Research in the supporting sciences

Sociolinguistics

95–364 Caldwell, John A. W. (U. of Newcastle, NSW, Australia). Provision for minority languages in France. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (Clevedon, Avon), **15**, 4 (1994), 293–310.

The study investigates provision for minority languages in France, involving a comparison of regional and immigrant language provision. Historic and tehnolinguistic aspects and the limited regional language provisions under the Loi Deixonne and Commission Haby rulings are summarised. Investigation of current aims and praxis reveals a slow and contested shift from assimilation towards integration and diversity. Political intention is seen as being in advance of an educational policy and praxis imbued with French humanism. Pressure from language contact across the frontiers and France's international status constitute manipulable factors for change. A small, uncomfortable breach, occasioned partly by provision for immigrant languages, has occurred in the tenaciously applied principle of French unilingual territoriality. Confusion in the regionalist goals may be preventing full exploitation of the breach. Some regional languages have declined to the critical level of bilingualism without diglossia. Others, sustained at the diglossic level by continuing extra-frontier language contact or relative isolation, may yet benefit educationally from evolving political attitudes.

95–365 Edwards, Viv (U. of Reading). Community language teaching in the UK: ten years on. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy* (Cambridge), **11**, 1 (1995), 50–60.

This paper presents an overview of developments over the last 10 years in the teaching of the languages spoken within the various ethnic minority communities in the UK. It considers the ways in which arguments in favour of bilingualism have been articulated with increasing clarity during this period. It then focuses on the three sectors that deliver community language teaching: the voluntary sector, which continues to play the most important role; mainstream education, which has been responsible for many important initiatives in the last decade, now under threat from recent educational reforms; and adult eduction, where the teaching of Kwéyòl may well serve as a model for community language teaching in the future.

95–366 Erbaugh, Mary S. (U. of Oregon). Southern Chinese dialects as a medium for reconciliation within Greater China. *Language in Society* (Cambridge), **24**, 1 (1995), 79–94.

Southern Chinese dialects – Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Hakka – have received little official support from the governments of the nations where Chinese is spoken; they are not mutually intelligible with Mandarin, and are often deeply stigmatised. Although China's language wars have paralleled cold war hostilities, unofficial forces in the 1990s are rapidly enhancing dialect prestige, as an economic boom increasingly links the 'Greater China' of the People's Republic, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

95–367 Li Wei and Milroy, Lesley (U. of Newcastle-upon-Tyne). Conversational code-switching in a Chinese community in Britain: a sequential analysis. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **23**, 3 (1995), 281–99.

The informal conversational data presented in this paper were collected in the course of a larger participant observation study of a set of ten Chinese/English bilingual families in the Tyneside area of northeastern England. A sequential analysis is offered in an attempt to illuminate patterns underlying code-switching both within and between speaker turns. The procedures of conversational analysis are adopted, with particular attention to the way in which code-switching might be said to contextualise particular conversational procedures. Evidence is presented to suggest that these bilingual conversationalists deploy code-switching as a resource to help then contextualise

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preference organisation and repairs. It is argued that code-switching functions in a manner similar to other contextualisation cues which have been discussed in the literature, and that it is available to bilingual conversationalists as an additional conversation management resource. It is suggested that some of the code-switching patterns discussed in the paper are specific to generational subgroups in the community, and an attempt is made to associate the strategic use of conversational code-switching by these subgroups with wider intergenerational patterns of language choice and language competence in the community as a whole.

Psycholinguistics

95–368   Chafetz, Jill (Vanderbilt U., TN). The closed-class vocabulary as a closed set. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **15**, 3 (1994), 273–87.

Children who have normal language development are aware of the distinction between closed-class and open-class words at a very early age. In order to test to what extent children know the closed class to be, in fact, closed, 104 children aged 3 to 5 years participated in a sentence repetition task. Each sentenced contained a nonsense word that fulfilled either an open-class or a closed-class function. Children were more likely to repeat sentences correctly when the nonsense words functioned in open-class, rather than in closed-class, contexts. In addition, older children correctly repeated more sentences containing nonsense words that functioned in closed-class contexts than younger children. This last result shows a mechanism by which children may acquire new closed-class words. The theoretical implications of the results are also discussed relative to children with specific language impairments, especially in terms of the reliance on semantic value in word acquisition.

95–369   de Bot, Kees and others (U. of Nijmegen). Lexical processing in bilinguals. *Second Language Research* (Utrecht, The Netherlands), **11**, 1 (1995), 1–19.

A description is given of current theoretical models of the bilingual lexicon. Data from an auditory lexical decision experiment with English–Dutch bilinguals are compared with data from a similar experiment using visual lexical decision. The aim of the experiments was to investigate three factors that may play a role in lexical processing: level of proficiency in the second language, mode of presentation (visual vs. auditory) and cognateness of lexical items. These two sets of data are discussed in the light of recent theorising on the bilingual lexicon. It is concluded that for a general model of bilingual processing it is not sufficient to do experiments using visual techniques only. Auditory-based experiments offer additional validation to the models presented in the literature.

95–370   Fischer, Ute (Princeton U.). Learning words from context and dictionaries: an experimental comparison. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **15**, 4 (1994), 551–74.

This research investigates the independent and interactive effects of contextual and definitional information on vocabulary learning. German students of English received either a text with unfamiliar English words or their monolingual English dictionary entries. A third group of subjects were given both text and dictionary entries. Subjects used each target word in an English sentence and then translated their sentences into German. The translations showed whether students had understood the meaning of a target word and permitted the specification of comprehension strategies. Subjects who had received text and dictionary entries tended to favour the dictionary and thus performed no better than students in the other experimental groups. Subjects learning words from context replaced unfamiliar words with familiar words conforming to contextual constraints. Subjects in the dictionary group commonly substituted a relevant part of the definition for the head word. Lexical errors occurred for different reasons: substitutions in the dictionary condition were unconstrained by context; substitutions in the text condition were not sufficiently constrained by context. The study shows that information about the contexts in which words are used is crucial for acquiring an adequate understanding of word meaning.

95–371 Giacobbe, Jorge. Construction des formes lexicales et activité cognitive dans l'acquisition du français L2. [The construction of lexical forms and cognitive activity in the learning of French as a second language.] *Aile* (Paris), **3** (1994), 29–54.

In this article L2 lexical development is analysed as the learner's own systematic construction. The cognitive activity required in developing this system is considered as being linked to the learner's ability to set up and readjust a set of schemata which he can bring to bear on the intake resulting from interaction. This activity, resulting in successive and sometimes conflicting hypotheses, is exemplified with data from the longitudinal observation of a Spanish speaker acquiring French in natural circumstances.

95–372 Haenggi, Dieter (U. of Colorado at Boulder) **and Perfetti, Charles A.** (U. of Pittsburgh). Processing components of college-level reading comprehension. *Discourse Processes* (Norwood, NJ), **17**, 1 (1994), 83–104.

The roles of basic reading processes and prior knowledge to comprehension of expository text were addressed in a study of college readers. According to their performance in the Nelson-Denny Reading Comprehension Text, 34 college students were divided into groups of above-average and average readers and had to complete tasks of word and pseudoword vocalisation, sentence verification, probe discourse memory, text-based word recognition and word prediction. Subjects also took a prior knowledge test, read an expository text, and answered comprehension questions that covered explicit and implicit text information. The data indicated that word identification and propositional encoding measures were closely related to individual differences in college-level reading comprehension ability. Examining the relative contributions of basic reading and prior knowledge to comprehension, it was shown that knowledge played the major role in answering explicit questions, whereas probe discourse memory was relatively more important when the information was implicit.

95–373 Jisa, Harret and Richaud, Frédérique. Quelques sources de variation chez les enfants. [Some sources of variation in child language acquisition. *Aile* (Paris), **4** (1994), 7–51.

Recent research has brought into question the hypothesis that all children acquire language in the same way. This paper begins with a review of current research on variation in child language acquisition. It is argued that all children do not resolve the language learning problem following the same developmental trajectory. The author then considers different sources for the observed variation: what individual children consider salient; language specific morphosyntactic structure; maternal language; input directed to children in different cultures. Given such a wide range of possible explanations for variation in children learning language, an adequate theory of language development requires an interdisciplinary approach.

95–374 Long, Debra L. (U. of California, Davis). The effects of pragmatics and discourse style on recognition memory for sentences. *Discourse Processes* (Norwood, NJ), **17** (1994), 213–34.

Numerous laboratory studies have found that the precise wording of a sentence is not retained in memory once a conceptual representation has been derived. However, studies in the context of natural, communicative discourse have found substantial memory for both sentence meaning and form. Two components of natural discourse – pragmatics and discourse style – were investigated in the context of conversations embedded in narratives. The results from three experiments suggests that both components play a role in memory for the surface form of sentences. Recognition memory increased as a function of information about the speaker's positive and negative attitudes. In addition, recognition memory was enhanced to the extent that such evaluative information was conveyed by means of formulaic expressions (i.e., idioms, common expressions) which are characteristic of oral style discourse. These results were confirmed using a recall task. Subjects exhibited substantial verbatim memory for evaluative and formulaic expressions. To the extent that particular words and phrases from

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a sentence are explicitly encoded, they are available for use by normal sentence production mechanisms, increasing the probability that the wording generated at recall will match the wording of the original sentence.

Pragmatics

95–375 Aston, Guy (U. of Bologna). Say 'thank you': some pragmatic constraints in conversational closings. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **16**, 1 (1995), 57–86.

Research on intracultural and cross-cultural variation in the use and realisation of particular speech acts has generally focused on situational parameters such as power, social distance, and degree of imposition (Brown and Levinson). This paper argues that the use of thanks in closing conversations also reflects local concerns of conversational management, insofar as participants need to demonstrate their final alignment to a common frame of reference and a shared satisfactory role-relationship. Analysis of naturally-occurring data from English and Italian service encounters suggests that cross-cultural differences in closings may be as much due to differences in the preferred procedures of conversational management as to differences in perceptions of the overall situation or in cultural ethos, arguing for a greater attention to such procedures in contrastive pragmatics and in foreign language pedagogy.

95–376 Connor-Linton, Jeff. The role of lexical variation in crosstalk: pronominal reference choices in a Soviet-American spacebridge. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **23**, 3 (1995), 301–24.

This article seeks to extend the model of cross-cultural miscommunication, or crosstalk, in two directions and constrain it in a third through an analysis of Soviet and American speakers' pronominal reference choices in a three-hour audio-video 'spacebridge' meeting. First, the potential causes of crosstalk are extended by demonstrating the role played by variation between speakers' uses of lexical features. Co-occurrence of divergent pronominal reference and overt verbal oppositions indicates that the groups' differing pronominally marked constructions of the speech activity – including the goals, participant structures, and types of information each group privileged – contributed to participants' miscommunication.

Second, the explanation of crosstalk is enhanced by showing that much crosstalk is not purely accidental, as frequently claimed, but motivated by speakers' competing constructions of the context; that crosstalk is at once a failure of communication on one level and, on another level, a successful communicative strategy by which speakers protect their views of themselves and their world. Finally, the analysis reverses commonly held stereotypes of Soviets' and Americans' respective communicative styles, indicating that characterisations of communicative style must be constrained to specific speech events or activities.

95–377 Glover, Kelly D. (U. of Durham). A prototype view of context and linguistic behaviour: context prototypes and talk. *Journal of Pragmatics* (Amsterdam), **23** (1995), 137–56.

This paper discusses how and why the interface between talk and activity types departs from prototypical realisation. A 'context prototype' model is proposed in which lexical choice and propositional content is determined by the interactants' perception of a prototypical norm. Intersubjectivity between the participants in a speech event is not an assumed notion. Instead there are gradient properties which may be realised along a continuum. The model uses the analogue of a 'sliding scale' to refer to a system by which one aspect (linguistic behaviour) automatically varies according to the fluctuations of another aspect (context).

The idea that shared identification to a social norm has its boundaries is illustrated by the dialogue analysed. In particular, the paper shows how a successful Instruction-Giving activity type depends on the instructee's acceptance of unequal status. This point is exemplified with reference to a dispreferred second within the Instruction format. The data also show that differences in language competence between the instructor and instructee can bring about a non-prototypical speech event realisation.

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Research in the supporting sciences ■

Current approaches to ELT see the fostering of communication in the classroom as a prime aim. Failure to recognise the complex and elusive nature of communication has led to a problem at the heart of communicative methodology: that of evaluating the richness or value or authenticity of classroom interaction. A framework for analysing and evaluating classroom interaction is proposed which links the social and psychological purposes underlying the communication with the resultant discourse in terms of patterns of interaction. It is suggested that classroom interaction can best be analysed and evaluated if it is seen as operating in four basic classroom modes, in each of which typical purposes and patterns of interaction can be seen to converge. Textual analysis of published classroom data is undertaken in support of this contention.

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