

Handout 7

Pinker 2000, pp. 23-91

1 Discuss the following graph from Pinker's book.

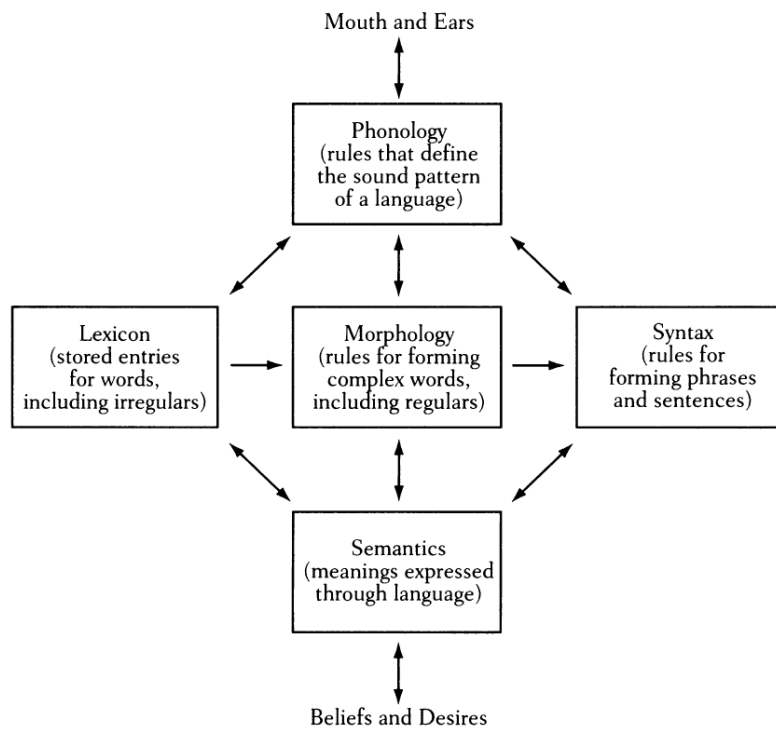


Figure 1. Pinker 2000, p. 23

2 How would, according to Pinker, the following listemes be represented in our language faculty?

- *quacked*
- *gone with the wind*
- *duck*
- *cooked*
- *duck-billed platypuses*

3 Why do speakers disagree about an adequate inflection of the following words?

- *mother-in-law* (pl.)
- *gin-and-tonic* (pl.)
- *passer-by* (pl.)

4 Discuss inflectional properties of English and German comparing the following two verbs.

- *sprech, sprechen, spreche, sprach, sprich, sprichst, spricht, sprecht, sprach spräche, ...*
- *speak, spoke, speaks, speaking.*

How about the verb *to be*?

5 Explain to each other the allomorphy behind the English past-tense and plural formation and argue which modules in our language faculty are involved in what order when applying them.

