

Ling 315 Lecture notes. 29 January 2007.

1. Class grammar, as of the beginning of class today:

Lexicon

N → kittens, squirrel ... V → love, hug, have... A → happy, nice, ...
 P → on, near, ... D → the, those, my... C → that, whether, if, ...
 Deg → very, so, too, ... Pron → I, me, he, it... T → might, will, have...

Phrase Structure Rules

S → NP (T) VP NP → (D) (AP) N (PP) (CP) NP → Pronoun
 AP → (Deg) A (PP) (CP) PP → P (NP) (CP) CP → C S
 VP → V (NP) (PP) (PP) (AP) (CP)

Other Principles

That-Deletion. The complementizer *that* is optionally unpronounced when it is the head of a CP complement of a verb.

Projection. The head of a phrase projects its features up to the phrasal level.

Full Interpretation. The structure to which the semantic interface rules apply contains no uninterpretable features.

Checking Requirement. Uninterpretable features must be checked; once checked, they delete.

Checking under Sisterhood. An uninterpretable **c-selectional** or **inflectional** feature on a syntactic object Y is checked when Y is sister to another syntactic object Z that bears a **matching** feature.

3. Features. *Properties* of words matter for syntax. E.g., whether a word is singular [sg] or plural [pl] matters:

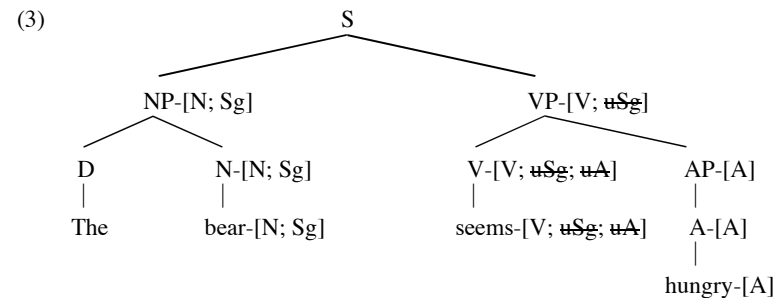
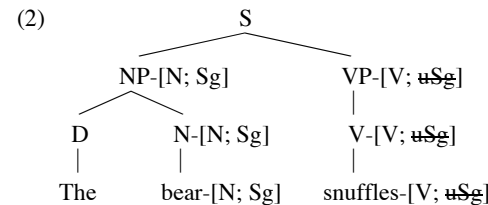
- (1) The bear snuffles/*snuffle. The bears snuffle/*snuffles.
- The man snuffles/*snuffle. The men snuffle/*snuffles.
- The deer snuffles/*snuffle. The deer snuffle/*snuffles.

A *feature* is a property of words that the syntax is sensitive to, and which may, but need not, determine the particular shape that a word has: bear-[Sg], bears-[Pl], man-[Sg], men-[Pl], deer-[Sg], deer-[Pl], child-[Sg], children-[Pl], etc.

Features that have a semantic effect on a word are called *interpretable* features. For example, the features [Sg], [Pl] on a noun are interpretable, since *bear* clearly means something different from *bears*.

Features that do not have a semantic effect on a word are called *uninterpretable* features. For example, the feature [Pl] on a verb has been argued to be uninterpretable, as it does not appear to affect the meaning of a verb; the feature is only there as a syntactic requirement that the subject and verb agree.

If we assume that number features on a verb are uninterpretable, we can account for the requirement that the NP of an S must agree in number with the VP of an S:



(4) A table of features that we have looked at so far (for English):

Kind of feature	Features
category	N, V, A, P, etc.
number	[Sg], [Pl]
person	[1], [2]
gender	[masc], [fem]
case	[nom], [acc], [gen]