

**EXPLAIN ME THIS:  
CREATIVITY, COMPETITION  
AND THE  
PARTIAL PRODUCTIVITY OF  
CONSTRUCTIONS**

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## **1. Introduction: CENCE ME principles**

- 1.1. The puzzle
- 1.2. The roadmap
- 1.3. The CENCE ME Principles
- 1.4. Speakers balance the need to be Expressive and Efficient while obeying the Normative conventions of their speech community.

## **2. Word Meanings**

- 2.1. Words evoke semantically rich, structured, partially abstracted senses
- 2.2. Implicit memory for how words are used is vast
- 2.3. We regularly employ old words for new uses: common words evoke a cluster of conventional, related senses.
- 2.4. Creativity: New representations are added to express new meanings
- 2.5. Competition: Word meanings are constrained by competition in context from other words
- 2.6. Speakers avoid overgeneralizations by learning and gaining fluency with more appropriate labels for intended meanings
- 2.7. Summary

## **3: Constructions as invitations to form categories**

- 3.1. Meaning (semantics)
  - 3.1.1 Experimental evidence for constructional meaning
  - 3.1.2 Relationships among argument structure constructions
  - 3.1.3 Semantic compatibility between verb and construction is gradient
  - 3.1.4 Relationships between verbs and constructions
- 3.2. Form (syntax)
- 3.3. Sound patterns (phonology)
- 3.4. Discourse context (Information Structure)
- 3.5. Social Context
- 3.6. Variation across dialects
- 3.7. Variation across languages
- 3.8. Constructions can be combined (recursively)
- 3.9. Summary

## **4: Creativity: coverage is key**

- 4.1. We retain memory traces of which verbs are used with which constructions
- 4.2. Why NPs are less finicky than predicates in argument structure constructions
- 4.3. Entrenchment: more familiar formulations are more preferred
- 4.4. Creativity: New representations are added to express new meanings
- 4.5. Coverage: clustering of partially abstract exemplars in high dimensional conceptual space
- 4.7. Modeling COVERAGE
- 4.8. Summary

## **5. Competition in context: statistical preemption**

5.1 Statistical Preemption: constructions are constrained by competition in context from other (combinations of) constructions

5.2. Recasts

5.3. Confidence

5.4. What coverage adds

5.5. Niche constructions

5.5 Summary

## **6. Age effects**

6.1. Younger children are less likely to recognize the SIMILARITIES needed for generalization

6.2. Younger children are less likely to recognize relevant DIFFERENCES needed to reproduce a complex system

6.3. Early abstractions

6.4. Why adult (L2) learners struggle to overcome overgeneralizations

## **7. The roads not taken**

7.1. Is compatibility between verb and construction enough?

7.2. Is positing invisible features or underlying structure explanatory?

7.3. Do we only use formulations we have witnessed (conservatism via (negative) ENTRENCHMENT)?

7.4. Are the “Tolerance” and “Sufficiency” numbers explanatory?(Yang 2016)?

7.5 O'Donnell

7.6. *Hapax legomenon* is a symptom of productivity

7.7. A critique of preemption (“blocking”) by Embick & Marantz (2008)

7.8. Early “structure mapping”

7.9. Do children witness enough data?

7.10. Summary

## **8. Where we are and what lies ahead**