ENG423A:
Current Issues in Linguistics

STANDARD THEORY

What the Standard Theory achieves

1. Constituent order of expressions:
   ◦ Deep Structure constituent order
   ◦ Surface Structure constituent order
   ◦ PS Rules and transformations account for both

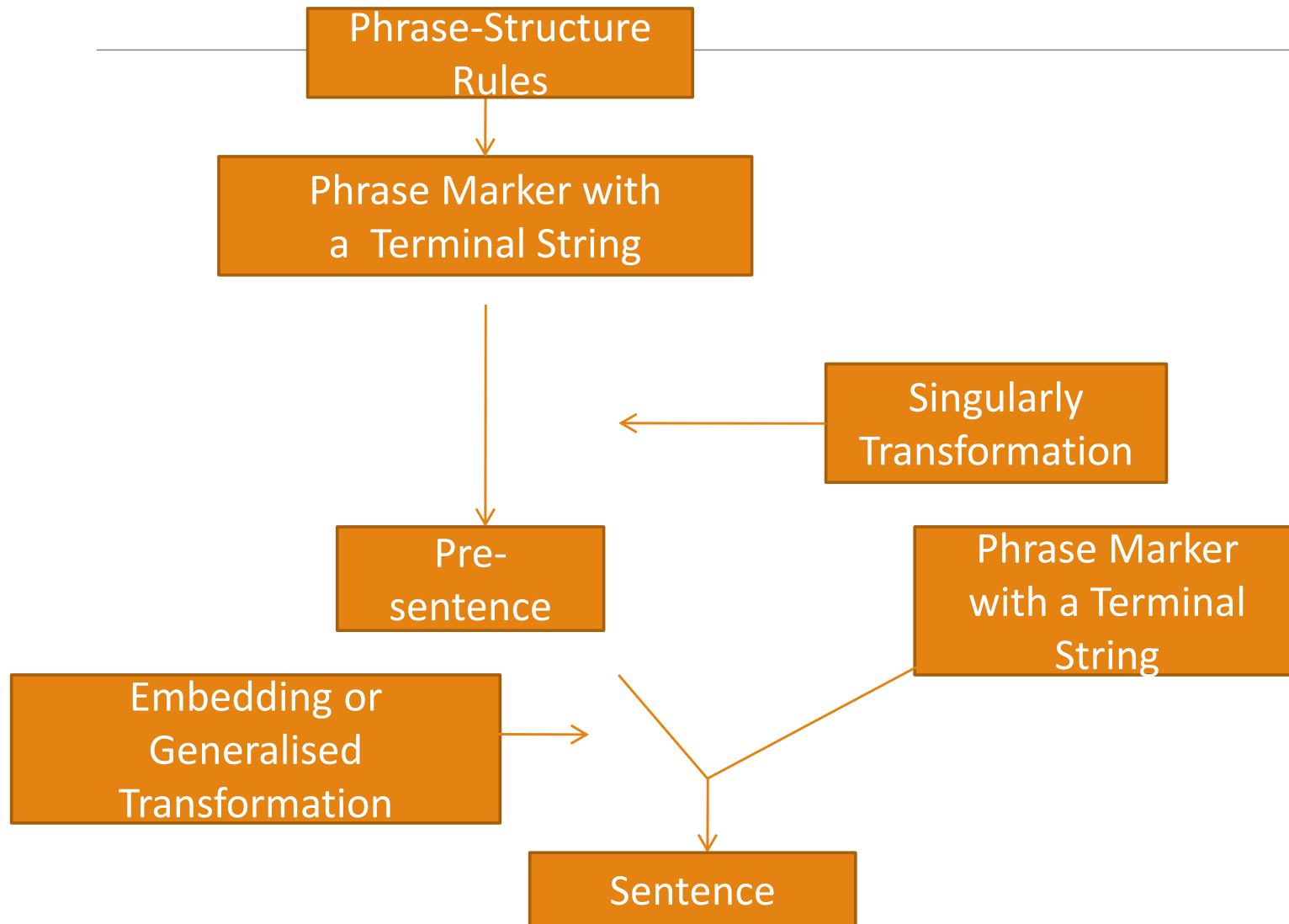   Recursion through PS Rules and subcategorization

2. Several transformations proposed – movement and other kinds of transformation such as deletion and insertion

3. A proliferation of transformations in the grammar to account for the rich diversity of phenomena across languages
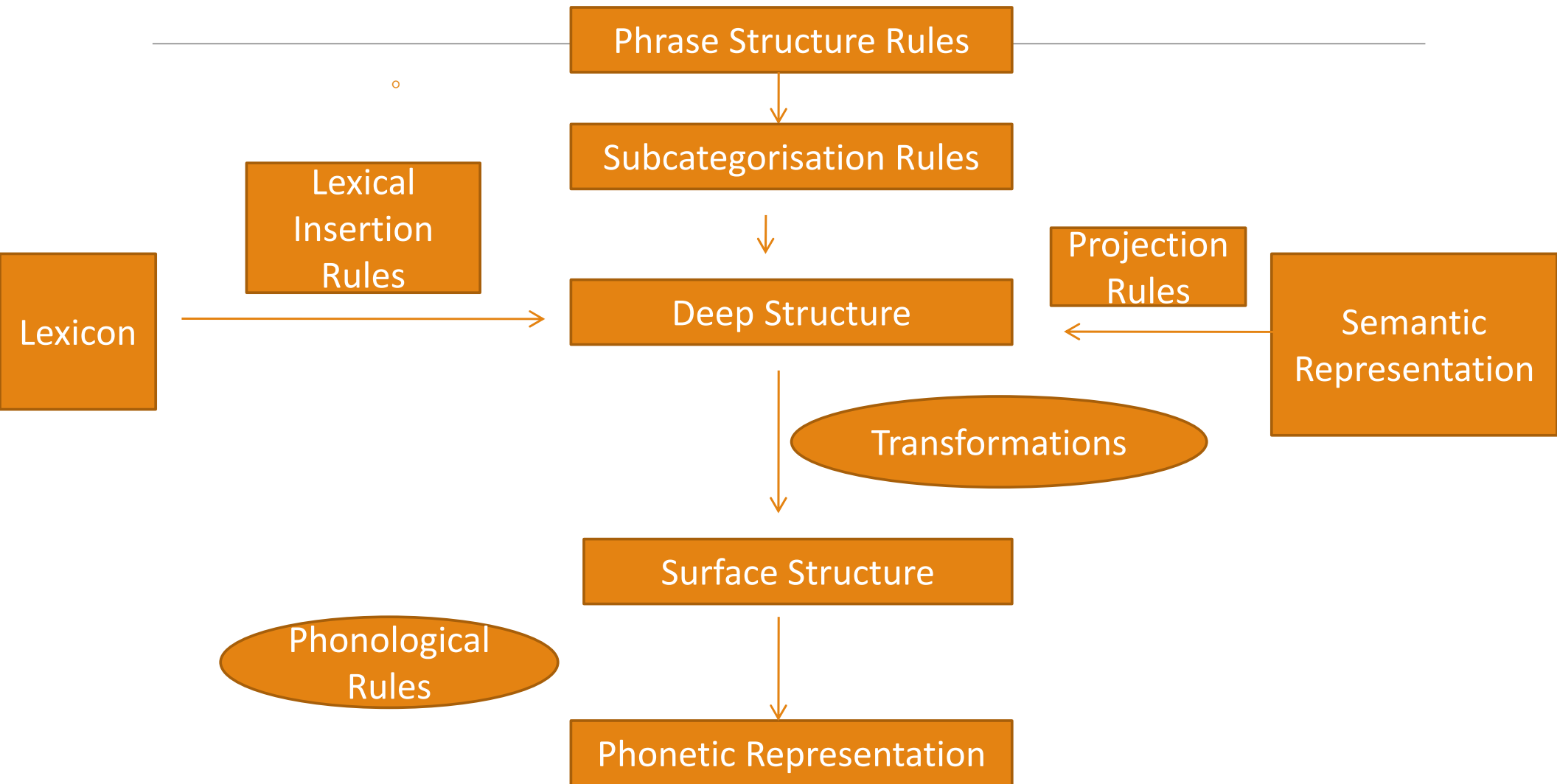
4. For example, Scrambling in Indian languages to account for relatively free word order

Glossing over many important debates. . .

Syntactic Structures: Organisation of Grammar

Phrase-Structure Rules

↓

Phrase Marker with a Terminal String

Singularly Transformation

Pre-sentence

Phrase Marker with a Terminal String

Embedding or Generalised Transformation

Sentence

Standard Theory

Phrase Structure Rules

↓

Subcategorisation Rules

Lexical Insertion Rules

↓

Lexicon → Deep Structure ← Projection Rules — Semantic Representation

↓

Transformations

Surface Structure

↓

Phonological Rules

Phonetic Representation

Subcategorization

The lexicon contains a specification of the kind of elements that verbs/adjectives/nouns select.

An overlap with the Phrase Structure Rules

An important consequence: Recursion to be handled through PS Rules of the form

VP $\longrightarrow$ V (NP) (S)

Formal and substantive universals

Substantive Universals: A set of concepts that the linguist may draw upon in constructing a grammar (noun, verb, noun phrase, adpositional phrase   etc).

Formal Universals: Concepts that specify the form that statements in a grammar take, e.g. syntactic and phonological components, phrase structure rules, transformational rules, island constraints etc.

Substantive Universals

The set of primitive elements from which languages must draw

Phonology: phonetic features such as voicing, nasality, aspiration etc.

Morphology: morphological features such as subject-verb agreement

Lexicon: subcategorization features, semantic selection features

Syntax: Syntactic categories such as N, V, Adj etc.

Formal Universals

Related to the form that the grammar or its rules take – organization of grammar.

Form of grammar: derivational structure

Rules, Conditions, Principles etc. that govern the operation of phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic rules

The difference

Substantive Universals: those that have an empirical basis – we expect cross-linguistic variation here.

Formal Universals those that are deduced from certain axiomatic assumptions that the theory makes about language – we do not expect cross-linguistic variation here but these may change due to the internal dynamics of the theory

What the Standard Theory achieves

Constituent order of expressions:

- Deep Structure constituent order
- Surface Structure constituent order
- PS Rules and transformations account for both
- A movement transformation

Recursion through PS Rules and subcategorization

Several other transformations proposed – a proliferation of transformations in the grammar to account for the rich diversity of phenomena across languages - Scrambling

Glossing over many important debates. . .

Standard theory to LGB

Revisions in Generative Grammar born out of two challenges:

1) The empirical challenge

   Proliferation of devices - both PS Rules and Transformations

   A challenge to explanatory adequacy requirement of restrictiveness

2) The theoretical challenge

   Generative Semantics

   Deep structure is over-determined (you are asking it to do more than it can!)

   It cannot be input to Semantic representation. Why?

   Not rich enough semantically!

   Transformations change meaning.

Do transformations change meaning?

1. Everyone in this room knows two languages.

2. Two languages are known to everyone in this room.

The interpretation of the two sentences varies over knows what.

S-1: I know English and Hindi while you know Bangla and French, and he knows German and Telugu etc.

S-2: Bangla and Hindi are the two languages known to everyone in this room.

1. Einstein has visited Princeton.

2. Princeton has been visited by Einstein.

The interpretations vary over whether Einstein is alive.

(1) presupposes that E is alive. The presupposition is lost in (2)

Standard theory to LGB

Intense intellectual activity following the Standard Theory

Two directions of research:

1) Empirical Research: Implementation of Standard Theory with respect to world languages

2) Theoretical Research: Competing theories challenging some of the axiomatic assumptions of Generative Grammar - in particular, indirectness of the S-M correlation

Introducing Formulation 3 (LGB)

Lectures on Government and Binding

Two of the important constructs in the Generative Grammar so far:

PS Rules and Transformations

PS Rules generate Deep Structure

Transformations map Deep Structure to Surface Structure

Both are revamped in LGB

PS Rules generalized to **X-bar Theory**

Transformations generalized to **Move Alpha (*Move α*)**

Advances within the theory as well as competing theories in the field acting as triggers for these revampings.