

# LANGUAGE

JOURNAL OF THE LINGUISTIC  
SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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VOLUME 81, NUMBER 4

DECEMBER 2005

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PUBLISHED BY THE LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

## Abstracts:

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### HOW RHOTICITY BECAME /r/-SANDHI

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It is well known that nearly all nonrhotic dialects of English exhibit linking and/or intrusive /r/. What is not known are the details about how linking and intrusive /r/ emerge. This article provides the first empirical data on the diachronic relationship between the decline of rhoticity and the emergence of /r/-sandhi in a dialect of English. The results are based on an analysis of rhoticity and /r/-sandhi in the speech of New Zealanders born between 1860 and 1925, dates that encompass the formative years of New Zealand English. The results demonstrate that the /r/-sandhi system in New Zealand English emerged gradually and overlapped with the decline of rhoticity. This is a significant advance on previous descriptive work on this topic and provides results that should both inform and constrain potential phonological theories of /r/-sandhi.

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### OBLIQUE SUBJECTS: A COMMON GERMANIC INHERITANCE

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We argue that subject-like obliques of the impersonal construction show behavioral properties of syntactic subjects in Old Germanic, contrary to standard assumptions (Cole et al. 1980). Subject tests, including control infinitives, reveal that subject-like obliques in Old and Early Middle English, Old Swedish, and Old Norse-Icelandic exhibit behavioral properties of subjects, as they do in Modern Icelandic and Faroese. We also present new data from Modern German, illustrating the same syntactic behavior of corresponding arguments in that language. Thus, we conclude that subject-like obliques exhibit behavioral properties of syntactic subjects from the earliest attested Germanic period onwards. Our findings contradict the standard view that these arguments were objects, which gradually acquired subject properties. We show that data from Gothic intended to support the standard view has been misinterpreted. Given the validity of our findings there are no grounds for reconstructing a stage at which subject-like obliques were objects in Germanic.

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## A NEW LOOK AT THE ACQUISITION OF RELATIVE CLAUSES

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This study reconsiders the acquisition of relative clauses based on data from two sentence-repetition tasks. Using materials modeled on the relative constructions of spontaneous child speech, we asked four-year-old English- and German-speaking children to repeat six different types of relative clauses. Although English and German relative clauses are structurally very different, the results were similar across studies: intransitive subject relatives caused fewer errors than transitive subject relatives and direct object relatives, which in turn caused fewer errors than in direct object relatives and oblique relatives; finally, genitive relatives caused by far the most problems. Challenging previous analyses in which the acquisition of relative clauses has been explained by the varying distance between filler and gap, we propose a multifactorial analysis in which the acquisition process is determined primarily by the similarity between the various types of relative clauses and their relationship to simple sentences.

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## TONGAN DETERMINERS AND SEMANTIC COMPOSITION

Randall Hendrick

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This article describes the syntactic distribution and semantic interpretation of determiners in Tongan (Polynesian). This determiner system is unusual because it contains, in addition to the familiar definite and indefinite, a third contrasting morpheme, labeled ‘semi-definite’ in traditional descriptions. A description of the behavior of these three determiners is offered that makes use of some conceptual tools provided by recent crosslinguistic work in formal semantics.

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## AGAINST FORMAL PHONOLOGY

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Chomsky and Halle (1968) and many formal linguists rely on the notion of a universally available phonetic space defined in discrete time. This assumption plays a central role in phonological theory. Discreteness at the phonetic level guarantees the discreteness of all other levels of language. But decades of phonetics research demonstrate that there exists no universal inventory of phonetic objects. We discuss three kinds of evidence: first, phonologies differ incommensurably. Second, some phonetic characteristics of languages depend on intrinsically temporal patterns, and, third, some linguistic sound categories within a language are different from each other despite a high degree of overlap that precludes distinctness. Linguistics has mistakenly presumed that speech can always be spelled with letter-like tokens. A variety of implications of these conclusions for research in phonology are discussed.

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