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Letters to <i>Language</i>	229
The chicken or the egg? A probabilistic analysis of English binomials	<i>Sarah Bunin Benor & Roger Levy</i> 233
Heteroclimis and paradigm linkage	<i>Gregory T. Stump</i> 279
A usage-based approach to Spanish verbs of 'becoming'	<i>Joan Bybee & David Eddington</i> 323
Properhood	<i>Richard Coates</i> 356
Short Report:	
Negative grammatical functions in Skou	<i>Mark Donohue</i> 383
Discussion Notes:	
On Gahl and Garnsey on grammar and usage	<i>Frederick J. Newmeyer</i> 399
Knowledge of grammar includes knowledge of syntactic probabilities	<i>Susanne Gahl & Susan Garnsey</i> 405
Obituary:	
Murray B. Emeneau	<i>William Bright</i> 411
Reviews:	
Bowerman & Koch (eds.): Australian languages: Classification and the comparative method	<i>B. J. Blake</i> 423
Cinque (ed.): Functional structure in DP and IP: The cartography of syntactic structures, vol. 1	<i>J.-Y. Pollock</i> 426
Evans: The structure of time: Language, meaning and temporal cognition ..	<i>B. Nerlich</i> 429
Harris: Endoclitics and the origins of Udi morphosyntax	<i>P. S. LeSourd & P. D. Kroeber</i> 431
Lust & Foley (eds.): First language acquisition: The essential readings	<i>S. Goldin-Meadow</i> 435
Reppen et al. (eds.): Using corpora to explore linguistic variation	<i>M. Kytö</i> 438
Postal: Skeptical linguistic essays	<i>R. D. Borsley</i> 442
Yang: Knowledge and learning in natural language	<i>R. Clark</i> 446
Book Notices (see back cover)	450
The Editor's Department: Annual Report	<i>Brian D. Joseph</i> 466
Recent Publications.....	475

Abstracts:

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG? A PROBABILISTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH BINOMIALS

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Why is it preferable to say *salt and pepper* over *pepper and salt*? Based on an analysis of 692 binomial tokens from online corpora, we show that a number of semantic, metrical, and frequency constraints contribute significantly to ordering preferences, overshadowing the phonological factors that have traditionally been considered important. The ordering of binomials exhibits a considerable amount of variation. For example, although *principal and interest* is the more frequent order, *interest and principal* also occurs. We consider three frameworks for analysis of this variation: traditional Optimality Theory, stochastic Optimality Theory, and logistic regression. Our best models—using logistic regression—predict 79.2% of the binomial tokens and 76.7% of types, and the remainder are predicted as less-frequent—but not ungrammatical—variants.

HETEROCLISIS AND PARADIGM LINKAGE

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Heteroclisis is the property of a lexeme whose inflectional paradigm involves two or more distinct inflection classes. Although heteroclisis is widely observable, its implications for grammatical theory remain underexplored, perhaps because its canonical instances have the appearance of sporadic lexical exceptions. But heteroclisis cannot be assumed to lack any role in the definition of a language's morphology, since (i) it is sometimes highly systematic, involving whole classes of lexemes; and (ii) it obeys a universal constraint. These two facts show that heteroclisis is rule-governed. On the assumption that inflectional morphology involves a linkage of content-paradigms with form-paradigms (Stump 2002), heteroclisis can be seen as a kind of mismatch regulated by rules of paradigm linkage. Such rules account for the range of empirical phenomena subsumed by observations (i) and (ii).

A USAGE-BASED APPROACH TO SPANISH VERBS OF ‘BECOMING’

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A usage-based analysis of four constructions in Spanish, each with a different verb meaning ‘become’ used with an animate subject and an adjective, provides evidence for exemplar representations of constructions, with analogy to these representations accounting for productive use. We analyze 423 tokens from spoken and written corpora, which we take to represent a subset of a speaker’s experience with these constructions. The analysis, based on token frequency and semantic similarity, leads to the organization of tokens with two of the verbs into dense clusters of semantically related adjectives centered on a high-frequency exemplar. The other two verbs are used with more diverse sets of adjectives. The initial analysis is supplemented with an experiment in which speakers were asked to rate the semantic similarity of pairs of adjectives. When subjected to multidimensional scaling, the results of the experiment support the initial analysis. We argue that novel instances of verb + adjective sequences are based on analogies to previous experience and not on rules that refer to abstract features. In a second experiment, speakers judged the acceptability of sentences taken from the corpora; the results showed that high-frequency expressions and expressions semantically similar to the high-frequency ones lead to an expression being judged more acceptable. Overall the results support exemplar representations, which are heavily based on usage experience.

PROPERHOOD

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A history of the notion of properhood in philosophy and linguistics is given. Two long-standing ideas, (i) that proper names have no sense, and (ii) that they are expressions whose purpose is to refer to individuals, cannot be made to work comprehensively while PROPER is understood as a subcategory of linguistic units, whether of lexemes or phrases. Phrases of the type *the old vicarage*, which are potentially ambiguous as regards properhood, encourage the suggestion that PROPER is best understood as a mode of reference contrasting with SEMANTIC reference; in the former, the intension/sense of any lexical items within the referring expression, and any entailments they give rise to, are canceled. PROPER NAMES are all those expressions that refer nonintensionally. Linguistic evidence is given that this opposition can be grammaticalized, a speculation is made about its neurological basis, and psycholinguistic evidence is adduced in support. The PROPER NOUN, as a lexical category, is argued to be epiphenomenal on proper names as newly defined. Some consequences of the view that proper names have no sense in the act of reference are explored; they are not debarred from having senses (better: synchronic etymologies) accessible during other (meta)linguistic activities.

SHORT REPORT: NEGATIVE GRAMMATICAL FUNCTIONS IN SKOU

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Negation is widely known to correlate with changes of word order, agreement, or case marking in the clause. I present data from Skou, a language of north-central New Guinea, which show obliques and adjuncts appearing postverbally in the SOV positive clause and preverbally in negative clauses. Moreover, in addition to these changes in the order of constituents, the grammatical functions assigned in the negated clause are not the same as in a positive clause, with obliques and adjuncts assuming object properties in the negated clause, as well as object positions. This results in otherwise unattested trivalent constructions in the language.

BOOK NOTICES IN THIS ISSUE

Abbi: A manual of linguistic field work and structure of Indian languages	<i>G. van Driem</i>	450
Alves (ed.): Triangulating translation: Perspectives in process oriented research	<i>T. Shmiher</i>	450
Bakker & Matras: Bibliography of modern Romani linguistics	<i>M. Sawaie</i>	451
Dedaić & Nelson (eds.): At war with words.....	<i>C. Xie</i>	452
Dirven et al. (eds.): Cognitive models in language and thought: Ideology, metaphor and meanings	<i>C. Xie</i>	453
Dunne: Democracy in contemporary Egyptian political discourse	<i>M. Sawaie</i>	453
Duszak (ed.): Us and others: Social identities across languages, discourses and cultures	<i>D. Golumbia</i>	454
Fiorentino (ed.): Romance objects: Transitivity in Romance languages	<i>G. H. Toops</i>	455
Fradin: Nouvelles approches en morphologie	<i>A. Dufter</i>	456
Genter et al. (eds.): The analogical mind: Perspectives from cognitive science	<i>R. DeNoble</i>	456
Givón & Malle (eds.): The evolution of language out of pre-language	<i>D. Golumbia</i>	457
Kelly: The mirror of grammar: Theology, philosophy and the <i>Modistae</i>	<i>D. Golumbia</i>	458
Mülhäusler et al.: Tok Pisin texts: From the beginning to the present	<i>S. Robinson</i>	458
Olawsky: Urarina texts	<i>D. Golumbia</i>	459
Pica & Rooryck (eds.): Linguistic variation yearbook, vol. 2 (2002)	<i>P. Panagiotidis</i>	460
Scollon & Scollon: Discourses in place: Language in the material world	<i>M. Sloboda</i>	460
Smyth & Crosbie: Rus': A comprehensive course in Russian	<i>D. Aichele</i>	461
van Hout et al. (eds.): The lexicon-syntax interface in second language acquisition	<i>L. Chen</i>	462
Verhagen & van de Weijer (eds.): Usage-based approaches to Dutch: Lexicon, grammar, discourse	<i>L. Roels</i>	462
Wang: Die Relativkonstruktionen im Chinesischen: Eine diachrone Studie	<i>H. Narrog</i>	463
Yip & Rimmington: Chinese: A comprehensive grammar	<i>E. J. Vajda</i>	464
Zima (ed.): Areal and genetic factors in language classification and description: Africa south of the Sahara	<i>B. Wald</i>	464