SEM- III
CC-14 UNIT-I C
SYNTAX

Dr. Vandana Singh
Asst. Prof.
P.G. Dept. of English
Maharaja College, Ara

Syntactic relation

Sentences can be shown to be series of words, ~~and~~ and grammar is concerned with the analysis of the structures and regular patterns of sentences. In taking the word as a basic grammatical unit one may say that the heart of grammar is that part which deals with the patterned interrelations of words in the sentences of a language, and with the means of analysing them and stating them systematically. This is the traditional province of syntax, and it may reasonably be claimed that syntax is the most imp. part of grammer. It is unfortunate that sentence structure formerly received less attention than word structure, the province of morphology, and that is sometimes badly neglected in the teaching of languages. Languages vary in the amount of word form variation that is found in them. Latin, Ancient Greek, and Sanskrit have a good deal; so do Arabic and many American-Indian languages. English has much less, and languages with a few or no paradigms of variable words, such as Chinese ~~or~~ & some of the languages of S.E. Asia, show hardly any. The confusion of grammar with ~~linguistics~~ morphology alone leads to the absurd statements still heard such as "English has less grammar

than Latin", and that "Chinese has no grammar." If a language had no grammar, no systematic ordering of its words in sentences, it could never be learned by a native speaker or by a foreigner, nor could two people understand one another in it. Indeed, a language without grammar is a contradiction in terms.

What does emerge from a comparison of diffnt. types of languages is that the relative weight borne by morphology and syntax in governing the forms and patterns of sentences may vary from language to language, and that the role of morphological word form variation in paradigms may be very much reduced or even non-existent, but the syntactic classification and ordering of words in sentences are essential components of the grammar of every language.

The fact that English sentences can be of the type the men eat, but not of the type *men the eat reveals one essential basis of syntax, namely that words, even when they are ~~actively elaborated~~ collocationally appropriate, cannot be put together just in any order; in addition to grammatical acceptability and intelligibility the total meaning of a sentence may

depend in part simply on word order, as in the English pair of sentences *the tigers killed the hunter* and *the hunter killed the tigers*.

Syntactic relations are fundamentally very simple ones, and fall into three classes, positional relations, relations of co-occurance, and relations of ~~sent~~ substitutability. The first of these are overt relations, observable as the word order of sentences; the other two are covert, not revealed by the observation of sentences alone, but by the comparison of ordered series of sentences with one another.

By relations of co-occurrence one means that words of different sets of classes may permit, or require the occurrence of a word of another set or class to ~~form~~ a sentence or a particular part of a sentence. Thus in English words of the class *man*, *horse*, etc. may be followed by words of the class of *eat*, *live*, etc in short sentences, and usually are so followed, though it is a fallacy to say that all proper sentences must be of this type. Response sentences may often be of other types, and a good many of the one-word sentences of many languages are response sentences (eg. *Who are you?* *Travellers*)

words of the class man, horse, etc. may be preceded by words of the class good, strong, etc., and also by the words the and a. But the and a require the presence of a word of either the man class ~~as~~ or the good class if they are to ~~positional~~ precede a member of the eat, breathe, live class. Here at once one sees that the positional order of elements is brought into play; the both presupposes good, etc. or horse, etc. & (the good are honoured, the horse eats), and presupposes it in a fixed relative position. The strong horse is the only permitted order of these three words when they are all to precede eats, works, etc. as a complete sentence or as the first part of one. Further examples of presupposition or obligatory co-occurrence are the relations uniting latin words like /in/ and /ad/ to a following word of the class /dominum/ master, /urbem/ city, etc., or to an equiv. groups of words: /ad dominum/ to the master, /in urbem/ into the city.

The third relation, substitutability, has already been mentioned in the illustration of classes or sets of words substitutable for other grammatically in the same sentence structures;

but additionally groups of more than one word, contiguous or discontiguous in a sentence, may be jointly substitutable grammatically for a single word of a particular set. In English the group the man is subs. for man, but not for the, in man lives, man wants little, etc.; and strong man is subs. for man in the man drank it all, etc. In yesterday he came, came could be used in place of yesterday, ... came, but yesterday could not (he came is a sentence, but not *yesterday he).

The substitutability of words, groups for single words, according to certain statable principles in a language shows that sentences are not merely strings of words, but, except for the shortest sentences, they are hierarchially ordered in terms of interrelated groups. This is basic to the understanding by the hearer and the analysis by the linguist of longer sentences, and must be considered in more detail below.

Linguists working within TG theory make use of a further syntactic relation, that of transformation, holding between grammatically related structures, such as the hunters killed the tiger and the tiger killed by the hunters.

S → NP + VP NP + V P (1)

VP → V + NP NP + V + NP (2)

NP → { Prop N + Prop N / D + N } — Prop N + V + D + N (3)

Proper N → John — John + V + D + N (4)

D → the → John + V + the + ~~door~~ N → (5)

N → door → John + V + the + door (6)

V → Aux + ~~MV~~ MV → John + Aux + M + the + door (7)

Aux → tense → John + tense + MV + the door (8)

tense → past → John ~~Past~~ + MV + the + door (9)

MV → open → John past + open + the + door

Kernel terminal string

John opened the door.

T – Neg ⇒ John did not open the door.

T – Pass ⇒ The door was opened by John.

T → Pass + T – Neg ⇒ The door was not opened by John

It rained yesterday.

T – ADV FREP ⇒ Yesterday it rained