

Language Creativity in Numerals

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Given minimalist assumptions, language creativity is the conjunction of the composition operation and a recursive procedure. I assume that the composition operation derives asymmetric structures, and I consider the consequences of this hypothesis for language creativity. I focus on the derivation of complex numerals and show that asymmetry in complementation and adjunction, mediated by a small set of unpronounced operators, contribute to language creativity. I take a single application of the recursive operation to be an instance of language creativity, and consider the properties of domains with limited recursion. I argue that the limitations are attributed to interface requirements. I propose that the difference in recursion between argument structure and adjunct structure follow from the fact that only the first qualifies as a unit of interpretation. I draw parallels with the asymmetry of recursive systems in biology.