A basic mechanism of language comprehension that involves the activation, selection and integration of constructions corresponding to the linguistic input is put forward. During the processing of the sentence

He is kicking the ball

the following constructions are likely to be accessed:

- **Nominal**: he
- **Verb**: be3-pres-sing
- **Clause**: [Ref-Ptcomp be3-pres-sing Prednhead] clause
- **Proposition**: [Ref-Ptcomp kickv-ing head Objcomp] proposition
- **Predicative**: [Ref-Ptcomp Vhead Objcomp] clause

The [he3-sing-male-human-pron]nominal construction encodes the knowledge that pronouns like “he” (3rd person, singular, male, human) function as full nominals, encoding both a referential specifier function and an objective head function (see Ball, 2005, “A Bi-Polar Theory of Nominal and Clause Structure and Function”, this proceedings). The [be3-pres-sing]verb construction encodes the status of “is” as the 3rd person, present tense, singular form of the verb “be”. The [Ref-Ptcomp be3-pres-sing Prednhead]clause construction captures the use of a reference point complement and a referential specifier (be3-pres-sing) to tie a predicating functioning as head of a clause to the larger discourse situation via the reference point and referential specifier. This construction is related to the basic subject-predicate form of a clause with be3-pres-sing and Prednhead together constituting the predicate (which is not a distinct functional element in this construction) and Prednhead alone constituting a predication (i.e. head, and post-head complements—syntactically a VP when the head is a verb). In the case of a tensed verb without a separate auxiliary (e.g. “kicked”), the construction has the form [Ref-Ptcomp Prednhead clause] where Prednhead constitutes a predicate (and distinct constituent) which encodes the tensed verb and post-head complements and Ref-Ptcomp corresponds to the subject. The [kickv-ing]verb construction captures the “V-ing” (i.e. progressive) verb form of “kicking”. The [Subjcomp kickv-ing Objcomp]proposition construction captures the basic relational meaning of the verb “kick” which combines with a subject and object complement to form a proposition. This construction is closely related to the basic SVO form of a clause. The [Vhead Objcomp]predication construction captures the combining of a tenseless verb head with an object complement to form a predication that functions as the head of the [Ref-Ptcomp be3-pres-sing Prednhead]clause construction. The [be3-pres-sing V-inghead predicator]construction captures the combining of the auxiliary verb “be” functioning as a specifier with the progressive form of a verb functioning as the head in forming a predicator. The [the spec Head]nominal construction captures the encoding of a referential specifier and objective head to form a nominal. The [the spec ballhead]nominal construction captures the encoding of “ball” as the head of the [the spec Head]nominal construction.

Assuming the activation, selection and integration of these constructions during the processing of this linguistic input, the following linguistic representation is suggested: