

COMPOSITIONALITY AND SYSTEMATICITY

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'Systematicity of Language' refers to the observation that our ability to produce/understand certain sentences is intrinsically connected to the ability to produce/understand certain other sentences. According to Fodor & Pylyshyn (1988) the feature of systematicity is closely connected to the principle of compositionality and forms part of the basic architecture of natural language. In the first part of the talk, I argue against treating systematicity as a property to be directly induced by a canny choice of basic architecture. Instead, it may be fruitful to treat it as intrinsic to the world knowledge we want a system to acquire. In the second part of the talk, I point out how a geometric model of meaning can be used to explain how complex concepts are modulated by what we know about the world. The critical examples are due to modifier-head constructions in English and German.