

Week 4

- Seven NP asymmetries, c-command
- Ditransitives, little *v*

Next week:

- Subjects, movement

Announcements:

- Office hours: Tuesdays at 10:30, on Zoom: tinyurl.com/gram2020office
- Syntax/Semantics Reading Group:
Every week, Thursdays at 11am
Via Zoom: mitcho.com/nus/synsem/
- Survey after class to schedule test during recess week

Exercise:

1. Each person writes (or finds) a sentence with at least two NPs.
2. Look at each sentence as a group. Use at least three tests to see which NP c-commands the other.

Unlike English, some other languages have very free word order. Where are subjects and objects in such languages?

(1) **Free(er) word order in Warlpiri (Pama-Nyungan; Australia) (Simpson, 1983: 140):**

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| a. Kurdu-ngku ka-ju nya-nyi ngaju.
child-ERG PRES-OBJ:1SG SEE-NONPAST me-ABS
'The child sees me.' | S AUX V O |
| b. Kurdu-ngku ka-ju ngaju nya-nyi. | S AUX O V |
| c. Nya-nyi ka-ju kurdu-ngku ngaju. | V AUX S O |
| d. Nya-nyi ka-ju ngaju kurdu-ngku. | V AUX O S |
| e. Ngaju ka-ju nya-nyi kurdu-ngku. | O AUX V S |
| f. Ngaju ka-ju kurdu-ngku nya-nyi. | O AUX S V |

- ERG = ergative case (transitive subject)
- ABS = absolutive case (transitive object or intransitive subject)
- OBJ:1SG = object agreement
- PERL = perlocative case (a case for certain locations)

Warlpiri and other languages with very free word order have been called *non-configurational* (Hale, 1983). In particular, they seem to challenge the idea that subjects and objects are in an asymmetric structural relationship.

(2) **Condition A:**

- a. Purlka-jarra-rlu ka-pala-nyanu nya-nyi.
old.man-DUAL-ERG PRES.IMPF-SUBJ:3DUAL-REFLEX see-NONPAST

‘The two old men are looking at each other’

(Simpson, 1991: 163)

- b. *Purlka-jarra ka-nyanu-palangu nya-nyi.
old.man-DUAL PRES.IMPF-REFLEX-OBJ:3DUAL see-NONPAST

Intended: ‘Each other are looking at the old men.’

(Legate, 2001, 2002)

(3) **Condition B:**

- a. *Jakamarra-rlu ka-(nyanu) nyanungu paka-rni.
Jakamarra-ERG PRES.IMPF-(REFLEX) him hit-NONPAST
Intended: 'Jakamarra is hitting him.' (Simpson, 1991: 170)
- b. Japanangka-rlu-nyanu yirra-rnu mulukunpa nyanungu-wana.
Japanangka-ERG-REFLEX put-NONPAST bottle 3-PERL
'Japanangka set the bottle down beside him.' (Simpson, 1991: 171)

But evidence from WCO and Condition C is less conclusive. See Legate (2001, 2002) for more discussion.

References

- Hale, Kenneth. 1983. Warlpiri and the grammar of non-configurational languages. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 1:5–47.
- Legate, Julie Anne. 2001. The configurational structure of a non-configurational language. *Linguistic Variation Yearbook* 63–99.
- Legate, Julie Anne. 2002. Warlpiri: Theoretical implications. Doctoral Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Simpson, Jane Helen. 1983. Aspects of warlpiri morphology and syntax. Doctoral Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Simpson, Jane Helen. 1991. *Warlpiri morpho-syntax: A lexicalist approach*. Kluwer.