

**I'm not a robot!**

## CLEFT SENTENCE EXERCISES

### EXERCISES

1. Rewrite the sentences to focus attention on the underlined information. Start with it + be and an appropriate wh- word or that. (C)

I'm not looking forward to physics, but I'm most worried about the statistics exam.  
I'm not looking forward to physics, but...It's the statistics exam (that/which) I'm most worried about.

2. She's been seeing a doctor at Newtown Hospital, but she's having the operation in the Queen Mary Hospital.  
She's been seeing a doctor at Newtown Hospital, but...

3. They said they dropped in when they were passing, but I think they came to visit us because they wanted to watch TV.  
They said they dropped in when they were passing, but I think...

4. He says he's got a cold, but in fact he's feeling unwell because he's working so hard.  
He says he's got a cold, but in fact...

2. Give responses beginning No, what..., correcting what was said in the question. The first one is done for you. Use the notes in brackets to help. (B)

1. Did you say that you wanted me to move these boxes? (wanted you / fill boxes / these books)

'No, what I said, was that I wanted you to -fill the boxes with these books.'

2. Did you mean that you will give me the money? (lend / money until next week)

3. Did you think that I would take Mark to piano practice? (going / his own)



### Diagramming Worksheets Name:

Sentence Diagram - A sentence diagram is a chart that shows the relation of the words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence to analyze a fault in a sentence or whether the word "who" or "whom" is to be used.

#### Subject Noun And Predicate Verb

subject noun | predicate verb

I sing.

You are singing.

He has been singing.

We have been singing.

You had been singing.

They had sung.

Practice Worksheets a2-worksheets.com/ - 1 - Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The 38th ANNUAL BOSTON UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT  
Boston, MA - USA; Talk Session A, 2:15pm - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2013

#### Three-year-olds use prosody online to constrain syntactic analysis

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Nouns and verbs, a crucial linguistic distinction, are present in all languages of the world. Since nouns typically refer to objects, while verbs refer to actions, inferring the syntactic class of a novel word can be extremely helpful during early language processing (Gleitman, 1990). Previous work has shown that two-year-olds can use function words to predict the grammatical category of an upcoming content word (Bernal et al., 2007; Zangl & Fernald, 2007) during sentence processing. However, not all content words are preceded by function words. In such cases, an analysis in terms of syntactic constituents can be very informative. Given that the prosodic structure of an utterance tends to coincide with its syntactic structure, listeners could exploit prosodic boundaries together with function words to categorize content words (Morgan & Demuth, 1995; Christophe et al., 2008). Specifically, in two experiments, we investigated whether young children are able to take into account the position of a word within the prosodic structure when they compute its syntactic category (noun vs. verb).

Pairs of homophones belonging to different syntactic categories (noun and verb) were used to create locally ambiguous sentences (e.g. a noun sentence: [la petite ferme] [est très jolie] *the small farm* is very nice vs. a verb sentence: [la petite] [ferme la fenêtre] *the little girl closes the window*, where brackets indicate phonological phrase boundaries). Although both sentences start with the same three words, they can be disambiguated by the prosodic boundary that either directly preceded the critical word *ferme* in the case of verbs or directly followed *ferme* when in the case of nouns. Crucially, all words following the homophone were masked, such that prosodic cues were the only disambiguating information. In an oral completion task (Experiment 1), French 5-year-olds completed these three-word sentence onsets. As shown in Figure 1, children successfully exploited prosody to interpret the ambiguous word as either a noun or a verb (similar to adults, Millotte et al., 2007).

To test whether children can use prosodic boundaries *online* to compute syntactic categories, Experiment 2 used an intermodal preferential looking task with an eye-tracker. Children were presented with two images displayed side-by-side, one associated with the noun interpretation of the ambiguous word (e.g. a farm) and the other with the verb interpretation (e.g. a little girl closing something). We recorded both the time course of their eye-gaze and their pointing responses. Figure 1 b shows that 3.5-year-olds pointed toward the correct interpretation of the ambiguous word. Furthermore, the eye-tracking data (Figure 2) show that children initially looked more toward the verb image (which always contained humans). In the noun sentence condition, children appropriately switched their gaze toward the noun image by the end of the ambiguous word, which, taking into account saccade preparation time, suggests that they computed its category before word offset.

Altogether, these results show that young children, upon hearing the first words of a sentence, exploit prosody on-line to group words into constituents, and exploit this constituent structure in their computation of syntactic categories.

## Sentence Rearrangement (language competency)

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## Sentence Rearrangement (language competency)

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Syntactic analysis exercises.

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