Lecture 11. More Practice with Lambdas. Review for Test #2

1. Plan for Test #2.
Test #2 will be an open-book test, taking up just one hour. (Class will finish early on April 5: we won’t try to do anything else in class after the test.) You can bring all of the handouts of Part II with you, and your homeworks, and your class notes, and anything else you want. Questions will be similar to the questions on Homework 4 and Homework 5, plus things we do today.

Part I.
One or two questions in which I give you an English sentence and ask you to (a) Draw a syntactic tree for the sentence and label its nodes with both syntactic category and semantic type, and (b) work out a compositional translation for the sentence, showing the interpretation of each constituent as you build up the meaning of the whole from the meanings of the parts.

Part II.
Two or three questions which relate to the semantic treatment of certain linguistic constructions. I will design those questions so that they involve multiple-choice answers, fill-in-the-blanks answers, etc., not free-form paragraph answers.

1. Sample Questions of the kind that will be on Test #2.

Examples:
Part I. Similar to questions 1, 2, and 3 in Homework 5. We can do some more of these together today.

Part II.
Sample question 1: Why do examples like stone lion, rubber duck, wooden horse present difficulties for the Head Primacy Principle discussed in Partee (1995) and the Handout for Lecture 10?

a. Because stone, rubber, wooden are always privative adjectives.
b. Because stone, rubber, wooden is the head in this construction, whereas the head usually comes last in English NPs.
c. Because in these cases, it is the meaning of the head noun lion, duck, horse that shifts.
d. Because stone, rubber are ambiguous between adjective and noun and wooden is always an adjective.
e. Because these are compound constructions rather than modifier constructions.

Sample question 2: For each of the examples in set A, choose an appropriate meaning for the adjective new from set B, and choose an appropriate semantic type to correspond to that meaning from set C. If an example seems ambiguous to you, you may choose any one of its possible meanings; just be sure you then choose the semantic type that fits that meaning.

A. 1. new friend in the context I’d like you to meet my new friend Mary.
2. new helicopter in the context I just saw a new helicopter that was very recently invented and is just starting to be used this year.

3. new pop-star in the context An 65-year old grandmother who sings jazz lullabies is the surprising new pop-star of the year.

4. new car in the context The hybrid Toyota Prius is a new car that is getting lots of favorable attention from environmentalists.

B. a. hasn’t been in existence for very long
   b. hasn’t been a P for very long (applies to CNP; P a variable over CN-type meanings)
   c. hasn’t been in relation R to x for very long (applies to a TCNP; R a variable over TCN-type meanings, x a variable over individuals)

C. (i) e
   (ii) e→t
   (iii) (e→t)→(e→t)
   (iv) e → (e→t)
   (v) (e → (e→t)) → (e → (e→t))
   (vi) ((e→t)→t) → ((e→t)→t)

Sample questions 3-4. Multiple choice.

3. Frege said that one of the most basic operations involved in semantic composition is the operation of (a) set intersection; (b) function-argument application; (c) conjunction.

4. In the case of a prenominal possessive like John’s team, the interpretation of the Saxon genitive form John’s is a combination of the interpretation of a postnominal possessor like of John’s in team of John’s and the interpretation of (a) the definite article the; (b) the indefinite article a/an; (c) the relation is owned by.

Sample questions 5-6. True or false. IF FALSE, give a (very brief) correction. (To help focus your attention, I’ve put the most relevant part of each assertion in boldface.)

5. One difference between compounds like toy store and modifier constructions like toy train is that the interpretation of compounds is usually less compositional than the interpretation of modifier constructions.

6. The differences in preferred interpretations in the pairs below provide evidence that the relational adjective favorite prefers an agentive interpretation.

(21) (a) Mary’s favorite movie
     (b) Mary’s movie.

(22) (a) Mary’s favorite poem
     (b) Mary’s poem.