

Making the right comparisons

Gisbert Fanselow (University of Potsdam)

In this paper, I will discuss at least three construction types from the generative literature (the third *wh*-effect in English multiple questions, superiority effects in German, and weak crossover facts) for which careful acceptability rating experiments show:

- (a) the data are not always correctly represented in the literature,
- (b) the corrected set of data allows for a simpler analysis, and
- (c) it is crucial to correctly identify the set of competing structures relative to which grammaticality judgments are given.

Due to the eminent contribution of processing difficulty to acceptability judgments, it seems vital to find a better empirical grounding of syntax theory.