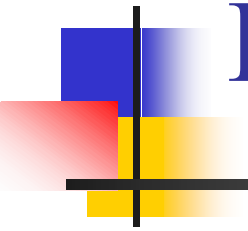


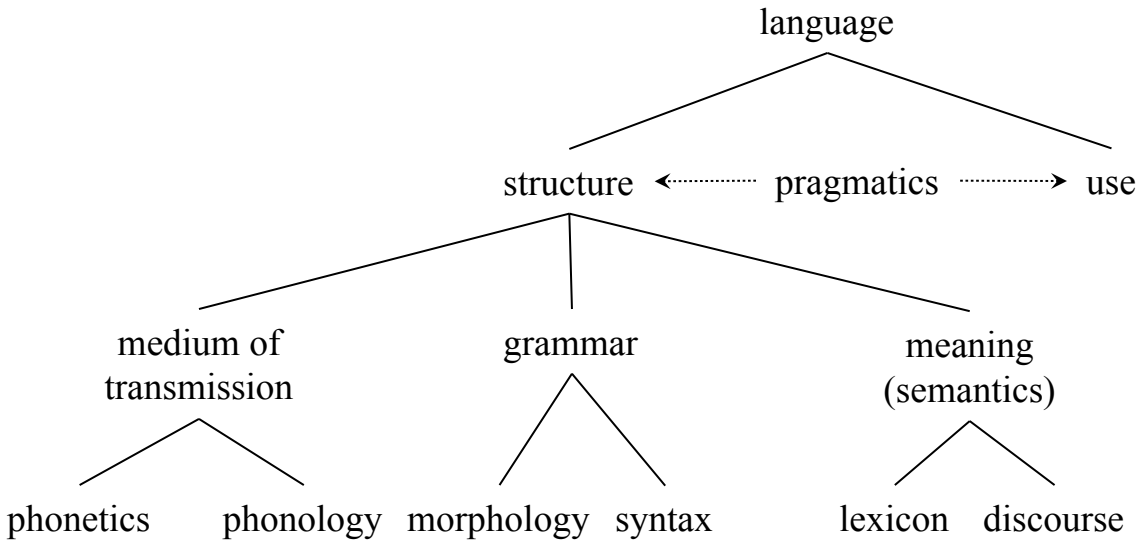
PSY 369: Psycholinguistics

A Crash Course in Linguistic Theory

Part II

Levels of analysis

- Phonology
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Pragmatics



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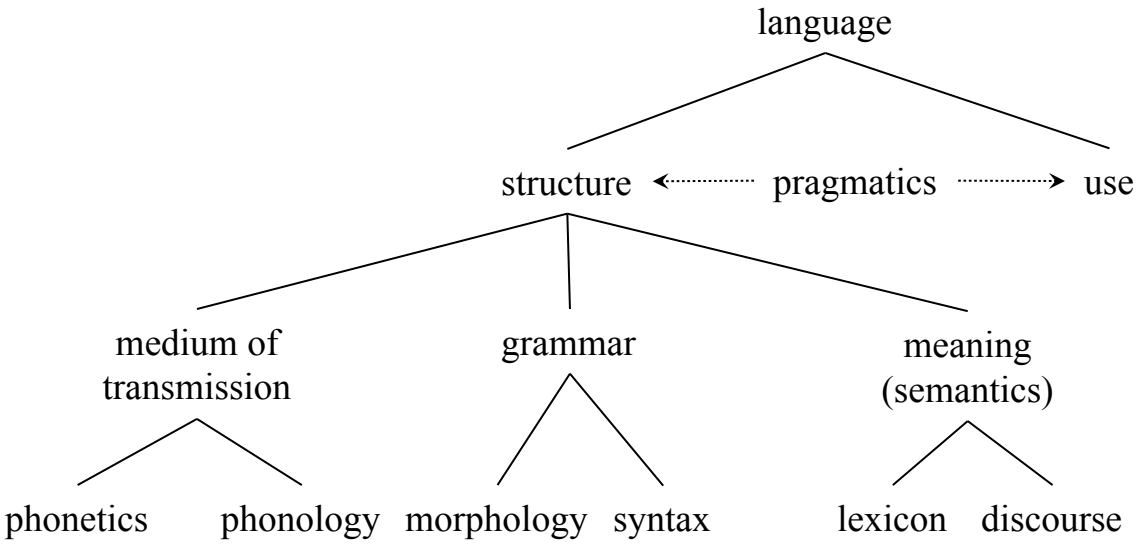
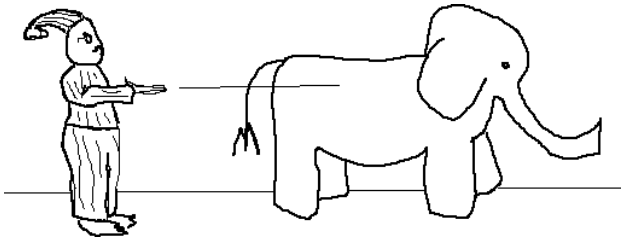


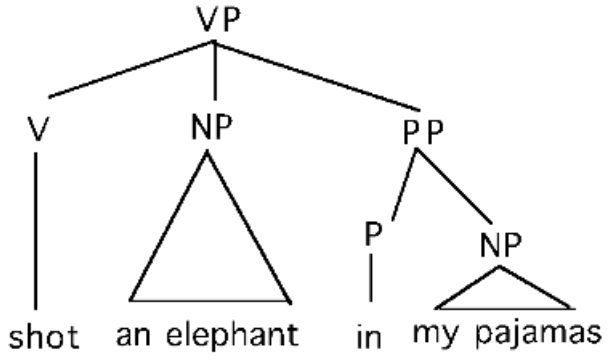
Syntax: the ordering of the words

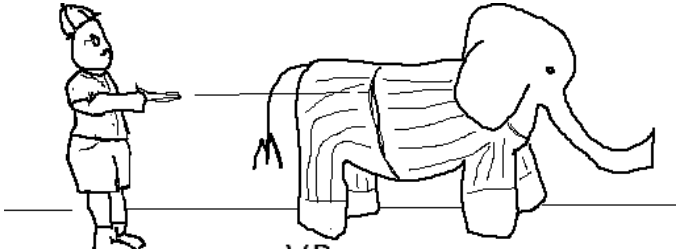
- A dog bites a man.
- A man bites a dog.
- A dog was bitten by a man.

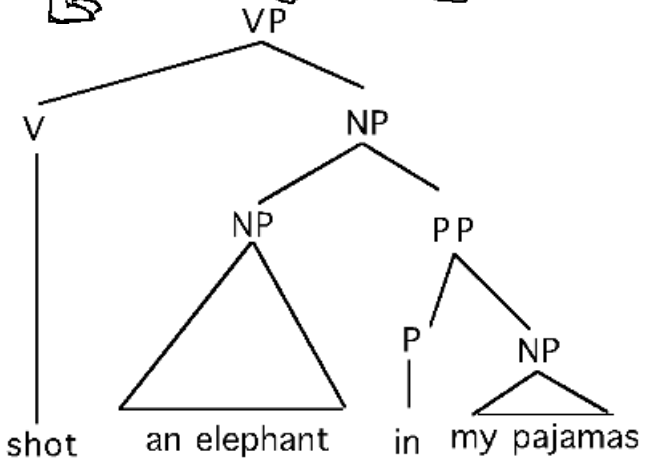
- Not just the linear ordering
- It is the underlying set of syntactic rules

Syntax: the ordering of the words









- Not just the linear ordering
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Generative Grammar

- The pieces:
  - Grammatical features of words
    - Grammatical class: **Dog**:*noun*; **Bite**:*verb*
    - Other Features like: grammatical number & gender
  - Phrase structure rules - these tell us how to build legal structures
    - S --> NP VP
    - VP --> V (NP)
    - NP --> (A) (ADJ) N (PP)

Transformational grammar

- Chomsky (1957, 1965)
  - Two stages phrase structures for a sentence
    - Build *Deep Structure*
      - Build from phrase structure rules
      - One ***constituent*** at a time
    - Convert to *Surface Structure*
      - Built from ***transformations*** that operate on the deep structure
        - Adding, deleting, moving
      - Operate on entire strings of *constituents*

S --> NP VP
VP --> V (NP)
NP --> (A) (ADJ) N

Passive transformation rule:

$NP_1 + V + NP_2 \text{ ---> } NP_2 + be + V + \text{-en} + by + NP_1$

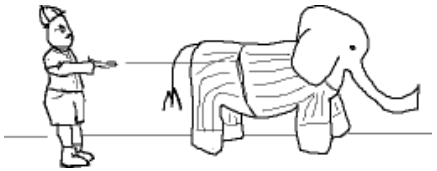
Transformational grammar

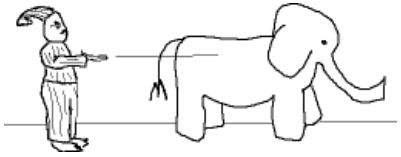
- 1 deep structure, 2 surface structures:
  - Active/passive sentences:
    - The man bit the dog.
    - The dog was bitten by the man.

Passive transformation rule:

$NP_1 + V + NP_2 \text{ ---> } NP_2 + be + V + \text{-en} + by + NP_1$

- 2 deep structures, 1 surface structure:
  - Groucho Marx shot an elephant in pajamas





Psychological reality of syntax

- Derivational theory of complexity (pp 291-294)
  - The more transformations, the more complex
    - The man was bitten by the dog.
    - The man was bitten. (involves deletion)
    - No evidence for more processing of the second sentence

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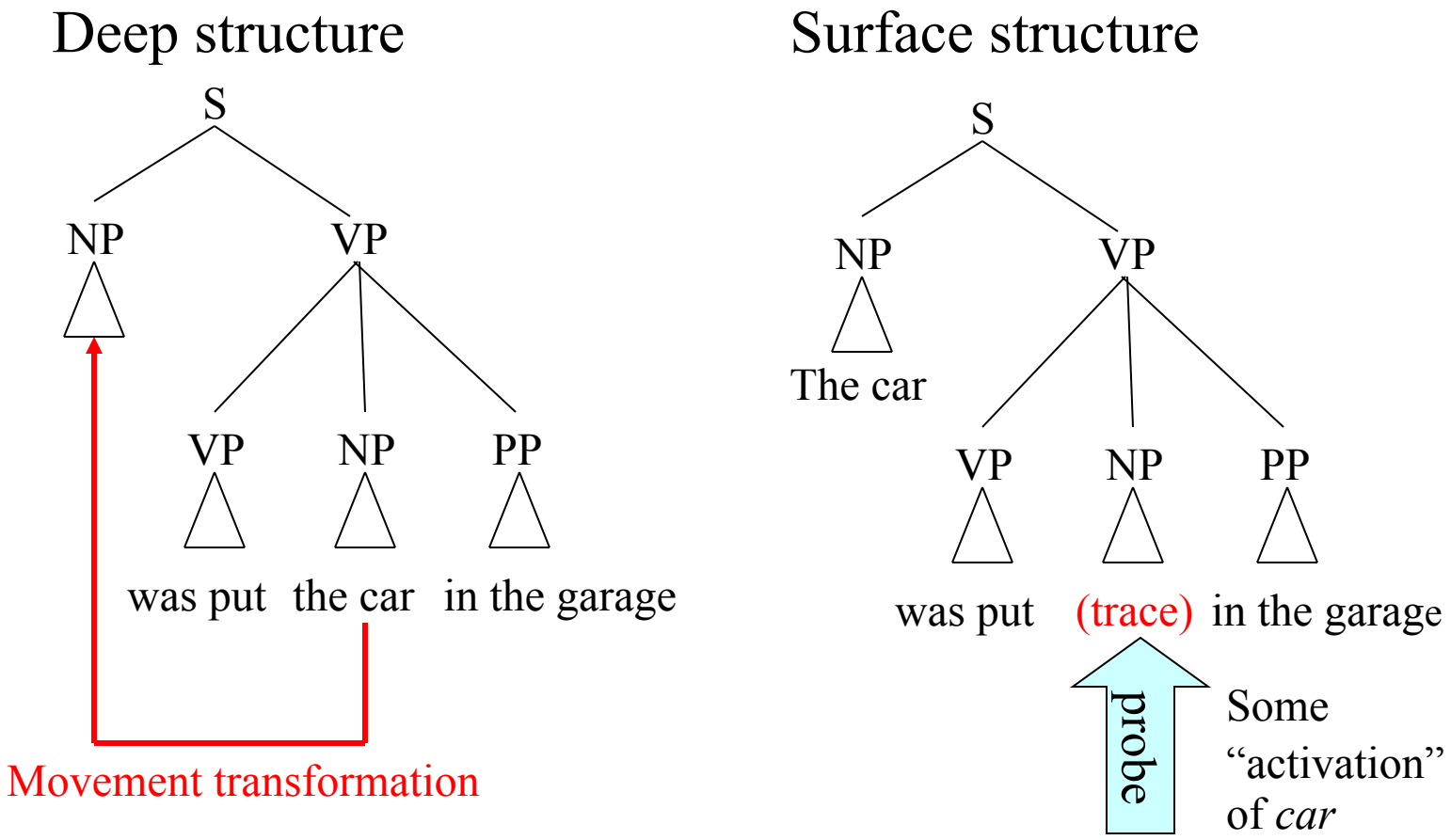
Transformational grammar



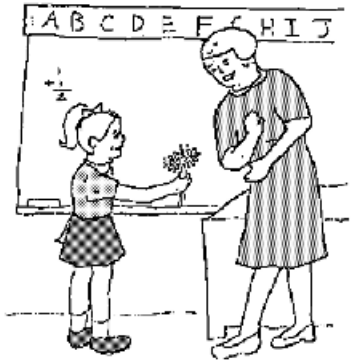
Psychological reality of syntax

- Derivational theory of complexity
  - The more transformations, the more complex
    - The boy was bitten by the wolf
    - The boy was bitten. (involves deletion)
    - No evidence for more processing of the second sentence
  - Evidence for (trace)
    - Some recent evidence or reactivation of moved constituent at the trace position
- Evidence for syntax
  - Syntactic priming

Syntactic priming (pp 405-407)

- Bock (1986) Task: If you hear a sentence, repeat it, if you see a picture describe it

The ghost sold the werewolf a flower

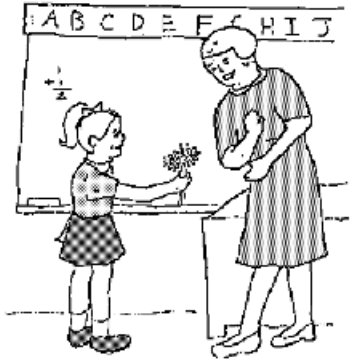


The girl gave the teacher the flowers

Syntactic priming (pp 405-407)

- Bock (1986)

The ghost sold a flower to the werewolf

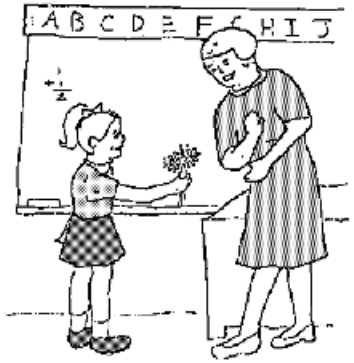


The girl gave the flowers to the teacher

Syntactic priming (pp 405-407)

- Bock (1986)

a: The ghost sold the werewolf a flower
b: The ghost sold a flower to the werewolf



a: The girl gave the teacher the flowers
b: The girl gave the flowers to the teacher

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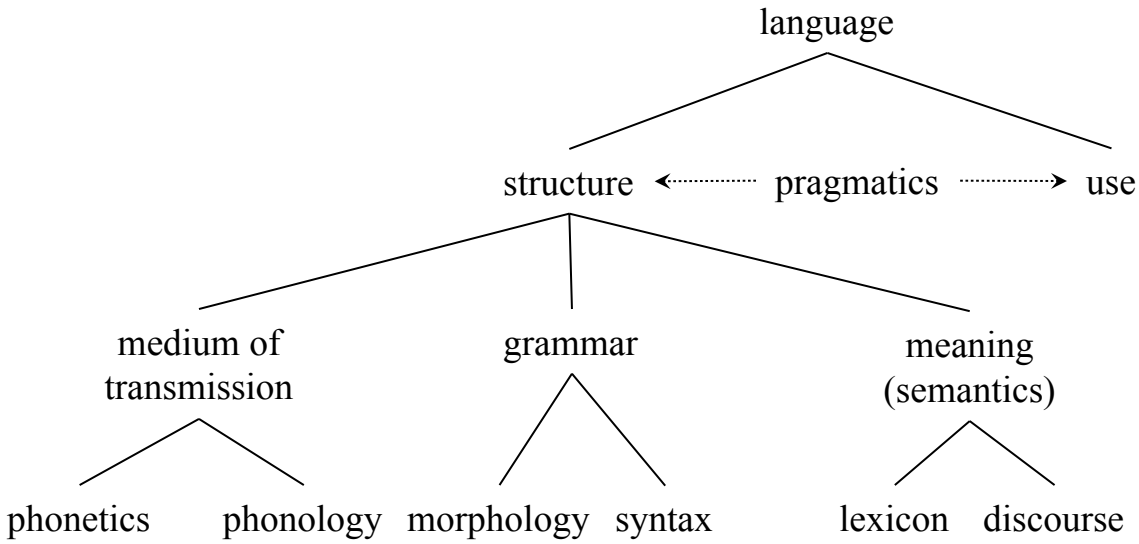

Semantics

- The study of meaning
  - Arbitrariness

"What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any *other name* would smell as sweet."

  - Words are not the same as meaning
    - Words are *symbols* linked to mental representations of meaning (concepts)
    - Even if we changed the name of a rose, we wouldn't change the concept of what a rose is

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