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Sommario/riassunto

The papers in this volume focus on the impact of information structure on language acquisition, thereby taking different linguistic approaches into account. They start from an empirical point of view, and examine data from natural first and second language acquisition, which cover a wide range of varieties, from early learner language to native speaker production and from gesture to Creole prototypes. The central theme is the interplay between principles of information structure and linguistic structure and its impact on the functioning and development of the learner's system. The papers examine language-internal explanatory factors and in particular the communicative and structural forces that push and shape the acquisition process, and its outcome. On the theoretical level, the approach adopted appeals both to formal and communicative constraints on a learner's language in use. Two empirical domains provide a 'testing ground' for the respective weight of grammatical versus functional determinants in the acquisition process: (1) the expression of finiteness and scope relations at the utterance level and (2) the expression of anaphoric relations at the discourse level.
