LX 321/521/621 Syntax
Spring 2024

Homework #6
DUE FRI MAR 29

1 Secret agents

1.1 Identifying argument structure

For each of the following, write down:

- the verbs
- the arguments (required complements and subject) for each verb
- the category of each argument
- what PRO refers to if PRO is one of the arguments

For example, in the sentence *Pat said Chris ate lunch in the subway*, the first verb is *said* (*say*) and the arguments are *Pat* (the subject, the sayer, a DP) and *Chris ate lunch in the subway* (what was said, a CP). The second verb is *ate* (*eat*) and the arguments are *Chris* (the subject, the eater, a DP) and *lunch* (what was eaten, a DP). Note that *in the subway* is not an argument/complement at all, it's just an optional adjunct.

Sometimes the subject will be PRO if it is in an infinitive clause. But not always, sometimes the subject of an infinitive clause is pronounced. The task here is to differentiate those situations. If you say that PRO is the subject of a given verb, also make note of what it refers to.

One more example. In *Homer persuaded Marge to win the race* (a sentence from the handout), the first verb is *persuade*, and the arguments are *Homer* (the subject, persuader, a DP), *Marge* (a complement, the one persuaded, a DP), and . . . *to win the race* (that of which the persuaded is persuaded, a CP). The second verb is *win*, and the subject/winner is invisible here, but it is PRO (a DP). There must be a winner in a winning, and *Marge* is already busy being persuaded (the same DP can't simultaneously be both a winner and persuaded), so we need to hypothesize a silent winner, PRO. So, for *win*, PRO is the subject/winner, a DP, and *the race* is the thing won, also a DP. So the answer would look like:

- *persuade*: *Homer* (DP), *Marge* (DP), *to win the race* (CP)
- *win*: PRO (DP, refers to Marge), *the race* (DP)

One final wrinkle. When we were discussing this, it was pointed out (stipulated, kind of), that an infinitive clause can either be a CP or a TP. The policy is that an embedded clause is only a TP (no CP layer) unless there is evidence indicating that it is a CP. Most of the time there is such evidence. If the clause is finite, it is a CP. If you can see the C (*that*, *for*, etc.) it is a CP. If it has a PRO subject, it is a CP. But there are a few cases where the embedded clause is infinitive, there is no visible C, and there is no PRO, and in those cases, we assume the embedded clause is just a TP. Usually in these cases, the subject of the embedded infinitive is there and is pronounced in accusative case.

Here are yours:

(1) Pat expected Chris to leave.

(2) Pat told Chris to paint the fence.

(3) Pat wants Chris to rake the leaves.

(4) Pat convinced Chris to stay.

1.2 Trees

Now, draw a few trees. Do the argument structure identification quietly to yourself first, though, so you know whether to draw a PRO or not, and whether to draw any embedded clauses as CPs or TPs. Draw the tree of each of the following sentences.

(5) Pat's friends want to mow the neighbor's lawn.

(6) The neighbor wants Pat's friends to leave.

(7) Pat's neighbor told the police to arrest the kids.

(8) The police persuaded Pat's neighbor to withdraw the complaint.

(9) Pat's neighbor promised to talk to Pat's parents.

Note: To reduce the busywork here, it is ok if you draw out the full structure of *Pat's friends* only for the first sentence, and then just use a DP triangle for *Pat's friends* and for *Pat's neighbor* and for *Pat's parents* in the subsequent sentences.