# THEORETICAL (ENGLISH) GRAMMAR

GRAMMAR AND THE SYSTEMIC CONCEPTION OF LANGUAGE

# The Aim of the Course of Theoretical Grammar

"I have just read a book of yours about Spain and I wanted to ask you about it.

- It is not a very good book I am afraid."

"My holiday at Crime isn't being a disappointment". (Huxley)

"For the first time Bobby felt he was really seeing the man." (A. Christie)

# *Nominative Grammar vs Theoretical Grammar*

- The aim of practical grammar of language is the description of grammar rules that are necessary to understand and formulate sentences.

- The aim of theoretical grammar of language is to give a theoretical description of its grammatical system, that is, to scientifically analyze and define its grammatical categories and disclose and formulate the regularities of the correspondence between the plane of content and expression and study the mechanisms of grammatical formation of utterances out of words in the process of speech making.

# *The systemic conception of language*

- - the phonological system (determines the material (phonetic) form of its significant units)

- - the lexical system (comprises the whole set of nominative means of language (words and stable word-groups)

- - the grammatical system (presents the whole set of regularities determining the combination of nominative units in the formation of utterances)

# *Language Units*

- Segmental

- Suprasegmental

# Language Levels

- *the phonological level*

- - phonemic

- *the morphological level*

- - morphemic

- - lexemic

- *the syntactical level*

- - denotemic

- - proposemic

- *the supersyntactical level*

- - the level of topicalization

# A morph and a morpheme

**gently**          **gentleman**

"gentl" [d entl]

| knife | knives |
|:---:|:---:|
| [nai**f**] | [nai**v** / z] |

# *A morpheme*

- A morpheme is an abstract unit which has no form: it has only the meaning. In actual words, which we pronounce and write, we distinguish not morphemes but morphs. Morphs are actual smallest meaningful parts of words.

# TYPES OF MORPHEMES

# Types of morphemes

- roots, prefixes, infixes, suffixes

- derivational/form-building morphemes

- additive/replacive morphemes

- overt/covert morphemes

- continuous/discontinuous morphemes

- segmental/suprasegmental morphemes

- lexical, grammatical, lexico-grammatical morphemes

# Lexical, grammatical, lexico-grammatical morphemes

child + hood = childhood

(the meaning of the lexico-grammatical morpheme *hood* is the expression of an abstract state)

friend + ship = friendship

(the meaning of the lexico-grammatical morpheme *ship* is the expression of an abstract progress)


white – whiter – the whitest

Go – went – will go

Cat, cat's, cats, cats'

# Segmental and suprasegmental morphemes

- Lik-ed   walk-ing   re-write   tell-s

- `import      im`port

## Answer the questions

1. What is the difference between nominative/practical and theoretical grammar?

2. Describe the systems forming a language. What do they comprise?

3. Which type of language units forms a hierarchy of levels?

4. What are the basic units of the language?

5. What is the phoneme's basic function?

6. What is the basic function of the morpheme?

7. What is a morph? What is a morpheme?

8. What types of morphemes are distinguished?