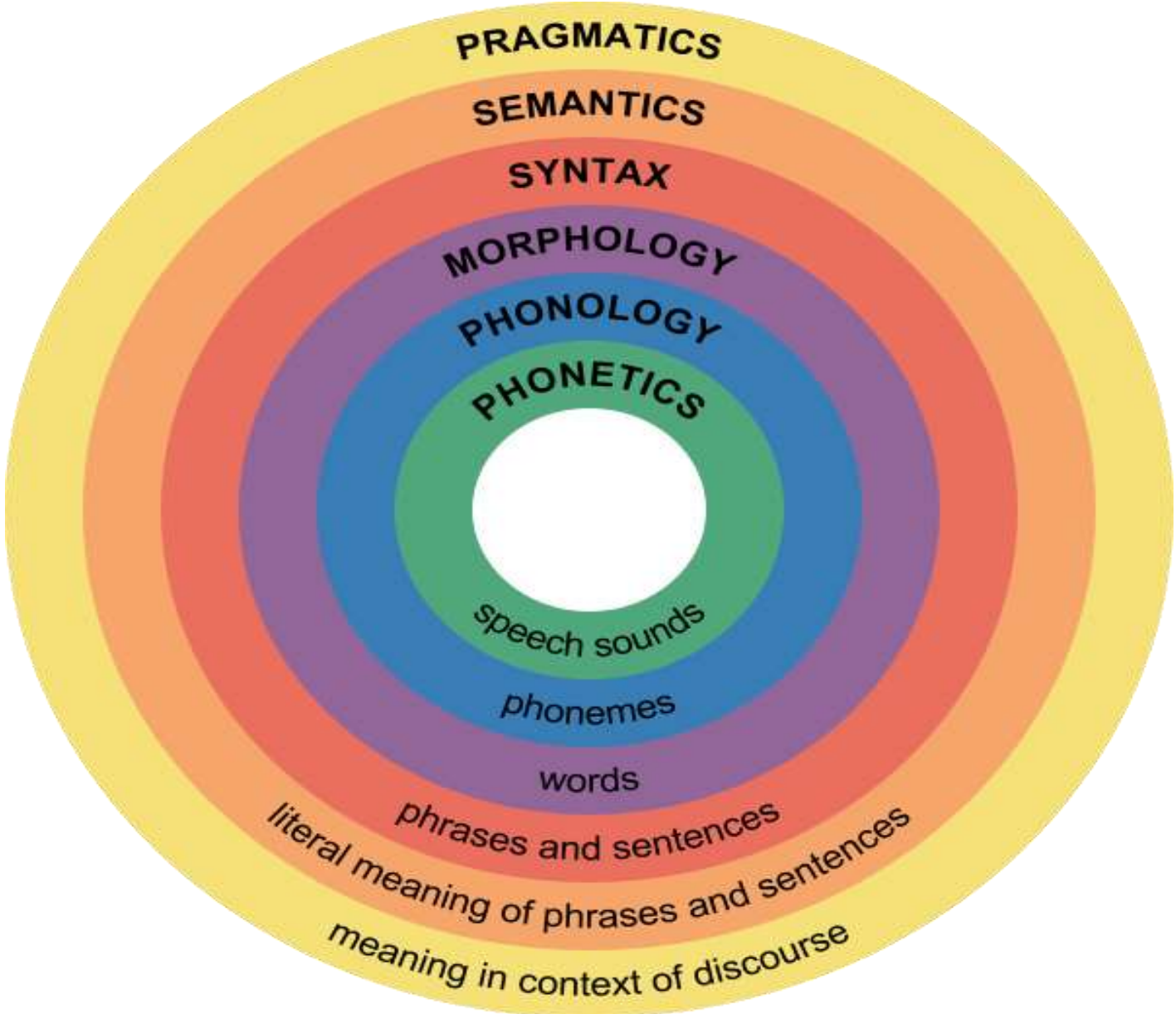# Morphology

1st lecture:

Introduction

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Layers of Linguistic Analysis

A question ?

How many entries do dictionaries of English contain?

The answer

Dictionaries of English contain nearly 500,000 entries.

Other estimated facts about words in English

- A child of six knows as many as 13,000 words.

- The average high school graduate is about 60,000.

- A college graduate presumably knows many more than that.

Knowledge of words

Words are important parts of linguistic knowledge,

but…

Can we communicate in a foreign country by merely learning thousands of words in a language or merely using a dictionary ?

Knowledge of words

Someone who doesn't know English would not know where one word begins or ends in an utterance.

Take this:

Thecatsatonthemat

Knowledge of words

We separate written words by spaces.

 However, in the spoken language there are no pauses between most words.

Without knowledge of the language, one can't tell how many words are in an utterance.

Thecatsatonthemat

A speaker of English has no difficulty in segmenting the stream of sounds into six individual words:

the , cat , sat , on , the , and mat

This is because each of these words is listed in his or her mental dictionary, or lexicon, that is part of a speaker's linguistic knowledge.

Uncharacteristically

Similarly, a speaker knows that **uncharacteristically**, which has more letters than **Thecatsatonthemat**, is nevertheless a single word.

Knowledge of words

Knowing a language means also knowing that certain sequences of sounds signify certain concepts or meanings.

Speakers of English know what **boy** means, and that it means something different from **toy**.

You also know that **toy** and **boy** are words, but **moy** is not.

Arbitrary Relation of Form and Meaning

If you do not know a language, the words (and sentences) of that language will be mainly incomprehensible, because the relationship between speech sounds and the meanings they represent is, for the most part, an **arbitrary** one.

Arbitrary Relation of Form and Meaning

When you are acquiring a language you have to learn that the sounds represented by the letters house signify the concept of this image

If you know French, this same meaning is represented by **maison**.

Arbitrary Relation of Form and Meaning

Similarly, is represented by **hand** in English,

main /ma/ in French,

рука /ruka/ in Russian.

Arbitrary Relation of Form and Meaning

The following are words in some different languages. How many of them can you understand?

- **odun**
- 朝
- **wartawan**

Arbitrary Relation of Form and Meaning

There is conventional and arbitrary relationship between the form (sounds) and meaning (concept) of a word.

There is some sound symbolism in language—that is, words whose pronunciation suggests the meaning.

Onomatopoeia

It is the process of creating a word that [phonetically](#) imitates, resembles, or suggests the sound that it describes.

- Shh! No talking in the library please.
- Please do not beep your horn after dark.
- The loud boom of the fireworks scared the dog.
- Quack, quack went the ducks as we threw them our stale bread.
- I could hear their buzzing, so I knew there was a bee's nest around here somewhere.

Arbitrary Relation of Form and Meaning

Because the sound-meaning relation is arbitrary, it is possible to have words with the same sound and different meanings (**bear** and **bare**) and words with the same meaning and different sounds (**sofa** and **couch**).

Words in our mental lexicon

Each word stored in our mental lexicon must be listed with:

1- its pronunciation, and with a meaning

2- its orthography (spelling)

3- its grammatical category (whether it is a noun, a pronoun, a verb, an adjective, an adverb, a preposition, or a conjunction)

The grammatical category

You may not consciously know that a form like **water** is listed as both a verb and a noun, but as a speaker you have such knowledge, as shown by the phrases:

- **I water the garden.**
- **I need some water.**

If such information were not in the mental lexicon, we would not know how to form grammatical sentences, nor would we be able to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences.

The grammatical category

Unless we had such kind of information in our mental dictionary, we could not know how to produce grammatically correct sentences.

We intuitively know how to use words in different types of sentences because of this kind of information.

Video

The Nature of Words ([The Virtual Linguistics Campus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bp_53n7cs68))

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bp_53n7cs68

Assignment

3. Content Words and Function Words

Content and Function Words in English

Content Words	Function Words
Nouns (*computer, board, peace, school*)	Articles (*the, a/an*)
Verbs (*say, walk, run, belong*)	Auxiliaries (*can, must, might, will*)
Adjectives (*clean, quick, rapid, enormous*)	Demonstratives (*this, these, that, those*)
Adverbs (*quickly, softly, enormously, cheerfully*)	Quantifiers (*many, few, little, some*)
	Prepositions (*on, with, to, from*)
	Pronouns (*he, she, they, we*)
	Conjunctions (*and, but, or, but*)

Content Words

Content words belong to the major parts of speech that consist of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs and represent ideas, actions, objects and attributes.

So, these words have clear lexical meanings like children (noun), build (verb), beautiful (adjective).

Content Words = open class words

Content words are sometimes called the **open class words** because we can and regularly do add new words to these classes such as **Facebook** (noun), **blog** (noun, verb), **frack** (verb), **online** (adjective, adverb), and **blingy** (adjective).

So these words are lexically productive. That is, we can create and add an infinite number of new words to these classes.

Function words

They belong to grammatical or function classes that consist of a small number of fixed items, such as articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, prepositions and conjunctions.

Examples of function words in English include articles (the, a), demonstratives (this, that), quantifiers (most, few, some, little), prepositions (up, from, to, with), and conjunctions (but, or, and, yet).

Function words

The **it** in:

It is raining

is an example of words whose function is purely grammatical—they are required by the rules of syntax and we can hardly do without them.

Function words

Consider the articles **the** and <u>a/an</u>. The essential feature of these articles is that they function grammatically to indicate whether a noun is definite or indefinite (the teacher or a teacher).

Likewise, the word **and** functions grammatically to connect words and phrases, as in the combination of noun phrases:

the girl **and** the boy.

Function words= closed class words

This is because it is difficult to think of any conjunctions, prepositions, or pronouns that have recently entered the language.

The small set of personal pronouns such as I, me, mine, he, she, and so on are part of this class.

Content words

- Content words have clear lexical meanings.

- Content words do not specify grammatical relations.

- Content words are lexically productive

Function words

- Function words do not have clear lexical meanings.

- Function words specify grammatical relations

- Function words are lexically unproductive

Content Words and Function Words

Speakers of a language are likely to encounter many new content words such as nouns and verbs, in the coming years.

However, it is very unlikely that they will see a new conjunction in the coming years or even in their entire life.

To sum up

Content words (including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and most adverbs) are those words that carry the 'content' or the meaning of a sentence and are open-class words.

In contrast, function words are those words that do not possess clear lexical meaning but instead help to express grammatical relationships with other words within a sentence, or specify the attitude or mood of the speaker