

慶應言語学コロキウム

Current Issues in Minimalist Explorations

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*参加費無料・事前申込不要 (会場にて参加者カードへの記入が必要となります)

The Question Particle in Japanese and the Nature of Exhaustivity in Wh-questions

Shigeru Miyagawa, MIT

Wh-questions typically require an answer that gives the maximal information possible. I argue that this notion of exhaustivity is overtly marked by the Question particle in the root clauses in Japanese. We can detect the exhaustivity associated with the Q-particle by optionally omitting it; in the absence of the Q-particle, the question loses the exhaustive meaning, which signals that a partial answer is sufficient. We will see that the Q-particle provides a test for a number of issues in the meaning of questions that heretofore were not easily testable. We will see that a question that has *for example*, which asks for a partial answer, nevertheless may have the Q-particle because the question can contain the meaning of exhaustivity in its underlying meaning. *Why* questions require the Q-particle because *why* cannot lead to a partial answer. There is one situation where the Q-particle is prohibited; I argue that it is a pure form of Question Under Discussion, made possible by a question lacking the meaning of exhaustivity. For the mention-all versus mention-one question-answers, we will see that both contain exhaustivity. I will propose that the exhaustivity associated with mention-one questions is directly related to Schwarzschild's (2002) idea of singleton indefinites.

Inducing and blocking labeling

Shigeru Miyagawa, MIT (co-authored with Danfeng Wu, MIT and Masatoshi Koizumi, Tohoku University)

Japanese has functional elements that have grammatical, semantic, or pragmatic functions. Case markers mark grammatical relations; the Q-particle clause-types the sentence as an interrogative; and the topic marker designates a phrase as the topic of the sentence. Along with these functions, we argue that these functional elements have a uniform function of assisting in the labeling of structures. There are two ways in which they do so. In one case, a functional element attaches to an item that cannot otherwise project, and induces the item to project. In the other case, a functional element attaches to an item that is projectable but requires the projection to be blocked, allowing the sister item to project. The Q-particle is an example of a functional element that, when attached to an otherwise unprojectable C, induces the C to project. In contrast, case markers attach to XPs, which are inherently projectable, and blocks the XP from projecting, which allows the sister element to project. The same goes for topic marking. Across languages, many functional elements have this role of assisting in the labeling of structures. The Q-particle in Japanese, which allows the C to project, is similar to agreement in English and other languages, in which the agreement morpheme on T induces the T to project. Case marking, which blocks projection of a XP, is similar to augment vowels in Bantu, and it is no accident that these vowels have a case-like distribution.

Systems Underlying Human and Old World Monkey Communication: One, Two, or Infinite

Shigeru Miyagawa, MIT (co-authored with Esther Clarke, Durham University/MIT)

Using artificially synthesized stimuli, previous research has shown that cotton-top tamarin monkeys easily learn simple AB grammar sequences, but not the more complex An Bn sequences that require hierarchical structure. Humans have no trouble learning An Bn combinations. A more recent study, using similar artificially created stimuli, showed that there is a neuroanatomical difference in the brain between these two kinds of arrays. While the simpler AB sequences recruit the frontal operculum, the An Bn array recruits the phylogenetically newer Broca's area. We propose that on close inspection, reported vocal repertoires of Old World Monkeys show that these nonhuman primates are capable of calls that have two items in them, but never more than two. These are simple AB sequences, as predicted by previous research. In addition, we suggest the two-item call cannot be the result of a combinatorial operation that we see in human language, where the recursive operation of Merge allows for a potentially infinite array of structures. In our view, the two-item calls of nonhuman primates result from a dual-compartment frame into which each of the calls can fit without having to be combined by an operation such as Merge. Based on this study, we will explore a possible source for the binary nature of human language.

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