

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The present number comprises six articles written by Polish, American, French, Canadian, Swedish, and Japanese researchers. Five of three deal with development of language, firstly, from the perspectives of phylogenesis and ontogenesis, and secondly, in the light of the ontogenetic development of human beings. Acquisition of both spoken and sign language development is considered. The final article focuses on speech in adults and illustrates the differences between West and East in terms of the specificity of Japanese language behavior.

The issue opens with a text by Ida Kurcz (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw School for Advanced Social Psychology) – the dean of general psycholinguistics in Poland. Entitled *Language – Cognition – Communication*, it shows human natural language in relations to cognition and thought on the one hand, and to communicative processes on the other. The author considers representational and communicative functions of language in light of phylo- and ontogenetic development and presents the specificity of both linguistic functions in human beings. The nativist perspective of language as a specific human organ is accepted. The second article is by Piotr Kochański (Polish Academy of Sciences), Andrzej Nowak (University of Warsaw and Warsaw School for Advanced Social Psychology), Peter Culicover (Ohio State University), and Wojciech Borkowski (University of Warsaw). The text, entitled *On computational simulations of the acquisition of natural language syntax*, presents various distributional approaches to language acquisition. The authors show computational models based on statistical parsing of sentence corpora. The main questions the authors attempt to answer are: 1) how much of prior (innate) mechanisms do we need to assume before syntax can be learned? and 2) to what degree can syntactic rules be learned on the basis of exposure to language?

The third article is a kind of exemplification of the interrelations: language – cognition – communications, presented in the opening text of this issue. The authors – Gabrielle Konopczynski (University of Franche-Comté, Besançon) and Blagovesta Maneva (McGill University, Montreal) – discuss prosodic structuring of a language and its relation to early cognition. The title of the text is formulated as a question: *Can prosodic cues be a window to early cognitive development?* Answering this question in the light of inter-regional (French vs Quebec French) and inter-language (English, French, Hungarian, Portuguese, and Spanish) comparisons, the authors argue that prosodic cues can give good insight into cognitive development in children. In the next article, entitled *The use of direct and indirect speech by 1;6 to 4-year-olds*, Åsa Nordqvist (Göteborg University) argues that the

attribution of speech to others by means of direct and indirect speech develops in parallel with the emerging awareness of others' minds and intentions. This is another example of language use and cognition interrelations. The material analyzed in Nordqvist's study comes from 30 Swedish children between 18 months and 4 years of age. It turned out that direct and indirect speech appear between 2 and 3 years. Four-year-olds who have a more developed theory of mind and awareness about different perspectives, also manage to better convey shifts of perspective to the interlocutor.

The fifth article in this issue is written by a deaf author – Piotr Tomaszewski (Institute of the Deaf, Warsaw) who conducts work with young deaf children. The author discusses a sign language as a real language system and reports studies of the acquisition of sign language by two groups of deaf children, a) of deaf and, b) hearing parents. The basic question is asked in the text: How do deaf children develop communicative competence using language in different contexts? From his studies the author considers not only Polish Sign Language (PSL) but also signed Polish as facilitators for the deaf subjects in acquiring communicative competence and metalinguistic skills.

The concluding article by Norie Mogi (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań) is entitled *The effects of group consciousness on Japanese language behavior*. The author shows the difference in the notion of *self* between the West and Japan and describes the hierarchy-like system in Japanese society from the perspective of features of communicative competence acquired within it. The Japanese are likely to group people into in-groups and out-groups and each group tends to communicate differently.

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