Initiation to Linguistics

Second Year

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The Methodology of TGG (the Classical Theory)

Introduction

The description of sentences in TGG is based on the operation of several types of rules which constitute the components of grammar. It is important to note that there are differences between the two versions of TGG, the Classical Theory of 1957 and the Standard Theory of 1965, in the types, the number, the status and the order of components.

The Classical Theory:

In this version, grammar consisted of three components:

1. The phrase structure component (consists of phrase structure rules)

2. The transformational component (consists of transformational rules)

3. The morphophonemic component (consists of morphophonemic rules)

The following diagram shows how the grammar outlined in this version was organized:

Morpho-phonemic component

Phrase Structure component

Transformati-onal component

1. Phrase Structure Rules:

Phrase structure rules (rewriting rules) expand the sentence (S), the largest unit of grammar into smaller units. They show the internal grammatical structures of constituents using symbols. There is always one symbol to the left of the arrow. The arrow means: “is to be rewritten as” and it has one direction. Each symbol represents a constituent. Some of these rules are categorical (they translate abstract elements into other abstract elements); others are lexical (they translate the abstract elements into concrete vocabulary items. PS rules are ordered and each one is derived from some previous one. It is possible to use a **phrase marker** (a diagrammatic representation) to show PS rules. It is a tree diagram which has branches (lines) and nodes (dots). One node above the other on a diagram dominates the lower node.

Example:

* the boy opens the door

1. **drawing the phrase marker of the sentence (tree diagram)**

S initial string

NP VP

NP

Art N V Art N

The boy opens the door

**2-Rewriting rules for the verb element**

The verb element can have its own rewriting rules:

R(1) VP Aux + MV+…..

R(2) Aux Tense + (Modal) + (have+ en) + (be+ ing)

R(3)Tense past

present

**Rule (1)** indicates that the VP contains (an) auxiliary (s) and a main verb. Other elements are possible depending on the pattern of sentences (SVO, SVC, SVOC, SVC…). The other structures of VP are related to the type of verb use (transitive, intransitive, copular). So, rule (1) can have the following forms:

Vp: MV + NP, PP, Adj……

VP : Aux + MV + NP

VP : Aux + MV + Adj

VP : Aux + MV + NP + Adj

**Rule (2)** indicates that the auxiliary element contains:

- Tense (obligatory): English sentences must have a tense.

- A modal auxiliary (optional): English sentences can have modal.

- A perfect auxiliary (optional): English sentences can have a perfect aspect

expressed in the auxiliary “have” which needs a past participle morpheme “en”.

- A progressive auxiliary (English sentences can have a progressive aspect expressed in the auxiliary “be” which needs a present participle morpheme “ing”.

**Rule (3)** indicates that there are 2 tenses in English (present or past). The Future time is expressed by the modal “will” + present time.