

September 19, 2006

CLASS 5: CATEGORIES & CONSTITUENCY

SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES

We typically distinguish **lexical categories** from **functional categories**:

- (1) noun (N), verb (V), adjective (A) — preposition (P), adverb (Adv)
- (2) determiner (D) — complementizer (C), inflection (I)/tense (T) ...

There are (usually) clear **syntactic environments** in which each of these occur, e.g.:

- (3)
 - a. We have much [_N ___].
 - b. The ([_A ___]) [_N ___] is on the desk.
 - c. She slept [_{Adv} ___].
 - d. very [_{A/Adv} ___]
 - e. This is very [_A ___].
 - f. We all should [_V ___] (...).
 - g. He put the book [_P ___] the table.
 - h. It is a fact [_C ___] the earth is flat. (NB: no free C)

CONSTITUENT STRUCTURE

We could begin with a simple construction of **phrase structure rules**:

- (4)
 - a. That man likes that woman.
 - b. $S \rightarrow D+N+V+D+N$
- (5)
 - a. $S \rightarrow NP VP$
 - b. $NP \rightarrow D N$
 - c. $VP \rightarrow V NP$
- (6)
 - a. $NP \rightarrow (D) (AP) N (PP)$
 - b. $AP \rightarrow (Adv) A$
 - c. $PP \rightarrow P NP$ (...)

TESTS FOR CONSTITUENTS

Proform Test

- (7) a. The teacher (that...) drew the wrong tree last class.
 b. He [This guy] drew the wrong tree last class. [substitution]
 c. The teacher (that...) / This guy / He drew it last class.
 d. The teacher (that...) / This guy / He did so last class.
 e. The teacher (that...) / This guy / He drew the wrong tree / it then.

Question Test

- (8) a. A: Who drew the wrong tree last class? — B: The teacher (that...).
 b. A: What did he draw last class? — B: The wrong tree.
 c. A: When did he draw the wrong tree? — B: Last class.

Movement Test

- (9) a. Last class, the teacher (that...) drew the wrong tree.
 b. The wrong tree, the teacher (that...) drew last class.
- (10) a. Draw the wrong tree, the teacher usually doesn't.
 b. Interested in literature, the teacher isn't either.
- (11) a. Out of the house Rover ran.
 b. The house Rover ran out of. [P-stranding]
- (12) a. It didn't surprise anyone that the earth is round.
 b. That the earth is round didn't surprise anyone. [expletive *it*]

Coordination Test

- (13) a. The teacher drew the wrong tree and isn't interested in literature.
 b. The teacher relies either on his knowledge or the books that he uses.

Cleft Test

- (14) a. It is his knowledge that the teacher relies on.
 b. It was last class that he drew the wrong tree.

Pseudocleft Test

- (15) a. What the teacher did last class was draw the wrong tree.
 b. What the teacher drew last class was the wrong tree.

though Test

- (16) a. Interested in literature though he isn't, ...
 b. Draw the tree wrongly though he did, ...