

Assignment 3

The problems in this assignment are based on Grimshaw (1979).

1 Null Complement Anaphora

1a. Explain the following patterns of grammaticality.

- (1) a. i. Question: Who left?
ii. Response:
*It's too bad.
*I agree.
*I'm flabbergasted.
*I'm surprised.
*It can't be true.
- b. i. Statement: John is telling lies again.
ii. Response:
It's too bad.
I agree.
I'm flabbergasted.
I'm surprised.
It can't be true.
- (2) a. Statement: John is telling lies again.
b. Response:
*I inquired.
*Ask Bill.

1b. Given the previous discussion of how Null Complement Anaphora is resolved, explain why the grammaticality of (3) is surprising. Then explain why these cases do not ultimately constitute a counterexample to Grimshaw's Null Complement Anaphora resolution proposal.

- (3) a. Question: Did John leave?
b. Response: It's possible.

1c. What is the source of the oddness of the following examples?

- (4) a. Question: Has the Mayor resigned?
b. Answer: ??I know.
- (5) a. Question: Did John leave?
b. Response: *I agree.

1d. Suppose a predicate takes both indirect questions and *that*-complements and also allows null complement anaphora. Then is it possible for it to take null indirect question complements but not *that*-complements, or vice-versa? If not, then explain how this follows under Grimshaw's proposal.

2 Concealed Questions

2a. Explain the following pattern of grammaticality.

- (6) a. Only Harold knew the kind of candy that Jill likes.
b. Only Harold ever found out the kind of candy that Jill likes.
c. Harold couldn't remember the kind of candy that Jill likes.
d. *Harold firmly believed the kind of candy that Jill likes.
e. *Harold asserted the kind of candy that Jill likes.
f. *Harold denied the kind of candy that Jill likes.

2b. Explain why (7b) lacks the concealed question reading available in (7a).

- (7) a. Harold finally found out the kind of candy Jill likes.
b. Harold finally found the kind of candy Jill likes.

3 Concealed Questions and Null Complement Anaphora

3a. Explain the following pattern of grammaticality. What conclusions can we draw about the relationship between concealed questions and null complement anaphora from the following examples?

- (8) a. i. Bill asked me the time, but I didn't know.
ii. Bill asked me the time, but I didn't know the time.
b. i. Bill claimed to want to know the reasons for my decision, but I didn't tell him.
ii. Bill claimed to want to know the reasons for my decision, but I didn't tell him my reasons.
c. i. Bill asked me the time, so I inquired.
ii. *Bill asked me the time, so I inquired the time.
d. i. Bill claimed to want to know the reasons for my decision, but he didn't really care.
ii. *Bill claimed to want to know the reasons for my decision, but he didn't really care the reasons for my decision.

3b. Why is null complement anaphora involving concealed questions of the sort seen in (8) not an option in (9)?

- (9) a. i. *Bill tried to buy the kind of food Mary likes but he didn't know.
ii. Bill tried to buy the kind of food Mary likes but he didn't know the kind of food Mary likes.
b. i. *Bill wanted to type the answer to the question so he asked Mary.
ii. Bill wanted to type the answer to the question so he asked Mary the answer to the question.

4 Getting Minimalist

4. Grimshaw's proposal is couched in a syntactic theory which had D-Structure, S-Structure, and LF. Minimalist assumptions, however, militate against the postulation of additional levels of representation such as D-Structure and S-Structure unless there is very good evidence for them. Ideally we would like to state all conditions as conditions on structure building or as interface conditions (LF or PF). Discuss whether Grimshaw's proposal irreducibly requires reference to D-Structure/S-Structures or whether it can be reformulated to not make reference to D-Structure/S-Structure. The answer to this question is important because Grimshaw's paper is an important and lasting contribution to our understanding of subcategorization and selection and a good theory of syntax should be able to represent its insights perspicuously.