

Homework Assignment #3

Due as an MS-Word document (.doc) via e-mail to djsilva@uta.edu by 11:59 PM on Tuesday, March 3, 2009

In categorizing languages, linguists often make reference to the notion of a syntactic “head.” In brief, the head of a given phrasal type refers to the one element that is *required*. For example the head of a Noun Phrase (NP) is a Noun (N): with rare exception, an NP without a noun would not be considered an NP. Similarly, the head of VP = V, of PP = P, etc. Linguists generalize this pattern by saying that “the head of XP is X,” where “X” represents a given lexical category.

In addition to having a head, there is the matter of how the head of a given phrase is ordered with relation to other (optional) material in the phrase. Cross-linguistic generalizations regarding the head’s location is encapsulated in a concept known as the “headedness parameter.” According to the headedness parameter, there are three types of languages:

- a. Head First: The head appears as the initial element in phrases
- b. Head Last: The head appears as the final element in phrases
- c. Head Variable: The position of the head is free (or varies from one phrase type to the next)

(A) Consider the following English data. Based on these forms, is English a Head First, Head Last, or Head Variable language? Briefly explain how you arrived at your conclusion. [10 points]

Noun Phrases	NP → (Det) (Adj) N (PP)	<i>Susan’s children</i> <i>The red car</i> <i>My friends from Spain</i> <i>Jack’s ideas about education</i> <i>Chocolate from Belgium</i>
Prepositional Phrases (PP)	PP → P (NP)	<i>about a boy</i> <i>from Spain</i> <i>under the teacher’s table</i> <i>at the table by the window</i>
Verb Phrases (VP)	VP → V (NP) (PP)	<i>walked to the park</i> <i>bought a new car</i> <i>asked a question before class</i> <i>have a lot of ideas</i>
Adjective Phrases (AP)	AP → (Adv) Adj	<i>blue</i> <i>happy</i> <i>very uncertain</i> <i>barely legible</i>

(B) Analyze the following data from Korean, focusing on the same phrasal constituents as above: NP, PP, VP and AP. Based on your analysis, is Korean a Head First, Head Last, or Head Variable language? Explain your answer by referencing the appropriate data. If you feel comfortable doing so, feel free to draw one or two representative syntactic trees to illustrate

your ideas, or to write “XP → Y X Z” sorts of rules. In other words, take advantage of the knowledge and skills developed in *other* classes to help make your argument stronger. [20 pts]

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. sumi-ka koyangi-leul pwasseo
Sumi cat see-PAST | ‘Sumi saw (the) cat’ |
| 2. koyangi-ka yangpha-leul mekesseo
cat onion eat-PAST | ‘(The) cat ate (the) onion’ |
| 3. appa-ka cha-leul sasseo
daddy car buy-PAST | ‘Daddy bought (a) car’ |
| 4. i kes-i chaita
this thing car-is | ‘This (thing) is (a) car’ |
| 5. sumi-eui appa-ka sinmun-eul ilkeosseo
Sumi daddy newspaper read-PAST | ‘Sumi’s daddy read (the) newspaper’ |
| 6. i cha-ka sumi-eui keosita
this car sumi thing - is | ‘This car is Sumi’s’ |
| 7. sikye-ka chaeksang wi-e isseo
watch desk on exist | ‘(The) watch is on (the) desk’ |
| 8. sikye-ka kapang sok-e isseo
watch bag in exist | ‘(The) watch is in (the) bag’ |
| 9. sumi-ka kyosil an-e isseo
Sumi classroom in exist | ‘Sumi is in (the) classroom’ |
| 10. nuku-eui sikye-ka isseo
who watch exist | ‘Whose watch (do you have)?’ (lit: <i>Whose watch exists?</i>) |
| 11. nuku-eui kesiya
who thing-is-Q | ‘Whose (thing) is (it)?’ |
| 12. masissneun umsik-i manhta
delicious food be-much | ‘There is lots of delicious food’ |
| 13. sumi-ka sae chaek-eul sasseo
Sumi new book buy-PAST | ‘Sumi bought (a) new book’ |
| 14. i acu coheun chaek-eul poseyo
this very good book see-IMPER | ‘Look at this really good book’ |

Note: /-i/ and /-ka/ are nominative suffixes; /-eul/ and /-leul/ are accusative suffixes; /-e/ is a locative suffix; /-eui/ is the genitive suffix. Assume that these suffixes are morphologically attached directly to the noun immediately to the left. They are not separate words.

(C) The following passages were drawn from (or constructed based upon) documents produced by Korean-speaking EFL students.

1. When we examine the data, we find many examples of L1 transfer. For example, the speakers’ obligatory [i] insertion process was frequent in the data.

2. It is common that EFL students can not accurately distinguish between definite and indefinite article uses. More specifically, they tend to over-use 'the' in place of 'a'. After some focused instruction, however, the subjects' inappropriate using 'the' instead of 'a' frequency decreased sharply.
3. Before the ship left port, the crew gave a safety demonstration. Most of the demonstrations were well understood. But many passengers had questions about the emergency door opening procedures explanation. Therefore, the crew explained it again.
4. In Korean, many verbal roots have complex codas (e.g., /palp-/ 'to tread (on)', /ilk-/ 'to read'). When these roots are followed by a consonant-initial verbal morpheme, [a three-consonant cluster arises and] the pronunciation is variable. For the form /palp+ta/, some speakers [delete the second/p/ and] say [palta], others [delete the /l/ and] say [papta], while still others [delete nothing, maintaining the CCC-cluster and] say [palpta]. The first two pronunciations are acceptable. However, both segments pronunciation is considered to be ungrammatical.

Describe the phenomenon you observe in these data, being certain that you have clearly identified the constituent that is the focus of the discussion. What's the status of these underlined passages: are they fully ungrammatical in English? As part of your discussion, assume the role of teacher-editor and revise the underlined constituents so that passage reads more fluently. NOTE: If you are not a native speaker of English, you may ask native speakers (who are not taking this course) to provide you with assistance and feedback; doing so is perfectly acceptable. [20 pts]

(D) Develop an explanation for the errors presented in (C), being sure to consider the possible role of both transfer and Universal Grammar. [30 pts]

(E) With regard to acquiring consistent, accurate native-like word order, which of the following students is predicted to have a more difficult time of it: Korean students learning English as a second language, or English speakers learning Korean as a second language? Explain. [20 pts]

In your explanation for (E), you may find useful the following quotation from linguist Jack Hoeksema (1992):

The [headedness] parameter may have different values for different categories (in Dutch for instance VP is head-final, PP usually head-initial and CP always head-initial). Typologists point out that variation of this kind is usually limited because of rather powerful tendencies within languages to harmonize head-complement order across categories.

www.let.rug.nl/~hoeksema/heads.pdf

A final metacognitive note: Be mindful of how you're being led through this exercise in a manner consistent with the basic structure of all scientific inquiry: observe → describe → explain. From your explanation, you can then attempt to predict (part E), which then leads you to a new hypothesis and a second round of O → D → E. The circle of life continues... <cue music...>

image: <http://www.laughingplace.com/News-PID114720-114721.asp>

