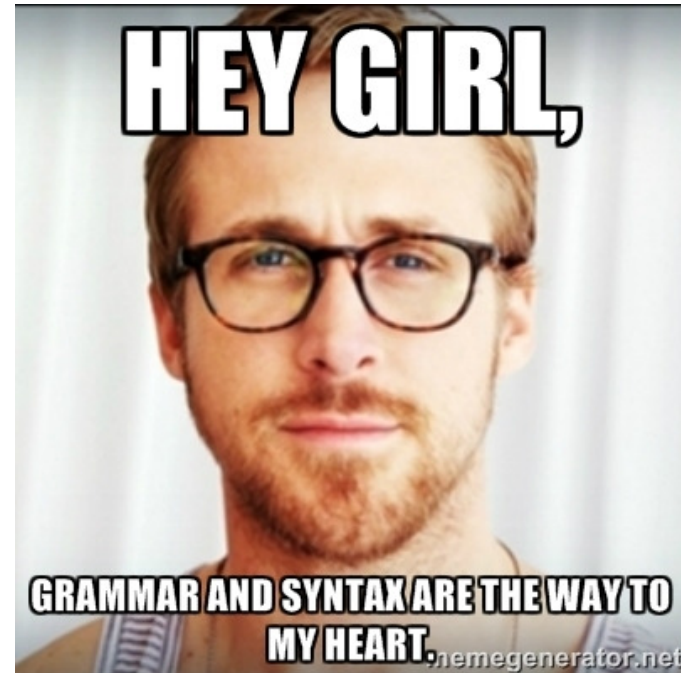


Syntax: The Sentence Patterns of Language

Intro. to General Linguistics
Nina Setyaningsih



Definition

- **Syntax** is the study of the principles and rules for the construction of phrases and sentences in natural languages.
- It is the part of grammar that represents a speaker's knowledge of sentences and their structures.

Rules of Syntax

- Specifies the correct word order of language.

SVO, VSO, VOS, SOV, etc...

1. The President nominated a new Supreme Court justice.

2. *President the new Supreme justice Court a nominated.

Rules of Syntax

- Specifies the grammatical relations of a sentence: subject, object, specifier, complement, head, etc...
- They provide the information about who is doing what to whom
 1. John loves Mary.
 2. Mary loves John.

Rules of Syntax

- Specifies constraint that must be adhered to.
 - (a) *Disa slept the baby.
 - (b) Disa slept soundly

- (a) *The boy found in the house.
- (b) The boy found the ball.

Rules of Syntax

- It clarifies structural ambiguity.
For sale: an antique desk suitable for lady with thick legs and large drawers.
 - [a desk] [for lady with thick legs and large drawers]
 - [a desk for lady] [with thick legs and large drawers]
- It permits speakers to produce and understand limitless number of sentences never heard produced or heard before. This is called the *creative aspect of linguistic knowledge*.

Grammatical vs. Ungrammatical

- Syntactic knowledge qualifies which utterance is grammatical and which one is ungrammatical.
- Well-formed or grammatical sentence: a sequence of words that conform to the rules of syntax.
- Ill-formed or ungrammatical sentence: a sequence of words that violate the rules of syntax

English sample sentences:

1. Enormous crickets in pink socks danced at the prom.
2. Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.
3. A verb crumpled the milk.
4. *Furiously sleep ideas green colorless.
5. *Milk the crumpled verb a.
6. *The boy quickly in the house the ball found.
7. *Why are you did not eat the food?

Syntactic Categories

Lexical categories

- Noun (N)
- Verb (V)
- Adjective (Adj)
- Preposition (P)
- Adverb (Adv)

Examples

- moisture, policy
- melt, remain
- good, intelligent
- to, near
- slowly, now

Syntactic Categories

Non-lexical categories

- Determiner (Det)
- Degree word (Deg)
- Qualifier (Qual)
- Auxiliary (Aux)
- Conjunction (Conj)

Examples

- the, this
- very, more
- always, perhaps
- will, can
- and, or

Indicate the category of each word in the following sentences.

a. The glass suddenly broke.

Det / N / Adv / V

b. A jogger ran towards the end of the lane.

Det / N / V / P / Det / N / P / Det / N

c. The peaches never appear quite ripe.

Det / N / Qual / V / Deg / A

d. Gillian will play the trumpet and the drums in the orchestra.

N / Aux / V / Det / N / Conj / Det / N / P / Det / N

Phrases

- NP : Noun Phrase
The car, a clever student
- VP : Verb Phrase
study hard, play the guitar
- PP : Prepositional Phrase
in the class, above the earth
- ADJP : Adjective Phrase
very tall, quite certain

Noun Phrase (NP)

- NP is formed by a noun alone or a noun plus other words
 - a. NP → Det N the cat
 - b. NP → Det Adj N those noisy cats
 - c. NP → N cats
 - d. NP → Adj N noisy cats
 - e. NP → Pron she, you
 - f. NP → Det N PP my friend from Brazil

Verb Phrase (VP)

- VP can consist of a single V or a V plus other words
 - a. VP → V snored
 - b. VP → V + ADV sleep soundly
 - c. VP → V + NP + PP walked the dog through the park
- A VP can combine with a subject NP to form a whole S (sentence)

Pat *loves music.*

Adjective Phrase (ADJP)

- ADJPs are often used to modify nouns and thus often appear as elements of NP, for example:

a very expensive watch

- Examples of ADJP

smart

very expensive

certain to win

as tall as his father

Adverbial Phrase (ADVP)

- ADVPs are often used to modify V and ADJ and ADV
- Example:
 - almost certainly
 - fiercely
- ADVPs also appear as constituents of VP and ADJP
 - sleep soundly (VP)
 - fiercely loyal (ADJP)

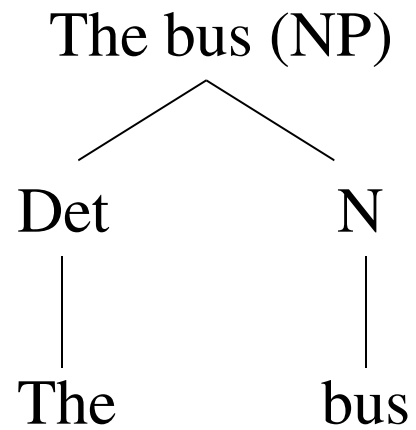
Prepositional Phrase (PP)

- PPs always consist of a preposition plus an NP
- Example:
 - from Uganda
 - for nothing
- A PP can be constituent of wide range of phrases
 - my friend from Uganda (NP)
 - angry with Howard and his dog (ADJP)
 - go to the movies (VP)
 - separately from the others (ADV P)

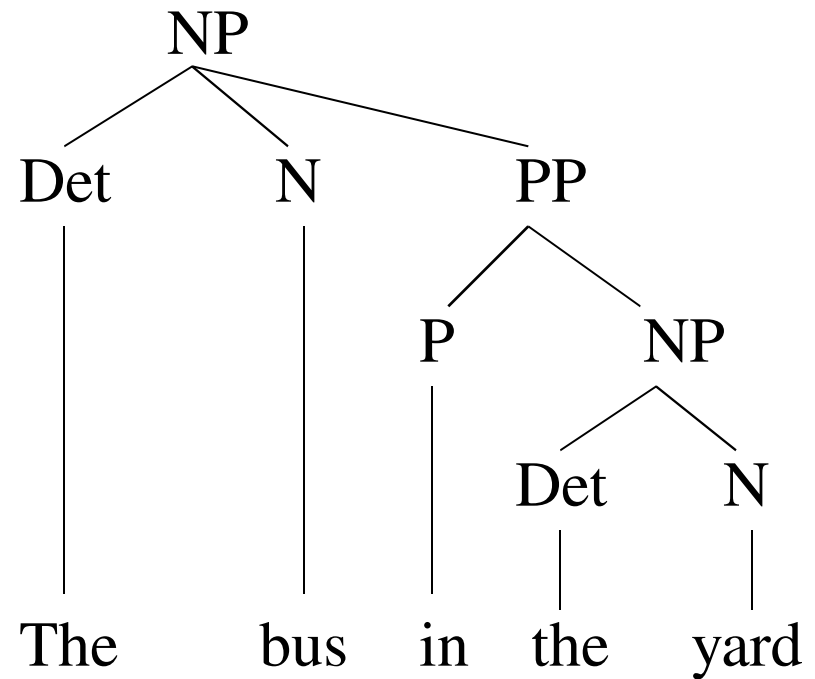
Phrase Structure Trees and Rules

- A tree diagram with syntactic category information is called a **phrase structure tree**
- The information represented in a PS tree can also be represented by another formal device: **phrase structure (PS) rules.**

- NP \rightarrow (Det) N (PP)
- PP \rightarrow P NP

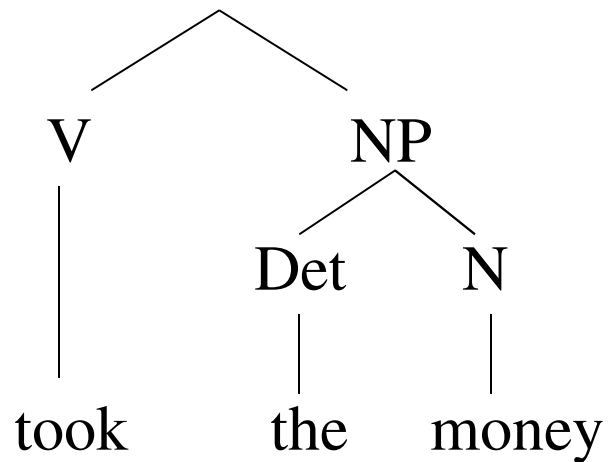


The bus in the yard

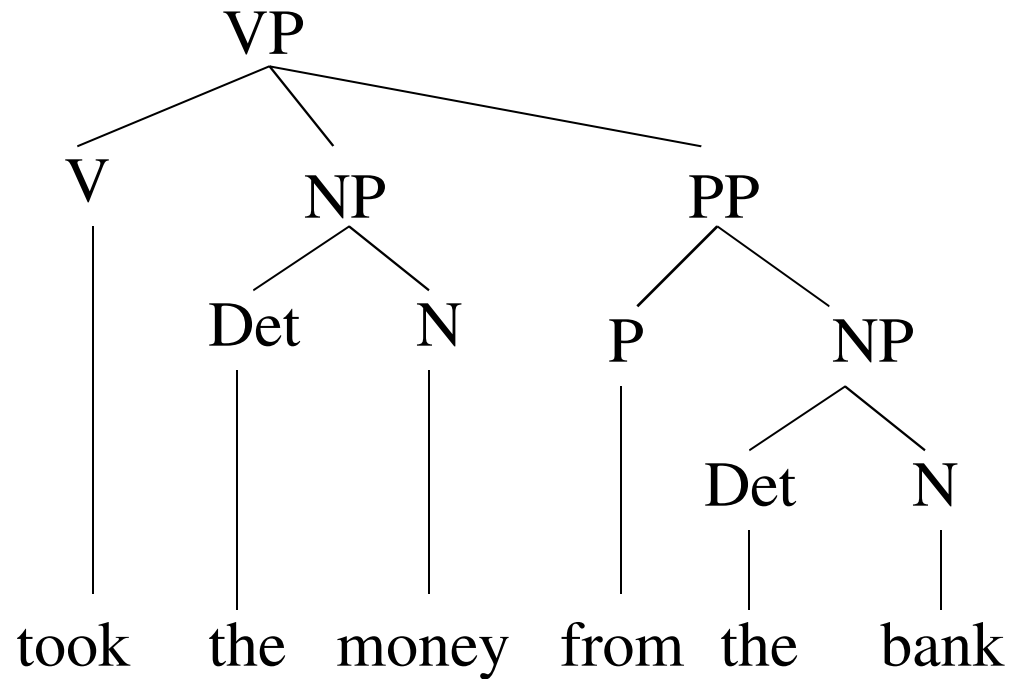


- VP → V (NP) (PP)
- NP → Det N
- PP → P NP

took the money (VP)

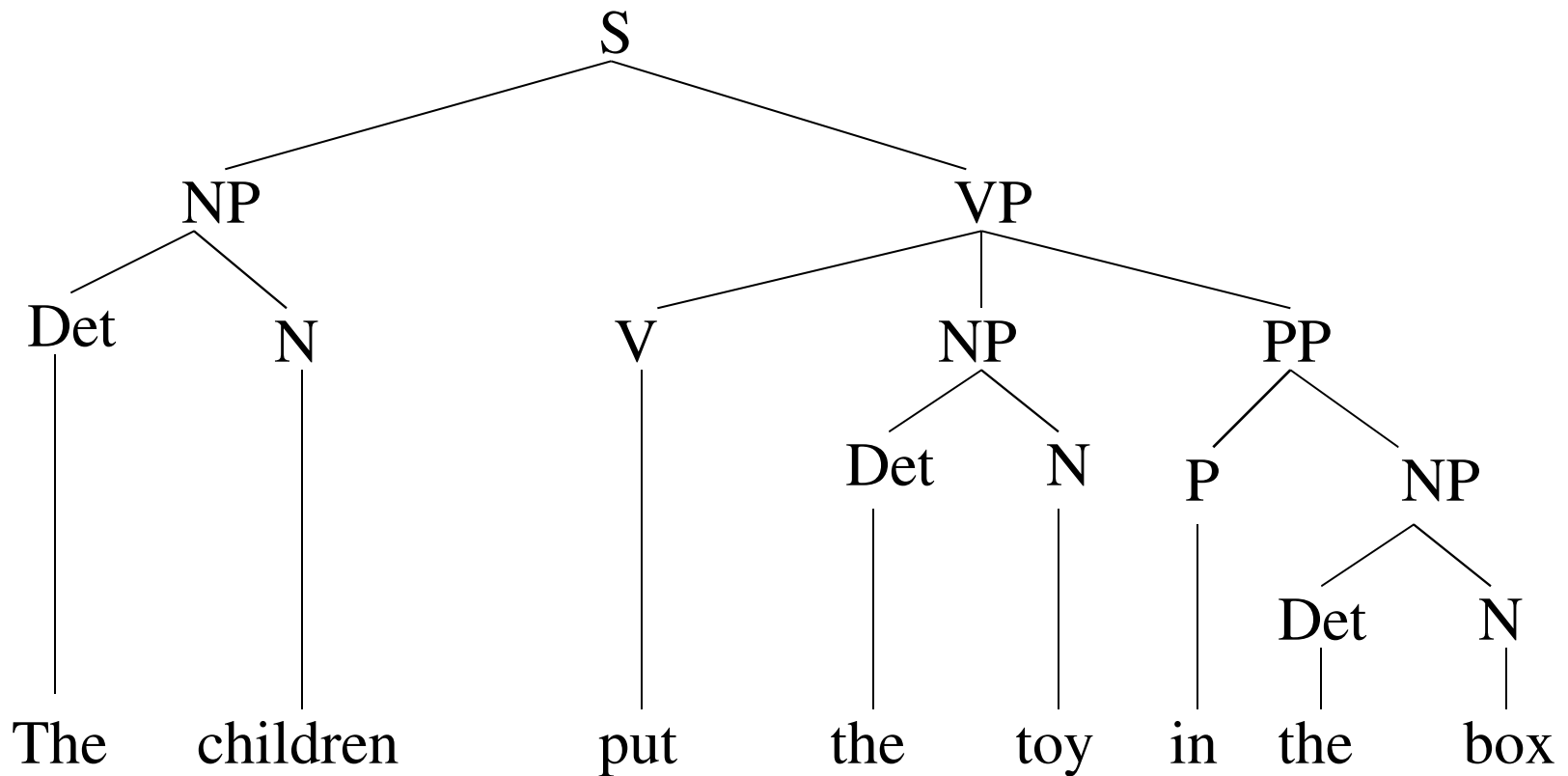


took the money from the bank



Sentence

The children put the toy in the box



Draw the tree diagram

1. fixed my problem
2. the friend of the teacher
3. a movie about war
4. walk to the door
5. found a cake in the cupboard

See you next week!

