

Grammar and Our Knowledge of Language

Overview

1. Syntax
2. Morphology
3. Phonetics and Phonology
4. Semantics
5. Ambiguity
6. Descriptive and Prescriptive Rules of Grammar

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1. Syntax
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 - Movement

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 - Inflection and derivation
 - Word formation processes

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Overview

3. Phonetics and Phonology
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 - Acoustic phonetics
 - Auditory phonetics

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 - Contradiction
 - Presupposition
 - Metaphor

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- Lexical and syntactic ambiguity

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What is Syntax?

- The study of the way in which sentences are constructed from smaller units called constituents; how sentences are related to each other.

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What is Syntax?

- The presidential candidate thought that the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Constituents

- The presidential candidate thought that the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Constituents

- The presidential candidate thought that the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Constituents

- The presidential candidate thought that the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Constituents

- The presidential candidate thought that the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Constituents

- The presidential candidate thought that the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Constituents

- Geraldine thought that the gifts given by Scott were wonderful.
- The presidential candidate thought that the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Movement

- The expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were surprisingly boring.

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Movement

- Surprisingly the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor were boring.

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Movement

- Were the expensive dinners given in Lee's honor surprisingly boring?

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Movement

- Honor the expensive dinners given in Lee's were surprisingly boring?

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What is Morphology?

- The study of the construction of words out of morphemes.
 - A morpheme is the smallest linguistic unit that can have meaning or grammatical function.

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What is Morphology?

- Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

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Affixation - suffixes

- Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious
- Atrocious
- Pretentious
- Delicious
- Salacious

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Affixation - prefixes

- Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious
- Super-size
- Superlative
- Supersede
- Superficial

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Inflection and derivation

- Eat, eats, eating, ate
- Sleep, sleeps, sleeping, slept
- Round, rounder, roundest
- Eat, edible, inedible
- Sleep, asleep, sleepy
- Round, around, roundabout

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Word-formation processes

- Blending: brunch, smog, flubber
- Clipping: phone, exam, dis
- Compounding: basketball, blacklist
- Coining: Kodak, Pepsi, Yoda
- Forming acronyms: radar, scuba, AIDS, NASA
- Semantic shift: hot, like, kosher

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What is Phonetics?

- Phonetics is the study of speech sounds; how they are produced in the vocal tract (articulatory phonetics), their physical properties (acoustic phonetics), and how they are perceived (auditory phonetics).

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What is Phonology?

- Phonology is the study of the sound system of a language; how the particular sounds contrast in each language to form an integrated system for encoding information and how such systems differ from one language to another.

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Phonetics

- What sounds have you heard in other languages that are not in English?
- Exactly how do you move your articulators to pronounce the tt in butter?
- What two English sounds are often confused when they are heard on the telephone?

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Phonology

- How does the pronunciation of s differ in "he talks" and "she snores"?
- What English sounds never occur at the beginning of words?
- How can you say That looks interesting as
 - A statement?
 - A question?
 - Ironically?

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What is Semantics?

- The study of meaning in language

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Semantics

- Anomalous sentences
 - Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.
- Contradictions
 - The fertilizer killed the plant but it didn't die.
- Presuppositions
 - Would you like another sandwich?
- Metaphor
 - That class was a long haul.

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What is Ambiguity?

- The property of words or sentences of having more than one meaning.
- Words with more than one meaning are said to be lexically ambiguous (e.g., bank or crane). Phrases with more than one meaning because of the structure of the phrase are said to be syntactically ambiguous (e.g., Flying planes can be dangerous).

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Lexical Ambiguity

- The crane fell over.
- That's a good pitch.
- Doctor Testifies In Horse Suit

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Syntactic Ambiguity

- Susan wrote a book on a famous antique desk.
 - Susan wrote [a book on a famous antique desk].
 - On a famous antique desk Susan wrote a book.

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What is the Difference between Descriptive and Prescriptive Rules of Grammar?

- Descriptive grammar is the objective description of a speaker's knowledge of a language (competence) based on their use of the language (performance).
- Prescriptive grammar is a set of rules designed to give instructions regarding the "correct" or "proper" way to speak or write.

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Descriptive or prescriptive?

- Never end a sentence with a preposition.
- In casual styles of speaking, people frequently end sentences with prepositions, but this is generally avoided in formal styles.
- Between you and me is correct; between you and I is ungrammatical.

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