, and (3) predicative construction.

A directive construction is a construction that consists of two IC-s. The first IC is a director and the second one is its object. The director may be in the form of verbal element such as 'spend' that is followed by its object 'time' to form a construction 'spend time'; it may be in the form of preposition such as 'on' that is followed by its object 'the table' to form a construction 'on the table'; or it may be in the form of conjunction 'until' that is followed by its object 'she comes back' to form a construction 'until she comes back'.

A complementation construction is a construction that consists of two IC-s. The first IC is a copula or copulative verb 'be,' and the second one is its complement. The following is some examples of this type of construction:

(She) is a nurse. be (is) + a noun as a complement

(You) are selfish. be (are) + an adjective as a complement

(I) am in the garden. be (am) + an adverb of place as a complement

Some verbs are similar in their function to a copulative verb 'be. They are 'become (become famous), get (get dressed), go (go mad), grow (grow old), turn (turn grey). In one case, the verbs have almost the same meaning as 'be.' That is to say that a sentence 'She is famous' is similar in meaning to a sentence 'She become famous'. In other cases, they are different from 'be.' In this relation, when the sentence is changed into a negative or an interrogative sentence, it is altered differently. For instance, a negative form of the sentence 'She is famous' is 'She is not famous'; whereas, a negative form of the sentence 'She become famous' is 'She does not become famous'.

A predicative construction is a construction that consists of two IC-s. The first IC is a subject and the second one is a predicate. This construction refers to what we have known as a sentence. The two essential things in the sentence are the uses of a subject and a predicate or a noun/noun phrase plus a noun/noun phrase. The following examples show the kind of construction:

1. She is happy. She (subject) + is happy (predicate)
2. I completed the task fully. I (subject) + completed the task fully (predicate)
3. Executives elected her as a supervisor. Executives (subject) + elected her as a supervisor (predicate).



Academia Globe: Inderscience Research

ISSN: 2776-1010

Volume 2, Issue 5, May, 2021

Bibliography

- 1) "An introduction to Linguistics". Fatchul Mu'in, Yusuf Al Arief. 2019
- 2) "English syntax: an introduction". Jong-Bok Kim, Peter Sells. 2008
- 3) "Syntactic constructions". Peter Svenonius. 2015
- 4) Data from internet networks.