SYNTACTIC RULES

1. Phrase Structure Rules (PS Rules)

1.1/ Definition:

+ PS rules are the rules that determine the basic constituent structures of sentences.

+ PS rules are said to generate structures.

1.2/ Rules:

 a/ Rule 1: generate *phrasal categories*

e.g.:   S => NP + VP : root node

 NP => Det + N

 VP => V + NP

 b/ Rule 2: generate *terminal nodes*

 (*terminal nodes* are nodes that do not branch and that immediately dominate the lexical item)

e.g.: Det. Ns V are terminal nodes

e.g: (S) The boy kicked the ball

S => NP (the boy) + VP (kicked the ball) : root node; phrasal categ.

NP => Det (the) + Noun (boy):   phrasal category

VP => V (kicked) + NP (the ball):   phrasal category

Det => the (boy), the (ball):   terminal node

Ns => boy, ball: terminal node

V => kicked: terminal node

The structures generated by both sets of rules are called *phrase markers.*

HOW TO DRAW SENTENCE STRUCTURES USING TREE DIAGRAMS

1/ Rewrite the given sentence at the bottom of the blank space.

2/ Identify the type of the sentence (question, simple, compound, complex...).

3/ Break down the sentence into terminal nodes (I.C).

4/ Determine what modifies what.

5/ Group the related words into phrases; mainly NP, VP, AP, PP.

6/ Go on grouping until there are two main phrases NP, VP left.

7/ Draw from bottom to top; from right to left.

8/ Note that there are no gaps between the phrases when drawing lines (phrases must be connected closely by the lines).

Analyze the structures the following sentences by drawing tree diagrams:

Simple declarative sentences

1/ Nuclear power plants must have strict safety controls.

2/ Our children and grandchildren will suffer the consequences.

3/ Poorer nations especially will continue this harmful practice.

4/ Burning fossil fuel causes serious damage to our planet.

5/ Poorer nations especially will continue this harmful practice.

6/ They don't have the money to develop "clean" energy sources.

7/ The tourists wanted the receptionist to call a taxi.

8/ The students work very hard to pass the exam.

Polar/Yes-No questions (Group 4.1)

WH questions (Group 4.6)

Complex sentences (Group 4.11)

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SENTENCE ANALYSIS (cont'd)

1/ Nuclear accidents can happen.

2/ Nuclear power plants must have strict safety controls.

3/ Solar heating systems are economical to operate.

4/ The cost of installation is very high.

5/ Energy needs are not going to decrease.

6/ Energy sources are not going to increase.

7/ Burning fossil fuel causes serious damage to our planet.

8/ We need to develop other sources of energy.

9/ Ecologists know that burning fossil fuels causes holes in the ozone layer.

10/ People continue to do it.

11/ Poorer nations especially will continue this harmful practice.

12/ They don't have the money to develop "clean" energy sources.

13/ All nations of the world must take action.

14/ Our children and grandchildren will suffer the consequences.

15/ There will be a special exhibition of photographs in City Halls between Monday and Friday.

16/ He has travelled all around the world showing us amazing scenery, animals and different ways of living.

17/ People came in large numbers to Jukkasjãrvi to see the Arctic Hall.

18/ The temperature inside the hotel changes according to the temperature outside.

19/ It is possible to take a train from the airport to the ICEHOTEL.

20/ You can make a reservation now for one of next year's tour.

1.3/ " X-bar" theory

       PS rules generally recognize only one level of representation above the terminal node, namely the phrasal level.(e.g: NP, VP, AP, PP… etc (**XP**) in which **X** represents either Noun or Verb or Adj., Prep. etc.

       The phrasal level (XP) is called the **maximal projection** (of X) in X-bar terminology.

       In X-bar terminology, the obligatory constituent of a maximal projection is called the **head**.

2/ Recursive rule:

       the category on the left side repeated on the right side

e.g: You mean (that) you didn't know (that) I know that she didn't know that I saw her eat out with her boyfriend in the Indian restaurant.

3. Transformational rules (T-rules) or Transformations

3.1/ Definition: it is a special type of rule that can move an element from one position to another (transformation).

3.2/ Rules:

a/ Inversion Transformation/ Subject-Auxiliary Inversion (SAI):

It is used in Yes/No questions. The auxiliary is moved from its position within the VP to a position to the left of the subject to signal a question.

e.g: <u>Will</u> the boy leave?

   <u>Can</u> the cat climb this tree?

b/ General Transformation rule/ Move-Alpha rule:

It is used in WH-questions. Both the auxiliary and the WH word are moved to the left of the subject to signal a question.

e.g: The boy will find _<u>what</u>?_

   <u>What will</u> the boy find?

c/ Other common T-rules:

   c1/ Deletion rule:

+ The conjunction (complementizer) deletion

e.g: You mean (that) you didn't know (that) I knew......................

+ Verb phrase deletion:

e.g: You can cook, and I can, too.

c.2/ Insertion rule;

+ ***There*** insertion: e.g: There is a book on the table.

+ ***-ING*** insertion: e.g: She walk upstairs crying silently.

c.3/ Passive transformation:

e.g.: He was bitten by the dog.

4. Deep structure:

generated by the PS rules in accordance with the head's sub categorization properties (i.e. the first underlying structure to which a transformation applies)

5. Surface structure:

is the result of applying transformations to an underlying structure (when no further transformations apply)

Phrase Structure Rules -------→ DEEP STRUCTURE ---------→

Transformations -------------→ SURFACE STRUCTURE

6. Properties of Kernel clause:

* A Kernel clause/ Independent clause forms a sentence on its own.

* A Kernel clause is structural complete, not reduced by ellipsis.

* A Kernel clause is declarative, not imperative, interrogative or exclamative.

* A Kernel clause is positive, not negative.

* A Kernel clause is unmarked with respect to all the thematic system of the clause.

e.g.: My father wrote the letter (Kernel)

      The letter was written by my father (Non-Kernel)

      They invited John (Kernel)

      It was John that they invited (Non-Kernel)

(see p.65, Intro. To English Syntax, HCE 2003 for more examples)

THE GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES OF THE ENGLISH SENTENCES

1. Traditional points of view: described the English sentences consisting of two parts

S = Subject – Predicate

S =   S   V O C A

2. Modern points of view: the structure of English sentences is described under a system of PS rules (IC Grammar)

S = NP + VP

3. The roles of NP in a sentence:

3.1/Thematic Role Agent: The agent is a mind-possessor who acts, usually intentionally.

e.g: **_Huong_** has been teaching English for twelve years.

3.2/ Thematic Role Instrument: The instrument is a thing with which the action is done.

The instrument is <u>typically either the object of **_with_** or the clause subject.</u>

e.g: They opened the safe **_<u>with an electronic device</u>_**.

     <u>Penicillin</u> killed the gram-positive bacteria.

3.3/ Thematic Role Theme: covers three different classes of theme

     + the first is the role of the often inert entity, which is in a certain state or position or is changing its state or position or unable to move or act.

e.g: **_<u>The girders</u>_** were rusting

     <u>The ball</u> rolled down the slope.

     <u>The news</u> would have shocked the community.

     + the second is the role assigned to clauses

e.g: **_<u>For Charlotte to outdo Branwell</u>_** would shocked the community.

     Patrick believed **_<u>that Emily had the greatest talent.</u>_**

     + the third class is that of affected mind-possessing entities

e.g: A wealthy hunter killed **_<u>the Bengal tiger</u>_**

     <u>The Bengal tiger</u> died.

In an active voice sentence, the theme is typically the subject of the

verb or the direct object of a verb.

3.4/ Thematic Role Experiencer: The experiencer is the one who experiences a mental state or process such as thinking, knowing, believing, understanding, seeing, hearing, fearing, hoping, being surprised etc.

e.g: ***The trooper*** hoped for a promotion.

Montaigne's words inspired ***the young poet.***

They will see a huge bronze gates between two pillars.

3.5/ Thematic Roles Source and Goal:

a/ Source: refers to the location from which someone or something originates

b/ Goal: refers to the location that serves or should serve as the destination.

e.g: The delegates left ***Mexico City*** (source) for ***Buenos Aires*** (goal).

The government (agent) took over ***a billion dollars*** (theme) from ***the poor*** (source)

3.6/ Thematic Role Benefactive: The role of the individual for whose benefit some action is undertaken.

e.g: The chef baked ***Jessica*** a cherry pie.

The chef baked a cherry cake ***for Jessica***.

3.7/ Thematic Roles for Nonargument Noun Phrases (location and time)

e.g: Dangers waited for them ***on the mountain***.

They have been waiting for us ***for an hour***.

Last year the programme supported the poor farmers.