

Problem set 8: 24.900

Due Monday, 11/05/01

Note: This problem set is more interesting than the last one, but will also take longer. Please look ahead to part 3. This is *not* an assignment you can do at 3:00am the night before it's due, especially because it requires locating and working with a native speaker of a foreign language!

1. **More trees.** Do problem 9, a-b on pp. 238-239 of *CL*.
2. **Swedish.** Examine the Swedish sentences on the next page and answer the questions.

Question 1: What syntactic property of Swedish visible in (1) and (2) makes it more like German than like English? What syntactic property makes it more like English than like German?

Question 2: Draw a tree for sentence (1b), modelled (where appropriate) on the tree found on Syntax Handout #3.

Question 3: The sentences in (3) show (among other things) the Swedish equivalent of an embedded clause whose complementizer is *if* (Swedish *om*). Sentence (4a) shows another kind of *if*-clause. What syntactic process takes place in (4a) that is not seen in (3), and why is (4b) impossible?

Extra credit: Does English (or some other language that you know) have anything like the type of *if*-clause seen in (4a)? What similarities or differences are there between the Swedish example and similar examples in your native language?

- (1) **Word order in main clauses**
 - a. Han känner faktiskt Ingrid.
he knows actually Ingrid
'He actually knows Ingrid.'
 - b. Ingrid känner han faktiskt.
Ingrid knows he actually
'He actually knows Ingrid.'
 - c. Faktiskt känner han Ingrid.
actually knows he Ingrid
'He actually knows Ingrid.'
 - d. * Han faktiskt känner Ingrid.
 - e. * Faktiskt han känner Ingrid.
 - f. * [any other order of these 4 words]
- (2) **Word order in embedded clauses with complementizer *att***
 - a. Johan mindes att han faktiskt känner Ingrid.
Johan remembered that he actually knows Ingrid
 - b. *Johan mindes att han känner faktiskt Ingrid.
 - c. *[all other orders of the words in the embedded clause]
- (3) **Word order in an embedded clause with complementizer *om* 'if'**
 - a. Om han faktiskt känne Ingrid, blir jag arg.
If he actually knows Ingrid, get I angry.
'If he actually knows Ingrid, I'll get angry.'
 - b. *Om han känner faktiskt Ingrid...
- (4) **Another way of saying "if he actually knows Ingrid".**
 - a. Känner han faktiskt Ingrid, blir jag arg.
'If he actually knows Ingrid, I'll get angry.'
 - b. *Om känner han faktiskt Ingrid, blir jag arg.

3. Linguistic Fieldwork

Find a friendly speaker of a language that meets the following criteria:

1. it is not English, Japanese or Korean;
2. it is not your native language;
3. it is not a language you have studied at school or from a book.

You will have the most fun if you pick a language that does *not* belong to the Romance, Germanic or Slavic families (see *CL* pp. 366-370).

Ask your informant to translate various some reasonably simple sentences of your own choosing (e.g. "The student will read the book") into his/her native language. Your purpose in asking for these data is to answer the following questions:

Part 1: What is your language consultant's name? Where does he/she come from? What is the name of his/her language? How did you find him/her?

Part 2: Do complements (direct objects) precede or follow the verb in VP? What is the order of head and complement in NP, PP and (if it's possible to ask this) AP? If you can identify a word that might be a candidate for Infl in the language, add that. Your answer should have the following general form:

VP: the verb follows its complement:

- (1) blablabla ga googoo bleepbleep
 Mary the book bought
 'Mary bought the book'

PP: P precedes its complement

- (2) blabla boo ba googoo geegee
 Mary into the room ran
 'Mary ran into the room.'

If the word order of the language for some reason makes this task difficult for certain constituents, explain clearly why and give examples. Note that the language might have different orders for different categories (unlike English and Japanese, just as in my examples above).

Part 3: Draw a phrase structure tree that reflects your answers to question 1 for a sentence that has a verb with complements, including a PP (e.g. something like *Mary will put the book on the table*). Assume that the tree is as much like the trees we draw for English as your data permits (but make sure that your tree represents the word order for your chosen language -- not for English)! Make sure that your tree contains an I node, even if you did not elicit any words like 'will' or 'must' in your language.

Notes:

- If your language turns out to place the verb to the left of the subject and object (i.e. *Reads Mary the book.*), congratulations! Read *CL* pp. 220-221 on Verb-initial languages, and model your analysis on the one presented there.
- If your language consultant tells you that word order in his/her language is free, i.e. that words occur in all sorts of orders, try to get him/her to identify a "most common" or "typical" order, and use that in your answers.
- If your language turns out to be a verb-second language, congratulations! Re-read Syntax Handout #3 and model your answer (as much as possible) on the discussion of German there.
- Feel free to ask me or your recitation leader for advice or help.