

Exercise set 1, week 1.

1. Assign judgements of acceptability, grammaticality, semantic and pragmatic normality or anomaly to the following sentences, and provide a brief explanation of your answer. If you have knowledge of dialectal or sociolectal variation with respect to the sentences, you should also take it into account.

- a. Mary opened.
- b. John wrapped sincerity around the package.
- c. He will can come tomorrow.
- d. He ain't home.
- e. Mary took her toothbrush for a walk.
- f. Can you give me an information?
- g. Dances he often here?
- h. He don't know the answer.
- i. John met.
- j. Who does the fact that came bother you?

Example answer.

a. Is grammatical but semantically anomalous. Indeed, the structure is well formed since with another choice of NP the sentence becomes ok (*The door opened*) but in that case the subject of the sentence denotes the thing that goes from the state of being closed to the state of being open, and this is not normal for a human being. The semantic anomaly makes the sentence unacceptable. There is no variation in this case.

2. Consider the following sentences. Decide whether they are ambiguous. If so, (1) explain the different possible meanings; (2) try to decide whether the ambiguity is lexical, syntactic, or purely semantic; (3) justify your decision. Do not forget to think about cases where the ambiguity involves anomalous meanings.

- a. The tank exploded.
- b. Did you see her answer?
- c. Did Peter meet with John or Mary?
- d. Did he kick the bucket?
- e. He went home and did the dishes.
- f. He took the bus to the school.