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**From:** Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 2, 2015 1:41 PM  
**To:** Jeffrey E.  
**Subject:** RE: Re:

The idea of interpreting sensory systems as involving both input and output, and hence presumably accessing a central system of competence (as distinct from the input-output performance systems) is a very interesting one, particularly the hints about eyes. I don't see quite how it works, but worth pursuing and thinking about.

Very few people I can think of, but will think more.

What sensory systems provide to the brain is always interpreted by internal systems, memory included, and the sensory systems themselves carry out analysis. There's a good deal of detailed work on this, mainly for sound and vision. Turns out, for example, that chimp auditory system yields something very close to the physical features that enter into the phonological systems of human language, but lacking the internal interpretation, for the apes it's noise while for the newborn infant it's language.

From: Jeffrey E. [mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com]  
Sent: Saturday, August 01, 2015 7:33 PM  
To: Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Re:

is a first step to get a group together of people that might add useful insights. . people you respect . though you might disagree. maybe we pose the question to the group. re eyes, it seems that each sense should have both a transmitter and receiver, . scent. smell., hearing voice. , touch movement, sight -? , I think the eyes transmit info. my work on placebo showed video did not work, no explanation, interrogators. use eyes to gauge truthfulness. ( But these are all cognitive interpretations of the (internal) output of the visual system. , -- not sure what input is not- a cognitive interpretation.? why I like the music work is that our brain must first deconstruct the chords. Fourier transform , or something like, it. then have a memory to know whether the next two or three notes follow grammatically from the past few.

On Sat, Aug 1, 2015 at 6:30 PM, Noam Chomsky [REDACTED] > wrote:

Been on the road all day from the Cape to Cambridge. Along with every other car in Mass.

Glad you liked the paper. Since Leonard Bernstein's Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard about 40 years ago there has been interesting work seeking structural similarities between language and at least some musical traditions, mostly western tonal. You might want to have a look. One of those doing the best work is my colleague David Pesetsky, a fine linguist and excellent musician.

You're right that "reading the eyes" is a complex and fascinating topic, even extrapolating gaze, the way infants do but probably not other animals. And famously, staring into someone's eyes is far from neutral: either serious threat or real intimacy. But these are all cognitive interpretations of the (internal) output of the visual system.

It could be argued that the computations involved in determining what we see are a central system, not just part of a processing system. Hard to see how to pose that as a real empirical issue that can be tested.

From: jeffrey E. [mailto:[jeevacation@gmail.com](mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com) <<mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com>> ]  
Sent: Saturday, August 01, 2015 9:18 AM

To: Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Re:

"processing" -my use of sloppy language , sorry, thanks for the great paper. music and its" understanding", might be a closer representation to expressing a formalism that might help describe the events. it is not an either , or , it is a superposition of melody, prosody, harmony, within certain bounds that differentiate it from noise.

fyi, in the paper it says the vision system is only input, .not sure that is correct. reading the eyes might have more to it than previously thought.

On Sat, Aug 1, 2015 at 6:54 AM, Noam Chomsky [REDACTED] > wrote:

There is a view that language is essentially a processing system. The arguments against it seem to me very power. I'll attach a recent paper about it, a contribution to a volume of essays dedicated to Jerry Fodor and focusing on his conception of language as processing (input modules). His version is far more sophisticated than the signal processing approaches that were all the rage in the 1950s, drawing from the successes of wartime technology in signal analysis and Shannon's information theory.

Noam

From: jeffrey E. [mailto:[jeevacation@gmail.com](mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com) <<mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com>> ]  
Sent: Saturday, August 01, 2015 7:34 AM  
To: Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Re:

can it be thought of as no more than signal processing. why not use the same technology that attempts to intercept communications and decode the signals and apply it to language. normally one tries to process the signals. i wonder if they put it in reverse. and processed the language in an attempt to find coherence.???

On Fri, Jul 31, 2015 at 6:58 PM, Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]  
wrote:

There is a notion of coherence in both cases, but how to unify them, or whether it's possible, I don't really see.

From: jeffrey E. [mailto:[jeevacation@gmail.com](mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com) <<mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com>>]  
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 1:33 PM  
To: Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re:

what i have been calling my sense making module. . visual sense, is the image coherent. / ?  
why dont you ask your young friends what they think the chomsky questions should be. I will provide the reward

On Fri, Jul 31, 2015 at 1:21 PM, Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] > wrote:

Marr's group, as you know, studied edges, rigidity, etc. Those particular phenomena don't seem relevant to language, except indirectly (as Marr and I in fact discussed often): there must be built-in systems that enter into language processing (including determining grammatical status -- "legitimacy" – one property among many). That's what work on UG should be about.

Noam

From: jeffrey E. [mailto:[jeevacation@gmail.com](mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com) <<mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com>>]  
Sent: Friday, July 31, 2015 12:59 PM  
To: Noam Chomsky [REDACTED]  
Subject:

I hope you have fun at the institute. I am in santa fe. . you and i have discussed vision and edges etc rigidity etc. auto focus on a camera looks for the most contrast. is there an equivalent . first step to intuit whether a sentence is legitimate ?

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