Research in the supporting sciences

Sociolinguistics

94–463 Clyne, Michael and others (Monash U.). Cross-cultural responses to cross-cultural communication. *ITL* (Louvain, Belgium), **103/104** (1994), 1–17.

This paper builds on ongoing research on communication in English between migrants of diverse backgrounds in Melbourne work-places. Subjects from various European and South-east Asian backgrounds were videoed responding to videoed role plays between European and South-east Asians based on instances of communication breakdown (apology, complaint, small talk) in the corpus. The paper discusses the differences in the mode of argumentation between the cultural groups. Special attention will be paid to the use and non-use of *yes* and *no*, the presentation and elaboration of arguments, identification of and with their own cultural styles, and the identification of and with their own work experience. Responses will be related to cultural value systems and the co-operative principle.

94–464 Falk, Ian (Griffith University, Australia). The social construct of adult literacy learners' needs: a case study. *Language and Education* (Clevedon, Avon), **7,** 4 (1993), 221–37.

This paper reports a theory-driven, critical case study of the stated needs for literacy of eleven adult literacy learners. The literacy 'needs' of adult learners are argued to be social constructions. These stated literacy needs of adult learners are influenced by the external environment of the workplace and the particular workplace literacy requirements, and societal demands. However, these needs are also influenced by the adult learners' reconstructions and memories of schooling, and the views of significant others whose discourses on literacy affect the adult learners' perceptions of their 'reading failure'. The hypothesis generated by this case study, then, is that notions about literacy acquired in the context of acquisition of that literacy will be represented in the subsequent requests of the adult learners for these literacy needs.

94–465 Hamers, Josiane F. (U. Laval, Quebec, Canada). Rôle des réseaux sociaux dans le maintien de la langue maternelle, dans le développement bilingue et dans le développement de la literacie. [The role of social networks in first language maintenance, bilingual development and literacy development.] *Bulletin Suisse de Linguistique Appliquée* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland), **59** (1994), 85–102.

In the 1960s, Canada, like U.S.A., Australia, etc., favoured the 'melting pot' theory that second-generation immigrants should lose or never acquire their parents' language, but since that time opinion has changed radically, and it is now believed that multilingualism and multiculturalism are psychologically and socially beneficial.

Hamers and her colleagues studied 720 bilingual children in Quebec, and from these focused on 160 children, all aged 12, whose parents were of either Greek or Arab (Egyptian Christian) origin. Both children and parents were interviewed (average 22 hours of interview per family) about their language attitudes and the contexts in which Greek or Arabic were used, and statistical correlations were computed. The main results were that (1) Greeks maintained language and ethnicity more than Arabs; (2) children used Greek/Arabic less than parents; (3) maintenance of Greek/Arabic correlated with extent and quality of interpersonal relations within family and with peers, and with positive parental attitudes to literacy in the relevant language; (4) taking classes in Greek/Arabic had only a small correlation with competence; (5) the children's sense of identity reflected their competence in Greek/Arabic and the linguistic heterogeneity of their social networks.

94–466 Leets, Laura and Giles, Howard (U. of California, Santa Barbara). Does language awareness foster social tolerance? *Language Awareness* (Clevedon, Avon), **2,** 3 (1993), 159–68.

Language Awareness (LA) programmes are often implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, assumed to aid in the promotion of intercultural tolerance. Drawing on sociopsychological theory and research on intergroup relations, it is argued that awareness should not necessarily lead to tolerance. In an

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exploratory study, 253 westcoast American students' general responses to LA issues are investigated in relation to their own self-reported LA and tolerance levels. In general, the findings only reflected extremely modest and uncertain relationships bet- ween LA and tolerance. Consequently, insights gleaned from inter-group relations (as well as accommodation processes) may serve as valuable resources for the development and refinement of LA programmes.

94–467 Nsakala, Lengo (Inst. Supérieur Pédagogique, Mbanza-Ngungu). Code-mixing as a communication strategy in the speech of Zaïrean students of English. *ITL* (Louvain, Belgium), **103/104** (1994), 113–34.

The lack of balance between foreign language students' competence and the communicative demands imposed on them prompts them to resort to communication strategies, one of which is code-mixing. This strategy with Zaïrean students is mostly characterised by the influence of French (rather than their Zaïrean languages) on their English. Foreign language students should be advised to avoid code-mixing in their use of the target language, first because of its poor effect on the listener, and second because it may slow down the acquisition of the target language, instead of promoting it.

94–468 Omoniyi, Tope (U. of Reading). English and the other tongues in official communicative interaction in Nigeria. *ITL* (Louvain, Belgium), **103/104** (1994), 57–75.

This paper examines issues of language choice and language use patterns, attitudes to English and to indigenous languages in official communicative interaction in Nigeria as they exist in the offices today. The report is projected against the back- ground of the claim that English is 'the language of government, education, commerce, etc.' in Nigeria, a claim that does not present the current roster of functions performed or shared by English and the other languages. It does not correctly portray workers' preferences of language medium in participating in the numerous communicative inter- actions they undertake during their day's work.

This report acclaims the importance of English particularly in a multiplex society such as Nigeria's, but role-sharing and competition for certain com- municative functions is actually going on between English and the indigenous languages in offices today. The report represents a state of the art commentary on language use practice and preferences in offices. It is a signal to the writers of the Nigerian Constitution and drafters of the National Language Policy *per se* that a reworking is due. For other English as a Second Language (ESL) nations, the report is a hint that assessment of the actual roles of English in national life is a continuous process rather than a once-and-for-all issue.

94–469 Soh, Kay Cheng (National Inst. of Education, Nanyang Technological U., Singapore). Language motivation and ethnic attitude of high-ability students who attended ethnically homogeneous secondary schools. *Language and Education* (Clevedon, Avon), **7,** 4 (1993), 271–81.

The effects of attendance at linguistically and ethnically homogeneous schools on language mot- ivation and ethnic attitude among high-ability pre- university students learning English and Chinese (Mandarin) in Singapore were investigated. With reference to ethnolinguistic identity theory, results show no perceivable defect in motivation to learn the ancestral language though some effect on motivation to learn English. Contrary to expec- tation, students from homogeneous secondary schools tended to be more positive in their ethnic attitude. Factor analysis shows ethnic attitude and language motivation to be independent and that, for learning the ancestral language, emphasis on exam- ination is antagonistic to language identity.

Psycholinguistics

94–470   Bloom, Paul (U. of Arizona). Possible names: the role of syntax-semantics mappings in the acquisition of nominals. *Lingua* (Amsterdam) **92,** 1/4 (1994), 297–329.

Many scholars have posited constraints on how children construe the meanings of new words. These include the restriction that new words refer to kinds of whole objects, that words describing solid objects refer to individuated objects while words describing non-solid substances refer to portions of substance and that count nouns that name objects are generalised on the basis of shape. There are theoretical and empirical problems with these proposals, however. Most importantly, they fail to explain the fact that children rapidly acquire words that violate these constraints, such as pronouns and proper names, names for substances, and names for non-material entities. The theory defended here is that children and adults possess mappings from grammatical categories ('count noun', 'mass noun', and 'noun phrase') to abstract semantic categories; these mappings serve to constrain inferences about word meaning. Evidence from developmental psychology and linguistic theory is presented that suggests that even very young children possess such mappings and use them in the course of lexical development. Further issues – such as the possibility of developmental change, the precise nature of these semantic categories, and how children learn words prior to the acquisition of syntax – are also discussed. It is concluded that although these syntax-semantics mappings are not by themselves sufficient to explain children's success at word learning, they play a crucial role in lexical development. As such, only a theory that posits a deep relationship between syntax and semantics can explain the acquisition and representation of word meanings.

94–471   Brent, M. R. (Johns Hopkins U.). Surface cues and robust inference as a basis for the early acquisition of subcategorisation frames. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 433–70.

How could children possibly acquire their first subcategorisation frames? The hypothesis that they directly observe the syntactic structures of the utterances they hear raises two questions. First, how can children parse input utterances reliably without already knowing the syntactic properties of all the words in them? Second, how do children survive the ungrammatical or misconstrued utterances they inevitably encounter? This paper suggests a specific inference algorithm that substantially reduces the effects of ungrammatical or misconstrued input. Since children must have some such inference procedure, they can use approximate cues to determine syntactic structure. In particular, they can use string-local surface cues rather than global constraints. Such cues make it possible to discover relevant syntactic structure in an utterance without already knowing all the words in it. This paper suggests a possible set of cues for English subcategorisation frames that assumes only the ability to detect the ends of utterances and knowledge of a few function morphemes and proper names. Simulation experiments on naturally occurring, child-directed English show that these cues, combined with the proposed inference mechanism, do surprisingly well at discovering subcategorisation frames.

94–472   Carey, Susan (Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.). Does learning a language require the child to reconceptualise the world? *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 143–67.

Sortal concepts, lexicalised as count nouns in languages with a count/mass distinction, provide criteria for individuation and numerical identity. This paper examines Quine's and Piaget's claims that babies and young children lack the logical resources to represent sortal concepts.

Evidence is marshalled against the Quine/Piaget position, in favour of a view that even young infants represent at least one sortal concept, physical object, which provides spatiotemporal criteria for individuation and identity. Evidence is also provided that babies below 11 months of age may not represent more specific sortals such as cup, animal, bottle, or book. Rather, they may conceptualise these entities in a way closely related to Quine's hypothesis.

94–473 Fisher, Cynthia (U. of Illinois). When it is better to receive than to give: syntactic and conceptual constraints on vocabulary growth. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 333–75.

How do children solve the mapping problem for verb acquisition: how do they pair concepts with their phonological realisations in their language? There is evidence that nouns but not verbs can be acquired by pairing each sound (e.g. 'elephant') with a concept inferred from the world circumstances in which that sound occurs. Verb meanings pose problems for this word–world mapping procedure, motivating a model of verb mapping mediated by attention to the syntactic structures in which verbs occur. An experiment is presented which examines the interaction between a conceptual influence (the bias to interpret observed situations as involving a causal agent) and syntactic influences, as these jointly contribute to children's conjectures about new verb meanings. Children were shown scenes ambiguous as to two interpretations (e.g. giving and getting or chasing and fleeing) and were asked to guess the meaning of novel verbs used to describe the scenes, presented in varying syntactic contexts. Both conceptual and syntactic constraints influenced children's responses, but syntactic information largely overwhelmed the conceptual bias. This finding, with collatoral evidence, supports a syntax-mediated procedure for verb acquisition.

94–474 Giacalone Ramat, Anna (U. of Pavio). Sur quelques manifestations de la grammaticalisation dans l'acquisition de l'italien comme deuxieme langue. [On some manifestations of grammaticalisation in the learning of Italian as a second language.] *AILE* (Paris), **2** (1993), 173–200.

This paper deals with the notion of grammaticalisation as a tool to describe the increasing morpho-syntactic and semantic complexity in learner varieties. This notion needs, however, some readjustments when transferred from its original domain of usage in historical and typological linguistics to second language acquisition research.

Some selected topics are discussed in the light of grammaticalisation with reference to Italian as a target language: they include the development of verbal morphology to express tense and aspect relations starting from a basic unmarked form through the emergence of inflections and auxiliaries. They further include the development of modal means for epistemic modality from discourse pragmatics and the development of means to connect propositions, in particular relative clauses. The notion of grammaticalisation has proved useful in providing adequate descriptions of a number of acquisitional phenomena and has also contributed to clarify some theoretical points within a functionalist view of language.

94–475 Greene, Stuart. Constructing a voice from other voices. A socio-cognitive perspective on the development of authorship in a beginning writing classroom. *Odense Working Papers in Language and Communication* (Odense, Denmark), **6** (1994), 11–40.

The purpose of this article is to discuss a case study of how one beginning college writer attempted to integrate his own ideas with the ideas of others in composing an argument. Three questions motivate the larger study that this writer participated in: (1) How did the instructor represent the writing task and the process of writing in the classroom? (2) What are some possible ways that student–teacher interactions can influence how students negotiate and construct meaning in reading and writing? and (3) What were students' interpretations of writing an argument based on different sources of information? That is, would they see this task as asking them to rely on prior knowledge and experience or to rely on the texts they read as primary sources of information? Analyses revealed that students' legacy of schooling can influence the style, form, and content of what they write. This legacy values recitation of received information rather than the purposeful use of what students know in order to develop their own rhetorical purpose. Students' evolving interpretations of the task can also be influenced by their own personal goals for writing and the teacher's responses to their work. These analyses suggest that if teachers are to help students develop as writers, they need to listen closely as they negotiate a sense of authorship in their writing. Such a project entails making the students' thinking visible through close, systematic observation, detailing the drama that unfolds as they create a text from other texts.

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94-476 Grimshaw, Jane (Rutgers U., NJ). Lexical reconciliation. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 411–30.

In the context of current research in lexical representation there are two fundamental ideas about lexical learning. One holds that the semantics of a word is critically involved in the acquisition of its syntax, another holds that the syntax of the word is critically involved in the acquisition of its semantics. This paper examines the positive results and limitations of the two views, and proposes a reconciliation of the two in which a hypothesised meaning based on observation is the input to the linguistic mapping principles. These derive a predicted s-structure, checked against observed syntax. Learning occurs when the two match.

94-477 Hausendorf, Heiko (U. of Bielefeld). L'adulte auditeur: aspects de l'étayage dans l'interaction avec des narrateurs enfants. [The adult hearer: aspects of scaffolding in interaction with child narrators.] *AILE* (Paris), **2** (1993), 85–107.

An examination of interactions between child narrators and adult hearers throws light on a series of problems which have hitherto received little attention: what role does interaction play in the acquisition of discourse (here, narrative) competence by 5, 7 and 14-year-old children? Some activities of the adult listener may be analysed as a type of scaffolding which, by compensating for the narrator's deficiency, prevents narrative failure. These scaffolding activities vary considerably in form and amount depending on the narrator's age. Analysing the phenomenon of scaffolding allows a better identification of the questions which need to be asked – and answered – in order to make the links between interaction and acquisition explicit.

94-478 Kelly, Michael H. and Martin, Susanne (U. of Pennsylvania). Domain-general abilities applied to domain-specific tasks: sensitivity to probabilities in perception, cognition, and language. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 105–40.

Perceptual and cognitive abilities that are species- and domain-specific may nonetheless have components that are widespread across species and apply to numerous domains. For example, all theories of sentence parsing are constrained by the operations of a limited-capacity memory that is a general characteristic of cognition. This paper discusses another ability that is general across species and, within a species, across numerous cognitive and perceptual domains. Evidence is reviewed from the animal learning and human cognitive literature that animals (*a*) possess fine-grained sensitivity to probabilistic patterns in their environment and (*b*) use multiple probabilistic cues to solve particular problems. Such sensitivity is advantageous because the structure of the environment itself can often be characterised as probabilistic. The chances of success at solving various problems, from foraging to depth perception, would therefore increase if animals were sensitive to probabilistic cues and could determine whether multiple cues converge on a solution. The implications of these claims for language processing are discussed and it is argued that the domain-general ability to detect and exploit probabilistic information is brought to bear on numerous language-specific problems.

94-479 Keil, Frank C. (Cornell U., NY). Explanation, association, and the acquisition of word meaning. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 169–96.

A newly emerging view of concept structure, the concepts-in-theories view, suggests that adult concepts are intrinsic mixes of two different sorts of relations: (*a*) those involving domain-general tabulations of frequencies and correlations and (*b*) those involving domain-specific patterns of explanation. Empirical results from early cognitive development suggest that, by the time first words are acquired, most concepts have this intrinsic mix even though changes in the nature of the mix can produce marked developmental changes in apparent concepts, word meanings, and their use.

The concepts-in-theories view suggests that the sorts of constraints needed to model the representation and acquisition of concepts cannot be based solely on either perceptual or grammatical bases; they must also arise from biases given by specific patterns of explanation, patterns that may depart from standard notions of intuitive theories. These in turn suggest different views of possible constraints on the acquisition of word meaning.

94–480 Krings, Hans P. What do we know about writing processes in L2? The state of the art. *Odense Working Papers in Language and Communication* (Odense, Denmark), **6** (1994), 83–114.

Whereas L1-related text production research has made great progress in the last few years, there have been very few studies of L2-related text production. There is a particular lack of information on the psycholinguistic processes going on in the heads of learners when they write foreign-language texts. This article gives an overview of nine empirical studies from various countries which concentrate on this topic. After a short introduction, Part 2 gives an overview of the different methods employed. Part 3 presents the results of the studies in systematic form. Finally, Part 4 gives a summary and discusses the possible impact of the research results on foreign language teaching.

94–481 Landau, Barbara (U. of California). Where's what and what's where: the language of objects in space. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92**, 1/4 (1994), 259–96.

Many traditional views of language learning emphasise the importance of non-linguistic knowledge in constraining children's interpretations of the utterances they hear as they learn form-meaning correspondences. In this paper, it is proposed that the structure of the human spatial-cognitive system may impose massive limitations on how the language of objects and places can be represented during first language learning. Specifically, the separation and respective structures of the 'what' and 'where' systems (as documented by neuro-psychologists) show striking correlation with the properties of geometric representations underlying object names and place expressions. Spatial representations underlying object names seem to be linked to detailed object shape (along with possible relevant shape transformations), while the representations underlying place-functions (spatial prepositions in English) seem to be linked to object descriptions preserving principal axes, but no detailed shape. Evidence is reviewed that these distinct representations are reflect in children's early comprehension, production, and learning of names for objects and places. Additional evidence from cross-linguistic studies of spatial terms appears to be consistent with the account given, although challenges remain. As a whole, the linguistic and psychological evidence support the notion that non-linguistic representational systems may play a part in shaping some of the character of languages.

94–482 Lee, Kang and others (U. of New Brunswick). Referential place-holding in Chinese children's acquisition of English articles. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **15**, 1 (1994), 29–43.

This longitudinal study examines the acquisition of English articles by three 6-year-old, second language learning children whose native tongue is Chinese, a language without articles. Brown's coding scheme and an extended coding scheme were used in scoring the corpora of the children's responses to a Syntax Elicitation Task. Results revealed that the Chinese children's acquisition of the definite article differed from what had been previously found using Brown's coding scheme with English as first language learners and second language learning children of other native language origins. Chinese children's use of the definite article developed through an unmarked phase, a referential place-holding phase, a marked phase, and a referential substitution phase before the definite article was fully acquired. The acquisition of the indefinite article, on the other hand, was similar to the acquisition pattern already reported for children learning English as a first language or as a second language. It is suggested that referential place-holding, as well as referential substitution, might not be a Chinese-specific second language learning phenomenon; rather, they might be derived from a universal referential strategy for learning articles.

94–483 Lieven, Elena V. M. (U. of Manchester) **and Pine, Julian M.** (U. of Nottingham). Exposition et appropriation dans l'acquisition de la langue maternelle. [Exposure and appropriation in the acquisition of the mother tongue.] *AILE* (Paris), **2** (1993), 143–71.

As soon as one leaves the nest of the European professional middle classes, one realises that the dyadic (mother-child) context is far from representing the rule in first-language acquisition and one is forced to revise one's understanding of scaffolding. A general theory of acquisition has first to make the Corderian distinction between the linguistic material of the child's environment (input) and within this, those data she is capable of processing alone or with the help of others (intake) and then to put forward a methodological procedure which allows precise correlations between the child's socio-linguistic environment and her linguistic development. A theory and methodology such as this go against the Chomskyan framework.

94–484 Markman, Ellen M. (Stanford U., CA). Constraints on word meaning in early language acquisition. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 199–227.

Very young children successfully acquire the vocabulary of their native language despite their limited information processing abilities. One partial explanation for children's success at the inductive problem word learning presents is that children are constrained in the kinds of hypotheses they consider as potential meanings of novel words. Three such constraints are discussed: (1) the whole-object assumption which leads children to infer that terms refer to objects as a whole rather than to their parts, substance, colour, or other properties; (2) the taxonomic assumption which leads children to extend words to objects or entities of like kind; and (3) the mutual exclusivity assumption which leads children to avoid two labels for the same object. Recent evidence is reviewed suggesting that all three constraints are available to babies by the time of the naming explosion. Given the importance of word learning, children might be expected to recruit whatever sources of information they can to narrow down a word's meaning, including information provided by grammatical form class and the pragmatics of the situation. Word-learning constraints interact with these other sources of information but are also argued to be an especially useful source of information for children who have not yet mastered grammatical form class in that constraints should function as an entering wedge into language acquisition.

94–485 Pinker, Steven (Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.). How could a child use verb syntax to learn verb semantics? *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 377–410.

The author examines Gleitman's (1990) arguments that children rely on a verb's syntactic subcategorisation frames to learn its meaning (e.g., they learn that *see* means 'perceive visually' because it can appear with a direct object, a clausal complement, or a directional phrase). First, Gleitman argues that the verbs cannot be learned by observing the situations in which they are used, because many verbs refer to overlapping situations, and because parents do not invariably use a verb when its perceptual correlates are present. The author suggests that these arguments speak only against a narrow associationist view in which the child is sensitive to the temporal contiguity of sensory features and spoken verb. If the child can hypothesise structured semantic representations corresponding to what parents are likely to be referring to, and can refine such representations across multiple situations, the objections are blunted; indeed, Gleitman's theory requires such a learning process despite her objections to it. Second, Gleitman suggests that there is enough information in a verb's subcategorisation frames to predict its meaning 'quite closely'. Evaluating this argument requires distinguishing a verb's root plus its semantic content (what *She boiled the water* shares with *The water boiled* and does not share with *She broke the glass*), and a verb frame plus its semantic perspective (what *She boiled the water* shares with *She broke the glass* and does not share with *The water boiled*). It is shown that hearing a verb in a single frame only gives a learner coarse information about its semantic perspective in that frame (e.g., number of arguments, type of arguments); it tells the learner nothing about the verb root's content across frames (e.g. hot bubbling liquid). Moreover, hearing a verb across all its frames also reveals little about the verb root's content. Finally, it is shown that Gleitman's empirical arguments all involve experiments where children are exposed to a single verb frame, and

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therefore all involve learning the frame's perspective meaning, not the root's content meaning, which in all the experiments was acquired by observing the accompanying scene. It is concluded that attention to a verb's syntactic frame can help narrow down the child's interpretation of the perspective meaning of the verb in that frame, but the author disagrees with the claim that there is some in-principle limitation in learning a verb's content.

94-486 Pujol Berché, Mercè (U. Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona). Interaction bilingue et acquisition simultanée de deux langues. [Bilingual interaction and the simultaneous acquisition of two languages.] *AILE* (Paris), **2** (1993), 109–42.

The analysis presented here, of verbal interaction between bilingual children (French/German) between the age of 1·05 and 2·06 and their caretakers, provides evidence for Meisel's (and others) hypothesis that bilingual children acquire and develop two independent linguistic systems from the outset, thanks to the fact that these children mostly experience communicative and social situations allowing use of both languages with bilingual interlocutors. The results were obtained using a frame of analysis based on Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' and the 'format' of Bruner, which therefore emphasises the role of the learning individual's interaction with environment in the explanation of acquisitional processes.

94-487 van Waes, Luuk. Computers and writing. Implications for the teaching of writing. *Odense Working Papers in Language and Communication* (Odense, Denmark), **6** (1994), 41–61.

In order to be able to describe the influence of word processing on the organisation of the writing process, 80 writing processes of experienced writers were analysed (40 computer and 40 pen&paper writing processes). The data were analysed from three different points of view: time and product analysis, analysis of the pausing behaviour, and analysis of the revision behaviour. One of the main conclusions from these analyses is that computer writers spend more time on the first draft of their text and less on the finalisation of the text, and that their writing process is more fragmentary compared to that of pen&paper writers. They also revise more in the beginning of the writing process than their pen&paper colleagues and pay more attention to the lower text levels and the formal characteristics of their text. From the analysis on the level of writing profiles it also became clear that a single individual will organise his or her writing assignment differently depending on the writing mode used. On the basis of these conclusions some suggestions for the teaching of writing are discussed.

94-488 Waxman, Sandra R. (Northwestern U., IL). The development of an appreciation of specific linkages between linguistic and conceptual organisation. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 229–57.

Evidence from infants and toddlers, and from preschool children learning either English, French, or Spanish as their first language are summarised to reveal the emergence of specific linkages between linguistic and conceptual development. The data suggest that infants begin the process of word learning with a general expectation that words (independent of the linguistic form) refer to objects and object categories. This initial, rudimentary linkage gives way to more specific pairings between particular linguistic forms (e.g., nouns vs. adjectives) and particular types of meaning (e.g., object categories vs. properties of objects). These more specific linkages may depend upon language experience.

94-489 Williams, Edwin (Princeton U., NJ). Remarks on lexical knowledge. *Lingua* (Amsterdam), **92,** 1/4 (1994), 7–34.

The abstractness of lexical knowledge, and its independence from the 'words' of a language, are generally underestimated. Abstract idioms demonstrate that the lexicon is the repository not only of fixed expressions, but of abstract language-particular phrase- and word-patterns as well. Paradigms are language-particular patternings dimensioned and structured in language-particular ways, with

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language-particular patterns of syncretism. The learning burden of these two abstract but learned features of lexical knowledge falls outside of what current thinking about language learning would allow.

Pragmatics

94–490   Cutting, Joan (U. of Edinburgh). MSc common room conversations: topics and terms. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* (Edinburgh), **4** (1993), 1–13.

This paper explores the difference between conversations of new acquaintances and those of established friends. Psycho- and sociolinguistic literature on the subject lacks a systematic grammatical and lexical approach to the analysis of distinguishing features. This paper describes a longitudinal study of the 1991–92 Edinburgh University Applied Linguistics MSc students' common room conversations investigating how the language of this discourse community changes over the duration of the course as the students' shared knowledge increases. The contextualisation cues to be examined in the full study are special terms and names, general nouns and verbs, exophoric reference, substitution and ellipsis. So far, only special terms have been analysed, and this paper discusses the trends revealed, pointing to areas requiring further exploration.

94–491   Fisher, Eunice (Nene College, Northampton). Distinctive features of pupil–pupil classroom talk and their relationship to learning: how discursive exploration might be encouraged. *Language and Education* (Clevedon, Avon), **7,** 4 (1993), 239–57.

In this paper classroom discourse is evaluated for the contribution it can make to pupils' learning in groups. The emphasis, therefore, is on the interactional nature of the discourse insofar as it contributes to the maintenance of a dialogue and supports the extension of group understanding. The data recorded was of primary age children working at computers, and the analysis is qualitative. Three major categories are described; exploratory, cumulative and disputational talk, and their potential contribution to the children's learning is discussed. It is concluded that teachers play an important role in making explicit the strategies which optimise exploratory talk.

94–492   Freed, Alice F. (Montclair State Coll., NJ). The form and function of questions in informal dyadic conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **21,** 6 (1994), 621–44.

This paper presents an analysis of 1275 question tokens which occurred in approximately seven hours of conversation between 12 pairs of same-sex friends; the conversations were taped in an experimental setting. The paper establishes a taxonomy of question functions which illustrates how questions vary along an information continuum and presents findings which show a notable correspondence between the pragmatic/social function of questions and their syntactic form as used in informal dyadic conversation. Central to the discussion are the multiple ways that questions function for speakers in casual conversation and the correspondences between the function and the syntactic form of the questions used to accomplish these particular goals.

94–493   Kinginger, Celeste (U. of Maryland at College Park). Learner initiative in conversation management: an application of van Lier's pilot coding scheme. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **78,** 1 (1994), 29–40.

This study involved the application of van Lier's pilot coding scheme to determine degrees of learner initiative in four classroom tasks. The interactions observed for these tasks were coded in four areas: topic, self-selection, allocation, and sequencing. Results show variation in the extent to which tasks allow interaction resembling 'conversation,' as described by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson. Learner initiative in structuring the talk increases as the number of externally imposed constraints decreases.

This emphasis on learner initiative in the van Lier coding scheme represents a new perspective on

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assessment of quality in classroom discourse. Rather than focusing on quantifiable instances of 'negotiation,' the scheme allows characterisation of the overall quality of the talk in terms of learner activity. Several reasons exist for taking such activity into account in classroom research and in task design for programs emphasising communicative competence.

First, practice in conversation management may have an impact upon the development of discourse and strategic competence. When learners are provided opportunities to structure their own conversations, they experience use of their second language in ways not typically allowable in classrooms where the teacher or the task control topic nomination, turn allocation, and sequencing.

Second, active participation in conversation requires careful attention to the ongoing talk and at least some comprehension of its topical content. If it is true that acquisition of grammatical competence proceeds at least in part though the tailoring of talk to the learner's current level of competence, then conversational initiative should have a strong positive effect in most learning environments.

94–494 Lauerbach, Gerda (U. of Wolfgang Gœthe, Frankfurt, Germany). Qu'est-ce qui permet de comprendre le discours de la classe en langue étrangère? Quelques types de connaissances sur lesquels s'appuient les élèves. [What allows one to understand classroom discourse in a foreign language? Some knowledge types on which pupils rely.] *AILE* (Paris), **2** (1993), 61–83.

The question posed by the title of this article is considered from the viewpoint of an English class for child beginners (third year of primary school). A video-recording of the class was analysed, using the 'pattern analysis' methodology, which assigns a function to each action-unit within an overall action pattern. By distinguishing between the different types of knowledge these pupils must resort to in order to understand the teacher's activities (most of the time, they cannot rely on their linguistic knowledge), the author identifies the interpretative role played by pragmatic and interactive knowledge and by familiarity with discourse patterns in learning.
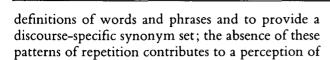
94–495 Todman, John (U. of Dundee) **and others.** Computer-aided conversation: a prototype system for non-speaking people with physical disabilities. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **15,** 1 (1994), 45–73.

This article describes the development, use, and initial evaluation of a prototype computer system to enable non-speaking persons with severe disabilities to engage in conversation on broad topics. The conversational aid produced (via a voice synthesiser) speech acts that were selected from a prestored menu, which was constructed by the user. Features of the system included facilities for switching the conversational perspective between the speaker and listener (i.e., 'your experiences and views' vs. 'my experiences and views'), providing a range of comments on what the other speaker had said, effecting repair when there was a conversational breakdown, and following predicted sequences of speech acts. The initial trials of the system produced dialogues that proceeded in a natural way and achieved encouraging conversational rates.

94–496 Tyler, Andrea (U. of Florida). The role of repetition in perceptions of discourse coherence. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **21,** 6 (1994), 671–88.

Ever since it was first proposed as part of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) general model of text cohesion, the construct of lexical cohesion has had great appeal. Under this model, the presence of lexical repetition and related semantic items, in conjunction with schemata, contributes to text coherence by creating cohesive ties within the text. However, this model has been criticised for confusing lexical repetition and anaphoric reference with the natural consequences of staying on topic and general pragmatic principles. Using an integrated discourse framework, this paper puts forward a third position which accepts the general outlines of the arguments posed by Green, Morgan and Sellner while arguing that certain patterns of repetition do make an independent contribution to discourse comprehensibility. By comparing discourse produced by a native speaker of English with an English text produced by a native speaker of Chinese, the effect of particular patterns of lexical repetition on text coherence is highlighted. The paper argues that lexical repetition serves to provide context-situated

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definitions of words and phrases and to provide a discourse-specific synonym set; the absence of these patterns of repetition contributes to a perception of incoherence in the non-native discourse examined here.