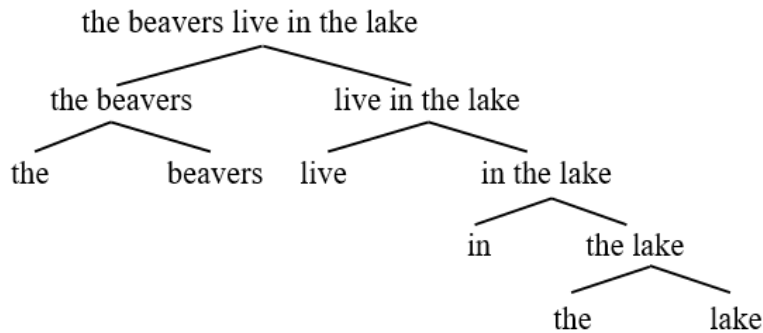# Chapter Eight: Syntax

1. THREE ASPECTS OF SYNTAX

1.1. Grouping

sentences are not random strings of words; rather, are constructed of smaller units known as **constituents**

groupings are of different types: Noun phrase (NP), Verb phrase (VP), Prepositional phrase (PP), Adjective phrase (AdjP), Adverb phrase (AdvP), etc.

1.2. Function

1.2.1. Syntactic function

- **Subject** → noun phrase immediately under S
- **Predicate** → verb phrase immediately under S
- **Direct object** → noun phrase immediately under VP
- **Object of preposition** → noun phrase immediately under PP

1.2.2. Part of speech

- **Lexical Categories:** Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition
- **Functional Categories:** Auxiliary, Determiner, Complementizer, etc.

1.3. Word Order

the correct word order for a language, e.g., English SVO

2. PHRASE STRUCTURE RULES

some of the phrase structure rules in English:

- **S→ NP (Aux) VP**, e.g. I saw the man; The girl is laughing
- **NP→ (Det) (AdjP) N (PP) (S)**, e.g. the young man in blue jeans; the man who is laughing
- **VP→ V ({NP, S, AdjP}) (PP)**, e.g. eat the apple; know you are lying; look angry; study at school
- **PP→ P NP**, e.g. to school
- **AdjP→ (Deg) Adj (PP)**, e.g. very serious about this issue
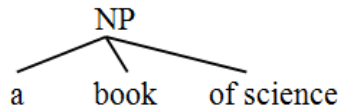- **CP→ C S**, e.g. (said) that he is a student

3. CONSTITUENTS OF A PHRASE

Head → the central word of a phrase whose lexical category defines the type of a phrase, e.g. N in NP
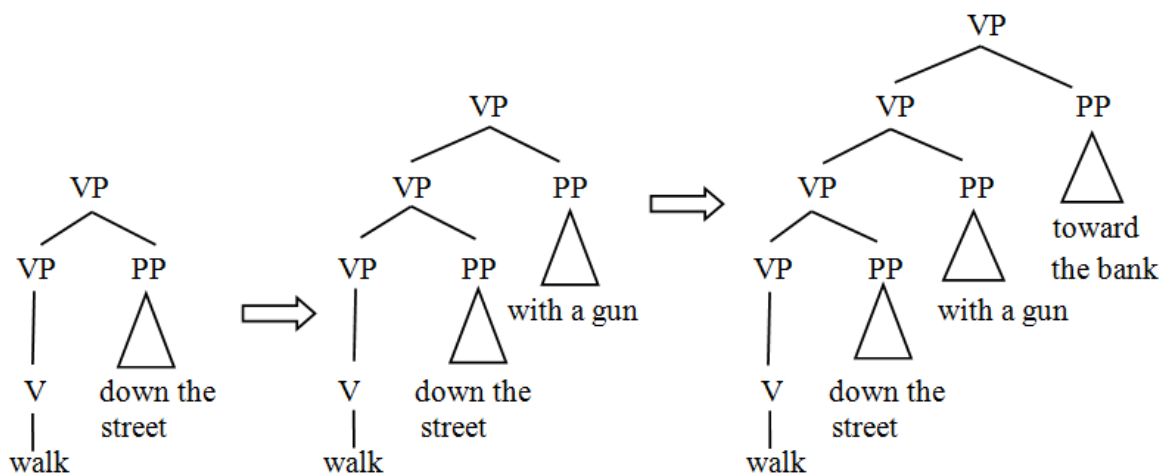**Complement(s)** → the sister constituents of a phrase which come after head
Specifier(s) → the sister constituents of a phrase which come before head

a noun phrase such as *a book of science* would be like:

```
         NP
        /|\
       a book  of science
```

4. RECURSION

Expansion of phrases within themselves

Coordination occurs by using *and, or, but,* e.g.
    [The book] *and* [pencil] are on the table.
    The book is [on the chair] *or* [in my bag].
    I [love cats] *but* [hate dogs].

Embedding
- Relative clause (RC)
  Betty works in a restaurant **which is near a school**.
  Betty works in a restaurant **which is near a school** *which was managed by a man*.
  Betty works in a restaurant **which is near a school** *which was managed by a man* <u>who is retired now</u>.
- Complementizer phrase (CP = S′): complementizer (abbreviated as COMP or C)
  I know **that Joe arrives by midnight**.
  Betty believes *that I know* **that Joe arrives by midnight**.
  They think <u>that Betty believes</u> *that I know* **that Joe arrives by midnight**.

5. CONSTITUENCY TESTS

Movement, e.g.
    Sandy found the puppy [in the garden] → [In the garden], Sandy found the puppy.

Sandy found [the puppy]. → [The puppy] was found by Sandy.

Clefting: "It + to be + …… + that/wh-word clause", e.g.

Betty bought [a pair of gloves]. → It is [a pair of gloves] that Betty bought.

Mathew lives [in a mansion]. → It is [in a mansion] where Mathew lives.

Pseudo-clefting: "… + to be + that/wh-word clause", or "that/wh-word clause + to be + …", e.g.

Billy planned [a trip to Bulgaria]. → [A trip to Bulgaria] is what Billy planned.

Billy planned [a trip to Bulgaria]. → What Billy planned is [a trip to Bulgaria].

Replacement, e.g.

[That boy in striped coat] is my teacher. → He is my teacher.

She doesn't like this [article on linguistics] or that one.

Sue married [the teacher of linguistics]. → Sue married whom.

Fatima [loved the kitten] intensely but Betty did so half-heartedly.

I will [resign my post] tomorrow and he will do so on Monday.

John used to be very [envious of Sally] but now he is much less so.

The man sat [on the chair]. → The man sat there.

I'll meet you [at ten]. → I'll meet you then.

Stand alone, e.g.

Betty borrowed a book from the library.

What did Betty borrow from the library? [a book]

What did Betty do? [borrowed a book from the library]

Coordination, e.g.

Bob [peeled the potatoes]. → Bob [peeled the potatoes] and [shucked the corn].

Can I go [through the tunnel]? → Can I go [through the tunnel] or [over the road]?

6. C-SELECTION

information about 'complement types' selected by particular verbs and other lexical items is called **c-selection**

subcategorization takes place between the head of a phrase:

cry, V, [—]	*cry* is a verb and is followed by no category, e.g. *She cried*.
put, V, [— NP PP]	*put* is a verb and must be followed by an NP and PP category within the VP, e.g. *She put the book on the desk*.

7. TRANSFORMATIONAL RULES

transformations are syntactic rules that convert the source, deep structures into actual, surface structures.

➢ Note: Functions of TRs

➢ Note: Obligatory TR vs. optional TR

three levels of adequacy include:

- **Observational adequacy** → determining which are the well-formed expressions in a language, and which are not.
- **Descriptively adequate** → articulating the grammar that competent speakers of a language have internalized, i.e. it provides a principled account for native speakers' intuitions about the structure of these.
- **Explanatory adequacy** → explaining the nature or essence of that competence.

7.1. Topicalization TR
an object to which attention is drawn generally becomes the topic of the sentence:

I love dogs very much → *Dogs I love very much*

7.2. Dative Movement TR
when datives lose their prepositions and move before the patients:

Can you give a book to her? → *Can you give her a book?*

7.3. Extraposition TR
moves an embedded complement sentence to the end of the full sentence:

That the elves dug those craters surprised the scientists → *It surprised the scientists that the elves dug those craters.*

7.4. Move Aux TR
moves auxiliary verb to a position before subject:

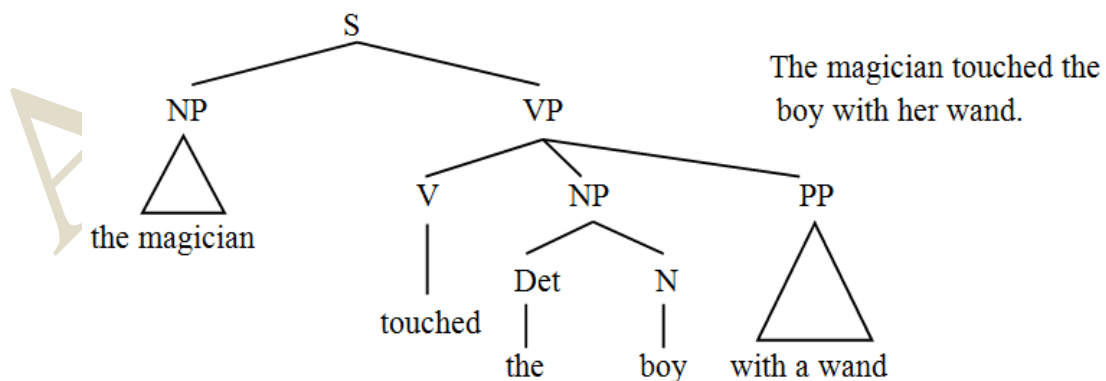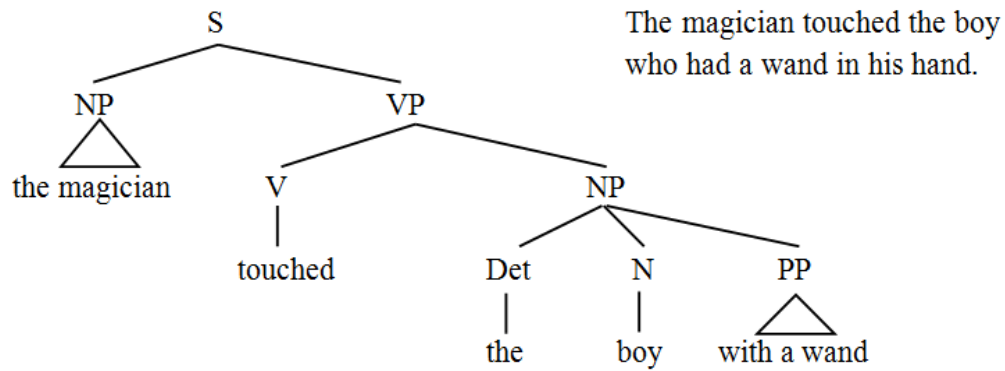*Sara is driving* → *Is Sara driving?*

7.5. Passive TR
converts the active form into the passive:

The cat chased the mouse → *The mouse was chased by the cat*

7.6. PP Preposing TR
moves any PP to the beginning of a sentence, as long as it is immediately under the VP:

The magician touched the boy with her wand.

The magician touched the boy who had a wand in his hand.

7.7. Reflexivization TR

converts object pronouns that refer to the same person:

I hurt me → I hurt myself	*I hurt us*
I hurt you	*I hurt you*
I hurt him/her	I hurt them

7.8. Imperative TR

deletes YOU along with WILL:

> *You will shut the window → Shut the window*

8. UG PRINCIPLES AND PARAMETERS

Principles apply to all languages
Parameters vary from one language to another, but within certain limits