Introduction to Linguistic Theory:
Assignment 9

This assignment is based upon the material presented in class during the twelfth and thirteenth weeks. It will be due on Monday, April 29th. Recall that, as explained in class and over e-mail, you cannot submit this assignment on Wednesday, May 1st.

(1) Exercise 1 (60 Points)

Our phrase structure (PS) rules from class don’t yet cover so-called ‘possessive phrases’ (PossP), such as the ones in boldface below.

a. Illustration of Possessive Phrases (PossP) in English
   (i) Dave’s mom owns a Toyota.
   (ii) Some man’s house is on fire.
   (iii) That ugly kid from New York’s car is in my driveway.

We’re going to assume the following PS rule for making PossPs in English.

b. The PS Rule for Forming Possessive Phrases

   PossP → NP ’s

We’re also going to revise our rule for NPs to the following:

c. New PS Rule for Forming NPs

   NP → { (PossP), (D) } (AP*) N (CP) (PP*)

d. Question 1: (30 Points)
   Please draw a tree structure showing how the rules in (1b) and (1c) can, with our other PS rules, form the following sentence: “The boy’s dog chased a cat.”

e. Question 2: (30 Points)
   Please use the rules in (1b) and (1c) to create a PossP that exhibits recursion.
   • Represent this PossP using a tree structure.
   • Identify the instance of recursion in the PossP.
   • Explain why the structure you identified is an instance of recursion.

f. Extra Credit Question (20 Points)
   Our new rule for NPs in (1c) places both ‘PossP’ and ‘D’ within a pair of curly brackets ‘{ }’. Please explain why this is the right thing to do.
   (This problem is optional, and can be done for 20 points of extra credit.)
Exercise 2  (40 Points)

In each of the sentences below, there is a sequence of words in boldface:

a. Dave saw the **old cat**.

b. The **boy’s** team is playing today.

c. Dave **will wash** the car

For each sentence, please use our two *constituency tests* to determine whether the boldfaced words form a constituent in that sentence. That is, for each sentence you will need to do the following:

- Apply the two *constituency tests* discussed in class.
  - Be sure to write out the sentence that the ‘conjunction test’ requires you to.
  - Be sure to write out the dialog that the ‘repetition test’ requires you to.

- Report the result of each test.
  - For the sentence and/or dialog created for the test, report whether it’s well-formed / natural in English or not

- On the basis of the results, state whether the sequence of words forms a constituent.
  - Be sure to explain your reasoning.

Note, for the purposes of this assignment, a sequence of words has to pass *both* tests before we call it a ‘constituent’. Therefore, if some sequence of words only passes *one* test, do *not* say that it forms a constituent.