

Theoretical grammar of the English language

A course of lectures

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Lecture 1.

Grammar in the system of language. Main concepts and notions.

Words for the lecture:

Category, syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, grammatical meaning, grammatical form, phonology, morphology, syntax, language proper, speech; a domain, grammar opposition, the weak member of the opposition, a lexeme, a grammeme, innate, immanent, a segmental sequence

Plan:

1. The place of grammar in the system of language
2. main notions of grammar: grammatical meaning, grammatical form, grammatical categories
3. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations as the subject of study of theoretical grammar
4. Types of grammatical categories.

The main aim of theoretical grammar is to present a theoretical description of the grammatical system of the English language. Language is a means of forming and storing ideas as reflections of reality. Grammatical system of the language consists of morphology and syntax. Grammatical elements of language preserve unity of meaning and form in the formation of utterances.

The main notions of theoretical grammar are grammatical form, grammatical meaning and grammatical categories.

Grammar studies the relations between elements of the language system. There are the fundamental types of such relations: syntagmatic and paradigmatic.

Syntagmatic relations are immediate linear connection between language units in a segmental sequence.

The main quality of paradigmatic relations is their inter-systemic character.

They presuppose the connection within the categories of grammar. From above mentioned it is possible to give the definition of a grammatical category as a

system of expressing a generalized grammatical meaning by means of paradigmatic correlations of grammatical forms.

Grammatical categories can be divided into different criteria. First, grammatical categories can be innate or a group of words having the same lexical morpheme is called a lexeme. The words which have the same grammatical meaning compose a grammeme. The number of words in a lexeme is limited. The number of words in a grammeme is unlimited.

Lecture 2

Grammatical Classes of words

Plan:

1. General description of the notion “a part of speech”.
2. Notional and functional parts of speech.
3. Subcategorization of parts of speech.

Words for the lecture.

a notional part of speech, a functional part of speech, semantic, a signemic system, a subject referent, conventional, to expose, a criterion, qualitative, relative adjectives, a substantive, a finite verb, stative, actional verbs, evaluative, factual verbs, animate, inanimate nouns.

The words of language are divided into grammatically relevant sets of words are called traditionally parts of speech.

In modern linguistics parts of speech are discriminated on the basis of the three criteria: semantic, formal and functional.

Parts of speech are classified into notional and functional parts of speech.

Notional parts of speech possess all three characteristics: functional, formal and the main-semantic. There are: the noun, the verb, the pronoun, the adjective, the numeral, the adverb. The functional parts of speech are words of incomplete nominative meaning and non-self-dependent. The basic functional parts of speech are the preposition, the article, the conjunction, the particle, the modal words, the interjection.

The notional parts of speech each of them has peculiar semantic, formal and functional features.

Besides the notional parts of speech can be subcategorized on some semantic or grammatical (formal and functional) criteria.

Thus the noun is usually divided into such subclasses as:

-proper and common;

-animate and inanimate;
-countable and uncountable
and some others.

Formal parts of speech preserve their homogenous quality and are not subjected to subcategorization.

Lecture 3

Noun. General. Gender. Number.

Words for the lecture:

A referent, nominative, derivative, casual, intermediary, crucial, sheer, to discriminate, by convention, relevant, gender, numeral, masculine, feminine, neuter, pronominal, to precede, singularia tantum, pluraria tantum, lexicalization.

Plan:

1. Noun. General characterization.
2. The gender of the noun.
 - a) Means of expressing the category of gender
 - b) characterization of gender division
3. The category of the number of the noun
 - a) general description.
 - b) The meaning of the Plural and its semantic varieties.
 - c) the absolute singular and the absolute plural.

The general characterization of the noun presupposes describing its peculiar semantic, formal and functional properties.

The semantic meaning of the noun is the idea of substance or thingness. The noun has the following formal features: a set of derivatives (affixes), different types of combinability with other words in the sentence. Functional peculiarity of the noun is that it may be all types of parts of the sentence except the predicate.

The nouns can be simple, compound and form different types of noun combinations-word-groups.

The category of gender of the noun is expressed in English through two oppositions: the first presupposes dividing the nouns into human and non-human. The non-human nouns represent the neuter gender. The lower division of the nouns is into nouns of masculine and feminine genders. The peculiar feature

of English gender is its semantic character while the peculiar feature of gender in Russian is its formal feature.

The category of Number is compressed by the opposition of the plural form of the noun to the singular form. The problem is simple with the countable nouns when the plural forms by adding "s" to the singular form of the noun.

But the category of number has some peculiarities. Just there exist besides common singular and plural so called singularia tantum and pluralia tantum expressing generally the ability of this or that noun to be used only in singular or only in plural. There are also rather many cases when one and the same noun can be used in common singular and/or plural and as absolute singular and/or absolute plural.

Similar cases take place in the Russian language too, but less rarer.

Lecture 4.

Noun. case. Article determination.

Words for the lecture:

possessive case, common case, genitive case, an apostrophy, apostrophized, declensional forms, organic possession, an agent, a collocation, explicit, assessment, to modify, genitive of possessor, genitive of agent, genitive of destination, genitive of adverbial, genitive of quantity, a theme, a rheme.

Plan:

part 1. Noun. Case.

1. The definition of the notions “case”, “possessive case”.
2. Semantic types of the Possessive case.

part 2. Article determination.

1. Semantic evaluation of the article.
2. Situational assessment of the article uses.

Case is the immanent morphological category of the noun manifested in the form of noun declension and showing relations of the nounal referent to other objects and phenomena. The noun in English has two cases in the paradigm: the common case and the possessive case. The possessive case is formed by ending the “s”, apostrophized to the noun in common case. Traditional name of the possessive case is the genitive case.

The possessive case in English has several semantic types, among which the following are: genitive of possessor, genitive of integer, genitive of agent, genitive of destination, genitive of adverbial, genitive of quantity.

Article is a determining unit of specific nature accompanying the English noun in communicative collocation. In theoretical grammar the article attracts interest from the following point of view: whether it is a special grammatical form of the noun or whether it is a separate determiner word.

Scientists offer different approaches to the solution of the problem including the analysis of semantic of the articles (a, the, no article) and the examination of the

usage of the importance of the information given in the sentence. On the basis of the second approach the article “the” is considered to help the noun express the theme in the sentence. The article “a” is usually associated with the rheme.

Lecture 5

The article. The adverb

Words for the lecture.

permanent, temporary, complementive, comparative, superlative degrees of comparison, relative superlative, substantivization, relative and qualitative adjectives, a derived adverb, a postpositive, converse, to convert

Plan:

Part 1 The adjective

1. General description of the adjective.
2. Qualitative and relative adjectives
3. Substantivization of adjectives.
4. Degrees of comparison of adject.

Part 2 The adverb

1. General characterization of the adverb.
2. Simple and derived adverbs
3. Qualitative, quantitative, circumstantial adverbs.

The adjective expresses the categorical semantics of property of a noun. Adjectives are characterized by a wide combinability with the noun, by combinability with link – words and modifying adverbs. The formal signs of adjectives are their special affixes and the absence of declension forms.

Qualitative adjectives denote various qualities of the noun which admit some quantitative measure.

One of the formal signs of qualitative adjectives is their usage in degrees of comparison.

Adjectives in English are easily substantivized forming new nouns of different kind, with different numbers of categories.

We all know few types of comparison of adjectives: the comparative degree and the superlative degree. On theoretical grammar we can use one more notion – the positive degree of comparison. In English the superlative degree has few subtypes: common and elative superlative. The latter presupposes the use of the article “a” instead of the article “the”.

The adverb expresses a property of another property (adjective) or of the action (verb). This part of speech is characterized by a wide variety of quite different words with quite different meanings.

Adverbs derived from adjectives express usually an adverbial modifier of manner. Their formal sign is the suffix “ly”.

Adverbs can be simple, derived and compound. Simple adverbs usually have one stem. They are rather few but having functional semantics they play a very important role in language.

Qualitative adverbs express non-graded qualities, quantitative adverbs express qualities of different degrees of intensity.

Lecture 6

Verb. general

Words for the lecture:

notional, processual, controversy, finitude, composite, manifold, a complement, a supplement, transitive, intransitive, actional, statal, ingressive verbs, durative verbs, terminative verbs, valency, an adjunct

Plan:

1. General characterization of the verb.
2. Semi-notional and functional verbs.
3. Actional and statal notional verbs.
4. Classification of the verbs based on aspective verbal semantics.
5. Valency of the verb.

Grammatically the verb is the most complex part of speech due to several factors: the verb has an intricate structure of its grammatical categories and the verb falls into two large classes: finite verbs and infinite verbs. Moreover the verb is the central part of predication and that's why plays the crucial semantic role in the sentence.

The verbs can be simple, derived and phrasal. The group of simple construction verbs makes the core of the vocabulary and naturally determines the usage of other verbs.

The verbs are divided into nominative and functional. There are also partial-semi-notional or semi-notional verbs. The group of functional verbs is rather small but of a great role in the construction of speech utterances.

These are auxiliary verbs, modal verbs and link-verbs.

The class of notional verbs can be divided into actional and statal verbs. the former express the action performed by the subject. The latter denote the state of the subject.

The verbs can also be described according to their aspective meaning: impressive, durative, verbs of termination and some other kinds.

A very important feature of the verb is its valency, that's the ability to be connected with other words in the sentence.

Valency of the verb helps construct the utterance correctly and makes it (the utterances) meaningful. Valency falls into two types: obligatory and optional and in this respect presupposes two types of adjuncts: complements and supplements.

Lecture 7

Verb. Tense

Words for the lecture:

estimation, a stretch of speech, exclusion, a temporal category, absolute time, a tense, non-absolute relative time, primary time, prospective time, temporal, genuine, a time-plane of the verb.

Plan:

1. General description of the finite forms of the verb.
2. Temporal categories of the verb.
3. The category of primary time (The present, the Past).
4. The category of prospect (the Future tense)

The categorical system of the English verb is presented through oppositional criteria. In the category of Tense such an opposition reveals itself as the opposition of prospective tenses (category of prospect) to tenses of present and past (primary time)

The immediate expression of grammatical time, or tense in of the typical and important functions of the finite verb.

In modern English the grammatical expression of tense (verbal time) is effected at they correlated stages, the first having an absolute time characteristic, the second – a non- absolute relative time characteristic.

The category of primary time includes the two tenses: present and past and provides for the absolute expression of time.

The category of prospect is the oppositional to both of these tenses. Semantics of the category of prospect, that is the future tenses, is different in principle from that of the category of primary time. This category contrary to present and past tenses is purely relative. This peculiar feature of the future tense makes the problem be discussed by scholars. Some of them consider the category of prospect be a variation of modality.

There are two plans of the category of prospect: common future tense and future in past.

Lecture 8.

Verb. Aspect.

Words for the lecture:

aspective meaning, continuous aspect, perfect aspect, indefinite aspect, an inflexion, oppositional approach, timing of the process, motion in development, a mere fact, to coordinate, in retrospect, subsequent, to reflect, a retrospective category, successive, inherent, sequence, conjugated, contextual

Plan:

1. Definition of the category of aspect.
2. The continuous aspect.
3. The perfect aspect.

The aspective meaning of the verb reflects the inherent mode of the realization of the process irrespective of its timing.

The continuous aspect represents the action as a process. It is called the aspective category of development. The continuous forms are built by auxiliary “to be” and the present participle of the conjugated verb. The categorical meaning of the continuous aspect is the action in progress.

The continuous aspect is oppositional to the indefinite aspect which presents the action as a factual event. The choice of the aspect (indefinite or continuous) depends on our intension: to express a mere fact or an action in its development.

The perfect aspect as different from the continuous aspect reflects a kind of timing through purely in a relative way. Namely, the perfect aspect commonly correlates two times locating them in retrospect towards each other. The perfect aspect also expresses the very connection of a prior process with some other action or its time limit. The perfect aspect is referred to as an oppositional one towards the indefinite and continuous aspects, having the general name “The imperfect forms”. The marked member of this opposition is certainly the Perfect aspect. The perfect aspect can also include the aspective category of

development. The forms of the Perfect Continuous expresses the integral time – aspective category of the verb.

Lecture 9

Verb. Voice.

Words for the lecture:

a participant, a doer of the action, active voice, passive voice, representation, objective verbs, an oblique object, a direct object, a prepositional object, a statal verb, an actional verb, a passivized verb, a demarcation line, a recipient, reflexive voice, reciprocal voice, a compound nominal predicate, to discriminate, medial, controversial, to disguise

Plan:

1. General description of the category of voice.
2. Peculiarities of the category of voice in the categorical system of the English verb.
3. Reflexive and Reciprocal voices.
4. Disguising passive constructions from similar complex nominative constructions.

The category of voice shows the direction of the process in connection with the participants or doers of the action.

The category is expressed by the opposition of the passive form of the verb to that of the active form. The sign making the passive form is the combination of the verb "to be" with the Past

Participle of the conjugated verb. The active voice shows that the subject of the sentence is the active doer of the action. The passive form shows that the subject of the sentence is the receiver of the action. In these two cases we have direct and indirect directions of the action.

The category of English voice (passive voice) has a much broader.

Presentation that in the Russian language because all objective verbs (direct, indirect, prepositional) can be subjects of English sentences contrary to the Russian variant with a direct object only. English verbs can be divided into passivized and non-passivized due to their abilities or disabilities to be put into the passive voice.

The category of voice differs from other verbal categories in the fact that use of the passive form does not presuppose the change of the actual properties of the process denoted by the verb. But the meaningful side of the information changes greatly the stress from one point of information proceeds to the other (from the subject to the object)/ The passive construction stresses the importance of the fact of the action leaving less importance of the doer. English reflexive and reciprocary voices are considered by grammarians variants of the passive voice. In Russian they are looked upon as variants of the active voice.

Lecture 10

Non-finite forms of the Verb.

Words for the lecture:

verbids, verbals, the infinitive, the gerund, the present participle, the past participle, the category of finitude, primary predication, secondary predication, regular, irregular verbs, a verbal predicate, the marker “to”, a categorical paradigm, a substantival unit, an absolute participle construction, to expose, intermediary, conjugation, an adjust, dual, triple causality

Plan:

1. General description of the verbids.
2. The infinitive
3. The gerund
4. The present participle
5. The past participle

Verbids are the forms of the verb intermediary in many of their lexicogrammatical features between the verb and non-processual parts of speech. They are formed by special morphemic elements which do not express either grammatical time (tense) or modality. The difference between verbids and finite verbs lies in the fact that finite forms serve only one syntactic function in the sentence-namely, the function of the predicate. Verbids serve various syntactic functions in the sentence.

The infinitive combines the properties of the verb with those of the noun. The infinitive is considered the head form of the whole paradigm of the verb. It represents the actual derivation base for all the forms of regular verbs.

The self-positional Infinitive performs the functions of all types of notional sentence parts except the predicate. The infinitive is used in semi-predicative constructions like the Complex Object, the Complex Subject. The verbal categorical paradigm of the Infinitive includes 8 forms for transitive (objective) verbs and 4 forms for non-objective verbs.

The Gerund is the non-finite form which like the infinitive combines the properties of the verb with those of the noun. But the substantive force of the Gerund is much stronger than that of the Infinitive. The gerund can be modified by the noun in the possessive case, and can be used with prepositions. Like the Infinitive the Gerund performs the functions of all parts of the sentence: the subject, the object, the attribute, the adverbial modifier. The gerundial paradigm of objective verbs includes four forms of non-objective verbs two forms.

The Present Participle is the non-finite form of the verb which combines the properties of the verb with those of the adjective and adverb. In form the present participle compares with the gerund but in functions these two grammatical phenomena differ greatly.

The past participle is the form of the verb which combines properties of the verb with those of the adjective. The past participle usually functions as an attribute and sometimes as a predicative.

The past participle is the only verbal form which has only one paradigm form.

Lecture 11

sentence. General.

Words for the lecture:

a word-sentence, nominative and predicative functions of the sentence, an integral unit of speech, a syntactic pattern, syntax, an utterance, language proper, predication, lexicon, nominative, grammatical, syntactical, syntagmatic division of the sentence, actual division, the theme, the rheme, a proposition, contextual division, reverse word order, intensifying words, a determiner, an indicator, relevant, to coincide.

Plan:

1. The difference between the word, the word-sentence and the sentence.
2. Nominative and predicative functions of the sentence.
3. the notial division of the sentence.

The sentence is the immediate integral unit of speech which is built up of words according to a definite syntactic pattern. The sentence is considered the main object of syntax as part of grammatical theory.

There is a difference between the word and the sentence including one-word sentences. The sentence is a unit of speech as a part of language. The word has only a nominative function. The sentence has two functions: nominative and predicative of which the peculiar feature of it as the main unit of speech. Thus the word is a monoaspective unit, and the sentence is considered to be.

The sentence has two aspective semantics.

The division of the sentence into its notional (parts (subject, objects, attributes, predicate, adverbial modifiers) is called grammatical, or syntactical division. This is a traditional analysis of the sentence. One more term is nominative division.

In modern linguistics, in theoretical grammar in particular, there exists one more kind of division of the sentence into its parts- actual division. It is based on the idea of evaluation of the actual importance of the information carried by different parts of the sentence. The theme presupposes usually the beginning of

the sentence and contains so called known information. The rheme often coincides with the predicate and carries new information which is considered the to fulfill the main communicative aim of the utterance.

Lecture 12

The Simple sentence

Words for the lecture:

communication, a communicative type of the sentence, the purpose of communication, a declarative sentence, an imperative sentence, an interrogative sentence, an action-response, a question-answer-dialogue unity, pragmalinguistics, a pragmatic utterance, refutation, disagreement, a request, a command, a recommendation, an application, a menace, a lexeme, emphatic, an interpretation, a predicative line, a parenthetical enclosure, a model of immediate constituents, an elementary sentence, a complement, a supplement

Plan:

1. Communicative types of the sentence
2. simple sentence and its parts.
3. Model of immediate constituents.
4. An elementary sentence.

The sentence being a speech utterance is a communicative unit.

In accord with the purpose of communication the sentences are divided into declarative, imperative and interrogative. They are all stand in a strict semantic opposition towards one another.

Ways of expressing different pragmatic purposes of utterances are studied by a special branch of linguistics – pragmalinguistics. The number of their concrete names is great: a statement, regulation, confirmation, agreement, disagreement, menace, as so on. These speech acts are distinguished as pragmatic utterances.

The basic predicative meanings of the sentence are expressed by finite verbs which are connected with the subjects of the sentence. The sentence which has one predicate is called a simple sentence.

The nominative parts of the sentence each occupying a notional position in it are: the subject, objects, attributes, the predicate, adverbial modifiers. They are organized in some hierarchy within which all of them play some modifying role.

The linear order of the parts of the sentence can be presented with the help of the so-called model of constituents. The sentence is first divided into two groups- the group of the subject and the group of the predicate.

Then both the groups are divided into their constituents. In the process of such an analysis two types of subordinative relations may be exposed: obligatory and optional. A sentence includes only obligatory relations of its members, it is called an elementary sentence (includes subject, predicate, complements). A sentence includes supplements, the sentence will belong to expanded units.

Lecture 13

Complex sentence

words for the lecture

a simple sentence, a complex sentence, a clause, a principal clause, a subordinate clause, the matrix base sentence, asyndetic connections, to dominate a thematic part, a rhematic part of the complex sentence, primary information, secondary information, a substantive-nominal clause, a qualification-nominal clause, an adverbial clause, a connective element, a positional subordinator, a conjunction substitute, parallel and consecutive subordination

Plan:

1. General characterization of the complex sentence.
2. Thematic and rhematic clauses.
3. Classification of subordinate clauses.
4. Types of subordination in the complex sentence.

The complex sentence is a polypredicative construction built up on the principle of subordination. It is derived from two or more clauses one of which is the principle clause playing the role of the matrix to the other, subordinate, clauses. Although the principal clause positionally dominates it is important to stress that the very existence of the principal clause often is presupposed by the informational role of the subordinate clause. Moreover the rhematic part of the complex sentence tends to be often presented by the subordinate clause. It means that the main new important information is often expressed in the subordinate clause and the subordinate are referred to thematic and rhematic elements of the complex sentence if they have direct syntactic order. Subordinate clauses are classified into substantive nominal, qualification-nominal and adverbial clauses of different types.

The connective elements in the complex sentence fall into two basic groups: positional and non-positional. The non-positional connective elements (or

subordinators) are pure conjunctions. The positional subordinators are in fact conjunction substitutes.

Complex sentences which have two or more subordinate clauses discriminate two basic types of subordination: parallel and consecutive. Subordinate clauses referred to one and the same principal clause are subordinated in parallel. Consecutive subordination presents a hierarchy of clausal levels.

Lecture 14

Compound sentence

Words for the lecture:

a simple sentence, a complex sentence, a compound sentence, a composite sentence, coordination, subordination, a leading clause, a sequential clause, copulative, adversative, disjunctive, causal relations, a coordinating connector, predicative volume, an open, a closed construction, a closure, syntactical, asyndetical.

Plan:

1. General characterization of the compound sentence.
2. Types of coordinative connectors of the compound sentence.
3. Open and closed multiclausal compound sentences.

The length of the compound sentence in terms of the number of its clauses (its predicative volume) is in principle unlimited. It is determined by the informative purpose of the speaker. The commonest type of the compound sentence in this respect is a two-clause construction.

Predicatively long compound sentences (having more than two clauses) are divided into “open” and “closed” constructions. The open construction presupposes descriptive and narrative means of a literary text, not varied in the final sequential clause. In the multi-clausal compound sentence of the closed type the final clause expresses the end, the result of the ideas presented in the previous clauses. The typical closures in this case are “and”, “but”.

The compound sentence is a composite sentence built on the principle of coordination. The main semantic relations in the compound sentence are copulative, adversative, disjunctive, causal, consequential, resultative.

The compound sentence is derived from two or more base sentences. The first clause is called “leading” (the leader clause), the successive clauses are “sequential”. The coordinating connectors are divided into conjunctions proper and semi-functional clausal connectors of adverbial character.

A compound sentence can often be transformed into a complex one.

