

ADVANCED SYNTAX

Lecture course

handout 1

Lecture: 2 hours weekly

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Monday 12.30-14.00 , Room 126 (Bldg D)

Office hour: by appointment

The lectures deal with fundamental issues in the grammar and in particular the syntax of English in the framework of modern grammatical theory. Emphasis in the latter part is placed on arguments for and against proposals concerning grammatical structures and analyses. The course aims at explaining what systematic regularities define language in general and English in particular. The course offers sound foundations for any further study in English linguistics. The following topics have already been discussed, you should find them familiar. This semester we are going to go into further details in the structure of the DP and the clause. We are going to discuss complex sentences focussing on how finiteness affects the interaction between the clauses and clause structure.

- 1) Language and Grammar
- 2) Constituents and structures
- 3) X-Bar Syntax
- 4) The structure of nominal expressions
- 5) The structure of Verb Phrases and simple sentences
- 6) Lexicon, Thematic Roles
- 7) Case Theory
- 8) Wh-Movement: questions
- 9) DP Movement

Grading will be based on a two-hour final during the exam period (time and place to be given). Exam based on handouts, lecture notes, textbook. An exam sample will be provided at the end of the term.

Handouts downloadable from the seas homepage.

Syntax relates form and meaning

Principles and Parameters, Universal Grammar (UG), language faculty

Principles: general principles concerning language, universal: we are born with the same capacity for language acquisition. Structure dependency, VP= V+Object, order not fixed; Wh-questions

Parameters: different options given by the principles. Different parameter-settings lead to differences between languages. OV or VO order within the VP; Wh-movement or Wh in situ

Generative Grammar: a set of rules with the help of which you can generate all and only the well-formed expressions of (a) language.

The three conditions for a good grammar:

1. **generality**: the range of sentences the grammar analyzes correctly.
2. **selectivity**: the range of non-sentences the grammar identifies as problematic.
3. **understandability**: the simplicity of the grammar itself.

Simple rules can produce complex phenomena if they interact in complex ways.

3 X-BAR THEORY: the structure-building module

A module of GB (Government and Binding Theory) containing three very simple rewrite rules to describe the structure of the expressions of a language:

1. the specifier rule: $XP \rightarrow \text{Specifier } X'$
2. the complement rule: $X' \rightarrow X \text{ Complement}$
3. the adjunct rule (optional, recursive): $X^n \rightarrow X^n, \text{Adjunct } (X^n: X, X' \text{ or } XP)$

Other modules we discussed last term: Theta Theory (+UTAH), Case Theory

- Lexical and functional categories (NP surrounded by DP, VP/vP surrounded by IP and CP)
- Movement for Case (DP-movement to satisfy the Case Filter) or feature checking (*Wh*-movement for the *wh*-word to check the [+wh] feature in the CP defining the force of the clause)

Sentences to revise: Curiosity killed the cat./Where should I put the loudspeaker?

Textbook:

Mark Newson, *Basic English Syntax with Exercises*, HEFOP, Budapest, 2006