

## Syntactic priming as a test of argument structure: A self-paced reading experiment

25th February 2016, 9:00 – 10:00: I. Oltra-Massuet<sup>a,b</sup>, V. Sharpe<sup>c</sup>, K. Neophytou<sup>b</sup>, A. Marantz<sup>b,c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Universitat Rovira i Virgili, <sup>b</sup>New York University Abu Dhabi, <sup>c</sup>New York University

[isabel.oltra@urv.cat](mailto:isabel.oltra@urv.cat), [vs1666@nyu.edu](mailto:vs1666@nyu.edu), [kyriaki.neophytou@nyu.edu](mailto:kyriaki.neophytou@nyu.edu), [marantz@nyu.edu](mailto:marantz@nyu.edu)

Using data from a structural priming experiment, we test two competing theoretical approaches to argument structure, (i) Hale & Keyser's (1993, 2002) approach as developed in Mateu (2002), Acedo-Matellán (2010) and Acedo-Matellán & Mateu (2011, 2013) [AM&M], and (ii) Marantz's (2005, 2011) [M]. These theories attribute different structures to transitive structures like (2-6) and make different claims about the relationship between transitive structures and unergatives like (1), thus making different predictions about priming relations between them.

	CONDITIONS	NP	V	NP(/PP)	PP
(1)	C1. Unergative	The dog	barked	in a quiet park	at night.
(2)	C2. Cognate	The man	dozed	a restful doze	on the train.
(3)	C3. Creation	The cook	baked	a carrot cake	with spelt flour.
(4)	C4. Saddle/Shelve	The girl	saddled	a wild horse	in the farm.
(5)	C5. Strong transitives	The athlete	ignored	a slight niggle	in his knee.
(6)	C6. Spray/Load 'with'	The worker	loaded	a rail wagon	with hay.

In AM&M theory unergatives (1) are analyzed as derived transitive configurations and pattern with cognate objects (2) as well as with verbs of creation (3), thus predicting syntactic priming among these sentence types but not between these sets and the remaining types (4)-(6). The latter are assumed to select for a small clause type complement structure, and are predicted to prime among them in this model. On the other hand, the M account does not predict structural priming between the unergatives (1) and the surface transitives, nor between complex complement constructions (6) and the other surface transitive sentences. However, M approach does predict some cases of priming that the AM&M theory does not; specifically, M predicts priming between sets (2)-(3) and (4)-(5), which display distinct underlying structures in the AM&M account. We run a self-paced reading language comprehension study to 600 subjects over MTurk. 24 sentences of each type were selected, to be read in 4 chunks (subject, verb, direct object/PP, PP), presented in 3 blocks of 48 in a randomized order. The large number of subjects allows us to model the reading times at the direct object/first PP and at the second PP of the same sentences as a function of the structure of the immediate preceding sentence, testing for structural priming within and across sentence types.

**REFERENCES:** Acedo-Matellán, V. 2010. *Argument Structure and the Syntax-Morphology Interface*. A Case Study in Latin and Other Languages. UB, PhD Thesis. Acedo-Matellán, V. & Mateu, J. 2013. Satellite-framed Latin vs. verb-framed Romance: a syntactic approach. *Probus* 25, 227-265. Hale, K. & Keyser, S. J. 1993. On argument structure and the lexical expression of syntactic relations. *The view from Building*, 20, 53-109. Hale, K. & Keyser, S. J. 2002. *Prolegomenon to a theory of argument structure*. MIT Press. Mateu, J. 2002. *Argument Structure. Relational Construal at the Syntax-Semantics Interface*. UAB, PhD Thesis. Marantz, A. 2005. Objects out of the lexicon: Objects as events. MIT, Ms. Marantz, A. 2011. Syntactic approaches to argument structure without incorporation. Talk presented at the Workshop *Structuring the argument*, Structures Formelles du Langage UMR 7023 Paris 8/CNRS, Paris, 5-7 September.