Class Lectures in Linguistics

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1. Lectures in Language Acquisition[1]

Foreword to Lectures in Language Acquisition

Language is quite possibly the most unique of all complex systems known to man, with little if any antecedence to its nature and origin tracible back to a Darwinian world. It appears that mere communicative needs as would be determined by a Darwinian model could not have possibly provided any great selective pressure to produce such an elaborate system as language that relies heavily on properties of **abstraction**. What one gains from language rather is an inner symbolic thought process, autonomous and private onto itself, built upon a **mentalese** which is to a large degree not optimal for serving mere communicative needs. Complicating the picture even more so is the fact that language seems to sit in a kind of 'no-man's land', at a crossroads between being an innate, biologically-determined system (on the one hand), and a learned, environmentally driven system (on the other). In other words, language is one and the same both **subjective** and **objective** in nature. Because of this, it seems any approximate understanding of language must be informed by a hybrid model of its **dualistic** nature. Such a model must straddle and bring together both Abstract/Mental and Physical/Material worlds. This coming together should by no means be interpreted as an attempt 'to make nice' with opposing philosophical camps, but rather, hybrid modeling of language and mind goes far in addressing the very complex and abstract nature of language, particularly considering the current knowledge linguists have gained over what I think has been a very prosperous half century of linguistics.

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[1] These series of lectures were given to the Child Language Acquisition seminars over a span of two decades (20002023), held at California State University, Northridge~ Linguistics Dept.
https://www.academia.edu/92731948/Lectures_in_Language_Acquisition_Table_of_Contents_and_Links_to_Class_Lectures_CSUN_Dept_of_Linguistics

What makes the above statements tricky, however, is that while there may be some level of (mental) learning going on for our first language, presumably based on the (material) frequency of input, (as with vocabulary learning), it has to be a 'strange' kind of learning unconnected to mere conscious observation and will. For instance, a child cannot willfully choose not to learn his/her native language. Nor can a child (subconsciously) fail to observe the hidden structures of language. So, any talk of 'learning' must be accompanied by the fact that this type of learning, or whatever it is, is silent, automatic and biologically determined. The environmental aspect of language is evidenced by the fact that some input–driven learning, subconscious though it may be, is what triggers the otherwise innate mechanisms behind the acquisition of language. In fact, the term **acquisition** comes with its own portmanteau of claims, chief among them being the claim that the child is born with an already predetermined template for language termed **Universal Grammar**, a (human only) species-specific **Language Faculty** that situates in a specific region of the human brain and gives rise to language acquisition. Some will argue that second language, a language 'learned' beyond the so-called **Critical Period** (Lenneberg)—reached around puberty when the brain goes through phases of neurological restructuring—is not qualitatively/quantitively the same as 'acquisition' as seen via first language, with some linguists suggesting that **learning** can never approximate the natural state of **acquisition**. (Two cases come to mind regarding the Critical Period: (i) The case of a 'Genie', (S. Curtiss), and (ii) the case of 'Christopher' (N. Smith, I-M. Tsimpli). I suppose the notion of trying to learn such a complex system that is meant to be biologically determined presents linguists with some fairly serious issues, many of which are not even close to being resolved, nor will they be any time soon.

Included in these lectures is a pedagogical treatment of the so-called 'Four Sentences', along with an 'Accumulative Lecture: Form defines Function'—both of which present insights into traditional questions dealing with 'learnability problems' associated with language acquisition. These lectures present an overview of the defining notion that language is quintessentially an internal mental processing; that it is the internal representations of our minds (Form) which define our environments (Function). This is indeed what we find of language—that language is largely a private enterprise, which, in fact, bears very little to what one would expect of a mere 'channel for communication'.

The unique properties which govern language are an outlier, they are a series of 'black swan' events.

Syntax shows us such sweeping powers of recursive complexity that it becomes quite difficult to ponder the exact nature of its origins. Certainly, a Darwinian-evolutionary tale is not without its problems in this respect, given that what we see of the formal properties of human syntax is mostly devoid of mere communicative aims.

Other general topics in the lectures include matters related to Child Syntactic Development, Second Language (L2) issues also accompany various discussion points as a means to contrast L2 from first language (L1). Regarding L2 phonology, students will enjoy the ramifications of so-called 'Phonological Repair' when looking at English borrow-words in Japanese—e.g., how 'love story' might get pronounced as 'loba sutori', or 'taxi' as 'takushi', etc.

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0. *Orientation to Linguistics: Paradigm Shifts*

0.1. LANG ACQ (Opening Remarks to Lecture 1): The 'Four Sentences'

0.2. LANG ACQ (Opening Remarks to Lecture 1) Notes on Structure. The 'Russian-Doll' Paper: The Recursive Implementation.

Let's narrowly define language as a hierarchic-structural configuration which encodes

1. Lang Acq. Prologue

Class lectures on Child Language Acquisition. Included: a pedagogical treatment of the so-called ... more Download

2. Lang Acq. Intro Language & Linguistics

Download

3. Lang Acq. Movement Distinctions

Movement distinctions based on Inflectional vs. Derivational Morphology-'Fascinating'-types (item... more

Dowload

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2. Lectures in Minimalist Program Syntax of Child Language

[The Myth of 'Function defines Form' as the Null-Biological Adaptive Process and the Counter Linguistics-based Response: <> Accumulative Lecture & Topics for Research](#)

This accumulative lecture serves as a springboard for discussion leading to data-collection and a... more

[Working Papers 1: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax](#)

1.1 Introduction I can't think of any other sort of software (the 'computer-program' metaphor for... more

[Working Papers 2: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax. Opening Remarks and Introduction](#)

The entire premise of this monograph rests upon a singular 'linguistic statement'— 'That very you... more

[Working Papers 3: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax. Why Move?](#)

3.1 Introduction One of the leading questions burning in the minds of most developmental linguist...

[Working Papers 4: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax.](#)

We take as our point of departure the view that any assumptions placed on morphology have to incl...

Working Papers 5: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax. 'Merge Over Move'—Movement Application in Child Syntax

5.1 Introduction We take it for granted that child language morphosyntactic development is determ...

Working Papers 6: Minimalist Perspective on Child Syntax. Other Theoretical Implications: Labels, Phases, and Treelet-structures.

Much of the impetus behind our current thinking of syntactic theory has to do with the notion of ... more

Working Papers 7: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax.

Working Papers 8: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax. A Meta-Analysis: Child Language, Second Language, and Broca's Aphasia. A Synthesis of Two Studies: Second Language and Broca's Aphasia

The main aim of this final chapter is to synthesize and comment on what I think are some recent s...

Working Papers 9: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax. Concluding Remarks.

Within a set of Working Papers, I have set out to try to sketch an account for early child Englis... more

Working Papers 10: Minimalist Perspectives on Child Syntax. References

Lectures in Linguistics: Working Papers & Reflections on Syntax. no. 1 Lecture.

The central theme of this monograph, along with its subsequent 'five notes', revolves around an e... more

Lectures in Linguistics: Working Papers & Reflections on Syntax. no.2 Lecture.

Lectures in Linguistics: Working Papers & Reflections on Syntax. no. 3 Lecture.

Ever since the initial conception of the 'generative' enterprise (GE) begun in the latter part of... more

Lectures in Linguistics: Working Papers & Reflections on Syntax. no. 4. Lecture.

[15] But is this operation Merge unique to language? In other words, is it a unique language-spec... more

Lectures in Linguistics: Working Papers & Reflections on Syntax. no. 5 Lecture.

[38] Taken from the above discussion, it appears that syntactic movement (a displacement of items...

Lectures in Linguistics: Working Papers & Reflections on Syntax. no. 6 Lecture.

Grodzinsky: As a review of two current methods for the study of brain language relations, it capt... more

Working Papers & Reflections on Syntax. References & Links

'Absent Minded , Dreamt Lenneberg' <> An Even Stronger Case for Maturation and Genetic-Guided Language Development

Absent Minded 2.

MA Comp Syntax Data Sets galasso

These three sets of sentences provide data regarding what are often referred to as different cons... more

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3. Lectures in Minimalist Syntax

Lectures in the Minimalist Program* Syntheses & Exegeses

This paper 'Exegeses & Syntheses of the Program' ('ESP-paper') attempts to broadly sketch out the...

A Note on Reprojection and the Dual-Merge Status of DP as a Phase <> Complex Nominal Expressions

Looking beyond the broad subcategorization for √Verb, and peering into the more narrow feature se

'Problems of Projection': A Note on Chomsky's (2013) Lingua paper

The most general case of lack of label is successive-cyclic movement. [2]. The intermediate steps...

Phrase Labelling (Ling 403/Morphology)

'Problems of Projection': A Note on Chomsky's (2013) Lingua paper

The most general case of lack of label is successive-cyclic movement. [2]. The intermediate steps...

Five Notes on Recursive Syntax.

These five notes have very much in common with one another. First of all, the whole notion of 'la... more

Prologue to 'Reflections on Syntax'

Berkeley Insights in Linguistics and Semiotics, vol 101, 2021

While Joseph Galasso's new book 'Reflections on Syntax' certainly delivers a fresh attempt at rev... more

From Merge (items)> to Sets (categories). Movement-based Theoretical Applications: Morphology down to Phonology

[15] But is this operation Merge unique to language? In other words, is it a unique language-spec... more

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Joseph Galasso is on the Linguistics Faculty at California State University, Northridge. His main research involves issues surrounding early child language development. He is interested in pursuing certain 'Minimalist Program' assumptions (Chomsky 1995) which ask how such assumptions might explain observed early stages of morphosyntactic development in Children. His 2016 monograph is entitled 'From Merge to Move: A minimalist perspective on the design of language and its role in early child syntax', *LINCOM Studies in Theoretical Linguistics*, 59. His last monograph in the same theoretical series is entitled 'Recursive Syntax' *LINCOM, 61*. His 2021 book entitled 'Reflections on Syntax: Lectures in General Linguistics, Syntax, and Child Language Acquisition' was published in the *Berkeley Insights in Linguistics and Semiotics Series*, Peter Lang Publishing: Berlin, Bern, Oxford. This was followed by his 2022 'Lectures in The Minimalist Program: Synthesis and Exegeses' *(LINCOM Coursebooks in Linguistics, 25).* His research has recently appeared in the *Oxford Handbook of Developmental Linguistics* (edited by Jeffrey Lidz, William Synder, and Joe Pater, Oxford University Press, 2016), as well the 2022 edition of 'Acquisition of Possessives': *Oxford Bibliographies in Linguistics: Essential Readings.* (Edited by Elena Babatsouli). His most recent writings involve Basal Ganglia Grammar.