

Current research and emerging challenges in usage-based approaches to children's language development

Elena Lieven

ESRC International Centre for Language and Communicative Development (LuCiD: www.lucid.ac.uk)
University of Manchester

Usage-based (or emergentist) approaches to language development are based on the idea that children extract form-meanings mappings from what they hear in interaction with others and that their language builds up from this in both complexity and abstraction. Over the last 25 years these approaches have made considerable advances both theoretically and in their evidence-base. In this talk, I will summarise the evidence for this approach including: cross-cultural studies of early communication; the influence of frequencies in the input for building a grammar; and data from systematic errors, before turning to the crucial issues that still need to be addressed.