From: "Noam Chomsky" <█████████████████>
    To: "jeffrey E." <jeevacation@gmail.com>
    CC: "█████████████████" <█████████████████>
Subject: RE:
    Date: Mon, 07 Sep 2015 18:06:04 +0000

Don't know if or when this letter will get sent. Lots of internet problems the last few days. One of the problems of living in a third world country. Paris is better, I'm sure.

These are interesting suggestions, but I'm not sure they are the right ones. They're very different from the Hilbert questions. These were deeply embedded in rich theoretical understanding, and were at the borders of such understanding. Furthermore, solving the problems would have a major impact on enriching mathematics.
They were very different from the imitation game, which, as Turing explained, had no particular intellectual interest but could be useful in encouraging the development of better hardware/software. Incidentally, as a matter of historical accuracy, I'm keeping to his famous paper. Elsewhere he seems to have taken it more seriously.

In formulating suggestions, it is important to avoid the fashionable (and moronic) approach of google-style statistical analysis of Big Data. Thus one could perhaps get a better prediction of leaves blowing in the wind by that approach than by invoking the laws of motion and interfering factors, but the better prediction would be scientifically worthless, whatever utility it might have.

Now consider these ideas. Take the first. The Big Data approach might provide a tolerable solution that wouldn't have the slightest scientific or other interest – that is, giving some understanding of how infants do it.

Take the others. A serious and meaningful answer would require an understanding of the phenotype – the state attained by the acquisition system. Here there are very significant questions, but like the Hilbert set, theory-internal ones that can barely be understood outside of the theoretical context in which they are posed: say, how to incorporate head-movement, with its peculiarities, within a Merge-based system. And many others like it. That's what I think one would find throughout the sciences, with the possible exception of parts of theoretical physics that verge on mathematics. All throughout the biological sciences. And throughout chemistry except maybe in very special corners that are basically part of theoretical physics.

A further problem is that the real task is not to show how a system could acquire some competence in English – which, again, might very superficially be approximated by an intellectually pointless Big Data approach – but how a child can acquire whatever language it is exposed to. That's always been the problem of theoretical linguistics/psycholinguistics. And a very different one, which can't be seriously addressed without UG-considerations.

All requires some more thought, I think.

Noam

From: jeffrey E. [mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, September 05, 2015 8:20 AM
To: Noam Chomsky <█████████████>; █████████████████
Subject:

noam, as always, spending time . was great/ first draft. of the Chomsky Challenge. . Produce a non-living system that can be put into an environment for a while and --- 1 . be able to discriminate language from noise. . prize . a 1 dollar bill signed by Noam and 100k. . 2. be able to discriminate coherent sentences from non (we provide 10 test sentences). prize a 10 dollar signed Chomsky bill , and 500k. 3. a language learning module. 20 dollar bill signed and 1 million, 4. a sense making module that can understand

meaning inference. . etc. the non recommendation recommendation. . ie the student has a nice family. etc. a 100 dollar signed bill and 10 million dollars. ? --- If your left leaning , is in conflict with a money prize , we could substitute ---your prize money goes to charity,- airline tickets to the Gaza strip. - Nicaragua, North Korea, . and 1000 blank ,protest placards ? or top prize includes 1000 protesters of your choice for three demonstrations :)

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    please note