Linguistics 170: Homework 2

due Thursday 16 November 2006

1. We have seen evidence for syntactic priming in linguistic production. How would you devise an experiment to test for syntactic priming in linguistic comprehension? More specifically, propose an experimental design to test the hypothesis that syntactic priming can affect the ambiguity resolution strategies comprehenders employ when faced with local syntactic ambiguity. Outline the experimental design, describe the manipulations/conditions, and give a proposed experimental item (i.e., a version of the item for each condition in the experiment.) Describe what patterns of possible results could be taken as evidence for the hypothesis that syntactic priming can affect comprehension, and what patterns of results would not lend support for this hypothesis.

2. Collect and classify a small corpus of speech errors. Carry around a notepad and pen and jot down any speech errors you find. Try to get at least 10–15 errors, then classify each one and suggest at what stage the error most likely occurred.

When you hear an error, you should immediately write down the error and as much of the immediate context that you can remember along with the date you heard it and the intended utterance. It might be good to carry around a notepad and pen so that you can get the error down exactly how it was produced (plus, this makes you extra cool at parties.) Here’s an example:

11/7: I saw someone who—I know someone who saw that.
(Intended: “I know someone who saw that.”). This is probably a word anticipation or exchange error that occurred during grammatical encoding. It might be an anticipation error, or it might instead be an exchange that was corrected before being fully produced (i.e., the error might have been “I saw someone who knows/knew that.”)

You should turn in both your data and a short (roughly half a page) discussion of the data, focusing on any interesting patterns you find.