Psych56L/ Ling51
Winter 2012
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) 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.)

(9) 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?

(10) 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?

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

(12) Sigmund was amazed to learn about how quantifiers can interact in utterances. Help him figure out the answers to the questions below, which involve quantifier interaction.

(a) A girl, Sarah, is helping three goblins, Stinkwort, Grappler, and Fungmunger, out of the Bog of Eternal Stench. Indicate whether the following statements (and their specific interpretations) are compatible with this situation (**yes or no**).

>   (i) "*Some*one is helping *every* goblin out of the Bog of Eternal Stench."
>   where scope = *some >> every*
>
>   (ii) "*Some*one is helping *every* goblin out of the Bog of Eternal Stench."
>   where scope = *every >> some*

(b) Three girls, Sarah, Attia, and Circe, are helping three goblins, Stinkwort, Grappler, and Fungmunger, out of the Bog of Eternal Stench, with each girl helping one goblin (Sarah helping Stinkwort, Attia helping Grappler, and Circe helping FungMunger). Indicate whether the following statements are compatible with this situation (**yes or no**).

>   (i) "*Some*one is helping *every* goblin out of the Bog of Eternal Stench."
>   where scope = *some >> every*
>
>   (ii) "*Some*one is helping *every* goblin out of the Bog of Eternal Stench."
>   where scope = *every >> some*

(c) Three goblins, Stinkwort, Grappler, and Fungmunger, decided to jump over a puddle. However, at the last minute, Grappler chickened out and didn't actually jump over it, while the other two goblins did. Indicate whether the following statements are compatible with this situation (**yes or no**).

>   (i) "*Every* goblin did*n't* jump over the puddle."
>   where scope = *every >> n't (short for not)*
>
>   (ii) "*Every* goblin did*n't* jump over the puddle."
>   where scope = *n't (short for not) >> every*

(13) According to Lidz & Musolino (2002), children find some sentences with multiple quantifiers easier to interpret than others. Which sentences are easier to interpret? Give an example of one sentence with multiple quantifiers, and indicate which interpretation would be easier to interpret for children and which interpretation would be more difficult to interpret for children.