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Foreword

The Child Language Research Forum has provided an annual meeting for the presentation of new findings in the field of first language acquisition for 24 years. The meeting grew out of a summer workshop held at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1968, organized by Dan I. Slobin and Charles A. Ferguson, and has been held regularly every spring since.

Each year since 1973, the organizers have invited a Keynote speaker to present an overview of a particular area of research. And perusal of the list of these speakers over the years offers a broad-based view of the field and its major research areas:

Hermine Sinclair-de Zwart (University of Geneva), Dan I. Slobin (UC Berkeley), Lois Bloom (Columbia University), Susan Ervin-Tripp (UC Berkeley), Elizabeth Bates (UC San Diego), Courtney B. Cazden (Harvard University), Eve V. Clark (CASBS and Stanford University), Melissa Bowerman (MPI for Psycholinguistics), Ursula Bellugi (Salk Institute for Biological Studies), Annette Karmiloff-Smith (MRC Cognitive Development Unit, London), Elissa Newport (University of Illinois), Shirley Brice Heath (Stanford University), Steven Pinker (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Jean Berko Gleason (Boston University), Charles A. Ferguson (Stanford University), Lila R. Gleitman (University of Pennsylvania), Elinor Ochs (University of Southern California), Peter Jusczyk (SUNY Buffalo), and Barbara Landau (UC Irvine). Their topics have ranged from the emergence of syntax from conversation, to the learnability of syntax; from the morphology of ASL to the prelinguistic knowledge children build on;

from the functions of linguistic structures to the problem-solving inherent in acquisition; from the construction of a sound system to changes over time in the forms of language; from analysis of word-structure to constraints on lexical learning; from the integration of separate subsystems to the role of spatial knowledge in language acquisition.

The same diversity has been reflected in the papers presented at the Forum. They have drawn on different theoretical backgrounds, they have studied a broad spectrum of structures in language acquisition (a full range of problems in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics), and they have reported on data from a large number of languages —including American Sign Language, Cantonese, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Icelandic, Inuktitut, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Mohawk, Moroccan Arabic, Quiche Maya, Samoan, Sesotho, Sinhala, Spanish, Swedish, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, and Zulu.

The meetings themselves have provided a setting for informal presentation of new findings in an atmosphere that encourages discussion and questions. The number of papers chosen each year (from the many abstracts submitted) has deliberately been limited so the audience could hear all the papers and have the time and opportunity to discuss them during the meeting. As the field has grown, the Child Language Research Forum has also provided a model for other meetings, notably the Boston University Child Language Meeting and the UCLA Second Language Forum.

Up until this year, the proceedings of the Child Language Research Forum have been available through a working paper series, *Papers and Reports on Child Language Development*, sponsored by the Department of Linguistics, Stanford University. (The contents of past issues are still available through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22304, USA. In addition, many of the articles that appeared in preliminary form in *Papers and Reports* have since been published in professional journals in the field.) This year we decided that the Proceedings would be more accessible in a new format, as a publication of the Center for Research on Language and Information at Stanford. We have therefore "retired" *Papers and Reports*, and in its place, we begin publication through CSLI with the Proceedings of the 24th annual meeting of the Forum.

At the 1992 meeting, held on April 3-5, at Stanford University, the Keynote speaker was Barbara Landau (University of California at Irvine) who spoke on her research into the role of spatial information in language acquisition, 'Learning the language of space'. LouAnn Gerken and Jeri Jaeger (University of New York at Buffalo) organized a workshop on 'Speech errors as evidence in acquisition', and Melissa Bowerman (MPI for Psycholinguistics) and Soonja Choi (San Diego State University) organized one on 'Crosslinguistic studies of spatial semantic development'. We thank them as well as all the presenters of

papers for their contributions to the success of the meeting. The meeting itself could not take place without the organizers: Jill Anderson, Miriam Butt, Daniel Dor, Lori van Houten, Melissa Iwai, Tracy King, Christopher Manning, Christopher Piñon, Peter Sells, and Trisha Svaib. Finally, we would like to thank the staff of Linguistics for their invaluable support: Michelle Collette Murray, Gina Wein, and Kyle Wohlmüt.

The 1993 meeting will be the 25th annual meeting of the Child Language Research Forum, and we plan to make the meeting a special one. It will be held on April 16-17-18, 1993, at Stanford University. Further details are available from the CLRF Coordinators-1993, Department of Linguistics, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-2150, or, by e-mail, from clrf@csli.stanford.edu.

Eve V. Clark

Editor

For the CLRF-92 Coordinating Committee