

Advanced experimental syntax

ECTS
crédits

Présentation

DESCRIPTION

SL6BY061

* Syntactic theories have long relied on partial introspective data. The availability of large annotated corpora and experimental methods has radically changed our empirical basis. This class will present recent discoveries and explored the consequences for theoretical syntax. We will deal in particular with:

1. argument order and transitivity alternation (ditransitive verbs, passives)
2. locality constraints on long distance dependencies (“islands”)
3. elliptical sentences, such as sluicing (*Paul left, I dont know when*) or gapping (*Paul left yesterday and Mary this morning*), which are very common in speaking and writing and which challenge most syntactic theories.

The theories are tested with attested data (from large corpora) and with controlled experiments (acceptability judgements, maze task, eye-tracking).

* Students taking the seminar will have to discuss a paper or to perform an empirical study (systematic search and annotation in a large corpus or set up an experiment).

References

A. Abeillé, B. Hemforth, E. Winckel, E. Gibson 2020. Extraction from subject : differences in acceptability depend on the discourse function of the construction, *Cognition*, 204. Futrell, Levy, R.P., & Gibson, E. (2020). Dependency locality as an explanatory principle for word order. *Language*.

Gibson, E. & Fedorenko, E. 2013. The need for quantitative methods in syntax and semantics research. *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 28:88–124. Poppels, T., & Kehler, A. 2019. Reconsidering asymmetries in voice-mismatched VP-ellipsis. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics*, 4(1), 60.

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