Linguistics 550 Midterm

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Please do this exam on a computer, as with the homeworks. Submit the answer via email in file whose name has the following form: First-name_Last-name_Lx550_MIDTERM. The exam should be submitted by 11:59 PM on Tuesday, October 28. Please make sure to keep both an electronic copy and a hard copy of your answers in case the mailing goes astray or other disasters occur.

The exam has three questions. Please do all of them. In answering the questions, you should use the systems of concepts developed in the course lectures and textbook as your starting point. Be sure to use tree diagrams where appropriate to represent sentence structure.

Because this is an exam, you should not discuss the questions or your answers with other students or with anyone else. You may use secondary literature, but the exam is designed to be answered without the need for this and it is not recommended. If you do use additional sources, you must cite them at appropriate points in the text of your answers and list them as references.

If you have questions as you are taking the exam, send them to me by email. I’ll be happy to answer them, where appropriate and will forward the substance of my answers to the entire class.

1. The following data comes from three languages, the E(astern), W(estern) and S(outhern) dialects of an artificial language that we can call “Lorainian.” Each example is marked as to which dialects accept it. If the letter name of a dialect does not appear in front of the example, you should assume that the sentence is not grammatical in that dialect. For instance, example (1) is grammatical in dialects W and S, but not in dialect E:

   (1)  W  S  Jone rolpat joran elo gori.

The examples below are marked for part-of-speech but not glossed in any way. The POS information should be enough for you to solve this problem.

Give a grammar fragment for each dialect of Lorainian, accounting for the pattern of grammaticality in that dialect, minimizing the differences between the
dialects, and explicitly characterizing the differences that you do postulate. How similar is the pattern that you have uncovered to any phenomena discussed in the textbook or in class?

(3) W S Jone rolpat/V-3rd-sing-pres joran elo gori.
(4) W E S Elo gore rolpart/V-3rd-pl-pres Jone.
(5) E Jone joran rolpat elo gori.
(6) W E S Elo gore rolpart Jone?
(7) W S Rolpart Elo gore Jone?
(8) E S Elo gori pa/NEG rolpart Jone.
(9) W Jone rolpat pa elo gori.
(10) W Rolpat Jone pa elo gori?
(11) E S Jone pa rolpat elo gori?

For the following sentences, indicate for each dialect whether it is grammatical or ungrammatical and briefly explain why:

(12) Jone joran bat rolpar elo gori.
(13) Jone pa bat rolpar elo gori.
(14) Jone rolpat pa elo gori?

2. Consider the following examples:

(1) a. The mason constructed the tower
    b. The tower was constructed (by the mason).
(2) a. the mason’s construction of the tower
    b. the tower’s construction (by the mason)

The parallel between 1 and 2 has led to the proposal that the passive transformation applies within noun phrases as it does within sentences.

a. If we assume this to be true, what differences are there, if any, between the passive in noun phrases and the passive in sentences?

b. Now consider the following examples:

(3) a. Mary is eager to help John.
    b. Mary is likely to help John.
c. Mary desires to help John.
d. Mary appears to help John.

(4)  a. Mary’s eagerness to help John
    b. the likelihood of help for John
    c. Mary’s desire to help John
    d. Mary’s appearance

(5)  a. * Mary’s likelihood to help John
    b. * Mary’s appearance to help John

What problem or problems do these examples raise for the idea that transformations apply inside noun phrases? How might they be addressed?

3. Consider the following set of Japanese sentences. The grammatical morphemes -(r)are- and -sase- are not glossed. The translations are deliberately loose, so you should rely on them for the overall meaning of a sentence but not for its detailed structure. One important fact about Japanese that you should take into account in analyzing these sentences is that the antecedent of the reflexive pronoun zibun must be a grammatical subject.

a. What can you tell about the meaning and syntactic properties of the sentences in the dataset from the glosses and translations that are supplied?
b. What does the subject requirement on the antecedent of zibun tell us about the structures of the sentences?
c. Draw trees for the sentences in (5), (7), and (8).
d. What does your analysis of the dataset predict about the structure and interpretation of the unglossed example in (10).

(1) Sensei ga kodomo o sikat-ta.
   teacher NOM child ACC scold-PST
   “The teacher scolded the child.”

(2) Ame ga hut-ta.
   rain NOM fall-PST
   “Rain fell.”

(3) Kodomo ga sensei ni sika-rare-ta.
   child NOM teacher DAT scold-??-PST
   “The child was scolded by the teacher.”

(4) John ga ame ni hur-are-ta.
   John NOM rain DAT fall-??-PST
   “Rain fell on John.”
(5) John ga sensei ni kodomo o sikar-are-ta.
John NOM teacher DAT child ACC scold-??-PST
“John’s child was scolded by the teacher.”
(6) John wa Mary ni hon o yom-(s)ase-ru.
John TOP Mary DAT book ACC read-??-will
“John will make Mary read a book.”
(7) John ga Mary ni zibun no uti de hon o
Johni NOM Maryj DAT selfi/j GEN house in book ACC
yom-(s)ase-ta.
read-??-PST
“John made Mary read books in him/her self’s house.”
(8) John wa Mary ni zibun no kazoku no hanasi bakari
Johni TOP Maryj DAT selfi/j GEN family GEN talk only
s-(r)are-ta.
do-??-PST
“John suffered from Mary only talking about him/her self’s family.”
(9) Mary wa John ni zibun no uti de hon o
Maryi TOP Johnj DAT selfi/j GEN house in book ACC
yom-(s)ase-rare-ta.
read-??-??-PST
“John made Mary read books in her/*him self’s house.”
(10) Mary wa John ni zibun no uti de sika-rare-sase-ta.

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Here is the key to the abbreviations used in the glosses in question 4:
ACC = accusative case
DAT = dative case
GEN = genitive case
NOM = nominative case
PST = past tense
TOP = topic marker