The Bidirectional Growth Model of Children's Syntax

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In this paper I argue that the growth of children's syntax is determined by a biological program which develops it from the two opposing ends of syntactic structures, i.e., CP and VP. The empirical data of ours show that children's earliest emergence of syntax involves projections which may be characterized as CP or VP respectively.

The main scientific findings of this paper are that children's syntax develops or grows in a bidirectional way with CP and VP as the two initial starting points, converging finally at the domain of IP in a later stage which connects CP and VP. According to this account of ours, children start with CP and VP fragment structures in their earliest stage of language development which may not be connected before the emergence of the INFL system in their syntax. It is argued that children's syntactic acquisition is a process of connecting CP with VP by the emergence of IP.

The hypothesis is that children are born with abstract syntactic structures which need be realized by their encounter with empirical data in the linguistic communities in which they grow up. It is claimed that children's full-fledged syntactic structures are acquired only when their INFL system has emerged. Further evidence will be given to show that children are born with interactional and pointing capacities which constitute the biological basis of the projections labeled as CP and VP.