Exercise walk-through

18.1

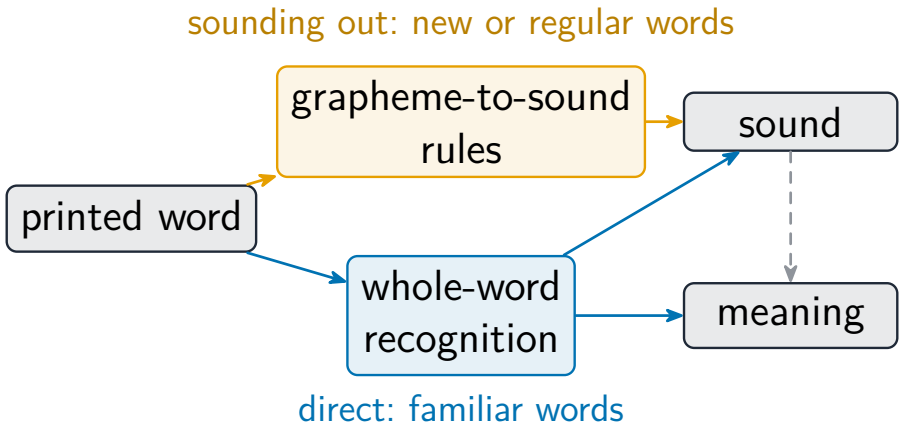
Language structure, perception and acquisition: evidence and transfer

GRE · GRE Subject Test · GRE Psychology

Speech perception

- **Categorical perception**: sounds that vary smoothly (from /b/ to /p/) are heard as one category or the other, with a sharp boundary. Differences inside a category are hard to hear.
- Segmentation: listeners find words in a continuous stream using the likelihood that one syllable follows another, stress patterns and known words.
- Infants can tell apart the sounds of every language, but by about 10–12 months they lose many contrasts their own language does not use.

Figure: Reading



- Two reading routes: sounding out and direct recognition.
- Read the axes and units first.

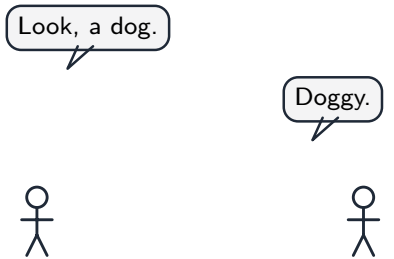
Acquisition

- **Overregularisation** : a child who said "went" begins to say "goed". The child has learned a rule (add -ed) and applies it too widely.
- Children's errors show that they produce new forms rather than only copying.
- Language learning gets harder with age of first exposure, especially for accent and grammar, but there is no single sharp cut-off age for a second language.
- Bilingualism does not lower intelligence; when schooling replaces the first language rather than adding to it, both languages can suffer.

Exercise 2.1

2.1 The word unhappiness contains how many morphemes? [1]

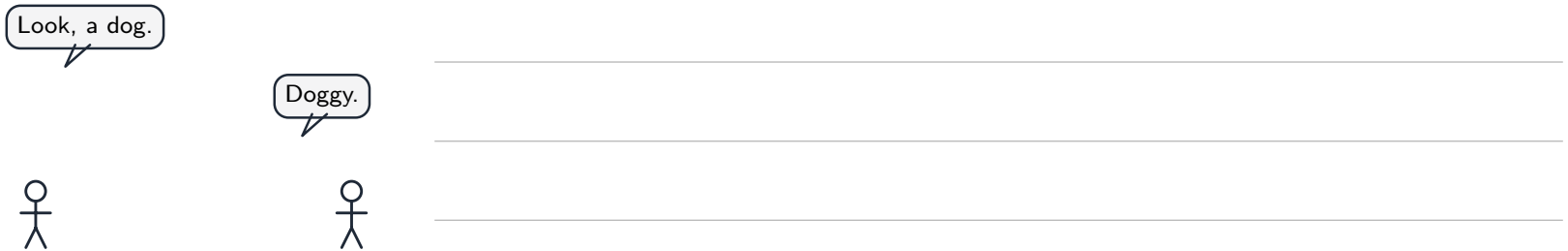
A. one B. two C. three D. five E. eleven



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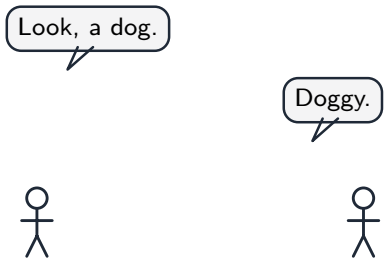


2.1 Answer: C. Un + happy + ness: three meaning-bearing units; letters are not morphemes. The other options do not satisfy the stated defining conditions.

Exercise 2.2

2.2 A sound acoustically intermediate between /b/ and /p/ is reported as clearly one or the other. This illustrates: [1]

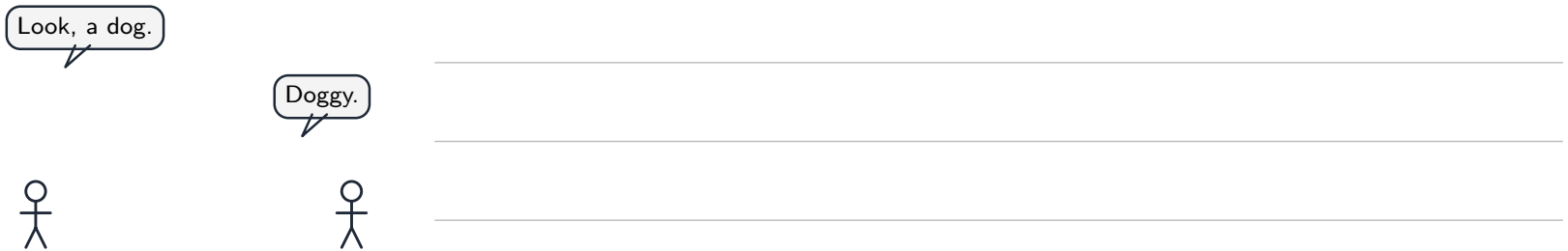
A. sensory adaptation B. categorical perception C. the phonological loop D. bottom-up feature detection E. spontaneous recovery



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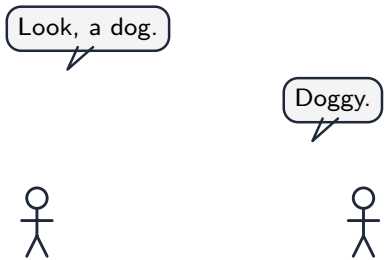
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2.2 Answer: B. Continuous acoustic input is perceived as discrete phoneme categories. Compare the exact process, design or evidence, rather than an associated keyword.

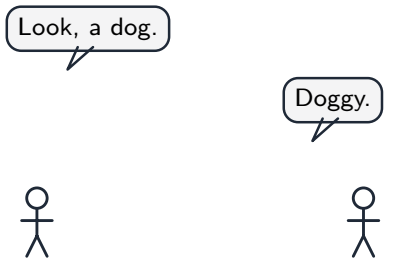
Exercise 2.3

2.3 Revisit the worked case. State one conclusion its evidence supports and one stronger conclusion it does not support. Explain the difference. [2]



Exercise 2.3

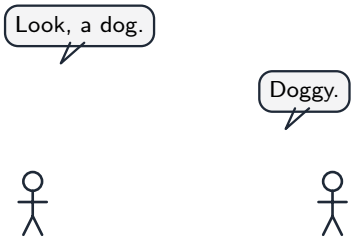
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2.3 Use the worked case evidence to support a bounded claim and explain why a causal, universal or stronger claim needs additional evidence. The claim must fit the specific design and observed process.

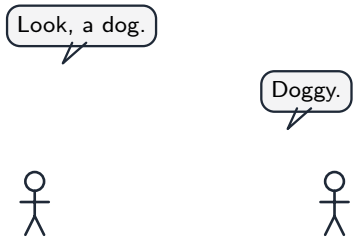
Exercise 3.1

3.1 Explain how a message can have correct syntax but be misunderstood because of context, using an original example. Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]



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3.1 Can you open the window? has interrogative syntax but may function as a request. Someone answering only yes may understand literal ability but miss the pragmatic intention. Meaning depends on speaker, setting and conventions. Accept another example that clearly separates grammatical form from use without treating a language community as uniform. Award B1 each (authored) for the interpretation, its reasoning, a relevant limitation/alternative and an appropriate check, up to four points. Accept a different justified answer satisfying these demands.