Linguistic Nativism Reconsidered
Shalom Lappin
King's College, Londres

Résumé :
For the past fifty years a strong version of linguistic nativism has been dominant in theoretical linguistics and cognitive science. On this view first language acquisition requires a rich set of domain specific constraints and learning biases. These constraints and biases place strong restrictions on the hypothesis space of possible grammars available to children. They are regarded as elements of a universal grammar, which is taken to be part of the biologically determined cognitive endowment that human learners bring to the task of language acquisition. Recent work on the application of unsupervised machine learning (ML) methods to a variety of grammar induction tasks suggests that a considerable amount of linguistic knowledge can be inferred from primary linguistic data by means of largely domain general learning algorithms with fairly weak natural language specific biases and learning priors. I will examine the relevance of this work to traditional arguments for linguistic nativism. I will also briefly consider some current psycholinguistic research on statistically driven learning which suggests that the sorts of learning procedures that ML algorithms encode may, in fact, play a significant role in human language acquisition.

Shalom Lappin donnera également une conférence
à l'IRIT (Université P. Sabatier),
le mercredi 13 février (salle et heure à préciser) :

**" Expressivity and Complexity in
Underspecified Semantic Representation"**