

Psych56L/ Ling51

Winter 2011

Review Questions: Morphological & Syntactic Development

(1) Terms/concepts to know: morpheme, free morpheme, bound morpheme, inflectional morphology, derivational morphology, recursion, embedded sentence, complementizer, determiner, imperative, declarative, question, negation, preposition, auxiliary verb, telegraphic speech, morphologically rich, morphologically poor, word order interpretation strategy, passive sentences, pronouns, reflexive pronouns, quantifiers

(2) How would you argue against someone who claims that the order words are put in is determined solely by what they mean?

(3) Why does being able to generate sentences of infinite length indicate that adults must have an underlying system for generating sentences?

(4) Describe the nature of children's early syntactic productions. That is, what kinds of words do they use and what kinds of words do they leave out? What kinds of clauses do they produce earlier, and what kinds of clauses do they produce later?

(5) What does it mean for a language's morphology system to be predictable? Does having a predictable system mean a language is likely to be easier to learn?

(6) One strategy children use to interpret sentences is the mentioned order of the words. Give one example where this strategy would work, and one example where this strategy would fail. Make sure to explain why the strategy would work for the first example you give, but not the second.

(7) What evidence is there that children who do not use grammatical morphemes (like determiners and auxiliary verbs) are still sensitive to these morphemes when they listen to other people speak?

(8) Is children's comprehension of language always ahead of their production? (That is, do they always understand more than they say, or do they ever say things that they don't really understand?)

(9) What is one reason why passive sentences are so difficult for young children to understand? (Hint: Think of the strategies children may fall back on when they don't quite understand the syntax of a passive sentence.)

(10) What is one common way for young children to misinterpret sentences like "The doll is easy to see"? How does this differ from the way adults interpret this sentence?

(11) Chien & Wexler (1990) found that children between the ages of 3 and 5 often make mistakes interpreting certain kinds of pronouns. Give an example of an utterance that they found children of this age would misinterpret. (Hint: Think about the difference

between reflexive pronouns and “plain” pronouns.) Do children have trouble using reflexive and plain pronouns correctly in their own productions?

(12) Why could it be more difficult to interpret a sentence that has more than one quantifier? (Hint: Think about how multiple quantifiers interact.)