

Syntax 380L
November 1, 2001

Midterm Exam

due in class on November 8

Suggestions

- When in doubt, draw trees. Trees are not essential but they will help you see the structural issues that are relevant. In particular, trees are likely to be very helpful in problem II.
- Please type if possible. If typing is inconvenient, please be neat and uncluttered.

I: Explain the contrast between (1a) and (1b).

- (1) a. I expect there to be an explosion.
b. *I persuaded there to be an explosion.

Given what we know about the properties of the English expletive *there*, explain the pattern of grammaticality shown in (2-4).

- (2) a. I imagined there being an explosion.
b. There seems to have been an explosion.
c. There is believed to have been an explosion.
- (3) a. Roland is in the next room.
b. There is an Icelander in the next room.
c. I imagined Roland in the next room.
d. *I imagined there a student in the next room.
- (4) a. It seems Roland is in the next room.
b. It seems there is an Icelander in the next room.
c. Roland seems in the next room.
d. *There seems an Icelander in the next room.

Extend your account to handle the following cases with expletive *it*.

- (5) a. That you were here is obvious.
b. It is obvious that you were here.
c. *I imagined that you were here obvious.
d. I considered that you were here obvious.
e. *I imagined it obvious that you were here.
f. I considered it obvious that you were here.

- (6)
- a. It seems that that you were here is obvious.
 - b. It seems it is obvious that you were here.
 - c. That you were here seems obvious.
 - d. It seems obvious that you were here.

Feel free to consider additional examples not listed above while formulating your hypothesis. It may be useful to ask yourself what kind of complements the different verbs in the above data set take (i.e. does verb X take IPs, VPs, PPs, APs or CPs as complements, does it take more than one kind of complement, does it take non-finite complements, if so what kind of non-finite complements does it take etc.).

II: Analyze the following set of sentences which all involve the expression *prevent . . . from*. You should find out what kind of complement *prevent . . . from* takes, who assigns case to what, who assigns θ -roles to whom, what *A*-movements take place, and the overall structure of the *prevent . . . from* construction.

- (7) (all exs. from the Wall Street Journal online corpus unless indicated otherwise)
- a. The law does not prevent witnesses from becoming plaintiffs.
 - b. This phobia prevents us from focusing on real food risks.
 - c. This rule prevents the company from being taken over at too low a price.
 - d. In the novelty filter, light reflected from a scene is passed through a photorefractive crystal that deflects it, preventing the scene from being registered by the system's video camera.
 - e. They say singers who want to prevent their performances from being imitated can simply buy the rights to the songs.
 - f. Philip is prevented from being the play's hero by his subservient position; John is stymied by his character.
 - g. The Hazelwood East High School students merely were prevented from being allowed to force another group, the school administration – and ultimately the community – to publish their views.
 - h. What can be done to prevent there from being more feral cats?
(from <http://www.auburn.edu/prevet/catnap/catnap.html>)
 - i. Second, there has not been one case of this disease in North America and every safety measure is in place to prevent there from being one.
(from http://aradece.tripod.com/how_safe_is_it.htm)

Your analysis should be for the construction as a whole. It should cover all the examples provided. Several of the examples provided are structurally identical and once you note their structural identity, you do not need to separately analyze each example.

III: It has been argued that the types of verbs that admit PP subjects are restricted: *be* and *suit* allow for PP subjects most naturally. Hence (8a, b) are grammatical while (8c, d) are not.

- (8)
- a. After seven suits me fine.
 - b. After two is good for me.

- c. *Before breakfast makes everyone sad.
- d. *After seven irritated everyone.

Now consider (9).

- (9) a. After seven appears to suit everyone.
- b. After two seems to suit everyone.
- c. Before breakfast turned out to be the best time for everyone.

Should the examples in (9) lead us to broaden the class of verbs admitting PP subjects? In formulating your answer, you should take into account (10).

- (10) a. After seven was believed to be the best time to meet.
- b. After seven was thought to be an appropriate moment.
- c. After seven was said to suit everyone.

Your answer should explicitly address questions pertaining to case and θ -roles, i.e. who assigns what case and who assigns what θ -roles.

IV: While NPs must receive Case, CPs do not need case. How does this assumption explain the following distribution of data?

- (11) a. i. The hosts anticipated that Mary would arrive late.
- ii. The hosts anticipated Mary's late arrival.
- b. i. It was anticipated (by the hosts) that Mary would arrive late.
- ii. *It was anticipated (by the hosts) Mary's late arrival.
- c. i. That Mary would arrive late was anticipated by the hosts.
- ii. Mary's late arrival was anticipated by the hosts.

Is the above data compatible with the view that case is the only trigger for A-movement? Explain your answer.

V: Consider the following facts from German and English.

- a. German
 - i. Es wurde getanzt
it was danced
'There was dancing.'
 - ii. Es wurde bis spät in die Nacht getrunken
it was till late in the night drunk
'There was drinking till late in the night.'
 - iii. *Es wurde diesen Roman von vielen Studenten gelesen
it was this-Acc novel by many students read
 - iv. Es wurde dieser Roman von vielen Studenten gelesen
it was this-Nom novel by many students read
'This novel was read by many students.'

- b. English
 - i. * was arrested John.
 - ii. *It/there was arrested John.
 - iii. It was believed [that the conclusion was false].

Provide a characterization of the difference between the German passive and the English passive. Relate the above difference to some point on which German and English differ. Avoid a stipulation about the passive construction itself.

VI: In French, ECM clauses comparable to the familiar English ones are not found:

- (12) a. I believe Roland to be the best.
- b. *Je crois Roland être le meilleur
I believe Roland be.inf the best

On the other hand, control is possible with *croire* here, unlike English *believe*.

- (13) a. *I believe [PRO to be the best].
- b. Je crois PRO être le meilleur
I believe be.inf the best
'I believe myself to be the best.'

Given an account of the difference between English and French that underlies the data in (12) and (13).

If French *de* is a prepositional complementizer similar to English *for*, then we find a further difference between English and French.

- (14) a. It would be a pity for something to happen to him.
- b. *Ce serait dommage de quelque chose lui arriver
it be.cond pity DE something to-him 'happen'.inf
'It would be a pity for something to happen to him.'
- c. *It would be a pity for PRO to leave now.
- d. Ce serait dommage de PRO partir maintenant
it be.cond pity DE leave.inf now
'It would be a pity to leave now.'

Extend the account you developed to handle the contrasts in (12) and (13) to cover the contrasts in (14). Your answer should indicate the difference(s) that we have to postulate between French prepositional complementizers and English prepositional complementizers.