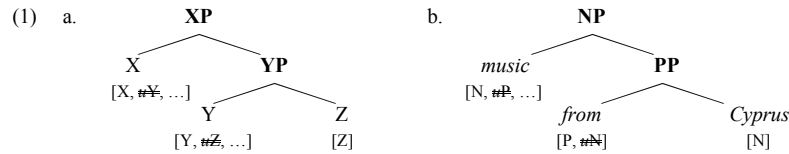


October 12, 2004

CLASS 9: THE STRUCTURE OF PHRASES & C-COMMAND

FIRST MERGE

Syntactic objects (= elements in the phrase structure, *not* an “object” as you might know!) that have all c-selectional features checked are **maximal projections** (because they don’t project any further) — such a projection level is called a **phrase** (of X), generally **XP**.

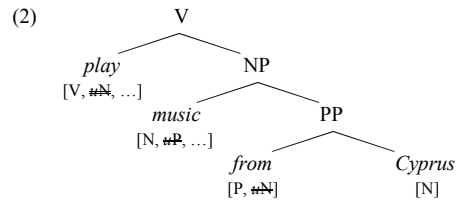


In contrast, simple lexical items are always **minimal projections** (also known as **X** or **X⁰**) — all they project (at that point) is into the phrase structure by virtue of being Merged.

Sometimes, a minimal projection can also be a maximal projection at the same time: **X = XP**. (For now, this goes on in cases where one lexical item doesn’t have any c-selectional features and is ready for further Merge: e.g. bare nouns like *freedom* or proper names like *John*.)

In (1b), we have a noun plus PP — the noun *music* is the **head** that c-selects a PP, which consists of the head P (*from*) which c-selects an N (*Cyprus*). The c-selected element is called the **complement** (of the head that c-selects it). We thus yield a **head-complement structure**.

And once we have a maximal projection, we can keep Merging — in particular, if an element enters the derivation which has a c-selectional feature matching that maximal projection:



We know that this structure is **pretty much complete** — at least as complete as to consider it a constituent. Recall from imperatives (which lack subjects) that these structures do occur:

- (3) a. Play music from Cyprus!
 b. Play music from there!
 c. Play it!

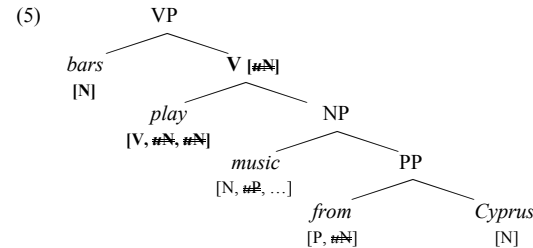
SECOND MERGE

Head-complement structures are only one type of structure (still barring further discussion of **linearization**). If we don’t want to express (2) as an imperative, we do need something else.

- (4) Bars play music from Cyprus.

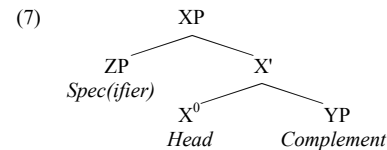
Questions: **Where** does *bars* come from? **What** does it do? **How** does it enter the derivation?

Answers: Just as NP *music from Cyprus* is a c-selected complement of V *play*, N *bars* is a c-selected element — we call it a **specifier**. The NP Merged with the predicate V must receive a **θ-role** (THEME) and intuitively, we need someone who does the playing, the AGENT: *bars*.



First Merge joins together a head and its c-selected complement. **Second Merge** then adds another syntactic object c-selected by the head, but because Merge is binary, it must be in a slightly different position: to the sister of an **intermediate projection** (also known as **X'**).

- (6) a. minimal projection: head — X⁰ / X^{min}
 b. intermediate projection: bar-level — X' / X-bar
 c. maximal projection: phrase — XP / X^{max}



Remember:
X⁰ = X

ADJOIN

Yet other elements won’t find a place in the structure as either complement or specifier — they won’t for the reason that they are not c-selected, hence bear no θ-role: they are **adjuncts**.

- (8) Bars play music from Cyprus **at night**.
 (9) Bars play music from Cyprus **loudly**.
 (10) Bars **regularly** play music from Cyprus.

