

PAPER 6 (DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS)
Describe the concept of I. C. analysis.

A sentence, as it is formed of morphemes or group of morphemes structured into successive components, may be divided into two constituents immediately - subject and predicate - recognizable as immediate constituents; and the process of analyzing all structures into two constituents is known as Immediate Constituents analysis or I. C. analysis. This term was first introduced by Bloomfield in 1933 in *Language*. For example:

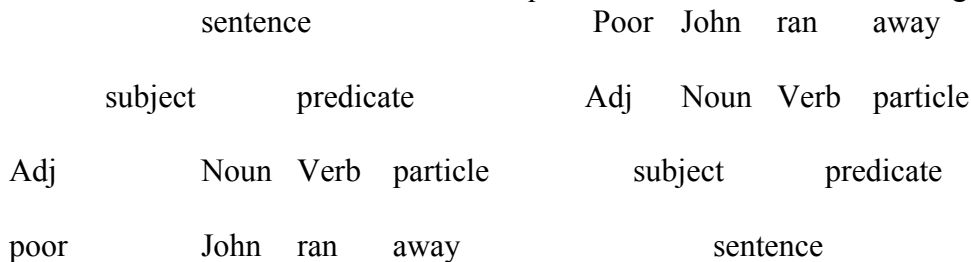
Poor John ran away.

This sentence is the union of four morphemes, which may be defined as the minimum significant syntactic units. These morphemes are ultimate constituents of the sentence, that is, further analyzable at the syntactic level. These constituents have been organized in a particular order in the sentence. A jumble of morphemes thrown together at random might have produced a non-grammatical sentence.

Ran John poor away.

But I.C. analysis attempts to break down constituents into sub parts that are in some sense grammatically relevant -as in the above sentence `subject' is - `poor John' and `predicate' is `ran away'; and both the groups are grammatically relevant.

Now the subject (structure of modification) is also a union of two morphemes and so it may be divided into two-head and modifier. Again the predicate (structure of complementation) may be divided into verb and complement and finally the complement which gets the shape of subject may be divided into head and modifier. So the aim of I.C. analysis is to break the sentence into its smallest parts. In other words, a sentence is not seen as a `sequence' or a string of elements, Poor + John + ran + away, but being made up of layers of constituents, each cutting point, or `node' in the diagram being given an unidentifiable label. This was made quite clear in the form of `tree diagram' such as



In other words I.C. of the whole sentence

1. Poor John -subject
- ran away - predicate

Now, I.C. of the subject (structure of modification)

2. Head (sub) - John
- Modifier - poor

Again, I.C. of the predicate (structure of the complementation)

3. ran - verb
- away - complement

In a linear manner, it can be shown as follows

poor John ran away

I.C. analysis has been presented by different linguists by applying the different diagrams. Nida uses a series of arrows drawn below the sentence.

Mary likes her heavy dog.
Mary likes her hairy dog

Nelson Fransis uses box diagram for IC analysis. In his presentation ultimate constituents are indicated in small boxes which are themselves enclosed in larger boxes. For example:

Mary likes her hairy dog

Pike has used slot and filler diagram in which the constituents are arranged like beads on a string. For example

subject	predicator				object
			Det.	numeral	Noun-head
Mary likes		her	hairy	dog	

Apart from all these three diagrams mentioned above for analyzing the sentences into their constituents, we can show the order of the segmentation by using one upright line for the first cut, two upright lines for the second and so on

A//young////man//with///a////paper/follow///ed//the///girl///with///a/////blue////////dr-
ess.

Another, now more common name for this kind of analysis is 'bracketing', but the best method of displaying cutting according to Frank Palmer, is to use the principle of a family tree diagram. For example

The little boy followed the black dog

It is a fact, it was argued, that speakers of a language can divide up sentences in this way, and it is the kind of analysis which ought to be developed and formalized so as to take account of all possible sentences. The similarity of I.C. analysis to traditional techniques of parsing sentences used by schools should be obvious. But I.C. analysis

was a much more powerful method of analyzing sentences than parsing. There are clear distinctions as to how the analysis of any sentence should be carried out. Moreover, the linguist would be anxious to make the method applicable to awkward sentence types, as opposed to the very limited range of constructions that traditional parsing was able to handle. And the detailed analysis of sentences would naturally develop a clearer awareness of the basis of classification of words, morphemes and other units, which would produce a more coherent account of syntax as a whole.

So it was felt. And it is certainly true that the technique of I.C. analysis which were developed, and the detailed elaboration of some of Bloomfield's followers were both illuminating and precise. A great deal of new information was accumulated in a systematic way, particularly about the way in which small sentences could be expanded to apparently infinite strength following certain procedures, as in

1. Buns taste nice.
2. Those delightful buns you bought taste nice.
3. Not quite all those buns that you bought the other day from that shop in the corner taste nice.

The same kind of diagram as above could be used to display many of the structural relationships which exist between the words and morphemes of these complex sentences as follows

The large current buns in the window taste very nice.

It is very easy to illustrate these problems, and no more than a brief illustration is required to make the point. It is not always clear where the 'break' or 'cut' between constituents is to come. Normally it is possible to decide intuitively on the basis of the way in which the meaning of a sentence is organized, or more explicitly in terms of the way in which the parts of the sentence attribute themselves and function where to draw dividing lines between constituents.

I.C. analysis is not the key to the understanding of grammatical structure in a language. It is a technique - an extremely useful technique, at times - which can organize our data in certain ways and provide a first insight into its structure. But there is too much of importance in grammar which I.C. analysis cannot handle.

There are many important grammatical relationships which could never be brought to light by IC techniques. The kind of degrees of relationship which exist between sentences, for example, are obscured. There is no way of finding out about such intuitively obvious co-relations as the relationship between active and passive sentences, for instance. Part of the reason is that IC analysis proceeds one sentence at a time. IC analysis does not take into account the functions of any given constituents or class of constituents - or indeed the sentences as a whole.