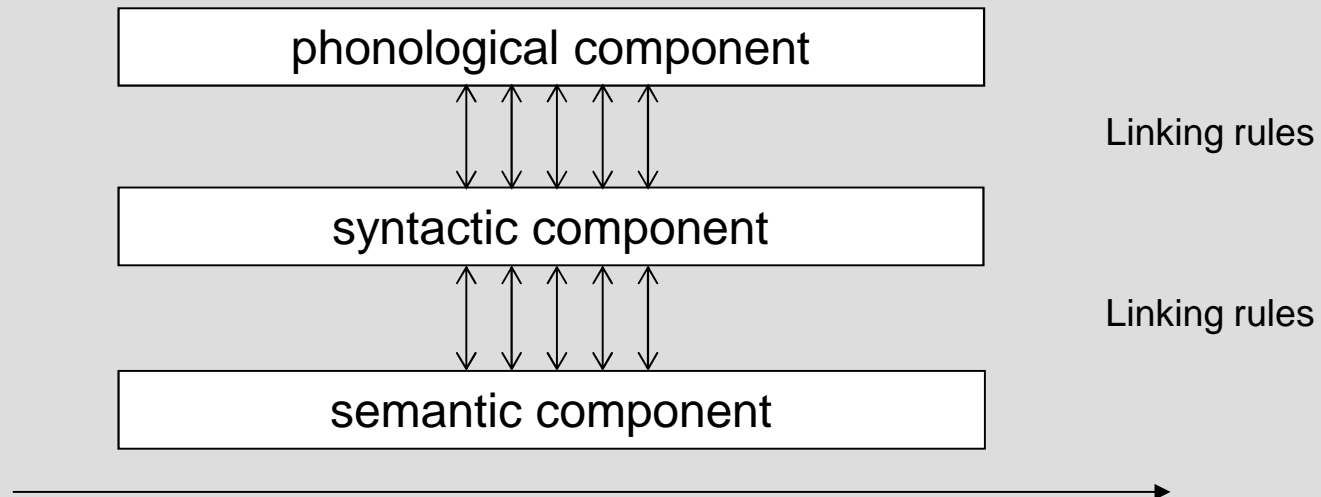


From idioms to construction grammar

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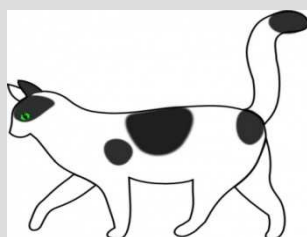
Croft and Cruise 2004

In the generative approach, grammar is characterized as a 'horizontal model'



Croft and Cruise 2004

In the generative approach, the lexicon involves a 'vertical component':



'cat'

/kæt/

NOUN

Domestic animal that

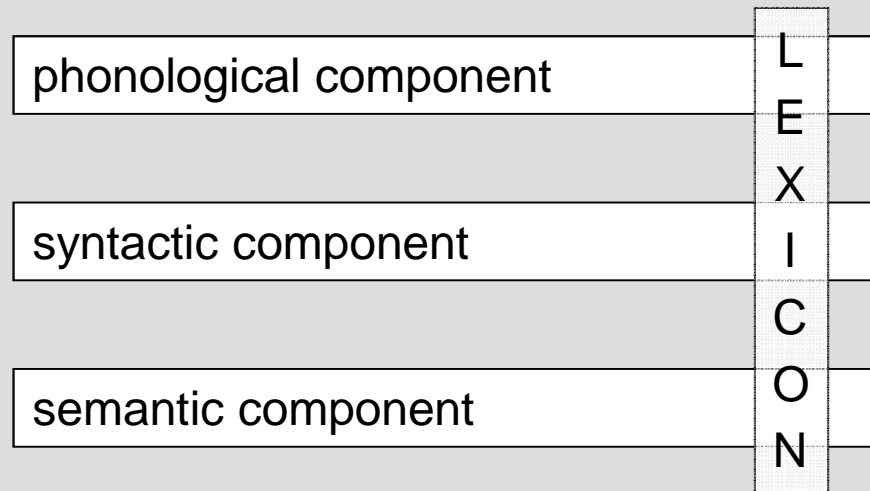
PHON

SYN

SEM

Croft and Cruise 2004

Words cross-cut the horizontal organization of grammar:



The problems of idioms

Kick the bucket

- (1) He kicked the bucket.
- (2) *The bucket was kicked.
- (3) *They kicked the buckets.
- (4) He will kick the bucket.
- (5) ?He had kicked the bucket.

Let alone

- (1)
 - a. We'll need **shrimp and squid**.
 - b. Max won't eat **shrimp let alone squid**.

- (2)
 - a. I want to **cook the shrimp and clean the squid**.
 - b. Max won't **touch the shrimp let alone clean the squid**.

Let alone

- (3) a. Bill will drink beer and whisky.
b. Bill **won't** drink beer and whisky.

- (4) a. *Bill will drink beer let alone whisky.
b. Bill **won't** drink beer let alone whisky.

Let alone

- (5) a. Shrimp and squid, John won't eat.
b. *Shrimp let alone squid, John won't eat.

- (6) a. Shrimp, John won't eat, let alone squid.
b. *Shrimp, John won't eat and squid.

Conclusion

Conclusion:

Idioms have both idiosyncratic properties that must be memorized and general grammatical properties that characterize 'regular' grammatical expressions.

Are regular, i.e. non-idiomatic, grammatical patterns
different from idioms?

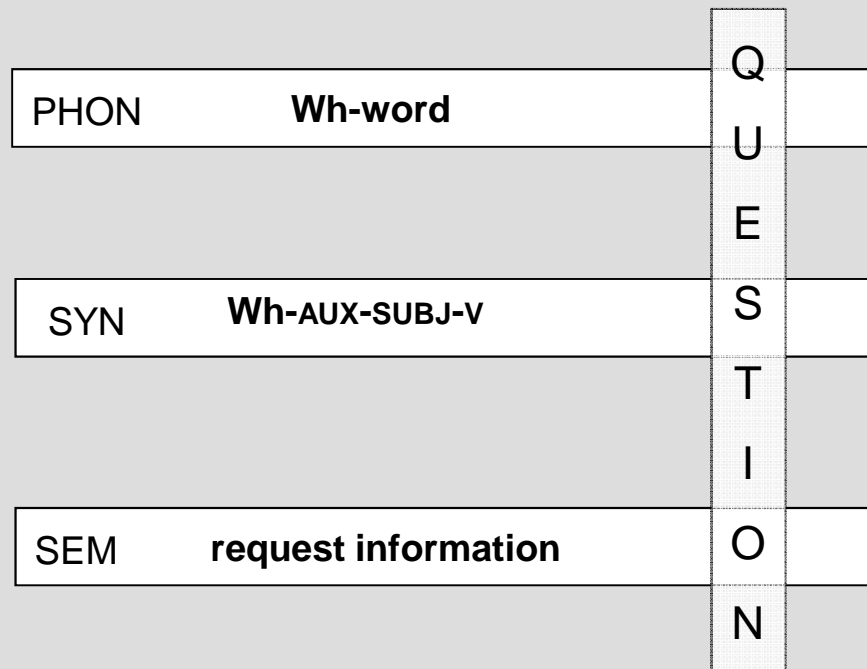
Hypothesis:

All grammatical patterns are like idioms, i.e. they have both idiosyncratic and general grammatical properties.

Questions

- (1) What time is it?
 - (2) Who told you this?
 - (3) Where did she go?
 - (4) Who said that?
- Form (a): WH verb NP/PP
 - Form (b): WH AUX NP V NP/PP
 - Function: Request information

Questions



Questions are like the lexical expressions: They have a particular form organized around a specific question word and serve to request information.

Passives

- (1) The house was built by my father.
- (2) The picture was painted.
- (3) Peter got hit by a car.
- (4) The door was opened.

- The subject functions as patient rather than actor.
- The verb occurs in a particular form (be + past PTC).
- The by-phrase has a particular function/meaning.

Passives

PHON	be V-ed (by __)	P	
		A	
		S	
SYN	NP be V-ed (by __)	S	
		I	
		V	
SEM	PA is affected by AG	E	

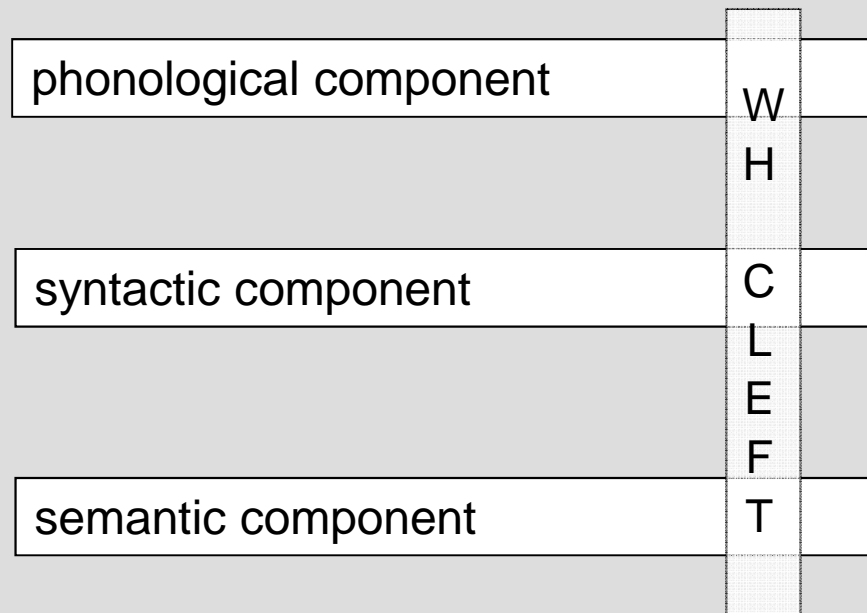
Passives are like the lexical expressions: They have a particular form organized around a specific verb form and focus on the patient.

WH-clefts

- (1) What I don't understand is that she wasn't there.
- (2) Who I really want to see is Peter.
- (3) Where Peter does not want to live is in Berlin.

- Form: WH S be S/NP
- Meaning: Presupposed + Focus

WH-clefts



“Constructions, like the lexical items in the lexicon, are ‘vertical’ structures that combine syntactic, semantic, and even phonological information (for the specific words in a construction, as well as any unique prosodic feature that may be associated with a construction).” [Croft and Cruise 2004: 247]