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Authors

Lowi, Rosamina
Mikesell, Lisa

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Editorial

The articles in this issue reflect part of the diversity of methodologies and subjects in applied linguistics today. The first article uses conversation analytic techniques to examine, in interactional context, the production of utterances by a child with an autism spectrum disorder; the second uses ethnographic and discourse analytic methods to explore the use of directives by Mexican American children in mixed-age play groups; and the third uses an experimental paradigm to assess the use of an implicit instructional technique in teaching Chinese EFL students the use of English pragmalinguistic conventions of request in different situations.

While some early studies of *echolalia* (the immediate or delayed repetition of one's own and others' utterances) in autism regarded it as meaningless and pathological, others suggested that it might serve a number of functions. Many early studies of the speech and language of autistic children focused on the children's utterances in isolation or solely in the context of immediately preceding utterances. More recently, conversation analysis (CA) has begun to be used to examine talk in autism in full sequential context, enabling a more precise examination of the functions of echolalia. In a study that uses CA techniques to analyze videotaped data, Stribling, Rae, Dickerson, and Dautenhahn examine several unusual utterances by a boy with an autism spectrum disorder. Taking into account the participants' non-vocal actions and use of prosodic resources, the authors demonstrate that these utterances are connected to the prior talk and embodied activity. Stribling et al. discuss what makes the utterances hearable as echolalic and consider their possible interactional functions.

Much of the previous work on children's acquisition of directives has focused on syntactic aspects of directives; more recently, studies have begun to examine directives in the context of interaction and embodied action. In the second article in this issue, Bhimji uses videotaped data of naturally occurring interaction in mixed-age play groups of Mexican American children to examine their use of directives in both English and Spanish. She finds that in addition to varying their directives along linguistic dimensions such as level of overtness, sentence type, and amount of mitigation, the children also modified them by using prosody, repetition, nonverbal actions, and code switching. Directives were used in a number of contexts, including pretend play, the demonstration of play skills, and the spontaneous invention of play. Bhimji's findings add to our understanding of the variety and complexity of children's discourse in mixed-age play.

The majority of research on the teaching of pragmatics has focused on explicit instruction. Using an experimental paradigm, Fukuya and Hill make an important contribution to the much smaller body of literature examining the effects of implicit instruction, operationalized in this study as the use of recasts, on the learning of pragmatics. (A recast is the provision of a corrected version of another's utterance.)

Fukuya and Hill investigate the effect of recasts on the learning of one pragmatic convention – English requests – by Chinese learners of English in role-play scenarios controlling for power, distance, and degree of imposition. In the pragmatic recast group, recasts were provided by the teacher, while in the control group, recasts were not provided by the teacher; both groups did a pretest and posttest discourse completion test. The authors found that the use of recasts was effective in that the pragmatic recast group performed better than the control group on the posttest in terms of both pragmatic appropriateness and grammatical accuracy.

The issue's exploration of the diversity of applied linguistics is rounded out with two book reviews, the first one of *Writing* (2nd Ed.) by Hedge, on teaching writing, and the second of *The Languages of the Andes* by Adelaar, a survey of current and previous languages in Andean South America. Finally, we would like to say farewell to one of our production editors, Jennifer R. Guzmán, who also wrote the second book review.

Rosamina Lowi
Lisa Mikesell