

Homework Assignment VIII
Due: Wednesday, November 15, 2006 (beginning of class)

I. *Where 'moved' constituents originate*

In class we have investigated the relation between declarative sentences, 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 echo question (We can describe the position as the position where the corresponding answer phrase would typically appear in an answer given as a complete 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 assignment you are supposed to identify the originating places of the moved constituents (underlined). Mark the originating place with an arrow. For example, for the regular question above, you would proceed like this:

Where are you going ? (compare: You are going to Mumbai.)

Step 1: Look at what a corresponding declarative sentence or echo-question would look like.

You are going to Mumbai. / You are going where?

Step 2: Where does the element that corresponds to the *wh*-word in the question occur in those sentences?

Step 3: Mark that position.

Where are you going ? (compare: You are going to Mumbai.)
↑

a. Where are you from ?

b. Who did you see in the park today ?

c. When are your friends coming over for dinner ?

Below you will see another sentence type that contains a constituent that occurs not in its typical position. These sentences are called "cleft sentence". Cleft sentences are sentences of the form

It's _____ that _____ .

They 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 doctor because your knee hurts, and she or he says "I'm going to apply this ointment to your elbow." Then you could respond with a cleft sentence "But it's my knee that hurts."

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

For example

It's butter that I don't like on bread .

Step 1: Construct the un-clefted sentence: I don't like butter on bread.

Step 2: Where does the clefted element occur in the un-clefted sentence.

Step 3: Mark that position.

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

d. It was Jaws that you were supposed to watch for this class .

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 originated from. Find both and mark them with arrows.

f. When did you say your friend were coming over ?

g. It was in March that I said I would marry you .

h. Where did you remember to buy a book ?

In these examples 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.

2. 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.