

UNIT 2

-Syntactic Structures-



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SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

- Grammar is conveniently divided into **two portions** morphology and syntax.
- Syntax may be roughly defined as the principles of arrangement of the constructions **formed by the process of derivation and inflection** into larger constructions of various kinds (Gleason: 1961, 128).

SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

There are **four principle groups** on the basis of their structural meaning.



The structure of
modification



The structure of
predication



The structure of
complementation



The structure of
coordination

M The structure of modification

A structure of modification consists of a **head (H)** and a **modifier (M)**.

- **The head**, the word which is modified, can be any of part of speech. (n./v./adj./adv.)
- It may be a single word, a phrase, or a sentence.
- Therefore, noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases, prepositional phrases, and sentences, which have heads and modifiers as their two major components, can constituent structures of modification.

M The structure of modification (cont.)

- **The modifier**, serves to qualify, select and limit the meaning of the head in order to make the more specific and vivid.

Example(s):

- That beautiful lady is neither my sister nor my niece.

Structures of modification are:





P

The structure of predication

A structure of predication consists of two main components: a **subject (S)** and a **predicate (P)**.

- **The subject** may be a word or a group of words that tell who and what about the subject whereas the predicate is a verb or a verb with its modifier, direct object, indirect object or complement.
- **The predicate** usually follows the subject:

**P**

The structure of predication (cont.)



Example:

– That beautiful lady is neither my sister nor my niece.

Structures of predication is:

SUBJECT

That beautiful lady

PREDICATE

is neither my sister nor my niece.



C₁

The structure of complementation

A structure of complementation consists of two immediate constituents: a **verbal element (VB)** and a **complement (C)**.

- **The verbal element** can be a simple verb or a syntactic structure in which the verb must be the core.
- Therefore, a verbal element may be an infinitive, a verb or a verb phrase, or a structure of coordination.

C₁

The structure of complementation (cont.)

- The complements which appear in structures of complementation may be divided into four types:

● Subjective Complement

● Direct Object

● Indirect Object

● Objective Complement

C₁

The structure of complementation (cont.)

Example:

- That beautiful lady is neither my sister nor my niece.

Structures of complementation is:

VERBAL ELEMENT

is

COMPLEMENT

neither my sister nor my niece.

C₂

The structure of coordination

A structure of coordination consists of two or more **conjoins**, either with or without a **coordinator** or **correlative conjunctions**.

- The most common **coordinators** are: and, but, or, with, not, as well as, whereas, as much as, rather than, together with, except, and along with.
- The **correlative** conjunctions which are normally found are: either...or..., neither...nor..., not only...but (also)..., and both...and....
- The structure of coordination is the only structure in English that can have more than two immediate constituents or conjoins.

C₂

The structure of coordination (cont.)

Example:

- That beautiful lady is neither my sister nor my niece.

Structures of coordination is:

CONJOIN 1

neither

my sister

CONJOIN 2

nor

my niece

The structure of subordination*

Apart from the four basic types of syntactic structure, some linguists have developed another type of structure known as the structure of subordination, which consists of a **subordinator** and a **dependent unit**.

- **Subordinators** are prepositions (in/at/on/to), relative adverbs (when/where/why/how), and subordinating conjunctions (before/till/after/since).

The structure of subordination* (cont.)

- Dependent unit may be words, phrases, or clauses.
- A structure of subordination can have various functions in all the four basic structure.
 - As a modifier in the structure of modification
 - As a subject in the structure of predication
 - As a subject complement in the structure of complementation/
As a direct object in the structure of complementation/
As objective complement in the structure of complementation
 - As the two conjoins in the structure of coordination

REFERENCE

Jotikasthira, P. (2014). Introduction to the English Language : System and Structure. Bangkok: Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

