Syntax Terminology: Part 2

Constituent A unit of syntactic analysis represented by a node in a tree diagram. *Language Files* only recognizes complex units as constituents (i.e., units that contain more than one word), but we will assume a more general definition according to which single words also count as constituents. Thus, the sentence *Harry greeted Sally* contains the following constituents on the analysis assigned to it by Bob 2.5: *Harry*, *Sally*, *greeted*, *greeted Sally*, and *Harry greeted Sally*.

Phrase vs. lexical constituents There are phrasal and lexical constituents. Continuing with the example of *Harry greeted Sally*, we can say that *greeted Sally* and *Harry greeted Sally* are phrasal constituents (a VP and a S, respectively), whereas *greeted* is a lexical constituent. *Harry* and *Sally* and both lexical constituents (of category N) and phrasal constituents (of category NP).

Transformational Rule The second type of rule used in generative grammar. A transformational rule operates on a previously constructed tree (a Deep Structure or a tree structure derived from the Deep Structure by (an)other transformation(s)) and yields a new structure. The only example we have in Bob 2.5 is our fronting rule, TR1.

Derivation A sequence of tree structures, connected by transformations, which starts with the Deep Structure and ends with the Surface Structure. If no transformations apply the derivation contains only one tree, which is simultaneously the Deep Structure and the Surface Structure.

Deep Structure The initial structure of a derivation, which created by applying PSRs until the root note is completely expanded into terminal nodes.

Surface Structure The final structure of a derivation, which a) is the result of applying none, one or a series of transformations to the Deep Structure and b) represents the hypothesized constituent structure of the sentence.

Grammar & Language Recall that the aim of a generative grammar is to generate all and only the grammatical sentences of the language it is intended as a grammar of. Thinking about English and a generative grammar for English (some Bob), we can schematize this goal, and its relation to undergeneration and overgeneration, as in the schema below (inspired by a similar schema that Christian drew in section):

	grammatical sentence of English	not grammatical in English
generated by Bob	empirical coverage (towards "all") does not undergenerate = GOOD!	OVERGENERATION BAD!
not generated by Bob	UNDERGENERATION BAD!	correct exclusion (towards "only") (does not overgenerate = GOOD)

Subcategorization A technical term in syntax which expresses that a syntactic category, e.g. the category V, is divided into subcategories, e.g. V1, V2, V3, V4, based on differences in the number and kinds of arguments (NP, PP, CP) that a verb requires/allows. So HW8 was an exploration of the subcategorization of verbs in English.