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THE STUDY OF COMMERCIAL NOUNS IN LINGUISTICS: BASIC APPROACH AND PRINCIPLES

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Abstract. Although all languages share some universal characteristics, languages also differ in many ways. The language that people use varies depending on who's speaking and the situation in which they're speaking. In fact, variability is one of the most important and admirable properties of language. Variation is the essence of information. The variability of language is indexical. Speakers vary the language they use to signal their social identities and also to define the immediate speech situation. People also use language variation to communicate the situation and purpose in which they are talking, as well as the roles they are playing in those situations. Without variation in light frequencies there would be no sight; without variation in sound frequencies, there would be no language and no music. Variability in language allows people to communicate far more than the semantic content of the words and sentences they utter. A priest uses different forms of language during a sermon than during the social hour after a church service, playing different roles.

Introduction. At work, people speak differently to subordinates than to superiors, and differently during coffee breaks than in meetings. Parents speak differently to their children than to other adults (or even to other people's children). The language used in writing typically differs from the language used in speaking, reflecting and communicating the different conditions under which language is produced and its various purposes. A large part of a speech community's culture is transacted through the medium of language variation. Norms of appropriate language use help speakers to construct and negotiate their relations to each other. The unwritten and unconsciously applied rules for the various forms and uses of language can vary from one cultural milieu to another, within and between societies, and even between genders. This raises the risk of misunderstanding when speakers unknowingly are behaving according to different cultural norms, but enriches our ways of seeing the world when those differences are understood. The fact that language is a universal characteristic of human beings means that all languages are equal. That is, they all come from the same genetic blueprint, and they all are equally "human."

Materials and methods. Language varieties differ because over time they have adapted to the differing needs of their speech communities. Each language is equally "functional" at meeting the communicative needs of its own speech community. But sometimes when two or more speech communities come into contact, one group will have more power, status or economic resources than the others.

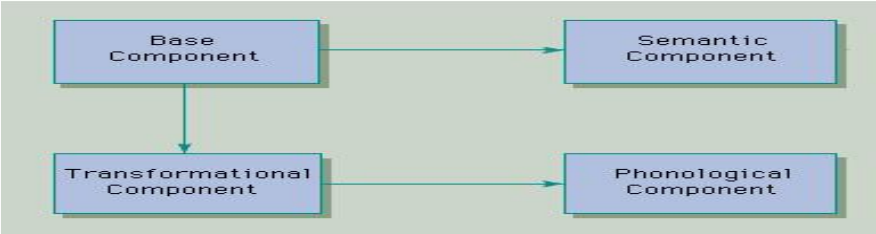


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of a transformational grammar

Not surprisingly, the language variety of that dominant group is often perceived as having higher status as well, especially if speaking it affords increased access to power or wealth. By comparison, the language varieties spoken by the less powerful groups often are stigmatized as

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"incorrect" or "bad" language. Linguists approach language in the same way that astronomers approach the study of the universe or that anthropologists approach the study of human cultural systems. It would be ridiculous for astronomers to speak about planets orbiting stars "incorrectly" and inappropriate for anthropologists to declare a culture "degenerate" simply because it differs from their own. Similarly, linguists take language as they find it, rather than attempting to regulate it in the direction of preconceived criteria. Linguists are equally curious about all the forms of language that they encounter, no matter what the education or social standing of their speakers might be. The fact that, in most societies, some varieties of language are perceived as "correct" while others are considered "incorrect" is, for linguists, a social phenomenon – an aspect of language use to be explored scientifically. Since "correct" language is inherently no better or worse than the varieties that are considered "incorrect," linguists eagerly seek to discover the reasons for the conviction that some part of language variability is superior to the rest, and to examine the consequences of those beliefs. However, so powerful are the natural forces that guide how a person learns and uses spoken language that explicit teaching on how to speak is virtually irrelevant. If a person is not very good at mathematics, we are probably justified in assuming that he or she did not learn mathematics in school [1]. The same may well be true of reading and writing; if someone cannot read or write, it is likely that something went wrong with that person's schooling. It includes the knowledge of what speech sounds are part of a given language and how they may and may not be strung together. Grammatical competence also includes knowing the meanings signified by different sound sequences in a language and how to combine those units of meaning into words, phrases and sentences. Grammatical competence is what allows a speaker of English to string together 21 sounds that sound something like "The dog chased the cat up the tree" and allows another speaker of English to understand what dogs, cats, and trees are, what chasing is, and which way is up. Further, grammatical competence is what allows these speakers of English to share the understanding that it was the dog doing the chasing and that it was the cat that went up the tree. Grammatical competence is almost useless for human interaction without communicative competence. In fact, a lot of the actual use of language is not in sentences at all, but in discourse units larger and smaller than sentences, some grammatical (in the technical sense used in formal linguistics), some not. To be effective, speakers have to combine grammatical competence with the knowledge of how to use grammatical sentences (and other pieces of linguistic structure) appropriately to the purpose and context at hand. The two taken together comprise communicative competence. Communicative competence – the knowledge included in grammatical competence plus the ability to use that knowledge to accomplish a wide range of communicative jobs – constitutes language [2]. Today the field of linguistics studies not just the nuts-and-bolts of forms and their meanings, but also how language is learned (both as a first and second language), how it plays a central role in reflecting and creating the interactive and cultural settings of talk, how computers can be designed to deal with language, and how language is represented in our very brains. Because much of this expanded scope of the field involves intense study of people actually using language, some doubt has arisen about how separate, or "dual," grammatical and communicative competence actually are. The degree of distinction between grammatical and communicative competence is understood differently by different linguists, even among the contributors to this book. One English consonant remains to be discussed. This sound combines a narrowing of the vocal tract at the velar place of articulation with rounding of the lips. It is thus a double articulation, a labiovelar glide [3]. While double articulations at various places of articulation are not hard to make (given the independence of the active articulators), they can be hard for the ear to distinguish, so double articulations other than labiovelars are rare. In summary, there are eleven common places of articulation – bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, alveopalatal, retroflex, palatal, velar, uvular,

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pharyngeal, and laryngeal though no single language makes consonants using all of the places of articulation. Introductory linguistics textbooks often simplify phonology by emphasizing the role of place and manner of articulation in making sounds, but you can see that there are many more choices involved. Speakers control the airstream mechanism, voicing, and nasality as well as the place and manner of articulation. Every sound is composed of smaller components that can be combined in different ways to make other sounds, and each of these components offers a (typically binary) opposition: voiced or voiceless, nasal or oral, open or closed, front or back. Speakers of Think of 'voiced', for example, not just as an adjective that describes a sound but as one parameter (a choice, a building block, a specific vocal tract configuration) that, in combination with other parameters, creates the sound. The phonetic symbol representing a given sound isn't the sound itself, but a 'cover symbol' for the set of choices. This also means that the speech sounds of a language are related to each other in important ways; some sets of sounds differ only by changing a single parameter, while others differ in the settings of several parameters. hat this argument could be put forward by one party to the controversy and rejected by the other is perhaps a sufficient indication of the uncertainty of the evidence. Of greater importance than the overt issues, in so far as they are clear, was the fact that linguists were now studying much more intensively than they had in the past the complexities of the interdependence of syntax, on the one hand, and semantics and logic, on the other. The most sonorous sounds are the low vowels; the mouth is wide open, and the sound flows freely out. The least sonorous sounds are the voiceless stops; the mouth is completely shut, and no sound is made at all. Other sounds range between these two extremes. The speech stream is organized into peaks and valleys of sonority. Languages generally do not choose long strings of consonants nor long strings of vowels. Rather, we alternate sounds that are more sonorous and less sonorous: each stands out better against the background of the other. As the ends of the tuning fork vibrate, they set the air particles next to them vibrating as well, following the same back and forth motion. These moving air particles alternately push and pull on the particles next to them, and those on the particles next to them, and so on, so that the pattern of vibration moves outward from the tuning fork like ripples in a pond. These moving patterns of vibration are called sound waves. When the sound waves reach our ears (or a microphone), they set the eardrum (or the membrane in the microphone) vibrating according to the same pattern [4]. Inside the ear, the vibrations set off nerve impulses, which are interpreted by our brains as sound. Consider all the information that is artificially condensed in a morphology example or problem set (including the ones in this chapter), such as English glosses and translations. Children acquiring a language don't get this kind of help. Instead, they swim in a linguistic sea where the meaning of an utterance and distinctions such as case, number, person, gender, conjugation class, and so on, must be deduced in context and compared with minimally contrasting forms that have already been acquired. It is the gradual accumulation of such minimal contrasts that leads to the child's formulation and increasing refinement of grammatical categories. Many linguists argue that the capacity to acquire key aspects of natural language is exclusively human. Human language is built on an intricate foundation of grammatical principles [5]. People don't have to learn a lot of what they know about these principles. The grammatical principles we are talking about don't have much to do with the grammar you learn in "grammar school." In fact, you have probably never heard of them, precisely because apparently, they don't have to be taught. What children know about language goes beyond what they should be able to derive from what they hear, and very far beyond anything they are explicitly taught. The scientist decided to interview the robot. She set up a monitor and showed a carefully selected video of a number of basketball plays – some showing violations of the rules and some showing unusual but legal plays – and asked the robot if what it saw was against the rules or not. What happened next was remarkable. The robot accurately pointed out the plays that were allowed and the ones that were not, with almost no

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errors. In the case of rule violations, the scientist would ask the robot what rule was violated. But the robot could not tell her the rule, just that the play wasn't allowed. When the scientist asked, the robot affirmed that it had never seen anyone play basketball before the experiment [6]. It is just this sort of reasoning that has led many linguists to the conclusion that people are "preprogrammed" with principles of grammar. In the first few years of life, children develop cognitive systems that characterize the structure underlying their linguistic capacity. We call these systems "grammars." A grammar, in this view, is biological a language organ. We don't know just how a grammar is physically represented in an individual's brain. But the systematic behavior that people display when they speak, and when they are asked whether or not certain structures are allowed, makes it possible for us to describe the grammar quite specifically. English speakers can tell you that the first example is fine and the second isn't, but they can't tell you why. If they try, they are likely to get it wrong. They almost certainly were not taught anything about these examples in school. Even for a functional category, inflection is special. Like transitive verbs and prepositions, it projects a complement branch; to be complete it has to have a verb phrase attached. In other words, you can think of the verb phrase as analogous to the object of a prepositional phrase; in our example, it provides a way for present tense to express its meaning.

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