Tutorial for Foundations of LS&T: Cognitive Foundations

Date: Wed, 9 November 2005

Due Date: Fri, 11 November 2005

Students names (work in pairs):

The following examples illustrate some common local and global ambiguities in English. Blue denotes the preferred structure, and red, the dispreferred.

NP/VP Attachment Ambiguity:
- "The cop saw the burglar with the binoculars"
- "The cop saw the burglar with the gun"

NP/S Complement Attachment Ambiguity:
- "The athlete realised his goal last week"
- "The athlete realised his shoes were across the room"

Clause-boundary Ambiguity:
- "Since Jay always jogs a mile the race doesn't seem very long"
- "Since Jay always jogs a mile doesn't seem very long"

Reduced Relative-Main Clause Ambiguity:
- "The woman delivered the junkmail on Thursdays"
- "The woman delivered the junkmail threw it away"

Relative/Complement Clause Ambiguity:
- "The doctor told the woman that he was in love with her"
- "The doctor told the woman that he was in love with to leave"

Questions:

1. Draw the phrase structure tree for each of the 10 sentences.

2. For each sentence pair, identify the word in the sentence that introduces the structural ambiguity.

3. Identify the word(s) that disambiguate the structure.

4. Does Frazier's Garden Path Theory (the principles of Minimal Attachment and Late Closure) correctly predict the preferred structure will be built first?