



The Acquisition of Syntactic Structure

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How do children acquire syntactic structure? Children at around the age of two produce main declarative in a non-finite form or Root Infinitives, and child grammar around then allows the choice of optionally truncated structures. The Truncation Hypothesis (Rizzi, 1993/1994, Murasugi 2020) naturally explains the bottom-up process in the acquisition of syntactic structure. Murasugi (2014), in "Inquires into Linguistic Theory and Language Acquisition- Paper offered to Adriana Belletti" argues, however, that during the RI stage, very young Japanese-acquiring children produce sentence-final discourse particles (SFDPs) even on the truncated structure, and proposes a possible top-down process found in the acquisition of phrase structure. In this paper, we reanalyze the two processes, bottom-up and top-down, in the acquisition of syntactic structure, under the minimalist programme in generative grammar. Because SFDPs that children employ are independent words and have no selectional restriction and they create head-complement structures, if children are equipped with the universal labeling mechanism for $\{X, YP\}$ structures at RI stage, it is not surprising that SFDPs are acquired early. I will argue that this is consistent with Murasugi's (2020) conclusion that the difficulty children face at the RI stage is at least in part the labeling of $\{XP, YP\}$ structures.