Research in the supporting sciences

LINGUISTIC THEORY

85–89   Ballmer, Thomas. Semantic structures of texts and discourses. *Journal of Semantics* (Nijmegen), **2**, 3/4 (1983), 221–52.

A comparison is made between the structural and the dynamic approach. When considering texts and discourses as full blown linguistic entities, a structural and emically abstracting approach is not sufficient. A text grammar has to account for dynamics, and specifically for the dynamics of context change. Such a grammar has to fulfill a number of requirements, specifically some concerning its formalisability. As an example of such a formal approach, the Context Change Logic for a solution of the Bach Peters paradox is proposed. The missing lexical basis of Logical Language Analysis is criticised. A programme is then presented to give formal logical semantics of natural language a solid linguistic basis. The topology of the semantic space of natural language is developed. This is achieved by reference to a comprehensive study of 21 000 German verbs, 13 000 German adverbs and an indefinite number of nouns. The paper then demonstrates how the semantic space of natural language impinges upon text and discourse structures. The expressive power of language is seen to be performed and severely restricted by the lexico-semantic findings presented in the paper.

85–90   Cornilescu, Alexandra (U. of Bucharest). Word meaning, as formal and factual object. *Revue Roumaine de Linquistique* (Bucharest), **28**, 6 (1983), 495–509.

Natural language semantics must be conceived of as both empirical and non-empirical. Categorial grammars such as Montague Grammar offer the most suitable framework for describing categorial meaning, without going beyond the level of syntactic subcategorisation. A theory of lexical meaning is also required which permits the individualisation of the lexical items of each syntactic category, and which represents a word's acquisition of meaning through its location in some body of organised knowledge in which it is related to other concepts. Reference is fundamentally an epistemological notion; a theory of reference must explain the role of language in the acquisition, assessment and communication of knowledge. In the study of word meaning it is impossible to separate knowledge of the language from knowledge of the world; furthermore, word meaning is changed or made more precise by context, and as a result, any Katz–Fodor type theory is unworkable.

85–91   Hajicova, Eva. Topic and focus. *Theoretical Linguistics* (Berlin, FRG), **10**, 2/3 (1983), 268–76.

The boundary between topic and focus in a sentence is always placed so that there is a node A such that every node that is less dynamic than A belongs to the topic, and every node that is more dynamic, to the focus. The hierarchy of communicative

dynamism within focus is determined by an ordering of the types of dependency relation given by the grammar, whereas within the topic no such hierarchy is determined. A consideration of topic/focus articulation may provide a more illuminating account of presupposition than the negation test, distinguishing three kinds of entailment: meaning proper, presupposition and allegation.

85–92   Hausser, Roland R. On vagueness. *Journal of Semantics* (Nijmegen), **2**, 3/4 (1983), 273–302.

It seems to be a foregone conclusion that natural language meanings are vague. Much depends, however, on the way meaning is analysed. For example, should vagueness of meaning be treated in terms of the truth- or denotation-conditions of expressions? Rather than proposing yet another 'fuzzy' or multi-valued logic, this paper investigates the nature of 'reference' and 'truth'. Two possible interpretations of the formal model structures used in formal semantics are considered. One is called the paradigm I approach, according to which the model structure is interpreted as a representation of reality (such that the speaker/hearer is part of the model structure). The other is called the paradigm II approach, according to which the model-structure is interpreted as a representation of conceptual meaning structures (such that the model structure is part of the speaker/hearer). It is shown that the theoretical nature of vagueness is totally different in the two paradigms. In conclusion, a number of standard examples of vagueness are analysed within the paradigm II approach, including the so-called Sorites paradox or paradox of the heap.

85–93   Heringer, Hans Jurgen. Wortbildung: Sinn aus dem Chaos. [Word formation: sense out of chaos.] *Deutsche Sprache* (Berlin, FRG), **1** (1984), 1–13.

In current theories of word formation the meaning of compounds is given a description which is sometimes too narrow, sometimes too broad, and always too general. In this article, word formation is brought into connection with the pragmatical mode (Givón), and it is shown how compounds are understood against the background of common knowledge with its different components (running knowledge, generic knowledge and episodic knowledge).

85–94   Magnera, Georgia (U. of Alberta). Semantic and grammatical aspects of hypothetical verbs. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **62**, 1/2 (1984), 71–95.

Future predictions, desires, wishes, hopes, obligations, permission, and prohibition may all be considered categories of hypothetical information because the events they refer to are only potential, not actually occurring. This paper explores some of the grammatical and semantic aspects of English verbs (in particular modals and catenatives) which express these types of hypothetical information.

Experimental evidence for the semantic organisation of hypothetical verbs is also presented. Subjects were asked to rate the semantic similarity of each pair of hypothetical verbs in the stimulus set. A hierarchical clustering analysis of similarity ratings can show some of the semantic components underlying a semantic field such as the one investigated here. Finally, a hierarchy of hypotheticals is proposed, whereby

the hypothetical verbs are arranged from greatest to least probability of an event occurring. Evidence from double modal dialects and various sentence types suggests that within an utterance verbs higher in the hierarchy must be placed before less hypothetical elements.

85–95   Penelope, Julia. Topicalisation: the rhetorical strategies it serves and the interpretive strategies it imposes. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **20**, 11/12 (1982), 683–95.

In spite of evidence to the contrary, many linguists persist in regarding topicalisation as a purely grammatical 'structure' to be accounted for by increasingly arbitrary and unmotivated syntactic or semantic rules or some combination of the two. The examples discussed in this essay suggest, however, that topicalisation is a pragmatic rule available to writers and speakers, that its selection is governed by rhetorical rather than textual considerations, and that its use imposes rather than serves interpretive strategies for readers and hearers.

85–96   Wiese, Bernd. Anaphora by pronouns. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **21**, 2 (1983), 373–417.

An adequate conception of anaphora is still a desideratum. Considering the anaphoric use of third-person personal pronouns, this study contributes to the solution of the question of what anaphora is. Major tenets of generative approaches to pronominal anaphora are surveyed; descriptive and methodological problems with transformational as well as interpretive treatments are discussed. The prevailing assumption that anaphora is a syntactically based phenomenon is shown to be inadequate. In particular, it is argued that pronominal anaphora does not constitute a case of either a syntactic (agreement) relation or a semantic (coreference) relation between antecedents and anaphors, i.e. linguistic expressions. In fact, there is no grammatical antecedent–anaphor relation that is essential to the description of pronouns. Pronouns are to be treated in their own right rather than by recourse to supposed antecedents. An account of the use of pronouns has to be based on a notion of speaker reference and on a unified description of lexical entries for pronouns that specify their meanings. Sample entries for English are suggested. It is emphasised that pronoun meanings reflect social, not biological, classifications of possible referents. To the extent that pronouns are used according to morphosyntactic features, as in languages like German or French, lexical entries for pronouns should specify the pronouns' 'associative potential'. Associative potential has the same function as conceptual meaning, viz. delimiting the associated extension. In addition to this, pronouns turn out to differ from 'normal definite nominals' only in the low conceptual content of their meanings. Pronoun occurrences that apparently agree with and are coreferential with referential antecedents are found to form a restricted subclass of pronoun use in general as well as of anaphoric pronoun use. Thus one must refrain from forcing each and every pronoun occurrence into this mould. Instead, anaphora by pronouns is characterised as a type of use where pronouns serve to refer to referents that the speaker considers to be retrievable from the universe-of-discourse.

85-97   Zadeh, L. A. A fuzzy-set-theoretic approach to the compositionality of meaning: propositions, dispositions and canonical forms. *Journal of Semantics* (Nijmegen), **2**, 3/4 (1983), 253–72.

In its traditional interpretation, Frege's principle of compositionality is not sufficiently flexible to have a wide applicability to natural languages. In a fuzzy-set-theoretic setting which is outlined in this paper, Frege's principle is modified and broadened by allowing the meaning of a proposition, p, to be composed not from the meaning of the constituents of p, but, more generally, from the meaning of a collection of fuzzy relations which form a so-called 'explanatory database' that is associated with p. More specifically, through the application of test-score semantics, the meaning of p is represented as a procedure which tests, scores and aggregates the elastic constraints which are implicit in p. The employment of fuzzy sets in this semantics allows p to contain fuzzy predicates such as *tall, kind, much richer*, etc.; fuzzy quantifiers such as *most, several, few, usually*, etc.; modifiers such as *very, more or less, quite, somewhat*, etc.; and other types of semantic entities which cannot be dealt with within the framework of classical logic.

The approach described in the paper suggests a way of representing the meaning of dispositions, e.g. *Overeating causes obesity, Icy roads are slippery, Young men like young women*, etc. Specifically, by viewing a disposition, d, as a proposition with implicit fuzzy quantifiers, the problem of representing the meaning of d may be decomposed into (1) restoring the suppressed fuzzy quantifiers and/or fuzzifying the nonfuzzy quantifiers in the body of d; and (2) representing the meaning of the resulting dispositional proposition through the use of test-score semantics.

To place in evidence the logical structure of p and, at the same time, provide a high-level description of the composition process, p may be expressed in the canonical form 'X is F' where $X = (X1, \ldots, Xn)$ is an explicit n-ary variable which is constrained by p, and F is a fuzzy n-ary relation which may be interpreted as an elastic constraint on X. This canonical form and the meaning-composition process for propositions and dispositions are illustrated by several examples among which is the proposition $p\Delta$ *Over the past few years Naomi earned far more than most of her close friends.*

PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

85-98   Berkovits, Rochele. On disambiguating surface-structure ambiguity. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **20**, 11/12 (1982), 713–26.

Three experiments are re-examined in light of the hypothesis proposed by Wales and Toner (1979) concerning which surface-structure ambiguities can be successfully disambiguated via intonation. They argue that when the preferred reading coincides with the earlier relevant constituent boundary then intonations will reliably convey both interpretations. It is demonstrated in Experiments I and II that when attention is not called to intonation, this variable is equally ineffective with respect to ambiguities in which the preferred reading is associated with either the earlier or the

later boundary. Experiment III indicates that the results of Wales and Toner can be replicated only when subjects are explicitly listening for prosodic cues. In providing an explanation for their hypothesis, Wales and Toner claim that later constituent boundaries typically involve discontinuous constituents, which are easier to mark intonationally. It is shown that this claim does not accurately describe the structure of most bracketing ambiguities, nor does it explain why intonation effectively disambiguates some instances of surface-structure ambiguity rather than others.

85–99   Martinet, André (École Pratique des Hautes Études à la Sorbonne). Ce que n'est pas la phonologie. [What phonology is not.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **60** (1983), 6–13.

Phonology (the study of distinctive sound units in particular languages) is to be distinguished from phonetics (the study of speech sounds in general). Phonology does not deal with alternation in morphemes where this is attributable to lexico-grammatical conditioning (even if historically there is some phonological basis for it); even productive alternation of the sort /-ɛ̃/ /-in/, /-in-/ found in French is not dealt with by phonology. Such matters are handled by morphology. Where the modification of particular sound units is automatic, however, as in neutralisation, it is dealt with by phonology. True free variation should be recorded for particular meaningful forms by lexicographers and grammarians.

85–100   Miller, M. (City of London Poly.). On the perception of rhythm. *Journal of Phonetics* (London), **12**, 1 (1984), 75–83.

This paper describes an experiment which attempted to determine the degree of consensus, if any, on the perception of syllable/stress timed rhythm in seven languages – Arabic, Polish, Argentinian, Spanish, Finnish, Japanese, Indonesian and Yoruba. Recorded language samples in reading and conversational styles were presented to English and French phoneticians and English and French non-phoneticians. Results indicate that all groups classified Arabic as strongly stress-timed. Predictably, phoneticians showed greater discrimination than non-phoneticians. For the reading style, statistically more reliable than the conversational style, phoneticians classified Spanish as clearly stress-timed and Yoruba as syllable-timed while Japanese, Finnish and Indonesian were not clearly assigned to either rhythmic type. Opinions differed on the categorisation of Polish. Even so, languages appear not to fall clearly into dichotomous rhythmic types but to display features of both types in different proportions.

85–101   Mitleb, Fares M. (Yarmouk U., Irbid, Jordan). Voicing effect on vowel duration is not an absolute universal. *Journal of Phonetics* (London), **12**, 1 (1984), 23–7.

A familiar model of the linguistic analysis of speech tends to describe speech in terms of the segment units of phonetic transcription under the assumption that non-discrete physical properties of speech can be derived from the discrete elements by universal rules of performance. Thus, it is widely accepted that vowels are universally longer

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before voiced consonants than before voiceless ones; for example, in English *tab* and *tap*, the vowel is obviously longer in the first. A sepectrographic test of Arabic minimal pairs by eight Arabs, however, revealed that Arabic did not exhibit a difference in vowel duration as a function of the segmental 'voicing' feature. Yet to further support this finding another spectrographic test of English minimal pairs spoken by eight Arabs revealed that they had considerable difficulty learning the *novel* temporal implementation for the English 'voicing' feature. These results disprove the assumption of current linguistic analysis that non-discrete physical properties of speech sounds are 'supplied by universal rules' that speakers do not need to learn. Instead, it is proposed that non-segmental differences exist between the temporal structures of languages that must be accounted for in the linguistic analysis of each language and must, apparently, be learned by second language learners to sound like speakers of the target language.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS

85–102   Bailey, Charles-James N. An apparent paradox concerning the nature of language. *Language and Communication* (Oxford), **3**, 3 (1983), 205–8.

In his book *The roots of language*, Bickerton argues that creolisation is both cause and source of connaturalness and that later linguistic developments are not natural. Connaturalness is however caused by developments free from the influence of other language systems. Language contact (including creolisation) can lead to abnaturalness – the violation of connatural patterns of language. This contradiction is only apparent and seems to lie in the use of the term 'creolisation', here used to refer to the down-building or disintegrating processes that affect languages in contact. Bickerton uses the term to refer to the positive, creative, up-building processes involved in children's inventing new languages they have never heard before. Bickerton nowhere justifies the exclusion of non-virgin creoles from his discussion.

Tok Pisin data is used as evidence against Bickerton's view that the early development of a creole and the acquisition of language by children necessarily involve an innate bioprogram. Constraint should be seen instead in terms of a general pre-wiring.

85–103   Briggs, Charles L. Questions for the ethnographer: a critical examination of the role of the interview in fieldwork. *Semiotica* (The Hague), **46**, 2/4 (1983), 233–61.

Our present, largely unquestioned faith in the interview as a means of obtaining exegesis should be replaced by critical understanding of the process and its results. This goal could be more swiftly and fully realised if the basic linguistic training for ethnographers included not only phonology, morphology and syntax, but embraced an introduction to the semiotic complexity of communication and to conversational analysis as well. This is especially important for fieldworkers who are concerned with the many ways in which signs can mean and people can communicate. The interview may indeed be the most efficient means of eliciting masses of data. Nevertheless, it

may also be the best way to sever the connections between referential content and other aspects of the communicative situation or, to phrase it differently, to make all signs look like context-independent symbols. A major component of the Peircian legacy, of course, is the refusal to collapse the indexical and iconic modes of signification into the symbolic. Therefore, the cultivation by ethnographers of a critical under- standing of the use of interview techniques will assist us in replacing another feature of scientific colonialism – communicative hegemony – with an appreciation of the semiotic richness and complexity of human existence.

85–104   Brouwer, Dédé. The influence of the addressee's sex on politeness in language use. *Linguistics* (The Hague), **20**, 11/12 (1982), 697–711.

On the basis of a corpus of 626 utterances by people buying train tickets, an investigation was made of (*a*) differences between the speech used by women and by men and (*b*) differences between the speech used when speaking to women and to men. The independent variables were sex of speaker, age of speaker, and sex of addressee. The dependent variables were diminutives, hesitations, requests for information, speaker's polite forms, and addressee's polite forms.

The results indicate that there are hardly any speech differences between female and male speakers, if the speech events and the factors, situation, setting, and topic are the same for all informants. The sex of addressee, however, affected the use of polite forms: the travellers – both women and men – were more polite to the male ticket sellers than to the female ticket sellers. Both these results show the importance of taking into account interactional aspects in research into sex differences in speech; attention should also be paid to the choice of the interviewer in sociolinguistic studies.

85–105   Eisenstein, Miriam (New York U.) Native reactions to non-native speech: a review of empirical research. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, Ind), **5**, 2 (1983), 160–76.

Recent research considers native reactions to various aspects of non-native speech and associated judgments regarding such speakers. The studies discussed here view listeners, speakers and language from a variety of perspectives employing both objective and subjective research paradigms. Interlocutor variables which have been found to influence linguistic perceptions include age, social status, degree of bilin- gualism, and educational level. Even the linguistic sophistication of the listener may be important.

Studies of error gravity, which treat the perceived seriousness of error types in learners' interlanguage, may now be contrasted with data from several related and unrelated languages. The relative intelligibility of language samples has also been investigated as has the role of comprehension in the information of linguistic judgments.

Research reflecting listeners' personal impressions and reactions shows that non- natives tend to be downgraded in contexts ranging from the classroom to the workplace. This area of experimentation would be enhanced by exploration of the issues through studies in natural sociolinguistic contexts.

85–106   Hymes, Dell (U. of Pennsylvania). Sociolinguistics: stability and consolidation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Amsterdam), **45** (1984), 39–45.

Historians of sociolinguistics should resist the temptation to describe or explain the rise of sociolinguistics by appeal to a single idea of method. Sociolinguists should address the question of whether or not there is anything more to their field than a common interest in the diversity of language and its social foundations and concomitants.

There is under way at the moment in sociolinguistics a transition to a period of consolidation sustained by three things: (1) the relevance of work to a variety of social situations and problems, (2) the concomitant adoption of a sociolinguistic perspective in certain growing disciplinary and professional areas, and (3) the congruence of the perspective with a language trend in the systematic study of language in linguistics itself. Two related tasks will sustain a line of work to be considered distinctively sociolinguistic, viz. (i) the description of verbal repertoire and (ii) the description and analysis of the organisation and change of verbal repertoirs in relation to the main processes of societal evolution of our time.

85–107   Jalaluddin, A. K. (Nat. Council of Education Research and Training, New Delhi). Problems of transition of rural Indian society from oral to written tradition through adult education. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **7**, 5 (1983), 517–31.

India, having a rich oral tradition, yet with nearly two thirds of its population still illiterate and more than half of them below the poverty line, poses a challenging task to the literacy workers of not only reducing the socioeconomic disparities but also of bridging the gaps between the oral and written traditions in the context of a pluralistic and multilingual society. This paper summarises the experiences of a large number of literacy workers and adult educators who have been grappling with the problem of establishing the sociolinguistic base of literacy teaching and learning and linking the mother tongue of the linguistic minorities with the standard regional languages since the launching of the National Adult Education Programme in 1978. The focus on the adult learners' needs in the programme facilitated the introduction of a new pedagogy with emphasis on their internal motivation, development of social awareness and a critical consciousness. The immediate and perceptible behavioural outcome of an effective adult education centre has been found to be a comparatively higher degree of articulateness, power of discrimination and a sense of knowledge organisation and protest orientation. However, as much of these behaviours are qualitatively assessed through conversation and reading, the above developmental indicators may essentially highlight a modulation on the existing oral traditions rather than a transition to behaviours indicative of the tradition of writing.

85–108   Kloss, Heinz. Umriß eines Forschungsprogrammes zum Thema 'Sprachentod'. [Outline of a research programme on the theme 'language death'.] *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Amsterdam), **45** (1984), 65–76.

The enormity of the task of investigating the circumstances causing or surrounding the death of a language is obvious, for while in Europe we have fewer than 100 languages, nearly all of them viable and well elaborated, we find all over the globe 5000–6000 living languages, most of them spoken by small and even tiny groups with little hope for language survival.

We must distinguish between three main types of language death: (I) Language death without language shift: the speech community dies out either because of zero natality – often caused by a cultural shock – or because the entire group falls victim to a mass catastrophe such as famine, inundation, an earthquake, a war conducted with (e.g.) ABC weapons, a civil war, or an expedition aiming at forcefully domesticating a tribe. (II) Language death because of language shift: here we have to isolate two all-encompassing factors, namely the near impossibility of language maintenance if the speech community does not inhabit a compact speech area (*Sprachgebiet*) and the intrinsic hostility of the technology-based infrastructure of modern civilisation. (The author also discusses certain conceptual subtleties such as the distinction between the death through language shift of a speech 'community' and the death of the last active speaker[s]. (III) Finally, we have the case of the largely nominal 'death by metamorphosis': a language disappears from the language lists of the academic world and/or UNO/UNESCO because of a change of status by either downgrading or partition. The language assumes the status of a 'mere' dialect when the speech community ceases using it as a vehicle of written communication, preferring instead another but closely related tongue. The language undergoes 'partition' when there exist two or three comparably well-developed varieties and if the world of scholardom agrees to henceforth treat them as so many independent units and to speak of (e.g.) Upper Sorbian and Lower Sorbian while ousting the presently prevailing common designation 'Sorbian'.

Studying the problems of language death implies answering questions of language policy, i.e whether large-scale survival is (*a*) desirable and (*b*) possible, plus (*c*) how language shift, where inevitable, can be channelled in an adequate fashion. We even may romantically ask whether we might not take over precious subtleties from at least some of the doomed languages and, even more romantically, whether there are not some few languages so precious as to make us try to keep them permanently alive.

85–109   Ryan, Ellen Bouhard (U. of Notre Dame & McMaster U.) Social psychological mechanisms underlying native speaker evaluations of non-native speech. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, Ind), **5**, 2 (1983), 148–59.

Research concerning native speaker reactions to the speech of language learners has generally flowed from an interpersonal perspective (i.e. speaker/listener). On the other hand, the broader social psychological domain of language attitude research has typically been based on an intergroup perspective (i.e. ingroup/outgroup). The two

perspectives are elaborated here and shown to provide complementary interpretations of evaluations of non-native speech. From the intergroup viewpoint, evaluations are based upon two processes: identification of the speaker's social group attributes and group-based inferences.

The step of identification is prerequisite for the stereotyping process. Variations in accuracy and in depth of identification are most probable when non-native speakers are involved; and the control, measurement, and manipulation of the variations must become universal features of programmatic investigations of reactions towards these speakers. The two other mechanisms derive from an interpersonal perspective. Inferences about speaker competence can go beyond the stereotyping inferences, and generalised negative affect can lead to downgrading by non-cognitive association. The fact that listeners downgrade speech that is different and hard to understand simply because it makes them uncomfortable needs to be kept in mind while more cognitive explanations are examined. How do listeners interpret the fact that an individual is speaking in a less than optimal manner? It appears that they tend to generalise to first language competence and overall intelligence. Yet, imperfect control can also protect speakers by allowing listeners to attribute errors to lack of knowledge of language and culture.

85–110   Schaff, Adam (European Co-ordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Science). The pragmatic function of stereotypes. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Amsterdam), **45** (1984), 89–100.

Stereotypes play a role in shaping the social character of human beings, modifying the social conditioning which is itself the origin of stereotypes. They have a socially integrating function, differentiating 'us' from 'them' on the basis of, for example, religion or language; like a foreign language, stereotypes cannot be truly internalised in adulthood. They also have a defensive function, protecting the 'closed mind' from hard realities; their elements of irrationality and faith lead them to play an important role in the development of ideologies. Thus, ultimately, they have a political function, and an examination of the language of politics should not be limited to surface phenomena but should explore the underlying functioning of stereotypes. 'Concepts' such as 'patriotism' and 'class enemy' have a strong emotional, irrational element and are thus stereotypes, dangerously liable to exploitation unless they are recognised for what they are.

85–111   Shorish, M. Mobin (U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). Planning by decree: the Soviet language policy in Central Asia. *Language Problems and Language Planning* (Berlin, FRG), **8**, 1 (1984), 35–49.

The Soviet Union as a multilingual and multicultural socialist society has been officially committed to the development of communism on the one hand, and, on the other, to the development and growth of various languages and the ethnic groups speaking them. One requires a standardised proletarian culture and presumably also a standardised language and the other strives for some form of linguistic if not cultural pluralism. This is the Soviet dilemma.

This paper attempts to identify ideological and political forces contributing to the

creation of this dilemma and the ways in which they have made impacts on languages of instruction and shaped the linguistic policies of the USSR. No attempt is made to give detailed descriptions of the implementations of these policies in the USSR at the present time. Instead, the plan is first to explain the ideological and political imperatives that have influenced the linguistic programmes and plans of the country in general and then to focus on Soviet strategies of language planning, language change, and language development in the Central Asian part of the USSR.

85-112 Shuy, Roger, W. The decade ahead for applied sociolinguistics. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Amsterdam), **45** (1984), 101-11.

Sociolinguistics began not as the development of theory for its own sake but with real problems of society, such as educational issues. Instead of being linear (theory → application), the model is triangular (problem/theory/application) with the starting point at any point on the triangle. In the past decade, sociolinguists studied language forms; in the field of education, applied sociolinguists worked on the interference of a child's native dialect on different aspects of his acquisition of standard English, and on bilingual education; they also studied language attitudes, values and beliefs, and larger issues of language planning, particularly in multilingual countries.

In the next decade such work will continue but the focus will be on matters larger than language forms, such as variability of discourse styles, and of strategies used to reveal language functions. Along with these developments will come a focus on the uses of sociolinguistics by other recognised disciplines, such as medicine; at present the focus is on the technological aspects of medicine rather than on doctor/patient interaction. Two promising areas are business and law (discourse analysis of taped conversation, libel cases).

85-113 Srivastava, R. N. and Gupta, R. S. (U. of Delhi). A linguistic view of literacy. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **7**, 5 (1983), 533-49.

Though speech is biologically and ontogenetically anterior to writing, writing is not merely a derivative or representation of speech but a language dimension in its own right, culturally determined and assuming more and more importance as societies move towards global literacy and higher culture, because of its capacity for greater abstraction, storage and transmission of thought over time and distance. Literacy experts urge learners to grasp whole meanings without explicit reference to the linguistic underpinning of writing systems; but a linguistic perspective must define reading and writing as linguistic processes constituting a proper area of enquiry within a general theory of language use, distinguishing the mechanics, pragmatics and ethnography of literacy. To these correspond the three crucial aspects of literacy; the 'orientational', learning the encoding and decoding skills; the 'operational', putting these skills to use as a normal part of one's way of life; and the 'functional', using written language to express and remake one's oral culture and world view.

The choice of a script of unwritten languages in India must take account of all these aspects. Where some ten scripts are used for scores of languages, the choice must not set up linguistic or cultural barriers. Literacy as a skill' is most effectively achieved

in the mother tongue, as literacy presupposes articulacy; however, as a 'function' it is most effectively achieved in the regional language of wider communication and culture. Therefore it is recommended that educands should first be taught literacy in their mother tongue and then transfer gradually to the dominant, mainstream language after elementary school; but it is pointed out that semi-literacy is as much a waste of human resources as illiteracy.

85–114   Tiugan, Marilena (Inst. for Ethnographical and Dialectological Research, Bucharest). Idiolect vs. rural social group: a relationship in search of a new kind of approach. *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* (Bucharest), **28**, 6 (1983), 1–8.

A discussion of the palatalisation of /f/ in the speech of two groups of middle-aged Romanian worker-peasants, one of which works in the local community environment while the other commutes to the city of Alexandria. It was found that four variants of /f/ co-exist. In families where the wife works in the community and the husband in the city, the distribution of the variants is more homogeneous. Inside this kind of family a diversification of usage was noted, while in families where partners work in the same place there is an adjustment to the norm of the neighbourhood. In the speech of the non-commuting member of the community, there is a strong tendency to avoid palatalised forms in the presence of outsiders. Since it is difficult to establish which of the variants of /f/ is representative of the social group, the value of the idiolect as representative of a language community is called into question.

PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

85–115   Clahsen, Harald. Der Erwerb von Kasusmarkierungen in der deutschen Kindersprache. [The acquisition of case markers in the language of German children.] *Linguistische Berichte* (Wiesbaden, FRG), **9** (1984), 1–31.

A report of a longitudinal study of three German children between the ages of 14 months and $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. A developmental sequence of three stages was noted: (1) 'no markings', (2) 'case-neutral markings' – where non-inflected forms are over-generalised to contexts requiring dative and accusative forms, and (3) 'case markings'. It is noticeable that German children – as compared with the acquisition of case inflections in other languages – start developing case morphology relatively late, at the age of three. This may be connected with the formal complexity of the German case system. But in order to understand over-generalisations of case markers it is necessary to examine the functional aspect of case in German. The author looks at the semantic function (employing categories taken from Dik's functional grammar), the pragmatic function, especially the system of focus, and the syntactic function. The latter interacts with the position of the verb. Indeed, word order is shown to be important in the early stages until case markers are more fully developed. The data provide support for Slobin's view that word order is primary in language acquisition and also that further 'operating principles', such as 'avoid exceptions', can be exemplified from the German data.

85–116 De Houwer, Annick (Free U., Brussels). Some aspects of the simultaneous acquisition of Dutch and English by a three-year-old child. *Nottingham Linguistic Circular* (Nottingham), **12**, 2 (1983), 106–29.

An account of the language development of a bilingual Dutch–English girl from 2;7 years to 3;2 years. The discussion mainly centres on code-switching and the use of colour terms in both languages. Copious illustrations are provided in the form of extended examples of the transcribed tape recordings that form the basis of the data. Language choice patterns are different depending on who is being spoken to: significantly more English is used with Dutch-speaking interlocutors than Dutch with English-speaking interlocutors. Some possible explanations for this imbalance are examined; the most plausible one seems to be that this child has a preferred language for certain specific domains.

85–117 Günther, S. and others. Ereignisnetze: Zeitnetze und Refentielle Netze. [Event nets: temporal nets and referential nets.] *Linguistische Berichte* (Wiesbaden, FRG), **88** (1983), 37–55.

At the core of text comprehension systems in artificial intelligence lie dynamic knowledge stores that include both knowledge of the world (in general) and of the discourse world (in particular) as well as containing the representation of the meaning of the text. The processing of knowledge can be formalised and operationalised as partial processes in the comprehension of text.

The example reported on is the recognition and filling of gaps in the temporal and event structure of a weather report. A semantic-representational language approach to text comprehension is used. A specific feature of this approach is that a common formalism is employed to represent textual meanings and knowledge of the world. This can be used for both the storage and retrieval of entities of knowledge as well as for inferential processes. A major distinction between the present work and more linguistically oriented approaches which have dealt with the processing of temporal relations is to be found in its explicit formalisation and use of rule-governed knowledge of the world.

85–118 Halliday, M. A. K. (U. of Sydney). On the transition from child tongue to mother tongue. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* (St Lucia), **3**, 2 (1983), 201–15.

In the first two months of life a child's semiotic is of two kinds, both pre-symbolic: (1) the bodily movements he performs during the exchange of attention with his care-giver and (2) involuntary acts that are contentful, e.g. crying. At around 5–6 months the child establishes the principle of constructing and using a symbol. In the period 7–10 months he proceeds to construe, sign by sign, his first semiotic system. The necessary preconditions for this protolanguage are: (*a*) that the child can control a range of vocal and gestural movements, (*b*) that he has identified a range of interpersonal contexts for acts of meaning in which expressions will be recognised and decoded, (*c*) he has learnt to pair content and expression in a single complex sign, and (*d*) he is recognised by others as a communicator. It seem highly likely that the development of this protolanguage is a general human potential. The protolanguage

is a system (not just an inventory) of signs, which is not, however, a language in the adult sense.

A protolanguage is a very effective semiotic system but does have certain limitations, viz. (i) it cannot serve to interpret experience, (ii) it cannot serve to maintain dialogue and (iii) it cannot both refer to the environment and act in it. The necessary transition from child tongue to mother tongue takes place at $1\frac{1}{2}$–2 years. Typically, each utterance and each word or structure has only one of the two basic functions of demanding or commenting. As the child moves on through the transition, words and structures become the resources of the transitory system, while the choice of functions becomes the basis of the mood system. The separation of functions is transformed to become the fundamental organising principle of the grammar itself. Utterances no longer function solely as demands or comments but are combinations of these, simultaneously both action and representation.

85–119   Hauenschild, Christa and Pause, Peter E. (U. of Konstanz). Faktoren-Analyse zur Modellierung des Textverstehens. [Factor analysis of the modelling of text comprehension.] *Linguistische Berichte* (Wiesbaden, FRG), **88** (1983), 101–20.

Comprehension is not the passive reception of information, but rather the active construction of an interpretation. The work reported here, from the 'Constance Concept of Context-Oriented Translation' research project, attempts to delimit and define the factors underlying comprehension. Considerations from research in logical semantics and artificial intelligence provide criteria for a study of the reconstructability of relations of anaphor in texts. From such studies a model of comprehension is developed, with linguistic, textual and world-knowledge components, but structured in terms of 'actors', accessing the various information sources in a fully active, non-hierarchical manner, thus progressively building a representation of the textual structure.

85–120   Hoppe, Ronald A. and Kess, Joseph F. (U. of Victoria, Canada). The acquisition of metalinguistic abilities. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), **15**, 2/3 (1983), 105–20.

Elementary school children at the ages of 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13 were investigated as to their ability to detect ambiguous sentences and to provide multiple interpretations for common ambiguity types in the areas of lexicon and syntax. Such abilities appear relatively late in the first acquistion process, and individual abilities vary greatly. They may therefore serve as potential test measures for facility in learning a second language successfully.

Metalinguistic knowledge has to do with what a speaker knows about his knowledge of the language, the interest being in the emergence of the child as grammarian. There are general developmental differences in the form in which metalinguistic abilities progress. Children can detect violations before they can name them, they can often detect unacceptable variations in phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. There are developmental differences in the application of these abilities to particular

structures within each language domain. Metalinguistic abilities develop progressively over the middle and late childhood years and continue on into adulthood.

Children between 5 and 13 years old were asked to give two meanings of ambiguous sentences. The results demonstrate a steady increase with age in the perception of meanings. At each age level, the lexically ambiguous sentences were generally easier than the structurally ambiguous ones. The youngest children were unable to perceive more than one meaning.

85–121 Horvarth, Barbara M. 'Learning to talk' in the new paradigm. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* (St Lucia), **3**, 2 (1983), 217–40.

The new dynamic paradigm in linguistics yields an explanation of the processes of language development in individuals that is more adequate than the ones provided by the static paradigm. A number of past and current models of child language development are criticised for making assumptions which are basically the outcome of studying inherently dynamic phenomena within a static framework (e.g. assumptions like: all change is qualitative, all change is instantaneous, stapes provide an adequate description of language acquisition, children acquire language by approximately 5 years of age, and having a rule in the grammar implies the ability to apply the rule in all possible constructions). There are similarities in the kinds of processes that go on in the historical development of language and those which occur during ontogenic language development. [Examples are discussed, e.g. directionality and order, the rate of linguistic change and implicational patterns in the order of acquisition of certain linguistic features.]

Language changes which take place throughout an individual's lifetime – not just those associated with early childhood – ought to be regarded as part of language development.

85–122 Lovett, Maureen W. Sentential structure and the perceptual span in normal reading development. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* (New York), **13**, 1 (1984), 69–84.

An eye–voice span paradigm was adopted to determine whether children use different aspects of sentence structure to facilitate decoding early in the course of reading development. Eighty-four grade 1 and grade 2 children, representing four levels of early reading competence, and 15 skilled adult subjects read from four textual conditions; materials varied in the extent to which the texts were semantically and/or syntactically constrained. The more precocious the young reader, the longer his reported span. The better readers' and the adults' advantage was greater the more linguistically constrained the reading material. These data support a continuous model of reading development and are compatible with an interactive definition of early reading behaviour.

85–123 Rapport, R. L. (U. of Malaysia) **and others.** Fonctions linguistiques et troubles du langage chez les polyglottes parlant chinois et anglais. [Linguistic functions and language difficulties in multilingual speakers of Chinese and English.] *Languages* (Paris), **72** (1983), 57–78.

At least four models of the distribution of language functions in the brain for bilingual speakers have been proposed: (1) competence in more than one language simply occupies more space; (2) language performance in different modes (reading and writing v. listening and speaking) is controlled from different areas; (3) differential lateralisation between the two languages (i.e. greater participation of the right hemisphere for one language), and (4) differential localisation within the same hemisphere [reference and discussion]. A three-part study, using seven multilingual subjects who spoke English and at least one of Cantonese, Hokkien and Mandarin, provides data on (*a*) left cortex stimulation during reading and naming tasks; (*b*) cerebral dominance for language, and (*c*) language recovery in four right-handed aphasics with left hemisphere injuries. In every case, the left hemisphere appeared dominant for all the languages tested and no evidence was found for differential lateralisation. However, there was some evidence for differential localisation. The studies of language recovery showed that the main (operational) language of the patient survived better or more completely.

85–124 Siguan, Miguel (U. of Barcelona). Acquisition of a second language from a Psychological point of view. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), **15**, 2/3 (1983), 59–76.

Our knowledge of the genesis and initial development of child language continues to be insufficient. In both the semantic and morphosyntactic aspects, progress is made both in the analysis and understanding of reality and in the use of linguistic rules in order to express reality as it is comprehended. Language acquisition implies a prior knowledge and therefore a development of intellectual activity. Moreover, from the beginning language encourages intellectual development.

In the simultaneous acquisition of two languages, the child acquires the sounds corresponding to each phonetic system, but tends to keep them separate. To the child, there is only one system: *eau* and *water* mean different things. In each situation, the child increasingly uses words corresponding to one language or the other. He soon becomes aware of the duality of linguistic systems, and asks for translations. The same word, *balle* and *ball*, learned in different situations, bears (and will always bear) different connotations. This helps bilinguals to discover the arbitrary character of linguistic signs before unilingual children do, and may make them more flexible and creative.

In the spontaneous acquisition of a second language later in childhood, the child may come into contact with the new language directly, trying to communicate with people talking it, or indirectly from people who know the two languages, such as his parents, perhaps. But he cannot help interpreting the second language according to the linguistic structures of the first language. Eventually he will not need to do this: he will begin to internalise the new language, and may eventually become a complete bilingual.

The systematic acquisition of a second language, whatever the method used, relies on the existing knowledge of the first language, and teaches the structures and regularities of the language first. The artificial and reflective nature of such learning prevents the linguistic system thus acquired from being used spontaneously, and is very unlikely to lead to true bilingualism.

85–125 Taeschner, Traute (U. of Rome). Does the bilingual child possess twice the lexicon of the monolingual child? *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), **15**, 2/3 (1983), 179–88.

Longitudinal observations were made for about five years of the speech development of two bilingual German/Italian girls aged 1;2 and 1;6 at the beginning of the period. In the first stage, the small bilingual child has one lexical system made up of words from both languages, where the terms used in one language have no equivalent meaning to the terms in the other. In the second stage, the child begins to produce equivalents. The research reported on here aimed to discover the age at which the children started to use certain words and when they started to use their equivalents. The analysis reconfirmed that there is a first stage, lasting about six months. The girls began to use equivalents at 20 and 26 months, respectively. The equivalents increased gradually, along a curve similar to that of new acquisitions. Even well into the second stage, the child continues to acquire more new words than equivalents. The number of words that the child produces in each language is substantially the same. Approximately one-third of the entire vocabulary is dedicated to equivalents, and two-thirds to new acquisitions.

To see if the lexicon of bilingual children is larger, smaller or the same as that of monolingual children, a comparison was made between the two German/Italian bilinguals and two monolingual Italian children. Only verbs were compared, because of their greater communicative power; the count was begun for each child when he/she had acquired 50 words, and continued for nearly a year. Results showed differences between each subject but not between bilinguals and monolinguals. Equivalents accounted for about one third of the bilingual's new words per month. The bilingual child's capacity to produce new words has then to be divided between the two languages, but the child deals with this by giving priority to new words at the expense of equivalents. He can thus speak two languages and express the same number of new objects and events as the monolingual child.

PRAGMATICS

85–126 Arnold, I. Text interpretation in terms of the reader's response. *Zeitschrift Für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* (Leipzig, GDR), **1** (1984), 32–40.

Matters discussed here under the general heading of 'foregrounding' have been separately noted and described by various scholars as independent phenomena. They are summarised here because they have much in common: taken together, they form the missing link between the whole text and its minor parts, and help to sharpen the response of the reader to ideas, images and emotions reflected in a work of literature.

They verify his interpretation of the text and help to grasp what it means because:
(1) foregrounding establishes the hierarchy of meanings and themes, bringing some
to the fore and shifting others to the background. In this way it helps not only to
comment on the thoughts explicitly formulated but also stimulates the reader's
intuition in noting text implications; (2) foregrounding provides the necessary
cohesion between the elements on all levels and also between the parts of the text;
(3) foregrounding enhances the emotional response of the reader and the aesthetic
pleasure received; (4) foregrounding intensifies memorability, and thus helps to keep
in mind distant contextual ties in the process of reading and to remember the text
afterwards; (5) foregrounding helps to obtain new linguistic information, to guess the
meaning and function of linguistic elements hitherto unknown. Foregrounding is
justly called the core of reader-centred stylistics because it provides a theory of analysis
with the help of which a reader develops the habits necessary for active and
independent reading, and is safeguarded against jumping the limits of permissible
variation.

Stylistics has to concentrate on the addressee because the general cultural level of
those taught depends to a great extent on their capacity to find information they need,
to know where to find it, and to remodel it in accordance with their own aims and
problems. They must also know how to transmit it further. The pragmatic approach
to literature in terms of the reader's response demands a corresponding development
in the techniques of describing literary texts. The concept of foregrounding as used
in Decoding Stylistics provides an adequate basis for this description, combining the
possibilities offered by linguistics, poetics, text theory and some other branches of
knowledge concerned with communication processes.

85–127   Bertrand, Denis (BELC, Paris). Sémiotique du discours et lecture des
textes. [The semiotics of discourse and how texts are read.] *Langue Française*
(Paris), **61** (1984), 9–26.

Reading is seen as a semiotic activity in which the reader constructs meaning by means
of various inferential schemata. How does he construct a continuous, coherent
narrative on the basis of the text and his own internal landmarks? In this paper
iconicity – the illusion of reality – is examined. The reader has to establish reference
from the sense of the text. This he does by means of 'referenciation' (establishing
the correspondence between expression and external entities and relationships, e.g.
temporal and spatial) and by 'referentialisation' (establishing intra-textual relation-
ships). Referenciation situates events in 'real' time and space, which are then related
by referentialisation. Referentialisation seeks consistency, smooth 'gear-changes'
from one stylistic mode to another (description, narration, dialogue, etc.) and
anaphoric reference. Referenciation seeks to situate socially participants in the
narrative. [Analysis of examples from ch. 1 of Zola's *Germinal*.]

85–128 Brodkey, Linda. 'Flapping ghants humming in jazz': reading a child's writing. *Text* (The Hague) **3**, 4 (1983), 327–45.

This essay reviews the literature on reading and analysing children's texts, discussing inherent strengths and weaknesses of error analyses, as methods for understanding a child's use of grammar. While recognising the potential significance of error with respect to what a language learner may know about a particular mode of discourse, naturalistic observation of the circumstances in which a child writes shows that analysis of error can be misleading. Genre rather than syntax is more constitutive of the texts examined in the essay, reminding us that reading a child's text, like reading a poem, novel, or essay, depends on knowing the genre, as this explains many of a writer's linguistic choices. An example of what can be recognised by simply knowing about circumstances of production, the essay also makes a case for what might be noted and explained were we to use ethnographic methods more regularly in our study not only of child writers, but of all writers.

85–129 Bruce, Bertram. Plans and discourse. *Text* (The Hague), **3**, 3 (1983), 253–59.

This paper presents an analysis of a simple story showing three ways in which plans affect the structure of discourse. First, the narrative is about the plans of characters in interaction. Second, it includes, as an essential element, a stylised conversation that exhibits cooperative plan formulation. Third, there is the author's plan in producing the narrative. These various plans are discussed within the framework of an 'interacting plans' formalism.

85–130 Kurzon, Dennis. Themes, hyperthemes and the discourse structure of British legal texts. *Text* (The Hague), **4**, 1/3 (1984), 31–55.

Although to a lay person legal texts are notoriously difficult to read, some semblance of order may be found, especially in the thematic structure of such texts. Thematic structure here coincides with what has been called in the literature 'thematic progression' or 'theme dynamics', and refers to the cohesive link set up by the themes – the initial element or elements – of the component sentences of a text. The predominant type of thematic progression in legal texts involves the hypertheme of the particular text, which is derived from two sources: the set of expectations produced by the specific genre of text, and the title of the text, if there is one. This model is applied to five British legal texts, each of which represents one particular genre: a will, a deed, a contract, a court order, and a statute. Since the texts do have a cohesive structure, as shown by the analysis, it is suggested that other factors lead to difficulties in reading, such as technical vocabulary and the length of clause and phrase elements.

85–131 McDermott, R. P. and Tylbor, Henry. On the necessity of collusion in conversation. *Text* (The Hague), **3**, 3 (1983), 277–97.

This paper is an attempt to grasp the social structure guiding naturally occurring talk among some children and their teacher. Many (most strikingly Saussure) have called

for language to be understood as a social institution. In the formulation of units and procedures of analysis, however, the institutional accomplishments of talk have been investigated largely as an afterthought. By focusing on collusion, this paper directs an analysis towards the identification of the efforts participants must make to preserve their conversation as an appropriate moment within the life of an institution. The consequence, from the point of view of linguistics, of using this starting point is briefly outlined, and the particular brand of formal analysis emerging from artificial intelligence is criticised as being methodologically insensitive to the social structuring of language.

85–132   Neuland, Eva. Alltagessprache. Untersuchungen zu ihrer Struktur, Funktion und didaktischer Relevanz. [Everyday language. A study of its structure, function and relevance to language teaching.] *Linguistik und Didaktik* (Munich, FRG), **43/44** (1980), 179–98.

The aim of this study is to establish proof of the fact that there is variation in language structures and communicative functions in general everyday conversation and to demonstrate the biographical significance of this fact for the partner in communication. Two communicative activities from the sphere of everyday family conversation are compared: relating a holiday experience and describing a school situation. The comparison demonstrates the different communicative functions of these two activities and the different language structures used in them. The differing and stylistic make-up of the individual stages of the conversations was immediately recognisable as indicative of semantic transfer and gauging of relevance with regard to the biography of the partner in conversation. The general theories which transpired from the study relate to the nature of everyday conversation in terms of structural and functional variation and to the biographical significance of everyday conversations for the partner in conversation.

Such a study indicates that language teaching materials should be compiled so as to bring home to learners the variation in everyday communication. Further, everyday conversations are useful in communicatively and situationally orientated language teaching as a means of demonstrating the characteristics and functions of conversations in different social situations.

85–133   Polanyi, Livia and Scha, R. J. H. The syntax of discourse. *Text* (The Hague), **3**, 3 (1983), 261–70.

In this paper, a model of discourse 'syntactic structure' is sketched in which each clause uttered belongs to a 'discourse unit'. It is suggested that a discourse grammar may be specified in the form of a Recursive Transition Network which describes the syntactic structure of a discourse in terms of coordinations and embeddings of discourse units of various types. A discussion of discourse PUSH and POP markers which signal movement into and out of embedded discourse units is included.

An argument is made for distinguishing discourse 'syntactic' and 'semantic' structures. The paper concludes by comparing this model of discourse syntactic structure with other proposals in which syntactic and semantic structures are conflated.

85-134 Smith, Raoul N. and Frawley, William J. Conjunctive cohesion in four English genres. *Text* (The Hague), **3**, 4 (1983), 347-74.

A major ingredient of textuality is cohesion. A text is not a text unless it coheres. But different text types do not cohere in the same way. In this paper, the authors focus on one type of cohesive tie, conjunction, and compare its use in four different American English genres – fiction, journalism, religion, and science. Results show that methods of conjunction in these genres vary in a statistically significant way and that conjunctions, although few in number of types and tokens, play a major role in structuring these different text types. Fiction and religion are more similar to each other in the amount and kinds of cohesive conjunction used in generating these texts, than they are to journalism and science. Why these latter two genres do not use conjunction cohesively very often may be due to the strong influence of prescriptive teachings. (Why writers on religion would not slavishly follow the same rubics, however, is not clear.) The kinds of conjunctive cohesion used in the various genre types is of extreme importance, because its semantics give an excellent insight into the argument or narrative structure of each text type.

85-135 Van Dijk, Teun A. Cognitive and conversational strategies in the expression of ethnic prejudice. *Text* (Amsterdam), **3**, 4 (1983), 375-404.

This paper studies conversational strategies in (interview) talk about ethnic minorities in the Netherlands against the background of their interactional and social functions on the one hand, and their cognitive functions, on the other hand. After a more general discussion of the notion of 'strategy', an analysis of 'semantic' strategies in some interview fragments is made. Various semantic strategies, such as those of Generalisation, Example, Contrast or Apparent Concession, are found and systematically defined. These conversational strategies are then again discussed in cognitive terms, viz. as strategies for the management of inferences about the speaker during talk about a socially 'delicate topic'. Socially, this implies that the strategies are geared towards the establishment or maintenance of positive self-presentation.