

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The present number comprises articles dealing with the acquisition of language (mental terms in German, verb grammatical system in Russian), discourse production by children and adults (narratives in French, Turkish, and Polish), and reading comprehension in Romany and Bulgarian children.

The issue opens with two articles based on longitudinal studies of child speech. The first, entitled *Development of desire terms by young German children: A semantic-pragmatic analysis*, by Luke Moissinac and Nancy Budwig (Clark University), focuses on use of the German desire terms (*wollen*, *moechte*, and *brauchen*) in three mother-child dyads in semi-naturalistic situations over four months. The authors try to answer two basic questions: 1) how children use these terms in the first months of the third year, 2) whether there are observable systematics between maternal and child use of the German desire terms (from the point of view of frequency and pragmatic function). It turned out that both mothers and children focused mainly on the children's desires although child references to others' desires increased over observational time. The second article, by Dorota Kiebzak-Mandera (Jagiellonian University) deals with formation of the verb system in Russian children. The data for three Russian children were collected during longitudinal studies up to the end of the third year. The analyses show the emergence of verb categories in each child corpus in reference to maternal use of verb forms. The author refers to the well-known hypothesis by Antinucci and Miller on the child's temporal system – the defective tense hypothesis. The data presented in the article do not confirm this hypothesis. The process of forming the verb system in Russian children takes very little time and rapidly becomes comparable with adult language.

The next three articles are based on analyses of narrative discourse. The first, entitled *Junction and segmentation in French children's narratives* is by Sophie Kern (Laboratoire Dynamique du Langage, CNRS-Lyon2). French monolingual children aged 3 to 11 years and adults narrated a picture-book *Frog, where are you?* (Mayer, 1969). The author studied the linguistic tools used by children and adults to establish links between referential events and to segment these events. These abilities increase with age. In the next article, *Introducing referents in Turkish children's narratives*, Hristo Kyuchukov (Open Society Institute – New York /University of San Francisco) examines the first-mentioned referential devices in Turkish narratives used by bilingual Turkish children (aged 7, 9, and 11)

living in Bulgaria. The narratives were elicited from two picture-books, *Horse story* and *Cat story* (Hickmann, 1982). The results were compared with introduction of narrative referents by Turkish children living in the Netherlands, studied by Aarssen (see Kyuchukov's review of Aarssen's book in *Psychology of Language and Communication*, 1999, vol. 3, no.1). The third article on narratives in this issue is entitled "*Possible worlds*" of the *Polish socio-political transformation. A study of narratives based on premodern, modern, and postmodern discourse resources*. The author, Katarzyna Stemplewska-Żakowicz (University of Warsaw) analyzes narratives produced by adults aged 19 to 30 years from three groups: Roman Catholics, international economy students, and an anarchist milieu. It was expected that each group would exhibit prevalence of a given type of discourse. From the analyses there emerged a pattern of contrasts and similarities between the three groups of subjects in terms of subjective representations of the world in narrative and the place of the self in that world.

The final article in this issue deals with reading comprehension. The title is *Reading comprehension of Romany and Bulgarian students from fifth to eighth grade*. The authors – Encho Gerganov (New Bulgarian University) and Hristo Kyuchukov – illustrated in their study how three factors influence global understanding of a text: school grade, mother tongue and type of residential area. The collected data require clarification in further studies.

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