Psych156A/ Ling150
Winter 2009
Review Questions: Phrases

(1) Terms/concepts to know: phrases, optional phrases, repeated phrases, moved phrases, experimental condition, control condition, identifying categories, identifying phrases

(2) Describe one way you could tell that the phrase "the girl who danced with the goblin king in the crystal ballroom" is a noun phrase. Make sure to be specific.

(3) Why do optional phrases in a language alter the transitional probabilities between phrases in general?

(4) Is it reasonable for Thomspon & Newport (2007) to use adults in their experiment, which is meant to explain how children identify phrases in language? Explain both why this may be reasonable and why this may be unreasonable.

(5) Under what circumstances are subjects in the Thompson & Newport (2007) experiment supposed to think that two categories (ex: category A and category B) form a phrase in the artificial language if these subjects can track transitional probability?

(6) In the Thompson & Newport (2007) experiment, were the transitional probabilities between phrases in the experimental conditions higher or lower than the transitional probabilities within phrases? What about for the control conditions?

(7) In the Thompson and Newport (2007) experiment, did the control subjects ever do as well as the experimental condition subjects at being able to categorize the novel words into abstract categories (like A, B, C, etc.)?

(8) How do we know that experimental condition subjects in the Thompson & Newport (2007) experiment were better able to group categories into their correct phrases than the control condition subjects?

(9) Did experimental condition subjects in Thompson & Newport (2007) always perform much better than control condition subjects when identifying phrases of the artificial language?

(10) What happened when Thompson & Newport (2007) exposed experimental condition subjects to an artificial language that had three properties at the same time (optional, repeated, and moved phrases)? Did they do better or worse than when the artificial language only had one property?

(11) Thompson & Newport (2007) thought that transitional probabilities can help learners identify phrases in a language. Is this hypothesis hurt by the fact that control subjects did as well as experimental subjects at categorizing words in the artificial language?