

Final exam

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LING 120B: Syntax I

Note: You may use the textbook (Radford 2004), class handouts, and class notes on this final exam.

1

2 points

Please briefly explain the difference between bullet features ($[\bullet x \bullet]$) and plus features ($[+x+]$) in our syntactic theory. (Note: Two or three sentences should suffice.)

Bullet features merge with maximum projection and must be satisfied with an element of the specified category.
Plus features merge with minimum projection to form a complex head, and is satisfied even if no target is found.

2

5 points

Please state why each of the following sentences is ungrammatical; in other words, the principle or constraint that they violate.

- (1) a. *What did Ekeme pet ^{DP} a cat ^{CP} that likes ___?
Complex DP constraint
- b. *What did Tyler and Eric ask who had read ___?
WH-island Condition
- c. *What did that Matthew watched ___ surprise Kathleen?
subject condition
- d. *Where is Allison a student whose mother comes from ___?
Complex DP constraint
- e. *Who was Joann friends with Thu and ___?
Coordinate structure constraint

3

10 points

Please answer the following multiple-choice questions. Select *all* of the answers that apply.

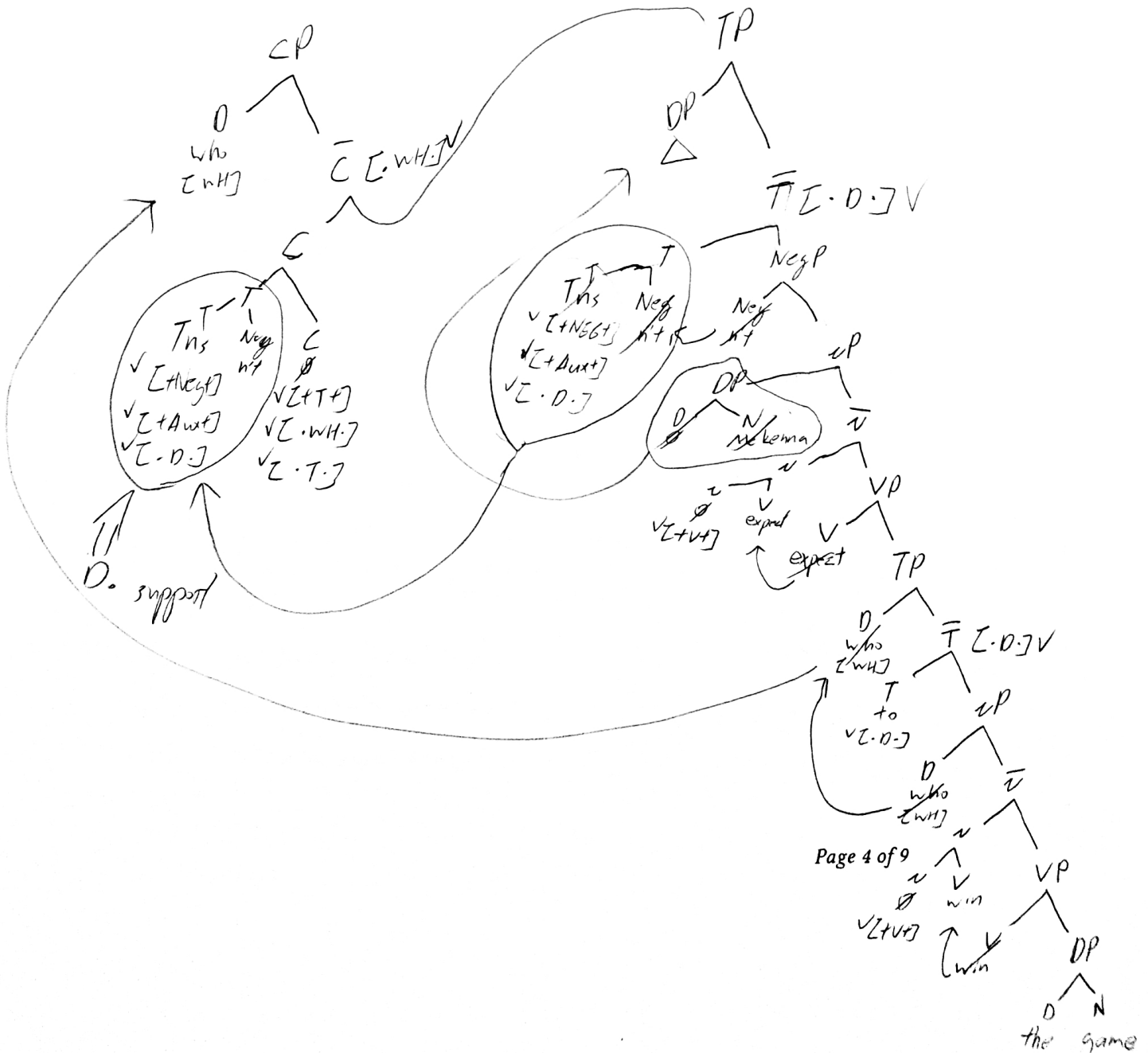
- (1) What is the syntactic subject of "leave" in the sentence "Jessica decided to leave".
- A. Jessica
B. PRO
C. *pro*
D. it has no subject
- (2) Fill in the blank: The verb "seems" is a(n) ___ verb
- A. unergative verb
B. control verb
C. raising verb
D. transitive verb
- (3) Which of the following predicate types do not occur with a *v* projection?
- A. passive
B. control
C. unergative
D. unaccusative
- (4) What constraint does the sentence "He₁ thought that Isaac called Henry₁" violate?
- A. Condition A
B. Condition B
C. Condition C
D. Condition H
- (5) What does the EPP apply to?
- A. Null finite T
B. Overt finite T
C. Nonfinite T
D. Embedded finite T

5

20 points

Please draw the **final structure** for the sentence in (3). You do not need to show each derivational step, but you do need to include the features that are relevant for the derivation. This will minimally include any features that may drive movement.

(3) - Who didn't McKenna expect to win the game?



6

3 points

In Finnish, *wh*-questions involve movement of the *wh*-expression to [Spec, CP], but no movement of a verbal element, as shown in (4).

- (4) a. Karen on ostanut kirjan
Karen has bought book
'Karen has bought a book'
- b. **Mitä** Karen on ostanut **mitä**?
what Karen has bought what
'What has Karen bought?'

Question: Which feature or features does the *wh*-question complementizer bear in Finnish? Make sure to exhaustively list them.

[·wh·]

[·T·]

7

10 points

This final question deals with an interaction between different independent syntactic processes in German. This interaction yields an interesting surface phenomenon: German *wh*-questions appear to not obey Superiority. Like English, when a *wh*-question contains two *wh*-expressions in German, it must be the case that one of them moves to [Spec, CP]. However, unlike English, either *wh*-expression can be the one that moves, not just the one closest to C.

- (5) a. Lauren has bought a book.
- b. **Who** has bought **what**?
- c. ***What** has **who** bought?

- (6) a. Lauren hat ein Buch gekauft
Lauren has a book bought
'Lauren has bought a book'
- b. Wer hat ~~wer~~ was gekauft?
who has who what bought
'Who has bought what?'
- c. Was hat wer ~~was~~ gekauft?
what has who what bought
'What has who bought?'

Question 1:

[2 points]

For English, what is the principle, condition, or constraint that rules out the superiority-violating question in (5c)?

minimal link condition (MLC)

In this question, you will explore the explanation of why German *wh*-questions appear to violate superiority, in a step-by-step guided investigation.

German word order is more flexible than English word order. Different word orders reflect subtle differences in meaning. Note that this difference is not relevant to the problem at hand, just the fact that different word orders are possible. (Abbreviations: DAT = dative, indirect object; ACC = accusative, direct object)

- (7) a. Dustin hat [dem Samuel] [die Nahyun] vorgestellt
Dustin has the.DAT Samuel the.ACC Nahyun introduced
'Dustin introduced Nahyun to Samuel'
- b. Dustin hat [die Nahyun] [dem Samuel] vorgestellt
Dustin has the.ACC Nahyun the.DAT Samuel introduced
'Dustin introduced Nahyun to Samuel'

Syntacticians analyze this word-order flexibility as involving *movement*. That is, the reason that German has a more flexible word order than English is because it has a general-purpose movement operation that English does not. It can use this movement operation to move constituents around in the structure. This movement operation is known as SCRAMBLING.

Question 2:

[2 points]

Let us assume that (i) scrambling targets a constituent bearing a $[\Sigma]$ feature, (ii) any D head in German may freely bear $[\Sigma]$, and (iii) scrambling targets $[\text{Spec}, \text{TP}]$. What feature does T bear then?

$[\Sigma^+]$

Like all movement, there are constraints on scrambling. The relevant constraint to this investigation is that scrambling in German can never cross a CP boundary, as shown in (8). Let us assume this as a German-specific constraint; that is, you do not need to explain why scrambling cannot leave a CP. (Abbreviations: NOM = nominative, subject; ACC = accusative, direct object)

- (8) a. Cindy hat gesagt $[\text{CP}$ dass [der Alex] [die Ashley]
 Cindy has said that the.NOM Alex the.ACC Ashley
 gesehen hat]
 seen has
 'Cindy said that Alex saw Ashley'

- b. *Cindy hat [die Ashley] gesagt $[\text{CP}$ dass [der Alex] ~~die~~
 Cindy has the.ACC Ashley said that the.NOM Alex the
~~Ashley~~ gesehen hat]
 Ashley seen has

Returning to multiple *wh*-questions, (9) shows that superiority is in fact obeyed in German when one of the two *wh*-expressions is in the matrix clause and the other *wh*-expression is embedded inside a CP.

(9) a. **Wer** hat ~~wer~~ gesagt [CP dass der Alex **wen** gesehen hat]?
 who has who said that the Alex whom seen has
 'Who has said that Alex has seen whom?'

b. ***Wen** hat ~~wer~~ gesagt [CP dass der Alex ~~wer~~ gesehen hat]?
 whom has who said that the Alex whom seen has
 Intended: 'Whom has who said that Alex has seen?'

Question 3:

[6 points]

You have been given all of the pieces to solve this problem now. Why is it that German multiple *wh*-questions (appear to) violate superiority in (6)? Why can they not violate superiority in (9)?

The SCRAMBLING targets WH and can bring it higher than the other WH in the syntactic tree, thus making it appear as if the superiority was violated. WH-movement occurs after SCRAMBLING moves the target WH higher in the tree.

In (9), WH "wen" is embedded inside a CP. SCRAMBLING is bounded by CP and cannot move "wen" outside of CP and higher than "wer."

Sentences in (6) appears to have violated superiority because both "who" and "what" can be moved still be grammatically correct.

Big Hint: A movement-triggering feature only sees the closest relevant constituent, given the Minimal Link Condition.

Bigger Hint: A *wh*-expression may move more than once and for different purposes. For example, one such case that we have seen in class is that a subject *wh*-expression starts out in [Spec, *v*P], moves to [Spec, TP] for the EPP, and then moves to [Spec, CP] to form a *wh*-question.

8

+6 points

For extra credit on this test: In class, we learned about the Subjacency Condition, given in (10). Subjacency derives the *Wh*-Island Condition and the Complex DP Constraint, in addition to forcing a successive-cyclic movement path.

(10) **SUBJACENCY CONDITION**

- a. In a structure $[\alpha \dots [\beta \dots [\gamma \dots \delta \dots] \dots] \dots]$, movement of δ to α cannot apply if β and γ are bounding nodes.
- b. DP and TP are bounding nodes.

Question: Please explain why the grammaticality of the following two sentences in (11) is problematic for the Subjacency Condition:

- (11) a. Who did ^{TP}Anza read ^{DP}a book about ^{DP}who?
- b. Who do _{TP}you believe Victoria _{TP}to love?

a. who did _{TP}Anza read _{DP}a book about who] S
 $\alpha \uparrow$ β γ

'who' is within two bounding nodes (TP, DP)

b. who do _{TP}you believe Victoria _{TP}to love who] S
 $\alpha \uparrow$ β γ

'who' is within two bounding nodes (TP, TP)