

Exam 2 – Syntax

Take home: Due at class time on Friday, April 13

You may use any resources you like to answer these questions; however, you may not discuss the questions with anyone, and the normal standards of academic honesty apply.

3. Hebrew: Transformations (35 points)

NOTE: In Hebrew, *et* is what's called an "object marker" (O.M.). It appears before the direct object in a sentence. Its meaning won't be particularly important; what is important is that you notice and describe where it (and other words and phrases) appears and moves.

3.1. Consider the following pairs of questions and answers:

Mi axal et ha-uga?
who ate O.M. the-cake
'Who ate the cake?'

Ha-yeled axal et ha-uga.
the-boy ate O.M. the-cake
'The boy ate the cake.'

Mi natan et ha-uga le im-o?
who gave O.M. the-cake to mother-his
'Who gave the cake to his mother?'

Ha-yeled natan et ha-uga le im-o.
the-boy gave O.M. the-cake to mother-his
'The boy gave the cake to his mother.'

a. What are the d-structures for the Hebrew questions: (4)

Mi axal et ha-uga? 'Who ate the cake?'

Mi natan et ha-uga le im-o? 'Who gave the cake to his mother?'

b. Explain, in a short, clearly-written paragraph, how you figured out the d-structure for either of the sentences in 3.1(a). Define 'd-structure' in your answer. Use the back of the page if you need more room. (5)

3.2 The following questions could also be answered by the statements in 3.1:

Et ma ha-yeled axal?
O.M. what the-boy ate
'What did the boy eat?'

(Answer: *Ha-yeled axal et ha-uga.*
'The boy ate the cake.')

Et ma ha-yeled natan le im-o?
O.M. what the-boy gave to mother-his
'What did the boy give to his mother?'

(Answer: *Ha-yeled natan et ha-uga le im-o.*
'The boy gave the cake to his mother.')

- a. Give the d-structure for each Hebrew question: (4)

Et ma ha-yeled axal? ‘What did the boy eat?’

Et ma ha-yeled natan le im-o? ‘What did the boy give to his mother?’

- b. Write a transformation that produces the questions in 3.2 from the d-structures in 3.2(a). (6)

- c. Does your transformation also produce the questions given in 3.1 from the d-structures you wrote in 3.1(a)? (1)

- d. If you answered ‘no’ to 3.2(c), revise your transformation from 3.2(b) so that it produces the questions in 3.1 as well as those in 3.2. (3)

- e. Use the transformation you wrote in 3.2(d) (or 3.2(b), if it didn’t need to be revised) to predict the form of the Hebrew question ‘What did the girl read?’, given the following statement: (2)

Ha-yalda karʔa et ha-sefer
the-girl read O.M. the-book
‘The girl read the book.’

- 3.3. So far, this portion of the exam has focused on d-structures, s-structures, and transformations. In a short, clearly-written paragraph or two, explain where d-structures themselves come from, and how transformations fit into the bigger picture of how a syntax grammar makes sentences. Choose one of the Hebrew questions from above to use as an example in your explanation. Use the back of the page or a separate piece of paper. (10)