

More Exercises for the Seminar *English Syntax* (A. McIntyre)

The exercises below introduce some new points. Some of these caused problems when students did take-home exams in previous semesters.

- (1) Sentences with the verb *be*: The verb *be* starts as head of a VP, before moving to I. Assume that the VP headed by *be* has an AP/PP/DP as complement and a DP as specifier.
- He was sometimes very sick.
 - The books are all here.
- (2) Subordinate clauses: Until now we have seen examples where CPs are complements or modifiers of verbs. They can also be subjects of sentences, but a commoner alternative is that expletive *it* appears in subject position and the CP appears at the end of the sentence. This is part of a general tendency to *extrapose* long constituents (i.e. move them to the end of the sentence) because they are often hard to process at the start or in the middle of the sentence. Assume that extraposed CPs are adjoined to the right of IP to form a larger IP.
- In the following exercises, use triangle notation for all CPs.
- That Fred was late annoyed us.
 - It annoyed us that Fred was late.
 - It is important for you to be punctual.
 - It was sad that she left.
 - He was sad that she left.
 - That the official justification for the war was a lie is disputed by nobody.
 - It is disputed by nobody that the official justification for the war was a lie.
- (3) Some uses of some verbs appear to have two complements. There are various different theories about the structure of the VPs in such cases. For our purposes it will suffice if you abbreviate the structure by assuming that V' can have three branches (V and its two complements).
- She gave her children books.
 - She took the rubbish out.
 - She took out the rubbish. (Assume *take out* is a compound verb.)
 - They will take us home soon. (Hints: *home* is not an NP. Think about *They went home or to the shops.*)
 - Around midday Wayne told his wife that he was leaving. (adjoin PP to IP)
- (4) An IMF document contained the sentence *Widening income equality is a challenge*, which could in principle have two meanings, one presumably not intended. What are these meanings? Try to find syntactic differences between the two interpretations.
- Hints:
- VPs with a verb affixed with *-ing* can often be converted into DPs. They can thus appear in positions where we otherwise find DPs:
[Opening the safe] was difficult.
She is not afraid of [quitting her job]
 - It is sometimes possible to turn participles into adjectives. Examples of such *adjectival participles* are seen in the following DPs:
very annoying problems, a growing child, these increasing difficulties
very underrated guitarists, a broken watch, disturbed people