LING279 Research Seminar in Psycholinguistics

"Slower Psycholinguistics"

Fall 2016

Department of Linguistics
University of California, Santa Cruz

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Meetings Tu/Th 3:20-4:55PM in 217 Stevenson

Office Hours Wednesdays, TBD

Course web site / `PDF` repository Shared Google Drive

Goals

The goal of this seminar is *slow down*. That is, to step back from the concerns of incremental, real-time language processing – arguably the focus of most contemporary research – and ask about the representations left behind in its wake. What methods are there for probing the content and structure of those representations? How can these contribute to a mentalist linguistics?

There are three primary topics we will examine:

(1) the phenomenon of **verbatim memory**, or, memory for exact form. Verbatim memory is famously fleeting, but sometimes surprisingly durable. It is often proposed that "memory for structure" – as equivalent to verbatim memory - is thus also labile. But the relationship between syntactic representations and inflected, ordered word strings is perhaps not so direct.

(2) **syntactic priming**, a catch-all term for the observation that one token of some linguistic type can lead to facilitation for the recognition/comprehension/production of another token. What are the varieties of priming, and What is the right type-token relationship? Priming demands a metric of similarity, and implicitly, a domain over which that similarity is calculated.

(3) **multiple representations**: when several syntactic descriptions are simultaneously present, how can we tell what they are, or even how many there are? Here we will discuss recent research on acceptability ratings distributions using the tools of signal-detection theory (separate and joint work with Brian Dillon).

Responsibilities & Evaluation

To receive a satisfactory evaluation,

- Be an active, prepared and supportive participant in class discussions;
- Sign-up to give paper presentations at regular intervals;
- Complete a final paper:
  - a research project proposal, written in the style of an NSF application (10-15 pp);
  - strongest proposals include pilot data

Schedule & Readings

Week 0

- September 22 Introduction to course

Week 1

- September 27 **The classics**
  - Sachs, J. S. (1967). Recognition memory for syntactic and semantic aspects of connected discourse. *Perception and Psychophysics 2(9)*, 437–443.
  - Jarvella, R. J. (1973). Coreference and short-term memory for discourse. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 98(2)*, 426-428.
  - Bransford, J. D. & Franks, J. J. (1971). The abstraction of linguistic ideas. *Cognitive Psychology, 2,* 331–350.
- September 29 **Deep cuts**
  - Anderson, J.R. Verbatim and propositional representation of sentences in Immediate and Long-term Memory. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, **13**, 149-162.
  - Begg, I. & Wickelgren, W.A. (1974). Retention functions for syntactic and lexical vs. semantic information in sentence recognition memory. *Memory & Cognition*, *2*, 353-359.
  - Johnson-Laird, P. N., Robins, C., Velicogna, L. (1974). Memory for words. *Nature, 251,* 704-705.

... What do we know so far, and what would we like to know?

Week 2

- October 4 **Pragmatic influence**
  - Bates, E., Masling, M., & Kintsch, W. (1978). Recognition memory for aspects of dialogue. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory, 4(3)*, 187.
  - Murphy, G. L., & Shapiro, A. M. (1994). Forgetting of verbatim information in discourse. Memory & Cognition, 22(1), 85-94.
  - Holtgraves, T. (2008). Conversation, speech acts, and memory.* Memory and Cognition, 36(2)*, 361–374.
- October 6 **Taking stock and a theory**
  - Gernsbacher, M. A. (1985). Surface information loss in comprehension. *Cognitive Psychology*, *17*, 324-363.

Week 3

- October 11 **The re-production hypothesis**
  - Potter, M. C. & Lombardi, L. (1990). Regeneration in the short-term recall of sentences. *Journal of Memory and Language, 29*, 633–654.
  - Lombardi, L., Potter, M.C. (1992). The regeneration of syntax in short term memory. *Journal of Memory and Language, 31*, 713-733.
  - Potter, M. C. & Lombardi, L. (1998). Syntactic priming in immediate recall of sentences. *Journal of Memory and Language, 38(3),* 265–282.
- October 13 **What have we learned? why does it matter?**
  - Gurevich, O., Johnson, M. A., & Goldberg, A. E. (2010). Incidental verbatim memory for language. *Language and Cognition, 2(1)*, 45-78.

Weeks 4-6 (Oct 18-Nov 3) Syntactic priming

Weeks 7-10 (Nov 10-Dec 1) Signal-detection theory & acceptability judgments

- N.B.: No class on **Nov 8** or **Nov 24** (Thanksgiving Day)

Policies

Communication I will communicate with the group via email. Seminar participants will be invited to a Google Group and a Google Drive shared folder where they can find course documents.

Academic honesty The work you complete for this course must be your own work and must meet basic standards of honesty. Be sure and familiarize yourself with University policies and procedures related to Academic Integrity: https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_misconduct. If I suspect academic dishonesty, I will comply with these procedures very strictly.

You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning. **Attend class.** You are responsible for material in your readings. **Participate.** Ask questions and offer ideas in class. **Communicate.** Never hesitate to get in touch. If you get into difficulty, it is entirely appropriate to seek help. Come by office hours, or send an email. Likewise, if you are having a problem that adversely affects your classroom participation, contact the instructor.