

February 21, 2006

CLASS 8: CONSTITUENCY TESTS

SUBSTITUTION

- insert *anaphoric element* for a constituent (= *antecedent*); works well for NPs and PPs
- (1) a. The student with the funny hat will answer all questions immediately.
b. **She** will answer **them** immediately.
- do the same for VPs; here the relevant substitute is an expression like *do* or *do so*
- (2) a. ... but in order to **do so**, she has to show up for class.
b. ... and the student with glasses **does so too**.
c. ... and **so will** the student with glasses.

MOVEMENT

- constituents may be displaced from their *canonical* position = aka *movement*
- (3) a. **Immediately**, the student with the funny hat will answer all questions.
b. **All questions**, the student with the funny hat will answer immediately.
c. **Answer all questions immediately**, the student with the funny hat will.
- (This movement is called *topicalization*, for contrastive or backgrounding purposes.)
- the movement test can be applied to *all kinds of constituents*: NP, VP, AP, AdvP...
- (4) a. ... and **very smart** she is too.
b. ... and **after her classes**, she immediately goes to study.
c. ... and **because she is very smart**, she will pass all her courses.

QUESTION FORMATION

- we already know that *questions and answers* stand in a close relationship
 - one way of exploiting this is to say that *an answer expresses a constituent*
 - in other words, a property of constituents is that they can *stand alone*
- (Obviously, we're talking about *constituent questions*, aka *wh*-questions.)

- (5) a. Q: Who answers all questions immediately?
A: **The student with the funny hat.**
- b. Q: What does the student with the funny hat do?
A: **Answer all questions immediately.**
- c. Q: What does the student with the funny hat answer (immediately)?
A: **All questions.**
- d. Q: When does the student with the funny hat answer all questions?
A: **Immediately.**
- e. Q: How does the student with the funny hat answer all questions?
A: **Correctly.**

At the same time, this test shows us which words *don't* form a constituent:

- (6) Q: What does the student with the funny hat answer?
A: * **All questions immediately.**

(All other tests can do this too; try and show *implausible constituents* with them.)

DELETION / ELLIPSIS

- sometimes we can *omit material* which is recoverable from the preceding context — what's omitted (or *deleted*) forms a constituent
 - a common strategy is so-called *ellipsis* — where the omitted material is elided (\emptyset)
- (7) A: The student with the funny hat will answer all questions immediately.
B: But the student with glasses doesn't / won't / can't / refuses to [_{VP} \emptyset].

(Much more can be said about ellipsis, or *VP-ellipsis*, and we'll get back to it.)

FOCALIZATION

- *focus* is *foregrounded* material, and it can be done by e.g. *clefting* or *pseudo-clefting*
- (8) a. It is **the student with the funny hat** who will answer all questions imm'ly.
b. It is **all questions** which the student with the funny hat will answer imm'ly.
c. It is **imm'ly** that the student with the funny hat will answer all questions.
- (9) What this student does is **answer all questions immediately.**

COORDINATION

- *coordination* coordinates... constituents!

- (10) This student will answer all questions **immediately and correctly.**