

Homework Assignment #7

Due Thursday December 13th, beginning of class

Name: _____

Where ‘moved’ constituents originate

In class today, we have investigated the relation between echo-questions and regular questions. We saw that in regular questions, a *wh*-word appears at the beginning of the sentence, but does no longer show up at the position where it did in the corresponding echo question – we called this position the *gap* position. Similarly, we saw that we have those gaps at the positions where the phrase that is asked for would typically appear in a full declarative sentence.

Example:

Typical declarative sentence: “I am going to Mumbai!”

Echo question: “You are going where?”

Regular question: “Where are you going?”

In this part of the assignment you are supposed to identify the gap positions, or originating places, of the moved constituents (Those are the ones that are underlined). Mark the gap with an arrow. For example, for the regular question above it would be like this:

Question: Where are you going (gap) ? Answer: To Mumbai.
(Declarative: You are going to Mumbai.)

Where are you going ?



Cleft Sentences

The examples below are a mix of regular questions and another kind of movement construction, called “cleft sentences”. Cleft sentences are sentences of the form

It’s _____ that _____ .

“It’s” and “that” get added to the original sentence, and a constituent is moved between those two words. For example, given our sentence “You are going to Mumbai”, you could form the cleft sentence “It’s to Mumbai that you are going.”

Cleft sentences can sound a little weird in isolation, because, similar to echo-questions, they are only used in particular conversational situations, typically to mark a contrast. Here’s an example.

Imagine you're meeting your boss and tell him that you bought a travel guide for New Dehli for your upcoming business trip, and she or he says "But it's to Mumbai that you are going."

Finding the gap in a cleft sentence works just like in regular questions. Compare it to the unclefted version, and see where the underlined constituent would show up.

For example

It's butter that I don't like on bread . (compare: I don't like butter on bread.)



- a. Where are you from ?
- b. Who did you see in the park today ?
- c. It was Jaws that you were supposed to watch for this class .
- d. When are your friends coming over for dinner ?
- e. It was fake bacon that I ate my eggs with this morning.

In the following examples there are two possible gaps where the moved constituent could have come from. Find both and mark them with arrows.

- f. When did tell me that your friends were having dinner ?
- g. It was in March that I said I would marry you .
- h. Where did you remember to buy a book ?

In the examples above each of the two gaps corresponds to a particular meaning of the sentence. That is, these questions are ambiguous in what they ask. We saw this in the boy/tree story:

“When did the boy say he hurt himself ?”

could ask for the time the boy said that he hurt himself (corresponds to the first gap), or the time the boy hurt himself (corresponds to the second gap).

Give short characterizations of the ambiguities for the second set of sentences above (f. – h.). That is, say what two questions could be asked with the sentence, and which question corresponds to which gap.

f.

g.

h.

More evidence for the co-ordinate structure constraint

Find an (ungrammatical!) sentence that can be accounted for by saying that the co-ordinate structure constraint applies to cleft sentences as well.

Note:

Remember the co-ordinate structure constraint said that you cannot move things out of a co-ordinate structure (X and Y). We used it to explain why you cannot form regular questions like

*Who did she see Bob and?

even though the corresponding echo question

She saw Bob and who?

is available.