A cognitive-pragmatic
approach to situation-bound utterances

Istvan Kecskés

*State University of New York, Department of Educational Theory,
Albany, New York 12222, USA*

Abstract

This study focuses on a particular type of formulaic expressions called situation-bound utterances (SBUs). Since the meaning of these pragmatic units is shaped by the interplay of linguistic and extralinguistic factors, they can be best accounted for in a theoretical framework which represents a knowledge-for-use conception. A cognitive-pragmatic approach to SBUs reveals that in many cases cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor and conventional knowledge are responsible for the unique situational meaning of SBUs. In this respect, SBUs are similar to other formulaic expressions such as idioms and conventional implicatures whose meaning structure can also be better accounted for if the underlying cognitive mechanisms are examined. It will be claimed that the relationship of SBUs to socio-cultural concepts resembles that of words and concepts as described in Cruse (1992). SBUs will be classified according to their formula-specific pragmatic properties which are either encoded in the expression or charged by the situation. The investigation of the characteristic features of SBUs and the development of their situational meaning necessitates the review of two important theoretical issues: the creative aspect of language use and the role of formulaic expressions in the development of syntax. It will be argued that the formulaic-creative dichotomy makes sense only at sentence level, whereas it loses its significance at discourse level. Not all types of formulaic expressions contribute to syntactic development in an L2, because some of them (including SBUs) are almost never split into constituents by L2 learners. Errors in the use of SBUs can mainly be due to the lack of native-like conceptual fluency and metaphorical competence of adult L2 learners, who rely on their L1 conceptual system when producing and comprehending SBUs in the target language. © 2000 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Formulaic expressions; Situation-bound utterances; Cognitive-pragmatic approach; Cognitive mechanisms; Conceptual fluency; Second language acquisition

1. Introduction

Bolinger (1976: 2) suggested that "speakers do at least as much remembering as they do putting together". Charles Fillmore (1976: 24–25) also found that "an enormously large amount of natural language is formulaic, automatic and rehearsed, rather than propositional, creative or freely generated". Nowadays, speakers in conventional speech situations tend to do more 'remembering' than 'putting together'. A considerable part of our everyday conversation is usually restricted to short routinized interchanges where we do not always mean what we say. For instance:

Bob: Hi Jim, how are you doing?
Jim: Fine, thank you.

Bob does not necessarily care how Jim is doing, and Jim may be far from being 'fine', but he says so. The gap between 'what is said' and 'what is communicated' in such situations can be quite wide.[1] Fónagy (1961b) and Coulmas (1981a) argued that frequency of occurrence has a crucial impact on the meaningfulness of linguistic elements: the more frequent they are, the more meaningless they become in terms of referential semantics. The compositional meaning of utterances frequently becomes of secondary importance and the functional aspect dominates.

Formulaic expressions have received a fair attention within both theoretical and applied linguistics as well as in pragmatics and second language acquisition (Fillmore, C., 1976, 1979; Bolinger, 1976; Fillmore, L., 1976; Coulmas, 1979, 1981a, 1981b; Yorio, 1980; Vihman, 1982; Fónagy, 1961a,b, 1982; Bahns et al., 1986; Bohn, 1986; Carter and McCarthy, 1988; Kiefer, 1985, 1995, 1996; Kecskés, 1997, 1999; Raupach, 1984; Willis, 1990; Sinclair, 1991; Moon, 1992; Verstraten, 1992; Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992; Weinert, 1995; Miller and Weinert, 1998; Wray, 1998). These studies discuss the same phenomenon from different perspectives, but most of them have something in common. They emphasize the important role of fixed expressions in speech production.

2. Situation-bound utterances (SBUs)

This paper focuses on a particular type of formulaic expressions called situation-bound utterances (Kecskés, 1997, 1999). SBUs are highly conventionalized, prefabricated pragmatic units whose occurrence is tied to standardized communicative situations (Coulmas, 1981a; Kiefer, 1995, 1996; Kecskés, 1997, 1999). If, according to their obligatoriness and predictability in social situations, formulaic expressions are placed on a continuum where obligatoriness increases to the right, situation-bound utterances will take the rightmost place because their use is highly predetermined by

---

[1]   There are, of course, situations where speakers mean what they say. So there could be a certain person called Bob who is really interested in finding out how Jim is, and Jim could be sincere in his response. This issue will be discussed later.

the situation. The acquisition of these units in an L2 requires the knowledge of the socio-cultural background of the target language, because SBUs are functional units whose meaning can be explained only as functions of habitual usage. The pragmatic functions are usually not encoded in these linguistic units, therefore SBUs often receive their 'charge' from the situation they are used in. It is generally this situational charge that distinguishes SBUs from their freely generated counterparts.[2] Several labels have been used to refer to these expressions in the relevant literature: 'routine formulae' (Coulmas, 1979), 'énoncés liés' (Fónagy, 1982), 'situational utterances' (Kiefer, 1985, 1995), 'bound utterances' (Kiefer, 1996), 'institutionalized expressions' (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992). This variety of terms can be explained not only by the difficulty of defining this particular type of pragmatic units, but also by the fact that these expressions are discussed in different fields of theoretical and applied linguistics, while sometimes authors seem to care relatively little about research on SBUs done outside their own respective field. The term 'situation-bound utterances' is preferred in this study to any other term, because this expression refers to the main characteristic feature of the utterances being investigated: their boundedness to a particular situation. 'Routine formulae' is too broad a category, 'situational utterances' presupposes that there are utterances other than situational, 'institutionalized expressions' seems to be too specific a term. The French term 'énoncés liés' used by Fónagy (1982) expresses best what these pragmatic units are all about. Kiefer (1995) refers to Fónagy when explaining 'situational utterances'; still, the term 'situation-bound utterances' appears to be a closer equivalent to 'énoncés liés' than 'situational utterances'.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: the main aim is to discuss the characteristic features of SBUs in a cognitive-pragmatic framework which may give a comprehensive view of the phenomenon of formulaic expressions. It will be argued that idioms, implicatures, and situation-bound utterances have similarities in their development through the cognitive mechanisms (metaphor, metonymy, conventional knowledge) which are responsible for the meaning structure of these linguistic expressions. Furthermore, I will provide a relatively detailed analysis of the common features of words and SBUs. In the second part of the paper, I will outline the differences between the standard view of creativity and the view that has been developed from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective. A review of the literature listed above reveals that formulaic expressions play a central role in on-line processing (certainly for production purposes), while the grammatical aspect of creativity (syntactic creativity) plays a smaller part in second language acquisition than supposed. In addition, I will discuss the difficulties adult L2 learners[3] have in the acquisition and application of

---

[2] Compare the following situations:
    (a) – Bill, may I talk to you for a minute?
       – Sorry Jill, I am very busy now, but *I'll talk to you later.*
      Compositional meaning is preserved.
    (b) – I think, I must go now.
      – OK, *I'll talk to you later.*
      Functional meaning (saying good-bye) comes to the fore.

SBUs, and point out that the figurative idiomatic structure of English as a second language can be better understood if cognitive mechanisms are accounted for.

2.1. Theoretical framework

Wray (1998) argued that the fact that formulaic expressions seem to appear and disappear suggests that they are not linguistic in origin but are a linguistic solution to non-linguistic problems. She identified two such problems: "the need to achieve social interactional goals and the need to produce (and understand) language without causing a processing overload" (1998: 1). The development of SBUs strongly supports Wray's theory. As far as their etymology is concerned, SBUs are freely generated phrases which have become delexicalized to a particular extent during their frequent use in certain predictable social situations. Fónagy (1956, 1961a,b) and Coulmas (1981a) argued that excessive currency usually corrupts expressiveness and diminishes meaningfulness. SBUs may lose their semantic transparency (or at least part of it) because they are used to express certain pragmatic functions attached to particular situations. They can become formulae for specific social interactions. The main question is why exactly these utterances started to be used to express those pragmatic functions and not others. This question can be answered only within a cognitive-pragmatic framework because the traditional 'arbitrariness of the sign'-view, in which linguistic meaning is divorced from the human conceptual system will not lead us anywhere (cf. Fónagy, 1956).[4] The development of certain SBUs can be accounted for through cognitive SBUs demonstrate better than any other linguistic unit that there is a strong cognitive-linguistic interdependency. The development of certain SBUs can be accounted for through cognitive mechanisms, and vice versa: learning an SBU for a culturally important category can linguistically reinforce the learning of the category itself.[5]

It has been argued that universal human cultural concepts are lexicalized in various forms in different languages (cf. Wierzbicka, 1992, 1994). The forms of expressing politeness or request in one language are usually quite different from those used to express the same or similar function in another language. What does the selection of these forms depend on? The traditional view emphasizes that the selection of a given form (be it a word, a phrase, or a sentence) for a particular function may simply be arbitrary in a given culture (Pawley and Syder, 1983). Following Searle (1975), Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992: 17–18) go one step further when they argue that the choice of a form may be at least to some degree predictable. This predictability can be based on syntagmatic simplicity and paradigmatic flexibility. According to Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992: 17), lexical phrases with a relatively simple syntactic pattern and a flexible amount of lexical variation are favored for

---

[3]   There is no room here to target all possible contexts of second language acquisition. Therefore the entire discussion in this paper will refer to adult second language learners unless specified otherwise.
[4]   Fónagy discussed the role of Saussure's 'arbitraire du signe' in his study published in 1956.
[5]   Sweetser (1990: 7) referring to the issue of language shaping cognition says that "... learning a word for a culturally important category could linguistically reinforce the learning of the category itself".

common pragmatic acts. The cognitive-pragmatic approach used in this paper refutes both explanations and claims that relationships between linguistic form and function reflect human conceptual structure and general principles of cognitive organization (cf. Sweetser, 1990; Nuyts, 1992; Kövecses and Szabó, 1996).

SBUs are usually based on conceptual metaphors or conventional implicatures. Their meanings are motivated and not arbitrary.[6] They make the fullest use of cultural knowledge common to the members of a speech community. If, for instance, we want to explain why exactly 'give me a break' (and not 'give me a rest' or 'give me a pause') may function as an objection or rejection in American English, we will have to examine the relationship between the given function 'objection' (or 'rejection'), the semantic domain of this phrase and the cultural knowledge attached to the expression. It has been argued (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987) that our cognition and hence our language operate metaphorically. This view can be used to explain polysemy and specific figurative usage not only at the word and idiom level (as done, for instance, by Sweetser, 1990, and Kövecses and Szabó, 1996), but also at utterance level. When we use 'give me a break' as an objection rather than some other type of utterance, this is not just a fact about the language but also about the cultural community that sees 'asking for a break' as metaphorically standing for objecting to something. As a result of this metaphorical understanding, the linguistic expression acquires a pragmatically motivated new sense. Similarly to what Kövecses and Szabó (1996) found in idioms, there is a great deal of systematic motivation for the meaning of most SBUs.

Many SBUs evolve out of conventional implicatures. Grice (1968, 1975) makes a distinction between conversational implicatures and conventional implicatures. *Conversational implicatures* are created ad hoc in the course of conversation and have to be calculated by the interlocutor. *Conventional implicatures* have become routine formulas and are used almost automatically. Conversational implicatures are generated by a particular utterance for a particular receiver in a particular situation, so what is conversationally implicated is somewhat indeterminate and cancelable. The conventional implicature of an expression, on the other hand, is quite specific, and usually means the same for members of a speech community, so its content is hardly cancelable.[7] These expressions are routinely interpreted in a derived (i.e. non-literal) sense. For instance, 'please help yourself' is often used by Americans at the table to urge their guests to start to eat or take some more food. The original cognitive mechanism[8] responsible for the situational meaning of the expression is no longer maintained consciously, and no inferential reasoning is necessary to find out that the speaker asks you to 'help yourself' not because he does not want to. The linguistic form has acquired a pragmatically motivated sense which became conventionalized.

---

[6]   Motivation here is to be distinguished from prediction as in Lakoff (1987).

[7]   The speaker can't deny that s/he meant it without involving him/-herself in a contradiction.

[8]   Take as much as you wish (I don't want to help you because you know how much you need) → help yourself to as much as you need.

2.2. Distinguishing features of SBUs

2.2.1. Meaning of an SBU applies within a relevant frame

The meaning of SBUs is pragmatically conditioned within situational frames. Their use is closely tied to the performance of specific meanings, so they are more or less fixed and predictable. Each prefabricated element is linked to a communicative function the learner is motivated to perform. Kiefer (1995) suggested that SBUs be discussed within the confines of frame semantics because any account of stereotypical expressions calls for frames. They are interpretive devices by which we understand a term's deployment in a given context. Each situation has a script which is a sequence of events and actions, taking place in frames (Van Dijk, 1980: 234). SBUs are often 'indexical' in the sense that their occurrence evokes a specific subevent of a particular script (C. Fillmore, 1976; Coulmas, 1979; Kiefer, 1995, 1996). Predictability and boundedness to a specific sub-event are, of course, a matter of degree rather than absolutes. The more predictable the link between a sub-event and an utterance, the more bounded the expression (Kiefer, 1995). The following example (adapted from Genzel, 1991: 54) demonstrates how situation-bound utterances are tied to certain sub-events:

Frame: Knowledge structure connected with doctor's office.
Script: (Don is the customer, B is the receptionist)
Sub-events: (a) D enters and greets the receptionist B;
              (b) B looks up and inquires about D's goal;
              (c) D tells about his appointment;
              (d) B asks him to fill in a form;
              (e) D thanks B;
              (f) B reacts to thanks.
  D: Good afternoon.
  B: Good afternoon. *Can I help you?*
  D: I'm Donald Daniels. I have a 2 o'clock appointment.
  B: Yes, Mr. Daniels. *Please fill out this form.*
  A: *Thank you.*
  B: *You are welcome.*

2.2.2. SBUs behave like words

Kiefer (1995) argued that the important role prefabricated sentences play in everyday discourse has blurred the distinction between 'words' and 'sentences'. It can be no longer maintained that 'words' are listed in the mental lexicon and 'sentences' are freely generated. The lexicon contains a large number of prefabricated sentences and phrases which are associated with certain typical situations (Moon, 1992; Verstraten, 1992). Kiefer (1995) suggested that the situational meaning of an SBU usually cannot be derived from its semantics, therefore, SBUs must be listed in the lexicon in the same way as words. SBUs, however, are pragmatic rather than lexical units so there must be reference to a particular frame or script. More precisely, each SBU must be characterized by the sub-event of the script for the given frame it is associated with.

Situational meanings and pragmatic functions of SBUs may not apply at all outside the relevant frame and script because these functions and their frames are inseparable from one another. Take, for instance, 'you bet' or 'piece of cake'. It is hard to tell what they mean without a frame. They can obtain different meanings in different frames.

To explain the word-like behavior of SBUs I will use an approach similar to that of Cruse's (1992) who discussed the relationship between concepts and words. Cruse argued that there are alternative lexical access routes to a single concept. An example he uses is 'die', 'kick the bucket', 'pass away', 'snuff it'. Cruse assumed that cognitive synonyms map onto identical concepts. The stable meaning properties that differentiate the members of a pair of cognitive synonyms like 'pass away' and 'snuff it' can then be viewed as properties of the individual lexical units, as distinct from properties of the common concept. These *word-specific semantic properties* will include such things as emotive coloring and various kinds of contextual affinities (see Cruse, 1990). Cruse argued that if we allow the possibility of word-specific semantic properties, then this creates the possibility of lexical as opposed to conceptual semantic relations. For instance, if 'die' serves to activate the concept [DIE] directly, without modulatory effect, whereas 'snuff it' activates the same concept, but with a modulatory effect, then 'snuff it' stands in a meaning relation to 'die'. According to this view, the whole meaning of a word comprises the associated concept (together with its pattern of connections within the concept network) plus any word-specific semantic properties.

Cruse (1992) thinks that it would be useful to have terms to distinguish words that do not have any word-specific semantic properties from those that do. He suggested that the former be referred to as 'plain' words, and the latter as 'charged' words. Cruse's approach can be confirmed with further examples:

[SURRENDER] Plain: surrender,
             Charged: capitulate, give up, quit, chicken out
[DISAPPEAR] Plain: disappear,
             Charged: vanish, fade away

Cruse's classification works at the lexical semantic level. When adapted to the discourse level, his approach needs modification because 'plain words' often receive a pragmatic charge from the situation. For instance, the 'plain' word 'hit' does not have any 'word specific semantic property' in situation A. In B, however, its basic semantic function is extended with a pragmatic property that is not encoded in the word but is charged by the situation:

(A) – What has happened to you?
     – I *hit* my hand against the wall.
(B) – Hurry up, John, or we'll be late.
     – OK, OK, we'll *hit* the road in a minute.

The type of meaning expressed in B does not apply outside the appropriate situations. Therefore the classification of words according to their discourse functions

should be different from Cruse's lexical semantic classification. His theory claims that expressions like 'chicken out', 'fade away', 'pass away' have word specific semantic properties which are encoded in the linguistic forms. These properties are in the semantic domain of these words, i.e. they are not obtained from the situation or other external, extralinguistic factors. If this is so, it makes sense to use the term 'loaded' in opposition to 'charged', when that particular meaning property is not encoded in the linguistic form but is supplied by the situation. Consequently, what Cruse calls 'charged words' will be labeled 'loaded words' at the discourse level, and 'plain' words with pragmatic extensions will be called 'charged words'. Basically, what happens at the discourse level is that 'loaded' words usually keep their 'load', while 'plain' words either remain 'plain', or get 'charged' by the situation. The word 'chicken out' is 'loaded' with what Cruse calls 'a word specific semantic property' both within and without a context. In contrast, when 'plain words' are used in a context, they either remain 'plain' (like in A above) or adopt a figurative meaning that is usually charged by the situation (like in B).

2.3. Classification of SBUs

Cruse's (1992) modified theory can be applied to explain the relationship of SBUs to the communicative situation they are used in. SBUs have communicative functions which represent socio-cultural concepts (cf. Wierzbicka, 1992, 1994). There are several pragmatic access routes to each socio-cultural concept; these routes are represented by functionally synonymous, but stylistically different SBUs. The relationship of these SBUs to the socio-cultural concept they represent is similar to that of words to concepts in Cruse's theory. For instance:

Socio-cultural concept: [when someone says 'thank you' it must be recognized]
Some SBUs representing this concept:[9]
  – Don't mention it.
  – It's OK.
  – You are welcome.
  – You bet.
Socio-cultural concept: [when you meet someone, it is essential to ask about her/his well-being]
Some SBUs representing this concept:
  – How are you doing?
  – How is it going?
  – Howdy.

Each SBU expresses a similar function referring to the same concept. Just like words in Cruse's theory, SBUs can either be 'plain' , and have no modulatory effect like 'it's OK', or they can have what I call *formula-specific pragmatic properties* as, for instance, in 'you bet'.

---

[9] 'Some' here and in the other examples refers to the fact that there are several other SBUs that can express the same function.

SBUs having a formula-specific pragmatic property encoded in the expression will be called 'loaded' (for example: 'howdy', 'you bet', 'welcome aboard', etc.) But in most of the cases we have what Horn (1985) and Sweetser (1990) called 'pragmatic ambiguity': a single semantics is pragmatically applied in different ways according to the pragmatic context. This means that the formula- specific pragmatic property is not encoded in the SBU but is charged by the situation.

As seen above, SBUs do not represent a homogenous group. Coulmas (1981b: 73–79) argued that the literal meaning of these expressions is only suspended in use. A closer examination, however, shows that Coulmas is not necessarily right: what we have here is not suspension of meaning, but functional change or a pragmatic extension of the basic semantic function. As claimed above, SBUs behave like words. If they are frequently used in a particular meaning they will encode that meaning, and develop a new formula-specific pragmatic property. This pragmatic property is conventionalized and will mean the same thing for all speakers of that speech community. If, for example, native speakers are asked what they think the meaning of 'welcome aboard' or 'piece of cake' is, most of them will not think of a "ship" or a "cake" which are supposed to be the primary reference of those phrases.[10] What enters their mind first is the meaning modified by the formula-specific pragmatic property of those formulaic expressions. (This fact will be especially important below, in section 4.1, when the 'graded salience hypothesis' is discussed.)

According to their specific pragmatic extensions the following types of SBUs can be distinguished: plain SBUs (section 2.3.1), charged SBUs (section 2.3.2) and loaded SBUs (section 2.3.3).

2.3.1. Plain SBUs

These SBUs usually have a compositional structure and are semantically transparent. Their communicative meaning may only differ slightly from their semantic meaning, since their pragmatic extension is minimal if any. For instance:

- *What can I do for you?*
- I need a book of stamps.
- Jim, is that you?
- Oh, hi Bill. *It's so good to see you.*

2.3.2. Charged SBUs

An SBU may exhibit pragmatic ambiguity, in the sense that its basic semantic function is extended pragmatically to cover other referents or meanings (Sweetser 1990: 1). It is the situation that is responsible for the charge of these expressions.

---

[10] In a survey conducted with 34 native speakers of English at the University of Montana students were given a list of ten words and phrases out of context. The list contained items such as 'cool', 'piece of cake', 'welcome aboard', 'gay', etc. Students were asked to use the given words and phrases in a sentence that comes first into their mind when they see the given item. Out of 34 respondents 27 used 'piece of cake' in the meaning 'easy', and 30 of them used 'welcome aboard' in the meaning 'cordial greeting to a new member/members of a group'.

With no context, these phrases are ambiguous because there is nothing that can distinguish them from their freely generated counterparts. For instance, the expression below can have more than one situational meaning depending on the context it is used in:

'*get out of here*':
(A) Go away, leave
(B) Don't fool me, don't put me on

When this expression is used in a context, the situation makes clear which function it is used in:

(A) – *Get out of here*. I don't want to see you any more.
(B) – John, I think you really deserved that money.
      – Oh, *get out of here*.

2.3.3. Loaded SBUs

Very frequently used SBUs, such as greetings, closings, apologies, and other rituals become delexicalized relatively easily. They lose their compositionality and are no longer transparent semantically. These SBUs show polysemy rather than pragmatic ambiguity.[11] Their pragmatic function is more important than their original literal meaning, which is difficult to recall if needed. Loaded SBUs have formula-specific pragmatic properties which are present even if no particular sub-event of a script is supplied. These SBUs are 'loaded' with their relatively new function, which remains there and is no longer dependent only on the situation, because it is encoded in the expression as a whole. The SBUs in question are pragmatic idioms whose occurrence is very strongly tied to conventional, frequently repeated situations. We think of a particular situation if we hear the following expressions, even outside their routine context: 'Welcome aboard', 'Please help yourself', 'Howdy', etc.

3. The creative aspect of language use

3.1. Sentence versus discourse level creativity

The increasing frequency with which SBUs occur calls for the review of the claim that language has to be seen as a formulaic-creative continuum (Bolinger, 1976; Wood, 1991); Pawley and Syder, 1983; Langacker, 1987; Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992). The formulaic-creative dichotomy makes sense at sentence level, but it loses its significance at discourse level: sentence production is not the same as language production (Bahns et al., 1986; Rescorla and Okuda, 1987; Nuyts, 1992). The discourse level requires a more complex understanding of creativity regarded as an

---

[11] Polysemy is understood here as in Sweetser (1990: 1): the synchronic linking of multiple related senses to a single form.

interplay of grammatical rules, functional adequacy, situational appropriateness, stylistic preference, and norms of use (Coulmas, 1981a). Language is obviously organized both on the discourse and sentence levels, with no opposition in evidence.

Creativity was crucial in Chomsky's conception of what a linguistic theory should be able to explain. His original understanding of creativity was quite narrow: "... the grammar of a language must, for empirical adequacy, allow for infinite use of finite means, and we assigned this recursive property to the syntactic component" (Chomsky, 1972: 155). Nuyts (1992) argued that this quantitative concept of creativity is based on recursivity, defined as the possibility to expand a syntactic structure by repeating a structural element in its own internal pattern.[12] Real creativity in linguistic behavior, however, means much more than that. Language use does not stop at sentence level. When language is used for communication or for other purposes, it usually works with units qualitatively and quantitatively more complex than sentences: texts which cannot be defined by linguistic means only. Creativity in the production of these higher level units can be regarded as an interplay of grammatical rules, functional adequacy, situational appropriateness, stylistic preference, and norms of use (Coulmas, 1981a: 6). Chomsky (1974) acknowledged the existence of two types of creativity: one which is called 'mathematical' or 'formal' (the recursive property of grammars), and the other which he calls the 'creative aspect of language use'. By stating, however, that "the creative use of language should be none of the business for a mechanism which does not say how language is used" (Nuyts, 1992: 110), Chomsky referred creativity to the mysteries of performance.[13] For him, textual creativity is not part of linguistic competence in the narrow sense: "the recursive property of generative grammars provides the means for the creative aspect of language use, but it is a gross error to confuse the two, as some linguists do" (Chomsky, 1974: 28).

From a generativist perspective, creativity is rule-governed. Chomsky (1974: 29) argued that "creativity ... presupposes a framework of rules", and that "if all constraints are abandoned, there can be no creative acts" (cited by Nuyts, 1992: 111–112). When Chomsky speaks about this rule-governed creativity, he has syntactic creativity in mind. But human beings can be extremely creative in a rule-changing, rule-breaking manner: this is the essence of much of literary creativity and discourse creativity. Nuyts acknowledges that there is a need for creativity to follow a certain order, since otherwise it would not be comprehensible (1992: 112). But at the same time he argues that creative language use is the optimal exploitation of the structural possibilities available to reach all kinds of goals in as efficient a way as possible (1992: 111).

---

[12] Nuyts (1992: 110) notes that Chomsky (1974) denied ever having had the intention to relate creativity and recursivity. But in the quote from Chomsky (1972: 155) in Nuyts (1992), the suggestion for this correlation seems rather strong.

[13] "When we ask how humans make use of these cognitive structures, how and why they make choices and behave as they do, although there is much that we can say as human beings with intuition and insight, there is little, I believe, that we can say as scientists. What I have called elsewhere 'the creative aspect of language use' remains [...] a mystery to us." (Chomsky, 1975: 138)

This approach to creativity bridges the gap between structural well-formedness and communicative appropriateness, both of which are needed in the use of formulaic expressions. No appropriate use of SBUs is possible without the ability to communicate in a socially acceptable manner and/or to produce a coherent and cohesive text. But this creativity is governed by pragmatic rather than syntactic rules. Fixed expressions are already formed. Creativity is needed to use an appropriate utterance in a given situation, and integrate it with other utterances (generated or fixed) into a text or conversation, both of which are higher level units of language than sentences. This creativity means the ability to create coherent and cohesive text from sentences/utterances according to the requirements of situation and context. The truly creative faculty is located on the level of the production of ideas (Bouveresse, 1974). The creative-formulaic dichotomy loses its significance in discourse because any kind of 'putting together' is a creative activity.

Constraints on creativity can only be formulated if the functional dimension is taken into account. Speakers producing a text always have to evaluate, select, and 'put together'; the differences between the sentence and discourse level are only in the nature of creativity. To generate a sentence from words requires mainly grammatical and semantic creativity. Development of a text or conversation needs a qualitatively different, more complex type of creativity with its grammatical, logical and socio-cultural aspects. In language use, these aspects are all present at any given time, but not to the same extent. The grammatical and logical aspects have several objective constraints, while the socio-cultural aspect is more arbitrary and contains more subjective and individual elements. Even when we use the most routinized expression, we must make a choice in which the socio-cultural aspect of creativity dominates.

3.2. Do routines evolve into creative language?

In order to learn more about the nature and use of SBUs it is essential to review what second and foreign language research has to say about the issue.[14] Although changing speaker behavior and growing interest in formulaic speech have had some impact on second language research, the view of SLA as a product of rule formation still prevails (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Weinert, 1995). Until now, most of the discussions on routine formulae have focused on their role in the acquisition of syntax: researchers have asked how learners go about analyzing those strings they pick up and memorize as wholes (Bahns et al., 1986). But the acquisition of an L2 is much more than just the development of a new system of signs, and interlanguage development can be understood only through a cognitive-pragmatic approach that

---

[14]   There is considerable difference between a 'second language' and a 'foreign language' although these terms are usually interchangeable in the relevant literature. The most important difference is the environment and the linguistic background of the learners (cf. Hammerly, 1991; Kecskés and Papp, forthcoming). In the SL environment the target language is the L1 of the community and SL students speak a variety of languages as their L1. In the FL environment the target language is remote and language learners usually speak the same L1. When 'L2' is used in this paper it refers to both SL and FL wherever the distinction between them is not of primary importance.

focuses on the function of utterances in language use, rather than on their structure.

There are two approaches to the role of formulaic expressions in L2 development. It has been suggested (in L1 as well as L2 research) that formulaic speech is the basis for creative speech (as understood by generative grammarians). Several researchers (L. Fillmore, 1976; Pawley and Syder, 1983; Bygate, 1988) believe that second languages are acquired through a process by which learners acquire unanalyzed 'chunks' of language (such as Bygate's 'satellite units' or Pawley and Syder's 'sentence stems') as formulae. Over time, one learns to break these down into their constituent elements and combine them with other constituents in a variety of rule-bound ways. Bygate (1988) argued against the notion that one moves from syntax to discourse. In fact, he demonstrated that a great deal of interactional talk consists not of complex grammatical structures, but of what he calls 'satellite units'. Satellite units are moodless utterances which lack a finite verb or verb group. They can consist of any dependent syntactic element, including nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, as well as verb groups, prepositional phrases, pronouns and subordinate clauses. An example from Bygate's data:

Prepositional phrase:
S12: *At the door.*
S11: Yes *in the same door* I think.
S12: *Behind the man who is leaving.*
S11: *Behind him.*

In contrast, Bohn (1986) argued that formulaic language plays only a minor role in L2 acquisition; formulae in his data reflect the learners' current stage of morphosyntactic complexity, and do not interact with syntactic development. Weinert (1995) also noted that basically there is no direct evidence to prove that chunks are related directly to subsequent target-like performance. Krashen and Scarcella (1978) arrived at a similar conclusion, but for a different reason. They believe that memorized utterances and creative speech are produced in ways that are neurologically different and that, therefore, there can be no interface between them. They distinguish between 'routines' and 'patterns', to refer respectively to whole utterances learned as memorized chunks (e.g. 'Nice to see you'; 'Have a good day') and to utterances that are only partially unanalyzed and have one or more open slots (e.g. 'Can I have a …?; 'Would you like to …?').

Syntactic development and pragmatic development do not go hand in hand in the acquisition of an L2. Especially in a foreign language environment, syntactic development usually precedes pragmatic development. Bahns et al. (1986: 720) reported that "the increase of L2 knowledge seems to lead away from target-oriented verbal behavior to a phase of creative but sometimes pragmatically inadequate verbalizations". L2 learners tend to handle most fixed expressions as just another syntactic unit: they split them into parts and often come up with their own 'creations'. Pawley and Syder (1983) pointed out that L2 learners often assume that an element in an expression may be varied according to a phrase structure or transformational rule of some generality, when in fact no variation (or maybe, some very restricted one) is

allowed in native-like usage. This assumption of adult L2 learners, however, depends on the type of fixed expressions and the semantic transparency of the expression. With respect to the acquisition process, a dividing line has to be drawn between patterns, prefabricated chunks (Bygate's 'satellite units', Pawley and Syder's 'sentence stems', Nattinger and DeCarrico's 'lexical phrases') on the one hand, and 'routine formulase' (Coulmas, 1979; 1981a), 'situational utterances' (Kiefer, 1995) and 'situation-bound utterances' (Kecskés, 1997) on the other. When broken down by the learner into their constituents, patterns may support the development of syntactic rules (although this has never been proven); in doing so, learners augment their interlanguage system (Ellis, 1985). This can occur because these memorized chunks have a compositional structure and most of them are semantically transparent:

What's this?; Can I have ......?
There is no ....; I wanna ..; I don't know; etc.

Language learners can figure out how these chunks are put together from words. However, this is not the case with situation-bound utterances, which are pragmatic rather than syntactic units. These can hardly support the development of grammatical competence in second language acquisition, because their function is usually different from what they say. They are like idioms but their use is situationally tied, which is not the case with idioms. If broken down into constituents, they could do more harm than good to L2 learners because their functional meaning can hardly be figured out from the elements they contain. Even in the case of 'plain' SBUs, there is usually at least a slight difference between 'what is said' and 'what is communicated'. Consequently, SBUs can hardly take part in the development of grammatical competence in L2.

4. SBUs in L2 production and comprehension

It has been argued that L2 learners of high grammatical proficiency will not necessarily show concomitant pragmatic skills. Bardovi-Harlig (1996) observed that the range of success among students with a high level of grammatical proficiency is quite wide. When acquiring a non-primary language, students have to learn not only the forms of that particular language, but also the conceptual structures associated with those forms. Not having full access to the 'conventionalized conceptualizations' (Taylor, 1993: 212) of the target language, adult second and foreign language learners usually rely on the conceptual base of their mother tongue. They map target language forms on L1 conceptualizations, which often results not only in lexical, but pragmatic failures as well (cf. Danesi, 1992; Kecskés, 1995). When an L2 starts to be acquired, the learner already has a conceptual system which is based on the L1 (Cummins, 1979, 1984). This conceptual system is responsible for cognitive mechanisms that govern the development and use of pragmatic units. In the L1, the development of fixed expressions is tied to general cognitive development. Bates (1976:

292) argued that children acquire a number of performative or pragmatic idioms "without having the flexible, conscious control over form-function relations". Adult L2 learners also pick up a number of ready-made units before they can synthesize expressions of corresponding complexity. There is, however, a crucial difference between L1 learners and L2 learners in this respect. In the L1, a sense of situational appropriateness of a given formula precedes its understanding (Bates, 1976). L1 learners supported by their socio-cultural background knowledge are usually aware of the pragmatic aspects of the use of those formulae; however, this is generally not the case with L2 learners. Living usually outside the target language community, or having spent there only a limited time, these adult second and foreign language learners have no opportunity to gradually develop SBUs as native speakers do. As a consequence, they usually lack a considerable part of the socio-cultural background knowledge which is needed for the correct interpretation of pragmatically loaded formulaic expressions.

4.1. The graded salience hypothesis

Since SBUs are pragmatic units whose literal meaning often differs from their communicative function, it is relevant to discuss the use of these units within the framework of contemporary theories of understanding figurative and literal language (e.g. Gibbs, 1984; Keysar, 1989; Blasko and Connine, 1993; Giora, 1997). A review of recent research on this issue reveals that figurative language does not involve processing the surface literal meaning, since figurative and literal language use are governed by a general principle of salience. The salient meaning (which can be either literal or figurative) is processed first, because it is conventional, frequent, familiar, and usually enhanced by prior context. The 'graded salience hypothesis' (cf. Giora, 1997) claims that different linguistic expressions (salient vs. less salient) may tap different (direct/parallel/sequential) processes. When, for instance, the most salient meaning is intended (as in, e.g., the figurative meaning of conventional idioms, or the special communicative function of SBUs), it is accessed directly, without the less salient (literal) meaning having to be processed first (Gibbs, 1980). However, when a less, rather than a more salient meaning is intended (e.g. the metaphorical meaning of novel metaphors, the literal meaning of conventional idioms, a novel interpretation of a highly conventional literal expression, or the literal meaning of a conventional SBU), comprehension seems to involve a sequential process, in which the more salient meaning is processed initially, before the intended meaning is derived (Blasko and Connine, 1993; Gibbs, 1980; Gregory and Mergler, 1990). Parallel processing is induced when more than one meaning is salient. For instance, conventional metaphors whose metaphoric and literal meanings are equally salient, are processed initially both literally and metaphorically (Blasko and Connine, 1993). According to the graded salience hypothesis, the literal/metaphoric divide cannot account for ease of processing; therefore, the salient/non-salient continuum is suggested instead (Giora, 1997). This approach has serious bearings on how we interpret learner difficulties with idioms, formulaic implicatures, and SBUs in L2 production and comprehension because proper application of salience requires conceptual flu-

ency and metaphorical competence in the target language. In order for adult L2 learners to process salient meaning first, they should know what the conventional, frequent, and familiar meaning of an SBU is in a given situation. This is, however, something they do not always know because of their insufficient background knowledge and conceptual fluency in the target language.

4.2. Individual learner attitude

Research has demonstrated that not only linguistic and social variables play a decisive role in shaping discourse competence of adult L2 learners, but also subjective variables which may vary even within a group where speakers share the same L1. Giles (1980) and Beebe and Giles (1984) emphasized the importance of speakers' subjective feelings, values, and motives which play a crucial role in determining discourse behavior. This observation was supported by further research in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics (cf. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Cenoz and Valencia, 1996). L2 students seem to have more control over their pragmatic development than over their grammatical development. They frequently learn pragmatic units and develop pragmatic attitude by choice, which they usually cannot do when learning grammar. Beebe (1988: 45) argued that "learners actively choose to adopt (i.e. learn) only those target language varieties that appeal to them on affective grounds and to reject others to which they are sufficiently exposed". Although this observation is basically true for any L2 learner, we need to point out that the role of individual learner attitude is not the same in a second language environment as in a foreign language environment. Linguistic behavior of students with a high command of L2 (especially in a second language environment) appears to be dominated by their individual choice. Investigating the use of situation-bound utterances by adult learners of English as a second language, Kecskés (1999) found that individual learner attitude and preference play a decisive role in students' selection of SBUs in various speech situations. This coincides with Beebe's view that "second language learners may never attain native-like proficiency to the best of their ability because they may find that the reward of being fluent in the target language is not worth the cost in lost identification and solidarity with their own native language group" (Beebe, 1988: 63).

In a foreign language environment, however, it is not so much individual feelings but the learning process itself that makes students selective. Without direct exposure to the target culture, SBUs in a foreign language are rather learned than evolving (cf. Coulmas, 1979; Kecskés, 1997): they emerge as a result of special learning. Students are expected to learn not only the syntactic structure expressing a certain situational meaning, but also to be familiar with the conventional knowledge that goes with the use of that expression. Because language teaching is still sentence-driven, foreign language students usually learn the structure of SBUs with little target-like socio-cultural background. Repetition and frequent encounter with a phrase is crucial in language development. If learners want to develop a routine, they must several times experience the event which requires the formulaic expression. In the L1, the production of SBUs involves a high degree of automaticity. L2 learners, however,

use a much more conscious approach to conventional routines because those expressions are usually conventional only in the target language and not in their own L1. This conscious learning may lead to underuse, overuse or misuse of SBUs.[15]

5. Conclusion

SBUs are prefabricated pragmatic units with a strong tie to particular situations. They frequently behave like words. Their pragmatic-functional meaning is the result of cognitive mechanisms (metaphor and conventional knowledge) which link literal meanings to figurative meanings. Since SBUs are pragmatic idioms rather than syntactic units, their role in the acquisition of syntax appears to be minimal.

There are fundamental differences in the production and comprehension of SBUs between native speakers and adult L2 speakers. These differences can partly be explained by the graded salience hypothesis, which claims that understanding figurative language does not involve a special process, but is essentially identical to understanding literal language (Giora, 1997). Figurative and literal language use are governed by a general principle of salience which develops as a result of the interplay between language and cognitive development. Using the principle of salience, L1 speakers process functional meanings of SBUs directly without falling back on the literal meaning. Adult L2 speakers, however, can hardly ignore the literal meaning of SBUs and develop a proper understanding of salience in the L2 for several reasons:

– insufficient conceptual fluency and metaphorical competence in the L2;
– use of an L1-governed conceptual base to process L2;
– the principle of salience is language-specific and changes from language to language.

Danesi (1992) claimed that metaphorical competence is as important in second language production and comprehension as grammatical and communicative competence. The present study, as well as several others (cf. Radden, 1995; Kövecses and Szabó, 1996), have confirmed Danesi's claim. Findings indicate that the real difficulty of an adult L2 learner may not necessarily be in the acquisition of the syntax of the target language (as has been almost taken for granted in the relevant literature for decades), but in the development of conceptual fluency in the L2, which requires a serious adjustment to the existing L1 conceptual base that is the socio-cultural heritage of native speakers (Kecskés and Papp, forthcoming). According to the accounts of adult L2 learners at the intermediate and advanced level, their major concern is not syntax but the proper use of words and expressions (Meara, 1980: 221). Learners consider vocabulary errors the most serious of all error types (Politzer, 1978, as cited in Levenston, 1979: 147). Interference appears to be metaphoric rather than

---

[15]   Several authors address this problem from a different perspective. See, for example, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Beebe et al. (1990), Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996).

syntactic in nature, especially at a higher level of fluency. The syntax of a second language is learnable and teachable, but we can hardly say the same about the conceptual structure of an L2. At least, we do not know yet how to teach and/or learn it. One thing is for sure: we would need to develop methods other than we have been using to teach syntax. Before the appropriate methods can be developed, further research is needed to investigate and describe the figurative idiomatic structure of languages.

References

Arnaud, Pierre J.L. and Henri Bejoint, 1992. Vocabulary in applied linguistics. London: Macmillan.

Bahns, Jens, Hartmut Burmeister and Thomas Vogel, 1986. The pragmatics of formulas in L2 learner speech: Use and development. Journal of Pragmatics 10: 693–723.

Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen, 1996. Pragmatics and language teaching: Bringing pragmatics and pedagogy together. In: L. Bouton, Pragmatics and language learning, vol. 7: 21–41. Champaign: University of Illinois.

Bates, Elizabeth, 1976. Language and context: The acquisition of pragmatics. New York: Academic Press.

Beebe, Leslie, 1988. Issues in second language acquisition. New York: Newbury House.

Beebe, Leslie and Howard Giles, 1984. Speech accommodation theories: A discussion in terms of second language acquisition. International Journal of the Sociology of Language 46: 5–32.

Beebe, Leslie M., Takahashi Tomoho and R. Uliss-Weltz, 1990. Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In: R. Scarcella, E. Andersen and S.D. Krashen, eds., On the development of communicative competence in a second language, 55–73. New York: Hamburg House.

Blasko, George D. and Cynthia Connine, 1993. Effects of familiarity and aptness on metaphor processing. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition 19(2): 295–308.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, Juliane House and Gabriele Kasper, eds., 1989. Cross-cultural Pragmatics. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Bohn, Ocke-S., 1986. Formulas, frame structures, and stereotypes in early syntactic development: Some new evidence from L2 acquisition. Linguistics 24: 185–202.

Bolinger, Dwight, 1976. Meaning and memory. Forum Linguisticum 1: 1–14.

Bouton, Larry, 1994. Can NNS skill in interpreting implicatures in American English be improved through explicit instruction? In: L. Bouton and J. Kachru, Pragmatics and language learning, vol. 5, Champaign 88–110: University of Illinois.

Bouveresse, Jacques, 1974. On linguistic methodology. In: H. Parret, ed., Discussing language, 71–78. The Hague: Mouton.

Bygate, Martin, 1988. Units of oral expression and language learning in small group interaction. Applied Linguistics 9(1): 59–82.

Carter, Ron and Michael McCarthy, 1988. Vocabulary and language teaching. London: Longman.

Cenoz, Jasone and José Valencia, 1996. Cross-cultural communication and interlanguage pragmatics: American vs. European requests. In: L. Bouton, ed., Pragmatics and language learning, vol. 7: 41–55. Champaign: University of Illinois.

Chomsky, Noam, 1965. Aspects of the theory of syntax. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chomsky, Noam, 1972. Language and mind. New York: Harcourt.

Chomsky, Noam, 1974. Dialog with H. Parret. In: H. Parret, ed., Discussing language, 27–54. The Hague: Mouton.

Chomsky, Noam, 1975. The logical structure of linguistic theory. New York: Plenum Press.

Chomsky, Noam, 1980. Rules and representations. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chomsky, Noam, 1986. Knowledge of language: Its nature, origin and use. New York: Praeger.

Coulmas, Florian, 1979. On the sociolinguistic relevance of routine formulae. Journal of Pragmatics 3: 239–266.

Coulmas, Florian, ed., 1981a. Conversational routine: Explorations in standardized communicative situations and prepatterned speech. The Hague: Mouton.

Coulmas, Florian, 1981b. Routine im Gespräch: Zur pragmatischen Fundierung der Idiomatik. Wiesbaden: Athenaion.

Cruse, D.A., 1990. Prototype theory and lexical semantics. In: S.L. Tsohatzidis, ed., Meaning and proptotypes: Studies in linguistic categorization, 382–402. New York: Routledge.

Cruse, D.A., 1992. Antonymy revisited: Some thoughts on the relationship between words and concepts. In: A. Lehrer and E. Kittay, eds., Frames, fields and contrasts, Hillsdale, 289–309: Erlbaum.

Cummins, Jim, 1979. Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters. Working Papers on Bilingualism 19: 121–129.

Cummins, Jim, 1984. Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy. Clevedon: Multilingual matters.

Danesi, Marcel, 1992. Metaphorical competence in second language acquisition and second language teaching: The neglected dimension. In: J.E. Alatis, ed., Georgetown University round table on languages and linguistics, 489–500. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Ellis, Rod, 1985. Understanding second language acquisition. Oxford: OUP.

Fillmore, Charles J., 1976. The need for a frame semantics within linguistics. SMIL, Skriptor, Stockholm: 5–29.

Fillmore, Charles J., 1977. Scenes-and-frames semantics. In: A. Zampolli, ed., Linguistic structure processing, 55–81. Amsterdam: North Holland.

Fillmore, Charles J., 1979. On fluency. In: C.J. Fillmore, D. Kempler and W.S.-Y. Wang, eds., Individual differences in language ability and language behavior, 85–101. New York: Academic Press.

Fillmore, Lily W., 1976. The second time around: Cognitive and social strategies in second language learning. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Stanford University.

Fónagy, Iván, 1956. Über die Eigenart des sprachlichen Zeichens. Lingua 6: 67–88.

Fónagy, Iván, 1961a. Beszéd és valószinüség. (Speech and Probability.) Magyar Nyelvór 86: 309–320.

Fónagy, Iván, 1961b. Communication in poetry. Word 17: 194–212.

Fónagy, Ivan, 1982. Situation et signification: Pragmatics and beyond. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Genzel, R.B., 1991. Getting the hang of idioms and expressions. New York: Macmillan.

Gibbs, Raymond W. Jr., 1980. Spilling the beans on understanding and memory for idioms in conversation. Memory and Cognition 8: 449–456.

Gibbs, Raymond W. Jr., 1984. Literal meaning and psychological theory. Cognitive science 8: 575–604.

Giles, Howard, 1980. Accommodation theory: Some new directions. In: S. De Silva, ed., Aspects of language behavior, 129–140. York: York University Press.

Giora, Rachel, 1997. Understanding figurative and literal language: The graded salience hypothesis. Cognitive Linguistics 8(3): 183–206.

Gregory, M.E. and N.L. Mergler, 1990. Metaphor comprehension: In search of literal truth, possible sense and metaphoricity. Metaphor and Symbolic Activity 5(3): 151–173.

Grice, H. Paul, 1968. Studies in the way of words. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grice, H. Paul, 1975. Logic and conversation. In: P. Cole and J.L. Morgan, eds., Syntax and Semantics, vol. 3: Speech acts, 41–58. New York: Academic Press.

Hammerly, Hector, 1991. Fluency and accuracy. Clevedon: Multilingual matters.

Hartford, Beverly S. and Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig, 1996. At your earliest convenience: A study of written student requests to faculty. In: L.F. Bouton, Pragmatics and language learning, vol. 7, 55–71. Champaign: University of Illinois.

Horn, L.R., 1985. metalinguistic negation and pragmatic ambiguity. Language 61: 1, 121–174.

Irujo, Suzanne, 1993. Steering clear: Avoidance in the production of idioms. IRAL 31(3): 205–219.

Johnson, Mark, 1987. The body in the mind. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kasper, Gabriele and Shoshana Blum-Kulka, 1993. Interlanguage pragmatics. Oxford: OUP.

Kecskés, István, 1995. Concept formation of Japanese ESL/EFL students. In: Second Language Research in Japan, Vol. 6, 130–149. Tokyo: IUJ.

Kecskés, István, 1997. A cognitive-pragmatic approach to situation-bound utterances. Paper presented to the Chicago linguistics society, March 7, 1997.

Kecskés, István, 1999. Situation-bound utterances from an interlanguage perspective. In: Jef Verschueren, ed., Pragmatics in 1998: Selected papers from the 6th International Pragmatics Conference, vol. 2, 299–310. Antwerp: IPrA.

Kecskés, István and Papp, Tünde, forthcoming. Foreign language and mother tongue. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Kellerman, Eric, 1984. The empirical evidence for the influence of the L1 in interlanguage. In: A. Davies, C. Croper and A. Howatt, eds., Interlanguage, 98–122. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Keysar, B., 1989. On the functional equivalence of literal and metaphorical interpretations in discourse. Journal of Memory and Language 28: 375–385.

Kiefer, Ferenc, 1985. How to account for situational meaning? Quaderni di semantica. 2/85. 288–295.

Kiefer, Ferenc, 1995. Situational utterances. Keynote presented to the semantics and pragmatics conference at Brighton.

Kiefer, Ferenc, 1996. Bound utterances. Language sciences. 18(1–2): 575–587.

Kövecses, Zoltan and Peter Szabó, 1996. Idioms: a View from cognitive semantics. Applied linguistics. Vol. 17. No. 3: 326–355.

Krashen, Stephen and Robin Scarcella, 1978. On routines and patterns in language acquisition and performance. Language Learning. 28: 283–300.

Lakoff, George, 1987. Women, fire and dangerous things. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson, 1980. Metaphors we live by. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Larsen-Freeman, Diane and Michael Long, 1991. An introduction to second language acquisition research. New York: Longman.

Levenston, E., 1979. Second language acquisition: Issues and problems. Interlanguage studies bulletin, 4: 147–160.

Meara, Paul, 1980. Vocabulary acquisition: neglected aspect of language learning. Language teaching and linguistics: Abstracts, 13: 221–242.

Mey, Jacob, L., 1993. Pragmatics. London: Blackwell.

Miller, James and Regina Weinert, 1998. Spontaneous spoken language. Syntax and discourse. Oxford: OUP.

Moon, Rosamund, 1992. Textual aspects of fixed expressions in learners' dictionary. In: Arnaud, P.J.L. and H. Bejoint (eds.), Vocabulary and applied linguistics. London: Macmillan.

Nattinger, James R. and Jeanette S. DeCarrico, 1992. Lexical phrases and language teaching. Oxford: OUP.

Nuyts, Jan, 1992. Aspects of a cognitive-pragmatic theory of language. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Pawley, Andrew and Syder, Frances H., 1983. Two puzzles for linguistic theory: Nativelike selection and nativelike fluency. In: Richards, J.C. and Schmidt, R.W. (eds.), Language and communication. London: Longman, 191–226.

Politzer, Robert, 1978. Errors of English speakers of German as perceived and evaluated by German natives. Modern Language Journal, 62: 253–261.

Radden, Gerhardt, 1995. Motivation metaphorized: The case of coming and going. In: B. Korponay and P. Pelyvas (eds.), Studies in Linguistics III. Debrecen: Kossuth University.

Raupach, Manfred, 1984. Formulae in second language speech production. In: H.W. Dechert, D. Mohle, and M. Raupach (eds.), Second language productions. Tubingen: Narr. 114–137.

Searle, John, 1975. Indirect speech acts. In: P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.), Syntax and Semantics. Vol. 3. Speech acts. new york: Academic Press.

Sinclair, John, 1991. Corpus Concordance Collocation. Oxford: OUP.

Sweetser, Eve, 1990. From etymology to pragmatics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Van Dijk, Teun A., 1980. Macrostructures. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Verstraten, Linda, 1992. Fixed phrases in monolingual learners' dictionaries. In: Arnaud, P.J.L. and H. Bejoint (eds.), Vocabulary and applied linguistics. London: Macmillan.

Vihman, Marilyn M., 1982. Formulas in first and second language acquisition. In: Obler, L.K. and L.Menn (eds.), Exceptional language and linguistics. New York/London: Academic Press.

Weinert, Regina, 1995. The role of formulaic language in second language acquisition: A review. Applied linguistics. Vol. 16. No. 2: 180–205.

Wierzbicka, Anna, 1992. Semantics, Culture, and Cognition. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wierzbicka, Anna, 1994. Cultural scripts: A semantic approach to cultural analysis and cross-cultural communication. In: L. Bouton and J. Kachru, Pragmatics and language learning, vol. 5, 1–25. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois.

Willis, Dave, 1990. The lexical syllabus. London: Harper/Collins.

Winner, Ellen. 1982. Invented worlds: The psychology of the arts. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wood, Michael, 1991. A definition of idiom. Manchester: Centre for Computational Linguistics.

Wray, Alison, 1998. Formulae in L1, L2, adult native speakers and aphasics: Are they all the same thing? Paper presented at the 6th International Pragmatics Conference in Reims, France.

Yorio, Carlos, 1980. Conventionalized forms and the development of communicative competence. TESOL Quarterly XIV(4): 433–442.

Istvan Kecskes is Professor of Linguistics at the State University of New York, Albany where he teaches pragmatics, second language acquisition, and bilingualism. His research interests include the effect of foreign language learning on the development of mother tongue skills, transfer in multilinguals and also the development and use of situation-bound utterances in first and second language acquisition. His forthcoming book (co-author: Tünde Papp), to be published by Lawrence Erlbaum, is titled *Foreign language and mother tongue*.