

Ling151/Psych156A
Winter 2018
Review Questions: Syntax & Sentences

(1) Terms/concepts to know: reflexive pronoun, regular “plain” pronoun, antecedent, main clause, discourse context, anaphor, anaphoric one, Noun’, ambiguous data, unambiguous data, *wh*-dependency, gap, syntactic island, acceptability judgment, superadditive, Subjacency, Subjacency-ish, container nodes, trigram, Maxim of Quality, ambiguity resolution, quantifier scope, surface scope, inverse scope, utterance endorsement, informativity, question under discussion (QUD), grammatical factors, pragmatic factors, Rational Speech Act Framework, pragmatic speaker, pragmatic listener, speaker, literal listener

(2) What’s the interpretation difference between a reflexive pronoun and a plain pronoun? (Hint: This is easier to think about with a concrete example. What antecedents are possible for each pronoun type?)

(3) What’s the syntactic constraint on where the antecedents of reflexive pronouns are? What about the antecedents of plain pronouns? (Hint: This has something to do with clause structure.)

(4) If children already know that the antecedents of reflexive pronouns appear in one location and the antecedents of regular pronouns appear in another, what else is there to learn about these pronouns? (Hint: Think about the example *Lily, who adores Sarah, admired PRONOUN in the mirror.*)

(5) How can discourse context help children figure out the antecedent of a pronoun? (Hint: A concrete example will probably help.) Is the discourse context in child-directed speech informative in this way? Is it possible for children to use it in order to learn which pronouns belong to which pronoun classes? How do you know?

(6) How do we know that anaphoric *one* in English is a category that’s bigger than plain Noun? How do we know that *one* is a category that’s smaller than a full Noun Phrase?

(7) How do we know that English 18-month-olds interpret *one* in context the same way that adults can? (Hint: Think about this example: *Oh look – a pretty kitty! Do you see another one?* Where do 18-month-olds look? How do we know how to interpret this? How do 18-month-olds behave with this example: *Oh look – a pretty kitty? Do you see another pretty kitty?*)

(8) Why is learning from the direct evidence in child-directed speech problematic when learning how to interpret anaphoric *one*? (Hint: How much of the data are ambiguous? Why is this a problem?)

(9) Regier & Gahl 2004, Pearl & Lidz 2009, and Pearl & Mis 2016 implemented different learning strategies in computational models to see if they could match 18-month-old

behavior when interpreting anaphoric *one* in context. What did these approaches have in common? (Hint: How did they accomplish inference?) What was the main difference between these approaches? (Hint: Think about the acquisitional intake –which approach filtered data out, and which approach included more data on top of the direct evidence?) Which strategy seemed to be more robust? Based on the existing empirical data, could either strategy still be right?

(10) How do we know that syntactic islands aren't simply about the length of a dependency? (Hint: Can you find examples of long dependencies that are grammatical and shorter dependencies that cross syntactic islands?)

(11) How do we know that adults judge island-crossing dependencies as worse than similar dependencies that don't cross islands? What does superadditivity have to do with this? (Hint: Think about the factorial design of Sprouse et al. 2012 – dependencies can be thought of as similar when they share a design feature, such as length or the presence of island structure. What features do island-crossing dependencies have? What features did the other stimuli have? How did adults judge these stimuli?)

(12) Why might it be hard for English children to learn to have adult-like judgments about the *wh*-dependencies tested in Sprouse et al. 2012, based on the child-directed speech they encounter? (Hint: Think about the dependencies adults judged, and think about how often these dependencies appeared in children's input.)

(13) Which syntactic islands learning strategy, Subjacency or Subjacency-ish, did Pearl & Sprouse (2013) investigate with their computational model? Was the strategy successful? Did that strategy try to learn about whole *wh*-dependencies directly from the input? (Hint: Think about container node trigrams, and how they relate to the probability a learner assigns a *wh*-dependency.) How did this strategy implement syntactic islands? (Hint: When you looked inside the modeled child, what did syntactic islands look like?)

(14) What is the basic “quality” that the Maxim of Quality assumes about a cooperative speaker's utterance? What happens if this quality is violated? (Hint: Think about sarcasm, irony, and metaphor.)

(15) For an utterance like “Every kitty didn't jump on the bed”, why are two interpretations available? What are these two interpretations? How do they relate to the order of the words in the utterance?

(16) Do adults seem able to access the inverse scope interpretation for an every-not utterance like “Every kitty didn't jump on the bed”? How do you know? (Hint: Think about a specific situation where only the inverse scope interpretation is true. Do adults endorse this utterance?)

(17) Musolino & Lidz (2006) demonstrated that four- and five-year-old children are sensitive to the experimental context when deciding whether to endorse utterances like “Every kitty didn't jump on the bed”. What is an example of an “early failure” context,

and what happens to children's endorsement rate? What is an example of an "early success" context, and what happens to children's endorsement rate? Does it matter if there's an explicit utterance that highlights the "early success"?

(18) What are three factors that might impact children's utterance endorsement rate in the experiments with every-not scenarios that Musolino & Lidz (2006) conducted? Can we tell from those experiments which factors are responsible for the shift in children's behavior? What about for the experiments by Viau et al. (2010)?

(19) What are the different levels of the Rational Speech Act Framework used by Savinelli, Scontras, & Pearl (2017, 2018)? How does this demonstrate recursive social reasoning? (Hint: Social reasoning refers to how speakers and listeners think about each other. Recursive means there's multiple levels of this.) Which level corresponds to the observed behavior of utterance endorsement?

(20) Based on the computational model findings of Savinelli et al. (2017) for every-not scenarios, which factors are more likely responsible for children's observed utterance endorsement behavior? How do you know? (Hint: Think about which factors seem to have more impact on the predicted endorsement rate.)

(21) Based on the findings of Musolino & Lidz (2003), do adults seem able to easily access the inverse scope interpretation for utterances like "Two kitties didn't jump on the bed"? How do you know? (Hint: Think about the 1-of-2 contexts, and what happened without the explicit contrast. Think also about the 2-of-4 context, and which interpretation was true.)

(22) Based on the computational model findings of Savinelli et al. (2018) for two-not scenarios in 1-of-2 contexts, which factor seems the most powerful? Do all factors matter? Could the same factors that increase children's endorsement rate in the presence of an explicit contrast also be responsible for increasing adults' endorsement rate in the presence of an explicit contrast? Which factors are these?

(23) Based on the computational model findings of Savinelli et al. (2018) for two-not scenarios in 1-of-2 contexts vs. 2-of-4 contexts without explicit contrasts, which factors are responsible for the observed shift in adult endorsement rate?