

## **Introducing Psycholinguistics**

How humans produce and understand language is clearly introduced in this textbook for students with only a basic knowledge of linguistics. With a logical, flexible structure *Introducing Psycholinguistics* steps through the central topics of production and comprehension of language and the interaction between them.

- Students will gain an understanding of the processes and representations involved in language use, aided by a comprehensive glossary, concepts defined in the margins and online flashcards that allow students to check their understanding of all the key terms and concepts of the subject.
- Examples and exercises throughout each topic reinforce understanding and encourage students to consider what language users might carry around in their heads as part of their linguistic knowledge, and how this stored knowledge relates to the structures and rules proposed by theoretical linguistics.
- Students will gain hands-on experience of experimental methods, with online demonstrations of techniques. This supports the theory within the book, reinforces a student's grasp of the concepts and allows the student to apply their understanding to the analysis of data.

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PAUL WARREN

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# Contents

<i>Figures</i>	ix
<i>Tables</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<b>1 Introduction</b>	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 What is psycholinguistics?	4
1.3 Who does psycholinguistics?	6
1.4 How do psycholinguists do psycholinguistics?	6
Summary	10
Exercises	11
Further reading	12
<b>2 Planning utterances</b>	13
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 A sketch of the production process	15
2.3 Conceptualisation and planning	17
2.4 Cycles of planning	20
2.5 Formulation	23
2.6 Sentence complexity	27
2.7 Syntax and speech	29
Summary	34
Exercises	34
Further reading	35
<b>3 Finding words</b>	37
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Pausing and predictability	40
3.3 Speech errors and lexical selection	41
3.4 Getting the order wrong	48
3.5 Association norms	49
Summary	50
Exercises	51
Further reading	52
<b>4 Building words</b>	53
4.1 Introduction	54
4.2 Tip-of-the-tongue	55
4.3 Speech errors and morphological structure	56
4.4 Speech errors and phonological encoding	62
4.5 Tongue twisters	67
Summary	68

Exercises	68
Further reading	69
<b>5 Monitoring and repair</b>	71
5.1 Introduction	72
5.2 Self-monitoring	72
5.3 Induced errors	73
5.4 Repair	75
5.5 Editor theories	79
5.6 Speakers helping listeners	80
Summary	81
Exercises	82
Further reading	83
<b>6 The use of gesture</b>	85
6.1 Introduction	86
6.2 Gestures as content	86
6.3 Gesturing for discourse management	90
6.4 Gestures for emphasis	91
6.5 Gestures, conceptualisation and lexicalisation	92
6.6 Who do we gesture for?	94
Summary	96
Exercises	96
Further reading	97
<b>7 Perception for language</b>	99
7.1 Introduction	100
7.2 Basic issues in perception for language	100
7.3 Basic issues in speech perception	105
7.4 Basic issues in visual perception for language	109
7.5 Influence of the linguistic system on perception	113
Summary	115
Exercises	116
Further reading	117
<b>8 Spoken word recognition</b>	119
8.1 Introduction	120
8.2 What are words?	120
8.3 Pre-lexical analysis	121
8.4 Contact and activation	126
8.5 Selection	128
8.6 Lexical access	130
8.7 Recognition and context effects	130
8.8 Frequency, competition and neighbourhoods	132
8.9 Recognising morphologically complex forms	135
Summary	137
Exercises	138
Further reading	138

<b>9</b>	<b>Visual word recognition</b>	139
9.1	Introduction	140
9.2	Factors affecting visual word recognition	140
9.3	Models of visual word recognition	144
9.4	Routes to read by	147
9.5	Dyslexia	152
	Summary	155
	Exercises	156
	Further reading	156
<b>10</b>	<b>Syntactic sentence processing</b>	157
10.1	Introduction	158
10.2	Complexity and sentence processing	158
10.3	The clausal hypothesis	160
10.4	Explicit syntactic markers	163
10.5	Strategies for syntactic processing	164
10.6	Garden paths and the sausage machine	165
10.7	Syntactic category ambiguity	170
10.8	Cross-linguistic evidence for processing strategies	171
	Summary	174
	Exercises	174
	Further reading	175
<b>11</b>	<b>Interpreting sentences</b>	177
11.1	Introduction	178
11.2	Meaning and sentence processing	178
11.3	Syntax first	180
11.4	Presuppositions, plausibility and parsing	182
11.5	Lexical preferences	184
11.6	Prosody and parsing	189
11.7	Constraint-based accounts	192
11.8	Hybrid accounts	194
11.9	Good-enough processing	195
	Summary	196
	Exercises	197
	Further reading	198
<b>12</b>	<b>Making connections</b>	199
12.1	Introduction	200
12.2	Mental model building	200
12.3	Inferences	202
12.4	Anaphora	203
12.5	Given and new	206
12.6	Fillers and gaps	208
	Summary	214
	Exercises	215
	Further reading	216

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<b>13</b>	<b>Architecture of the language processing system</b>	217
13.1	Introduction	218
13.2	Modularity within language processing	218
13.3	The relationship of production and comprehension	223
13.4	The relationship of visual and spoken language	226
13.5	Language and other processing systems	228
13.6	Language and the brain	231
	Summary	233
	Exercises	233
	Further reading	234
	<i>Glossary</i>	235
	<i>References</i>	255
	<i>Index</i>	269



# Figures

- Figure 1.1** Thank goodness our young ones are not breaking the speed limit.
- Figure 1.2** An outline sketch of language use.
- Figure 1.3** Schematic representation of differences in brain activity during different tasks.
- Figure 2.1** Processes and knowledge types involved in language production.
- Figure 2.2** Left hemisphere brain areas involved in syntactic encoding and conceptual planning.
- Figure 2.3** The cat hunted the mouse.
- Figure 2.4** Speech waveform and text annotation of '... space and ...'
- Figure 2.5** Example of hesitant and fluent phases of speech.
- Figure 2.6** The components of the formulation process.
- Figure 3.1** A two-stage model of lexicalisation.
- Figure 3.2** Left hemisphere brain areas involved in aspects of word production.
- Figure 3.3** Activation flow to an associate lemma in substitution errors.
- Figure 3.4** Activation flow to a phonetically similar form in malapropisms.
- Figure 4.1** A wug, as used in the wug test. Reproduced with the kind permission of Jean Berko Gleason.
- Figure 5.1** An example of a node network as used in experiments collecting repair data.
- Figure 5.2** The anatomy of a repair.
- Figure 7.1** Variability in the input.
- Figure 7.2** Spectrogram for the utterance *Pete is keen to lead the team*.
- Figure 7.3** Four /i/ sounds from the utterance in Figure 7.2.
- Figure 7.4** Compensation for coarticulation.
- Figure 7.5** Eye movements during silent reading.
- Figure 7.6** Smooth and categorical response functions.
- Figure 8.1** Changing activation levels of word entries as more of a word is heard.
- Figure 8.2** Modification of Figure 8.1 to account for frequency differences between words.
- Figure 9.1** Representation of logogens as containers.
- Figure 9.2** Forster's bin or search model of word recognition.
- Figure 9.3** Partial sketch of an Interactive Activation model of word recognition.
- Figure 9.4** The grapheme–phoneme route in reading.
- Figure 9.5** Lexical access through whole-word pronunciation.
- Figure 9.6** A dual-route model of reading.

- Figure 9.7** Whole form vs letter-by-letter word identification.  
**Figure 9.8** A sketch of reading aloud, based on dual-route models.  
**Figure 13.1** Two possible views of the relationship between the production and comprehension of spoken words.  
**Figure 13.2** A model of three repetition routes for getting from spoken input to spoken output.  
**Figure 13.3** Possible architecture of the lexical system for both spoken and visual input and output processing.  
**Figure 13.4** Single referent condition.  
**Figure 13.5** Double referent condition.  
**Figure 13.6** Timing of activation of left hemisphere brain areas during word production.  
**Figure 13.7** Two configurations of four objects.

# Tables

- Table 1.1** Approximate timing of components involved in picture naming.
- Table 3.1** Types of word errors.
- Table 3.2** Most popular association responses to a selection of target words.
- Table 3.3** Association responses given to two target words.
- Table 4.1** Types of sound errors.
- Table 5.1** Examples of different kinds of editing expressions and their suggested functions.
- Table 6.1** Examples of symbolic gestures.
- Table 8.1** Consonant and vowel phonemes of New Zealand English.
- Table 9.1** Some word types based on regularity and consistency of the relationship of spelling and pronunciation of the word body.

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# Preface

This book introduces key issues in the production and comprehension of spoken and written language. Its focus is on how adult native speakers carry out the everyday but complex tasks involved in generating an utterance from an idea or in deriving a meaning from a sentence.

Using data from observation, from experiments, and more recently from brain imaging, the field of psycholinguistics has contributed significantly to our understanding of the uniquely human ability to communicate through language. *Introducing Psycholinguistics* summarises key findings from the field, such as the fascinating study of spontaneous speech errors and misperceptions, and carefully controlled experimental investigations of the details of how we produce and understand language.

*Introducing Psycholinguistics* is written by a linguist primarily for students of linguistics. The book therefore assumes no prior familiarity with psychology. Although readers would find a basic understanding of linguistic concepts helpful, explanations of key linguistic terminology are provided. As a consequence, this text is also a useful introduction for students of psychology with an interest in language processing.

The book is arranged in two main clusters of chapters. Chapters 2 to 5 cover aspects of language production, starting with the speaker's (or writer's) intention, moving through the stages of sentence planning and word selection to the construction of words. The final chapter in this first cluster considers the monitoring and repair that speakers carry out of their own speech output. Chapters 7 to 12 deal with language perception and comprehension, starting with the perceptual skills relevant for language processing, before looking at word recognition, syntactic and other aspects of sentence analysis, as well as discourse processing. A bridge

between these two clusters of chapters is provided by Chapter 6, which discusses how the study of gesture can inform us about both production and comprehension. Chapter 13 brings together issues from earlier chapters, linking the study of the production and comprehension of spoken and written language in a discussion of how it all fits together.

The structure of the book allows some flexibility in how it can be used in the teaching of psycholinguistics. That is, in addition to the existing sequencing of chapters, the book could be used to support a course that starts by looking at issues in language perception and comprehension (using Chapters 7 to 12), before considering language production (Chapters 2 to 5). The choice of ordering may hinge on other aspects of a course, such as assessment, and on what material needs to be covered before assignment topics can be tackled.

Note that this book does not give extensive coverage to (first or second) language acquisition or to language breakdown. Instead, it focuses on normal adult language processing. What we know about normal language processing is of course informed by our knowledge of how infants become adult users of language and also by what we understand of impaired language use. But these are vast subject areas in their own right.

The chapters have a common structure. Each chapter opens with a preview summarising what the reader should expect to learn. This is followed by a list of key terms that will be introduced in the chapter. These and further key terms are also highlighted in **bold blue** text when they first occur. The most important key terms are explained in the glossary at the end of this book, and all key terms are explained in the fuller glossary on the accompanying website. The main text for each chapter consists of a short introduction and a

number of sections covering the subject matter of the chapter. A short summary then reviews the main points, and is followed by a set of exercises to reinforce the reader's learning, as well as a section indicating where to look for relevant further reading.

The chapters include many illustrative examples and figures, as well as sidebars that convey more detail than is in the main text. Sidebars with blue shading introduce technical terms or matters of notation, while those shaded in grey provide additional background information of interest.

The online glossary on the website for *Introducing Psycholinguistics* ([www.cambridge.org/paulwarren](http://www.cambridge.org/paulwarren)) provides definitions and examples for the key terms, and also includes functions that allow users to test their own understanding of the entries. The website also includes audio and video files illustrating ideas introduced in the text, solutions to some of the

exercises, and examples of some of the main experimental techniques used in psycholinguistics, as well as links to other useful resources. When the following symbols appear in the margin they indicate that at the time of publication links were available on the website to resources relevant to the material under discussion. Other resources will be added over time.



General web resource



Sound file



Video or image file



Demonstration



Solutions to problems