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Sommario/riassunto

Volume 1 of Approaches to Bootstrapping focuses on early word learning and syntactic development with special emphasis on the bootstrapping mechanisms by which the child using properties of the speech input enters the native linguistic system. Topics discussed in the area of lexical acquisition are: cues and mechanisms for isolating words in the input; special features of motherese and their role for early word learning; the determination of first word meanings; memory and related processing capacities in early word learning and understanding; and lexical representation and lexical access in early language production. The papers on syntactic development deal with the acquisition of grammatical prosodic features for learning language specific syntactic regularities. Volume 2 of Approaches to Bootstrapping focuses on the interaction between the development of prosodic and morphosyntactic knowledge as evidenced in the early speech of Dutch, English, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Danish, Icelandic, and Swedish children shedding new light on the relation between universal and language specific aspects of language acquisition. Another section of this volume deals with new approaches to language acquisition using ERP- techniques. The papers discuss in detail the relation between the development of language skills and changes in neurophysiological aspects of the brain. The potentials of these techniques for the development of new tools for an early diagnosis of children who are at risk for developmental language disorders are also pointed out. The closing section contains a synopsis of interactionist approaches to language acquisition, a discussion of the genetic and experiential origin of primitive linguistic elements in acquisition, and a discussion of structural and developmental aspects of bird song in comparison to human language. The two volumes making up Approaches to Bootstrapping present a state-of-the art interdisciplinary and cross-linguistic overview of recent developments in first language acquisition research.
