# Extensional Syntax and Morphological Dependency in English

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One of the problems for Dynamic Syntax, and not much addressed heretofore, is how to account for morphosyntactic dependencies without recourse to standard syntactic objects such as features or categories. With the commitment to represent only interpretable elements, the theory has significant difficulty in accounting for purely morphological dependencies such as dependent case-marking, preposition selection and nominal and verbal agreement in which the form of one expression depends on some other expression in the linguistic context. But how to account for such constructions without compromising the hypothesis that syntax is a process not a linguistic object?

Cann (2000) argues that there is a significant cognitive difference between 'functional' and 'lexical' or contentive expressions. Taking evidence from linguistic theory, psycholinguistics, first language acquisition and historical linguistics, the paper argues that only the latter should be defined intensionally by means of categories (or types or what have you). The main hypothesis is that functional categories as such are not cognitively real, only the phonological forms of the morphs making up those categories have any meaningful grammatical significance. This paper adopts this hypothesis and introduces two new labels $Phon$ and $MDep$, the former taking as value a single string of phonemes (or whatever phonological representations is adopted) while the latter has as values sets of such strings - the set of phonological forms that can be selected for some particular type of dependency. $Phon$ decorates only leaf nodes and $MDep$ non-leaf nodes. In this way, particular elements can select for particular $Phon$ forms uch as with particle verbs like *look up* with idiosyncratic meaning not compositionally derived from the meanings of the two words. Agreement patterns are then determined by $MDep$ requirements which are satisfied by nouns and pronouns. The paper will sketch the mechanisms required to achieve this.

R Cann (2000) 'Functional versus lexical: a cognitive dichotomy'. In R D Borsley (ed.) The Nature and Function of Syntactic Categories: Syntax and Semantics 26. New York, Academic Press: 37-78. 1