SYNTAX
Handout 2

X-BAR THEORY: the structure-building module

A module of GB (Government and Binding Theory) containing three very simple rewrite rules to describe the structure of the expressions of a language:

      1. the specifier rule: $XP \rightarrow$ **Specifier** X'

      2. the complement rule: $X' \rightarrow X$ **Complement**

      3. the adjunct rule (optional, recursive): $XP \rightarrow XP$, **Adjunct**

A little terminology

    X is the **head** of the phrase. It is a word level or **zero level** category. It **projects** its properties to the phrase (XP) via the X', so that the category of X is the same as X' and XP. X' and XP are **projections** of the head of different levels. X' is the first level of projection and XP is the second. In X-bar theory it is claimed that a head projects only two levels and hence XP is the top of the phrase (typically represented as XP). It is the **maximal projection**. The presence of X (the head) is obligatory in XP.

      Complement position**: daughter** of X-bar; **sister** to the head, syntactically very close to it. A position for certain types of complements (non-subject arguments).

      Specifier position:. daughter of XP, sister of X'; precedes X', and, as the head is inside X', the specifier will therefore also precede the head. Arguments (both the subject and the complement(s) selected by a predicate) can appear in this position.

      Adjunct: introduced by a **recursive rule**: i.e. it can keep on applying infinitely. No linear relationship defined between the YP and its sister XP (indicated by the comma), the YP can either precede or follow the XP. Structurally an adjunct is sister to an XP, **daughter** of an XP. It is more distantly related to the head than the complement. When both a complement and a (post-head) adjunct are contained in a phrase, X-bar theory predicts that the order will be Complement – Adjunct

Specifiers, Complements, Adjuncts: phrase-sized constituents.