

(8)

The negative transformation

In the previous lectures we mentioned that transformational rules are used to produce different changes in the form in order to produce a grammatical sentence. Transformation is the process that converts deep structures into surface structures. The negative transformation involves a rearrangement of structure, as when we move “not” to the position after the first occurring auxiliary or after be.

In this lecture, we will mention how we produce a negative and an interrogative sentence.

1-deep and surface structures

Deep structure: is a structure generated only by phrase structure and lexical rules, such as the negative sentence “not past John can sing well”. The word “past” refers to the tense, and we will see how this sentence changed into a grammatical sentence after a transformation and the result is a surface structure.

Surface structure: is the deep structure that has transformed into a grammatical English sentence, such as “John could not sing well”. All grammatical sentences are surface structures, underlying each one is a deep structure.

Deep structure

The man present not see me
Not we play often
not the janitor did it

surface structure

the man doesn't see me
we do not play often
the janitor did not do it

We need to formulate a rule to transform the deep structures on the left to the surface structure on the right.

In the surface structure, the negative particle not follows part of the auxiliary, but not all of it. In “not Jerry could hear me”, could is a case of “past+can”.

Can is the first occurring auxiliary; therefore, not follows it in the surface structure.

Other examples:

Not those apples were smelling rotten.
Not sara would have done that.
Not you are reading fast enough.
Not tom will have finished by then.
Not we had heard the news.

Transform the following deep structures into surface structures:

1- Not John present be in the room

John is not in the room

2- not of course the children past can go with us.

Of course, the children could not go with us.

3- not we present jump here

We do not jump here.

Examples:

(Deep structure)

(surface structure)

1-Not Jerry could hear me

Jerry couldn't hear me

2-Not Bill has received it

Bill has not received it

3-Not they are going with us

they are not going with us

4-We present not play often

we do not play often

5-They present not taste the salt

they do not taste the salt

In the above sentences, in 1,2,3 there are helping verbs/ auxiliaries so we know the tense,while in 4 and 5, we don't have auxiliaries therefore,we added the word "present" to tell you the tense,so you will add it in the surface structure to have a grammatical sentence. If there was "past",we would say "did not".

Therefore, in the above example, we have a negative transformation.

