

Thursday ~ February 5th ~ 4:05-5:00pm ~ Keene Faculty Center ~ Dauer Hall

Word Learning Episodes

(and their Consequences for Word Knowledge and Reading Skill)

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Knowledge of words is central to language use, including comprehension. Such knowledge is usually expressed theoretically as interconnected (static) semantic representations. I argue that it is useful to frame word knowledge in terms of word episodes that bring about learning of word form and meaning. Drawing on some of our recent experiments, I provide examples of the role of episodic variability in learning words, e.g. modality and context effects, and show how ERP markers expose details of word episodes. Moreover, ERP markers expose skill differences in word learning and in the use of word knowledge in comprehension. In this framework word learning results from the availability of contextual features that are part of word episodes and individual differences result from massively variable word experiences that have wide consequences for subsequent word learning and in comprehension.

Dr. Perfetti is a world-renowned professor of psychology, and a Senior Scientist and Associate Director of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh