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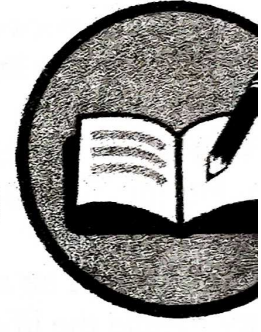
2022-2023

Third Year

Second Term



4 + 5



Semantics & Syntax

17.06.2023

24.06.2023

سنة العائدي للخدمات الطلابية



Semantics & Syntax 3.4+5

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LECTURE NO.4

17.06.2023

HELLO EVERYONE!

- **What are collocations?**

In any language, there are certain words that occur together. For example, "sky" and "blue". This is a collocation between an object and its feature. To determine the degree of a blue color of an object, you can say "sky blue".

We can have also collocations between verbs and adjectives and between nouns and adjectives. But the most interesting types of collocations are idioms and proverbs.

- **What are idioms?**

They are a type of collocations where the meaning of the whole idiom is different and cannot be inferred from the meanings of its individual constituents.

Examples of idioms:

- Piece of cake (very easy)
- Kick the pocket (to die)
- Raining cats and dogs
- It's bucketing

Notice that we can't infer the meaning of an idiom so we have to learn it. Learning idioms has to do with the cultural background of the people who speak the language.

Idioms might be associated with some historical aspects. For example, there is a story behind the idiom "kick the pocket".

- **What are proverbs?**

They are also a type of collocations but you can guess of a proverb from the meaning of its constituents. Proverbs are more intertwined with culture and history and traditions of the people who speak the language.

Examples of proverbs:

- Out of sight, out of mind
- You are trying to sell coal in Newcastle (Newcastle is a city in England famous for producing coal)

Notice that you can guess the meaning of the proverb from its constituents.

SYNTAX

- **Are the words in English a finite set?**

The words of any language are a finite set although it's too large that no person can cover it. So it is a limited set.

- **Are the sentences and utterances in English finite or infinite?**

They are infinite. You can use a finite set of words to produce an infinite set of sentences and structures.

- **Since words are finite and sentences are infinite, how can we make these infinite set of structures and sentences mutually understandable by the speakers**

of a language? Are they constructed haphazardly?

There are certain rules for constructing those sentences to make them mutually intelligible. These rules that we use to combine the finite set of words to produce an infinite set of sentences are the focus of Syntax. These rules are finite rules so a person can cover them all.

In any sentence, we have the constituents that we can see.

• ***What are those constituents?***

Subject and predicate.

✓ The predicate certainly has a verb and maybe something else.

✓ The subject can be a noun, a pronoun, a noun phrase, or even an entire sentence.

✓ In the predicate, we have a verb followed by a noun or a noun phrase or even a sentence.

The basic constituents are:

- Noun phrase (NP)

- Verb phrase (VP)

- Prepositional phrase (PP)

These constituents and phrases make the surface structure of a sentence. But we have also what we call the deep structure.

✓ The surface structure is the elements of the sentence that we can observe.

✓ The deep structure is the message conveyed by the sentence.

Examine the following sentences:

1. John is eager to please.

2. John is easily pleased.

3. The window is broken by John.

4. John broke the window.

In the first two sentences, we see a subject and a predicate consisting of a verb to be and a complement. At the surface level, these sentences have the same structure. But at the deep level, do they mean the same? Do they convey the same message?

Each sentence conveys a different message although they have the same surface structure.

The sentences number 3 and 4 have different surface structures but they convey the same message. This is what is meant by surface structure and deep structure.

We can conclude that we can convey a certain message through different structures.

• ***What if we have the same structure and we can get from that structure two or more different messages? What if a surface structure conveys two different messages? What do we call that?***

Let me give you an example:

- I saw a man with a telescope.

This sentence has two meanings: it's either I saw a man via a telescope or that I saw a man who is holding a telescope. We have two deep structures here: I saw a

man who happens to have a telescope, or I saw a man using a telescope.

- *What do we call it when we have a surface structure conveying two different messages?*

It's called structural ambiguity.

Structural ambiguity is when we have a surface structure that conveys two different meanings. To make it clearer, we use alternative surface structures to convey the two different messages.

Example of structural ambiguity:

- I bumped into a man with an umbrella.
- This sentence means either I have an umbrella and I bumped into someone with it, or I bumped into someone who happens to be carrying an umbrella.
- ***

Constituents

We said that we have constituents. The first one of these constituents is the noun phrase.

❖ **Noun Phrase**

• *What is a noun phrase?*

The basic element of a noun phrase is either a noun or a pronoun or a nominal group or a pronominal group.

• *What are nominal groups and pronominal groups?*

- A nominal group is a group of nouns.
- A pronominal group is a group of pronouns.
- A group of nouns or pronouns would be linked by either "and" or "or".
- Sometimes pronominal groups can refer to words like somebody, everybody, etc.
- Nouns, pronouns, nominal groups, and pronominal groups are called the head of the noun phrase.

We can have other elements in a noun phrase such as adjectives, articles, adverbs with an adjective, modifiers, and articles (a, an, the).

✓ When those other elements occur before the head, they modify the head and they are called premodifiers.

✓ When those other elements occur after the head, they modify the head and they are called postmodifiers.

• *Can you give me examples of noun phrases with premodifiers?*

The blue sky. (The head of this noun phrase is "sky" and we have two premodifiers)

• *Can you give me examples of noun phrases with postmodifiers?*

The house of my family. (The head of the noun phrase is "house". The postmodifier is a prepositional phrase)

• *These noun phrases have functions in a sentence, what are those functions?*

On page 122, we have:

The functions of a noun phrase:

1. The subject of a sentence.

2. A complement to a subject: when a noun phrase gives additional information about the subject, it's called a complement to the subject.

Example: Ahmad is the owner of a great company.

3. The direct object of a verb:

Example: I knew Salem.

4. The indirect object of a verb:

Example: I gave my friend a book.

5. The complement to an object: it is when the noun phrase gives additional information about the object.

6. An object of a preposition: every prepositional phrase has either a noun or a noun phrase as an object of a preposition.

Example: I saw a man with a large telescope. ("a large telescope" is a noun phrase that functions as an object of the preposition)

7. In an opposition to another noun phrase:

Example: John, my friend, called me yesterday. ("John" is a noun phrase. "my friend" is another noun phrase. These two noun phrases are in opposition)

There is another case of opposition: when we restrict the reference of another noun phrase.

Example: My friend John called me yesterday. (I might have many friends, but adding "John" restricts the reference of the noun phrase "my friend")

❖ **Verb Phrase**

The second constituent is the verb phrase.

• **What is a verb phrase?**

A phrase that starts with a verb. We have two types of verb phrases: finite and non-finite.

• **What are a finite noun phrase and a non-finite verb phrase?**

Actually it all goes back to the type of the verb. We have finite verbs and non-finite verbs.

• **What are the finite verb and the non-finite verb?**

- Whenever a verb does not function as a verb, it is a non-finite verb.
- Whenever a verb functions as a verb, it is a finite verb.

Example: walking is good for health. ("walking" here is a noun, so this is a non-finite verb)

I was walking very slowly. ("walking" here is a verb, so this is a finite verb)

Thus, we have finite verb phrases and non-finite verb phrases.

- A finite verb phrase is a group of verbs and their modifiers that function as a verb in a sentence.

Example: I have been living in Damascus. ("*have been living*" is a finite verb phrase because it is a verb phrase that functions as a verb)

In finite verb phrases, the verb can appear in:

- The infinitive form
- The -ed form

- The -ing form
 - The past participle form.
- Those forms indicate the tense of the sentence.

In non-finite verb phrases, the verb can be in:

- The -ed form
- The -ing form
- The infinitive form.

So it is tenseless.

Example: To walk is good for your health.

My brother was bored. ("bored" is functioning as an adjective)

Note: *The predicate of a sentence is always a verb phrase. So the verb phrase is a phrase that is headed by a verb and that might contain other phrases.*

Example:

I was walking very slowly. ("I" is the noun phrase, "was walking very slowly" is a finite verb phrase and it is the predicate)

I gave my friend a nice gift. ("I" is the noun phrase as the subject, "gave my friend a nice gift" is a finite verb phrase and it is the predicate, "my friend" is a noun phrase, "a nice gift" is a noun phrase)

❖ **Prepositional Phrase**

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition with a noun phrase.

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a prepositional complement. The complement is usually a noun phrase but can also be another element.

▪ **Forms of prepositional phrases:**

- Preposition + a noun phrase

Example: with a telescope

I traveled in my old blue car. ("in my old blue car" is a prepositional phrase)

- Preposition + a wh-clause

Example: She comes from what she calls 'a small town. ("from what she calls a small town" is a prepositional phrase. "what she calls a small town" is a wh-clause. The object of the prepositional phrase is a wh-clause consisting of an entire sentence.)

- Preposition + -ing clause

Example: He tried to facilitate the meeting my making some calls. ("by making some calls" is a prepositional phrase. "making some calls" is an -ing clause")

- He: noun phrase
- tried to facilitate the meeting my making some calls: verb phrase
- tried: verb
- to facilitate: non-finite verb phrase functioning as an object
- the meeting: a second object
- by making some calls: prepositional phrase
- making some calls: -ing clause

- Preposition + an adverb

Example: you can start from here.

- You: noun phrase (a subject)
- can start from here: verb phrase
- can start: verb group
- from: preposition
- here: adverb

▪ The functions of a prepositional phrase:

- Prepositional phrases as an adverb phrase:

Here a prepositional phrase relates to the time and place of an action.

Examples:

I may need you to do some work in the evening.

To my surprise, Ola phoned me next morning.

Finally she went back to her old job.

- Prepositional phrases as modifiers in a noun phrase:

A prepositional phrase can be a premodifier or a postmodifier in a noun phrase.

Examples:

I've rented this cottage in the country for peace and quiet.

She felt she had no chance of promotion.

- She: noun phrase (subject)
- felt: verb
- she had no chance of promotion: a noun phrase (a sentence) functioning as an object
- had no chance of promotion: verb phrase
- no chance of promotion: noun phrase
- of promotion: a prepositional phrase that functions as a postmodifier to the noun "chance"

- Prepositional phrases as verb complement:

Here the prepositional phrase adds more information to the verb.

Examples:

You mustn't worry too much about the results.

- You: noun phrase
- mustn't worry too much about the results: verb phrase
- about the results: a prepositional phrase functioning as a complement to a verb phrase

- Prepositional phrases as complement of an adjective

Examples:

John is terrified of heights.

- is terrified of heights: verb phrase
- is: verb
- terrified: adjective
- of heights: prepositional phrase functioning as a complement to the adjective "terrified"

Note: a prepositional phrase may occasionally take the functions of a noun phrase. So we can add a fifth function of a prepositional phrase:

- Prepositional phrases take the functions of a noun phrase

Examples:

- I like being in this room.
- She will finish the work in the present month.
- Her life is in danger.
- They told me this in all seriousness.
- I love walking through woods in spring.
- The children were playing around the park.
- There is someone walking up and down the drive.
- The horse has successfully jumped across the gap.
- She last saw her parents at Christmas.
- In the evening, I listened to Beethoven.
- Try to stay alert throughout the entire ceremony.
- She was fined for dangerous driving.
- What will you drink with you meal?

Thank You

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LECTURE NO.5

24.06.2023

HELLO EVERYONE!

Student: can a phrase be composed of one word?

Instructor: essentially, a phrase is a group of words. But what if the phrase has the function of a single word? For example, a noun phrase can function as a subject or an object. By definition, a phrase is a group of words, but when it is limited to one word you can consider it either as a phrase or as a word as long as it has one grammatical function.

Student: non-finite verbs don't function as verbs, what does this mean?

Instructor: a non-finite verb does not function as a verb. Verbs are very flexible because they can lend themselves to other parts of speech. For example, verbs with *-ing* (gerunds) can function as nouns. Verbs with *-ed* can function as adjectives. Another example of the non-finite verb is the (to infinitive). The non-finite verbs are tenseless because they don't have any role in specifying the tense or the time of the action.

Student: in the book there is an example about transitive and intransitive verbs. I think there is a mistake in the book.

- They hanged the criminal
- I hung my clothes

Instructor: actually the verb is transitive in both sentences.

Today, we are going to start with tree diagrams. We have been analyzing the syntactic constituents of a sentence. We have the subject and the predicate. The predicate consists of a verb and a complement. This complement can be an object or something else. We can represent that in what is called tree diagram.

We have already established that *the basic constituents of a sentence are:*

• Noun phrase	• Verb phrase	• Prepositional phrase
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The noun phrase can contain:

• A pronoun	• A noun	• An adjective	• An article
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The verb phrase can contain:

• Verb group	• Adverbs
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The prepositional phrase can contain:

• A preposition	• A noun phrase
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Now we need to represent that in tree diagrams:

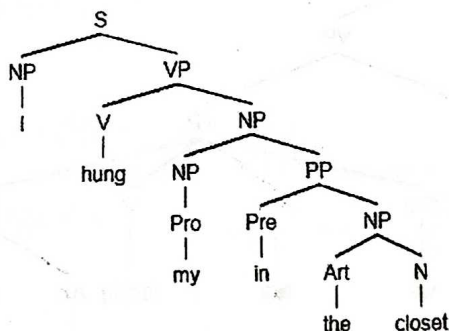
The tree diagram starts with a Sentence.

Then we have two branches: one for the subject which is a noun phrase, and the other for the predicate which is a verb phrase.

Then the verb phrase could go further to a verb and other things.

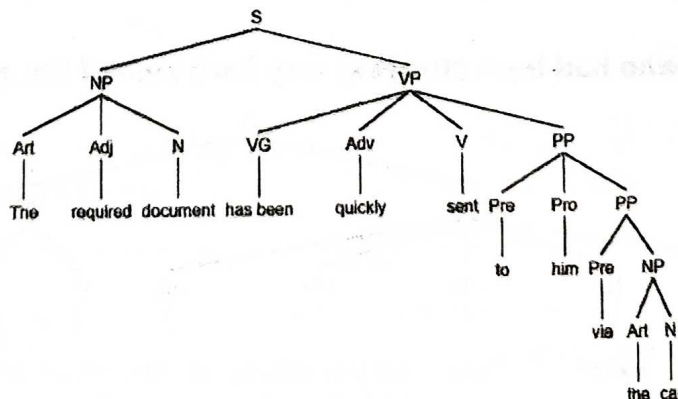
1.

- I hung my clothes in the closet.



2

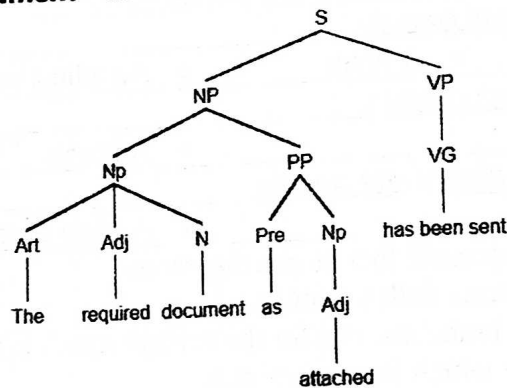
- The required document has been quickly sent to him via the car.



Note: in the exam you will have the tree diagram drawn for you with missing labels that you need to fill. Maybe you will have to choose the suitable tree diagram for a sentence.

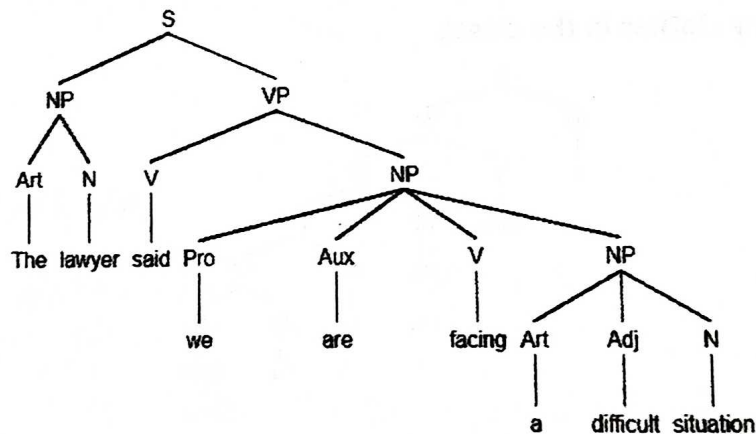
3.

- The required document - as attached - has been sent.



4.

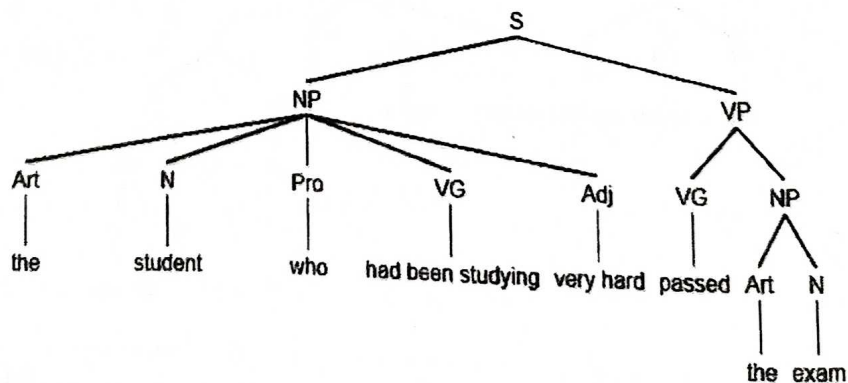
- The lawyer said 'we are facing a difficult situation.'



"We are facing a difficult situation" is a sentence that is functioning as a noun phrase. It is an object to the verb said.

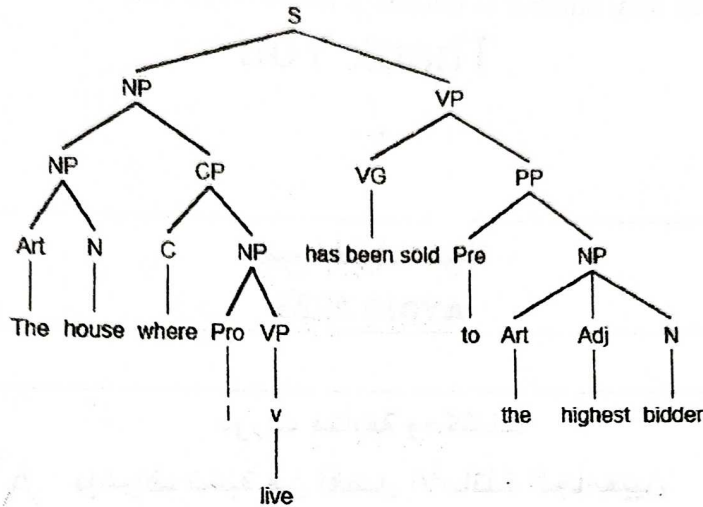
5.

- The Student who had been studying very hard passed the exam.



6.

- The house where I live has been sold to the highest bidder.



In the exam, you will have the tree diagram drawn for you with some labels missing.

If you think of sentences with structural ambiguity, how many tree diagrams can we draw? Two tree diagrams.

For example:

7.

- The boy saw the man with the telescope.

These are the two the meanings. Of course because we have two meanings, we have two different tree diagrams:

<p>1.</p>	<p>2.</p>
<p>This is the first meaning. The boy used the telescope to see the man.</p>	<p>This is the second meaning. The boy saw the man who was holding the telescope.</p>

You have to practice how to distinguish between instruments, themes, agents, experiencers, locations, goals, and sources. Try to learn the functions of noun phrases and prepositional phrases in a sentence.

You might be asked for example:

What's the function of the underlined noun phrase in this sentence?
For theoretical questions, there won't be more than 10 marks. The rest will be applications. The total number of questions might be 50 questions.

Thank You

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AYDI© 2023

دورات متابعة ومكتفات
بإشراف نخبة من أفضل الأساتذة الجامعيين
في معهد الكندي
لطلاب الترجمة (التعليم المفتوح) ولجميع المواد

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