



Interview with Dr Kriszta Szendroi

Background of how Kriszta took up linguistics as a field of study

Dr Kriszta Szendroi:

I came to linguistics through loving languages, as many do. I grew up in communist Hungary, which was very much a closed society. I remember my parents planning a French-Swiss tour that lasted maybe three weeks and when they were back they immediately started planning the next trip. They had the rest of the three years for planning, as people were only allowed to go to the 'West' once every three years. As things began to thaw in the eighties, travelling became gradually easier. So, when I was 12 my parents arranged for me to stay with a friend's bilingual family in Manchester, England. I spent two months there, immersed in a foreign environment and picked up English pretty well. It was a great experience that defined my love of languages.

Kriszta rationale of choosing MACCS is to experience first hand the linguistics experimental work in action at MACCS language acquisition lab

Dr Kriszta Szendroi:

I came to MACCS primarily as I wanted to be part of the experimental work being done in the language acquisition lab. Stephen Crain and Rozz Thornton's views on acquisition are very appealing to me. They believe that when it comes to the invariant abstract grammatical principles that languages share, children have adultlike linguistic abilities from the start. What is very hard sometimes, is to demonstrate these abilities, given the young age of the children involved. It is these practical issues that I came here to learn more about, and to get my hands dirty with some experiments myself.

Extending and making the academic connections between Kriszta's mentor, the late Tanya Reinhart, with Stephen Crain's work at MQ

Dr Kriszta Szendroi:

I met Stephen Crain through an old friend and mentor who is no longer with us, Tanya Reinhart. I think she visited Macquarie shortly before her passing away, in 2006. People often know of her because of her political work concerning the Palestinian people, but I knew her primarily as a brilliant linguist. Tanya Reinhart was remarkable in being able to make lasting contributions to many areas of linguistics. Already her thesis, which she wrote in 1976, she defined a structural notion (c-command) that has been applied in numerous circumstances, both in syntax and in semantics ever since. She was also a very warm and generous person. It is only fitting that the anniversary of her passing away took place while I was here.