1999 Ninth Annual Meeting of the Society for Text and Discourse

Table of Contents

Nathalie Blanc & Isabelle Tapiero (University of Lyon 2, France)

Identification in narrative: Evidence for conversational processes

Maria Kotovych, Peter Dixon, & Marisa Bortolussi (University of Alberta)

Types of pronominal reference in spoken dialogue

Miriam Eckert & Michael Strube (University of Pennsylvania)

Formal consequences of a marked syntactic choice: Morphosyntactic properties of lexical subjects in English conversation

Hartwell S. Francis, Michelle L. Gregory, & Laura A. Michaelis (University of Colorado at Boulder)

Mapping topic flow and coherence across conversations

Christine Winskowski (Lewis University)

Characteristics of parent-child talk about emotions and young children's emotional understanding

Lisa E. Mader, Jeremy Carpendale, & William Turnbull (Simon Fraser University)

Cultural and cognitive shifts in beliefs: Influences on identity and literacy in Russia and the Ukraine.

Rosalind Horowitz (The University of Texas -San Antonio)

Is it memory, or is it metamemory?: Understanding the relationship between working memory capacity and reading comprehension

Danielle S. McNamara & Jennifer L. Scott (Old Dominion University)

The effects of reading purpose and working memory capacity limitations on the processing of expository texts

Tracy Linderholm & Paul van den Broek (University of Minnesota)

Memory for mathematical proofs and narratives

Charles R. Fletcher & Steve Jax (University of Minnesota)

An evaluation of the structural interchangeability rule of metaphorical structural similarity

Herbert L. Colston (University of Wisconsin - Parkside)

Conventionality and metaphor comprehension: A process-priming study

Brian F. Bowdle (Indiana University) & Dedre Gentner (Northwestern University)

Impact of mother-child talk on the development of the child's understanding of mind

William Turnbull & Jeremy I. M. Carpendale (Simon Fraser University)

Functional neuroanatomy of narrative comprehension with and without words

David A. Robertson & Morton Ann Gernsbacher (University of Wisconsin - Madison)

The communication of quantities as a problem in discourse

Anthony J. Sanford & Linda M. Moxey (University of Glasgow)

Evidence of immediate activation of gender information from a social role name

Jane Oakhill, Alan Garnham, & David Reynolds (University of Sussex)

Verb aspect and instrument inferences

Rolf A. Zwaan & Robert A. Stanfield (Florida State University)

POSTER PRESENTATIONS – MONDAY, AUGUST 16

Situational dimensions constructed from a descriptive text: Effects of prior knowledge, task demands and studied phase

Nathalie Blanc & Isabelle Tapiero (University of Lyon 2, France)

The effects of situational dimensions on the detection of inconsistencies

Isabelle Tapiero, Nathalie Blanc, Christelle Font, & Sabine Guéraud (University of Lyon 2, France)

The effect of multimedia on comprehension and retention of text

Michelle C. Schleich & Joseph P. Magliano (Northern Illinois University)

The construction of thematic information during narrative comprehension

Hao Zhang, & Rumjahn Hoosain (The University of Hong Kong)

The reading-writing relation: Models and future perspectives

Giovanni Parodi (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso)

Argument structure and meaning

Michael P. Kaschak & Arthur M. Glenberg (University of Wisconsin - Madison)

Examining the complex elements of extended argumentative discourse

Ronan S. Bernas (Eastern Illinois University) & Nancy L. Stein (The University of Chicago)

Individual differences in discourse comprehension: The interaction between reading span and text structure

Sung-il Kim (Kwangwoon University), Jae-Ho Lee (Choong-Ang University), So-young Kim (Seoul National University), & Hyun-joo Yoo (Sung-Kyun-Kwan University)

Negatives Bo and M in Taiwanese conversation

Miao-Hsia Chang (Chung Kuo Institute of Technology and Commerce)

A centering account of zero pronouns in Hindi

Rashmi Prasad (Univeristy of Pennsylvania)

The co-construction of genre, expert, and novice: A social pragmatic approach

Sherrie Atwood (Simon Fraser University)

A psychological dimension of talk: Ephemeral and mutable topic elements as evidence for simultaneous internal and external discourse

Christine Winskowski (Lewis University)

A descriptive analysis of the rhetorical situation in elementary school student writing

Ricardo Benítez (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile)

A conceptual framework for the analysis of intertextual scientific discourse

Juanita Marinkovich & Ricardo Benítez (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile)

The written discourse production in school settings

Juanita Marinkovich (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile)

Children's beliefs about reading before they learn to read

Marianne Peronard (Catholic University at Valparaíso)

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SPOKEN PRESENTATIONS – TUESDAY, AUGUST 17

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Invited Presentation

Talking texts into being: On the discursive construction of disciplinary knowledge in classrooms

Judith Green (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Anaphoric inferences in reading: Necessary or optional?

Celia M. Klin, William H. Levine,

& Alexandria E. Guzmán (State University of New York at Binghamton)

The on-line generation of instrument inferences

Suzanne Kear & Garry Wilson (University of Lincolnshire and Humberside)

Text understanding and predictive inferences : Role of semantic features of the verbs expressing the causal consequence of the action

Pascale Maury (Université P. Valéry)

Thematic inference in on-line comprehension

Shannon N. Whitten & Arthur C. Graesser (The University of Memphis)

Domain knowledge and purpose for reading: Interacting factors in comprehension?

Jean-Marie Burkhardt (Universite Rene Descartes-Paris V & Action Eiffel, INRIA-Rocquencourt), Francoise Detienne (Action Eiffel, INRIA-Rocquencourt),

& Susan Wiedenbeck (Dalhousie University)

Content integration in learning from multiple texts

M. Anne Britt (University of Pittsburgh), Susan R. Goldman (Vanderbilt University), & Charles Perfetti (University of Pittsburgh)

Vicarious learning: What do overhearers learn?

Jean McKendree, John Lee, Richard Cox, Keith Stenning (University of Edinburgh), Finbar Dineen, & Terry Mayes (Glasgow Caledonian University)

Learning from oral-based versus literate-based discourse: A look at discourse variation and its effect on comprehension

Rosalind Horowitz (The University of Texas-- San Antonio)

A discourse constraint on questions

Kristin Homer & Laura A. Michaelis (University of Colorado)

Effects of informativeness on durational shortening in conversation

Michelle L. Gregory, William D. Raymond, Alan Bell, Daniel Jurafsky (University of Colorado at Boulder)

The salience of goals: How thematic role information impacts choices in reference form

Jennifer E. Arnold (University of Pennsylvania)

How often is often? Effects of context on the interpretation of frequency adverbs

Katja Wiemer-Hastings, Arthur C. Graesser, & Cynthia Doyle (The University of Memphis)

Autotutor's pedagogical effectiveness and conversational appropriateness

Natalie Person (Rhodes College), Roger Kreuz, Victoria Pomeroy, & Bianca Klettke (The University of Memphis)

Mechanisms for generating a hint

Rachel DiPaolo, D. Hacker, H. Yetman, S. Whitten, Arthur Graesser, & Tutoring Research Group (The University of Memphis)

Listening in on dialogues and monologues of embodied agents in virtual tutoring sessions:

Learning and questioning

Scotty D. Craig, Barry Gholson, Dereece Smither, & The Tutoring Research Group (The University of Memphis)

A collaborative approach to computer-administered surveys

Michael F. Schober (New School for Social Research), Frederick G. Conrad (Bureau of Labor Statistics), & Jonathan E. Bloom (New School for Social Research)

Invited Presentation

A new look at literal meaning in understanding what is said and implicated

Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. (University of California, Santa Cruz)

AUTHOR ADDRESSES

Presentation Abstracts

MONDAY, AUGUST 16

INVITED PRESENTATION

Nelson/Denman , 9:00 - 10:00 A.M.

James W. Pennebaker (University of Texas at Austin)

Language, disclosure, and health

An impressive number of studies have now demonstrated that writing about emotional upheavals can produce improvements in physical and mental health. Using a text analytic strategy, we have been exploring the features of word use that predict these health changes. Further, language use in the writing paradigm predicts changes in the ways people naturally talk to others in the weeks after the study. Recent findings about using language and word choice as a fingerprint of personality and social situations will be discussed.

PAPER SESSION 1

Denman Room, 10:30 A.M. - 12:10 P.M.

Revealing differences between good and poor readers based on thinking-aloud

Joseph P. Magliano (Northern Illinois University)

This study assessed the viability of developing a reading skills test based on thinking aloud. Good and poor readers thought aloud while comprehending two Chinese folktales. Both traditional, qualitative analyses and nontraditional quantitative analyses (i.e., Latent Semantic Analysis) of the content of the think-aloud protocols were conducted in order to expose differences between good and poor readers in terms of the content of their think-aloud protocols. The results indicated that latent semantic analysis may provide an important basis for assessing reading skill based on the content of think-aloud protocols.

The effects of individual differences, tests, and diagrams on constructing situation models across readings

Keith Millis & Joyce Kim (Northern Illinois University)

We examined the extent that above and below-average readers allocated resources to building the situation model of descriptive text across two readings. One group was instructed to read in order to take a test; a second learned a diagram of the text referents before reading; a third was told to read for understanding. The test and diagram facilitated the on-line construction of the situation model for the better readers, but inhibited the construction for the poorer readers.

Updating of a situation model: Effects of readers' prior knowledge and task demand

Nathalie Blanc & Isabelle Tapiero (University of Lyon 2, France)

In this study, we investigated whether the updating process is sensitive to readers' prior knowledge and task demands. We distinguished participants according to their prior knowledge and we assessed

whether they integrated new incoming information via two tasks that probed the same information but differed on their temporal occurrence during the experiment. Results confirmed that the updating process is composed of two temporal components which are differently affected by the specificity of prior knowledge and by task demand.

Identification in narrative: Evidence for conversational processes

Maria Kotovych, Peter Dixon, & Marisa Bortolussi (University of Alberta)

We argue that identifying with a character in literary narrative occurs because the narrator is treated as a conversational participant. This entails that readers draw narrational implicatures on the assumption that the narrator is rational and cooperative, and as a consequence, attribute aspects of their own knowledge and experience to the narrator. Consistent with this analysis, less identification occurs when the narrator's thoughts and attitudes are explicitly justified, making implicatures unnecessary.

PAPER SESSION 2

Nelson Room, 10:30 A.M. - 12:10 P.M.

Types of pronominal reference in spoken dialogue

Miriam Eckert & Michael Strube (University of Pennsylvania)

In our analysis of a corpus of spoken dialogues we show that in spontaneous speech only 45% of pronouns and demonstratives have NP antecedents. For the remaining anaphors we provide a classification into three types, which are reliably marked by human annotators -- discourse-deictic reference to events and propositions, vague reference to the general topic of discourse, and inferrable-evoked reference. We furthermore show that these types are mainly restricted to spoken language and discuss implications of this.

Formal consequences of a marked syntactic choice: Morphosyntactic properties of lexical subjects in English conversation

Hartwell S. Francis, Michelle L. Gregory, & Laura A. Michaelis (University of Colorado at Boulder)

We report first findings in a study of the use of lexical subjects in conversation. We find that speakers who choose to conflate the discourse functions of referent-establishment and predication through the use of a lexical subject nevertheless constrain hearer processing load by ensuring that these lexical subjects denote referents which are ACCESSIBLE or ANCHORED to the discourse context. This claim is based upon morphosyntactic coding trends in the Switchboard corpus.

Mapping topic flow and coherence across conversations

Christine Winskowski (Lewis University)

This study maps the naturalistic emergence and evolution of topic production (or topicalization) in an experimental relationship of five conversations. The analysis identifies the correspondence of topical elements between topics and subtopics, both adjacent (topic drift, Hobbs, 1990) and non-adjacent (topic coherence). The resulting statistical and graphical profiles of topical flow reflect characteristic and quantifiable differences among conversations. Applications of this method mapping topical flow are discussed.

Characteristics of parent-child talk about emotions and young children's emotional understanding

Lisa E. Mader, Jeremy Carpendale, & William Turnbull (Simon Fraser University)

Recent evidence suggests that parent-child talk influences the development of children's social understanding. To evaluate this general finding, variables from videotaped parent-child interaction were derived and related to independent measures of three - to - 5 - year-old children's understanding of emotion. Aspects of talk were positively related to children's overall measure of emotion understanding. Partial evidence supports the hypothesis that social interaction is a necessary component in the development of children's social understanding.

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Lunchtime Slideshow

Denman Room, 12:30 - 1:00 P.M.

Cultural and cognitive shifts in beliefs: Influences on identity and literacy in Russia and the Ukraine.

Rosalind Horowitz (The University of Texas -San Antonio)

Belief change may be compared to the "deep processing" theory in cognitive psychology described by Craik and Lockhart (1972). While research on beliefs has grown in the US, this work has not been related to emerging democracies and the cultural and conceptual shifts in beliefs found in such worlds. Since 1991, with the end of Communism, political reforms have taken place to move Russia and The Ukraine into democratic republics. Russians and Ukrainians are routinely engaged in discourse processes which involve questionning and reflecting about cultural and conceptual beliefs. This slide presentation and analysis of post-Soviet worlds is based on my 1998 visit to Russia and The Ukraine. Using interviews, text accounts by journalists, and diary notes, as well as recent theory of belief change, the presentation considers shifts in belief and their influence on identity formation and literacy.

PAPER SESSION 3

Is it memory, or is it metamemory?: Understanding the relationship between working memory capacity and reading comprehension

Danielle S. McNamara & Jennifer L. Scott (Old Dominion University)

This study examines the relationship between reading skill and working memory (WM) capacity. Previous correlational research has indicated that skilled readers have greater WM capacity. We examined the effects of strategy use on WM task performance to determine whether metacognitive strategies contribute to both WM capacity and reading skill. Our overarching goal is to determine whether strategy use accounts for correlations between reading skill and WM capacity. Results presented here support that hypothesis.

The effects of reading purpose and working memory capacity limitations on the processing of expository texts

Tracy Linderholm & Paul van den Broek (University of Minnesota)

Think-aloud protocols were analyzed to investigate the cognitive processes that readers with high and low working memory (WM) capacities employ when reading for study versus entertainment purposes. All readers produced more paraphrases and backward inferences when reading to study and editorial comments when reading for entertainment. High WM readers produced more elaborative inferences and, when reading to study, metacognitive remarks than did low WM readers. Thus, readers adapt processing to reading purpose but high WM readers engage in processes that go beyond basic comprehension.

Memory for mathematical proofs and narratives

Charles R. Fletcher & Steve Jax (University of Minnesota)

Previous research in our laboratory has shown that memory for a step in a mathematical proof does not increase as the number of enabling connections that it has to the rest of the proof increases. This represents a fundamental difference between proofs and narratives. The research reported here explains this difference by showing that memory for proofs is largely a reconstructive, problem solving process.

PAPER SESSION 4

Nelson Room, 1:45 - 3:00 P.M.

An evaluation of the structural interchangeability rule of metaphorical structural similarity

Herbert L. Colston (University of Wisconsin - Parkside)

The study provides evidence on the recent debate concerning the nature of the psychological processes underlying metaphor cognition (Murphy, 1996; Gibbs, 1996; Murphy, 1997). A structural interchangeability prediction of Murphy's (1996) Structural Similarity alternative to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980; 1999) Conceptual Metaphor was tested. The results suggested that Structural Similarity is inadequate.

Conventionality and metaphor comprehension: A process-priming study

Brian F. Bowdle (Indiana University) & Dedre Gentner (Northwestern University)

In this talk, we examine how conventionality influences metaphor comprehension. First, we describe the career of metaphor hypothesis, according to which there is a shift from comparison to categorization processing as metaphors become conventionalized. Second, we review prior evidence from our laboratories supporting this view, and offer new evidence from a process-priming study in which novel and conventional figurative expressions were interpreted in contexts promoting either comparison or categorization processing. Finally, we discuss the implications of these findings for existing single-process models of metaphor comprehension.

Impact of mother-child talk on the development of the child's understanding of mind

William Turnbull & Jeremy I. M. Carpendale (Simon Fraser University)

Children develop an understanding of mind; they learn the circumstances for the correct use of mental state terms. To examine this process, mother-child dyads were videotaped as they made up a story. Analysis of the videotapes revealed that mothers initiated most talk of mental states; mental states were named, described, explained, pointed to, and mimicked orally and facially; and children typically acknowledged mother's mental state talk, but at times contested it or demanded clarification.

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PAPER SESSION 5

Denman/Nelson Rooms, 3:25 - 5:05 P.M.

Functional neuroanatomy of narrative comprehension with and without words

David A. Robertson & Morton Ann Gernsbacher (University of Wisconsin - Madison)

Traditional accounts of the brain regions supporting language functions have emphasized the role of language-specific modules in the left hemisphere. This paper reports results from fMRI studies that provide two important qualifications to that contention. First, the right hemisphere rather than the left hemisphere appears to be more involved in discourse-level processes. Second, the same neural circuitry is involved in the processing of language and non-language materials, suggesting domain-general cognitive processes.

The communication of quantities as a problem in discourse

Anthony J. Sanford & Linda M. Moxey (University of Glasgow)

Communicating degrees of uncertainty, levels of risk associated with hazards, and quantities in general is a ubiquitous activity, undertaken by laypersons and experts alike. This paper concerns the effect of expressing quantities in different ways, including through number and through natural language. Our claim is that whichever way quantities are expressed, it is impossible to do it in a neutral way, and that this fact results from the way in which the language of quantity is structured to reflect a process of argumentation.

Evidence of immediate activation of gender information from a social role name

Jane Oakhill , Alan Garnham , & David Reynolds (University of Sussex)

Two experiments investigated how knowledge about stereotypical gender is incorporated into discourse representations. In Experiment 1, subjectsU understanding of a vingette indicated that gender information was incorporated into their representation, even though it had to be inferred. In Experiment 2 subjects decided whether two words, an occupation (e.g. typist), and a kinship term, (e.g. uncle) could apply to the same person. The findings showed that gender information is activated when the role is encoded.

Verb aspect and instrument inferences

Rolf A. Zwaan & Robert A. Stanfield (Florida State University)

Four experiments demonstrate consistently that the availability of instrument concepts in comprehenders' working memory is affected by (1) the temporal contour of the action involving the instrument and (2) the instrument's availability for use in the situation. Specifically, the availability of the instrument in the situation affects its accessibility to the comprehender, but only if the action is described as ongoing not when it is described as punctual. Analyses of reading times yield a similar pattern, except that the instrument's availability now also shows a reliable effect for punctual actions, but this effect is reliable smaller than that for ongoing actions. The implications of these results for theories of situation-model construction will be discussed.

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POSTER SESSION 1

Ballroom Foyer, 8:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.

1. Situational dimensions constructed from a descriptive text: Effects of prior knowledge, task demands and studied phase

Nathalie Blanc & Isabelle Tapiero (University of Lyon 2, France)

In this study, we investigated whether the multidimensional content of a situation model constructed from a descriptive text is sensitive to readers' prior knowledge, task demands and studied phase of the situation model (construction and updating). Four situational dimensions were studied: Personality traits, emotional reaction, spatiality and intentionality. As expected, the situational dimension readers foregrounded was function of their prior knowledge, the task they had to perform and evolved as participants proceed through the text.

2. The effects of situational dimensions on the detection of inconsistencies

Isabelle Tapiero, Nathalie Blanc, Christelle Font, & Sabine Guéraud (University of Lyon 2, France)

We investigated whether readers detect inconsistencies relative to the spatial and emotional dimensions when provided with prior knowledge in relation with these dimensions. We assumed an effect of prior knowledge regarding the monitoring of these dimensions as well as the detection of inconsistencies. Our main results showed that although the spatial dimension is more difficult to monitor than the emotional dimension, it allows the reader to create a stronger situation model when faced to inconsistencies.

3. The effect of multimedia on comprehension and retention of text

Michelle C. Schleich & Joseph P. Magliano (Northern Illinois University)

The extent in which illustrations influence the comprehension and representation of text information in memory was examined. Participants either read passages in which target sentences were or were not embellished with an illustration depicting what the text described. The participants' recognition for the targeted sentences were then tested either immediately following the presentation of the texts or one week later. The results most strongly supported a situational effect, whereby the illustrations enhanced participants' memory for the situation being described in the text more so than for other types of representations.

4. The construction of thematic information during narrative comprehension

Hao Zhang & Rumjahn Hoosain (The University of Hong Kong)

The effects of narrative characteristics on thematic inferences were investigated. In Experiment 1, a self-paced reading-time method demonstrated that appropriate title facilitated comprehension of the theme of a text. In Experiment 2, results indicated that generation of thematic inferences depended on the interaction between the central goal of the protagonist and the outcome of a text. These findings are consistent with the constructionist theory in which the theme is constructed during reading by integrating crucial information.

5. The reading-writing relation: Models and future perspectives

Giovanni Parodi (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso)

The purpose of this paper is to present background information on interconnections between reading and writing and to speculate about the nature of their potential relations. Three theoretical models are examined and a global model of comprehension/production of written texts intended to lay down the basis for posing a common knowledge between both competencies will be outlined. At the same time, some suggestions for the development of the field will be made.

6. Argument structure and meaning

Michael P. Kaschak & Arthur M. Glenberg (University of Wisconsin - Madison)

The relationship between argument structures and meaning has been acknowledged in various literatures, but the source of this relationship is far from clear. One approach proposes that this relationship is the result of verbs with a particular meaning projecting a particular argument structure. A contrasting approach holds that argument structures exist as independent linguistic units with their own semantics. In a series of experiments, we present evidence that supports the latter approach to argument structure.

7. Examining the complex elements of extended argumentative discourse

Ronan S. Bernas (Eastern Illinois University) & Nancy L. Stein (The University of Chicago)

The study examined the structural complexity of extended arguments generated by 88 individuals who held four different positions on abortion. Varied types of complex sequences of arguments that go beyond the minimal claim-data structure were identified and differences in their use were examined. It was found, for instance, that participants hardly elaborated on their supports. A larger proportion of their extended discourse was spent on refuting the objections they raised to their own positions.

8. Individual differences in discourse comprehension: The interaction between reading span and text structure

Sung-il Kim (Kwangwoon University), Jae-Ho Lee (Choong-Ang University), So-young Kim (Seoul National University), & Hyun-joo Yoo (Sung-Kyun-Kwan University)

This study was conducted to investigate the individual differences in discourse comprehension. In correlational study, it was found that reading span score correlates word span score and reading span score correlates reading comprehension score. However, there was no significant relationship between Korean verbal SAT score and both types of span score, and between reading comprehension score and word span score. In Experimental study, the significant interaction effect between reading span ability and text structure was found. High span readers recognized the superordinate goal faster in the hierarchical text structure than in the sequential text structure, whereas low span readers did not differ in both types of

text structure. The results suggest that individual difference in reading span lead to construct a differential representation of a hierarchical discourse.

9. Negatives Bo and M in Taiwanese conversation

Miao-Hsia Chang (Chung Kuo Institute of Technology and Commerce)

NO SHOW AT CONFERENCE

10. A centering account of zero pronouns in Hindi

Rashmi Prasad (Univeristy of Pennsylvania)

This paper presents a corpus-based discourse account of the constraints on the occurrence of null elements in Hindi. It will be shown that an adequate account of the phenomena cannot be provided in terms of a theory of pro-drop tied in with verb agreement. Furthermore, the study will also contest previous attempts to explain the phenomena from a discourse perspective, and provide a proper account of null elements in the language in terms of "Centering Theory", which provides a strict definition of the notion of the "topic" of the utterance.

11. The co-construction of genre, expert, and novice: A social pragmatic approach

Sherrie Atwood (Simon Fraser University)

Genre is socially constituted through shared knowledge making practices of novice and experts. Social pragmatics is an empirical method which investigates conversation under the rubric of talk-in-interaction. Ten students (novices) and their instructor (expert) were taped recorded. The tape was analyzed for structures that constitute genre, expert and novice. Though a preliminary study, expected structures were confirmed. Significantly, the social pragmatic method proved an appropriate and successful method for analysis.

12. A psychological dimension of talk: Ephemeral and mutable topic elements as evidence for simultaneous internal and external discourse

Christine Winskowski (Lewis University)

This study explores psychological features of topic production (topicalization) in conversation, where topical elements may variously divide, combine, disappear, resurface, and transmute. This ephemerality

and mutability is demonstrated in a top-down analysis of a conversation, pointing to the role of speakers, internal (unspoken) topicalization. Next, this phenomenon, and its impact on the progress of the speakers, relationship, is examined across a series of conversations, illustrating the confluence of internal and external topicalization.

13. A descriptive analysis of the rhetorical situation in elementary school student writing

Ricardo Benítez (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile)

Analyzing the rhetorical situation in a corpus of 439 writing samples written by sixth and eighth graders was a major concern in a more comprehensive study that attempts to discover the connection between the reading and writing of argumentative texts. The data shows that the writers tend to maintain the topic but cease to keep the audience and purpose in mind. The subjects' writing mimics their oral discourse with its spontaneous, empathic and informal style.

14. A conceptual framework for the analysis of intertextual scientific discourse

Juanita Marinkovich & Ricardo Benítez (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile)

Intertextual analysis is a fundamental area of study in the discourse processing. In this framework the purpose of this study is to revise the different concepts that are nowadays related to the intertextuality and to establish a minimum referential framework. Another purpose is to propose some categories that, starting from these concepts, can facilitate the analysis of the discourse from this perspective, especially scientific discourse. The categories are discourse representation, presupposition, polarization, metadiscourse, transformations, coherence, and interdiscursivity.

15. The written discourse production in school settings

Juanita Marinkovich (Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile)

This current study is intended to give an account of the types of papers written by a sample of seventh graders of Spanish state schools in Valparaiso, Chile. The most common textual typology are the copy of other writings and the answers given to questionnaires; the least common are the persuasive texts and the schematic representations of written discourse. The detection of the typology is complemented by the inquiry of the quality of the same typology.

16. Children's beliefs about reading before they learn to read

Marianne Peronard (Catholic University at Valparaíso)

The aim of this investigation is to find out what children know about reading before they have learned to read. 60 children (thirty boys and thirty girl) were interviewed about the subject and the results were strikingly similar between the groups: 95% knew letters were used to read and were different from numbers and drawings but only 10% said that letters "say" something. In trying to account for this 10%, we investigated their family environments.The results show that none of the factor investigated correlated with their metacognitive knowledge.

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 17

INVITED PRESENTATION

Nelson/Denman Rooms, 9:00 - 10:00 A.M.

Judith Green (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Talking texts into being: On the discursive construction of disciplinary knowledge in classrooms

This presentation examines how texts are talked into being in classrooms and how these texts form the basis for defining what counts as disciplinary knowledge in classrooms. Drawing of recent work in classroom ethnography, sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, critical linguistics and New Literacy Studies, I will present an argument about the situated nature of disciplinary knowledge, of access to academic literacies, and of identity in classrooms. Through this work, I raise questions about theory-method relationships, units of analysis, and the claims that are possible using an ethnographically oriented approach to the study of text and discourse in classrooms and other institutional settings.

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PAPER SESSION 6

Denman Room, 10:30 A.M. - 12:10 P.M.

Anaphoric inferences in reading: Necessary or optional?

Celia M. Klin, William H. Levine, & Alexandria E. Guzmán (State University of New York at Binghamton)

A central task of reading is to integrate currently-read information with information from earlier in the passage. The integration is often signaled by anaphors. Four experiments are presented in which several text variables (e.g., distance, a same category distractor) prevent noun phrase anaphors from being resolved. The results support a memory-based text-processing view; further, they are inconsistent with the view that anaphoric inferences initiate an exhaustive search of memory.

The on-line generation of instrument inferences

Suzanne Kear & Garry Wilson (University of Lincolnshire and Humberside)

Three experiments tested whether or not instrument inferences are drawn on-line and before reading instrument identity in single sentences. Results suggested that instruments are generated predictively and on- line, contradicting previous research by Dosher and Corbett (1982) and McKoon and Ratcliff (1981). These contradictory findings are explained in terms of differences between verbs in their strength of implication of instruments. The results are discussed in relation to verb lexical entries and mental model theory.

Text understanding and predictive inferences : Role of semantic features of the verbs expressing the causal consequence of the action

Pascale Maury (Université P. Valéry)

In this study, we investigated the activation for predictive inferences as a function of the semantics features of the verbs expressing the consequence of the action. Using an on-line verification task, we observed that predictive inferences are higher activated in the texts describing intentional actions of a causal human agent vs texts about changings produced by the action of forces of nature. This suggests that agent and object differed in salience in the situation model.

Thematic inference in on-line comprehension

Shannon N. Whitten & Arthur C. Graesser (The University of Memphis)

This paper investigates whether a specific type of inference, thematic inference, is generated on-line. A thematic inference is an inference about the global message of a text. The constructionist theory of inference generation predicts that these inferences are made in considerate text. The results of sentence reading times and word recognition judgements indicate that readers are able to generate thematic inferences off-line, but were inconclusive about the on-line status.

PAPER SESSION 7

Nelson Room, 10:30 A.M. - 12:10 P.M.

Domain knowledge and purpose for reading: Interacting factors in comprehension?

Jean-Marie Burkhardt (Universite Rene Descartes-Paris V & Action Eiffel, INRIA-Rocquencourt), Francoise Detienne (Action Eiffel, INRIA-Rocquencourt), & Susan Wiedenbeck (Dalhousie University)

Using the mental model approach to comprehension, this research evaluates the interaction of expertise and purpose for reading in computer programs. Expert programmers were expected to form a stronger situation model than novices. Participants given a read-to-do purpose for reading were expected to form a stronger situation model than those given a read-to-recall purpose. The results show an interaction between expertise and purpose for reading with novices building a stronger situation model if given a task requiring situation knowledge.

Content integration in learning from multiple texts

M. Anne Britt (University of Pittsburgh), Susan R. Goldman (Vanderbilt University), & Charles Perfetti (University of Pittsburgh)

We investigated 11th graders' ability to integrate information when learning from multiple texts. We manipulated whether a story was told from the perspective of a single author or two different authors and the type of instructions provided. Students required to integrate information across two texts performed as well as those who read the story as a single text, but only when explicitly instructed on how to integrate. Students who read two texts with only comprehension instructions made more errors, recalled less information, and provided less integrated answers to questions.

Vicarious learning: What do overhearers learn?

Jean McKendree, John Lee, Richard Cox, Keith Stenning, Finbar Dineen, & Terry Mayes (Glasgow Caledonian University)

The Vicarious Learner project is investigating the role of dialogue in learning and the benefits of 'overhearing' other learners. Our results suggest that dialogue serves to 'enculturate' learners into the patterns of language in particular disciplines and that such learning can occur not only through direct participation in dialogue, but also vicariously. We see educational dialogue, as opposed to everyday conversation, as being about the complex alignment of concepts where the participants know that an initial misalignment is fairly certain.

Learning from oral-based versus literate-based discourse: A look at discourse variation and its effect on comprehension

Rosalind Horowitz (The University of Texas-- San Antonio)

Over the century, researchers have been intrigued with similarities and differences between listening and reading. Most of the research has been based on a theory of a unitary nature of language processing using only a few sentences at a time, not extended discourse. In contrast, Horowitz & Samuels, 1985 demonstrated that poor readers out-perform good readers on listening to easy discourse but not in reading easy or hard discourse, suggesting discourse variation was an important factor in comprehension and that researchers could not generalize across modalities. The present study was conducted to look at oral-based versus literate-based discourse comprehension on two different topics. The oral-based versions were ghostwritten by a professional writer for delivery as speeches, while the literate-based versions were ghostwritten by the same writer for magazine articles (using language features identified as spoken or written forms, Biber, 1988). College students from two universities, and high school students, were administered tests of listening and reading. Results showed that oral-based texts were easier to process than literate-based texts, and that reading was more effective than listening, though it requires greater investment of mental effort. For some of the outcome variables, these factors interacted with the topics of the text. Research conducted supported a dual theory of discourse processing--based on discourse variability and modality of comprehension.

PAPER SESSION 8

Denman Room, 1:50 - 3:30 P.M.

A discourse constraint on questions

Kristin Homer & Laura A. Michaelis (University of Colorado)

In an analysis of information questions in the Switchboard Telephone Speech Corpus, it was found that subjects were questioned in only 3.85% of the sample. As in declarative clauses, subject position in information questions is also constrained. We propose that one general constraint on the discourse status of subject referents is responsible for both the low occurrence of subject information questions and the lack of discourse-new referents in subject position in declarative clauses.

Effects of informativeness on durational shortening in conversation

Michelle L. Gregory, William D. Raymond, Alan Bell, Daniel Jurafsky (University of Colorado at Boulder)

Researchers have long noted a relationship between informativeness and the pronunciation of words (Jespersen 1923): Less informative words are more likely to be reduced than more informative words (Jurafsky et al. 1998, Fowler et al. 1987, Resnik 1993). In this study, we investigate the effects on durational shortening of three possible sources of informativeness; the probability of a word given the two previous words, the number of times a word is used in the prior context, and the semantic word association between the word and the discourse context (as measured by LSA). From 789 examples from the transcribed Switchboard corpus of telephone conversations (Greenberg et al. 1996), we conclude that all three of these factors independently affect a word's informativeness in conversation, and hence its degree of durational shortening. Thus, we provide a model of the knowledge that speakers exploit during conversation.

The salience of goals: How thematic role information impacts choices in reference form

Jennifer E. Arnold (University of Pennsylvania)

Goal and source thematic roles have been shown to influence pronoun resolution, an effect that has been linked to the reader's tendency to focus on the consequences of the event (Stevenson et al., 1994). Using a story-continuation experiment and a corpus analysis, I show that speakers also tend to use pronouns more often for goal entities. Furthermore, speakers tend to refer more frequently to goal entities than source entities, a pattern which may explain the salience of goals.

How often is often? Effects of context on the interpretation of frequency adverbs

Katja Wiemer-Hastings, Arthur C. Graesser, & Cynthia Doyle (The University of Memphis)

We examined the effects of frequency (low, middle, high) and context on the interpretation of twenty frequency adverbs. For context-free adverbs, the variance in frequency ratings was highest for middle frequency, resulting in a curvilinear relationship between means and standard deviation of the ratings. Context only selectively decreased the variance in interpretations for adverbs of lower middle frequency (e.g., occasionally). Variance increased when the adverb modified an activity with a clear frequency norm.

PAPER SESSION 9

Nelson Room, 1:50 - 3:30 P.M.

Autotutor's pedagogical effectiveness and conversational appropriateness

Natalie Person (Rhodes College), Roger Kreuz, Victoria Pomeroy, & Bianca Klettke (The University of Memphis)

Evidence will be provided that demonstrates Autotutor's effectiveness as a tutor and conversational partner. We analyzed several tutorial transcripts in which Autotutor and students of varying ability levels collaboratively answered questions and solved problems. Knowledgable judges rated tutor dialogue moves on two dimensions: pedagogical quality and conversational appropriateness. Data from three evaluative cycles will be presented

Mechanisms for generating a hint

Rachel DiPaolo, D. Hacker, H. Yetman, S. Whitten, Arthur Graesser, & Tutoring Research Group (The University of Memphis)

The hinting strategy is one of the most powerful tools a tutor can use to facilitate a student's active knowledge construction within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). We reanalyze data on hints in a sample of human tutoring transcripts and present some new data from our current simulated tutor (AutoTutor). We will discuss ideal strategies of improving hints so they are more effective and engaging.

Listening in on dialogues and monologues of embodied agents in virtual tutoring sessions: Learning and questioning

Scotty D. Craig, Barry Gholson, Dereece Smither (The University of Memphis), & The Tutoring Research Group

This research was concerned with two issues: the extent to which overhearers could both learn from listening to monologues and dialogues, and be induced to ask questions by listening to a large number of questions in a virtual tutoring session. In retention tests subjects in the dialogue condition wrote significantly more content than in the monologue condition. In a transfer task subjects in the dialogue condition asked significantly more questions than in the monologue condition.

A collaborative approach to computer-administered surveys

Michael F. Schober (New School for Social Research), Frederick G. Conrad (Bureau of Labor Statistics), & Jonathan E. Bloom (New School for Social Research)

In two experiments, we compare conventional computer interfaces for administering survey questions with more collaborative interfaces in which the system interacts with the user to help clarify what the questions mean. In both a text-based and voice-based interface, collaboration improved question comprehension -- but only when respondents recognized that their personal conceptions of ordinary terms like "bedroom" and "job" might differ from the survey designers'. Users asked more questions when the system recognized evidence of their uncertainty.

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INVITED PRESENTATION

Nelson/Denman Rooms, 4:00 - 5:00 P.M.

Raymond Gibbs (University of California, Santa Cruz)

A new look at literal meaning in understanding what is said and implicated

What role does literal meaning play in language comprehension? This question has been vigorously debated in research on figurative language understanding. The "standard pragmatic view" proposes that people must analyze the complete literal meaning of indirect and figurative utterances before pragmatic information is consulted to infer speakers' nonliteral messages. Most of the psycholinguistic research shows, however, that given sufficient context people understand nonliteral meanings without first analyzing the complete literal meaning of an expression (i.e., the "direct

access view"). Several lines of research have recently attempted to demonstrate that people still analyze aspects of literal meaning when understanding metaphors, irony, idioms, and proverbs. I critically evaluated this new work and suggest that it does not contribute sufficient evidence against the direct access view. Nonetheless, I argue that other research suggests how people analyze aspects of what speakers say as part of inferring what speakers implicate. This conclusion has several implications for specifying the role of pragmatics in ordinary utterance interpretation.

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