Homework 11
LIN 311: Syntax, Fall 2018

Problem 1. Basic Trees.

Draw the trees of the following sentences. You may use triangles to abbreviate parts irrelevant for this problem. Indicate all movements with arrows. Do not forget that *wh*-phrases stop in all intermediate Spec,CP positions!

(1) What did John buy at the supermarket?

(2) What do you think that Bill bought a book about?

(3) Why did you ask when Mary lost her wallet?

Problem 2. Binding and *Wh*-movement.

Part 1.

Recall Principle A of binding theory. According to it, anaphors must be bound in their local domain (usually, their local TP or DP). Consider the following sentence:

(1) **Bill$_i$** wonders [which picture of *himself$_{i/j}$*] John$_j$ bought.

For the most speakers of English, this sentence is ambiguous: the anaphor *himself* can refer to both **Bill$_i$** and John$_j$. It contrasts with a sentence without *wh*-movement in (2), where the anaphor *himself* can only refer to John$_j$.

(2) **Bill$_i$** thinks that John$_j$ bought [a beautiful picture of *himself$_{*i/j}$*].

Draw a tree of the sentence in (1). Explain why this ambiguity is surprising, based on the version of binding theory developed in class.

Think of a possible explanation of why there is a difference between (1) and (2) and why the sentence in (1) is ambiguous. You may need to make some assumptions about when Principle A of binding theory applies.

Part 2.

Now consider the sentence in (3). It is also ambiguous, in the same way as (1) is.

(3) [Which picture of *himself$_{i/j}$*] does **Bill$_i$** think that John$_j$ bought.

Does your explanation from the previous part explain this ambiguity? Explain how this sentence can give us evidence for the intermediate sites of *wh*-movement.

Problem 3. Islands and Ungrammatical Sentences.

For each of the following sentences produce an ungrammatical *wh*-question about the word in bold. Identify the constraint that this instance of *wh*-movement violates. Explain, which structure is an island, out of which *wh*-movement is prohibited.

(1) I believe the rumor that Bill received **a bribe** from his client.

(2) Alice bought some spices **at the supermarket** and is planning to make chicken tikka masala.

(3) Mary went to buy a new album of U2 after she saw **Bono** at the concert.

(4) Mark wonders why his wife doesn't let him go to a party at his friend's house **tomorrow night**.

(5) That the president of Russia came **to the meeting** two hours late didn't go unnoticed by the media.

Problem 4.* Irish Resumptive Pronouns.

(Based on Carnie, Ch. 12, CPS3)

Some dialects of English allow a kind of *wh*-construction, where the base position of the *wh*-phrase is filled by a **resumptive pronoun**. (The idea behind this problem set is taken from McCloskey 1991.)

(1)   This is the **book$_i$** that the police are arresting everyone who reads **it$_i$**.

In Modern Irish, this kind of construction is very common. Modern Irish has two different *wh*-complementizers (notice that these are not *wh*-phrases, which go in the specifier of CP; these are complementizers): a^L, a^N. The complementizer a^L is found in sentences like (2). Sentence (a) shows a simple sentence without *wh*-movement using the non-*wh*-complementizer *go*. Sentences (b) and (c) show two possible forms of the question. (b) has the question moved only to an intermediate CP specifier. (c) has the *wh*-phrase moved to the topmost specifier.

(2)   a.   Bíonn fios   agat i gconaí [$_{CP}$ **go**   bhuailfidh an píobaire an t-amhrán].
            be$_{HAB}$ know at$_{2S}$ always   that play$_{FUT}$ the piper   the song
            "You always know that the bagpiper will play the song."
       b.   Bíonn fios   agat i gconaí [$_{CP}$ caidé$_i$ **a^L**   bhuailfidh an píobaire ___$_i$].
            be$_{HAB}$ know at$_{2S}$ always   what$_i$ COMP play$_{FUT}$ the piper   ___$_i$
            "You always know what the bagpiper will play."
       c.   [$_{CP}$ Cáidé$_i$ **a^L**   [$_{TP}$ bhíonn fios   agat i gconaí [$_{CP}$ ___$_i$ **a^L**   bhuailfidh an píobaire ___$_i$]]]?
            what COMP   be$_{HAB}$ know at$_{2S}$ always   ___$_i$ COMP play$_{FUT}$ the piper   ___$_i$
            "What do you always know the piper will play?"

Now the distribution of the complementizer a^N seems to be linked to the presence of a resumptive pronoun. Consider the (b) sentences in (3) and (4). Both show resumptive pronouns and the complementizer a^N:

(3)   a.   Bíonn fios   agat i gconaí [$_{CP}$ caidé$_i$ **a^L**   bhuailfidh an píobaire ___$_i$].
            be$_{HAB}$ know at$_{2S}$ always   what$_i$ COMP play$_{FUT}$ the piper   ___$_i$
            "You always know what the bagpiper will play."
       b.   [$_{CP}$ Cén   Píobaire$_j$ **a^N**   [$_{TP}$ mbíonn fios   agat i gconaí [$_{CP}$ caidé$_i$ **a^L**   bhuailfidh **sé$_j$** ___$_i$]]]?
            which piper   COMP   be$_{HAB}$ know at$_{2S}$ always   what$_i$ COMP play$_{FUT}$ he
            "Which bagpiper do you always know what he will play?"

(4)   a.   Tá   máthair an fhir   san   otharlann.
            be$_{PRES}$ mother the man$_{GEN}$ in.the hospital
            "The man's mother is in the hospital."
       b.   Cé$_i$ **a^N**   bhfuil **a$_i$** mháthair san   otharlann?
            who COMP be$_{PRES}$ his mother   in.the hospital
            "Who is (his) mother in the hospital?"

Example (5) is similar, but it shows the use of the resumptive pronoun in the formation of the relative clause.

(5)   seanchasóg [$_{CP}$ **a^N**   dócha   go   bhfuil an táilliúir [$_{CP}$ **a^L**   dhein **í**] sa   chré fadó   ].
       old-jacket   COMP probable COMP is   the tailor   COMP made it   in.the earth long.ago
       "an old jacket that the tailor who made it has probably been in the grave for ages/" =
       relative clause formed from "the tailor who made an old jacket has probably been in the grave for ages."

The a^N and a^L complementizers and **the resumptive pronouns** are boldfaced in the above examples. Where precisely does the a^N-resumptive strategy appear? In what syntactic environment do you get this construction? Why does Irish resort to it?