Comptes Rendus • Book Reviews

Peter Robinson and Nick C. Ellis (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition.* New York: Routledge. x + 566 pp.

Reviewed by Margaret MC So, OISE/UT.

Robinson and Ellis have assembled a handbook that is at once informative, comprehensive, and authoritative. The editors' purpose is twofold: to summarize current Cognitive Linguistic (CL) perspectives on "language, patterns of language use, and patterns of child language acquisition" (p. 7); and to develop a Cognitive Linguistics of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and second language (L2) pedagogy based on the observed systematicities in SLA, and have gathered the contributions from 21 of the leading experts in CL to this end. The handbook is organized in three sections. The first section contains Ellis and Robinson's introduction, which cogently explains CL and the research areas within Cognitive Science from which it builds, linking these to areas of research within SLA: corpus linguistics; psycholinguistics; probabilistic and frequency-based theories of language; connectionist, competition, and rational models of language; dynamic systems theory; sociocultural theory; and emergentist and chaos/complexity theory.

The second section sets out the basic tenets within CL. Beginning with Talmy's chapter, we learn how attention directing mechanisms are inherent in language, and how that they act alone or in concert to assign different degrees of salience in our encounters with language. Next, Taylor's chapter historicises the development of prototypes in CL, based on Rosch's psychological theories of prototype categorization. In Chapter 4, Langacker summarises Cognitive Grammar and demonstrates its promise for language instruction because of its threefold character: grounded in meaning, where grammar itself is meaningful (as opposed to learning syntax), and usage-based, because language structures are abstracted from actual usage and understood in their myriad contexts. In Chapter 5, Hudson argues that language leaning is no different from general learning. Comprised of networks of vocabulary and grammar, language could be understood within the framework of memory by token and type categorizations through induction. In Chapter 6, Coventry and Guijarro-Fuentes present a framework for understanding spatial language learning through computational, developmental, and cross-linguistic considerations. In Chapter 7, O'Grady proposes that a linear computational processor drives human grammar, as opposed to an inherent language acquisition device. Lieven and Tomasello's chapter entitled "Children's first language acquisition from a usage-based perspective" demonstrates how such a perspective best accounts for language processing in children. In Chapter 9, Goldberg and Casenhiser summarise studies where form-function pairings are learned on the basis of input frequency. The section concludes with Joan Bybee's contribution, which provides examples to illustrate the effects of type-token frequency effects on a range of constructions, from pervasive prefabricated word combinations to limited scope patterns and, finally, grammaticized constructions.

The third section contains chapters considering SLA and L2 instruction in light of CL. In Chapter 11, Cadierno examines language transfer and the influences of L1 thinking patterns on

the learning of L2 motion events. In Chapter 12, Gullberg shows how gestures are systematically related to language, and how such research informs cross-linguistic interaction. Odlin's contribution considers the broader issues of linguistic relativity and the extent to which native language habits of mind and grammar could themselves be reflected in conceptual transfer. In Chapter 14, MacWhinney presents an information processing model of SLA and concludes that impediments to SLA stem not from maturational constraints but from L1 interference and entrenchment of form-meaning mappings. In Chapter 15, Ellis considers L1 and L2 acquisition through associative learning theory, demonstrating why SLA stops short of native-like ability as a result of "learned attention" effects, even as it shares the same processes for L1 learning. Next, Gries highlights the fact that CL and corpus linguistics overlaps in a number of ways, showing how corpus linguistic analyses in SLA could potentially be used for the study of constructions and generate applications for teaching. In Chapter 17, Achard exemplifies classroom use of cognitive-grammar in the teaching of the French definite and partitive articles. In Chapter 18, Tyler argues for a CL analysis of the language that is being taught, and presents two studies on the teaching of English modals which show the benefit of CL instruction treatment. Finally, Robinson and Ellis's summarise the contributors' main themes and identify issues for future SLA research arising from their discussion.

I would highly recommend this handbook to L2 teachers, researchers, and graduate students, particularly those unfamiliar with CL, because it distils it into readable and accessible essentials while clearly elucidating its connections to SLA, an advantage over more exhaustive treatments of CL such as Geeraerts and Cuyckens (2007) or Evans, Bergen and Zinken (2007). Secondly, it demonstrates convincingly that CL theory has much to offer SLA research, which to date, has been dominated by Universal Grammar underpinnings. Lastly, it successfully bucks a historical trend that has seen theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics pushed apart in recent decades (Hudson, this volume, p. 89), and builds bridges between two young disciplines. Such a development is welcome, and hopefully, portends to future cross-fertilizations in applied linguistics research.

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Filppula, M., Klemola, H., and Paulasto, H. (2009). *Vernacular universals and language contacts: Evidence from varieties of English and beyond.* New York/Abingdon: Routledge. vi + pp.385.

Reviewed by Walcir Cardoso, Concordia University &The Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance

What is the relationship between language contact phenomena and vernacular universals (VUs)? How distinguishable from each other are they? These are some of the questions addressed in *Vernacular Universals and Language Contacts: Evidence from Varieties of English and Beyond* (VULC henceforth). VULC is a collection of papers presented in 2006 at the symposium on World Englishes: Vernacular Universals vs. Contact-Induced Change, at the University of Joensuu Research Station in Mekrijärvi in Finland. The conceptualization of the book and symposium results from recent developments in contact linguistics (e.g., Ross, 1996; Thomason, 2001 – see also the papers by Thomason, Mufwene, and Britain & Fox in VULC) that question the preponderant role that Vernacular Universals (e.g., Chambers, 2003, 2004) have played in the analysis of linguistic phenomena in language contact situations. The volume consists of an introductory section and fifteen chapters divided into four parts, each organized based on a set of common objectives: to provide the reader with the necessary theoretical background and to contextualize the state of the field (introduction and part 1); to analyze pertinent linguistic phenomena that reinforce and/or weaken different hypotheses proposed for the investigation of features that are putatively universal (VUs) in language contact situations (parts 2 and 3); and finally, to compare different methodological and theoretical perspectives and explore their implications for the analysis of VUs (part 4).

Without going into the details of the merits of each contribution, the volume covers an extensive selection of topics that empirically validate, challenge, and consequently advance some of the hypotheses, models and theoretical principles proposed for the analysis of VUs. While some studies in VULC appeal to the allegedly universal nature of VUs to explain phenomena that are observed cross-linguistically in non-standard varieties of English (e.g., the papers by Chambers; Filppula, Klemola, & Paulastro; Schreier; Tagliamonte), others defend a stronger role for cross-dialectal influence in language contact or diglossic situations (e.g., papers by Britain & Fox; Mufwene). A third group of researchers casts doubt on the strict UV versus contact dichotomy, either because there are other more relevant oppositions such as a high versus low contact language status (Trudgill), or because the dichotomous relationship is empirically unattainable, since many phenomena observed in contact situations are caused by a combination of overlapping factors, including UVs, cross-dialectal influence, and ease of learning (Thomason). As one would expect from a volume that includes such an eclectic team of researchers from rather distinct theoretical perspectives (e.g., contact linguistics, dialectology, generative linguistics, historical linguistics, linguistic typology, sociolinguists), it is not surprising that there are no clear-cut answers to the two questions mentioned at the outset of this review. With regards to the first question, in general, most of the chapters in VULC endorse a more prominent role for cross-dialectal influence in language contact situations, in conjunction with a variety of other factors such as high/low contact language status, ease of learning, productive and perceptual ease, and more general social factors such as gender and age. The second question is best addressed by Thomason (chapter 15), who proposes a set of four criteria

for assessing the likelihood that language contact (as opposed to VUs) played a role in determining a specific linguistic change.

As is the case with any enterprise of this magnitude, the volume contains some shortcomings. First and foremost, I was surprised not to see a proportionate distribution of analyses across the linguistic disciplines. For instance, of the fifteen chapters in VULC, only two are dedicated to the study of VUs from a phonological perspective (Schreier; Britain & Fox), while the vast majority of the contributions focuses on morphosyntactic phenomena. While this is possibly a reflection of the field of contact linguistics and/or the organization of the World Englishes symposium, one might wonder if the analyses proposed are equally generalizable to other components of grammar. The volume also focuses exclusively on the analysis of English varieties. While other languages are discussed in other chapters (e.g., Thomason; Odlin), they merely serve to illustrate a methodological or theoretical position. Only after the "beyond" aspect of the title is expanded to include other languages and their vernaculars may one obtain more satisfactory answers to the issues addressed in VULC. Finally, the volume has some editing problems involving the reference sections, which could have been avoided had the editors unified the separate lists into a single bibliography at the end of the book. This would eliminate the considerable amount of overlap of references across the individual chapters (e.g., Chambers, 2004 appears in almost every single study), and would minimize the formatting inconsistencies in the reference list (e.g., the title and publisher location for Chambers, 2003 are not provided in a uniform manner; compare "*Sociolinguistic Theory: Linguistic Variation* and its Social Significance. Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA" – p.16 with "*Sociolinguistic Theory*. Oxford" – p.201; see also Chambers, 2004 references for more formatting inconsistencies).

Despite some of the shortcomings discussed above, there is much to admire in this collection of papers that clearly accomplishes its main goal: to present and discuss, from a variety of disciplines and theoretical perspectives, the role of VUs and contact-induced phenomena in the shaping of non-standard language varieties. In general, VULC is superbly well written and organized and, as the first collection to gather studies on the effects of VUs and inter-dialectal influence in language contact situations, it should be a starting point for any research on the subject. This is an outstanding, state-of-the-art volume written by a team of internationally renowned scholars that will certainly inspire future research on vernacular universals. VULC is highly recommended to linguists in general, and more specifically to researchers in the fields of contact linguistics, creole linguistics, language acquisition, and sociolinguistics.

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Fanny Forsberg. 2008. *Le langage préfabriqué: Formes, fonctions et fréquences en français parlé L2 et L1*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG. 293 pp.

Reviewed by Valerie Wust, North Carolina State University

With the re-emergence of formulaic language as a hot topic in linguistics, Forsberg produces a timely work that examines the forms, functions, and frequencies of formulaic sequences (henceforth FSs) in spoken French as a first- (L1) and second- (L2) language. She also documents innovative interlanguage FSs that are characteristic of the early phases of L2 acquisition.

In Chapter 1, Forsberg discusses the difficulty of defining FSs, before adopting an inclusive definition based on Wray (2002) and introducing her research questions. Chapter 2 provides a thorough description of FSs in both general and acquisitional linguistics. Chapter 3 presents psycholinguistic models that could explain the (non)-acquisition of FSs, while Chapter 4 examines empirical research on FSs in L2 acquisition. Chapters 5 and 6 touch on important learner-related characteristics for the analysis: individual differences, sociocultural integration, and the native speaker (NS) norm. In Chapter 7, Forsberg presents a variety of definitions of FSs and models in which they can be analysed, before arriving at her own contextually-based definition that allows for the inclusion of divergent L2 learner forms. Her modified and expanded analytical framework, based on Erman and Warren (2000), is comprised of six categories: 1) lexical (coup de foudre "love at first sight"), 2) grammatical (un petit peu "a little bit"), 3) discursive (textual: c'est "it is"; own-speech management: je pense "I think"), 4) interactive (d'accord "okay"), 5) interlanguage (ils n'ont pas la morale "they aren't in good spirits"), and 6) situational (j'ai X ans "I'm X years old").

In her first analysis (Chapter 8), Forsberg inventories FSs in the InterFra corpus of Swedish learners of French representing a continuum of beginning- to near-native stages of acquisition (sixteen university-level beginners, twelve high-school students, and six advanced university students). Data from the semi-structured interviews is compared to that of six native-speakers (Socrates exchange students). Based on her examination of the quantity, categories, and type/token distribution of FSs, Forsberg is the first to posit an acquisitional continuum for French in which the quantity of FSs increases as a function of proficiency and the largest percentage of FSs are present in NS discourse. Distribution across categories also becomes increasingly native-like, albeit slowly, as a function of proficiency. Early acquisition contains FSs from all of the documented categories, but is characterized by the use of unanalyzed Situational and Interlanguage FSs. Discursive FSs, the most widely used forms at all proficiency levels, are shown to be good candidates for early acquisition because of their natural frequency and fixedness. However, advanced learners overuse these forms, compared to the NSs-Socrates. Lexical FS usage shows greater variability across the continuum and poses acquisitional difficulties. Overall, advanced university-level learners use considerably less FSs than NSs and across-category distribution differs significantly, most notably in the case of Lexical FSs (a frequent category in L1 that is underdeveloped in L2 speech).

Chapter 9 completes the proposed developmental continuum with a secondary analysis of FS usage by six very advanced L2 French learners having resided in Paris for at least five years (Corpus Forsberg) and six Parisian NSs. Overall, Forsberg reports a native-like quantity of FSs

in the discourse of very advanced learners, which differs significantly from that of the advanced learners in Sweden ($p < 0.005$). Forsberg asserts that it is not the rate of FS usage that distinguishes advanced and very advanced L2 speakers from NSs, but rather their across-category distribution. For example, advanced learners exhibit decreased usage of Lexical FSs and significantly overuse Discursive FSs when compared to the two groups from Paris ($p < 0.01$); very advanced learners differ significantly from NSs only in their over-use of Discursive FSs ($p < 0.05$).

The case studies of "extreme" learners across the proficiency spectrum presented in Chapters 8 & 9 make for fascinating reading and provide illustrative examples not only of the functions of FSs, but also of their importance in fluent production. Based on these qualitative analyses of speech, Forsberg concludes that in early acquisition a holistic learning style (in contrast to an analytic one) favors FS usage. At more advanced levels, input, linguistic disposition and motivation are most important.

In the end, Forsberg poses more questions that she originally set out to answer, as is evidenced by the abundance of suggestions for future research. While this may be frustrating for some readers, it underlines how little we know about FS acquisition in (L2) French and the potential implications for pedagogy. Forsberg is well aware of the weaknesses of her methodology (e.g., difficulties in identifying FSs in production; speaker diversity: monolinguals vs. bilinguals; geographical diversity: France vs. Sweden) and the limited generalizability of the findings (p. 131). Despite the exploratory nature of her dissertation research, however, she provides valuable insights into the acquisition and use of FSs, in a book that will be read with interest by researchers, language instructors and aspiring "near-native" speakers alike.

References

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