

AM2 — Syntax: theories and models

Reading Assignment #1

Preliminaries

Reading Freeze, Ray. 1992. Existentials and other locatives. *Language* 68:553–595 (download it from the course website; it is password-protected, so contact me if you don't know the password).

Instructions

- Answer all the questions in exercises #1 and #2 plus the bonus exercise, quoting data and/or text from Freeze (1992) as necessary.
- What this assignment is testing is your ability to extract relevant information from a complex technical text. You have to write as much as you think you need to answer the questions appropriately, but not more.
- You may write your answers in either English or German.
- Submit your answers no later than Saturday, November 3 at 23:59.
- The answers must be submitted by email (vicente@uni-potsdam.de). The preferred submission formats are .pdf or .txt (no .doc or .docx files, please).

Clarification Freeze refers repeatedly to *D-structure* and *S-structure*. These are terms that are no longer in use, as the concepts they represent have been abandoned or modified. S-structure is more or less equivalent to what we today call *Spell Out* —i.e., a point at which all syntactic operations have been completed and the syntactic structure can be piped to the PF and LF interfaces. Most of the time, S-structure and PF have the same shape, but occasionally there can be differences between the two (e.g., relevant to this article, the insertion of a proform in a number of languages).

D-structure is trickier because it doesn't correspond to anything in our current theory. In the framework Freeze was assuming, D-structure was an intermediate level of representation between the Lexicon and S-structure, where only *some* syntactic operations had taken place. Specifically, S-structure was the point at which all the arguments of the verb had been merged (i.e., all the theta roles had been assigned) but no movement operations had happened yet.

Additional clarifications If you have extra questions, you can write to me. However, I will have limited spare time and internet access on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, so I might not reply immediately. This means, if you have questions, ask them as soon as possible!

Exercises

Exercise #1 Freeze (p. 556) states that “the predicative locative and what is preliminarily identified as the existential simply represent different orderings of the same constituents”.

1. What is the underlying structure for both constructions? Don't just copy the tree on p. 558! Explain, in your own words, what the role of each element is.
2. What is the evidence in favor of this particular structure?
3. What is the main factor influencing the final ordering of constituents?

Exercise #2 Later on in the article (p. 576), Freeze says that “the *have* predication constitutes the third member of the locative paradigm”.

1. Enumerate the different pieces of evidence that Freeze provides to support his argument that possessives have the same underlying structure as locatives.
2. Explain, quoting appropriate data from Freeze, how the verb *have* (and its equivalents in other languages, e.g., *haben* in German) can be derived from a locative structure.

Bonus exercise What is the claim (either empirical or theoretical) in Freeze's article that you find the most interesting or surprising? Explain why you find it interesting/surprising.

This question doesn't count for the grade of the assignment because there is no right answer to it. Freeze says a lot of things in his article, and each person might find a different claim interesting. However, answering this question is useful on two counts:

- it is useful for *you* because it will make you think a bit deeper about the article.
- it is useful for *me* to see what kind of things you find interesting.