Linguistics 610 Fall 2018
Problem Set #3   Due Tuesday, October 16
22 points

4 points
1.a. Give a Syntactic Structures transformations that would not be possible within the 'wish list' theory
      of possible transformations, and show precisely **all** the ways in which it fails 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), and on the Wish List handout. [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 rule in (a) failed to qualify, show in detail whether the failures could
      have been rectified *internal to the Syntactic Structures/LSLT 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
2.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 Provide evidence/argument 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.]

8 points
3. 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 declared Mary to be the best candidate
      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

4. Explain the ungrammaticality of each of the following examples in terms of principles of
   linguistic theory or properties of the grammar of English that we have seen. (Or, if in
   some instance, the ungrammaticality cannot be explained, show why.) Use the GB
   framework for your answers. Be explicit.

   a. *It was chosen John

   b. *It was laughed by the children

   c. *George appears to be likely that it will rain