ENGLISH SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

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1.- SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

**Subject Name:** English Syntax and Semantics  
**Code:** G5061325  
**Type of subject, course and year in which it is imparted:** Major Subject, 3rd year of the degree (Second Semester).  
**Number of credits:** 6  
**Prerequisites (regulated or recommended):** To have passed *English Morphosyntax*.  
**Taught in English**  
**Examinations:** Please consult the timetable.  
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**Research team website SCIMITAR:** [http://www.scimitar.es/](http://www.scimitar.es/)

2.- OBJECTIVES AND ACQUIRED SKILLS

In this course we have a double objective. First, we shall describe and analyse the structure of simple, complex and compound clauses from a discourse-functional perspective. Accordingly, you will get acquainted with the different subtypes of coordination and subordination in order to be able to recognise and analyse them in real texts, which will require the application of the principles and conceptual tools explained in class. Subsidiary to the first one, our second goal will be to study the basics of English Semantics at sentence and word levels.

The program of the subject is divided in three parts. Part I provides the framework for syntactic analysis adopting a discourse-functional perspective: it presents some introductory concepts and summarises the principles of syntactic analysis endorsed in the course. The contents of Part II form the bulk of the syllabus, in which a typology of
interclausal connectios are described concerning clause combining and clause condensing processes. Closing the course, Part III offers an introduction to sentence and word semantics in English, paying particular attention to the interconnections between Semantics and Syntax. Readings and theoretical questions will be substantiated with practical tasks.

2.1.- Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this subject are the following:

1. Become familiar with the main approaches and concepts in syntactic and semantic analysis in English, although comparisons with other languages (especially Spanish & Galician) will also be encouraged.
2. Analyse clausal and sentential constructions in natural settings.
3. Read specialized literature related to the field critically.
4. Use new resources and technologies to carry out research in the field.
5. Do case analysis.
6. Work individually and in groups.
7. Encourage active participation in class.

2.2.- Acquired Skills

1. An understanding of the basic concepts of clausal and sentential syntactic analysis.
2. Knowledge of the main features of different types of interclausal connections (clause-combining and clause-condensing strategies), as well as of the basics of semantic analysis in English.
3. Critical reading of recommended literature.
4. Application of the basic concepts dealt with in the course.
5. The ability to consult and select from the recommended bibliography and available resources all the relevant and appropriate information.
6. The ability to gather, select and analyse natural data in field research.

3.- SUBJECT CONTENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

3.1.- Abridged syllabus and Bibliography

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH SYNTAX

UNIT 1 Introducing the syntax of the clause

1.1. Utterance, sentence, clause
1.2. The structure of the clause
1.3. Syntactic patterns of canonical and non-canonical clauses
1.4. Interclausal connections and syntactic relationships

PART II: CLAUSE COMBINING AND CLAUSE CONDENSING

UNIT 2 Coordination and parataxis
2.1. Syndetic vs. asyndetic
2.2. Yuxtaposition
2.3. Basic coordination: characterization and markers
   2.3.1. Reductibility to one element
   2.3.2. Order change
   2.3.3. Likeness of class and function
   2.3.4. Open endedness.
   2.3.5. Range of occurrence
2.4. Non-basic coordination: characterization and markers
   2.4.1. Discontinuity
   2.4.2. Bound ellipsis and Gapping
   2.4.3. Restructuring
2.5. Expressive and idiomatic uses of coordination
   2.5.1. Pseudocoordination
   2.5.2. Iterative or continued use of coordination
   2.5.3. Other expressive uses of coordination

UNIT 3. Subordination and hypotaxis
3.1. Characterization and markers
3.2. Subordination vs. embedding
3.3. Complement clauses
   3.3.1. Noun complement clauses
   3.3.2. Adjective complement clauses
   3.3.3. Verb complement clauses
3.4. Relative clauses
   3.4.1. Restrictive
   3.4.2. Non-restrictive
   3.4.3. Fused relative constructions
3.4.3. Finite, non-finite and other reduced variants
3.5. Comparative constructions
3.5.1. Equality
3.5.2. Inequality
3.5.3. Comparison + result
3.5.4. Comparison + purpose
3.6. Adverbial clauses
3.6.1. Clauses of time
3.6.2. Clauses of place
3.6.3. Clauses of condition
3.6.3. Clauses of concession
3.6.4. Clauses of reason or cause
3.6.5. Clauses of result
3.6.6. Clauses of purpose
3.6.7. Clauses of manner

UNIT 4. Clause condensing
4.1. Substitution
4.2. Ellipsis

PART III: INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH SEMANTICS

UNIT 5 Introducing sentence and word semantics
5.1. Rhetorical Structure Theory and sentence semantics
5.2. Lexical Semantics

Required Books
A) Syntax

B) Semantics
3.2.- Detailed Programme and Reference List

PART 1 INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH SYNTAX

UNIT 1 Introducing the syntax of the clause

1.1. Utterance, sentence, clause

1.2. The structure of the clause

1.2.1. Grammatical form and illocutionary force
   1.2.1.1. Declarative clauses: Statements
   1.2.1.2. Negative clauses: Negations
   1.2.1.3. Interrogative clauses: Questions
   1.2.1.4. Imperative clauses: Directives
   1.2.1.5. Exclamative clauses: Exclamation, Echo and Tags

1.2.2. The concept of "negation"
   5.1. Location in the clause structure
   5.2. Major types of negation
   5.3. Assertive, non-assertive and negative forms
   5.4. Scope and focus of negation

1.3. Syntactic patterns of canonical and non-canonical clauses

1.3.1. Canonical Clauses: Major clause types and verb patterns
   1.3.1.1. Copular
   1.3.1.2. Intransitive
   1.3.1.3. Monotransitive
   1.3.1.4. Ditransitive
   1.3.1.5. Monotransitive Prepositional
   1.3.1.6. Complex Transitive

1.3.2. Non-canonical clauses
   1.3.2.1. Preposings
   1.3.2.2. There constructions
   1.3.2.3. It-Extrapositions
   1.3.2.4. Inversions
   1.3.2.5. Left detachments
   1.3.2.6. Right detachments
   1.3.2.7. Cleft clauses
1.3.2.8. Pseudo-cleft clauses

1.3.2.9. Passives

1.4. Interclausal connections and syntactic relationships

1.4.1. From (complex) verbs to separate clauses

1.4.2. Models of syntactic analysis and the analysis of sentences

I. TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCE BOOKS


II. OTHER RESOURCES

http://www.sfu.ca/rst

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/

III. COMPLEMENTARY LITERATURE


IV. SELECTED REFERENCES ON ILLOCUTIONARY PATTERNS: QUESTIONS, DIRECTIVES


Williams, J. 1989. Yes/no questions in ESL textbooks and classrooms. IDEAL 4. 149-156.


V. SELECTED REFERENCES ON NEGATION


V. SELECTED REFERENCES ON NON-CANONICAL CLAUSES


PART 2 A TYPOLOGY OF CLAUSE COMBINING & CLAUSE CONDENSING

UNIT 2 Coordination and parataxis

2.1. Syndetic vs. asyndetic

2.2. Yuxtaposition

2.3. Basic coordination: characterization and markers
   2.3.1. Reductibility to one element
   2.3.2. Order change
   2.3.3. Likeness of class and function
   2.3.4. Open endedness
   2.3.5. Range of occurrence

2.4. Non-basic coordination: characterization and markers
   2.4.1. Discontinuity
   2.4.2. Bound ellipsis and Gapping
   2.4.3. Restructuring

2.5. Expressive and idiomatic uses of coordination
   2.5.1. Pseudocoordination
   2.5.2. Iterative or continued use of coordination
   2.5.3. Other expressive uses of coordination

I. SELECTED REFERENCES ON COORDINATION & PARATAxis


**UNIT 3 Subordination and hypotaxis**

3.1. Characterization and markers

3.2. Subordination vs. embedding

3.3. Complement clauses
   
   3.3.1. Noun complement clauses
   
   3.3.2. Adjective complement clauses
   
   3.3.3. Verb complement clauses

3.4. Relative clauses
   
   3.4.1. Restrictive
   
   3.4.2. Non-restrictive
   
   3.4.3. Fused relative constructions
   
   3.4.4. Finite, non-finite and other reduced variants

3.5. Comparative constructions
   
   3.5.1. Equality
   
   3.5.2. Inequality
3.5.3. Comparison + result
3.5.4. Comparison + purpose

3.6. Adverbial clauses
3.6.1. Clauses of time
3.6.2. Clauses of place
3.6.3. Clauses of condition
3.6.3. Clauses of concession
3.6.4. Clauses of reason or cause
3.6.5. Clauses of result
3.6.6. Clauses of purpose
3.6.7. Clauses of manner

I. SELECTED REFERENCES ON CATENATIVE VERBS


Huddleston, Rodney. 19882. Review article on A comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, by Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. Index by David Crystal. Language 64. 345-354.


**INTERNET SOURCES**

http://www.santiagoapostol.net/ingles/grammar_bach.htm
http://esl.fis.edu/learners/advice/syntax.htm
https://www.sfu.ca/rst/

**II. SELECTED REFERENCES ON SUBORDINATION & HYPOTAXIS**


III. ADVERBIAL CLAUSES


**IV. CONDITIONAL CLAUSES**


George, H. V. 1966. If (1) and if (2). *English Language Teaching Journal* 20(2). 113-119, and 20(3), 232-239.


V. DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH


VI. RELATIVE CLAUSES


**UNIT 4 Clause condensing**

4.1. Substitution
   4.1.1. Nominal
   4.1.2. Verbal
   4.1.3. Clausal

4.2. Ellipsis
   4.2.1. Definition
   4.2.2. Function and interpretation
   4.2.3. Syntactic types

**I. SELECTED REFERENCES ON CLAUSE CONDENSING**


PART 3 INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH SEMANTICS

UNIT 5 Introducing sentence and word semantics

5.1. Rhetorical Structure Theory and sentence semantics
   5.1.1. Projection
      5.1.1.1. Locution
      5.1.1.2. Idea
   5.1.2. Expansion
      5.1.2.1. Elaboration
      5.1.2.2. Extension
      5.1.2.3. Enhancement
   5.1.3. Spans of hypotactic and paratactic relations in language
   5.1.4. Types of RST relations
   4.1.5. Sample RST analyses

5.2. Lexical Semantics
   5.2.1. Basic concepts of semantic theory
   5.2.2. Lexical semantics, lexical fields and meaning relationships

I. SELECTED REFERENCES AND RESOURCES ON RST & SENTENCE SEMANTICS


http://www.sfu.ca/rst

II. SELECTED REFERENCES ON LEXICAL SEMANTICS


4.- DISTRIBUTION OF ECTS AND METHODOLOGY

6 credits will be devoted to class sessions in which the syllabus will be covered and the practical tasks will be corrected. In the joint sessions the professor will offer an explanation on the topics of the programme, which will be summarised in hand-outs and power points resorting to the selected references provided for each section. In the practical sessions students will apply the acquired notions and skills on the syntactic analysis of clauses and sentences from a discourse-functional perspective, and they will also discuss issues related to such activities. Students are expected to read the compulsory readings and to do the practical tasks recommended for each unit.

5.- CALENDAR

WK 1- PART 1

WK 2- PART 1

WK 3- PART 2: COORDINATION & PARATAXIS. TYPES OF COORDINATION

WK 4- PART 2: COORDINATION & PARATAXIS. TYPES OF COORDINATION

WK 5- PART 2: SUBORDINATION & HYPOTAXIS. COMPLEMENT CLAUSES I (NOUN COMPLEMENT CLAUSES). COMPLEMENT CLAUSES II (ADJECTIVE COMPLEMENT CLAUSES)

WK 6- PART 2: COMPLEMENT CLAUSES II (ADJECTIVE COMPLEMENT CLAUSES)

COMPLEMENT CLAUSES III (VERB COMPLEMENT CLAUSES)

WK 7- PART 2: RELATIVE CLAUSES

WK 8- PART 2: COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

WK 9- PART 2: ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

WK 10- PART 2: CLAUSE CONDENSING

WK 11- PART 2: SENTENCE SEMANTICS

WK 12- PART 3: SENTENCE SEMANTICS VS. LEXICAL SEMANTICS
WK 13- PART 3: LEXICAL SEMANTICS

WK 14- REVISION

6.- ASSESSMENT
Assessment will be based on a FINAL EXAMINATION at the end of the period of classes, which will include theoretical and practical questions on English Syntax and Semantics. Grades will be from 0 to 10. Students who attend classes and participate in them actively can receive bonus in such a way that their exam grade may be upgraded (but 4 is a minimum requirement). In no case will this be possible for students who do not attend classes or do so only sporadically.

The assessment system will be the same for the Resit & First sit exams, as well for those students who have failed the subject in previous years. The final marks of those students who are officially dispensed with class attendance will be exclusively based on the result of the final written exam.

7.- OTHER INFORMATION OF INTEREST
7.1.- Study Recommendations

- **Attendance & Office hours.** Students are expected to come to class regularly and to use the professor’s office hours to consult with her.
- **English expression.** Serious grammatical mistakes will have an impact on the final grade.
7.2.- Mock Test

ENGLISH SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

SURNAMES + FIRST NAME:............................................................................................................................

A) SYNTAX (7 points)

1. Provide a tree diagram for the following text. (4 points)

My linguistics professor advised me to tell the rest of the team’s members that we should have a number of meetings to discuss the issue as to whether the proposed guidelines could be improved. Dr. Gómez also suggested we looked at the idea of setting up a research network, which is a very good initiative in my opinion.

2. Describe and illustrate the different types of catenative complements that exist in English (3 points)

B) SEMANTICS (3 points)

3. Propose a logico-semantic interpretation of the text above (1.5 points)

4. Determine whether the following are cases of homonymy or polysemy (1.5 points).

(a) fine 'superior in quality' 'a sum of money paid as a penalty'
(b) bank 'an incline of land adjoining a river' 'financial institution'
(c) monitor 'a pupil who assists a teacher' 'a device that receives video signals from a computer'