

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX TO THE STUDY AND ISE

OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The contributions of morphology and syntax to the study of language, particularly English, can never be over-emphasized. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), in broad terms, contend that language is used to carry out interpersonal functions in speech and writing. This paper, therefore, carefully explores these contributions, taking into considerations the roles played by these variables in the study and use of the English language. The corpora for the study were collected from relevant texts, journals and the internet and subjected to a more careful review. It is found that morphology and syntax play significant roles in reading comprehension, formation affective communication and Literature-in English. The paper concludes that Syntax and of English words, language learning, formation of phrases, clauses and sentences, clear and morphology provide a solid foundation for the study of language without which language study goes into extinction.

1. Introduction

The roles of syntax and morphology in the study and use of English cannot be fully discussed without falling back to linguistics. The term, linguistics, according to Lyon in Agbedo (2015:14), is the scientific study of language. Language in itself is seen as a System of rules and

principles of human communication. This definition seems to be complicated because many linguists tend to have their different perceptions of what language is. However, generally seen as a human system of communication that uses arbitrary signals, Such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols. It is therefore right to assert that language Is an umbrella term that houses all levels of linguistic analysis: Phonology, Morphology- Syntax and Semantics. Linguistics in general will be incomplete if Morphology and Syntax are excluded from language.

English language is among many natural languages in the world that uses morphology and syntax to coordinate coherence and clarity in both speech and writing. That is, when there are morphological and syntactic misrepresentations in either speech or writing, there are bounds for incoherence in such piece of talk. It is also observed that when a reader struggles to make out meaning from a poor assemblage of word strings in a passage, then he will begin to appreciate the contributions of syntax in language. The imaginary beauty that underlies a word that has undergone word formation process according to the application of a set of rule; is overtly seen as the immense work of morphology. Scholars in linguistics can never be grateful enough to early scholars who had made this wonderful contribution. It is therefore worthy to say that morphology and syntax play a leading role in the development, study and use of language

Morphology as one of the levels of linguistic analysis, seeks to study the internal structure of a word. In other words, morphology is a branch of linguistics which studies word structure and how words change their forms when they change grammatical function. Similarly, syntax deals with the study of how these words are arranged into phrases and sentences. In the light of the above definitions, language can be said to be vague if morphological and syntactic principles are neglected. In fact, what said to constitute language will just be a leftover of unnamed piece of unstructured vocal utterances.

1.1 Overview of Morphology

As it is clearly but briefly defined in the introductory part of this work, morphology studies the internal structure of word. Morphology therefore studies the ways morphemes organize themselves to form words.

1.2 The Concept of the Morpheme

The term morphology is generally attributed to the German poet, novelist, playwright, and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), who coined it early in the nineteenth century in a biological context. Its etymology is Greek: morph- means 'shape, form', and morphology is the study of form or forms. In Biology, morphology refers to the study of the structure of organisms, and in geology it refers to the study of the configuration and evolution of land forms. In linguistics morphology refers to the mental system involved in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed.

Morpheme is a unit of morphology. The word 'morpheme' is used to refer to the smallest indivisible form which has a specific grammatical function. Agbedo (2015) also sees morpheme as the smallest unit of meaning which cannot be further broken into meaningful grammatical analysis. For example, the English word 'worked' contains two bits of meaningful units. WORK plus PAST TENSE. Generally speaking, WORK plus PAST TENSE are called morphemes. In the word 'birds', two morphemes BIRD and PLURAL MARKER are present. It is however pertinent to note that when words are determinate with respect to segmentation, then the segmented parts are referred to as morphs. The word 'buyer' for instance is analyzable into two morphs, which is represented by 'buy' and 'er'. All the morphological elements, that is, 'buy' and 'er' contribute to the building block of the word 'buyer'. It is evident that a morpheme takes two forms: the Free and Bound morpheme. A Free morpheme is one that can stand on its own in an utterance, usually a full word as man, fan, table etc. On the other hand, a Bound morpheme is one that cannot stand alone in an utterance. For example, 'in-,un-, -y' are bound morphemes. They are forms that possess meanings but which crucially have grammatical functions in the grammar.

1.3 Morph and Allomorph

The term 'morph' is sometimes used to refer specifically to the phonological realization of a morpheme. For example, the English past tense morpheme that we spell -ed has various morphs. It is realized as [t] after the voiceless [p] of jump (jumped), as [d] after the voiced [d] of repel (repelled), and as [ɪd] after the voiceless [t] of root or the voiced [d] of wed (cf. rooted and wedded). We can also call these morphs allomorphs or variants. The appearance of one morph over another in this case is determined by voicing and the place of articulation of the final consonant of the verb stem. Now consider the word 'reconsideration'. We can break it into three morphemes: re-, consider, and -ation. Consider is called the stem. A stem is a base morpheme to which another morphological piece is attached. The stem can be simple, made up of only one part, or complex, itself made up of more than one piece. Here it is best to consider a simple stem. Although it consists historically of more than one part, most present-day speakers would treat it as an unanalyzable form. We could also call consider the root. A root is like a stem in constituting the core of the word to which other pieces attach, but the term refers only to morphologically simple units. For example, disagree is the stem of disagreement; because it is the base to which -ment attaches, but agree is the root. Taking disagree now, agree is both the stem to which is attached and the root of the entire word. Returning now to reconsideration, re- and -ation are both affixes, which mean that they are attached to the stem. Affixes like re- that go before the stem, are prefixes, and those like -ation that go after are suffixes. Diagram below illustrates further the types and sub-types of morphemes in English:

1.4 Types and Sub-Types of Morphemes

Free

Nouns

Verbs

Adjectives

Lexical

e. g., compress

depress

oppress

repress

Suppress

Morphemes

Bound

e. g., subvert

invert

Convert

Free

Grammatical

Prepositions

Articles

Conjunctions

e.g., at

the

and

Bound

Inflectional

Derivational

In summary, The English clearly related I phonemic forms /iz/ or /z/, and /s/. These three have in common not only their meaning, but also the fact that each contains an alveolar fricative phoneme, either /s/ or /z/. The three forms are in complementary distribution, because each occurs where the others cannot, and it is possible to predict just where each occurs: /iz/ after sibilants, /z/after voiced segments, and /s/ everywhere else. Given the semantic and phonological similarities between the three forms and the fact that they are in complementary distribution, it is reasonable to view them as contextual pronunciation variants of a single entity. In parallel with phonology, we will refer to the entity of which the three are variant representations as a morpheme, and the variant forms of a given morpheme as its allomorphs. When we wish to refer to a minimal grammatical form merely as a form, we will use the term morph. Compare these terms and the concepts behind plural morpheme {-s} can be expressed by three different but them with phoneme, allophone, and phone

1.5 Overview of Syntax

Syntax in linguistics can refer either to the study of the structural rule of a language or the bodies of rules themselves. The word Syntax is derived from the Greek syntax is, which means arrangement." This therefore implies that syntax deals with rules of word order and word combinations in order to form phrases and sentences. Syntax in linguistics deals with the ways the element of a sentence or phrase can be arranged and rearranged to express different meanings. For example, in spoken and written English, sentences can often be constructed following a subject with a verb and direct object. The position of the words conveys the subject- object relationship. For example, a sentence such as "The dog bit the cat" conveys a meaning that is different from "The cat bit the dog," even though they contain exactly the same words.

1.6 The Discovery of Syntax

The birth of syntax as a quasi-autonomous branch of study has a fascinating beginning. Two reasons account for this type of beginning. The first is that just as many other independent fields of study today. It began from an arguable different discipline, it originated from Philosophy. Even though it is controvertible that the Greek started the study of syntax, it is undoubtedly the Greek who started the formal study. And this form of language discovery is what linguist called Traditional Grammar. Secondly, the recognition of the theoretical importance of syntax in human language arose from two sources during the 1950's. Computers had a dual influence. On one hand the development of high level programming language entailed the increasing complex syntactic processors; on the other, the availability of these machines fueled the hope of devising an automatic language translator that could translate from one language into another. For example from Russia to English. These developments were not unrelated. Chomsky's work (1959a, 1959b) on formal Grammar was recognized as an important contribution to the growing field of computational linguistics while Chomsky himself was connected for a time with machine translation project directed by Victor Yngve at M.I.T. Both computer applications and Chomsky continued to have a powerful impact on the psychological

study of language processes, and syntax in particular. Chomsky not only constructed a formal theory of human language structure, but he argued persuasively that linguistics actually was part of Psychology.

In addition, he effectively challenged the relevance to the study of human language of the dominant Behaviorist paradigm.

The Roles of Morphology in the Study and Use of English

English is a language that modeled after Latin. Latin in itself is a highly inflectional language. That is, it uses morphological principles in describing and analyzing language. Bearing this in use of English. It is quite unimaginable that language will be a success without the mind, it will not be out of place to say that morphology is the central factor in the study and the to say that, language is Comprised sounds, words, phrases and sentences. At all these levels, morphological aspects. In fact, morphology plays a vital role in language analysis. Undoubtedly language is rule-based.

At the sound level, phonology refers to the rules of sound combination.

At the word level, morphology refers to the structure and construction of words. Interestingly, morphological skills require an understanding and the use of the appropriate structure of words such as word roots, and affixes called morphemes. Strong knowledge of grammatical morphemes, such as use of -ing for a present progressive verb, /s/ to indicate plural form correct use of verb tense, is necessary in order to have well developed morphology skills.

Morphological principles allow a speaker of English to have a general view in the field morphology and to understand its relationship with the other level of grammar. It's introduces a language learner to the nature of morphemes, word, and its various formation process in English. Also, a language learner is at the advantage of achieving through comprehension and practice, skills and attitudes in analyzing different type of word structures in English.

3. The Role of Morphology in Reading and Reading Comprehension

Morphology as a branch of linguistics plays an important role in reading skills. Many would ask of what relevance is morphology to reading. It is important however to note that, the knowledge of morpheme is a prerequisite in learning how to read. It is not out of place to ask whether morphological representations play a vital role in learning to read. Learning to read in an alphabetic orthography involves the acquisition of mappings between phonemes and graphemes. Clear research evidence shows that word identification in learning to read requires a phonological mechanism that generates phonological word forms. A phonological constituent applies as soon as the child begins to treat the letters of a word as having speech associated with them. However, the role of morphology in learning to read is less well understood. How children learn to recognize more complex words on the basis of their constituent parts remains to be

established. Although children perceive speech and recognize words, there is nothing in that ability that makes visible the composition of the speech in terms of morphological constituents. Some morphological awareness seems to be required for children to be successful in reading. Progress in reading acquisition requires gaining knowledge of morphemes as abstract linguistic units. The relationship between awareness of morphology and progress in reading acquisition can also be seen as reciprocal and mutually facilitative in that morphological awareness develops as a consequence of reading instruction. Alphabetic orthographies differ in the degree to which they adhere to a consistent representation of phonemes, or alternatively, the degree to which they deviate in a principled way from representing the phonetic level to preserve deeper linguistic or lexical information. In comparative studies on learning to read and write in different languages, cross-linguistic differences in orthographic regularity are usually expressed along the continuum deep versus shallow. In shallow orthographies like Italian, Finnish, or Serbo-Croatian, for example, morphemes are said to be represented by the graphemes in a direct and unequivocal manner. In deeper orthographies, such as English and French, on the other hand, the relationship between spelling and the basic "sub-word sounds that make meaningful contrasts in the spoken language are more opaque. Although the lack of grapheme consistency in these languages has many sources (especially in English), one source is that pronunciation changes with morphological variation, but spelling tends not to change for example, library-librarian, human-humanity. In learning to read, children learn that word parts that are related in meaning are usually spelled consistently, despite changes in pronunciation. Thus, they learn the Isomorphism Principle, which assigns similar spellings to similar (parts of) words, as long as pronunciation allows this. Given the fact that in many cases spelling rules are not directly governed by the phonological syllable structure, the learner must convert sounds to an underlying spelling representation with orthographic syllables reflecting morphemes (Treiman, 1992, pp. 259-272).

4. The Role of Morphology in Formation of English Words

Morphology is saddled with the sole responsibility of forming words in every language. Particularly, morphology plays an indispensable role in the formation of words in English language. It is no longer news that words are formed through the word formation process of every language. There are rules governing the formation of words in all languages and particularly in English. The process helps to build up the lexicons of a language thereby making that particular language unique. Morphology plays a considerable role in producing and building thousands of English words. English derives a huge number of words on a daily basis from all the languages of the world and morphology gives you the idea about the source of the words with rules and regulations on how to form new words. In English, there are quite a number or types of word formation process. These include:

1. **AFFIXATION:** This is the process by which bound morphemes are added before, within or after the root/free morphemes. In other words, it is the process of word formation by prefixation, infixation and suffixation. Through this process, lexical and grammatical information is added to the sense of the root. For example, the word 'logic'

can undergo this morphological process. logic- illogic (prefixation) and logical (suffixation)

2. **COMPOUNDING:** This involves the combination of two or more words. The combined words can be with a hyphen or without it. For example grandchild, frame-up, half-truth classroom etc.
3. **CONVERSION:** This is the process of forming a new word from an existing word merely by changing the grammatical class of the latter word. Conversion may or may not involve the change of stress pattern. The same assumes a different class in conversion. For example, man (n), man (v), pencil (n), pencil (v) etc.
4. **BLENDING:** in blending, two words are brought together to form a new word. It is a process that involves collapsing one form into the other. Examples of blends are transistor (transfer + resistor), forex (foreign + exchange), telecast (television + broadcast) etc.
5. **CLIPPING:** this is a morphological process of word shortening to the effect that words retain their original meanings. Clipping is done by removing the initial or the final syllable. For example 'advertisement (advert), refrigerator (fridge), examination (exam) etc.
6. **REDUPLICATION:** this is the process of repeating words, a form of compounding. Reduplicatives are either partial or total. Examples of partial reduplication are nitty-gritty, tit-tat, helter-skelter etc. Total reduplications are goody-goody, bye-bye, eye-eye
7. Others include acronyms, back-formation, coinage, Neologism, Borrowing and host of others. etc.

5. The Role of Morphology in Language Learning

Morphological awareness can help English Language students to familiarize with derivations and with the meaning or morphemes. They will be able to distinguish, for instance, that the CS-ment" or "-ness" form noun, or that the suffix -ly' forms an adverb. Ultimately, they will be able to realize that, at some extent, the English language has a certain morphological logic people follow and produce new words, These new words, remind us of what call, in Chomsky's word, Transformational Generative Morphology. Humans generally have the ability of perfectly producing and understanding words that have never been produced or generated before as a result of the understanding of their root words. student, provided that it is indispensable to fulfill adequate abilities to understand the target Conclusively, the study of morphology is not only an option but a 'must' for any language languages, and to be able to communicate successfully.

6. The Roles of Syntax in Study and Use of English

It was highlighted in the introduction, the roles of syntax in the study and use of English can never be over emphasized. In fact, syntax cannot be separated from the study of any natural language. This is because, the arrangement of words into group, groups into clause and clauses into sentences, is said to be in the field of sentence. It is true that, all that we say consists words and their structural arrangement into meaningful sentences. Syntax therefore stands a coordinator of utterances into semantically implied discreet. It is however pertinent to note that syntax plays important roles in English at various levels. Some which are outlined below:

7. The Role of Syntax in the Formation of Phrases, Clauses and Sentences

Traditionally, syntax is the study of the structure of sentences. In other words, it is a branch of linguistics that studies the internal structure of a sentence and how words come together to form phrases, clauses and sentences respectively. It is therefore right to say that syntax is concerned primarily with word order in a sentence and with the agreement of words when they are used together. So it is a kind of 'police officer' for the way in which sentences are constructed. English is language that has a structure SVO. That is Subject, Verb and Object. For example, The cat (subject) washes (verb) its paw (object). This is the correct word order and also there is agreement. If there were no agreement, it could read, "The cat washes their paw. In this case, the verb does not agree with the pronoun.

The formation of phrases, clauses and sentences is the primary work of syntax in linguistics. Without this aspect of linguistics, the study of language, be it English or any other language is baseless. This is because our speeches and utterance must fall within the three syntactic formations. That is the phrasal, clausal or sentential groups. A phrase is a word group that does not contain a finite verb for instance, THE MAN, BEAUTIFUL GREEN SNAKE, ON THE RUN, is phrases. A clause is a group that contains a subject and a finite verb and also expresses meaning at the same time. For example, OLU IS THE MAN WHO I INVITED. A sentence is an independent unit of thought. For example, JOHN KILLED THE SNAKE. Syntax therefore plays a vital role in this regard.

8. The Role of Syntax in Clear and Effective Communication

In English, knowing the basic grammatical rules can assist a listener or reader to understand the direction of communication. The proper assemblage of words in the right order facilitates the understanding of the intended meaning of an utterance. But if a sentence or utterance has a poor assemblage of word order, then, understanding becomes difficult. In short, at times, there is no understanding of any sort because the words do not follow the rules of syntax. Communication is as important as language itself. However, the aim of communication, be it written or oral, can be defeated if it fails to be interpreted the way it should. For example, in Phrase Structure Grammar, any sentence which does not follow the PSG rule may be ill formed.

Some of the rules include:

SENTENCE

NOUN PHRASE

NOUN PHRASE

NOUN PHRASE

NOUN PHRASE

VERB PHRASE

VERB PHRASE

VERB PHRASE

NOUN PHRASE-VERB PHRASE

NOUN

DETERMINER-NOUN

ADJECTIVE NOUN

DETERMINER-ADJECTIVE NOUN

VERB

VERB-NOUN PHRASE

VERB- NOUN PHRASE-PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE,

The man killed the cat" is syntactical and acceptable in English Kill man the cat is syntactically unacceptable in English. These are finites rules use a generating infinite number of well-formed sentences. In the light of this. the role of syntax clear and effective communication is to a large extent, appreciated.

9. The Role of Syntax in Reading Comprehension

The term "Reading Comprehension" simply means the reader's ability to decode or understand the central message of a given passage or excerpt through reading. This comprehension can hardly take place if the reader does not have a firm knowledge of syntax. Syntactic abilities enable the reader to adequately grasp the message that is organized in meaningful word The reader, as a matter of fact, must be firmly rooted in syntax before comprehension in reading can ensue. Thus the rules that govern how a language is spoken must be strictly adhered to. before

language will begin to make meaning to the speaker or hearer. Reading, just as speaking, is productive in nature though the former deals with the interpretation of the author's ideas and message through text while the latter deals with the oral production of meaning syntactic structures. From the foregoing, one can say that the syntactic ability of a learner aids his or her reading comprehension.

Prior to actual reading, readers equip themselves with the previous knowledge of well formed syntactic structures. These structures are already built in their sub-consciousness. Whenever they come across them in a passage, they rush over them speedily because the residual knowledge is at work. Syntax and reading are in mutual relationship though: the knowledge of syntax facilitates the understanding of a given excerpt. For instance, most good readers are aware that article precedes a noun and not a pronoun so whenever they come across the phrase "the man", in a sentence, they will not waste time in grasping the conceptual meaning. However, a structure like this "they man" is ungrammatical and good readers will identify them as a structure that has a syntactic problem. That is, a pronoun, ordinarily, does precede a noun.

10. The Role of Syntax in Literature-in- English

Syntax and literature are so important and dependent upon each other that the two cannot be separated. Syntax in Literature gives the sum of the word meaning in a way that simply listing words never would. Syntax influences literature a big way, because without proper syntax, literature would not exist, nor would many of the subtleties that the academics and casual readers alike love to ponder. In looking at syntax in literature, writers can use it in numerous ways to convey different meanings and provoke certain responses.

In order to look at the role of syntax in literature, it is first necessary to understand exactly what syntax is. Syntax is defined as the structure and placement of words for the purpose of creating sentences. By following the rules of language, syntax in literature helps convey meaning. Wording can help the readers determine who is speaking, and the overall mood the author wishes to convey, in a logical fashion. Readers typically expect a certain syntax flow. In some cases, such as E.E. Cummings, syntax provided a figurative canvas for poetic expression that intentionally broke the rule of English language in order to create a unique look and feel. So without proper syntax, literature would simply be a list of words that conveyed no particular meaning.

Syntax in literature, the structure mostly begins with the typical construction of subject and verb. The subject and verb must agree, or be conjugated properly. In English, this usually involves putting an "s" or "ed" at the end of the verb, or simply leaving it alone. Syntax therefore plays a very important role in organizing and ordering words properly for the convenience of readers.

11. Summary

The individual roles of morphology and syntax in the study and use of English have been extensively discussed in chapter two and three, respectively. However, it will not be out of place of bring the roles played by morphology and syntax together in this chapter for better comprehension. Comparatively, morphology and syntax play the following roles in English: Morphology studies the internal structure of words and how words are actually formed in a language. Syntax on the other hand, studies the internal structure of sentences and how words are combined to form phrases, clauses and sentences. From the foregoing, it is assert that morphology and syntax are complementary in the sense that, morphology builds words that syntax uses in formation of longer grammatical constructions. Undoubtedly, syntax cannot successfully operate without the morphological complements. For example, the words "boys", "snake", "was", "killed" and "by" are morphological functionality however, the assemblage of the words in the right order is syntax functionality. "the snake was killed by the boys." In English, words must be both morphologically and syntactically correct before they are grammatical and acceptable. The illustrations above are perfect examples.

- Both morphology and syntax play important roles on reading comprehension. The works morphology and syntax are more explicit in writing than speech. This is because, the morphographic representations are plausible. A passage that contains morphological blunders and poor syntax are more often than not, illegible. Readers cannot make meaning out of it easily as a result of these errors. It is therefore worthwhile to know that morphology and syntax are necessary prerequisite to reading and reading comprehension.
- Morphology and syntax play important roles in language learning. This is a fact that is indispensable as far as language learning is concerned. A child begins learning by individually pronouncing free morphemes, then words, phrases to a full blown sentence. This act is in stages. And each stage complements the other in order to fully complete the circle of language learning. For instance, a child may start with the morpheme "mum", then "The after some time, he may add "hungry". When these words are put in the right order, it will read I am hungry. Now the role of morphology and syntax is glaring.
- Morphology, through word formation process, builds millions of words and phrases in English lexicon. Syntax on the other hand, provides the rules that must be applied to these words and phrase in order to generate well-formed sentences. The English dictionary provides an insight on these words and their usages.

12. Conclusion

Syntax and morphology provide bedrock for the study of language without which language study goes into extinction. It is true to say that other levels of linguistics analysis such as phonology, semantics and pragmatics are important in language study, but it is equally true, that, syntax and morphology are of importance in language, especially in English. The roles of

morphology and syntax have highlighted in almost all the chapters. That is to say, syntax morphology are paramount in Linguistics.

A student who studied English at a higher Institution and he/she was not introduced syntax and morphology, then, a greater part of language study was omitted. Syntax a morphology cannot be separated from language. As it was discussed in the previous chapter morphology builds words and phrases into a language lexicon while syntax provides the rules for the realization of well-formed strings. This is in no small measure. a big contribution language (English). Syntax and morphology play paramount role in reading comprehension emphasized. Also, the role of syntax and morphology in writing of Literature-in- English, English except. Their roles in ensuring clear and perfect communication cannot be over worth appreciating. With all these in mind, one can say that syntax and morphological inseparable as far as language study is concerned. But may or may not be true because syntax and morphology are independent levels of linguistic analysis. While morphology studies worth structures; syntax studies sentence structures. Both syntax and morphology are however, important in study and use of the English language.

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