Linguistics 610 Fall 2013
Problem Set #3   Due Tuesday, October 22
26 points

4 points
1.a With reference to specific examples, discuss some specific formal property of a rule (or set of
        rules) that would require negative evidence (i.e., the information that a particular example
        is ill-formed) in order to be learned. Be as explicit as possible, and show precisely why
        negative evidence is needed in the case you discuss.
  b Show how the property in (a) could be eliminated in favor of a device (or devices) not
        requiring negative evidence, **such that the new device still handles the original facts**.
        Be explicit.

6 points
2.a. Give 2 Syntactic Structures transformations that would not be possible within the 'wish list'
        theory of possible transformations, and show precisely **all** the ways in which they fail to
        qualify. The theory, essentially the one we have been working toward in class, is
        summarized on p.131 of Chapter 5 of Essays on Restrictiveness and Learnability,
        "Restricting the Theory of Transformations" (Lasnik (1981). [This is not a question about
        the specific T's proposed in Lasnik (1981), but rather, about the theory of transformations
        permitting those T's, and excluding others. Thus, the following would not be an answer:
        "T12 is not listed in Lasnik's article; therefore it is not a possible rule of the system."]
  b. For the ways in which your rules in (a) failed to qualify, show in detail whether the failures
        could have been rectified *internal to the Syntactic Structures theory*, **so that everything
        still works**, i.e., so we still obtain the empirically correct results. (For example, T21b
        stipulates 3 instances of adjacency, but clearly adjacency to the left and right edge of the
        sentence is not a crucial requirement of the rule. In fact, it is not even correct.)
  c. Parts (a) and (b) were about ways that the SS/LSLT theory evolved into a more restrictive
        one. But it was already rather restrictive. Make up and discuss some formal operation that
        apparently does not occur in human language and show how the SS/LSLT theory of
        possible transformations correctly predicts its impossibility. [Note that I am NOT asking
        how SS/LSLT rules out some bad sentence.]

4 points
3.a Present an argument for the Case Filter. That is, show in detail how the Case Filter helps
        provide an explanation for some fact or facts that cannot be explained (or at least not
        easily) otherwise. For your example, show that nothing else is violated. [Logically, if you
        don't do this, you haven't really presented an argument for the Case Filter.]
  b Show that the Case Filter applies at S-structure rather than D-structure. [Note that I am
        specifically asking about the Case Filter, rather than the rules of Case assignment.]

6 points
4. For each of the following examples, discuss in detail what the structure of the VP is. Some
        potentially relevant possibilities to consider are [_ NP CP], [_NP IP], [_IP], [_CP]. (Make
        sure to present evidence/argument bearing on IP vs. CP). In answering this question, you
        will be providing some of the subcategorization information about the verb.

        a. Mary persuaded John to leave
        b. Susan attempted to solve the problem
        c. John imagined Mary to be a genius
        d. Harriet appears to like linguistics

[Even if you are not a native speaker of English, you should know just what information you need to answer this question, and hence, should be able to collect the data from a native speaker. Relevant evidence involves distribution of expletives, of PRO, of lexical NP, of NP trace, of 'idiom chunks'.]

[Here is a sample answer (an excellent one) of a similar question from Beth Rabbin, who took this course several years ago:

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       John considers Mary to be a genius.
The structure of this VP is [ __ IP].  "Consider" is an ECM
verb, and it assigns Accusative Case to the subject of the
embedded clause ("Mary").  We can see that "considers" is not
a ditransitive verb because we cannot do the same thing to
this sentence as we could with "Mary told John to leave":
 *John considers Mary that she is a genius.
However, we can make the embedded clause an idiom and still
preserve the idiomatic meaning:
  John considers the cat to be out of the bag.
These facts suggest that "Mary to be a genius" is a clause.
Since the non-finite Infl is not a Case assigner, "Mary" must
be getting Case from "considers".  Thus, the embedded clause
must be an IP, not a CP, because in order to assign Case, the
assigner must govern the NP.  A CP would prevent the verb
from governing the NP, but since IP does not seem to be a
barrier for government, the verb can assign Case to the NP.**]
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6 points

5. Explain the ungrammaticality of each of the following examples in terms of principles of linguistic theory or properties of the grammar of English. (Or, if in some instance, the ungrammaticality cannot be explained, show why.) Use the GB framework for your answers.
    a. *It was chosen John
    b. *It was laughed by the children
    c. *George appears to be likely that it is raining