

Lecture 13

Morphology & Syntax Interface

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LNG 103 Morphology & Syntax

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What is the morphology-syntax interface?

Think of it as the junction between the structure building device and the word-form/phonological form giving device

Words and morphemes are primary: They feed the structure-building machine

The lexicon

Consists of bound morphemes and words with categorical information



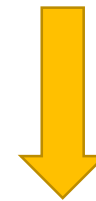
Syntax

The structural skeleton controlled by the what the words stipulate

The structure is primary: It determines the selection of words and morphemes

The Syntax

The structural skeleton where heads determine how many arguments they require, categorical information determined here.



The “vocabulary”

Consists of bound morphemes and words with information about pronunciation

Inflection as a window into the
interface

Inflection

- It is usually considered a “word formation” process propelled by the attachment or “affixation” of inflectional morphemes to word stems.
- Inflections are said to carry grammatical information and therefore inflection is considered a grammatical process.
- Morphemes that provide information about the following are considered inflectional:

Tense, aspect, case, voice, person, number, gender, mood, animacy, definiteness

- The category of a word does not change during inflection (cf. **Derivation**).
- Languages vary in the number of inflections that are found affixed in a word.

Tense inflection

- The man ask-**ed** about the toy.
- The man ask-**s** about the toy.

[PAST]

[PRESENT]

Aspect inflection

- bacca gir-**ta** hai
- bacca gir-**a**

[IMPERFECTIVE]

[PERFECTIVE]

How many tenses and aspects in your language are inflectional?

- How is 'asked' stored in the lexicon?

ask , -ed

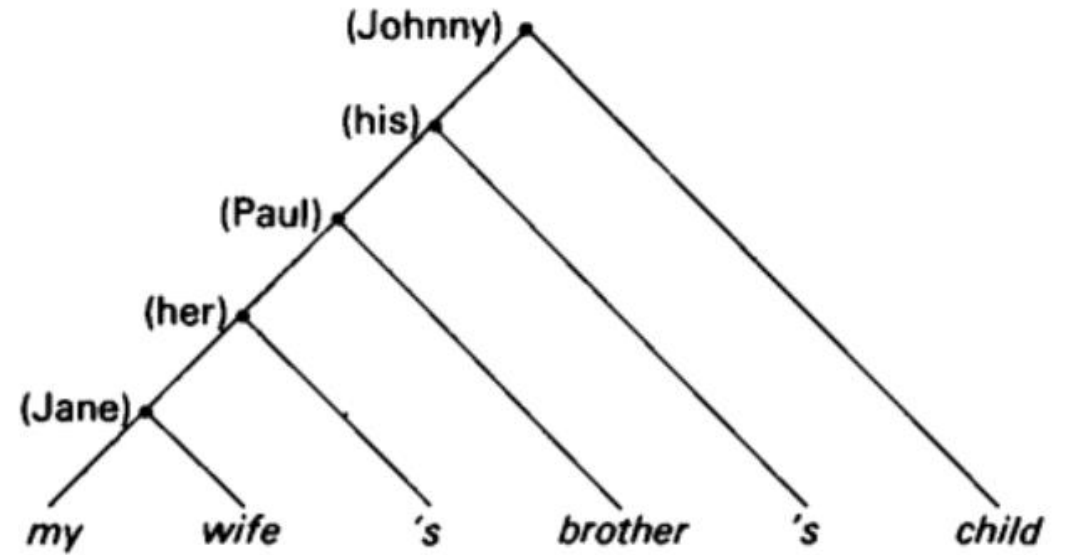
OR

ask, [PST]

- Which of the above can also account for the formation 'ate'?

Clitics as a window into the
interface

- A clitic is a morpheme that behaves like a word, but requires the aid of another word or phrase (a “host”) for phonological realization.
- Think of ‘s in English



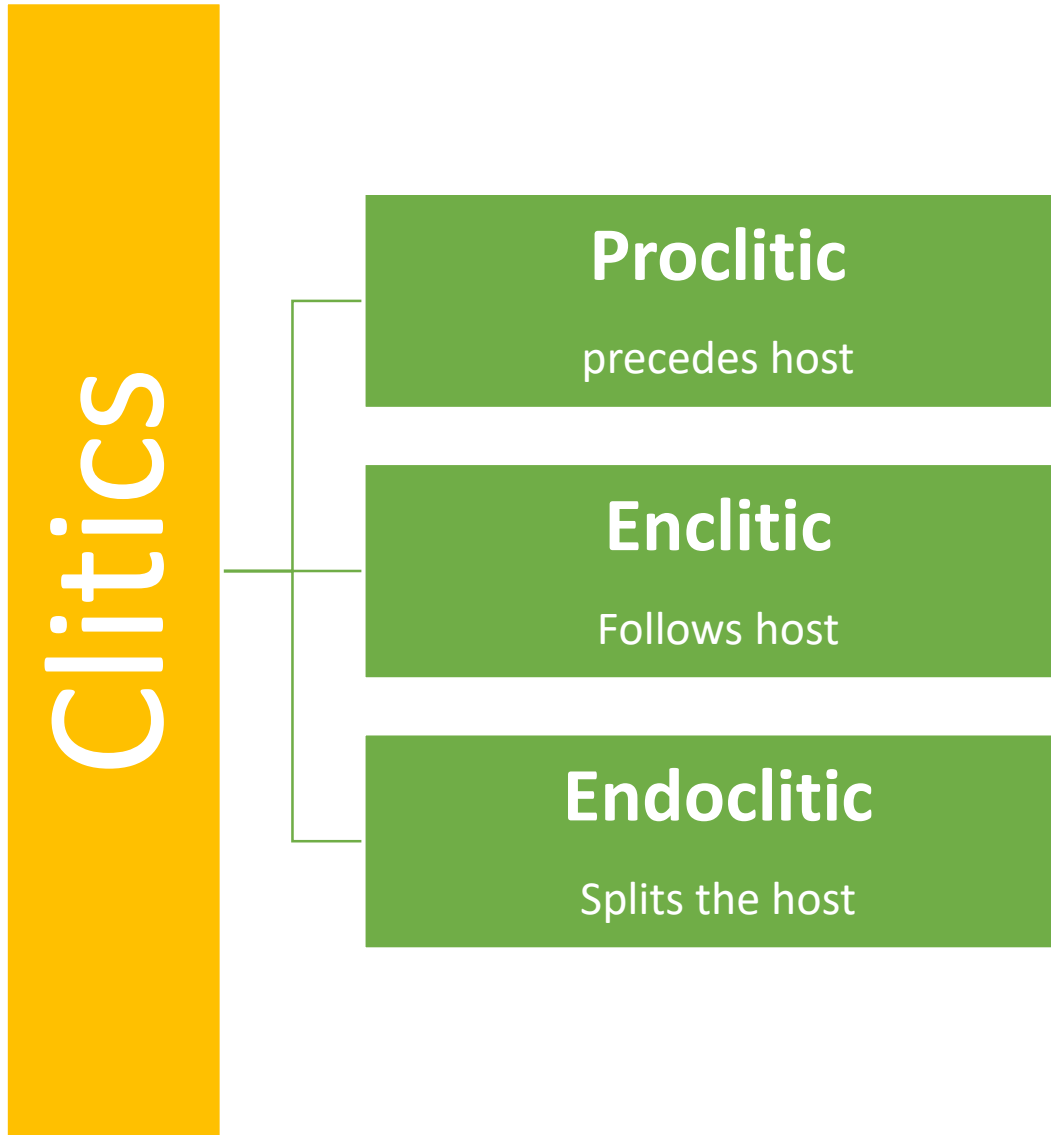
John's brother

?[The man named John]'s brother → Nothing in the syntax disallows this.

The sound system of English makes this sound odd.

Is a clitic a word such that it is stored in the lexicon the same way 'boy, 'bat', 'nation' are?

What would be the grammatical category of a clitic like 's?



End Semester Prep

Unit 4

- Determining constituency using constituency tests
- Marking Constituency using brackets and trees
- Marking the phrasal category of the constituents
- Writing Phrase Structure Rules

Unit 5

- Determining grammatical class using morphological and syntactic criteria
- Neutralization of a grammatical feature
- Agreement types – Concord & Government

Unit 6

- Argument and adjuncts
- Simple, compound and complex sentences

Unit 7

- How inflection and clitics challenge the traditional notion of words being stored in the mental lexicon

Write phrase structure rules to generate the following phrases. Convert your rules into trees

a) the kittens

b) ate the kittens

c) quickly ate the kittens

d) the beautiful sky

e) in the horizon

Determine if the following sentences are simple, compound or complex. Justify your answer.

- a) the glasses broke and the teacups broke.
- b) I asked about the book that was missing yesterday.
- c) Sheela is boring.
- d) Some people are way too smart for their own good.