

Psych56L/ Ling51

Winter 2010

Review Questions: Language & Cognition

(1) Terms/concepts to know: linguistic determinism, linguistic relativism, language as a toolkit, Neo-Whorfian, the influence of language on navigation, spatial language, verbal shadowing, rhythm shadowing, theory of mind, embedded proposition, false belief task, autistic children's theory of mind, sentential complement, non-human primates' performance on false belief tasks

(2) What is one major difference between the navigation abilities of adult humans and that of younger children (and rats)?

(3) What is the Neo-Whorfian explanation for why young children and rats are unable to find something that can be encoded as "to the left of the blue wall"? What evidence is there from rats and monkeys that might go against this explanation?

(4) What is the Neo-Whorfian explanation for why verbal shadowing (but not rhythm shadowing) causes adults to perform like young children when trying to find something that can be encoded as "to the left of the blue wall"?

(5) What are the two core number systems humans and other animals seem to have?

(6) Approximately how many items can be subitized by humans?

(7) What kinds of numbers does language allow us to comprehend and manipulate? Explain why these numbers cannot be dealt with by the two core number systems.

(8) Syntactic knowledge includes the fact that some verbs like *think* and *say* can take sentential complements. Social knowledge includes the fact that other people can have a false belief. How would a Whorfian label these with respect to cause and effect – that is, which is the cause and which is the effect? Why?

(9) What evidence is there that knowing sentential complements is helpful for passing false belief tasks, but is not necessarily required? What evidence is there that suggests knowledge of sentential complements is required?

(10) What are two examples in language of confronting multiple perspectives simultaneously? Give an explicit example of each one. What aspect of cognition is the ability to confront multiple perspectives simultaneously helpful for?