

**More learnable than thou?
Empirically testing linguistic knowledge representations**

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One (often implicit) motivation for a linguistic knowledge representation comes from an *argument from acquisition*, with the idea that language acquisition is straightforward if children's hypothesis space is defined by the correct knowledge representation. Acquisition then becomes the process of selecting the correct language-specific grammar from that hypothesis space, based on the language input encountered. I discuss a quantitative metric based on an argument from acquisition for comparing knowledge representations and the grammars they define. This metric involves assessing grammar learnability from realistic input data, and I apply this metric to three prominent knowledge representations in the domain of metrical phonology that each propose a grammar for English, a notoriously tricky language containing many irregularities. I discover that learnability issues arise for the English grammars in all three representations, and discuss aspects of the proposed English grammars that may be hurting learnability as well as ways a child may still be able to learn the proposed English grammars from English input.