Language on the international scene, accept that as the goal of *Whose Language? What Power?*, and if they accept the narrator's right to deliver that study from a very personal viewpoint, then they should not be disappointed. If they come to the book expecting a description of how South African teachers are prepared to teach English as a Second Language or a description of how ESL instruction takes place in South Africa, they will be disappointed.

Overall, it is an oddly disjointed book. Its main weakness is that it tells us more than we want to know about Smith's reaction to what he perceives as rejection and less than we would like to know about the field of applied linguistics in South Africa. It cannot be a bad thing to get some personal insights into the international ESL scene through the eyes of one of the most influential literacy researchers writing today, but the complexly intertwined social and pedagogical scenes in South Africa deserve something more comprehensive and less personal.

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EVE V. CLARK: *The Lexicon in Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.

This book sets out to show that when children acquire the lexicon of their first language, this acquisition involves the application of principles of processing. These principles are powerful enough to apply across different languages and language types, but are affected by the nature of the first language.

Chapter 2 looks at the very early stages of vocabulary development with data about rate of acquisition, early semantic fields, word meaning, and word structure. Chapter 3, on how children map meanings onto forms, argues that children are working with assumptions that guide the mapping. For example, one assumption that children seem to make is that speakers use words to pick out whole objects or actions, not just parts. Another is that speakers use words to denote types. These early assumptions change as children's knowledge of the

language develops. The first chapters have the same purpose as those that follow, to make sense of the considerable data on first language lexical acquisition by showing that the data is the result of principles that children apply regardless of their particular first language.

The book gets to the roots of the development of word formation and innovation in a first language. It draws on a great breadth of research and interprets it to show what really matters in lexical acquisition. It rigorously and even-handedly weighs up the pros and cons for explanatory positions. It points out inadequacies in research and gently and positively suggests research directions.

Chapters 4 to 7 describe the principles—contrast and conventionality, and transparency, simplicity, and productivity. In Chapters 8 to 12, the principles of transparency, simplicity, and productivity are put to the test by matching the predictions made from these principles against a variety of data from English, and Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages, as well as Hungarian and Hebrew. The book is thus tightly organized with a largely predictable organization, and this is both the strength and weakness of the book.

Its strength comes from the thoroughness with which the principles are tested. The data consists of words created by children when they wish to talk about things, agents and instruments, and actions for which they do not have an existing word (coinages). Coinages like:

to gun (to shoot)
to fire (to light [a candle])
sky-car (airplane)
cup-egg (boiled egg)
drummist
Mommy nippled Anna (nursed Anna)
You axed the wood
I'm souping (eating soup)

while showing the creativity and ingenuity that an individual child brings to using and acquiring the first language, also reflect the application of pervasive principles.

The data comes from diary observations and vocabulary records, and from elicitation experiments.

In an elicitation study, a child is asked a question like:

What would you call a girl who pulls wagons?

Typically the answers show that children move through stages in the forms they produce, from 'pull-wagon' to 'puller-wagon' to 'wagon-puller'. Data from an elicitation study is subject to the criticism that it may be the nature of the elicitation procedure that is determining the forms. Clark is careful to make sure that wherever possible, predictions are checked against evidence from both diary studies and elicitation studies. Diary studies may be criticized for the selection that must go on regarding which data to record. However, combining

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diary and elicitation studies allows these possible weaknesses to be countered. Where the data from the different types of studies agree, as they often do, then the researcher is in a strong position to present a case.

One openly acknowledged difficulty is that the data is gathered by a wide variety of researchers using widely differing methodologies and with differing degrees of systematicity. Each section in each chapter, however, describes the source and nature of the data so that some judgement can be made on its merits. The data is triangulated with data from other sources, and thus any poorly gathered data will not bias the analysis.

Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 12 have the same goal as Chapter 8, to test the principles, but on different kinds of words. Unavoidably, these chapters, then, do not carry the same excitement with them that the earlier chapters did.

The basic argument of most of the book is that the three principles of transparency of meaning, simplicity of form, and productivity in adult speech determine the ways in which children learn word building. Applying the transparency of meaning principle means using familiar roots and elements to build new words. The simplicity of form principle involves making 'as few changes as possible in the building blocks for new words' (p. 243). Following productivity in adult speech means that 'where there are several possible forms, choose the options preferred in the speech community' (p. 243). These definitions are not without their problems. Defining productivity has proved difficult for morphologists, and deciding on degree of simplicity of form involves judgements about the relative effect of various changes to roots and affixes.

Often the principles coincide in their application, with, for example, transparency, simplicity, and productivity occurring in the formation of verbs from nouns by zero derivation, 'Water the dirt off my stick!'. Transparency and simplicity together often determine what is initially used, particularly if the most productive form is complex and has not yet been analysed by young children. Once it is analysed, for example into stem and suffix, it can then enter the productivity equation.

The book is an impressive work of scholarship and analysis, and draws strongly on the writer's continued involvement in the field. It represents an important step in our understanding of the process of first language acquisition. It draws on a lot of previous research and will inspire a lot more.

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