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SPECIAL ISSUE ON PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF SEMANTICS

Guest Editors:
Gillian Brown, Simon C. Garrod

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INTRODUCTION

With remarkable consistency all languages appear to have a certain number of lexical items to make reference to spatial dimensions such as height, length, width, depth, distance, and thickness. Though there are some differences as to how language structures space (comparing, say, English with Hungarian or Japanese), the lexical field referring to spatial dimensional designation is in any case richer and more complex than would be needed simply to provide distinct labels for the three axes of a Cartesian system of coordinates. No doubt, there is a lot more to dimensional designation than mere discrimination of spatial coordinates. What is it? And why? And whence are we to derive the almost invariant pattern we observe across languages? One obvious source of this universality is its origin in human perceptual capacities. There is a considerable amount of research work on space perception, shape recognition, visual discrimination etc. which attempts to prove or at least to support the claim: The dimensions languages pick out are just those dimensions the human perceptual apparatus is tuned to pick out' (cf. Clark 1973; Clark & Clark 1977).

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON REFERENTIAL and ANAPHORIC PROCESSES in TEXT COMPREHENSION

Guest Editors:

Christopher Habel, Gert Rickheit

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