

Today

- Class mechanics?
- Readings
- How grammar contributes to meaning
 - Structurally
 - Through constructional meaning
 - Other higher-order contributions
- HW2

The constructicon

- In Construction Grammar, the mental lexicon includes not just words, but also constructions (so it's a *constructicon*)
 - This is your repository of constructions, organized hierarchically
- There's no clear-cut distinction between words and (other) constructions, they just vary along certain dimensions
- Some versions of CxnG (like those in R6 and R7), proposes that in addition to having a constructicon, you also perform mental simulations in understanding.

New uses of verbs

You can use old words in new ways. The grammar you use them with affects the meaning of the utterance (and what you think the word means).

*When young worker lamas stop picking up trash to mug for the camera, a gruff police monk **barks** them back to work. (Newsweek 9/97, cited by Michaelis, to appear)*

You can also use new verbs, with grammar having the same role.

*The message of these vigilante films: Push a man too far and the screen will be **Jackson Pollocked** with blood. (Vanity Fair 4/02, cited by Michaelis, p.c.)*

New uses of verbs

- Mary broomhandled the apple.
- Mary broomhandled the apple across the kitchen.
- Mary broomhandled the nurse the apple.
- Mary broomhandled the apple at the nurse.

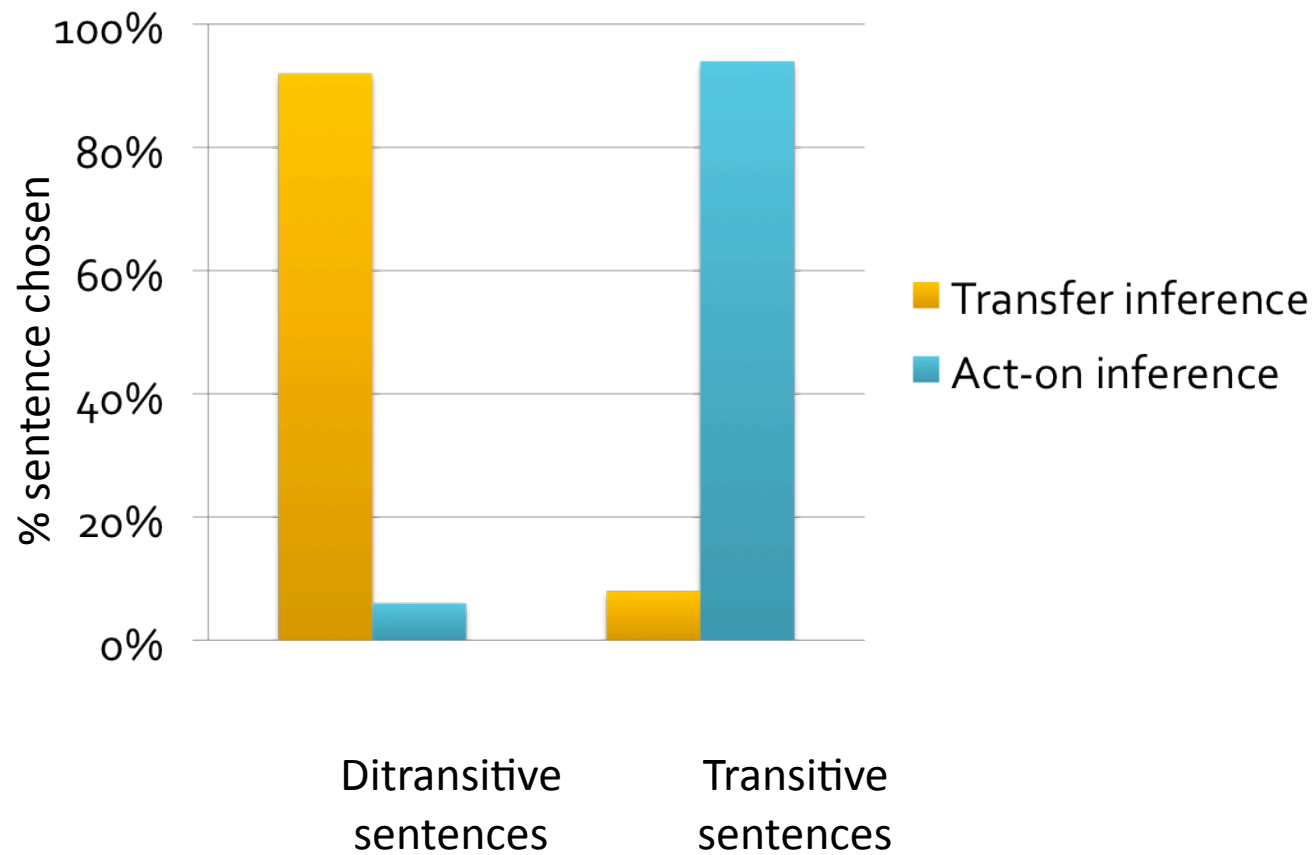
New verbs as a window to cxns

- Do people seem to use the meanings of constructions when processing new words?
 - Do adults know relationships between syntactic forms and their meaning (i.e. constructions)?

R6 – Exp 1

- Participants saw pairs of sentences.
 - [1] Lyn crutched Tom her apple so he wouldn't starve. [ditransitive]
 - [2] Lyn crutched her apple so Tom wouldn't starve. [transitive]
- And an inference statement (either [3] or [4]). Ppts indicated which sentence most strongly implied that the inference statement was true.
 - [3] Tom got the apple. [transfer inference]
 - [4] Lyn acted on the apple. [act-on inference]
- The verbs have no preexisting transfer meaning, so any such meaning must come from the grammar.

Results



Exp. 2

- Ppts saw the same novel verb sentences
 - [1] Lyn crutched Tom her apple so he wouldn't starve. [ditransitive]
 - [2] Lyn crutched her apple so Tom wouldn't starve. [transitive]
- Chose the meaning that more closely matched the meaning of the verb in the sentence.
 - “to act on using a crutch” [act-on definition]
 - “to transfer using a crutch” [transfer definition]
- Does grammar affect the inferred meaning of novel verbs?

Results

