

Chapter Three Translation Problems Set 2 #1, #2: WebCT Discussion

Problem: Explain the **mistake** made in each of the following **translation tables**.

1.

P: Rex and Ace will have a drink

2.

P: Ace will have a drink

Q: Rex will have a drink

R: Ace will have a drink

Discussion: Recall that a sentence letter stands for an English **subject matter sentence**. And what makes a sentence a subject matter sentence is that it lacks any **form phrases**.

The error in the first translation table is having a sentence letter, “P,” stand for a sentence that has a form phrase: the sentence “*Rex and Ace will have a drink*” has the form phrase “*and*”. That means “*Rex and Ace will have a drink*” is **not** a subject matter sentence – and so should not be assigned a sentence letter. (Instead, that sentence is gluing together two smaller subject matter sentences – “*Rex will have a drink*” and “*Ace will have a drink*” – with the form phrase “*and*”).

A proper translation would be as follows.

1. Rex and Ace will have a drink

P: Rex will have a drink

Q: Ace will have a drink

(P \wedge Q)

Recall also that we assign sentence letters to subject matter sentences based on the **meaning** of those sentences: assigning different sentence letters only when sentences mean different things.

But in the second translation table “*Ace will have a drink*” is assigned **two different sentence letters**: “P” and “R”.

2.

P: Ace will have a drink

Q: Rex will have a drink

R: Ace will have a drink

Since the sentence “*Ace will have a drink*” means the same thing both times, it shouldn’t be given different sentence letters in different cases. Instead, every time the sentence “*Ace will have a drink*” appears, it should be given the same sentence letter – say, “P”.

A proper version of this translation table is as follows.

2.

P: Ace will have a drink

Q: Rex will have a drink