

## Linguistics 315 Homework 1

1. There are a few examples of how children undergo a typical language acquisition process even through partial deficiencies. In one study that examined the acquisition of words relating to the visual experience in blind children, it was found that 'look' and 'see' were among the first verbs spoken by the children. They also had some understanding of what 'look' and 'see' meant in their terms of touching something cautiously versus exploring it with their hands. In another study, Newport (1977) found that childrens' learning rate was largely unaffected by the differences in their mothers' speech, and progressed along a maturational schedule that was largely indifferent to how their mothers spoke.

2.

- a) You would need a fast car to cross the country in three days.

Fast is an **adjective**.

Test 1: Inflected into a comparative form by the use of the suffix -er. "Faster car."

Test 2: Can be modified by the adverb 'very'. "You would need a very fast car to cross the country in three days."

- b) While Wile E. Coyote slept, Road Runner moved fast across the desert.

Fast is an **adverb**.

Test 1: Can appear in different positions in the sentence. "While Wile E. Coyote slept, Road Runner moved across the desert fast."

Test 2: Can follow a comparative morpheme. "While Wile E. Coyote slept, Road Runner moved less fast across the desert."

- c) Few people can fast during the holidays.

Fast is a **verb**.

Test 1: Can be negated with 'not'. "Few people can not fast during the holidays."

Test 2: Follows a subject. "Few people can fast during the holidays."

3.

Signs you Are too old to be Trick or Treating:

- a. You need to have another kid chew the candy for you.

**Not** a constituent.

Test 1: Clefting test. \*It is [need to have] that another kid chew the candy for you.

Test 2: Preposing test. \*[Need to have] is what another kid chew the candy for you.

- b. You always ask for high fiber candy.

**Is** a constituent.

Test 1: Substitution test. You always [do].

Test 2: Standalone test. Q. What do you always do? A. Ask for high fiber candy.

- c. You have a bag full of restraining orders by the end of the night.

**Is** a constituent.

Test 1: Standalone Test. Q: When will you have a bag full of restraining orders? A. By the end of the night.

Test 2: Preposing. [By the end of the night] is when you have a bag full of restraining orders.

4. 4 X'-Theory (1.8 pts)

Provide the tree structure for the strings underlined below, according to X'-Theory.

a. Mark has become very interested in plays by German writers.

b. Harry met Sally right outside the Italian restaurant next to his office.

5a.

**Not** a constituent.

Test 1: Standalone test. Q: What will Frank after this summer? A: Buy a vintage Ferrari.

Test 2: Preposing. Buy a vintage Ferrari is what Frank will after this summer.

b. This tree shows evidence that the underlined string is not a constituent. There is no element in the tree that contains only 'Buy a vintage ferrari' with no other elements of the bracketed phrase, so it cannot be a constituent.

6. (i) Explain the two core properties of phrases and syntactic structure below.

(ii) Provide a syntactic example illustrating each explanation.

a. Endocentricity means that the syntactic category of the phrase is the syntactic category of the phrase (e.g. a V projects a VP). An example of this is in the phrase "Mark is utterly in love with his wife." The N (Mark) projects the NP (Mark is utterly in love with his wife).

b. Syntactic structure projects by means of binary branching. Binary branching is where each syntactic unit can project either one or two (but no more) syntactic units. So, each VP → VP and VP; and V' → V' and V'.