Learning the Sentence Structure Moodle

6.1 The Nature of Syntactic Knowledge

* Compositionality
* Box 6.1: Stages of syntactic development
* Basic properties of syntactic structure
* Constituent structure
* Rules vs. constructions
* Varieties of structural complexity

6.2 Learning Grammatical Categories

* How do children get to know grammatical categories?
* Is distributional evidence powerful enough?
* The usefulness of frequent frames in English

6.3 How Abstract Is Early Syntax?

* Do children understand structure in the same way as adults?
* Looking for evidence of abstract knowledge
* Children as cautious learners of syntax
* Learning when to generalize
* Box 6.4: Quirky verb alternations
* Box 6.5: Syntax and the immature brain

WEB ACITIVITIES:

* 6.2 web activity: find patterns in the 3 languages

identify the alien language and explain why alien

* 6.3 web activity: what are you supposed to learn based on the exposure to 3-word clusters?
* (6.4 web activity: comment on each of the methods to probe to what degree a kid can do sentences)
* 6.5 web activity: German sentences with relative clauses

              rules and generalizations that are/ are not plausible

PUZZLES

1. EYELAND

           2. How do kids learn the difference between *John ate fish*and*John can fish* by using the strategies they are good at?

           3. Give examples of complex syntax (but not sentences with relative clauses):

the KLIGTON language and its rules

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SYNTAX

1. SYNTAX is about COMPOSITIONALITY where comp. means…

What makes sentential grammar complex for the mind of a small child grasping it?

What characteristic features of language enable this grammar?

Through what sort of grammar operations and concepts are sentences composed?

In what ways does mind need to mature to deal with the complexity of sentential grammar?

Aside from generalizing knowledge in the form of rules and then applying the rules, what other learning strategies could the child explore to process and create sentences?

How mature does a mind have to get to deal with syntactic meanings mapped onto semantic meanings?

1. Syntactic structure makes sense only when coupled with semantic meaning

In English, word order is primary in understanding semantic meanings.

Syntactic operations involved in the structure:

Alternative options of doing grammar opened to the child’s mind are…

Child’s modelling of thoughts

How does his grammar grow?

SENTENCE is an interface of words, rules and meanings

GRAMMAR is…

GRAMMAR is constrained by…

MAKING SENSE and building SENTENCES:

 Adults’ vs. children’s approach

 Nativist grammarians vs. linguists who build theories upon DATA

CRITICAL is that word meanings serve as cues in interpreting how words function syntactically.

Speech input

Distributional evidence

Building predictive and reliable FRAMES and drawing ANALOGIES

How real are the linguistic rules in the brain?

WE KNOW THAT…..: But can it be explained?

1. All the while the brain is maturing, language programs the mind.

2. All the while the child learns language, his/her language competence is far ahead performance.

3. Knowing language/doing grammar goes step in step with development of ventral and dorsal networks/streams that are tasked differently in the child and adult.

4. This difference accounts for kids’ language-learning strategies.

         Early learning machinery that kids depend on consists of…

5. Distributional evidence helps kids learn.

6. Nativists disagree with experimentalists about how kids learn grammar.

7. In syntax, meaning correlates with the structure of agents, objects, recipients, instruments, etc.).

*Science is not a verb*… Meanings of words are derived from their roles in sentence.

8. **Constituent** and **phrase** is about structure while **frame** (as in kids’ early learning) is about linear order.

9. Generating sentence is about composing them out of words.

10. Grammar is a linguistic model of thoughts.

11. Rules are needed to constrain possible morpheme and word combinations.

12. Rules need to be stated in terms of categories.

13. How would you teach the rule of where to insert relative clauses? e.g.

*The coffee that is in front of me is cold.*

           Turn the statement into a question and give a rule for this operation.

14. What makes this sentence grammatically complex?

*The coffee that is in front of me on the table that I put to the window got cold by now but I don't mind.*