

## Introduction to Syntax: Problem Set #2

This problem set is due on Wednesday, July 20 (understood as ending at midnight on the 20<sup>th</sup>). You can turn it in either by physically handing a hard copy to either Norvin or Cristina, or by sending us a .pdf file. Please don't send us other kinds of electronic files. Feel free to consult with each other, or with us, but please write up your own answers.

### Problem One

Consider the following ungrammatical sentences. In cases where a DP is italicized, assume that the italicized DP has been moved from the spot marked with "e" (short for "empty spot"). Explain why each sentence is ill-formed. Some of these examples may violate more than one constraint or principle; make sure you list everything that goes wrong.

- (1) \*We believe to be likely that *we* will win.
- (2) \*I told *Jerry* about e.
- (3) \*John's mother criticized himself.
- (4) \*It seemed to the clone of *Porter* to be hired e.

### Problem Two

In Choctaw (a Muskogean language spoken in Oklahoma and Mississippi), transitive verbs agree with both the subject and the object:

- (5) Chi- bashli -li -tok  
2sgOBJ cut 1sgSUBJ PAST  
'I cut you'
- (6) Is- sa- sso -tok  
2sgSUBJ 1sgOBJ hit PAST  
'You hit me'

(here the numbers stand for persons, "sg" means "singular", and "SUBJ" and "OBJ" stand for "subject" and "object"--so *chi-*, for instance, means "second person singular object").

Intransitive verbs split into two types, exemplified below:

- (7) a. Hilha -li -tok  
 dance 1sgSUBJ PAST  
 'I danced'  
 b. Ish- ipah ð?  
 2sgSUBJ eat Q  
 'Have you eaten?'  
 c. I:- bali:li-tok  
 1plSUBJ run PAST  
 'We ran'
- (8) a. Sa- hohchafoh  
 1sgOBJ be-hungry  
 'I am hungry'  
 b. Chi- cha:hah  
 2sgOBJ be-tall  
 'You are tall'  
 c. Pi- hohfaya -tok  
 1plOBJ be-ashamed PAST  
 'We were ashamed'

**Question one:** What do you think is going on here?

Choctaw exhibits a phenomenon known as "switch-reference marking". Under certain circumstances, the verb in the first of two clauses may bear a morpheme indicating, roughly, whether the subjects of the two clauses refer to the same person or not (SS stands for "same subject", DS for "different subject"):

- (9) a. Tobi apa -li -cha oka ishko -li -tok  
 bean eat 1sgSUBJ SS water drink 1sgSUBJ PAST  
 'I ate beans and I drank water'  
 b. Tobi apa -li -na tâchi ish -pa -tok  
 bean eat 1sgSUBJ DS corn 2sgSUBJ eat PAST  
 'I ate beans and you ate corn'

In (9a), the "same subject" suffix *-cha* indicates that the subjects of the two clauses refer to the same person; in (9b), where the two clauses have different subjects, you get the "different subject" suffix *-na*. These suffixes are obligatory in these examples; using *-na* in (9a), or *-cha* in (9b), would yield an ill-formed sentence.

Consider the following examples of sentences involving switch reference markers. The sentence marked with % is one on which Choctaw speakers disagree; in some dialects of Choctaw (call them Choctaw A), this sentence is well-formed, while in other dialects (Choctaw B), it is ill-formed.

- (10) a. Nita pisa -li -**cha** bali:li -li -tok  
 bear see 1sgSUBJ SS run 1sgSUBJ PAST  
 'I saw the bear and ran'
- b. Sa- hohchafo-**cha** tobi hothoni -li -tok  
 1sgOBJ hungry SS bean cook 1sgSUBJ PAST  
 'I was hungry, so I cooked some beans'
- c. \*Nita pisa -li -**na** bali:li -li -tok  
 bear see 1sgSUBJ DS run 1sgSUBJ PAST  
 'I saw the bear and ran'
- d. % Sa- hohchafo-**na** tobi hothoni -li -tok  
 1sgOBJ hungry DS bean cook 1sgSUBJ PAST  
 'I was hungry, so I cooked some beans'

**Question two:** Give a description of the rules for the use of same-subject and different-subject markers in Choctaw A and Choctaw B. Your rules should make reference to the syntactic behavior of the subjects of the clauses.