

LINGUIST 601
September 14, 2006
Due on September 21, 2006

Assignment 1

Assigned Reading: Sections 1-4 and 6 of Chomsky (1995): *Bare Phrase Structure*.

I. Pseudoclefts can be used to provide evidence for the constituency of a sequence of words. If a sequence of words can appear in the postcopular position of a pseudocleft, then that sequence of words forms a constituent.

- (1) a. I love pepperoni and smoked turkey.
- b. Pseudocleft: What I love is *pepperoni and smoked turkey*.

pepperoni and smoked turkey appears as the postcopular sequence of the pseudocleft in (1b). Hence we can conclude that it is a constituent.

Some other examples demonstrating pseudoclefts are provided below.

- (2) a. i. We donated a dialysis machine to the nephrology unit.
- ii. What we donated a dialysis machine to was the nephrology unit.
- b. i. Roumi and Dave soaked their feet after dinner.
- ii. When Roumi and Dave soaked their feet was after dinner.
- c. i. Roumi and Dave soaked their feet in the kitchen.
- ii. Where Roumi and Dave soaked their feet was in the kitchen.

((2b, c.ii) are stilted and unnatural. For the purposes of this exercise, please ignore this stiltedness. It might help you to read (2b.ii) prefixed by *The time*, and (2b.iii) prefixed by *The place*.)

a. Provide an explicit procedure which explains how to form a pseudocleft out of a simple sentence.

b. Check if your procedure extends to the following case.

- (3) a. Roumi and Dave soaked their feet in a bucket.
- b. What Roumi and Dave did was soak their feet in a bucket.

If it does, show that it does. If it does, show where it breaks down, and modify it so that it can handle (3).

c. Apply your procedure to the following sequences of words from (2b.i). Discuss what your results mean for the constituency of this sentence.

- (4) a. their feet after dinner
- b. Roumi and Dave

- c. soak their feet

II. The following sentences look superficially similar.

- (5) a. He looked up the number.
- b. He walked up the hill.

However, it turns out that they have rather different constituent structures. The most striking fact is that in (5a) but not in (5b) the word *up* can appear at the end of the sentence.

- (6) a. He looked the number up.
- b. *He walked the hill up.

Traditionally, verbs that behave like *look up* are called phrasal verbs.

a. Think up five more examples of phrasal verbs, and five examples of verbs which are not phrasal but can appear in sentences like (5) with the same superficial structure. Then using the clefting test, the movement test, and the replacement test, determine the constituent structure of your phrasal verbs and your non-phrasal verbs. For the replacement test, use *there* as a replacement for a PP constituent.

b. Phrasal verbs differ in their syntax from non-phrasal verbs in a number of other ways. For example, phrasal verbs with pronominal objects tend towards unacceptability if the prepositional element precedes the pronoun.

- (7) a. He looked it up.
- b. *He looked up it.

Check whether this is true of your examples, and show any contrasts you find with non-phrasal verbs.

c. Determine how your phrasal verbs and your non-phrasal verbs pattern with respect to the placement of certain optional elements such as adverbials (*slowly, often*), simple prepositional phrases (*in the town*), and complex prepositional phrases (*as quickly as he could*). Formulate a hypothesis that relates the pattern you find to the constituent structure of the two kinds of verbs.

d. What can be said about the constituency of the boldfaced sequences in cases like the following?

- (8) a. He looked **the number up**.
- b. They ate **it up**.