

Defective intervention and probe uniformity

This talk presents some ongoing work on defective intervention --- cases where one "not quite" match for a syntactic dependency blocks the formation of such a dependency with a less-local target. The starting point for this work is the observation that such effects --- construed broadly -- - consistently display considerable inter-speaker variability. I suggest that such variability arises for reasons related to learnability, since configurations that would provide sufficient evidence to the learner that a grammar that gives rise to such an effect are uncommon in the input. I propose an inferential mechanism for learners that favors grammars where syntactic dependencies which display a uniform locality profile, and discuss inter-speaker variation in restrictions on \bar{A} -dependencies in Tagalog in this light.