

IASCL - Child Language Bulletin - Vol 22, No 2: December 2002

IN THIS ISSUE

- [IASCL News](#)
- [Some useful information](#)
- [From Info-Childes](#)
- [Book notices, forthcoming conferences](#)
- [Other news](#)

IASCL HOMEPAGE CONTENTS

<http://cnts.uia.ac.be/iascl/index>

- Mission of the IASCL
- IASCL Officers and Executive Committee
- **Child Language Bulletin**
- Publications Committee Chair
- Governing Statute
- Membership directory
- Registration form
- Next conference
- Proceedings of Previous Congresses

IASCL NEWS

FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

By all accounts the 9th triennial meeting of the IASCL in Madison, Wisconsin, USA, was among the best ever. The venue - Frank Lloyd Wright's building on the edge of Lake Monona - was gorgeous, the city of Madison provided a very pleasant college town atmosphere, and everything was very efficiently organized. There were close to 700 participants from over 38 countries—our biggest meeting ever. Of special note, the many language disorder specialists who attended the jointly organized Symposium on Research in Child Language Disorders broadened the program in very fruitful and interesting ways. The only complaints I heard were all to the effect that there were too many interesting things going on at the same time. In all, Jon Miller and his team did a terrific job and I am sure everyone in the IASCL is very grateful.

At the meeting I was “elected” president. For as long as I have been going to these meetings - approximately 20 years - there has been grumbling about the Soviet-style election process, and the current one was no exception. Members are offered up a slate of candidates chosen by the current officers and executive committee, and although there is the possibility of nominating candidates from the floor, that rarely if ever happens. While in principle everyone agrees that open elections are a good thing, in practice the problem is to

find someone who will agree to do it. And many people, myself included, will agree to serve if asked but would not stand for election - if there is someone else who would like to do it, they are welcome to it, as we all know the time pressures that our jobs entail. In any case, the other “elected” officers are listed below, and at the business meeting of the next IASCL we will discuss the process again and entertain suggestions for changes. [Please note that executive committee members are indeed properly elected by an open vote.]

Which brings us to the next meeting. A main reason I was “elected” was that I am located close to our next venue, Berlin, and so I can provide support in the planning of that meeting. Rest assured it is in good hands. Dagmar Bittner, Gisela Klann-Delius, and Juergen Weissenborn have already done much advance planning in securing the meeting space, reserving hotel rooms, planning transportation, and the web site for the meeting is already up and running (www.zas.gwz-berlin.de/events/iascl). Berlin is a truly exciting city, with a unique and interesting mix of the old and the new, and I can promise that in addition to the usual excellent scientific program, the city will provide our members with more interesting sights and cultural events than they could possibly take advantage of. Berlin is a truly great European city, centrally located, and everyone is warmly welcomed. And just to show how organized things are, I can announce that the 2008 meeting is already planned for Edinburgh, Scotland (Antonella Sorace, main organizer).

Finally, we all owe a large debt of gratitude to Brian MacWhinney for his excellent service as the outgoing president. In addition to assisting Jon Miller in planning the Madison meeting, he has been instrumental in running and continually improving the web site. Stephen Gillis (and his son, Joris) are the actual Web Masters, and we owe them a large debt of gratitude as well. Thankfully, they have agreed to stay on at their current salary levels – Steven also as the society’s secretary. Thanks also to Itziar Idiazabal, gracious host of our previous meeting and outgoing vice-president. And we all are sad to see Annick De Houwer leaving as the society's treasurer; after watching our vast amounts of money for two terms she has decided to let someone else do it. Thank you to all of the outgoing officers for their service, and to the incoming officers for agreeing to serve. And thanks to Ludovica Serratrice for agreeing to do the newsletter for the coming 3 years!

Mike Tomasello

SOME USEFUL INFORMATION

Info-childes is an eclectic list where in addition to job postings, conference announcements, and book notices, researchers from all over the world discuss ideas and exchange all sorts of theoretical knowledge and practical information with great generosity.

In this column you will find extracts from past messages from info-children with useful information ranging from the availability of new corpora, to tips on the latest digital recording equipment, or practical advice on calculating children's age in Excel.

NEW TAGGED ENGLISH CORPORA

Date: Sun, 7 Jul 2002 19:01:59 -0400

From: Brian MacWhinney

macw@cmu.edu

Dear Info-CHILDES,

In the context of some work I am doing, I ran the MOR program over the entire normally-developing English CHILDES database and disambiguated the resulting %mor line using POST. The resultant files are on the web now at <https://childes.talkbank.org/english.sit> There is a link called "tagged-English" on the home page that points to that file. It is 32 MB in size and becomes 180 MB when expanded (that's a new record for compression ratio, isn't it?), so be patient in downloading.

My estimate is that the MOR line in these files is about 90% accurate. We have reached 95% accuracy for POST disambiguation in well-cleaned files.

Other files will surely have a lower level, but 90% is a reasonable guess.

This means that these data should only be used for analyses that are robust against a certain level of tagging error.

Brian MacWhinney

HOW TO CALCULATE AGE IN EXCEL

Date: Mon, 29 Jul 2002 23:13:56 -0500

From: John Grinstead

John.Grinstead@uni.edu

Dear Friends,

Do any of you computer-sages out there know a function or series of functions that can be entered into an Excel sheet to calculate ages of the format used in acquisition research, e.g. '7;3.14' from birthdates expressed in conventional ways, e.g. '4-15-95'?

John

Date: Tue, 30 Jul 2002 14:03:13 -0500

From: John Grinstead

John.Grinstead@uni.edu

Dear All,

I am always pleasantly surprised by how many knowledgeable and helpful folks there are on this list. Thanks again for your help, especially:

Barbara Zurer Pearson

Yvan Rose

Brian MacWhinney

Neil Bohannon

Susan Gelman

Keiko Okada

Most especially, I would like to thank Sonja Bartels, who provided me with this function which can be pasted into an Excel spreadsheet:

```
=DATEDIF(A2,B2,"y") & ";" & DATEDIF(A2,B2,"ym") & "." & DATEDIF(A2,B2,"md")
```

which will produce an age like "7;3.7" in column C, if you enter birthdates like "4-15-95" in column A and testing dates like "7-22-02" in column B.

Thanks again, all, so much,

John

DRAWING SOFTWARE

Date: Tue, 27 Aug 2002 09:39:30 +0200

From: Jeannette Schaeffer

jschaef@bgumail.bgu.ac.il

Dear Info-CHILDES subscribers,

Thanks for all your reactions! Below I compiled them, so that more people can benefit. For clarity, I copy-pasted my own message before the answers:

Dear Info-CHILDES subscribers,

I am looking for a good and user-friendly drawing program for the PC to create pictures for experiments with children between 1;6 and 6 years old. Does any of you have a recommendation and an idea of the price?

Thanks,

Jeannette Schaeffer

Teresa Guasti:

an alternative idea. Why don't you take pictures of objects arranged as you want with a Digital camera, then you put them on a computer and print these pictures with a color print? You do not need to make any effort for drawing pictures.

Karen Froud:

I'm afraid we didn't manage to find a nice easy software package to generate our images. We downloaded things from the web and then adjusted them as necessary using a combination of photoshop and microsoft paint. All our items then got turned into pictures inside word documents. I'm sure there must be a more efficient way of going about it, but this was the best we could come up with in the time - and it seems to have worked pretty well. Sorry not to be more help.

Carol Slater:

I'm not sure what you want to do, but you might want to look into Walter Beagley's EYELINES, which has PC and Mac versions. It allows you not only to capture a drawing but also to collect data on the sequence and timing of its constituents and interfaces nicely with statistical programs. For information, contact beagley@alma.edu. Good luck.

Keith Nelson:

Kid Pix costs around \$40 and is very user friendly. You might try it and see if it produces pictures in a format that will work in your experiments.

Ioulia Kovelman:

You can try MSpaint, Coreldraw or AdobePhotoshop.

Tomoko Asano:

I'd say one of the most popular and commonly used drawing programs in the U.S. is Adobe Illustrator. If you have familiarity with other Adobe graphics programs (such as Photoshop), the interface is similar, so it won't be too difficult even for a first-time user to navigate within the program. If you have no experience using any of the Adobe programs, you'll have some learning to do before getting comfortable with the program (just as any other programs), in which case I'd recommend "Adobe Illustrator Classroom in a Book" as a tutorial to cover the basics (the book comes with a CD-ROM containing 16 lessons). As for the price, if you are eligible for the "Educational Version" (which I believe you are), it'll be about \$300 or less. You can get more information about the product at www.adobe.com.

REFERENCES ON THE ACQUISITION OF TAG QUESTIONS

Date: Thu, 29 Aug 2002 15:44:43 -0700

From: Hyams, Nina

hyams@humnet.ucla.edu

Thanks to all of you who responded to my query about tag questions. Following are the references I received.

Nina.

- Annick De Houwer. 1990. The Acquisition of Two Languages from Birth, CUP.
- Roger Brown. 1973. A First Language (pages 404 & 408). Harvard University Press.
- Brown & Hanlon. 1970. Derivational Complexity and the Order of Acquisition in Child Speech, in JR Hayes (ed.) Cognition and the Development of Language, Wiley.
- Anne Baker. 1981 It's easier in German, isn't it? The acquisition of tag questions in a bilingual child. Journal of Child Language 8, pp. 641-647.
- Brian J. Richards. 1990. Language development and individual differences: a study of auxiliary verb learning. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 7)
- Keith Nelson. 1977. paper in Dev. Psych, 1977, 13, 101-107.
- Keith Nelson (2000) paper in L. Menn & N. B. Ratner (eds.) Language Production in Children (contains several references).

FILMS WITH FOCUS ON LANGUAGE

Date: Thu, 5 Sep 2002 07:57:11 -0500

From: Philip Dale

DaleP@health.missouri.edu

A couple of years ago I posted a notice asking for suggestions for fiction which had language as a focus, and I received many suggestions. As a followup, I'd like to recommend very highly Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow*, a science fiction novel in which language learning plays an important role. It's also quite fascinating as a meditation on culture contact and miscommunication, and on the nature of faith. The author is a Ph.D. anthropologist.

My request this time is for film which has language as a focus. The two which come mind immediately are *My Fair Lady*, and *Nell*. Are there any others? I have a hazy memory of some bits in Monty Python movies, for example. The treatment of language can be done well or badly; I'm interested in film as a discussion starter.

Thanks in advance for your help, and I'll post a summary.

From: Ann Dowker

ann.dowker@psy.ox.ac.uk

Would "Children of a Lesser God" be relevant?

From: Roberta Golinkoff

Roberta@UDel.Edu

Of course Truffaut's *The Wild Child* about Victor. Love to see the list that emerges. Thanks for doing this!

From: George Hunt

georgehu@education.ed.ac.uk

The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser, directed by Werner Herzog, Germany 1975. As well as exploring Jeanie-type language deprivation, social and emotional factors, and issues of language and cognition, this is a beautiful and moving film in its own right as well.

See also some of the dialogues in the British comedy series *the Two Ronnies*, particularly the spoof on segmentation and polysemy which begins with a customer walking into a hardware store and seeming to ask for 'four candles'. A bit of light relief for your students after the Herzog.

From: Patricia Smiley

PAS04747@pomona.edu

A colleague, Gail Gottfried, suggested the following: The only movie she found in which children have significant speaking roles and that had commentary **about** language was the recent remake of The Parent Trap, because the girls had to learn the California/British colloquialisms to pass.

From: Ann Dowker

ann.dowker@psy.ox.ac.uk

There was a play, "The Miracle Worker", about Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan: quite old, a bit sentimental. I'm not sure if it was ever turned into a film.

From: Jean Berko Gleason

gleason@bu.edu

Ann Dowker wrote:

There was a play, "The Miracle Worker", about Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan: quite old, a bit sentimental. I'm not sure if it was ever turned into a film.

Ann

It did, with Patty Duke, now called Anna, after going through some bad times herself.

From: Audrey Holland

aholland@email.arizona.edu

I teach a course, built around speech, hearing and language disorders built around film, personal accounts and novels, etc., occasionally.

A potent combination for the course is the (old original) Miracle worker, with Anne Bancroft as Annie and Patty Duke as Helen. Truffaut's Wild Child, and Shattuck's book "the forbidden experiment" which is about Victor too. Other films on my list include Children of A Lesser God, My Left Foot, and some excellent documentaries including Best Boy, Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter, a Kirk Douglas interview with Larry King, etc. I appreciate all of the suggestions that enhance my potential reading/viewing list.

From: Kenneth Allen Hyde

kenny@UDel.Edu

Hmmmm. Language as a focus? Honestly, I wouldn't include "Nell" or "My Fair Lady" in that list; they had language as a major theme, but it wasn't really the focus of the film. Assuming that you mean films that have language as a major theme, there is "Congo" (one of the characters is a gorilla that talks via a voice synth translator from sign language). A film that I use in my Intro and SLA classes is "The 13th Warrior." We don't

watch the whole file, of course, since most of it isn't relevant, but there is an excellent discussion-starter scene in which the Arab character “learns” Norse by listening to the campfire talk. It's a great jumping off place for discussion about what is and is not realistic in the scene. Another film that I've used in sociolinguistic discussions is “Miss Congeniality.” It's an excellent example of how language (specifically dialect choice) affects our self-presentation since it includes specific overt references to this phenomenon.

From: Jean Berko Gleason

gleason@bu.edu

I think I've got it: Iceman.

Here's the synopsis from the web: “A group of explorers on a remote expedition make a startling discovery: a frozen Neanderthal. Apparently, the specimen in question has been on ice for 40,000 years. Back in the lab, scientists and anthropologists try to thaw him out -- but he warms up a bit more than they expected him to...”

As I recall, Philip Lieberman consulted with the filmmakers on the vocal capacities of Neanderthal people, and there's quite a bit of attention to the iceman's communicative abilities.

From: karin@ruccs.rutgers.edu

Another movie that might be appropriate is “The heart is a lonely hunter” from the late '60s/early 70s. If I recall correctly, it stars Alan Arkin as a deaf man in an oral world.

From: Brian Richards

B.J.Richards@reading.ac.uk

Dear Phil, you are right about Monty Python. Two sketches spring to mind immediately although I am not sure whether they were in the films or just the TV series. One is the “argument” sketch where people pay to have an argument. This develops into an argument about whether they are really having an argument. The second is about a person who can pronounce /k/ in words beginning with the letter 'k' but not if they begin with 'c', i.e, 'king' is possible but not 'college'.

From: Hua Zhu

Hua.Zhu@newcastle.ac.uk

Similar to Monty Python, 'Alo 'Alo is another one which plays the game on pronunciation. There are ample sketches of mis/nonunderstanding due to the exaggerated accent used by the actor.

From: Reuben Woolley

rwoolley@teleline.es

The 'Argument' sketch is also included in the first Monty Python film - "And Now For Something Completely Different". The /k/ sketch (an absolute masterpiece) is the Travel Agency sketch, included in the LP/MC - Monty Python Live At the Drury Lane Theatre and also in their film/TV programme, Monty Python Live At The Hollywood Bowl. I often use this sketch in my EFL classes along with the Dead Parrot sketch which is marvellous for introducing register.

From: Steven Pinker

pinker@media.mit.edu

My Fair Lady is a wonderful film, but in some ways the 1938 black and white film adaptation of Pygmalion is even more satisfying. It doesn't have the singing and dancing, but the dialogue and scene structure are closer to those of Shaw's original play, and as a result it is wittier and subtler (particularly the scene in which Eliza shocks the stuffy aristocrats by using lower-class epithets with upper-class pronunciation). It is done in the style of the best English theatre and features a terrific performance by Leslie Howard, less hammy than Rex Harrison's Higgins. (Howard went on to play Ashley Wilkes in Gone With the Wind the following year.) Perhaps Yoda in Star Wars could be used to introduce students to VSO languages.

From: Beverly Flanigan

flanigan@ohiou.edu

Perhaps Yoda in Star Wars could be used to introduce students to VSO languages.

--Steve Pinker

My grad student TAs often use Yoda scenes in their Syntax unit. Students don't seem to notice that after a while Yoda drops his peculiar syntax and switches to SVO, particularly in complex sentences (I suspect the scriptwriter lost track of the "rules").

From: David Pesetsky

pesetsk@MIT.EDU

Perhaps Yoda in Star Wars could be used to introduce students to VSO languages.

--Steve Pinker

Mislead them you would!

From: Charles Watkins

charles.watkins@wanadoo.fr

I've come in late on the discussion. Has anyone mentioned Dances with Wolves? Particularly good in the scenes involving the reacquisition a forgotten mother tongue. As regards Yoda; is he the small hairy one with pointed ears? Watching the end of Episode 1 with my son I have just been, and the distinct memory of OSV (if the modal/auxiliary is the verb and the lexical verb considered part of the complement) have.

From: Carol Anne Miller

cam47@psu.edu

Like Audrey, I try to incorporate novels and films into my language courses, although I haven't yet gone so far as to structure an entire course in this way (what a great idea!). I use them mainly to jumpstart student's thinking about issues, and to highlight the real-life relevance of concepts learned in the classroom.

I use My Fair Lady--not the whole thing, but the first half hour or so, with the "Why Can't the English" number, and Eliza's request for Higgins to teach her how to "talk like a lady."

Alice in Wonderland is all about language...as I learned from Lila Gleitman, who used it as a supplementary text in Psychology of Language. Students will probably need some guidance in discovering the language issues. I use the chapter about the Queen's croquet game as a way of discussing classical vs. prototype theory. Again, this is totally stolen from Lila.

I use an excerpt from Tarzan of the Apes, where the young Tarzan teaches himself to read from materials found in his dead parents' cabin, to talk about literacy.

I have in the past used an excerpt from one of the later Anne of Green Gables books which has a reflection on motherese.

Along with the film The Miracle Worker, Helen Keller's memoirs can be a good learning tool. I can't remember the title just now. I really appreciate all the suggestions people are making. I know I'm straying somewhat from the original question about films, but I hope I'm keeping the spirit of the thing.

From: "KELLY, ELIZABETH"

EKELLY@gc.cuny.edu

Add "My Dinner with Andre"

ACCESS TO CHIPEOPLE AND PASSWORD PROTECTION

Date: Tue, 1 Oct 2002 11:18:53 -0400

From: Brian MacWhinney

macw@cmu.edu

Dear Info-CHILDES,

I received a complaint from one of the people listed in the ChiPeople file on chilides.psy.cmu.edu noting that, if her email was listed, it might be available to spammers who browse the net looking for email addresses. To prevent this, I had to reinstituted password protection for the address list. Username is "member" and password is "babbling" as before. In addition, I have locked the fields so that they cannot be edited. So, if you want to have changes made in your address there, you need to send me email and I will make the correction. I feel sorry about having to make these added restrictions, but hopefully the list still serves its basic purposes of allowing people to find colleagues addresses and emails.

Brian MacWhinney

THE TRANSITION TO XML AND UNICODE

Date: Wed, 23 Oct 2002 22:59:08 -

From: Brian MacWhinney

macw@cmu.edu

Dear Colleagues,

The CHILDES database is now available in XML format from <http://xml.talkbank.org>.

XML is the new "language" of the world-wide web. It is linked up to all sorts of new and powerful tools for running analyses over the web. We will be building those tools over the next months. Right now, you can only view the database over the web, but with the new tools you will be able to run analyses directly. Eventually, it may also be possible to support some forms of streaming audio or video from transcripts.

However, in order to match up with the requirements of XML, it was necessary to devise an XML Schema for the CHAT format and to apply that newer, more restrictive format to the whole database. It was also necessary to convert dozens of earlier font types to the single new Unicode standard. This was a really big job. Except for English files that do not use IPA, all of the CHILDES files are now in Unicode.

The CLAN editor is now capable of handling Unicode on the Macintosh. On Windows, the editor can display Unicode, but it is not yet capable of fully editing Unicode, although we hope to have that facility available soon. In the meantime, as a a stopgap, you can use Windows editors like MS-Word to edit CLAN files.

We have also tightened up the CHECK program so that it matches more closely the requirements of the new XML Schema. Nothing has actually changed in CHAT. Rather, CHECK now fully enforces all of the details of CHAT.

If you have any questions about these new facilities, please feel free to send me notes. I will also soon post a note about some of these new developments on a link from the CHILDES home page.

Best wishes,

Brian MacWhinney

INFO-CHILDES FORUM ON...

This section includes a discussion of the selection of productivity criteria, and an exchange on the coding grammatical errors. All messages are from the info-childes list: info-childes@chilides.psy.cmu.edu.

PRODUCTIVITY CRITERIA

Date: Wed, 10 Jul 2002 10:20:05

From: Alcock, Katie

k.j.alcock@city.ac.uk

Subject: Productivity in acquisition of grammar

Sorry for mass cross-posting - thought I might get more replies this way.

I'm just looking at some spontaneous speech data from a few 2 and 3 year olds. I am wondering what criteria people would use for productive use of a particular grammatical construction. Would it be:

a) use of that construction with more than one root morpheme/ main word e.g. productive use of past tense would be saying walked AND finished, for example

or b) use of the same root morpheme with more than one construction e.g. productive use of past tense being saying walk AND walked?

or c) use of the construction in a variety of circumstances correctly/contrastively? e.g. I finished milk but Daddy drive work.

Or would you say more than two uses, and in how many utterances? I have 100 to 200 utterances from each of about 4 or 5 children (but many of the utterances are just Yes or No or Mama). The slight problem is that they are in two previously undescribed languages so I don't know what the norm for each construction should be!

Katie Alcock

Date: Wed, 10 Jul 2002 09:16:02 -0400

From: Shanley Allen

shanley@bu.edu

Subject: Re: Productivity in acquisition of grammar

Hi Katie,

I've done similar work in Inuktitut, and used your (a) and (b) as indicators as well some other things. The most obvious indicator of productivity is overregularization (e.g. runned, fallled), but this doesn't occur very often. You can look at my indicators of productivity in the second chapter of my book (Allen, S. 1996. Aspects of Argument Structure Acquisition in Inuktitut. Amsterdam: Benjamins), or pretty much the same ones appear in my JCL article (Allen, S. & Crago, M. 1996. The acquisition of the passive in Inuktitut. Journal of Child Language. - the title isn't exact and I forget the volume and page numbers).

Work by Julian Pine, Elena Lieven, Mike Tomasello among others indicates that your (c) would not be a good measure of productivity. Children may well learn individual verbs in fixed forms at early ages, acquiring one tense for each verb, for instance, and so may not be productively applying morphology even though they are producing forms with the correct morphemes. You need evidence from one verb with or without the morpheme to tease this apart. This research also shows why your criterion (b) is weaker than (a).

Good luck, and don't hesitate to write with further questions.

Best,

Shanley Allen.

Date: Wed, 10 Jul 2002 09:26:25 -

From: Elizabeth Bates

bates@crl.ucsd.edu

Subject: Re: Productivity in acquisition of grammar

In "From first words to grammar" we actually had a horse race of sorts among different criteria for calculating productivity, to see how they correlated with one another, and with other language measures in our longitudinal data set. The criteria were applied at 28 months.

Data were available at 10, 13 and 20 months as well. Quantity-based criteria that rely on numbers of cases of a construction were relatively unreliable within this data set (we had 27 children, but speech samples were relatively short), and did not show high correlations with other measures. More qualitative criteria (relying on appearance of over-regularizations; or same verb/noun appears in more than one morphological form) showed substantially larger correlations with other variables, and seemed to line up with a more 'analytic' stream of measures in factor analyses. There is a chapter dedicated to these analyses in the book (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

liz bates

Date: Fri, 12 Jul 2002 07:36:57

From: "Alcock, Katie"

k.j.alcock@city.ac.uk

Subject: productivity continued

I accidentally pressed "send" instead of "save" on the last one... sorry about that... there was more and here it is.

Some people thought that using a) PLUS b) might work, rather than one or the other.

It was also pointed out that other types of errors (including but not limited to omissions, so I'm assuming things like using past tense when it is not the appropriate tense, rather than on a verb that doesn't take the past tense?) might reveal productivity.

Liz Bates' message did go to the whole list but I'll just summarise: in one of the few studies to compare different types of measures they found that number of uses of a construction were not particularly valid i.e.

didn't correlate with other language measures, especially for small speech samples from each child, but qualitative (over-regularisations or uses of the same word in more than one form) were more valid.

Finally a couple of people have said "in small samples like yours...". I know we don't have very many children and it is only a pilot study but it feels quite large already! How large is large?

Katie Alcock

CODING GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

Date: Wed, 4 Sep 2002 10:32:37 -

From: Helen Tager-Flusberg

htagerf@bu.edu

Subject: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

We are currently coding language samples and are interested in the presence of grammatical errors. One concern is how to distinguish between 'vernacular use' and genuine errors. Here are examples that we don't know what to do with: - regarding the use of "there are"- I am finding many subjects using it as a contraction in the singular when the plural form is called for- i.e. "there's more people here than expected" or "there's 100 people attending the service Also using "good" instead of "well"- "He ran really good at the race"? The other issue was dropping "ly" from adverbs- "he drew nice" or various combinations of both "she plays real good". Any ideas on this? rules to follow?

Thanks in advance for advice,

Helen Tager-Flusberg

Date: Wed, 4 Sep 2002 11:45:48 -

From: Beverly Flanigan

flanigan@ohiou.edu

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

These are increasingly common usages in American English, and not simply in "nonstandard" vernaculars. We sociolinguists consider these to be evolving toward general acceptance. The only form you cite that's perhaps still limited to Midland or Appalachian dialects is zero -ly on adverbs, but it's likely spreading also. These are

vernacular “errors,” then, but I'd quibble with the use of the term “error.” If by “genuine” you mean developmental, I wouldn't put them into that category.

Beverly Olson Flanigan

Date: Wed, 4 Sep 2002 12:11:39 -

From: Lynne Hewitt

lhewitt@bgnet.bgsu.edu

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

Dear Helen,

To me, these errors are in the twilight zone of grammaticalization and diachronic change. Many have pointed out that child language represents the canary in the coal mine for the death of certain grammatical structures. I am 100% certain that I have made all of these “errors” in conversation, especially in informal speech. My standard when training students is to say that it has to be an error that would not be used by the speakers of the input language. So “Kitty not go” is always wrong, but “There's not a lot of kitties here” can't be judged an error, since it is frequent in the input. I know that I and many other U.S. speakers would say this.

Where this rule flounders would be in cases like: “One hundred people is attending the service”. For a child acquiring my dialect, this should not be in the input, therefore would be classed as an error. But it seems wrong to code it as an error when uttered by a child exposed to dialects where number agreement in the auxiliary is optional. Ideally, research participants should not be compared unless acquiring the same dialect, but this is difficult to establish in practice. An alternative would be to code only errors that all likely input dialects reject, including the most common regional, social, and ethnic variants of U.S. English.

Lynne Hewitt

Date: Wed, 4 Sep 2002 14:35:41

From: Lise Menn

lise.menn@colorado.edu

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

There's a wonderful old paper by Jerry Morgan called 'Verb Agreement as a Rule of English' in CLS 8 (1972) about the syntax/semantics conflict in 'there is/there are' sentences...

Lise Menn

Date: Wed, 4 Sep 2002 16:52:47 -

From: Jay McClelland

ilm@cnbc.cmu.edu

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

I couldn't resist passing this bit of email I just received on to the info-childes list in the context of the present discussion: In reply to an email of thanks, I received this reply:

Your welcome!

How do we think about this kind of 'error'?

Jay McClelland

Date: Wed, 4 Sep 2002 18:31:17 -

From: Beverly Flanigan

flanigan@ohiou.edu

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

Strictly an orthographic error. The writer knows perfectly well what the base forms are. It drives me crazy, but it's not a linguistic error, any more than written its=it's=its' is.

>> Your welcome!

Date: Fri, 6 Sep 2002 12:37:05

From: Brian Richards

B.J.Richards@reading.ac.uk

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

<http://listserv.linguistlist.org/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0209a&L=info-childes&D=1&P=2547>

Re Jay Mclelland's example of "your welcome", I wonder whether with such a formulaic expression speakers and writers really are always aware of the base form.

One phenomenon that has always puzzled me in children's writing, including older teenagers is using 'of' instead of 'have/ve' after modals: 'It must of been...', 'they might of done...' Any thoughts?

Brian

Date: Fri, 6 Sep 2002 14:09:52

From: George Hunt

georgehu@education.ed.ac.uk

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

The forms could of, might of, should of etc are also common in adult writing, including that of education students. I had always assumed that the writers were simply making a graphophonic analogy with forms like kind of, sort of, some of, many of. When these are spoken, the vowel of the last syllable is reduced to schwa, making these syllables identical with those of the abbreviated modal forms. When these writers were mentally reconstructing the full forms for spelling, perhaps they drew upon the 'kind of' forms. However, this does not explain the direction of the analogy - why don't we as often see forms like kind have, many have etc?

It might be interesting to talk to the writers to see whether or not they are making conscious choices between possible spellings in the process of writing these non-standard forms. I once tried to correct a student by pointing out the difference between the full forms of the modal constructions, and contrasting them with kind of etc. She replied, 'I know that, but in my dialect the full form is should of'.

Date: Fri, 6 Sep 2002 14:46:58

From: George Hunt

georgehu@education.ed.ac.uk

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

In English Today, 14.3 July 1998, there's a short and entertaining article by Pam Peters, 'Differing on Agreement', about concord in contemporary International English usage. This is a report from the English Today/ Cambridge University Press 'Langscape' project which used computer corpora and elicited data to track

changes in usage. The project and the whole periodical are interesting sources of information about such changes.

George

Date: Fri, 6 Sep 2002 13:35:37 -0400

From: Beverly Flanigan

flanigan@ohiou.edu

Subject: Re: Coding grammatical errors in language samples

"I know that" is the key. At some underlying level, I suspect most people know the difference between 'have' and 'of' in these phrasal sets. Your student may not understand what "full form" means, and she's confusing dialect and style. A way to test this is to ask the writer to turn the statement into a question (cf. Labov's test of black kids' underlying knowledge of the copula). Similarly, if someone is asked what "your welcome," or "your tired," or "your not my boss" means, I suspect they will at some point articulate the copula fully.

Beverly Olson Flanigan

BOOK NOTICES

Wittek, Angelika (2002). *Learning the Meaning of Change-of-state Verbs. A Case Study of German Child Language*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

<http://www.degruyter.com>

Bernicot, J., Trognon, A., Giudetti, M. & Musiol, M. (2002).

Pragmatique et Psychologie. Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

2002

November 30 Groningen, The Netherlands

Going Romance 2002. 16th Symposium on Romance Linguistics

<http://www.let.rug.nl/~going>

December 16-21 Singapore

13th World Congress of Applied Linguistics (AILA)

<http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/aila/>

2003

April 30-May 3, Tempe, Arizona, US

4th International Symposium on Bilingualism

<http://isb4.asu.edu/>

July 13-18, Toronto, Canada

8th International Pragmatics Conference

<http://ipra-www.uia.ac.be/ipra/>

September 4-6 Tralee, Ireland

3rd International Conference of Third Language Acquisition and Trilingualism

http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_L3

Deadline for abstract submission: 31/12/02

Date of notification of acceptance: 28/2/03

March 14-15, Keio University, Kita Campus

The 4th Annual Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics

<http://www.otsu.icl.keio.ac.jp/tcp/>

Deadline for abstract submission: 30/11/02

Date of notification of acceptance: 10/01/03

9-11 July 2003, Newcastle upon Tyne, England

Child Language Seminar

<http://cls.visitnewcastlegateshead.com>

Deadline for abstract submission: 28/02/03

April 23 2003 (11:30 - 17:30)

Sign Language Acquisition: Typical and Atypical Development

Pre-conference in conjunction with the annual meeting of SRCD, Tampa, Florida

Pre-conference Program:

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rachel Mayberry, McGill University, Canada

Anne Baker, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands

Caregiver-child interaction in deaf signing families

Richard P. Meier, University of Texas at Austin, USA

Early sign language acquisition

Nini Hoiting, Royal Institute for the Deaf "H.D. Guyot", Netherlands

Acquisition of early sign vocabulary in deaf children and their parents

Brenda Schick, University of Colorado, USA (with Peter DeVilliers, Robert Hoffmeister, Jill DeVilliers)

Theory of Mind in child signers

Elissa Newport, University of Rochester, USA

Variations in sign language input

Bencie Woll, City University, London, England

Sign language acquisition by atypical learners

Wrap-up Discussion:

Dan Slobin, Univ. of California, Berkeley, USA

If you would like to be listed in our mailing list, please e-mail to Jenny Singleton (singleton@uiuc.edu).

Further information will be disseminated soon regarding registration procedures and fees for this Pre-Conference.

April 24-27, Tampa, Florida

SRCD 2003 Biennial Meeting

<http://www.srcd.org/biennial.html>

June 19-21, Montreal, Canada

The 14th Annual conference on Theoretical and Experimental Neuropsychology, TENNET XIV

<http://www.uqam.ca/tennet>

Deadline for abstract submission: 05/01/03

July 5-6 Kobe University, Japan

The Fifth Annual Conference of the Japanese Society for Language Sciences

<http://jchat.sccs.chukyo-u.ac.jp/JLSL/>

Deadline for abstract submission: 01/02/03

July 1-4, Vancouver, Canada

2003 Annual Child Phonology Conference

Deadline for abstract submission: 31/01/03

OTHER NEWS

FROM THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

'Trends in Language Acquisition Research' TiLAR)

In the previous IASCL term (1999-2002) a new IASCL publication series was launched: the book series 'Trends in Language Acquisition Research' or TiLAR. TiLAR is published by John Benjamins Publishing Company.

As the official publication of the International Association for the Study of Child Language (IASCL), TiLAR presents thematic collective volumes on state-of-the-art child language research worldwide. Two volumes are published per three year period in between IASCL congresses. All volumes in the IASCL-TiLAR Series are invited (but externally reviewed) edited volumes by IASCL members that are strongly thematic in nature and that present cutting edge work which is likely to stimulate further research to the fullest extent.

Besides quality, diversity is an important consideration in all the volumes: diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches, diversity in the languages studied, diversity in the geographical and academic backgrounds of the contributors. After all, like the IASCL itself, the IASCL-TiLAR Series is there for child language researchers from all over the world.

In the 1999-2002 the following two volumes were published:

- TiLAR1: Trends in Bilingual Acquisition, edited by Jasone Cenoz and Fred Genesee (2001). With an introduction by the editors, and chapter contributions (in the order of appearance) by Jürgen Meisel, Ludovica Serratrice, Laura Bosch, Nuria Sebastian-Gallés, Diane Poulin-Dubois, Naomi Goodz, Margareta Almgren, Itziar Idiazabal, Elena Nicoladis, Suzanne Quay, Elizabeth Lanza, Liane Comeau, and Fred Genesee. Discussion by Brian MacWhinney.
ISBN 90 272 3471 X.
- TiLAR2: Directions in Sign Language Acquisition, edited by Gary Morgan and Bencie Woll (2002). With an introduction by the editors, and chapter contributions (in the order of appearance) by Marc Marschark, Lodenir Becker Karnopp, Nina Hoiting, Dan Slobin, Elena Pizzuto, Richard P. Meier, Brenda Schick, Judy Reilly, Diane Anderson, Beppie van den Bogaerde, Anne E. Baker, Judy Kegl, Gary Morgan and Bencie Woll. Discussion by Elena Lieven.
ISBN 90 272 3472 8.

TiLAR1 and TiLAR2 are available to IASCL members at a substantial discount (www.benjamins.com).

In the period 2002-2005 we aim to publish TiLAR3 and TiLAR4. These are very much in the preparation stage right now, and information about them will be published in the Bulletin as it becomes available. However,

IASCL dues-paying members may be interested to know that they will all receive a free copy of TiLAR3 and TiLAR4 as part of their membership.

'Trends in Language Acquisition Research' is made for and by IASCL members. We hope it can become a source of information and inspiration which the community of child language researchers can continually turn to in their professional endeavors.

Annick De Houwer and Steven Gillis, TiLAR General Editors

IASCL DONATION DRIVE

The IASCL is a worldwide organisation, which means that it aims to serve child language researchers in all countries of the world. Child language research is important everywhere, both from a theoretical perspective (cf. for instance the significance of cross-linguistic evidence) and from a more applied point of view (cf. for instance the need for good description to allow for the assessment of language learning problems). Unfortunately financial considerations are often a hindrance to the development of scientific disciplines in countries with severe economic problems. The IASCL has always been supportive of would-be IASCL members working in such countries by waiving membership fees for them.

IASCL funds are limited, though. In the past, donations from regular IASCL members have been very helpful in supporting colleagues from economically disadvantaged countries. In order to continue offering that support, your donations are very welcome indeed. Each donation, whatever the amount, will be acknowledged by a receipt signed by the IASCL Treasurer (useful perhaps for tax purposes). You may send donations in either pounds sterling or American dollars.

(1) Cheques in pounds sterling payable to IASCL can be sent to:

*Dr Anna Theakston
IASCL Treasurer
University of Manchester
Department of Psychology
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL
UK*

Cash payments in pounds sterling can also be made by prior arrangement with Dr Theakston (theaksto@fs1.fse.man.ac.uk) at the above address.

(2) For American dollar amounts, please send your donations to:

Prof. Judith Becker Bryant
IASCL Assistant Treasurer
Department of Psychology, PCD 4118G
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL 33620-7200
U.S.A.

The IASCL as a whole will be sure to benefit from the more diversified nature of its membership as a result of your donations. Many thanks in advance!

Anna Theakston, IASCL Treasurer
theaksto@fs1.fse.man.ac.uk

FROM THE EDITOR

The **Child Language Bulletin** is the newsletter of the International Association for the Study of Child Language. It is distributed free to all members of IASCL and it is published twice a year.

The Bulletin is available on the IASCL Web page <http://iascl-www.uia.ac.be> and all members of the association will receive an e-mail message each time a new issue of the Bulletin is published. A hard copy of the Bulletin will only be sent to those members who ask for it by sending a message to the editor.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Dr Jasone Cenoz, for her hard work on the bulletin these last few years, and for the help and advice she has kindly given me.

I encourage members to submit news and information that might be relevant to our research community. I would especially like to hear from doctoral students on new theses being completed. They are often a wonderful source of new data and new ideas that are not always easily accessible before publication.

Please do send any items to the address below. I am looking forward to your submissions!

Dr Ludovica Serratrice
University of Manchester
Faculty of Education
Language and Literacy Studies
Oxford Road

Manchester M13 9PL

UK

Serratrice@man.ac.uk