

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.

PAUL WARREN is an Associate Professor in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University of Wellington.

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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) 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