Meeting III

The Linguistic Framework
(The grammatical framework)

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The nature of the lexicogrammar

- **Lexicogrammar in systemic linguistics** is the stratum which handles the wording of a text. It is the level at which the various patterns of semantic structure are realized in word form and is concerned with the classes of grammatical (and in principle also lexical) unit and the relationships which may be established between them.

- The study of grammar exists at all because a language does not consist of a fixed number, say 100,000, of possible sentences.

- On the contrary, owing to the creative potential of language, people can produce utterances which they have never heard before and, likewise, can understand sentences which they may not have come across previously.
The nature of the lexicogrammar

- Grammar then provides the language user and the language learner, with a basis for understanding how a language is structured, what the possibilities of patterning are and indeed what the constraints are.
- It is the grammar which accounts for these regularities of language structure and which thus explains why speakers avoid such malformations.
- It reflects the way in which language is used / can be used.
- Differences of wording in a text reflect differences of meaning.
The nature of the lexicogrammar

• It is then the task of the lexicogrammar to account for the differences (and the similarities) in the actual wording of these sentences, that is to say differences and similarities of syntactic structure.

• Syntactic structure can be approached in two ways: formal and functional.

• Formal syntax deals with how words can combine to create larger units of form and eventually sentences. (with a progression upwards from the word to the sentence)

• Functional syntax, on the other hand, handles the way in which sentences are structured in terms of smaller functional elements and eventually words (a progression downwards from the sentence to the word)
The nature of the lexicogrammar

- Based on the situation on page 22, it is thus not completeness or even accuracy of formal structure that is the primary consideration. That does not mean, though, that the formal composition is to be disregarded.
- Indeed, an educated native speaker of a language requires not just to be able to get things done by the use of language (the get-by approach) but should be able to do so by having recourse to linguistic structures which are well-formed and appropriate to the context.
- Formal and functional syntax are thus seen as complementary: they have different basic concerns but they are interdependent.
- The lexicogrammar, therefore, will incorporate both the formal and functional features of syntactic structure.
Units and the rank scale

- Syntactic structure in systemic grammar is traditionally based around five **formal units**: sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme.
  - **Sentence**
    
    ```
    After John has finished his exams, he is planning a trip abroad.
    ```
  - **Clause**
    
    ```
    After John has finished his exams, he is planning a trip abroad.
    ```
  - **Phrase**
    
    ```
    After John has finished his exams, he is planning a trip abroad.
    ```
Units and the rank scale

- **Word**
  
  : After:John:has:finished:his:exams,:he:
  
  is:planning:a':trip:abroad.: 

- **Morpheme**
  
  -After-John-has-finish-ed-his-exam-s,-he-
  
  is:plann-ing-a-trip:abroad.-
Unit

- is defined as a stretch of language which itself carries grammatical patterns or which operates in grammatical patterns.
- The sentence is seen as the largest of the four units carrying grammatical patterns: sentence, clause, phrase and word, and the morpheme is the smallest of the four units operating in grammatical patterns: clause, phrase, word and morpheme.
- All five units are arranged hierarchically, from the largest down to the smallest, on a scale of rank.
- Each unit except the largest has been defined by its function in the structure of the unit next above, and conversely each unit except the smallest has been described as being composed of one or more units of the rank below.
Unit

- In terms of the way systemic grammar has traditionally been formulated, all utterances require to be described at each rank. (see p. 24).

**The scale of rank**

- sentence
- clause
- phrase
- word
- morpheme

- However, the structure of a unit at one rank is not always composed of units from the rank below.
Sentence, clause, phrase, word and morpheme

• Orthographically the sentence begins with a capital letter and is terminated by a full stop.
• The sentence has come to be regarded as an element of textual structure and as such may be seen as a constituent of the paragraph.
• The sentence is a textual unit which it has been convenient to adopt as the largest grammatical unit for the purposes of syntactic analysis.
• In meaning terms, the typical role of the sentence is to express one or more ideas or 'propositions' from the ideational component, each proposition being realized by a clause.
A clause

• **A clause** in meaning terms typically expresses a single proposition.
• Grammatically, it consists of one or more phrases, e.g. / 've finished that book.
• clauses do not all share the same grammatical status, and relationships of subordination and superordination can be established within groupings/complexes of clause units
A phrase in meaning terms expresses one of the elements of a proposition.

Grammatically, it is the grouping of one or more words which together fulfill the role that in other circumstances might be expressed by a single word.

Phrase class, the traditional systemic term is 'group' rather than phrase, though Halliday actually distinguishes between 'group' and 'phrase'.
Word

• The **word** is the basic unit of syntax.
• Orthographically, words are typically bounded by a blank space either side of them (constraints, see p. 26).
• Compound words like *birthday* and *sunshine* are still individual units, but the position is complicated by the fact that the same expression may be written as a single, compound word with or without a hyphen or as two separate words, e.g. *airlock*, *air-lock*, or *air lock*.
• The word, then, is a unit which can be assigned to a recognized word class and which is not a (hyphenated or unhyphenated) component of a compound unit.
• At the bottom end of the rank scale, the **morpheme** is the smallest unit of grammatical form and meaning.
• The morpheme is involved in word formation in a number of ways:
  (a) lexical compounding, e.g. *blackbird, sunshine*;
  (b) lexical derivation of one word (or rather lexical item) from another, often involving a change of word class, e.g. *act, action, active, inactive, proactive, activate, actor, actress*;
  (c) grammatical inflection altering the form of a word to fit the grammatical context but not thereby changing the word class, e.g. *car - cars* (plural), *mend-mended* (past tense).
Unit complex and complex unit

- A **unit complex** may be explained as a coherent grouping or configuration of two or more units (a complex of units) from the same rank, which together may also constitute a unit of the rank next above.

- Ex: Other words may be grouped round a given headword, as in *a brilliant student*, to form a word complex which is a phrase.
Unit complex and complex unit

• If another unit of the same status is involved, then the relationship between them is one of equality, in other words a relationship involving units of equal grammatical status.

• In systemic grammar this has normally been referred to as one of the types of paratactic relationship.

• Ex:
  1. Jack fell down and Jill came tumbling after.
  2. Frank Jones, the butcher, is the best candidate

  the type of paratactic relationship between the units is one of apposition, in which two phrases, Frank Jones and the butcher, are juxtaposed and thus, here, operate as alternative expressions referring to the same person.
Unit complex and complex unit

• Where a subordinate unit is involved, the relationship between the main and subordinate units is known as a hypotactic relationship.

• A hypotactic relationship thus involves units of unequal grammatical status.

• Ex: *When Jack fell down, he broke his crown*
Unit complex and complex unit

- In these terms, therefore, a clause complex comprises more than one clause unit; it is a complex of clauses and typically operates as a sentence.
- A phrase complex involves more than one phrase unit (same or different classes) forming a coherent grouping which in some circumstances can also serve as a clause.
- A word complex is more than one word unit and can form a phrase.
- A morpheme complex - more than one morpheme unit - normally forms a word.
Some examples of unit complexes

Clause complex:

- **Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.** (paratactic, coordination).
- **What I really want, what I must have, is a new car.** (paratactic, apposition)
- **After Keith was awarded his degree, his confidence increased enormously.** (hypotactic)
Some examples of unit complexes

Phrase complex:

- *Goldilocks and the three bears* (paratactic, coordination)
- *Frank Jones, the butcher, is the best candidate.* (paratactic, apposition)
- *His latest book, on singing technique, comes out next week,* (hypotactic)
- *Mark is very clever, though erratic.* (hypotactic)
Some examples of unit complexes

- **Word complex:**
  - *Mark is a brilliant student.*
  - *He is very keen.*
  - *Rover has been lost.*

- **Morpheme complex:**
  - *She is becoming very nationalistic.*
A unit complex vs a complex unit

- Whereas a unit complex involves a grouping of units which can frequently operate as a unit of the rank above,
- a complex unit is composed of two or more elements typically, but not only, realized by units of the rank below.
- The relationship between the elements, however, is normally one of dependency involving different grammatical status, e.g. main-subordinate, headword-modifier, root-affix, though it may possibly be one of interdependency.
A unit complex vs a complex unit

• Complex sentence:
  *After Keith was awarded his degree, his confidence increased enormously.*

• Complex phrase:
  *The latest news about Jill*

• Complex word:
  *abnormally, hit and miss, dyed-in-the-wool*
The Summary of the relationships between the basic syntactic units

(a) a textual sentence may be composed of a clause or a complex of clauses, a clause complex;

(b) a clause contains at least one phrase and more normally a (multivariate) phrase complex;

(c) a phrase consists of a single (head) word or of a word complex; and

(d) a word may comprise a morpheme or a morpheme complex.