Ling 417—Lecture II (Chapter 6) Overview of Early Syntax

Stages of INFLection

Non-Adultlike stage
- Lexical stage-1

Adultlike stage
- Functional stage-2

0. Syntax/INFL

0.1 Lexical ‘Noun/Verb’

0.2 Functional Determiner [D=>N]

Auxiliary [Aux=>V]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NP</th>
<th>VP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>go</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DP</th>
<th>TP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The</td>
<td>car</td>
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DP Features: [+/-Def]  TP Features: [Agr]

[+/-Nom] (subject-verb)  [Person]  [Tense]

[+/-Number]  [+/-Past]

Lexical words provide substantive material/meaning.  

Functional words provide abstract grammar:

DP: Definiteness, Case, Person, Number  

TP: Agreement, Tense

Summary of stage: Non-INFL stage:
No Tense/Number/Agreement/Case

Summary of stage: onset of INFL,  

Tense/number/Agreement/Case

1. Lexical vs. Functional Categories

1.1 Non-adultlike INFL : Lexical stage-1

Children (18-30m) at the Lexical stage-1 employ  

Nouns (Adjectives) and Verbs (Adverbs).

Stage-1  

intermediate stage

[-Inflection] Verb Phrase (VP)

Examples: Baby have bottle.  

Car go. Him play.  

Optional INFL

Structure: [S [NP Car] [VP go]]  

[-AGR]  

S [-INF]  

[+Inflection] Tense Phrase (TP)

Examples: The baby has a bottle.  

The car goes. He plays.

Structure: [S [DP The car] [TP goes]]

[-AGR]

S [+INF]  

[+AGR]

1.2 Adultlike INFL: Functional stage-2

Children (36m+) at the Functional stage-2 employ Determiners and Auxiliaries.

Stage-2

[-Inflection] Verb Phrase (VP)

Examples: Baby have bottle.  

Car go. Him play.  

Optional INFL

Structure: [S [NP Car] [VP go]]  

[-AGR]  

S [-INF]  

[+Inflection] Tense Phrase (TP)

Examples: The baby has a bottle.  

The car goes. He plays.

Structure: [S [DP The car] [TP goes]]

[-AGR]  

S [+INF]  

[+AGR]
Structure: [S [NP Baby] [VP have bottle]]

[S [DP The baby] [TP has a bottle]]

2.1 Number

Stage-1/ No Number

Stage-2: Inflection of plural

2.2 Number [+plural]

3.1 Wh-Question/No Aux

No Aux Invert

3.2 Wh-Question/Aux invert

4.1 Negation/Neg initial

Internal Neg/No Aux

4.2 Negation/[Aux+not]

5. The nature of stage-1: Accounts

5.1 Thematic Stage-1 (p. 229) Grammar is based on semantics: Derivational morphology may be used as it is processed as a word chunk (e.g., teacher). Inflectional morphology on the other hand may not project at stage-1.

agent+action (Daddy sit)

action+object (drive car)

5.2 Lexical stage-1 (pp. 228ff)

Grammar is based on lexical categories: N(Adj), V(Adv), Prep.

5.3 Brain Maturation: (p. 56) Stage-1 grammar may be without full operation of Broca’s area which is said to be responsible for syntax.
Notes: Lecture II: Syntax

1. Nature of Errors:

   a) Lexical mix-ups: The car is driving
                             The drive is caring
                             @ The driving is car.
                             Rat-eater-s (Stem+Der-INFL/Gordon)
                             @Rat-s-eater

   b) Case Pronouns: Me do it. (Acc Default)
                             @Mommy kiss I.
                             Me playing car. (Acc Default/-Finite)
                             @Me am playing car.

   c) Deletion: /s/ Sally wear-s strange sock-s (Sally Exp).
                             Sally, Dance (/s/ doesn’t delete)

2. Nature of complexity: The/A number of students is/are dropping [Def => number]
                          S V x
                          John knows [me to tell the truth] (Acc/-Fin)
                          John knows [I tell the truth]
                          She talks to the director (Tense/AGR)
                          I suggest [she talk to the director]

DP: Def, Case, Person, Number  DP
    / \
    D N
AUX: Tense/AGR TP
    / \
    Aux V

3. Sentence Structure Show INFL