• Grammaticality judgments

Background reading:
• CL Ch 1, sec 2
1. The mental grammar as a “judge”

• A native speaker’s **mental grammar** can make **judgments** about whether a linguistic structure is
  - **grammatical** (allowed, acceptable, legal), or
  - **ungrammatical** (unacceptable, illegal)

• Note: A speaker’s mental grammar of a *non*-native language may also be able to make grammaticality judgments
  - Sometimes these are subtly different from those of a native speaker — this is an interesting research area!
1. The mental grammar as a “judge”

- The **ungrammaticality reaction** that your mental grammar produces is a “gut reaction” — try to learn to recognize it (when you encounter data from your native language)
  - When you hear a word, sentence, etc., that is ungrammatical in your native language, you may “feel your brain get stuck for a second”, or you may feel a reaction similar to “no way, that’s not part of my language!”
1. The mental grammar as a “judge”

• The ungrammaticality reaction is a “gut reaction” — try to learn to recognize it (when you encounter data from your native language)

• **Some examples** (English) — Sentence structure
  - Grammatical
    
    *The puppy found the bone.*
    
    *Oscar wants Grover to be a grouch.*
  
  - Ungrammatical (marked with a star, '*')
    
    *The puppy found quickly.*
    
    *Oscar tries Grover to be a grouch.*
1. The mental grammar as a “judge”

- The ungrammaticality reaction is a “gut reaction” — try to learn to recognize it (when you encounter data from your native language)

- **Some examples** (English) — Sound structure
  - Grammatical (“possible” but non-existing words)
    - *kref*
    - *palkim*
  - Ungrammatical (impossible as words)
    - *rkef*
    - *palikm*
1. The mental grammar as a “judge”

- A word, sentence, etc. is **grammatical with respect to a particular language** if:
  - Native speakers produce it (and it’s not a speech error)
  - When native speakers hear it, their mental grammar classifies it as grammatical (part of the language; structurally acceptable)

- Note that this varies by language!
  - In English, the word shape *kref* is grammatical
  - In Japanese, *kref* is ungrammatical
2. What grammaticality is *not*

This next part is very important to understand.

- Being **grammatical** is *NOT* the same thing as “being true” or “making sense”!

  - These factors have nothing to do with whether or not the mental grammar can produce, or will accept, the **structure** of a particular word or sentence.
2. What grammaticality is not

- Being **grammatical** is **NOT** the same thing as “being true” or “making sense”!
  - A sentence that **isn’t true** is one that fails to **match** the state of affairs **in the real world**
  - But: its **structure** could still be **acceptable** to the mental grammar (**grammatical**)
2. What grammaticality is *not*

- Being **grammatical** is *NOT* the same thing as “being true” or “making sense”!
  - A sentence that **doesn’t make sense** is one where you **don’t understand** what the speaker **meant**, or one where the **word meanings** are **inconsistent** with each other
  - But: its **structure** could still be **acceptable** to the mental grammar (**grammatical**)
2. What grammaticality is not

- Being **grammatical** is **NOT** the same thing as “being true” or “making sense”!

(1) Every basketball player at UNC is named Susan.
  - Is this sentence **true**?
  - Does this sentence **make sense**?
  - Is this sentence **grammatical**?
2. What grammaticality is not

• Being **grammatical** is **NOT** the same thing as “being true” or “making sense”!

(2) *I walked over to the table and put the book.*

- Does this sentence **make sense**?
- Is this sentence **grammatical** in your variety of English?
2. What grammaticality is not

• Being **grammatical** is **NOT** the same thing as “being true” or “making sense”!

(3) *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.*

- Does this sentence **make sense**?
- Is this sentence **grammatical**?

- **Some colorless green poems!**
  (optional, just for fun)