

Summary of Mismatches

A theory of syntax in which structure and function are modeled as parallel, mutually constraining levels of representation allows us to express the fact that, while the relation between them is not arbitrary, there are mismatches of various types. This semester we have seen several such mismatches.

- ⇒ In non-configurational languages, constituent structure does not reflect grammatical functions. Instead, it reflects other aspects of language, generally semantic or pragmatic. In such a language, the constraints on structure-function mapping are naturally inactive. (Few languages are totally configurational or totally non-configurational, so a better way to state this would be in terms of configurational vs. non-configurational encoding within a single language.)

- ⇒ Even in a highly configurational language like English, there is a certain flexibility in the relation between structure and function. Study of the English auxiliary system shows that in the configurations [_I I VP] and [_V V VP] the VP can function as a complement to the head I or V, or it (or rather its head) can be a co-head.

- ⇒ “Biclausal” constructions may be biclausal at one level and monoclausal at another, or even ambiguous between biclausal and monoclausal at the same level. We have seen this with the permissive and instructive constructions in Urdu: the instructive is structurally ambiguous and functionally biclausal, while the permissive is structurally ambiguous and functionally monoclausal.

- ⇒ Languages (or specific constructions in certain languages) may show different mappings from the standard. The Hebrew NP shows some such alternatives: POSS as sister to the noun head; adjunct in a simpler non-adjoined position; and the uniform treatment of a category (PP) without regard to grammatical functions.