Modeling English Syntax

Auxiliaries, Adjuncts, and Coordination

Auxiliaries and Negation

- In addition to a main verb, many sentences in English have one or more auxiliary verbs.

    - John eats apples.

    - John might eat apples.

    - John might have eaten apples.

    - John might have been eating apples.

    - John might not have been eating apples.

Auxiliaries and Negation

- Auxiliaries are a subclass of verbs that give additional syn/sem info about the main verb.
  - modals
  - perfect aux *have*
  - progressive aux *be*
  - passive aux *be*
- must occur in a specific order
  - modal < perf < prog < V

Auxiliaries and Negation

- modals are in complementary distribution with each other (in most dialects of English)
- traditionally classified into past tense forms and present tense forms
- tense features subject to Sequence of Tense
  - I thought John would go.
  - *I thought John will go.
- tense on matrix verb forces tense on embedded verb

Auxiliaries and Negation

- modals are separated into past and present tense forms for purely syntactic reasons
- this process is independent of their semantic interpretation
  - John might be hungry
- can still be interpreted as past even though the verb form is morphologically past

Auxiliaries and Negation

- perf aux
  - forces main verb to be in past participle form
    - John has eaten.

- prog aux
  - forces main verb to be in gerundive part. form
    - John is eating.

- Progressive and perfect aux must come in a strict order

Auxiliaries and Negation

- John has been eating apples.
- *John is have eating apples.

Auxiliaries and Negation

- In English, negation marked by *not*/*n't*
- occurs after aux, not after nouns or main verbs

Auxiliaries and Negation

- auxiliary *do* belongs to the same syntactic category as modals, but has –*s* form
- can function as aux or main verb
- do support applies in the negation of main verbs
  - John does not eat apples
  - *John not eat apples

Auxiliaries and Negation

- modals subcategorize for verbs in their bare form

- perfect aux *have* subcategorizes for past participle

- progressive aux *be* subcategorizes for gerundive participle

- passive verb *be* subcategorizes for past participle