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Theory and Pedagogy

Compiled by Viona Hausmann & Sandra Rosorius

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Along with the realisation that natural language abounds with standardised phrases has come the question how foreign language learners can be helped to commit so much multiword lexis to long-term memory. With regard to figurative expressions (e.g. idioms and phrasal verbs), cognitive semanticists (e.g. Kövecses and Szabó 1996) have proposed pathways for insightful learning that exploit mental imagery, and these have indeed been shown to be mnemonically effective (e.g. Boers 2000; Boers, Eyckmans and Stengers 2007) as was to be expected under the Dual Coding hypothesis (e.g. Paivio 1986). However, it must be acknowledged that the scope of application of the proposed imagery techniques is limited for at least three reasons. Firstly, it can only be applied to figurative expressions, and evidently these make up but a segment of phraseology (e.g. Nattinger and DeCarrico 1992). Secondly, the efficacy of mental imagery as a mnemonic technique does not seem to be optimal across the cognitive-style board (e.g. Boers, Eyckmans and Stengers 2006). Thirdly, the association of a figurative expression with a mental image is a type of semantic elaboration, which is beneficial first and foremost for learners’ retention of the meaning of the expression (i.e. for the purpose of comprehension) rather than for recollecting its precise lexical composition or form (i.e. for the purpose of re-production) (e.g. Boers et al. 2008).

However, we contend that the scope of linguistic motivation in phraseology could be broadened quite considerably if one were to take phonology into consideration. It appears, for example, that the precise lexical selection in up to 20% of English idioms might be motivated by the catchiness of phonemic repetition, typically consonance (e.g. alliteration in it takes two to tango) and assonance (e.g. rhyme in go with the flow) (Boers and Stengers, in press). Percentages are even higher (up to 50%) when we zoom in on types of expressions that are usually short (such as binomials and similes). Importantly, phonemic repetition is prevalent in phraseology at large, not just in figurative idioms (Boers and Lindstromberg 2008). Given this prevalence, it seems worth investigating whether patterns such as alliteration might carry pedagogical potential in foreign language instruction (e.g. Boers and Lindstromberg 2005).

We therefore report a series of experiments (conducted with the participation of students of English) the aim of which was to measure the mnemonic effect of (noticing) sound patterns of different degrees of salience in multiword units. The results of the experiments, which involved both immediate and delayed post-tests, almost univocally suggest that (a) lexical phrases that show strong consonance (alliteration) or assonance (rhyme) are more easily retained than phonologically ‘un-patterned’ phrases; (b) even less salient patterns of, e.g., assonance carry good mnemonic potential; and (c) students benefit
from teacher-guided noticing of phonemic repetition. We conclude that phonemic repetition can serve as a useful pathway for structural elaboration (i.e. contemplation of lexical composition, or form) and that it may render many more lexical phrases “teachable” than was hitherto thought possible.

References


Language Acquisition and Semantic Typology

After many years of emphasis on universals and constraints, linguistic diversity is back in fashion. In particular, there is increasing emphasis on semantic diversity – differences in how languages organize meanings, e.g., how they segment and categorize events. The systematic cross-linguistic study of variation and constraints on semantic structure is called semantic typology. The goal of this talk is to outline some recent findings in this rapidly developing field and discuss their implications for first and second language acquisition.

For many years, first language acquisition was seen as a process of learning how to express meanings that arise in the child through a universally shared process of cognitive development. But languages differ strikingly in the meaning distinctions they make, even in such supposedly basic semantic domains as the expression of spatial location, movement, and object manipulations (e.g., putting ‘in’ or ‘on’, opening, cutting, breaking, carrying, dressing, eating). Counter to the earlier view, recent research shows that children do not start out with a shared semantic system; in fact, they show remarkable sensitivity to language-specific aspects of the target system already by two years of age or before.

Semantic variation across languages, although important, is not limitless; rather, it tends to be played out within constraints. For example, languages often vary in the number of categories they honor in a particular domain, and in where they place category boundaries, but they tend to agree on the dimensions along which they distinguish events. Within such a constrained semantic space, some classification schemas are cross-linguistically more common than others, and there is preliminary evidence that the relative frequency of a schema among the languages of the world correlates with learning ease. A plausible interpretation of this finding is that greater cross-linguistic frequency on the one hand, and easier, more error-free learning on the other, are both consequences of a system that is cognitively more “natural” or accessible to human cognition.

In a learner’s L2, semantic distinctions often overlap and cross-cut L1 distinctions in complicated ways. Relatively little is known yet about how L2 learners cope with these differences. A small number of studies, as well as informal observation, suggest that meaning distinctions that are grammaticized in the first language, such the notions conveyed by tense and aspect markers and spatial prepositions, are particularly resistant to restructuring, but lexical domains also present problems. In the coming years, cross-linguistic studies on semantic typology and first-language acquisition are likely to stimulate new theoretical and applied work on second-language learning. For example, we might predict more interference when a learner is going from a cross-linguistically common L1 schema to a rare L2 schema than from a rare L1 schema to a common L2 schema.
Figurative Competence is better Developed in L1 than in L2, or is it?
Understanding Conversational Implicatures in L1 and L2

The present paper aims to investigate how Polish monolinguals and bilinguals comprehend and interpret figurative meanings. It addresses the issue of figurative competence of L2 users, as far as it is related to L2 users' interpretation of conversational implicatures (Grice 1975). Specifically, it sets out to investigate how L2 figurative competence interacts with L1 figurative competence. Whether bilingual Polish users of English will tend to interpret the intended meanings triggered by conversational implicatures similarly to monolingual Polish language users, and whether bilinguals are consistent in their interpretation of figurative meanings in both their languages? Finally, what is the role of L2 figurative competence of advanced L2 users in comprehending non-literal language in L1?

Two groups of respondents, the L2 users (bilinguals) – 28 Polish university students who receive their education through the medium of English, and the L2 learners (monolinguals) – 47 Polish students with pre-intermediate knowledge of English, were asked to participate in an off-line experiment. Data were elicited by means of a multiple choice implicature test modelled on Bouton (1994), consisting of 16 situations, in which the respondents were asked to decide what discourse participants mean by what they say. The bilinguals completed the questionnaire in both languages, the controls in L1 only. The ability to derive the intended meaning from the literal meaning was examined. Both monolinguals and bilinguals were expected to reveal a consistent pattern of conversational implicatures interpretation in L1. On the basis of L2 figurative competence research (e.g. Matlock and Heredia 2002, Kecskes 2000), it was expected that L2 users' understanding of conversational implicatures in L2 will be lagging behind L1.

The results show that monolinguals and bilinguals interpret the unsaid, intended meaning in L1 in a similar manner. The observed differences were significant only in three cases. Only in 4 cases poorer understanding was shown in L2 than in L1. In half of the test situations the bilinguals interpreted intended meanings similarly in L1 and L2. In the remaining 4 situations, their interpretations were more correct in L2 than in L1. The results might be taken to show that advanced L2 users may achieve a similar level of figurative proficiency in both languages. Moreover, the observed differences suggest that although the comprehension of implicatures is universal, in the sense of derivation of implied meaning, and mostly contextually dependent, it seems also to be linguistic code related.
References


Manner of Motion in Danish as a Second Language: A Comparison of Learners with Typologically Similar and Typologically Different L1s and L2s

Research inspired by Talmy’s (1985, 2000) typological framework on the expression of motion events has shown that native speakers of typologically different languages—satellite vs. verb-framed languages—tend to pay different kinds of attention to particular details of motion events when talking about them (e.g., Berman & Slobin, 1994; Slobin 1997, 1998, 2003, 2006). One of the main differences found in this research concerns the expression of manner of motion. Speakers of S-languages have been found to pay a relatively higher degree of attention to manner than speakers of V-languages when engaged in describing motion events. Thus, native speakers of S-languages tend to provide more elaborated manner descriptions, an elaboration that is reflected both in terms of the frequency with which manner information is supplied (number of tokens) and the variety of manner distinctions made (number of types). These results have been interpreted by Slobin (1996) as reflecting different patterns of “thinking for speaking”, a hypothesis that addresses the influences of language on the ongoing process of interpreting and expressing verbal messages. Slobin’s hypothesis has important implications for expression of motion events in a foreign language. Learners whose L1 and L2 belong to different typological patterns must learn another way of thinking for speaking, i.e., learning which particular details of a motion event must be attended to in the input (e.g., relatively more or less attention to manner information in the input), and learning the characteristic lexicalization patterns of the L2 (Cadierno & Lund, 2004).

Whereas previous SLA research into this area has tended to focus on the expression of motion events by learners with L1 S-languages and L2 V-languages (e.g., Cadierno 2004; Navarro & Nicolaidis 2005; Cadierno & Ruiz 2006), the present investigation examines the expression of manner of motion in an L2 S-language—Danish—by adult L2 learners with typologically similar and typologically different L1s and L2s, and compares the performance of these two groups of learners with that of Danish native speakers. The specific aim of the study is to investigate whether the informants differ with respect to (a) the preferred patterns of expressions in their description of motion, as measured by a picture description task, and (b) the knowledge of manner of motion verbs, as measured by both productive and receptive vocabulary tests. Given the different degrees of codability of manner of motion in the two types of languages, and the differences observed in L1 language and use by their respective speakers, learners with L1 S-languages were expected to provide more frequent and more varied manner information in L2 motion descriptions.
than learners with L1 V-languages, as well as display a higher level of knowledge of manner of motion verbs.

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The Acquisition of Image Schemas and Domain Mapping in SLA

This study focuses on the acquisition process of English prepositions by Japanese learners of English (hence JLEs). We discuss the effect of learners’ native language (hence L1) on the acquisition process from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and propose a cognitive mapping model to explain the positive and negative L1 transfer.

JLEs experience difficulties in using English prepositions appropriately. This is partly due to the grammatical differences between English and Japanese (Hayashi, 2001; Tanaka, 1983, Yamaoka, 1995, 1996). English uses prepositions for encoding various relations. Japanese, on the other hand, has fewer postpositions. The relations encoded by prepositions in English are encoded by a postposition alone, the combination of a postposition and a noun, or the combination of a postposition and a verb in Japanese. Unlike English, Japanese encodes several spatial relations with the combination of postposition and noun. Hence, this study divides the usages of English prepositions into the following four categories: topological, functional, temporal, and abstract relations. Spatial relations in English are divided into two groups, topological and functional relations, based on the ways of encoding in Japanese.

Two experimental studies were conducted based on the categorization above. The first study was to reveal a conceptual network of prepositional usages by JLEs. The results clearly showed two discrete dimensions, spatial and temporal dimension, in the learners’ minds. The second study was conducted to see the effects of the four meaning types on the acquisition process of the prepositions. The results showed that JLEs acquire the usages of English preposition along the following order: topological, temporal, abstract, and functional relations. Some spatial relations in English are acquired the earliest, but the others are the last. The results showed that image schemas of learners’ native language, which reflect learners’ cognition, affect learners’ acquisition process and performances.

This study proposes a cognitive mapping model to explain the acquisition process observed in the study. This study suggests learners’ acquisitional process as domain mapping process. Domain mapping process is one of the basic cognitive activities, which we can observe in several linguistic activities (Fauconnier, 1997). The domain specificities determine how easy the learners acquire an image schema of the target language. Learners map relevant domains available in their L1 onto the target language when they acquire the image schema. When the domains are easy to map, the target is easy to acquire. When there exist some discrepancies of the domains between the target language and their L1, learners experience difficulties to acquire the target. Negative transfers occur when the domains in L1 and L2 have some discrepancies. Positive transfers occur when the domains match completely.

This study only discusses the acquisition process of English prepositions. The model proposed in this study, however, can be applicable not only to the acquisition of words and grammatical items but also discourse and pragmatic knowledge.
Formulaic Language in L2- Storage, Retrieval, and Production of Idioms by Second Language Learners

The paper addresses the question of how second language learners process formulaic language, more specifically, idioms. Broadly speaking, two opposing views on idioms have been proposed by researchers interested in psycholinguistic aspects of formulaic language storage and processing. The noncompositional view of idioms, based on traditional accounts of these expressions (Chomsky, 1980; Fraser, 1970; Katz, 1973; Weinreich, 1969), treats idiomatic phrases as arbitrary strings whose figurative meanings are not directly related to the literal meanings of their individual words (Bobrow & Bell 1973; Swinney & Cutler 1979; Gibbs, 1980, 1985). Contrary to the standard, noncompositional view of idioms, compositional theories propose that idioms vary with respect to their compositionality; the term taken to mean the degree to which the literal meanings of their constituent words contribute to their overall figurative interpretation. In accordance with this assumption, several lines of research have convincingly shown that idiom processing cannot be reduced to the holistic retrieval of a lexicalized meaning, and that it involves an obligatory semantic and syntactic analysis of its constituent words (see, for example, Cacciari & Tabossi 1988; Glucksberg 1993; Titone & Connine 1994, Tabossi & Zardon 1995).

Models developed within the compositional framework, such as the configuration hypothesis, specifically emphasize the role of literal meanings in constructing idioms’ figurative interpretations (Cacciari & Tabossi, 1988; Cacciari & Glucksberg, 1991). Whereas the activation of literal meanings of idiom constituents seems well-documented in the idiom comprehension literature, much less has been written about lexical access during the production of idiomatic phrases, and psycholinguistic research into the way in which second/foreign language users produce idiomatic language is even scantier. Recently Sprenger (2003) has proposed the superlemma theory of idiom production, which is a hybrid model, assuming both a unitary and a compositional nature of formulaic expressions. Under this view, idioms are unitary to the extent that they require their own lexical entry, and they are compositional in the sense that they are made up of simple lemmas in the mental lexicon. The model has been verified with monolingual speakers of Dutch (2006).

The aim of the present study was to verify the assumptions of the superlemma theory in the second language learning context. 30 advanced Polish learners of English were presented with English idiomatic expressions, all of which were finite phrases in the past tense form, sharing the same syntactic structure: Subject [VP [V [PP Prep [NP art/pro N]]]] (Jack kicked the bucket). In this task, the preparation of the last word of an idiomatic phrase (completion task) was used to prime the naming of visually presented targets (reading task).
The first part of the sentence (up to the determiner) functioned as a stimulus for retrieving the last, missing word of the idiom or for naming the word displayed on the computer screen. The participants’ task was either producing the missing word of the idiom or reading out loud a visually presented word that was semantically or phonologically related to the last target word. If, as the superlemma theory has it, literal meanings of simple lemmas making up an idiomatic phrase can be activated either via the idiom representation or via their lexical concept, then words phonologically or semantically related to the last word of the idiom should be named faster than words unrelated in any way to the last idiom constituent. Speech onset latencies for related as compared to unrelated words revealed that literal meanings of idiom constituents become active in the course of L2 idiom production. Results of the experiment are interpreted within the framework of the hybrid model of idiom production.
Spatial language in Spanish and English differ in a number of respects both syntactically and semantically. At a syntactic level, to express motion events Spanish is a “verb-framed” language while English is a “satellite-framed” language (Cadierno, 2004; Talmy, 1985). At a semantic level, containment and support relations are collapsed in Spanish (en) compared to English (in and on). At a finer level again, Spanish and English spatial prepositions have been shown to be affected differently by geometric and functional constraints (e.g., Coventry & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2004). In a large-scale bidirectional study (>200 participants) we tested L2 Spanish and English learners (with L1 control groups) using a range of tasks in order to map out the ease with which learners are able to capture these distinctions in L2. Critically the tasks varied from tapping understanding symbol-symbol relations in the language (e.g., sentence completion tasks), to sentence-picture acceptability matching tasks (symbol-visuosymbol relations), to picture sorting tasks in order to establish the extent to which L2 learners exhibit conceptual versus meaning transfer (Odlin, 2003). Additionally, based on the functional geometric framework for spatial language (cf. Coventry & Garrod, 2004) the materials used allowed us to examine whether transfer from L1 to L2 is based on geometric relations or extra-geometric relations, or a combination of both. Finally, we tested all participants for language proficiency levels using a range of established measures as well as one developed ourselves (the preposition identification test; Guijarro-Fuentes, Valdes & Coventry, in preparation). The results, using structural equation modeling, allow a close examination of the variables that affect L2 acquisition at different stages of the learning process. We discuss the similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition and show differences in stages of the L2 acquisition process as a function of the degree to which the task taps symbol-visuosymbol mappings. (300 words)
References


Stability of Representation in the Multilingual Lexicon: Cattell (1886) Revisited

In this presentation the stability of representations in the multilingual lexicon is discussed from a dynamic systems perspective (de Bot, Lowie & Verspoor 2005, 2007) which assumes that representations – if they exist at all – are not stable entities on which operations can be carried out, but meaning bearing structures that constantly change with use. In a series of experiments with a single subject, in line with experimentation carried out in the 19th century by British psychologist Cattell, the stability of lexical representations in Dutch and English have been studied using the same selected set of items in a simple word naming experiment. Tests have been administered on different times of the day with one day and a month interval and after heavy exposure to one of the two languages and very limited exposure to the other. Different ways to test stability have been used to analyse the data. The outcomes will be discussed in relation to existing models of the lexicon that tend to be more static than the data suggest.

References

A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to Pedagogical Grammar: Current Results and Future Directions

As observed in the introduction to *Cognitive Linguistics: Current Applications and Future Perspectives*, language pedagogy is interdisciplinary in character, crossing over into and closely collaborating with, among others, psycholinguistics and educational psychology. What Cognitive Linguistics (CL) brings to this multifaceted field of study – more than any other contemporary form of linguistics – is “a strong conceptual unity” (Kristiansen et al. 2006: 14). It is this unity in theoretical assumptions, basic units and constructs that is expected to offer a better insight into the nature of language and grammar and further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing second and foreign language teaching. It is no coincidence then that the past few years have witnessed a growing interest in cognitively oriented applied research (Pütz et al. 2001; Achard and Niemeier 2004; Tyler et al. 2005; Robinson and Ellis in press 2008).

In this presentation we address two general questions. First, apart from this conceptual unity, what else does CL theory and description have to offer to language teaching and especially pedagogical grammar (PG)? Note that we take “pedagogical grammar,” the bridge between theory and practice, to metonymically stand for (i) research into pedagogical grammar and grammar pedagogy as a process and (ii) the outcome of that research in the form of a pedagogical grammar package for a given language. Compared with the areas of lexis and metaphor and their rich and varied research tradition within the CL framework (Boers and Lindstromberg 2006 and forthcoming; Littlemore and Low 2006), pedagogical grammar has received only scant attention. This imbalance motivates our second question: What are currently the main strands of grammar research into the CL-PG interface, what results have these studies yielded so far and what can we expect for the future? In answering both questions we present the main research results of the 14 papers of the edited volume *Cognitive Approaches to Pedagogical Grammar* – to be published in 2008 (De Knop and De Rycker, in preparation).

The main conclusions to be drawn are the following. First, on the theoretical level, PG needs meta-theoretical categories and rules (as schemas) for learners. Compositional and non-compositional constructions, enriched by the principles and representations of blending theory, are both part and parcel of language learning, including a large amount of idiomatic chunks. Usage-based learning materials are not identical to corpus data but are to be filtered from them according to pedagogic parameters. Second, on the level of tools for teaching, a cognitive redefinition of contrastive linguistics incorporates the notion of language-specific extensions of central concepts within a network associated with a given form or forms, such
as the diminutive and the so-called middle constructions (part of which is the se reflexive) in Spanish. Similarly, error analysis is cognitively redefined as a struggle of the native language’s preferential choices over the target language’s conceptual distinctions. In the same vein, the old notions of “grammatical” or even “communicative competence” are subsumed and/or replaced by the wider and all-encompassing notion of conceptual fluency. Third, on the level of conceptual learning problems, three typologically distinct conceptualisations are analyzed as major instances of learning problems: (i) the different conceptualisation and expressions of motion in Romance verb-framed vs. Germanic satellite-framed constructions; (ii) aspectual distinctions such as the Slavic imperfective/perfective ones vs. Germanic progressive aspect; and (iii) the conceptualisation of diverse types of multifaceted action in English vs. the lack of it in Chinese.

References


Constructing a Second Language: Learning as a Function of Frequency, Frequency Distribution, Form & Function

Learners’ understanding of language, and of how it works, is based upon their experience of language. They have to estimate the system from a sample of usage. This paper considers effects of construction frequency, form, and function, and of their contingency and prototypicality, upon second language acquisition (L2A). It illustrates these effects by focusing upon the naturalistic L2A of English verb-argument constructions (VACs) in the ESF corpus (Perdue, 1993).

Language learning involves learning constructions - the units of the system specifying the morphological, syntactic and lexical forms of language and their associated semantic, pragmatic, and discourse functions. Together these form a structured inventory of a speaker’s knowledge, with schematic constructions abstracted over less schematic ones inductively in acquisition. For example, the caused motion VAC (X causes Y to move Z) exists independently of particular verbs, hence ‘Tom sneezed the napkin across the table’ is intelligible despite sneeze being usually intransitive (Goldberg, 2006). There is a close relationship between the types of verb that appear in constructions (in this case put, take, push, etc.), hence their schematic meaning is inducible from the items experienced within them. Learning thus involves the distributional analysis of the language stream and the contingent analysis of perceptual activity following psychological principles of category learning. Categories have graded structures, with some members being better exemplars than others. The prototype is the best example against which surrounding “poorer,” more borderline instances are categorized. The greater the token frequency of an exemplar, the more it contributes to defining the category and the more it is considered the prototype.

Research suggests that category learning is optimized by an initial, low-variance sample centered upon prototypical exemplars. This allows learners to get a fix on what accounts for most of the category members. Zipf’s law describes how the more common words appear as more tokens of our language than less common ones, and it applies within individual construction profiles too. Goldberg (2006) therefore argues that construction learning is optimized because there is one very high frequency exemplar that is also prototypical in meaning.

This paper tests and confirms this proposal for naturalistic L2A of English VACs in the ESF corpus. We show that VAC type/token distribution in the input is Zipfian, and that learners first acquire the most frequent and prototypical exemplar (e.g. put in the verb-object-locative VAC, give in the double-object-ditransitive, etc.). We show how acquisition
is affected by the frequency and frequency distribution of exemplars within construction, by their prototypicality, and, using a variety of psychological and corpus linguistic association metrics, by their contingency of form-function mapping.

We consider these processes in the initial induction of constructions, and in their subsequent tuning which underpins native-like, rational, fluent and idiomatic mobilization. Psycholinguistics, cognition, second language acquisition, and corpus and cognitive linguistics are all necessary to our understanding of how learners construct a second language (Robinson & Ellis, 2008).

References
Andrea Ender
University of Bern, Germany

**Ignoring, Memorizing, Embedding or Anchoring?**
**Cognitive Aspects of Lexical Processing and Vocabulary Acquisition by Experienced Language Learners**

The subject of the paper are lexical processing strategies by German speaking learners of French when reading a text for comprehension as well as the relevance of these strategies for vocabulary acquisition.

The topic is approached with regard to the cognitive operations involved in the processing and learning of new lexical items by experienced and multilingual learners. The data originates from an empirical investigation with German students learning French at the university. The findings are based on the analyses of introspective data (think-aloud-protocols) during the reading process and furthermore on the results of retention in the form of a vocabulary test.

The strategies, which the learners use to cope with an unknown lexical item, are analyzed with regard to the knowledge involved in the lexical processing strategies (cf. Hulstijn 2001; Qian 2004). It is examined how provisional lexical entries are built in connection to the existing knowledge and with cues from the phonological, morpho-syntactical or semantic level. Thereby, the results also provide an insight into the involvement of linguistic or metalinguistic knowledge acquired through previously and concurrently learned languages. Furthermore, it is investigated which strategies are most efficient for vocabulary acquisition, that is to say, under which circumstances new lexical items are best integrated in the existing multilingual lexicon (cf. Mondria 2003). This discussion raises questions about the importance of explicit learning and provides some new insights into the long standing topics of depth of processing and the potentials of linking to existing linguistic knowledge.

**References**


Child language acquisition research has, for some time, been finding evidence that children to a large extent rely on recycled linguistic material in the process of constructing their language. Studies have shown that creativity is item-based, rooted in utterance schemas, or formulaic frames, with an open slot for the insertion of relevant, schematically sanctioned lexical items (Tomasello 2000; Dabrowska 2000). In other words, language knowledge is much more concrete and stable in its nature than previously believed.

Recently, studies in second language (L2) acquisition have begun to adopt these insights (Larsen-Freeman 2006; Eskildsen in press), showing L2 learning to be an iterative process in which learners reuse linguistic matter to a large extent. Understanding the object of research in longitudinal L2 studies as a hybrid between locally applied usage patterns and application of the same and related usage patterns over time, this paper investigates ontogenetic development in terms of an empirically grounded, emergent grammar, consisting of units of spontaneously occurring language use. This allows me to investigate the degree to which emergent creativity in L2 learning can be conceptualised as building on recycled linguistic matter in the form of ‘formulas’ and ‘formulaic frames’. In this paper, then, I explore in detail the relationship between routines and creativity in linguistic development in a second language.

To get at the emergent linguistic repertoire in ontogenesis I adopt from Usage-Based Linguistics an item-based path of language learning, from formulas through low-scope patterns to abstract constructions. In doing so, I build on previous studies which have empirically substantiated L2 learning as item-based in nature (Eskildsen & Cadierno 2007; Eskildsen in press).

Empirically, this paper is based on two adult classroom learners of English as a second language. The data are part of an audio-visual corpus consisting of almost 4000 hours of recordings of classroom interaction. My focal students have been recorded for 18 and 48 months, respectively. Methodologically, the modus operandi is inspired by Lieven et al. (2003), who recorded a child, interacting with her mother, one hour daily over a 6 week period. The authors took the utterances made by the child in the final hour of recording and searched backwards in the database for 'similar' utterances to trace the interplay between routines and creativity. This procedure, of course, has been modified to fit my data, which cover a much longer period of time for both of my focal students. Fundamentally, however, I analyze spontaneous speech and trace the utterances in the same manner as described above.
References


Eskildsen, S.W. In press. 'Constructing another Language – (beyond) Frequency Effects in Second Language Acquisition.'


Teaching Chunks: Fine, but whose?

In recent years several applied linguists have convincingly demonstrated the pervasiveness of (semi-) standardized phrases (collocations, idiomatic expressions, and many other frequent word combinations) in native speakers’ discourse (e.g. Howarth 1998; Nattinger and DeCarrico 1992; Schmidt 2004; Wray 2002). It is now well-established that knowledge of one’s mother tongue consists very substantially of active and passive knowledge of formulaic sequences, or “chunks”, of a wide variety of sorts. If native speakers make extensive use of a large repertoire of chunks, then learners will also need to master considerable numbers of chunks in order to start approximating native-like proficiency. Moreover, knowledge of chunks is believed to be especially important for the processing of language under “real-time” conditions, because they can quickly be retrieved from memory as “prefabricated” word strings without the need for (much) parsing (Skehan 1998). However, given the fact that natural language contains thousands of such chunks, classroom-based instruction alone is unlikely to be sufficient if learners are to master more than just a fraction of L2 phraseology. One might be hopeful that learners whose awareness of phraseology has been raised will easily start picking up useful chunks autonomously from the L2 discourse they encounter outside the classroom too. In this paper presentation, we will report a small-scale experiment set up to help estimate the likelihood of learner-autonomous, incidental uptake of lexical phrases. Upper-intermediate English majors who had received classroom training in “chunk-noticing” were asked to indicate all the word sequences they considered to be chunks in a previously unseen text. Their performance was compared with that of (a) same-level peers who had not received any chunk-noticing tuition, (b) non-native EFL teachers (who can be considered highly advanced learners of English), and (c) native EFL teachers who are familiar with phrasal language learning approaches.

In a second experiment language users’ agreement in chunk recognition was put into operation in an experimental listening design. Native speakers of English as well as native and non-native EFL teachers listened to a set of authentic audio recordings and identified word strings which they considered multiword expressions in spoken language.

The results of these experiments suggest that (1) the overlap between the respondents’ set of identified chunks leaves much to be desired for; (2) building a native-like phrasal repertoire through incidental uptake is bound to be a very slow process, even in learners with an enhanced phraseological awareness.

We will discuss the implications of these results for language teachers aiming to implement a phrase-learning programme in their classrooms.
References


A Cognitive Approach to Metaphor Comprehension in a foreign Language

The present study deals with the understanding of metaphors by foreign language learners. Ten linguistic metaphors were selected from online editions of English and American newspapers. After that, we identified the underlying conceptual metaphor based on the conceptual metaphor inventory presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1999) and the primary metaphor inventory proposed by Grady (1997). Considering the difficulties linguistic metaphors represent for text comprehension by non-native speakers, we seek to investigate what sort of knowledge foreign language learners use when trying to understand a linguistic metaphor. In this respect, we looked into the way foreign language readers comprehend (Littlemore, 2002) linguistic metaphors, firstly without using the context and then using the context. Our goal was to study the comprehension of ten novel metaphorical expressions. We present experimental data to support the hypothesis that foreign language readers access conceptual knowledge when processing a linguistic metaphor in a foreign language in a similar way they do it in the first language (Gibbs, 1994). In order to achieve this goal, we compare the comprehension of ten metaphorical expressions by foreign language learners at four different language proficiency levels and English native speakers. The foreign language learners answered a reading proficiency test (TOEIC), a text of the lexis which appears in the metaphorical expressions, and two multiple choice questionnaires which contained the ten metaphorical expressions. One of the answer options was related to the corresponding conceptual metaphor. The English native speakers answered three questionnaires which aimed to investigate participants’ intuitions on how common and how frequent are those metaphorical expressions. Our main goal here was to examine the degree of conventionality and familiarity of those ten metaphorical expressions. The sample was made up by 221 Brazilian undergraduate students and 16 US-American undergraduate students at University of California, Santa Cruz. We have also statistically verified which metaphors scored higher in the tests applied to the foreign language learners. The results pointed out that conceptual metaphors related to the source domains (SD) of VISION, MOVEMENT and ANGER received a higher score in the experiment carried out with foreign language learners. The same metaphors have also been judged as the most common and the easiest to comprehend by the US-American native speakers who took part in the study. The comparison of the results of the studies carried out with Brazilian foreign language learners and US-American native speakers corroborate our hypothesis that there is a universal pattern in the structuring of abstract concepts which enhances the comprehension of metaphor in a foreign language in a similar way it does in the first
language. In a nutshell, these results reveal that the comprehension process in both native and foreign language is strongly influenced by embodied cognition (Gibbs, 2006).
Third Language Acquisition, Macrocategores and Synonymy

The problem of L(2+n) acquisition and functioning has recently moved to the fore of research. It now seems obvious that the dynamic processes underlying multilingual organization differ substantially from the ones involving only one foreign language; our own results (a year of L3 Spanish for Russian-speaking university students with L2 advanced English; for the majority, however, there is a further L4 German or French) conform with the already described tendency: in L3 production the accidental intrusion of L2 elements is recurrent, whereas L1 is practically deactivated.

An explanation to this intriguing fact which we consider to be relevant stems from Grosjean's language mode theory (2001). In order to apply it to L3 processing, we have to assume that “guest language” is actually a fuzzy set of all the guest languages known to the person (L2 and L3), which gives form to a very rigid conceptual opposition “NATIVE LANGUAGE” versus “FOREIGN LANGUAGE” (cf. talk foreign theory).

The foreign language macro-category on the lexicon level is formed by synonymic chains which replace the linguistic conceptualizations of L1 (grosso modo, the content words mela – manzana – pomme – Apfel – яблоко are nothing but cross-linguistic synonyms for the real-world apple) – the view which is not that alien to the entanglement theory (Meara, 2006) as it seems. The model of a multi-mapping lexicon is therefore proposed. Conscious activation of a language in the multilingual mind should start with making choices: the setting of grammar and phonetics, a syntagmatic grid that triggers off the selection of appropriate vocabulary. Indeed, these two constitute a watershed between languages in the FL macro-category; they help to tease the synonyms apart; grammar codings and phonological articulations are much harder to mix up after a certain level of proficiency.

The L2 intrusion problem benefits from being considered in the light of cognitive theory of meaning (cf. Sinha, 1999). Apart from bilingual children for whom the world is being worded simultaneously in two languages, L2 is always mediated by L1, a base language which the learner strives to transform, to rephrase, to reformulate, i.e. an additional grounding. Originally, L2 is a synonymous doubling of L1, quite deliberately created as such (“Now, how would you say it in Spanish?” - sort of talk). Therefore, L2 units which were meant to be synonyms from the very beginning to pop up when the other words are asking to be said, become quite easy to evoke whenever there is a knowledge gap interfering with L3 production (deficient multilingual mapping), though awareness thereof might be totally absent.

A possible corollary of considering L(2+n) as synonymic doublings might be an attempt to ground L3 acquisition in an L2 interface, thus replacing L1 in its role of an intermediate language in the learning process.
This paper addresses the issues that arise when second language acquisition is studied within the context of a semantic typology. The typology proposed by Talmy (1985, 1991, 2000) classifies languages on the basis of how they map cognitive notions (schemas) onto linguistic expression. In other words, languages offer different means to speakers in the process of lexicalizing experience. On the basis of how motion events are lexicalized in English and Serbian, these two languages are said to belong to the same typological group, unlike Spanish, for example, which exhibits a different lexicalization pattern. In English and Serbian the manner component of motion is lexicalized in the verb and the path component out of the verb (as in ‘He ran out of the house’), while Spanish speakers lexicalize path in the verb and manner out of the verb (the equivalent of the English ‘He exited the house running’). The restrictions guiding these typological patterns are both lexical and syntactic. However, some recent studies have advocated the view that the typology could be seen as a cline rather than a dichotomy since many languages do not uniformly belong to one or the other group as envisaged by the typology (e.g. Filipović 1999, 2002). In this paper, we assess the importance of intratypological differences between English and Serbian for second language acquisition of these two languages by Serbian and English native speakers respectively. Our central focus is on how this typologically driven study could help predict and explain learners’ errors and progress in competence. We first illustrate the habitual use of Serbian by the native speakers, which shows tendency to diverge from the prototypical typological pattern for the group of languages that it is classified together with. The consequences of this observation bear relevance to the understanding of the L2 acquisition process in both Serbian learners of English and English learners of Serbian. We provide experimental evidence that further establishes the relevant intratypological differences originally given in Filipović (1999, 2002, 2006, in press). For example, we explain why English learners of Serbian are extremely unlikely to use prefixed manner verbs in situations when they are required and produce errors due to the difficulty of acquiring their dual function (carrying spatial and aspectual information) and low input from L2 (i.e. Serbian). Furthermore, English controls provide more diverse manner distinctions, while those are systematically omitted in Serbian. We argue that this tendency is motivated by morphological complexity and the combinatorial restrictions that manner verbs are conditioned by in Serbian. We also explain the economy-of-from principle, which underlies the use of L2 for both English and Serbian learners.
Cognitive Theory as a Tool for Teaching Pronunciation

This paper is concerned with the least studied, but arguably most important, aspect of second and foreign language teaching - pronunciation (defined here to include all the ‘speaking skills’ not just segmental articulation).

Rather than simply applying existing theory to teaching practice, the topic is approached by considering, from a teacher’s point of view, ‘what works and what doesn’t’. In other words, it asks first ‘What kinds of teaching really helps learners achieve competence and confidence in spoken communication?’.

Building on a number of examples demonstrating rapid and highly effective pronunciation teaching, the paper then moves on to consider how this successful practice can be theorised. The theory of Cognitive Phonology, with its focus on categorisation in context, clearly provides a far better account than traditional derivational theories. However there are some respects in which even Cognitive theory forms an imperfect fit with the teaching data. For example, continued use of the traditional ‘top down vs bottom up’ dichotomy seems less than helpful in this context, limiting useful application of the otherwise extremely valuable model of phonology as a system of categories.

Some suggestions are made for refining the Cognitive view of categorisation and category formation in light of the data. However the main goal of the paper is to encourage two way flow of knowledge between application and theory, and to promote a framework for collaborative research aimed at improving understanding and practice in this crucial area of language learning.
This paper looks at interaction from an input-interactionist perspective. The paper will look at the field of SLA in general, tracing the changing orientations of SLA research. Parallel to general SLA research is the interactionist perspective which began with a decidedly linguistic orientation and with a focus on a description of the role of interaction. As the field broadened its scope, so did those working within the interactionist perspective who began to focus less on description and more on explanation. The explanations that have been offered have included psycholinguistic constructs, such as attention and working memory. These studies will be reviewed and another construct, inhibition, will be discussed. An empirical study will be reported based on L2 learning through interaction in relation to an individual’s ability to inhibit irrelevant information (through a Stroop test).
Aline Godfroid & Alex Housen

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

The Role of Noticing in Incidental L2 Vocabulary Acquisition: Evidence from an Eye-Tracking Study

The concept of ‘noticing’ is the cornerstone of the focus-on-form (FonF) paradigm in SLA research (e.g. Schmidt 2001; Robinson 1995, 2003; Doughty and Williams 1998; Long 1991), in which it is considered to be a necessary condition for uptake of novel linguistic forms to occur. FonF advocates argue that incidental acquisition of novel forms is unlikely to happen often enough through meaning-focused activities alone, because learners will attend first and foremost to the content of comprehensible input and thus fail to notice particular linguistic features.

To our knowledge, however, few studies so far have addressed questions such as (a) how noticing events can be identified or measured, (b) how often and under what conditions learners do notice linguistic features spontaneously, and (c) how much individuals might differ in their inclination (or ability) to attend to linguistic form while being engaged in meaning-focused processing.

In an attempt to provide preliminary answers to those questions, we will report the results of an experiment that was conducted as part of a study on incidental vocabulary acquisition. We defined noticing as a cognitive process in which the amount of attention paid to novel or not fully acquired language forms (in case words) in the input exceeds a critical threshold, thus turning these forms into intake and, as such, into candidates for further processing and long-term storage (uptake). The aims of our experiment were to gauge (a) the occurrence of noticing events during silent reading, (b) the role of the context in which novel words are encountered, and (c) the degree to which learners might differ in their inclination (or ability) for noticing.

Participants in the experiment were four groups of Dutch-speaking students of English. They were asked to read twenty short paragraphs with a view to answering content-oriented questions (i.e. with focus on meaning). In half of the paragraphs unknown (pseudo)words were embedded in one of four conditions: (i) (unknown) pseudoword (e.g. paniplines), (ii) pseudoword followed by a (known) existing word (e.g. paniplines or boundaries), (iii) existing word followed by a pseudoword (e.g. boundaries or paniplines), and (iv) existing word, the baseline (e.g. boundaries). An eye-tracking device recorded the duration and pattern of the students’ eye movements. Four commonly used processing time measures were calculated: first-fixation duration, single-fixation duration, gaze duration and total time (e.g. Rayner 1998; Reichle, Rayner and Pollatsek 2003). In addition, the participants completed a post-test after each target item, designed to check their recognition of the encountered target word. Comparatively pronounced fixations, which we took to be a
probable reflection of noticing taking place, were correlated with the participants’ performance on the post-test.

In conclusion we will discuss (a) the validity of eye-tracking measures as a means to operationalise noticing, (b) the putative benefits of a contextualised presentation of lexis, (c) the existence of individual differences in inclination (or ability) for noticing and (d) the implications of our results for the implicit-versus-explicit learning debate.

References


The acquisition of Phrasal Verbs (PVs) by L2 learners of English has received relatively little attention by the research literature (Hebrew, Laufer & Dagut, 1985; Dutch, Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Swedish Laufer & Eliasson, 1993 Finnish, Sjöholm, 1995; and Chinese, Liao & Fukuya, 2004). These studies, which use a very similar experimental methodology (multiple-choice, recall and translation tasks) have been able to establish some preliminary conclusions: 1) Language distance is related to PV avoidance (L1 Dutch and Swedish learners of English show less avoidance than Finnish learners); 2) Avoidance decreases with proficiency; 3) Opaque or idiomatic PVs show more avoidance; and 4) There are task effects related to avoidance of PV. Some recent studies (Yoshitomi, 2006; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007) have added a more usage-based perspective and have also come up with contradictory findings such as the uncertain role of the ‘proficiency’ variable in the more advanced levels.

However, the insights provided by Cognitive Linguistics (CL) make necessary a reassessment of these analyses with regard to two key aspects: a) their adoption of an exclusively lexical approach that neglects the syntactic-lexical interface; and b) their positing of semantic non-compositionality for the majority of PVs as a result of the equation of idiomaticity with opacity of meaning. It becomes then necessary to take into account the CL work on particles and prepositions, which under this new perspective are not simply explained as non-transparent or opaque but as an extension from a basic or prototypical meaning (Tyler & Evans, Lee, 2004, Lindner, 1982, Lee, 2001). So too it becomes important to incorporate the findings by Talmy (2000) and Berman & Slobin (1994), among others, regarding the influence of L1 typology in the phrasing of motion events, since this also provides the basis for a cognitive explanation of phenomenon of L1 transfer.

This paper provides a detailed study of the English verb particle constructions found in the written production of L1 Spanish and Italian speakers of English in the 200,000 word subsection of the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) of these two languages, and compares this with two other corpora of approximately the same size: a) the written production of native speakers in the School and University essays section of the British National Corpus; and b) the written production of speakers belonging to a different typological group (German and Dutch) in the same corpus (ICLE). The results show that learners with an L1 belonging to the Satellite-framed typological group (German and Dutch learners) show no avoidance of ‘verb out’ constructions in comparison to native speakers, i.e. a similar number of tokens can be found in both groups, whereas L1 learners of Verb-
framed Spanish and Italian use fewer verb particle constructions. However, closer scrutiny of the PV types used, their collocations and the meaning of the particle, shows that patterns of behaviour shared by all learner groups that distinguished them from native speakers, with all non-native speakers using a greater frequency of the locational meaning and fewer types of PV than native speakers). These results suggest that avoidance is not enough to account for the influence of the L1 on the construction choice of L2 learners, and that the patterns of acquisition can best be explained by a Cognitive Linguistics analysis.

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An Experimental Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Cognitive Grammar in the Teaching of Italian as a Foreign Language

In an unpublished pilot study, Hamrick (2007) found that monolingual English speakers performed significantly better in a test when exposed to a very short Cognitive Grammar explanation of the difference between mass and count nouns, than when exposed to a comparable treatment of the same subject couched in traditional grammar terms. The experiment was based on a pre-test/post-test paradigm, and used strictly controlled input (a one page handout). Its results were statistically significant (P = .0059) and were corroborated by post-test debriefings in which the students clearly preferred the Cognitive Grammar explanations over those couched in traditional grammar terms. The weaknesses of the experiment were that the number of subjects was relatively small (n=28) and that no effort was made to see if the statistically significant effect persisted over time and/or translated in improved performance in the subject matter of the class (English composition).

The present study seeks to elaborate on the paradigm, applied to a FLL setting (Italian as a Foreign Language), while correcting the deficiencies of the original experiment. In the experiment, two one-sheet explanations of how to select the auxiliary (essere or avere) in the passato prossimo will be randomly distributed to students from a number of Italian as a Foreign Language classes. One of the sheets will contain a traditional grammar explanation of the phenomenon, while the other will contain a Cognitive Grammar explanation. The students will be given time to read the handout and then will be immediately tested. A follow up test will be administered toward the end of the semester. A pre-test baseline will also have been collected, several weeks prior to the experiment. By comparing the pre-test baseline and the two post-test measurements, in the experimental and control populations we hope to replicate the positive results found in the monolingual setting.

The choice of auxiliary selection in Italian was dictated by a potential methodological objection to the results in Hamrick (2007) and namely that the mass/count distinction is somewhat of a "success story" for Cognitive Linguistics and so one could reasonably argue that this was playing up to the strengths of the model. However, the issue of auxiliary selection in Italian passato prossimo has been listed as one of the trouble spots of teaching Italian (Aski 2005).

This makes our application of Cognitive Grammar to the pedagogy of auxiliary selection in Italian methodologically sound.
References


In this paper, I will contrast L1 and L2 use as working languages in primarily content-focused problem-solving settings. The central question here is whether the foreign working language affects cognitive structures and processes. My theoretical concern is not so much on ‘thinking for speaking’ (Slobin 1987) but, on a larger scale, problem-solving theory (Funke 2003; Pretz, Naples et al. 2003), a theoretical framework that even provides the basis for writing research (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1987, Chenoweth & Hayes 2001; Flower & Hayes 1981) or the task-based approach of focus on form and focus on meaning in language pedagogy (Doughty & Williams 1998; Long 1991; Long & Robinson 1998).

Following the theoretical assumption that language is based on structures and processes of general and social cognition, I will try to demonstrate that different content-based and linguistic activities can be identified during the macro-process of problem solving, and that the focus can alternate between them. Additionally, I want to address the highly individual character of conceptual construction activities that is embedded in the social context surrounding the problem-solving activities of individual learners.

I will investigate empirical data in form of think-aloud protocols (Ericsson & Simon 1993; van Someren, Barnard et al. 1994), which were produced by 16-year old learners solving geography tasks in either their L1 German or their L2 English. The think-aloud method fits into the framework of Cognitive Linguistics in that it assumes that language in many cases is the most immediate artefact of human thought. Because of the close linkage between thought and language, think-aloud data externalise on what information a person is directing his or her attention in a given moment and thus provide a protocol of a person’s problem-solving activities in ‘inner speech’ (Vygotsky 1986).

The problem solving situations are created by elicitation tasks that on the one hand show a clear focus on content in that non-verbal sources of information such as climate graphs and geographical maps were to be interpreted by the subjects. On the other hand, even linguistic information had to be processed in order to solve the tasks. This kind of task design was chosen on the basis of the following reasoning: If interactional effects between content processing and linguistic processing are to be investigated, both kinds of processes take place when such a task is solved, and should thus be accessible in process data.

After analysing the protocols according to language-specific and conceptual problem-solving activities, it can be shown that as soon as the focus shifts to form, a deeper semantic processing of content follows, no matter whether the L1 or the L2 is used. Nevertheless, the use of the L2 can intensify this effect, although the individual differences between the
learners are striking. Here, I will argue that any educational setting should make use of activities that trigger focus on form for the benefit of the processing of content.

References


A Cognitive Approach to -ing Nominalization: From Theory to Pedagogical Practice

This paper deals with the distinction between so-called 'gerundive' -ing nominalizations (NOMs), as in (1), and 'action' -ing NOMs, as in (2) (Lees 1960):

(1) ... his job involves [my answering the phone on his behalf quite a bit of the time].
(CB)

(2) The Independent (...) criticizes [Mr. Mandela's thanking of the Libyan leader...].
(CB)

While in theoretical linguistics, the diachronic origin and synchronic features of both -ing NOMs have been elaborately discussed (e.g. Lees 1960, Chomsky 1970, Declerck 1991, Pullum 1991), it remains difficult to explain to learners of English why certain contexts seem to favour gerundives while in others action NOMs are acceptable as well. That gerundive NOMs are more clause-like (cf. their direct object, their incompatibility with nominal determiners other than the possessive/oblique, their inclusion of adverbs and auxiliaries) and action -ing NOMs behave like 'ordinary' nominal heads, taking determiners and pre/postmodification, does not help a non-native speaker of English to decide when to use which type.

Various cognitive linguists have shed new light on -ing NOMs: Langacker (1991) applies his functional model of the NP (incl. the notions of type specification, instantiation and grounding) to their analysis, and points to the importance of taking into account all their NP features, including the of in action -ing NOMs and the limited determiner options in gerundive NOMs (which in traditional analyses had been ignored or discarded as meaningless, cf. Grimshaw 1990) (see also Taylor 1996). Heyvaert (2003, forthc a and b) argues that -ing NOMs should be analyzed, not only as cases of word formation, but also as NPs, including a description of their internal as well as external functioning, in the clause as well as in the broader discourse context (e.g. in terms of reference). Heyvaert (forthc b) moreover suggests that the notions of 'type specification' and 'instantiation' capture the import of the various gerundive subtypes more accurately than do the traditional labels of 'action' and 'fact' (which, corpus analysis has shown, fail to uniquely distinguish gerundive from action -ing NOMs (Heyvaert 2004; see also Langacker 1991)). Cognitive descriptions, in short, suggest that Langacker's functional model of the NP, together with a more systematic inclusion of the NOM's functioning in the clause and discourse context, can lead to new insights into both NOM systems.

In this paper, I will show how these cognitive insights, when confronted with a
systematic comparative corpus analysis of action and gerundive -ing NOMs, can set us on the track of the language user's motives behind his/her actual choice between them. I will go more deeply into the results of an analysis I carried out of a randomly selected set of 200 action -ing NOMs and 200 gerundive NOMs (taken from COBUILD). Both types were analysed for various parameters: their determiner position (inclusion of (non-)Subject-like possessor; use of other determiners; control; referential status), the given-new status of their -ing form and of-phrase; the function of the NOM in the clause; their semantics. The analysis shows a clear division of labour between action and gerundive -ing, semantically and discursively. A theoretically inspired, usage-based analysis of this type, it will be shown, can lead to new insights into the distribution of -ing NOMs, and thus forms the ideal starting point for a pedagogically-oriented account of the structures in question.

References


The Role of Cognitive Development in Second Language Acquisition: A Cross-Linguistic Study

Aims of the Paper

This paper presents an empirical study which is concerned with the interaction between cognitive development and second language acquisition. It adopts the linguistic expression of space as domain of investigation, and considers the impact of the conceptual frame ‘pre-elaborated’ through the acquisition of Arabic and French L1 in the acquisition of French and Arabic L2.

Theoretical Framework

1. The relation between language and thought is subject of two theories: linguistic determinism (Whorf) and linguistic relativity (Boas and also Piaget). These two theories were represented respectively by the cross-linguistic developmental researches of Bowerman (1985; Bowerman and Choi, 1994; Choi and Bowerman, 1991) and of Slobin (1973, 1985; Johnston and Slobin, 1979). Recently, Bowerman (Bowerman and Choi, 2001), Slobin (2001) and others adopted a more interactionist perspective assuming that conceptual development in L1 is determined by both cognitive universal and linguistic specific (input) factors.

2. Cognitive linguistics which relates the way space is structured in languages to typological specificities (Talmy, 1983, 1985, 2000; Jackendoff, 1999; Bowerman, 1999).

3. The approach of learner variety (Perdue, 1993) which constitutes a radical rupture with the static ‘analysis of errors’ based on the contrastive hypothesis of Lado (1957). This new approach considers L2 acquisition as a dynamic cognitive/interactional process, which passes through progressive stages or interlanguages (see Selinker, 1972) in the direction of the target language. L1 is seen as a cognitive/perceptual base which can influence the acquisition of L2 in different ways according to the stage of the process: it can help learners at the beginning, but it might become an ‘obstacle’ to reach the full mastery of L2 (conceptual/functional transfer).

Methodology

To elicit spatial discourse, the task we proposed to our informants (adult native Arabic and adult native French) was the description of a complex spatial configuration. The informants represent three levels of mastery in French L2 and in Arabic L2. Data were collected by a procedure which ensures the absence of shared visual context between the informant/learner and the addressee/researcher.
Results

The comparison between French and Arabic points out significant differences which concern mainly: (1) word order (2) repertoire of locative expressions (3) referential features.

These cross-linguistic divergences lead to encode different spatial concepts, and to two different ways in the selection and the distribution of spatial information in the descriptive utterance and consequently in the segmentation and the cohesion of the discourse.

The spatial descriptions produced in French L2 and in Arabic L2 show that the acquisitional evolution begins by a prototypic (simplified) treatment of the discourse and arrives to a stage of complex elaborated cohesive discourse. At advanced level, the productions reveal full mastery of the morpho-syntactic specificities of L2 at utterance level. However, the strategies of information organisation through the discourse point out the specificities of L1. The task of advanced learners is more complex, it involves the perception of subtle functional divergences between L1 and L2 (Perdue, 2000). Thus, this acquisitional task can be defined as a conceptual re-elaboration (Giaccone, 1992) or a process of thinking for speaking (Slobin, 1996) which demand to ‘forget’ the way space is structured in L1 and to learn how it is structured in L2. In this study, we define this task as a ‘conceptual functional constraint’.
What CM Can Do for Idioms:  
The Efficacy of Understanding Conceptual Metaphors  
in the Learning of Idiomatic Expressions in EFL Classrooms

Background: Teaching idioms has remained a challenge in EFL and SLA classrooms. In this light, a study was conducted in 2006 to examine the effectiveness of incorporating conceptual metaphors (CM) and image schemas (IC) in teaching English idioms to 40 college students in Taiwan (Hu, 2006, Fong, 2006). The quantitative result of this study demonstrates that raising the awareness of CMs and ICs learners processed or constructed CMs and ICs in the target language and to what extent underlying idioms did facilitate learning. However, it has remained unclear how these CMs and ICs in their native language, in this case, Mandarin Chinese, aided or hampered learning. For example, the idiom, *keep a level head*, appeared easier for learners to comprehend as in Chinese having a balanced mind or spirit is well incorporated in the traditional theories of Chinese Medicine. On the other hand, the idiom, *hit the sack*, was unfathomable to learners since the linguistic as well as cultural representations of *sack* in Chinese vary from those in English.

Data: This paper will examine the two sets of think-aloud protocol produced by the learners during the study—one prior to learning about CM and IC and the other afterwards. The learners were instructed with 40 English idioms from a pool of 60 (Titone and Connine, 1994) and were presented context-free in a list. Subjects’ Chinese interpretations of the idioms before and after teaching were both tape-recorded and transcribed. Analysis: This corpus deriving by the first set of protocol will be analyzed in terms of CM and IC to investigate the strategies learners deployed to comprehend the tested idioms. Results of this analysis will be compared with the analysis of the second set of protocol containing learners’ interpretations of the idioms through the knowledge of CM and IC. Expected results: Such analyses will yield insight into the processes how learners learned CM and IC in a foreign language. Similarly, we should also be able to determine how the CM and IC in the first language “interact” with those in the target language in the corpus. This knowledge can help develop effective pedagogy.
References


Language-Specific Verbal Imagery in an FLL/FLT Context

Language-specific conceptualization can be observed at various linguistic levels in the way different languages construe the same experience by effecting varying “focal adjustment”, to use Langacker’s (1987, 2001, 2002) notion. As a result of the construal, differing gestalts, or scenes, arise (Dąbrowska 2004; Vandeloise 2003), which we call “language-specific imageries”. Lexical semantic information about language-specific imageries is crucial for achieving lexical competence in terms of lexical differentiation and lexical expansion. Lexical competence, in turn, is conducive to grammatical competence not only in the sense of verb-construction interaction as explicated by Goldberg (1995), but in the more general sense that lexicon and grammar are continuous (Langacker 2000; Taylor et al. 2003).

In this study, verbs of Chinese, English, and German are examined contrastively with regard to language-specific imageries underlying the conceptualization of certain physical actions. It is shown that spatial dimensions or bodily aspects profiled and elaborated in the verbs of one language are left indiscriminate in those of another language. To illustrate this point, let us consider an example. In contrast to a speaker of English who talks about putting on a hat and putting on a coat indifferently with regard to the choice of the verb (e.g. put), a German speaker and a Chinese speaker must communicate these two actions by using two different verbs. That is, in German one uses *aufsetzen* when describing the action of putting on a hat and *anziehen* when talking about putting on a coat. In Chinese, the difference is between *dai* and *chuan*, respectively. While this may appear to be a superficial difference in lexical convention, the true difference lies at the conceptual level. More specifically, German *aufsetzen* and Chinese *dai* describe the action of putting on something such that a prototypical two-dimensional contact results between the body part getting “dressed” and the object being put on. By contrast, *anziehen* and *chuan* encode an action that effects a prototypical three-dimensional contact or partial enclosure. The recognition of this dimensional difference is crucial to understanding the typology of verb-object collocations in the semantic domain of ‘act to cause someone to wear something’.

No doubt, the fact that English *put* is conceptually indifferent to the spatial configuration involved in the physical action under discussion has pedagogical consequences in FLL and FLT. English speakers learning German and/or Chinese are faced with the challenge to pick the right verb when talking about putting on something wearable. To rise to the challenge, they have a choice. They may memorize individual verb-object collocations by rote. Alternatively, they may be enlightened about the language-specific imagery underlying a particular lexical choice that fails to perfectly match their native convention. The latter possibility, i.e. the access to language-specific patterns of
conceptualization, not only installs intellectual confidence in the learners by reassuring them that what they are dealing with are not weird, exotic conventions that don’t “make sense”, but conceptually motivated, and therefore non-arbitrary, phenomena that do make sense. Moreover, the access to the conceptual motivations of the foreign linguistic structure will help learners to make sense of what they have to learn by way of a “reconceptualization” in terms of Langacker (2001: 8). Thus, the knowledge of language-specific conceptualization is highly relevant to, and indispensable for, foreign language pedagogy, as many cognitive linguists have pointed out (Taylor 1993; Pütz et al. 2001; Tylor and Evans 2001; Boers and Lindstromberg 2006). Acquiring that knowledge is complementary to exemplar-based repetitive exposure to linguistic input.
The Role of Pragmalinguistic Theories in SLA Studies

Pragmalinguistic theories, which define as one of the major objectives of their inquiry the accounting for cognitive processes that are at play during verbal communication, can be expected to provide important theoretical foundation for SLA studies, which aim at identifying and optimizing parameters crucial to L2 learning. The major goal of the paper is to explore interfaces between a pragmalinguistic model, namely Sperber and Wilson’s (1986/95, 1987, Wilson and Sperber 2004) relevance theory and processes underlying the development of competence in L2.

Relevance theory is rooted in some important observations about how human beings function cognitively, how they interact with the environment, and how short-term and long-term cognitive goals that they pursue constrain the complex cognitive machinery that lies at the heart of verbal communication. The model of human communication that Sperber and Wilson have developed is thus based on a set of assumptions related to the psychological factors underlying general cognitive processes, therefore it seems only logical to assume that it should offer useful theoretical support for SLA theory and practice.

Taking as a point of departure the key concepts of the relevance-theoretic framework, such as ostensive-inferential communication, the cognitive principle of relevance, the communicative principle of relevance, the presumption of optimal relevance, contextual effects and some others, the author attempts to show how the model affords significant insight into psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes underlying the development of competence in a second/foreign language. Drawing on earlier published works which suggest that the relevance-theoretic approach may be fruitfully applied in studying some cognitive, linguistic as well as micro-sociological mechanisms operating in L2 context (Foster-Cohen 2004, Gozdawa-Gołębiowski 2004, Liszka 2004, Matsumura 2003, Niżegorodcew 2007, Paiva 2003, Paiva and Foster-Cohen 2004, Žegarac 2004) I will argue that the range and originality of the relevance-theoretic model of human communication not only opens interesting lines of investigation into various theoretical issues pertaining to second language development, but also illuminates important practical aspects directly related to target language instruction. It will be shown that awareness of general cognitive processes that constrain human functioning can help in formulating principles that optimize teacher-learner cooperation in the language classroom. The relevance of general theory of human communication and cognition to applied linguistic research will thus be substantiated.
References


Fighting Reduced Authenticity: 
The Role of Metaphor in Teaching English for Specific Purposes

In the “Metaphor in discourse” program at VU University Amsterdam researchers apply a reliable tool for identifying metaphors on the linguistic level that builds on the Pragglejaz (2007) Metaphor Identification Procedure (“MIP”). MIP compares contextual meanings of lexical units to their basic meaning, and, if these meanings belong to different domains but can be understood by some form of comparison, words are said to be used metaphorically. In “higher interest costs”, for example, the contextual meaning of “high” is “large in amount”, but there is a more basic sense, “large in size from the top to the ground,” which is alien to the target domain of the phrase (Macmillan English Dictionary) and which therefore points to metaphorical use.

In the “Graduate School for Teaching Processes” at Koblenz University a research project deals with metaphor awareness in German Business English Courses. Complex business structures, such as financial matters, can be made more comprehensible by the use of concrete, everyday vocabulary from, for instance, the semantic field of water: money will “flow” or “circulate”, assets are “liquid” and financial matters are referred to as the “cash flow”. Similarly, economy, for example, may be conceptualized as a plant, which can “grow”, “flourish”, “thrive” or ”shrink”. Metaphorical expressions belong to concepts that map structures from one domain to another. This cognitive semantic proposal, as pointed out by Boers (2004), suggests the potential for alternative learning and, consequently, innovative teaching strategies in the foreign language classroom. Memorizing large chunks of words, such as metaphors or figurative language in general, and learning their meaning by heart has proved to be an ineffective technique. Therefore, Business English courses would profit from offering learners insights into the cognitive motivation of words and into the underlying concepts.

Often, intermediate and upper-intermediate Business English textbooks contain didactically reduced texts, and thus often lack passages of rich metaphorical usage. In order to expand the students’ vocabulary by raising metaphor awareness, additional material such as texts taken from natural discourse and language exercises developed to trigger and support metaphor awareness should be provided. But what is considered a metaphor? And what are the main concepts found in natural business discourse that should be taught? MIP and natural corpus analysis provide an interesting basis to apply cognitive linguistic research to teaching practice. Thus, the collaboration between VU University Amsterdam and Koblenz University was established. MIP is applied to texts taken from Business English textbooks and the corpus research results are integrated in the preparation of
teaching material for actual business discourse.

In our talk we will present MIP and illustrate the VU method of analysis for selected problems, address the analysis of metaphor on a conceptual level and suggest ways of identifying source domains. Furthermore, we will briefly report on our preliminary results from the comparison between metaphorical usage in natural discourse and in didactic texts. These findings will form the future basis for the development of additional exercises as well as of didactic guidelines for applying cognitive metaphor theory to language teaching.

References


Cognitive Constraints in Advanced L1 Dutch Acquisition and L1 Dutch Attrition in an Anglophone Environment

In this paper an attempt is made to compare two language systems in flux: advanced L1 acquisition in monolingual Dutch-speaking adolescents and the L1 of first-generation Dutch emigrants in Anglophone Canada, where they acquired English as their L2. Monolingual Dutch speakers in the Netherlands served as a point of reference. In particular, the three groups were compared with respect to their morphological and syntactic proficiency, both of which tend to show clear developmental sequences in children, which can easily be compared to attrition processes in an L2 setting. Subjects were asked to complete controlled language tasks, but free spoken data were also collected.

The outcomes reveal that the interlanguage of the emigrants shows clear correspondences to the output of the adolescents, as opposed to the Dutch control subjects. More specifically, mirror symmetries were found where those features that are acquired late in Dutch-speaking children also proved vulnerable in attrition. This finding provides evidence for the regression hypothesis (Jakobson, 1941). In interpreting the regression patterns, it was found that UG-based explanations are very hard to implement given the fact that it is hard to operationalize the exact nature of UG. Rather, it was found that the usage-based concepts of exemplar-based language learning, analogy and entrenchment and preemption could account for many of the study’s outcomes. For example, those features that revealed a significant parallel between the acquirers and attriters were invariably less frequent items, such as irregular plural inflection or strong past tense forms. This would indicate that the more frequent and entrenched items are less problematic than more sporadic phenomena ($$$, 2007: 278). In this paper, several other examples will be given within the realms of morphology and syntax.

It would thus appear that similar cognitive constraints govern both advanced L1 acquisition and the interlanguage of attriters in an L2 environment, revealing mirror symmetries between both varieties. To assess the nature of these constraints more carefully, it would be interesting for future research to include other language systems in flux, such as diachronic language change or pidgin and creole varieties ($$$, 2007: 290)

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According to the Dual-Mechanism Model (Pinker & Prince, 1988), the processing of language is based upon two fundamentally different components: a rule component and an associative memory. The aim of this study was to analyze whether the theoretical tenets of the Dual-Mechanism Model, which has originally been established as a model of L1 processing, can be extended to the processing of L2 morphological processing. For this purpose, 49 adult Turkish learners of L2 English at two distinct proficiency levels and 8 adult native speakers of English participated in an elicited English past tense production task that tested their regular and irregular past tense formation behaviors on real and nonce verbs. The results display that L2 subjects behave quite similar to L1 subjects and compute regular and irregular past tense forms in qualitatively distinct ways, as proposed by the Dual-Mechanism Model.

A second question that the study tried to approach related to whether L2 learners at low proficiency levels lack a rule-system and initially compute regular and irregular forms exclusively over the associative memory until a certain proficiency level is reached as proposed by Zobl (1998). The results of the present study show that both low and high proficiency L2 learners were able to implement the past tense rule that adds the default past tense suffix “-ed” to stem forms and did not rely on the associative memory only. The results thus suggest that the two distinct mechanisms posited by the Dual-Mechanism Model are in use from early stages of interlanguage development on.

References


The Acquisition of the Pro-Drop Parameter in Turkish as a Second Language

In this study, which is mainly concerned with the pro-drop parameter in L2 acquisition, subjects were chosen exclusively from pro-drop languages like Turkish (Afganian, Persian, Mongolian, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Spanish) and like Chinese (Chinese, Japanese, Korean). All of the subjects were attending TÖMER (Centre for the Teaching of Turkish) and were learning Turkish as an L2 at 3 different proficiency levels (elementary, intermediate and upper-intermediate). The subjects were given a grammatical judgment test which included 35 sentences related with pro-drop, subject-verb inversion and that-trace features and another grammatical judgment test which included 18 questions referring to null subjects and referential features of pronominals.

When comparing the data of the subjects from Turkish-type languages (Group 1) with the data of the subjects from Chinese-type languages (Group 2), it was found that Group 2’s choices related with pro-drop questions were much more successful. This does not support the claim of the indirect access hypothesis, according to which it is possible to reset parameters only before the critical period. It provides support for the claim that there is no L1 transfer in L2 acquisition.

It was also found that there was no difference in the success of both groups’ choices related with pro-drop questions in accordance with their levels. These results show that UG and L2 have a direct connection in L2 acquisition and there is no unique explanation for the theories of access, at least related with the pro-drop parameter.

When comparing both the scores of the subject-verb inversion questions with the ones of the pro-dropping questions and the that-trace questions again with the ones of pro-dropping, it can clearly be seen that there is no relation between subject-verb inversion and pro-dropping; just like there is no relation between that-trace and pro-dropping. These results support the claim of resetting the pro-drop parameter without any effect of syntactic features such as subject-verb inversion and that-trace and the idea of no-access in L2 acquisition. Agreement is another important syntactic feature supporting the idea that there is no L1 transfer in L2 acquisition. Those speakers who have strong agreement in their L1 (Group 1), are much less successful than the speakers who have no agreement in their L1’s (Group 2), in acquiring an L2 which has strong agreement, too. This result again indicates that there is no access to UG in L2 acquisition.

Both L1 speakers of Group 1 and speakers of Group 2 showed a regular increase of the reference of pronouns as subjects in accordance with their L2 acquisition levels of Turkish. But it can also be seen that speakers of Group 1 were much more successful than those of
Group 2, who also showed a tendency to choose another NP as an antecedent. The reason for this is thought as the possibility of a referential discourse of a pronoun in Chinese-type languages and such a binding feature can not be seen in Turkic-type languages. These results show that people learning Turkish as an L2 make use of their L1’s in accordance with referential features and, thus, support the idea of the indirect access theory.

Speakers of Group 1 also showed a regular increase of the reference of pronominals as a subject in accordance with their L2 acquisition levels of Turkish. Speakers of Group 2, however, did not show any increase in such questions related with their L2 levels and showed again a tendency to choose another NP. This result again supports the idea that L1 speakers of Group 1 are much more successful in choosing the correct antecedent than speakers of Group L2 and that speakers of Chinese-type languages transfer from their L1’s.

The results of the tests in this study, mainly concerned with the pro-drop parameter in L2 acquisition, showed that L1 speakers of both Group 1 and Group 2 supported different access theories in the acquisition of Turkish as an L2. As it is possible to reach different access theories according to the kind of the parameter studied (Cook, 1995; Hawkins, 2001), it can clearly be seen that is still not possible to have a unique judgement for the pro-dropping parameter in L2 acquisition with the existing theories.
Acquiring the Lexical Semantics-Syntax Interface in the L2: Auxiliary Selection in Near-Native Grammars of Italian

On the basis of developmental data pertaining primarily to the interface between syntax and discourse/pragmatics, Sorace (2005) has hypothesised that, contrary to pure syntax, interfaces between syntax and other linguistic/cognitive systems may not be completely acquired in an L2. By contrasting the ultimate attainment of the interface between syntax and lexical semantics by adult L2 learners, this paper examines whether the two domains in question are indeed acquirable to a different degree, as Sorace's hypothesis predicts, and whether they are also not equally susceptible to age effects in L2 acquisition. In this way, the paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the architecture of the language faculty and human mind in general, as well as the way in which different linguistic/cognitive modules interact in the process of L2 development.

The paper employs a contrast between auxiliary selection with intransitive verbs and auxiliary change under restructuring in compound tenses in Italian. While the first phenomenon depends on lexical semantic factors, and thus qualifies as a phenomenon at the lexical semantics-syntax interface, the second one is determined by purely syntactic factors, satisfying the criteria for a purely syntactic phenomenon. More precisely, the consistency with which different subclasses of unaccusatives (arrivare ‘arrive’) and unergatives (parlare ‘talk’) select one of the two auxiliaries depends on aspectual and thematic factors (Sorace 2000), while the optional or obligatory change of avere ‘have’ into essere ‘be’ in restructuring constructions hinges on the presence and the position of the clitic (Lui ha/è voluto andare a casa, ‘He wanted to go home’, Lui ha/è voluto andarci, Lui ci *ha/è voluto andare, ‘He wanted to go there’) (Rizzi 1978). The phenomena under scrutiny are not instantiated in Croatian, which is the L1 of the L2 participants in the study.

A group of post-puberty near-native L2 speakers, acquiring Italian in the naturalistic context, and a group of adult L1 speakers performed a self-paced and a speeded version of an acceptability-judgement task. The self-paced version elicited proportional judgments by means of the Magnitude Estimation technique, while the speeded version elicited binary judgments and also recorded response times. The two versions of the task yielded similar results. The responses of near-natives patterned with those of the natives with respect to auxiliary selection with intransitive verbs, but diverged from them with regard to auxiliary change under restructuring. Such results indicate, contrary to predictions, that the lexical semantics-syntax interface is less problematic and less susceptible to age effects in L2 acquisition than pure syntax, at least as far as the phenomena under scrutiny are concerned. It is argued that this is primarily due to the difference in the degree to which the two types
of phenomena are represented in the input and the extent to which they can be extracted from experience and learned in association with other cognitive faculties, in addition to those pertaining specifically to language.

References


The Influence of Task Complexity on Linguistic Performance in L2 Writing and Speaking: The Effect of Mode

In the paper the question will be answered to what extent the effect of task complexity on linguistic complexity and accuracy in L2 is influenced by the mode in which the tasks have to be performed (oral versus written).

Task performance in L2 depends on various factors, such as the cognitive complexity of the task, the conditions under which the task has to be performed (task format, participants involved, oral versus written mode) and learner factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety, working memory). Two of the most well known models which try to explain the relationship between cognitive complexity and linguistic performance are the Limited Attentional Capacity Model (Skehan and Foster 1998) and the Multiple Resources Attentional Model or Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson 2005). However, studies which have tried to find evidence for one of these models generally concern oral tasks and oral performance. Only a few studies have looked at the effect of cognitive complexity on the written performance of L2 learners (a.o. Kuiken, Mos and Vedder 2005, Kuiken and Vedder 2007). Moreover, there have been no studies in which the effect of mode on linguistic performance in relation to cognitive task complexity has been investigated.

For those reasons a study was set up in which two tasks, which previously had been submitted to L2 learners in the writing mode, were presented to a group of L2 learners as a speaking task. In these tasks cognitive complexity was manipulated along two variables of Robinson’s Multiple Resources Attentional Model (the number of elements to be taken into account and the reasoning demands posed by the task). The participants in the study were 45 learners of Italian as a second language with Dutch as their mother tongue. Their performance on a simple and a complex oral task was compared with that of another group of Italian L2 learners who had already performed the same tasks in the written mode. Scores on a cloze test were used as a measure of the general level of L2 proficiency of the learners. The results of the study will be discussed with respect to the different mental processes and attentional resources involved in either speaking or writing tasks in L2.
Svetlana Kurteš
University of Cambridge, U.K.

Didacticising Cultural Fluency: Theoretical Considerations and their Practical Application

The paper will discuss some aspects of **acquisitional pragmatics** and possible ways of its didacticisation. More precisely, **language teaching methodologies** are increasingly acknowledging the fact that language learners, particularly those at more advanced stages of language proficiency, when attempting to decode the message and get its proper contextual meaning, need to develop the right level of sophistication not only in their linguistic competences, but also in the pragmatic and cultural competences (Bailey 2003; Low 1988). Such competences should sensitize the learners to the discoursal and pragmatic layers of meaning of the message and enable them to decode its metaphorical and figurative levels – which can be very deeply culturally embedded – rather than interpreting the message only on the basis of its literary uses (Bailey 2003).

It will be reiterated that pragmatic principles underlying the rules of usage of grammatical structures, often quite neglected in traditional reference and descriptive grammars and other relevant pedagogical materials, need to be established and analysed in the socio-cultural context in which the examined instances were found to be naturally occurring. It will then be shown how the basic concepts of the theory of **cultural scripts** (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2007; Wierzbicka 2006) can be introduced into the foreign language classroom. The main construct of the theory refers to “a technique for articulating cultural norms, values and practices using the […] metalanguage of semantic primes as the medium of description” (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2007: 105). These norms change constantly, so “in every period there are certain shared understandings and shared cultural norms that find their expression in a community’s ways of speaking” (Wierzbicka 2006: 9). Perhaps most importantly, the **cultural norms and values** in the theory of cultural scripts are described “from within rather than from outside”, […] form the point of view of those people who are the bearers of the postulated norms and values (and in their own language)” (Wierzbicka 2006: 24).

We shall conclude by illustrating how the basic principles of the theory of cultural scripts could find their practical didactic and potentially auto-didactic application. Language learners can be invited to interpret the chosen messages based on the underlying cultural norms and values and then be encouraged to identify their pragmatic and metaphorical equivalents in the students’ native language and culture. Each student can then compile their own mini data-bank of pragmatic and cultural descriptors that can be further contrastively analysed and illustrated with more authentic examples. By inviting the learners to reflect upon their own experiences, knowledge and understanding of both their own culture and the
culture of the target language, the teacher can help them not only to improve their cultural fluency, but also gradually develop relevant metacognitive strategies that will in turn ensure more successful and more autonomous language learning and learning in general (Kurteš, in print).
‘He’s got a bit of a loose nappy’
Figurative Thinking and Foreign Language Learning Metaphor and Metonymy in Institutional Discourse

Figurative thinking refers to the online process of producing and/or decoding figurative language (in particular metaphor and metonymy) in context. Research suggests that the ability to understand and produce metaphor and metonymy involves, to varying degrees, the cognitive processes of: noticing; activation of source domain knowledge; associative fluency; analogical reasoning, and image formation (Littlemore and Low, 2006). In this talk I begin by outlining the contribution that figurative thinking can make to communicative language ability, and argue that it deserves to be included in second language teaching syllabi.

I then go on to present research that I am currently conducting into the role of metaphor and metonymy, as well as other types of figurative language, in institutional discourse. I focus in particular on the problems that that figurative language presents to second language learners who are attempting to enter unfamiliar discourse communities. I argue that figurative language can serve as a powerful device for members of discourse communities to develop and maintain their identity. It can also serve as a barrier to entry for potential new members of those communities. It is likely to be particularly problematic when those potential new members are non-native speakers of the language.

I focus on two types of institutional discourse: spoken academic discourse and spoken workplace discourse. Within these discourse communities, I look at how people use figurative language to construct and maintain their identities, as well as to perform a range of other functions. I then go on to look at the issue from the perspective of the non-native speaker attempting to enter these discourse communities, analysing the problems that they face and the attempts that they make to overcome these problems. I also examine the ways in which native speakers in the discourse communities adjust (or fail to adjust) the ways in which they use figurative language when talking to non-native speakers, and the ways in which non-native speakers react to this.

I close with a brief discussion of the results from a series of studies that I have conducted designed to (a) access the cognitive processes employed by second language learners when interpreting figurative language in a range of contexts and (b) test the relative effectiveness of a range of different techniques for promoting figurative thinking ability in second language learners. The techniques involve, among other things: classroom observation; the use of ‘thinkaloud’ techniques; working with transcripts; the use of corpora; activation of the basic senses, and attribute-matching training.
References

An Investigation of the Near-Native Speakers' Lexical Processing System and its Implication on L2 Ultimate Attainment

To form a descriptive basis for establishing the learning potential in adult second language acquisition, many SLA researchers have urged that studies on L2 ultimate attainment should identify the domains in which adult L2 learners are or are not able to attain native-like proficiency levels. The paper will report on a study that explored whether a native-like lexical processing system can be attained by advanced adult L2 learners. To this end, the study adopted the advanced-learner approach, recruiting 23 adult L2 Chinese learners, whose L2 reading skills were comparable to native Chinese speakers, and 23 native controls. Two online (sentence) reading tasks involving semantic judgments and lexical decisions were administered to the participants. Analyses revealed that, while the two groups were comparable in terms of their overall Chinese reading ability, similarities and differences co-existed between them with regard to the underlying lexical processing procedure and the nature of the activated lexical information. Implications for the L2 lexical processing system will be discussed and pedagogical implications for L2 Chinese reading instruction will be provided.
Input and Output Processing in Second Language Acquisition
A Case Study for the Spanish Subjunctive

The research conducted applies PI to the formal instruction of the Spanish mood selection in relative clauses, while replicating two previous studies at the same time: Collentine (1998) and Farley (2001).

To the present date, PI has traditionally been compared to so-called ‘output-based’ traditional instructions. In those studies, the focus of research has been the instruction effect for experimental groups with different cognitive processes, that is, with processing input and output. However, in the study presented here, PI (and all its theoretical premises) has also been directly applied to output, obtaining surprising results that cast new light on the purpose and use of this methodology. Hence, leaving the comparison between experimental groups aside, the focus was set -within one single instruction method- on the task itself, and thus, on the processing strategy: whether interpretation or production of the target structure wielded better acquisition results.

Lastly, the need for research in this field with learners of a mother tongue other than English led to work with German students. Research of this kind is necessary in order to ascertain the claim made that PI is a methodology whose application always yields positive results.
This paper presents results of a case study on the use of strategies of impersonalization by Spanish university students in writing and translation tasks in English and Spanish. It is hypothesized that characteristic errors made by Spanish students in designating events involving defocusing of agency/cause in English derive from differences in conceptualization and construal (Langacker 2000). Other factors involved, it will be argued, are the following: degree of explicitness in the designation of the subject element in both languages; grammatical vs. pragmatic motivation for word order; hypercorrection modelled on the use of 'anticipatory it' in English. That is, they derive from cognitive and pragmatic factors, and by the constraints imposed by the codification system in each language (Bernárdez 1997).

This paper explores the ways in which events are designated and the varying degrees of inclusion or exclusion of social actors (van Leeuwen 1996). In the designation of events, when the activity is included the exclusion of the agent leaves a definite trace. Languages make use of a set of strategies which represent a continuum in the mystification of agency or degree to which an agent is evoked. We have used the term 'impersonalisation strategies' to refer to a variety of linguistic means which allow for varying degrees of suppression or of backgrounding of the role of agency, ranging from implicit reference to the agent, to generic reference to the type of agent, and finally to some abstract and schematic notion of causation (Marín-Arrese 2002).

Strategies of impersonalisation in English include: agentless passive, resultative, get-construction, impersonal pronouns (one, you, we,...), unmarked intransitive (inherently and non-inherently spontaneous events, Kemmer 1993), existentials and nominalization. Spanish exhibits a more complex system of codification: agentless periphrastic passive, resultative estar, passive se, impersonal se, inchoative se (non-inherently spontaneous events), unmarked intransitive (inherently spontaneous events), impersonal use of pronouns (uno, nosotros,...), modalised impersonal expressions (hay que, urge, ...), existentials, nominalisation (Nedjalkov 1988; Shibatani 1988; Gómez Torrego 1992; Maldonado 1999, Marín-Arrese 2002, 2003, inter alia).

The purpose of this study is twofold: (i) the identification of qualitative and quantitative differences in the use of impersonalisation strategies between the two languages in the writing and translation tasks; (ii) the identification of errors in the FL tasks, and the possible explanations due to differences in the construal of events, and/or in pragmatic and 'grammatical' differences between the two languages.
References


Irene Mittelberg
VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Gesture as Mediational Practice:**
**Embodied Cognition and Semiotic Acts in Language Teaching**

Recent research on the semiotics of L2 teaching contexts has confirmed what language teachers have always been aware of: hand gestures are part of the multimodal tools and practices both teachers and students draw upon when attempting to make meaning or when trying to make sense of what others convey. By engaging the body in semiotic activities – such as facial expressions, posture, and manual gestures -- speakers may transgress L2 linguistic limitations. Ideas, emotions, and intentions can be expressed more effectively and also more naturally. Inseparable from the human body and social space, gesture aids in portraying one’s sense of subjectivity and identity, and enhances the linguistic mediation of lexical, conceptual and cultural knowledge as well as social norms (e.g., Gullberg 1998; Kramsch 2002; Kress et al. 2001; Lantolf & Thorne 2006; McCafferty 2004; McNeill 2005; Mittelberg 2006; van Lier 2002).

On the basis of video data collected in beginning German courses, this paper explores how the teachers’ spontaneous co-speech gestures render abstract concepts and structures, especially those pertaining to grammar, more graspable. It further illustrates how gestures may help manage classroom interaction without articulating every semantic nuance in the target language (e.g., when giving feedback or instructions). I will demonstrate some of the ways in which gesture, as a dynamic corporal modality, appears to be particularly apt at representing activities, spatial information, as well as relations between concepts, things, and people.

Taking an approach combining traditional semiotic theories and contemporary cognitive linguistic theories (e.g., Dirven & Pörings 2002; Jakobson 1956; Mittelberg fc.; Mittelberg & Waugh fc.; Peirce 1960), I suggest that gestural signs are in part motivated by concrete object manipulation, motor actions and conceptual metaphor and metonymy. The goal is to show that investigations into the logic and use of gesture can foster our understanding of situated, distributed cognition and the emergence of meaning in interpretive processes. To that effect, the paper will offer insights into how gestures produced in the L2 classroom may serve as tangible bridges between minds and languages.
References


Daisuke Nakamura

Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan

**Awareness, Input Frequency, and Construction Learning: A Replication and Extension of Casenhiser and Goldberg (2005) to Adult Second Language Acquisition**

This presentation reports results of a study investigating the effect of input skewedness and input consistency on adult second language (L2) construction learning, by replicating and extending Casenhiser and Goldberg (2005). Casenhiser and Goldberg's instructional conditions and English targets are replicated, with an L2 learning proficient population, and are extended to the acquisition of Samoan constructions, in a repeated measures design.

In Usage-based models (UB) of language and language acquisition (Barlow & Kemmer, 2000; Bybee 2007; Goldberg 2006; Tomasello 2003), children are assumed to develop adult abstract constructions in a stepwise fashion by gradually schematizing early item-based constructions from caretakers’ real-time usages. During SLA, a similar argument is advocated by Nick Ellis (2002). In UB models, two types of frequency effect are distinguished: type frequency leads to construction generalization while token frequency does to construction entrenchment and automatization. Although these should be separated conceptually, recent experimental findings suggest that skewing input facilitates construction generalization more efficiently than mere type frequency manipulation (Casenhiser & Goldberg, 2005; Goldberg, Casenhiser, & Sethuraman, 2004). Additionally Childers and Tomasello (2001) found that consistently providing pronouns into the subject and object slots facilitated abstract transitive construction generalization. In the experiments reported, input skewedness and input consistency were manipulated in a 2 (+/- skewed) x 2 (+/-consistent), two-way factorial design. The [+skewed, + consistent] group were hypothesized to outperform the others while both [+skewed, -consistent] and [-skewed, + consistent] groups were to outperform the baseline [-skewed, +consistent] group in terms of both production and comprehension of a novel “APPEARANCE” construction (as in Casenhiser & Goldberg, 2005) and comprehension of a Samoan ergative construction (as in Robinson, 2005). Both were novel constructions for adult participants. While familiar with the L2 English vocabulary, prior to the experimental treatments participants memorized requisite novel Samoan vocabulary. During computerized delivery of conditions they matched English and Samoan constructions with visual stimuli in the comprehension tests (as in Casenhiser & Goldberg) and additionally produced targeted constructions by arranging words in a guided production test.

Additionally reported are findings on the relations between awareness, perceived difficulty of L2 constructions and their comprehension and production. Goldberg (2006, p.26) argues, “language learning is an excellent example of implicit learning”. But it has
been argued that all L2 learning requires allocating attention to surface linguistic forms (Schmidt, 2001) and subsequent rehearsal within short-term working memory that results in awareness at the level of noticing (Robinson, 2003). These issues and claims were addressed using a 3-point scale retrospective awareness questionnaire (noticing the rule, correct word order, correct word order with a critical morpheme). Task and construction difficulty were judged using a 5-point scale questionnaire. A positive intercorrelation among awareness, production, and comprehension was assumed. The findings shed light on the roles of awareness and input manipulation during adult SLA, and on potential productive relationships between cognitive linguistics, L2 processing and current L2 learning theories (Robinson & Ellis, in press).
Teresa Naves
University of Barcelona, Spain

Analysis of Attentional Capacity
in a foreign Language Learners’ Writing Task

Skehan and Foster (1999) hypothesised that, when faced with cognitively demanding production tasks, L2 learners will attend to conveying meaning first and to accuracy and the linguistic complexity of the output last. Contrary to Skehan and Foster’s Limited Attentional Capacity Model, Robinson (2001) proposed that learners can access multiple and non-competitional attentional pools. Robinson’s proposal is consistent with Long (1996) and with Schmidt’s (2001) hypothesis on Cognition. The Cognition Hypothesis, integrating information-processing and interactionist explanations of L2 task effects (Long, 1996; Schmidt, 2001), predicts that gradually increasing the cognitive demands of tasks will push learners to greater accuracy and complexity in L2 production.

In a previous cross-sectional study (Author et al., 2003) six groups of EFL learners’ writing were compared after having received either 200, 416 or 726 hours of instruction. The same writing task was used. It was assessed by means of analytical measures following Wolfe-Quintero et al. 1998. The age of each group when tested ranged from 10 to 18. Two patterns of writing development were observed. For the three groups of young beginner learners aged below 13 who had received less up to 416 hours of instruction there was no syntactic or lexical development while accuracy and fluency seemed to increase in parallel. However, when the written production of older and more instructed groups of learners was analysed, syntactic complexity seemed to be achieved at the expense of accuracy.

This paper aims at re-examining the results of Author et al. 2003 in the light of the two cognitive hypotheses stated above. The trade offs of accuracy and syntactic complexity predicted by the work of Skehan and Foster is only found for the less proficient and less instructed learners. However, the development of the writing components of the younger and less instructed groups cannot fully be explained by either of the two cognitive hypotheses. The more instructed (between 416 and 726 hours) and older (between 14 and 18) learners’ writing is characterized by a steady grow both in accuracy and syntactic complexity. The writing pattern observed with older and more proficient learners seems to partially corroborate the Cognition Hypothesis since the demands of the task seem to trigger both accuracy and syntactic complexity but not lexical complexity.

This paper also aims at examining whether older and more proficient university learners’ writing (N=120) follows the last pattern described or whether as predicted by Robinson, the demands of the task will trigger both accuracy and syntactic and lexical complexity. The same writing task as in the previous study was used. The results partially corroborated the Cognition Hypothesis. University students’ writing is characterized by both

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being more accurate and syntactically complex. However, no significant development of lexical complexity was observed.

Foreign language learners whose age, amount of instruction, quality of input received and proficiency is much lower than that of second language learners should also be examined when testing the cognitive hypothesis of language learning. Some of those variables may need to be taken into account in the explanatory cognitive hypotheses.
Acquisition of Light Verb Constructions in the Academic English of Spanish EFL University Students: A Comparative Corpus Study

This paper presents the findings from a cross-linguistic corpus study of light verb constructions in the academic texts of Spanish EFL university students and American college students. Concretely, the study focuses on do, have, give, make, and take as these are high frequency verbs which could be predicted to show significant levels of erroneous uses as well as over- and under-use. The two corpora compared are the Spanish section of the *International Corpus of Learner English* (194,845 words) and the LOCNESS corpus (149,790 words), both held at Louvain. The corpus analyses were made by using Wordsmith 3.1 for initial searches and later refined through manual methods. These analyses were complimented by elicitation data, consisting of both fill-in and evaluation (judgment) exercises, administered to students whose level of competence had previously been established. Two further corpora, *Signed Editorials-English* (113,475 words) and *Signed Editorials-Spanish* (151,011 words), were also consulted in order to reveal differences in the frequency of use of these verbs in expert texts. For purposes of comparison, the tokens from the different corpora were normed per 10,000 words. This multi-method approach attempts to account for both the students’ comprehension and their production of these verbs, as well as to identify which features of the student texts are typical of developmental processes and which show transfer effects, thus providing a deeper understanding of acquisition procedures in FLA.

The paper first offers a brief overview of possible definitions of “light verbs” (Dixon, 1991; Mel’cuk 1996; Wierzbicka 1982). In this study we have accepted less restrictive definitions (Allerton 2002; Altenberg 2001; Langer 2004) of light verb constructions such as: a combination consisting of verb plus object, in which “the verb contributes comparatively little to the lexical meaning of the combination” (Nesselhauf 2004: 20) and the object is fundamental for determining the meaning of the whole.

Our preliminary study reveals different types of uses according to verbs. The Spanish EFL students’ texts show a significant and consistent underuse of make and have in delexicalized constructions. On the other hand, do is overused (as in ...*did an effort*), a finding which has been interpreted as a transfer effect since in Spanish, both verbs make and do correspond to a single Spanish form, *hacer*. In the case of have, an underuse of delexicalized constructions in the Spanish EFL texts contrasts with an overuse of have with an abstract object, as in *have fear*. The verb give as a light verb is significantly overused as well incorrectly used (*give judgment*) in the Spanish EFL students’ texts in comparison to the American college student’s texts. As for take, the Spanish EFL students seem to have...
learned a limited numbers of constructions with this verb (*take into account*) and, for the most part, they use them correctly. In the erroneous uses of these verbs by the Spanish students, it is often difficult to tell whether the students actually meant to use a light verb construction or not. The fill-in and judgment exercises, to be administered this autumn, will help to clarify developmental and transfer effects in the comprehension and production of written texts by Spanish EFL university students.

This study will be of interest to those who are concerned with more theoretical aspects, such as the categorization of light verbs and the extent to which they can be considered “meaningless”, as well as to those who are interested in the study of developmental and transfer effects.
Underlying the mainstream of current SLA research is the idea that some level of attention to the formal aspects of language is necessary for acquisition to take place. It is self-evident and commonsensical that focusing on specific linguistic aspects helps the learner to acquire and internalise them. Numerous recent studies investigated the complex relationships between the role of cognitive processes (consciousness, attention, awareness, detection…) and the process of language learning, and there is nearly global consensus among researchers that some degree of attention to problematic (fragile, crucial/non-salient) aspects of the input seems be essential for understanding and learning to occur.

At the same time learning invariably proceeds by relating new facts to the already familiar (which is why we learn in terms of prototypes). This is particularly vital in the process of foreign language learning (FLL). In this context the familiar is, of course, the student’s mother tongue (L1). It is therefore incumbent that this resource be actively capitalised on by the teacher. Drawing on the learner’s L1 (or another mastered language) and showing comparisons and contrasts between this and the target languages mirrors, facilitates, and accelerates the processes which occur independently in his/her mind. The role of pedagogic intervention is unquestionable, as transfer of operations from the L1 to the FL usually requires additional correction and clarification (cf. Leontiev 1981:28).

This is not, however, the end of the story. The basic reason why we look for familiar orientation points and similarities when in new circumstances is our natural need for safety. We feel more comfortable and at ease at home, in our district and city, than at a new venue, even though the latter may be objectively better-appointed, more attractive and safer, just because in the former we could take more things for granted. This is also why the target language should literally be taught in the framework of the learner’s L1 – what has come to be known as the Language Interface Model (LIM; Gozdawa-Gołębiowski 2003). This proceeds from an explication of how grammar rules operate in the learners’ L1, through an explanation of relevant L2 rules and subsequent modification of the L1 rule to accommodate L2 data, with practice first expecting the learner to apply the FL rules to L1 (sic!) examples, to finally end with competence expansion. The LIM allows the learner to link new language items with his/her present knowledge or experience; i.e., placing it within his/her Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 1934). By such a gradual, multi-stage method the learners gain command of the FL system before actually starting to use the operational principles in the TL itself. The juxtaposition and use of L1 and L2 rules alongside help the latter merge with the former (leading to the development of linguistic multicompetence) and
thus, hopefully, submerge to the subconscious, indicating that the material has become successfully automatized and internalized. This novel, eclectic method is supplemented with learner-friendly insights from generative syntax and cognitive semantics. A controlled longitudinal classroom experiment carried out on secondary-school students ($n=292$) across a representative range of grammar areas reveals considerably better results of experimental groups over control groups not only in a follow-up test, but also in a deferred post-test, thus corroborating the importance of explicit learning, attention, and $L_1$ awareness in interlanguage development.
Language Awareness and Transfer of Acquired Knowledge to New Contexts

Recently second language acquisition research has witnessed an explosion of studies that examined second language acquisition under cognitive and information processing frameworks (e.g., Leow 1997a and 1997b; Robinson, 2005; Schmidt, 2001; VanPatten, 2002; White 2001, among others). A major focus of this research has been exploring the role of various cognitive processes in language.

Contrary to Krashen’s non-interface position (see Krashen 1982), attention researchers reject any dissociation between learning and awareness, and argue that learners need to consciously notice some particular form in the input before that form can be further processed. Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1995, 2001) suggests that noticing is the necessary requirement for language learning to occur. However, Robinson (1997b) demonstrates that merely noticing a form in the input does not correlate with progress in language learning, and that a higher level of awareness at the level of understanding is a stronger predictor of success in language learning.

Despite the controversy regarding the level of attention necessary for language acquisition to take place, the majority of researchers in SLA agree that some degree of attention to problematic aspects of the input is necessary before language acquisition takes place. This general agreement, nonetheless, disguises clear diversity among research as to how to achieve that goal, thus, paving the way to a multiplicity of approaches such as consciousness-raising (e.g., SharwoodSmith, 1981; Rutherford, 1987), focus on form (e.g., Long, 1991), explicit instruction (e.g., DeKeyser, 1998), output practice (Swain, 1985; Shehadah, 2003), analytic teaching (Lyster, 1994), and input processing (e.g., VanPatten, 2003) to name just a few. This preponderance of approaches to formal instruction, if anything, reflects resurgence of interest in grammar teaching after a period in which its role in language learning was severely marginalized (Nassaji and Fotos, 2004).

This paper explores the facilitative effects of various types of attention-drawing instructional conditions (explicit and implicit) on the acquisition of a complex syntactic feature (English dative alternation). Specifically, the study addresses: (a) the interaction of level of explicitness in which the target feature is presented and learning outcomes; and (b) the ability of learners to generalize any acquired knowledge to new contexts. Learners were divided randomly into four groups: (1) a rule-oriented group, (2) an input enhancement group, (3) a content-oriented group, and (4) a control group. Results of the study show that (a) explicit instruction of rules correlates positively with gains on multiples measures of linguistic accuracy and language production; (b) higher level of awareness correlate positively with language development; and (c) only learners in the rule-oriented group were able to transfer their acquired knowledge to instances that were not encountered in the treatment sessions.
Numerous researchers have recently acknowledged the fact that we know little about what adult language learners do with the target language (TL) input they receive. Some have concluded that the best way to study what learners “take in” (or their “intake”) is to compare the input learners receive with their performance. To do this, one must measure the input provided to the learner. One way to measure input is to begin at the beginning, that is, control the input provided to learners at the very beginning of the acquisition process. As natural language provides methodological challenges, artificial languages have often been used (cf. special issue of Studies in Second Language Acquisition on testing SLA theories in research laboratories; Hudson Kam & Newport, 2005; Reber, 1967). However, SLA researchers are not always in agreement about the application of theories based on artificial languages to explain the acquisition of natural languages (cf. Schmidt, 1994). More recently, a small number of researchers have attempted to gather data from subjects upon first exposure to a novel natural language or within the first minutes or hours of acquisition (cf., Dimroth et al., under review; Rast & Dommergues, 2003, Zwitserlood et al., 2000). Our study is one of these.

In this paper, we will present a study in which all the input provided to our learners (French learners of Polish) from the moment of first exposure was controlled. This methodology allows a quantitative comparison of our learners’ performance in Polish on a given task with the total input they had received up to and including the task. Learners were tested on initial exposure, then at various intervals up to 8 hours of exposure.

Our quantified results show that through such comparison, we gain a better understanding of how some TL input becomes part of the learner’s language system and some does not. We explain why a learner perceived, comprehended and/or produced a particular input item at a given time. From these results emerges a typology of “intake” that should allow us to empirically test various aspects of this phenomenon in the future.
References


Can Word-Order Rules Be Learned Implicitly?

It is common to refer to language acquisition as a real-world phenomenon where most learning proceeds implicitly, i.e. independently of the deliberate intention to learn and in the absence of awareness of what was learned. At the same time, however, little effort has been made, in implicit learning research, to employ stimuli that resemble natural languages more closely than the letter or tone sequences commonly found, for example, in Artificial Grammar Learning (AGL) studies. In this talk, we report the findings of two experiments that applied AGL methodology and awareness measurement techniques to the learning of natural language syntax.

The aims of these experiments were two-fold. Firstly, we sought to determine whether natural language syntax, in this case verb-placement rules, could be acquired implicitly, i.e. incidentally and without awareness of the learning outcome. Secondly, we aimed at exploring what role, if any, awareness plays in the acquisition of syntactic rules. For this purpose, a semi-artificial grammar, consisting of an English lexicon and German syntax, was used in order to generate the stimulus sentences. English declarative sentences were rearranged in accordance to German verb placement rules as in (1-2):

(1) A few months ago played Jennifer an important part in the school play.

(2) Yesterday learned Chloe that the university her application accepted.

In the training phase, experimental groups were trained on the grammar by means of different exposure conditions: subjects in the incidental exposure condition were asked to judge the semantic plausibility of each sentence while subjects in the intentional exposure condition were instructed to listen attentively to the training sentences in order to discover word-order rules. In the testing phase, all subjects were then asked to listen to new sentences and to judge, on an item-by-item basis, whether they followed the word-order rules of the semi-artificial grammar or not. Performance on the grammaticality judgment task was used a measure of learning. Awareness was assessed by means of confidence judgments (How confident are you in your decision?), source judgments (What was the basis of your grammaticality judgment? Guess, intuition, memory or rule-knowledge) and two post-test measures: accuracy estimates (How accurate do you think you were in your grammaticality judgments?) and verbal reports (Did you notice any particular rule or regularity?)

The results of our experiments indicate that adult learners are able to acquire natural language syntax under both incidental and intentional learning conditions, without the benefit of feedback and after a relatively brief exposure period. The findings from the incidental exposure condition provided no evidence for implicit learning as the different...
measures of awareness showed that subjects were aware of the syntactic rules in question. However, learning without awareness was observed under intentional learning conditions: in this case, when subjects attributed their grammaticality decisions to guesses, they were actually significantly above chance level. Instructing subjects to discover the word-order rules of the semi-artificial grammar resulted in both aware and unaware knowledge. The implications of these findings for future research and L2 pedagogy will be discussed.
Monika Reif
University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany

Making Progress Simpler?
A Conceptual-Pragmatic Approach to Teaching
Problematic Areas of English TA

For decades, the notions of tense and aspect (TA) in English have received considerable
attention in theoretical linguistics (e.g. Comrie 1976, 1985; Klein 1994; Langacker 1991,
2001). TA furthermore occupy a prominent place in most scientific and pedagogical
grammars (e.g. Mindt 2000; Radden and Dirven 2007; Sammon 2002), as well as in the
literature on EFL acquisition and learning (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig 2000; Römer 2005;
Salaberry and Shirai 2002). At the same time, the English TA system has often been
described as a major source of errors, even for advanced learners (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2000;

In an attempt to detect the main “problem areas” for German learners of English, I
have counted and classified all TA errors that occurred in a total of 200 essays written by
intermediate and advanced university students. The average essay length amounted to 1000
words, and all errors were independently marked by one NS and one NNS of English.
Possible explanations have been put forward for a) the high frequency of specific TA errors
and b) the production of certain errors at a particular stage of the learning process.
Interference of the learners’ L1, as well as the conceptual complexity of certain TA
constructions have been identified as influential factors within the EFL learning process.

On the basis of this error analysis, teaching materials aimed at intermediate EFL
students have been developed, which will be tested in an empirical study at the University in
Landau during winter term 2007. The theoretical assumptions about grammar underlying
these materials are largely derived from Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar theory (cf.
Langacker 1991, 2000) and Fauconnier’s Mental Space theory (cf. Fauconnier 1994, 1997),
two approaches which are in line with the general movement of Cognitive Linguistics. Both
corpus-based language examples and graphical elements (static/animated pictures,
schematic images) are contained in the materials which will be presented within the
framework of this paper.
References


Comprehension Judgments of Resultative Sentence in German: The Relevance of the Verb Factor ‘SB’

In my talk, I will present the results of an empirical study intended to show the relevance of syntactic and semantic properties within resultative sentences in German for the acceptability judgments of adult native speakers that is to say, judgments of the comprehensibility (henceforth ‘comprehension judgments’). The sentences had the structure NP₁ – verb- NP₂ – adjective. I was interested, in particular, in the relevance of syntactic and semantic properties of verbs for comprehension judgments. It turned out the subjects indeed concentrate on the verb properties when making comprehension judgments. In addition, I will discuss the possibility that in sentence comprehension L2 adults differ from native speakers in that the former do not concentrate on the verb properties to the extent the latter do. Instead, L2 adults take semantic properties within sentences into account. In this respect they exhibit similarities with L1 learning children.

The specific syntactic and semantic properties of verbs mentioned above determine whether a verb permits a resultative construction. To capture these properties the verb factor ‘Semantic Binding Power’ (SB) is introduced here (Richter 2004, 2005, 2006). By SB the contrasts in (1) can be represented that is to say, the verbs in (1) differ in their SB:

(1) a) *er erschreckt die Wanderer ängstlich
‘he frightens the hikers scared’

b) er macht die Wanderer ängstlich
‘he makes the hikers scared’

c) er schneidet das Gemüse klein
‘he cuts the vegetables into small pieces’

Machen does not restrict the NP₂ (direct object) semantically and permits a resultative construction. The NP₂ of erschrecken on the other hand is affected by the process expressed by the verb. A resultative construction with erschrecken is not possible. The NP₂ of schneiden is affected by the process expressed by the verb, too, in contrast to erschrecken however a resultative construction with schneiden is possible. Thus, the SB value of a verb corresponds (1) with the verb property to permit a resultative construction which implies the property of complex predicate formation; (see the analysis of resultative sentences in Neeleman 1995) and (2) with the semantic relation of the verb and its NP₂. Beside SB I assume three semantic factors and a syntactic factor. The choice of these factors is motivated by the syntactic and semantic properties of the test stimuli that seemed to be organized by this set of factors.

The assumption of hierarchical ordered linguistic factors is based on OT (Prince &
Smolensky 1993). These factors are represented in human grammars as proposed in the Competition Model (MacWhinney 1987). I assume that L2 adults and native speakers differ with respect to the hierarchies in their grammars. This assumption is based on the findings of Roberts, Havik, Schreuder and van Hout (2007): In sentence comprehension native speakers concentrated on the properties of verbs, while the L2 learners focussed on semantic properties within the sentences.

It will be shown here that comprehension judgments of L1 adults can be explained by a grammar that is constituted amongst others by the SB factor. It will be discussed whether different comprehension patterns of L2 adults and native speakers are due to the different relevance of SB in the grammars of these two groups.
Richard Cromer (1974) first coined the term 'The Cognition Hypothesis' to describe how he understood conceptual development to set the pace for linguistic development in first language acquisition. Although he later abandoned a strong form of this Hypothesis, I argue in this presentation that a weaker form of the Cognition Hypothesis has much to offer in explaining the course, and extent of crosslinguistic influence on, second language acquisition.

I specifically make use of this Cognition Hypothesis for second language acquisition to motivate proposals for task-based language teaching materials and syllabus design. To illustrate the methodology, and research questions of interest to this program for establishing an empirically grounded, acquisitionally motivated rationale for second language pedagogy I describe the results of one recent study. In this study, three interactive tasks, increasing in the complexity of resource-directing reasoning demands on speaker/storyteller attribution of, and linguistic reference to, the thoughts and intentions of characters in narrative stimuli were performed by Japanese L1 speakers of English. Largely consistent with the claims of the Cognition Hypothesis, results of the study I describe show; i) task complexity led to more complex speech assessed using specific measures motivated by the conceptual/linguistic demands of the tasks but did not, however, affect accuracy, fluency and complexity assessed using general measures; ii) tasks requiring complex reasoning about characters’ intentional states led to significantly more interaction, and uptake of premodified input than simpler versions; and iii) output processing anxiety showed a linearly progressive, negative relationship to use of complex speech as tasks increased in complexity. The role of specific versus general measures of production is discussed, as is the importance of examining interactions of production, interaction and uptake with measures of individual differences when researching the influence of L2 task demands on learning and performance.
Ana Laura Rodríguez Redondo, Sarah Díaz-Wengelin, Gemma Píriz, Mª José Carmona, Carmen González & Gloria Fernández
Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

**Cognitive Strategies for the Development of Visuo-Gestural and Motor Abilities in Hearing Adult Learners of Spanish Sign Language as Second Language**

The goal of this paper is the presentation of the different strategies used in the teaching of Spanish Sign Language to hearing adults who learn Spanish Sign Language as a second language. Specifically, hearing adults have to face significant problems related to underdeveloped visuo-perceptual and motor abilities. Learners have to learn to “see the language” (Wilcox and Wilcox, 1991), but also they have to manually produce and spatially organize the language. Occipito-temporal areas are activated bilaterally and left inferior and superior parietal lobes are enhanced in deaf people, but they are only activated in hearing people when they see or hear the translation (Mac Sweeney et al, 2002). These brain areas are involved in the location and configuration of hands in space, and hearing people have to be trained to apply it to a visuo-gestural language rather than to an oral/written one. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that native Sign Language speakers activate specific right hemispheric areas which are directly engaged in the topographic use of space (Emmorey et al, 1995, 2002, Newman, et al. 2002) something which hearing people need to develop as it affects the ability to produce Sign Language syntactic constructions, use of classifiers and the establishment of spatial relationships. From a cognitive point of view, the strategies developed by the group aim at the enhancement of the neurocognitive ability of hearing people for the production of a blending space (Liddell, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003) and the use of signing space topographically.
References


Initial Mapping and Creative Use of Separable-Prefix Verb Constructions

Construction Grammar (e.g., Goldberg, 2003) and Cognitive Linguistic theories (e.g., Croft & Cruise, 2004) hold that basic units of language representations are constructions. These form-meaning mappings develop across interrelated continua (VanPatten, Williams & Rott 2004) that mark partial to complete, weak to robust, and nontargetlike to targetlike knowledge. An initial encounter may result in the establishing of a memory trace. Subsequent processing is necessary to fill in, restructure, and strengthen the construction. The emergence of constructions in L2 learners’ interlanguage is fostered through the repeated encounter of usage events (e.g., Ellis 2001) and the sequential processing of components of constructions (e.g., Bybee, 2002; Sinclair & Muraanen, 2006). Most of the studies conducted to date have been based on English, yet not much is known about morphosyntactically complex languages, such as German.

The current investigation assessed a) the amount and b) which components of separable-prefix verb constructions were encoded by 38 beginning learners of German. Learning (productive knowledge) was measured after the first and second learning trial. Retention was assessed three days later. In sets of 7, 28 constructions were presented as picture-sentence pairs in two different conditions: adjacent (Er kauft ein.) or nested (Er kauft jeden Mittwoch im Supermarkt ein.). Each picture-sentence pair was displayed on a screen for 12 seconds during each learning trial. The ability to use constructions creatively was assessed with guided essay writing task two weeks after the learning phase. In addition, learning was related to learners working memory capacity.

Findings supported Bybee’s linear fusion hypothesis (2002). When learners encountered constructions in an adjacent condition correct production of separable prefixes was higher than in the nested condition. In fact, correct recall of the prefix significantly declined after three days in the nested condition as compared to the adjacent condition. The learning of the verb stem was not affected by the treatment condition. For most of the target constructions learners were able to learn and retain 50 and 75% of the verb stem. The guided writing task showed significantly more correct recall of constructions in the adjacent condition. The majority of separable prefixes in the nested condition were either omitted or the wrong prefix was used. Yet, on a creativity scale students’ essays were more interesting and creative (longer t-units) when they had learned constructions in the nested condition. In addition, initial encoding and retention of prefixes was significantly related to working memory, while the amount of verb stem production was not significantly related.
Very little can be conveyed without grammar, but nothing can be conveyed without vocabulary (Wilkins 1972: 111). Consequently, the acquisition of vocabulary plays a central role in the learning of a second language.

There is psychological evidence that new phenomena are remembered more easily if they are related to previous knowledge (Kielhöfer 1994: 215). This also applies to vocabulary – and it is particularly important in the school context, where pupils are supposed to learn many foreign language words within a relatively short span of time.

Even though the results of psycholinguistic research on lexical motivation are inconclusive, there seems to be more evidence that the potential analysability of words into meaningful constituents has a positive effect on lexical processing. Insofar as psycholinguistic studies such as those by Marslen-Wilson et al. (1994), McQueen and Cutler (1998) or Taft and Kougiou (2004) are based on relatively few example words, a large-scale study on the morphological analysability of actual language material is a desirable complementation.

In my presentation, I would like to present such a study. Drawing on the 2,500 most frequent English and German lexemes from the British National Corpus and the DWDS Core Corpus, it deals with a relevant vocabulary slice for learners of both languages. The lexemes were analysed on the basis of the synchronic etymological competence of a postulated ‘normal’ language user (Augst 1998: IX-X) with a very flexible coding system that takes into account the idiosyncrasies of lexical items. Potential obstacles in the model used include semantic problems, incomplete analysability and differences in spelling and pronunciation between complex words and constituents. Pseudo-constituents such as even and -ing in evening were also encoded as potential mnemonic aids.

Hausmann (2002) and Nation (1990) recommend teaching learners awareness of the structures underlying vocabulary items to improve their ability to learn new words. My presentation deals with the pedagogical implications of cognitive linguistic research and attempts to answer the question to what degree the strategy of morphological analysis can be efficiently applied in the learning of the highest-frequency English and German vocabulary items.
References


Concept Stretching & Model Merging: An Attempt to Account for L2 Processing and Acquisition of Grammatical Constructions

Jurafsky’s (1993, 1996) theory of grammatical construction access and disambiguation consists of two distinct models, the Evidential Access Model and the Local Coherence Model, to account respectively for construction access (the retrieval of candidate structures from the mental store) and construction disambiguation (choosing the most appropriate structure from among those accessed). These two models, which I collectively term the EALC Model for ease of reference, are probabilistic on-line models that utilize Construction Grammar and operate on the same basic assumption as this syntactic theory; namely that all aspects of linguistic knowledge (e.g., morphological knowledge, lexical knowledge, & syntactic knowledge) are represented uniformly by constructions of varying sizes. By allowing such constructions to be accessed in a parallel and uniform manner, as well as acknowledging the powerful influence of frequency effects on language comprehension, Jurafsky’s theory has the potential to account for the interpretation of a huge array of linguistic input. Because it assumes the existence of a final-state adult grammar, however, the EALC Model fails to address the question of how L2 learners, who are not yet armed with complete arsenals of grammatical constructions, manage to acquire constructions and process the linguistic input they encounter.

In order to provide the EALC Model with the explanatory power necessary to account for L2 processing and learning, I will attempt to stretch Jurafsky’s original concept by fusing it with two other models: Abel’s (2003) Dual Idiom Representation Model, which deals with L2 idiom processing, and Chang’s (2001) model of grammatical construction learning in L1 child language acquisition. The Dual Idiom Representation Model allows for smaller, already known lexical constructions to trigger conceptual representations, which can then yield interpretations just as larger grammatical constructions do. Chang's model of construction learning allows for learning to occur concurrent with on-line comprehension through the processes of generalization, hypothesis formation, and the probabilistic consideration of all available evidence.

I will first provide a more detailed explanation of the EALC Model, as well as summaries of the models by Abel and Chang, and then subsequently explore areas in which the three models can potentially be merged to accommodate the issues of construction learning and processing for L2 learners.
References


The online segmentation of a continuous speech stream requires that the listener employ strategies to identify word and syllable boundaries. Much cross-linguistic research has been undertaken on the acoustic cues that are present in the speech stream that allow listeners to locate word boundaries and disambiguate ambiguous input. (See for example Nakatani and Dukes, 1977; Quéné, 1992.) In spoken French, the phonological processes of liaison, elision, and enchaînement often render syllable and word boundaries ambiguous (e.g. un air ‘a melody’ and un nerf ‘a nerve’, both transcribed and syllabified as [œ̃.nɛʁ]). Some research has suggested that in the case of liaison speakers of French give listeners acoustic cues to word boundaries, and thus segmentation, through durational variation of pivotal consonants. Using a lexical decision task in French, Spinelli, McQueen, and Cutler (2003) tested whether phrases rendered ambiguous by liaison hindered lexical access. In this study, reaction time was measured and recognition of vowel-initial words was not slowed due to resyllabification. For example, the words oignon ‘onion’ and rognon ‘kidney’ were both recognized with equal speed in the phrases le dernier oignon ‘the last onion’ and le dernier rognon ‘the last kidney’ though these phrases have ambiguous phonemic content. Spinelli et al. suggested that there must be enough acoustic differentiation between liaison consonants and initial consonants to allow for vowel-initial words to be activated pre-lexically in the word recognition process. Indeed, measurements of the pivotal consonants in pairs such as these revealed that consonants intended as initial consonants (i.e. /ʁ/ in rognon) were significantly longer than consonants that surfaced in liaison environments (i.e. /ʁ/ in dernier oignon). The results of the Spinelli et al. study suggest that these sub-phonemic differences are not sufficiently robust to cancel out competing candidates, but that they are robust enough to “bias interpretation in the correct direction” (2003, p. 250). The authors hypothesize that listeners exploit “subtle but reliable” acoustic cues in French to mark word boundaries and that access to representations in the mental lexicon is facilitated by these cues (2003, p. 248).

The current study directly tested this hypothesis by employing a forced-choice identification task in which both native speakers of French and late learners of French as a second language (L2) were asked to differentiate phrases containing ambiguous phonemic content. Phrases rendered ambiguous by liaison were presented aurally to 15 native speakers of French and 15 late learners. Participants were then asked to indicate what they had just heard by choosing one of two phrases presented visually on a computer screen.

The results suggest that, though durational differences may be systematically present
in the acoustic signal and may allow for the activation of vowel-initial candidates in the word recognition process, these durational differences are not robust enough to systematically guide listeners in disambiguation. Factors involved in top-down processing such as frequency and plausibility were also taken into consideration, but these factors did not play a systematic role in the differentiation of ambiguous phonemic content either.

However, of particular interest for the study of L2 learning is the fact that, though neither participant group performed significantly above chance on the identification task, the two groups did perform similarly as to the directionality of the distribution of their responses. Though overall mean percent correct for both groups was roughly at chance, there were significant biases in most stimulus pairs for both participant groups. Even more striking is the fact that the non-native speakers showed many biases in the same direction as those of the native speaker group. In 10 out of 12 minimal pairs tested the non-native speaker group preferred the same token as the native speakers, which would suggest that the late learners are sensitive to some sort of fine-grained acoustic detail in the L2 and to some extent are behaving like native speakers in this perceptual task.

References


“No, they won’t just sound like each other”:
NNS-NNS Negotiated Interaction and Attention to Phonological Form
on Targeted L2 Pronunciation Tasks

Theoretical and practical research in the past 25 years has provided ample evidence to show that language learners can push each other toward greater accuracy in a second or foreign language (L2). Yet researchers and practitioners alike still hold some reservation as to whether this finding is truly extendable to the realm of L2 pronunciation, fearing that “they’ll just sound like each other.” Thus, this process-oriented study sought to identify ways in which non-native speakers (NNSs) of English implicitly and explicitly draw each other’s attention to phonological forms when working on targeted, interactive pronunciation tasks. Such tasks have been shown to generate negotiated interaction through which learners can attend to target forms, provide each other with corrective feedback, produce modified output, and thereby advance their L2 learning process. The phoneme $\theta$ (/\(\theta\)/)—was selected as a target form as a catalyst for task-based negotiation between two NNSs. A two-way information gap task in the form of a map was created in which parallel street pairs were labeled with names including minimal pairs of words incorporating the target form and the phonemes /s/, /t/ and /f/, which are commonly substituted for /\(\theta\)/ by English learners. This design balanced inherent communicative value while requiring accurate perception and production of the $\theta$ as participants were required to give each other directions to various landmarks on the map. This balance raised the salience of the target form, and increased the likelihood that interlocutors would need to negotiate the form, thereby drawing each other’s attention to it. The study addressed the following research questions: (1) When working together on communicative pronunciation tasks, do NNSs draw each other’s attention to a targeted phonological form in ways generally understood to facilitate SLA? I.e., (1a) Do they provide each other with corrective feedback on the target form? (1b) Do they modify their production of the target form? (2) If NNSs do provide each other with feedback that focuses on the target form, are there specific ways in which they do so? (3) If NNSs do modify their target form production, do the modifications result in more targetlike pronunciation?

The task was incorporated as part of the curriculum for three existing, in-tact, intermediate L2 pronunciation classes (n=12, approximately, in each class). Participants in each class performed the task during one of the regular weekly meetings in the language laboratory, where they communicated with their interlocutor through headphones alone, with no visual contact, thereby forcing reliance on oral communication including accurate perception and production of the target form. Interlocutors of differing L1s were assigned...
into dyads whenever possible, in order to raise the potential for the need to negotiate. Negotiations pertaining to the target form were coded for corrective feedback and modified pronunciation. Data reveal ample evidence of NNSs’ ability to implicitly and explicitly draw each other’s attention to phonological form and push each other toward more targetlike pronunciation as a step in the process of L2 learning.
Some Constraints Governing Word Stress Placement
in Cameroon English and Nigerian English

Word stress in Cameroon English (CamE) and Nigerian English (NigE), which is very similar, differs significantly from the RP stress system reflected in current ELT dictionaries and textbooks. This difference has generated a lot of speculation in the literature, with some authors arguing for the inordinate and unpredictable nature of word stress placement in CamE/NigE, and others invoking the influence of local languages. This paper markedly differs from these two positions, and attributes the difference to the CamE/NigE speakers’ behaviour with regard to a number of constraints, some of which are observed and others are violated for particular words, often in a predictable way and independently of the influence of local languages. The constraints identified include the Backward and Antepenultimate Stress (BAPS) constraint shared with RP which requires stress to fall at the beginning of a word or on the antepenultimate syllable of polysyllabic words, the reverse Forward Stress constraint (FS) more characteristic of CamE/NigE which requires stress to fall later in a word, Noun-Verb Alternation (NVA) which requires the nominal form of a word to have backward stress and the verbal form to have forward stress, Final Obstruent Verbal stress (FOVS) which requires verbs ending in an obstruent to be stressed finally, Affix Stress Property (ASP) which assigns a particular stress behaviour to some affixes, and many more. For example, in CamE/NigE, the observance of BAPS accounts for the stress pattern of *idea, *lieutenant, *opponent, *umbrella; the observance of FS accounts for *carbon, *matress, *salad, *petty; NVA accounts for *applause, *extent, *success; FOVS accounts for *embar*ras, *interpret, (verb) *kid*hap; the observance of ASP (which RP violates in this particular case) accounts for *spiritual. In fact, the paper shows that, in a large number of words, (CamE/NigE) stress placement results from competition between several constraints, in which the winning constraint is often different from what obtains in RP. The approach used in the analyses is eclectic, but draws heavily on the Optimality Theory.
Knowing is Seeing: Conceptual Metaphor, Cultural Models and Image Schemas in Cognitive Language Pedagogy

In the SLA classroom, the complementary processes of acquisition and learning (Pütz/Niemeier/Dirven 2001: xiii) can be enhanced by virtue of top-down as opposed to bottom-up processing. However, the specificity of SLA processes constrains the use of either strategy by virtue of parameters such as learner proficiency, structural contiguity of L1 and L2 grammars and ‘cognitive economy’, all of which would suggest top-down rather than bottom-up processing within generative approaches to SLA.

In contrast, the experientalist CL paradigm posits that the human mind is holistic, entailing that “language operates on the basis of the same principles that other cognitive faculties of the mind use” (Kövecses 2006: 11). To a degree, the primacy of meaning and conceptualization rather than linguistic form obliterates the distinction between top-down and bottom-up processing. In educational discourse, - the activity of sharing concepts and understanding as well as developing methodologies reflecting the teaching experience itself - metaphorical thinking is pivotal in two respects: in acquiring new knowledge and in integrating it with existing knowledge structures. O’Malley/Chamot (1990: 46f.) identify several cognitive learning strategies such as organization, inferencing, imagery, transfer or elaboration all of which relate to the learner’s coping with new information or unfamiliar knowledge, respectively. Crucially, metaphorizing is central to all of them, underlining its importance in blurring the boundaries of implicit and explicit learning. Consequently, the distinction between language and thought is untenable in educational discourse (cf. Cameron 2003: 27).

It is against the background of these fundamental aspects that this paper proposes a two-fold analysis of the German ‘context of situation’. First, the ongoing theoretical discussion is to be extended by examining the teaching material and resources available to German secondary education contexts. Second, the possibilities of modelling lexical expansion and cultural knowledge in ESL/EFL syllabi will be illustrated. It will be argued that the CL paradigm, particularly conceptual metaphor, cultural models and image schemas, has not been explored in a sufficient and systematic way in German FLT. In particular, the following issues will be addressed:

- In the European context, any approach to SLA has to be embedded into the broader framework of supranational language and educational policies which increasingly affect teaching methodologies. Approaches to pedagogy and teaching methodology are regularly subject to political preferences: how does this affect SLA and how is this amenable to the promotion of European multilingualism?
• Are the existing German syllabi designed in a way to accommodate cognitive approaches to SLA? What are the possibilities of curriculum development in favour of cognitive language pedagogy?
• To what extent do teachers’ resources and learning material already incorporate cognitive learning strategies, including cognitive approaches to culture-specific conceptualizations of the target language?
Susana M. Sotillo
Montclair State University, USA

Noticing Errors in Negotiation of Meaning Moves, Corrective Feedback, Learner Uptake and Language Use in Instant messenger Exchanges between Second-Language Learners and Language Learning Partners

The present study is based on data from chat logs and transcribed tape recorded exchanges via Yahoo Instant Messenger (IM) in five dyads composed of tutors who were native-speakers of English (NSs)–ESL Learners (or NNSs), and advanced NNSs tutors (ANNSs)–ESL learners (NNSs). The combined IM chat-log and transcribed spoken data were obtained from pairs of students attending a large suburban university in northern New Jersey as they completed five 45-minute computer-mediated (CMC) learning activities for a period of nine weeks. These involved jointly filling out a questionnaire, synthesizing information from newspaper and magazine articles, negotiating individual perceptions about the content of a movie both partners had seen, evaluating the usefulness of IM as a learning tool, and problem-solving technical difficulties. First languages spoken by ESL learners included Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean. Four major research questions were addressed in this study: (a) the kinds of negotiation of meaning moves (NOMs) found in CMC exchanges, which are important in light Long’s (1996) claim that during negotiated interaction negative feedback moves are elicited that make L2 target forms more salient to learners; (b) learners' noticing of their inaccurate linguistic output; (c) the type of corrective feedback (explicit or implicit) provided to learners by partners; and (d) the frequency and type of learner uptake in a CMC environment. Grammatical, lexical, mechanical, and phonological errors were identified and coded in the learner data following procedures used in SLA research (see Ellis et al. 2001; Gass & Selinker 2001; Gass et al. 1998). Data were subsequently tagged using MonoConc Pro2 (Barlow 2003), a software program for analyzing texts.

Preliminary results show that ESL learners and their partners negotiated meaning in more than 166 NOMs, and a close examination of the combined IM data yielded a total of 441 learner errors. Of these, morphosyntactic and lexical errors accounted for 58% of all learner errors, whereas phonological errors made up roughly 8% of all learner errors. This was due to learners’ preference for text-mediated exchanges and avoidance of multitasking while chatting online with partners. Given the nature of instant messaging, spelling and punctuation errors represented 34% of all learner errors. An important finding was that NSs generally avoided direct and overt correction of learners’ linguistic errors and used recasts to get their attention. Notwithstanding the number of errors found in these synchronous online exchanges, creativity in the use of the second language (English) was demonstrated by the learners’ use of collocations. For example, ESL learners used various collocations or
prefabricated constructions to exchange information and keep the conversation going: “/I have noticed that/ people uses those idiomatic words,” “/Do you think/ is it good for me to used spell check?”; and “/I don’t know/ /what/ is that about…” Learners were thus able to obtain information from their partners on various topics as well as to request clarification and explicit assistance in restructuring utterances in English. Given the nature of IM text and oral chats, where short, on-the-fly exchanges predominate, standard academic writing or speaking is precluded.
According to Slobin (1996), recognizing the meanings of linguistic concepts is exceptionally difficult for adult second language learners, because they are often non-compositional elements of semantic structure, i.e., they are not perceivable as part of the linguistic environment. Von Stutterheim & Carroll (2006) argue further that such elements may be unlearnable in adult SLA. The presentation investigates this learning difficulty by examining the effects of concept-based instruction and/or input flood over extensive reading alone for acquiring the meanings of German inseparable prefixes (be- and er-) and prefixed words. The prefixes’ prototypical meaningfulness was analyzed through the framework of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1991), and a pedagogical intervention was developed, following Taylor’s (1993:220) call for a pedagogical grammar that provides a “descriptively adequate, intuitively acceptable, and easily accessible” meaningfulness, to explain meaning shifts that the be- and er- prefixes contribute to prefixed words in German. To determine what level of pedagogical intervention better supports learners’ needs while they are developing an understanding of the prefixes’ meaningfulness, learner data will be compared between performance after an explicit-deductive intervention (30-minute concept-based instruction plus concordancer activities with a deductive task) and an explicit-inductive intervention (concordancer activities with an inductive task). Both post-test and delayed post-test data were collected.

This presentation will examine learner data in a discussion of whether 1) advanced, adult second language learners can develop an understanding of conceptual constructs containing multiple linguistic concepts encoded by different grammatical features in their first and second languages; 2) instructional interventions focusing learners' attention on the systematic meaningfulness of the prefixes lead to greater gains in vocabulary knowledge of prefixed words than reading for meaning; and 3) an explicit/deductive or an explicit/inductive pedagogical intervention is more effective for prefix and word learning. Data showing different types of learner knowledge exhibited during retrospective interviews will be examined to demonstrate the critical role that contextualized exemplars plays in learning prefixed words to productive levels.
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Assessing the Pedagogical Effectiveness of a Phrase-Learning Programme beyond EFL

The surge of research of the past two decades in the domains of vocabulary acquisition (e.g. Nation 2001), exemplar-based knowledge (e.g. Ellis 2002) and corpus linguistics (e.g. Sinclair 1991) has brought the importance of multiword lexis to the fore. The message that language learning should involve the learning of multiword expressions has been conveyed to the teaching community most notably by Michael Lewis in his Lexical Approach (1993, 1997, 2000), which could perhaps more aptly be called a “chunk-noticing” approach. In this approach, learners are systematically encouraged to notice recurring lexical chunks in the authentic L2 language they are exposed to. Empirical evidence in support of the claim that a lexical or phraseology-oriented approach can indeed help learners of English reach a higher level of perceived proficiency has been reported by Boers et al. (2006). So far, the literature preconizing ‘phrase-learning’ approaches, i.e. an approach which fully acknowledges the prevalence of ‘idiomaticity’, seems to have stayed largely confined to the domain of TEFL.

We will report an ongoing study which aims to experimentally probe the relevance of a phrase-learning programme or Lexical Approach beyond EFL by means of a pedagogical experiment along a pre and post test design involving learners of English and Spanish as an L2. We address the following research questions: i) does the use of multiword units positively influence learners’ perceived oral proficiency in both target languages (in terms of fluency, range of expression or accuracy)? and ii) is the influence of the use of multiword units equally strong in different L2s, in our case English and Spanish?

As English and Spanish have different typological properties, e.g. in terms of relative flexibility of word order and degree of inflection, it may be hypothesized that the greater importance of inflection in Spanish creates an extra challenge for learners, either because they have to apply more procedural knowledge of grammar to adapt the phrases they have learnt to fit the syntactic context, or because they need to commit to memory many more ‘ready-made’ variants of the same ‘canonical’ forms. In other words, the pedagogical effectiveness of a Lexical Approach should not be taken for granted across the linguistic board.
References


To investigate the effects of individual difference (ID) factors on learners’ successful awareness of the target pragmalinguistic forms, previous research used factor analysis as a first step. The identified ID factors were presented separately for further analyses to explore the strength of their association with pragmalinguistic awareness. This research design presents information merely on the effects of isolated ID variables on the criterion measure; these effects fail to show whether or to what extent learners having different degrees of a particular ID disposition or a combination of ID dispositions are able to notice the target form-function mappings. Focusing on motivation, this study examined the effects of learners’ profiles on their awareness of pragmalinguistic forms in an English request-realization discourse. To achieve this, we reanalyzed the data from our previous study on the effects of motivation factors on pragmalinguistic awareness.

The study involved 80 Japanese EFL learners. They first filled out questionnaires on motivation. In the treatment session, learners had to identify native-speaker expressions that were distinctive from those of English learners in request role-plays. The role-play input included four types of pragmalinguistic forms as participants’ attentional targets: mitigated complex request forms, discourse markers, idiomatic expressions, and non-idiomatic expressions. The degree of awareness of the target forms was assessed through a retrospective awareness questionnaire administered immediately after treatment.

We focused on three motivation factors that were identified as the factors significantly correlated with the participants’ awareness of the target forms in our previous study—“intrinsic motivation (intrinsic),” “affiliative motives (affiliative),” and “attitudes toward target-language communities (attitudes).” Additionally, the following three combinations of factors were included in the current analysis: “intrinsic/affiliative,” “intrinsic/attitudes,” and “affiliative/attitudes.” A cluster analysis was performed for each motivation factor, indicating the emergence of three learner profiles, i.e., groups of learners differentiated by strength in the factors involved. Further, two-way repeated measures ANOVAs were performed for each motivation factor with the target forms as a within-subject variable and the learner profiles as a between-subject variable. The dependent variable was the awareness rate for the target forms.

Three major findings were obtained. First, the effect of pragmalinguistic forms was significant across six motivation factors, with the discourse markers and idiomatic expressions constantly surpassing the mitigated request forms with respect to learners’ awareness. Second, no significant interaction effects were observed in four motivation
factors, except for intrinsic/affiliative and affiliative/attitudes. This indicates that the three different learner characteristics for each of the four dispositions did not trigger any differences in the awareness of the target forms. Third, for the combined motivation factors that yielded significant interaction effects (intrinsic/affiliative and affiliative/attitudes), a relatively complex configuration emerged with respect to relationships between learner profiles and awareness of the target forms. These findings suggest that some distinctive features of the target forms may be more crucial in learners’ pragmalinguistic awareness than differences in learner characteristics; further, some complex cognitive and affective mechanisms may be operative in the awareness of the pragmalinguistic forms in learners with complex motivational profiles.
My talk addresses the dialectic relation between the language that one hears around one (and that one produces oneself) and the representation of language that is in the mind. It is rather evident that ‘external language’ is the product of the ‘internal language’ of individual speakers; at the same time, the internal language of individual speakers is the product of exposure to external language.

Most linguistic theories assume a model of internal language which is qualitatively quite different from external language. Such theories seek to compartmentalize linguistic knowledge into the lexicon and a set of rules for combining items from the lexicon. Such theories have to deal with two issues. First, how is linguistic knowledge acquired from experience with language data? Second, how can linguistic knowledge map onto external language? To handle these issues, theorists have had recourse to various additional mechanisms (innateness, semantic-pragmatic principles, etc.) in order to bridge internal and external language. In my talk I suggest that internal language should mirror external language as closely as possible. This means, that features of external language – such as frequency of occurrence of its various items, their collocations and co-occurrence patterns, their contextual situatedness, the ubiquity of the idiomatic and the formulaic – need to be incorporated into, and form an essential part of internal language. I use the metaphor of the ‘mental corpus’ as a way of characterizing the nature of what it is that speakers of a language have learned, and what they access in language performance.
Working Memory Capacity and Narrative Task Performance

Working memory, which is assumed to be responsible for the temporal storage, processing and manipulating information, plays an essential role in complex cognitive functioning. Language learning typically involves holding a substantial amount of verbal and visual information load in memory while processing it as well as noticing new pieces of information and matching them and encoding them in long-term memory. Performance in a foreign language places further cognitive demands (e.g. reasoning, planning, giving instructions, etc.) on L2 learners. Previous studies have shown that verbal working memory capacity is closely related to success in L2 learning in general, but little research has been done on what role memory capacity plays in how L2 learners use and divide their attentional resources when performing tasks of different cognitive complexity.

In this study we investigated how working memory capacity influences the allocation of attentional resources in narrative task performance in the case of upper-intermediate learners of English. We aim to answer the question of how working memory capacity is related to learners’ ability to divide their attention along the resource-dispersing dimension of task complexity. The participants of the study were secondary school students in their second academic year of a bilingual educational program in Hungary. The backward digit span was used to measure participants’ working memory capacity, and 10 students with the lowest and 10 students with the highest scores were selected. The participants performed two narrative tasks of different degrees of cognitive complexity: one with a given story line and another one where the content of the narrative had to be invented. Two aspects of students’ performance were measured: fluency (speech rate) and lexical complexity (D-value). According to the Cognition Hypothesis increasing task demands along the resource-dispersing dimensions requires more automatic and faster language use which justifies our choice of fluency and lexical complexity as measures of task performance. In line with the assumption that working memory capacity is limited, it is expected that working memory capacity will correlate positively with performance on the cognitively more complex narrative task. For students with lower working memory capacity, increased cognitive demands is hypothesized to result in the decrease of the quality of their performance both in terms of fluency and lexical complexity. In our talk we also discuss the pedagogical relevance of our findings.
Andrea Tyler
Georgetown University, USA

Applied Cognitive Linguistics:
Putting Linguistics back into Second Language Learning and Teaching

The model of language that underlies most modern L2 teaching materials, as well as most L2 teachers’ understanding of language, dates back to the 1950’s or even earlier. This traditional model represents language as a highly abstract system, disconnected from other cognitive processes. Sentence-level grammatical patterns are seen as being devoid of meaning in their own right and the lexicon as largely arbitrary. Figurative language is seen as mere stylistics, disconnected from syntax and the lexicon.

A number of negative consequences for L2 learning arise from assuming the traditional model. Language is represented as a set of rules to be mastered, but the rules are inevitably plagued with seemingly arbitrary exceptions. Moreover, the syntactic rules are represented as being unique to a language component whose organizing principles are divorced from general principles found in other areas of human cognition. The result is a fragmented picture of language in which important interactions among syntax, the lexicon, figurative language and discourse are not represented.

Many L2 researchers have grown dissatisfied with such accounts of language. Some have even advocated abandoning linguistic theory and focusing solely on psychological aspects of L2 learning, such as the role of attention. While recognizing research with a psychological focus has contributed much to our understanding of L2 learning, I argue that a full understanding of L2 learning will not be achieved without careful consideration of the model of language assumed by L2 researchers and teachers. Cognitive Linguistics can provide important insights for L2 research and pedagogy.

Cognitive Linguistics (CL) offers a distinct alternative to the traditional assumptions about the nature and structure of language. CL views language as reflecting human conceptualization, which is grounded in human experience of and interaction with the world. Instead of an emphasis on rules or abstract principles particular to language, CL focuses on established cognitive and perceptual principles (such as figure and ground organization) that are manifested throughout human cognition, including language. CL has revealed that much that has traditionally been assumed to be idiosyncratic and arbitrary is systematic. For instance, much of syntactic patterning has been shown to systematically reflect basic human experience with the physical-spatial world. Thus, CL provides a more comprehensive, coherent account of how grammatical constructions, lexical items and discourse patterns work.

However, L2 researchers and teachers are not likely to adopt a CL approach until there is experimental evidence for the effectiveness of applying CL to issues in L2 learning. This paper provides an overview of three such experiments which focus on L2 learning of English prepositions, modals, and so-called dative alternation.
Using Other Languages in English Language Learning Classes

It has been a cornerstone of English language teaching, as well as a proud tradition, that English should be taught by using only English. Various techniques and strategies are used and presented to teacher trainees to get learners to speak English only, from pretending to be deaf when learners address them in their home language to punishing learners by exacting a ‘fine’ of some sort when they ‘lapse’ into their home languages.

This paper will attempt an explanation from a cognitive perspective for the very deliberate use of the home language in English language teaching classes based on reports by teacher trainees and classroom observations. As such it attempts to integrate insights from:

- Neurolinguistics, with specific reference to the mental processes that govern the use of two languages when, e.g., the teachers and learners code switch;
- Bilingual education, with specific reference to the strengthening of home language literacy in cases where English is used as the language of learning and teaching;
- Language awareness, with specific reference to the creation of a classroom atmosphere of tolerance.

The tenet that English should be used exclusively by teachers and learners is such a widespread one that teacher trainees start their education studies with this idea firmly entrenched. They can provide a wide variety of strategies, from quite ingenious to downright cruel, of how the teacher can enforce this practice, even with beginner learners. The only way in which this idea can be dislodged seems to be to provide justification in the form of ‘proof’ that the use of other languages can strengthen the learning of English. This paper will examine the degree to which such a claim can be made.
The Blended Bilingual Lexicon

After briefly reviewing recent psycho-linguistic findings concerning the organization of the bilingual lexicon as one system (cf. de Bot et al 2005), we will argue that adopting a usage-based approach means that we should see words as labels for concepts which are dynamic, based on both physical and linguistic experience, and therefore have individual and cultural associations. We have tested this assumption by means of a number of paper and pencil word association tests (Lowie & Verspoor; Verspoor forthcoming) and two related Response Time experiments on Dutch advanced learners of English and English advanced learners of Dutch. Both experiments clearly show that even though the advanced learners move towards more native-like L2 concepts, a clear vestige of the L1 concepts remains.

References


A Cognitive Approach to ASL/English Pedagogy: Construal and Expression of Defocused Agents

This research analyzes non-agent focused utterances in American Sign Language (ASL); English constructions of this type have been shown to be difficult for deaf learners to master. The project exemplifies the development of a cognitive pedagogical grammar. A clear, linguistic understanding of the structures at work in ASL and the ability to correlate and contrast them with English constructions is critical in order for teachers to explicitly guide deaf learners through the comparative process that will lead to their English literacy success.

Schools for deaf students around the world have recently begun to incorporate Second Language (SL) and bilingual approaches. Within these pedagogical models, explicit instruction and direct comparisons between the structures and forms of the signed and spoken language are necessary. Background linguistic research like this project must be conducted, to provide teachers with the appropriate knowledge and skill sets to move easily between the two language modalities.

Languages have many ways to shift the focus of utterances and discourse to different entities participating in an event. In English for example, the passive construction is used to focus on the patient rather than the agent in a given event. While some previous research has aimed to determine whether American Sign Language (ASL) has a passive construction, there has not been research seeking to determine more broadly the types of constructions ASL uses to focus on entities other than the agent. Cognitive linguistics provides the tools to fill that gap, and the insights gleaned from research of this nature are directly applicable toward the development of pedagogical grammars both of ASL and of English for native ASL users.

This project provides linguistic analyses and explanations of ASL constructions that focus on an entity other than the agent or most prominent actor in an event. Rather than starting with a pre-conceived notion of a non-agent focused form and looking for those specific constructions, this research takes a more cognitive linguistic, usage-based approach: native ASL users were provided with non-linguistic and English based prompts highlighting a focus on a non-agent entity and their expressions of this material in ASL were recorded. The ASL constructions found to be used in the production of non-agent focused expressions were analyzed, including the frequencies that each participant used various forms, and a cognitive linguistic analysis of the ASL constructions is presented.

The project aims to provide clear, cognitive linguistic based descriptions of ASL structures that will be subsequently used to design pedagogical materials. This type of pedagogical grammar, gleaned through the cognitive linguistic analysis and comparison of specific language structures, has direct applicability to multiple educational settings, including teaching English to native ASL users, teaching ASL to native English speakers, and training interpreters to work between the two languages.
Michael White & Honesto Herrera
University of Hong Kong, China & Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

**A Contrastive Analysis of Fixed-Expression– and - Idiom Use in Business Press Headlines**

An area of great current interest in cognitive linguistic research is that of fixed expressions and idioms (FEIs) and this interest has both theoretic and applied relevance (for significant recent publications in the field see Langlotz 2007; Skandera, ed, 2007). Our own interest in this field derives from on-going research on business press headlines in both English and Spanish where corpus evidence, on the one hand, shows a significant incidence of FEI use in such headlines and, on the other, a very rich phenomenon of semantic and syntactic variation incorporated in use. All this, we claim, is of crucial importance for language pedagogy in that it directly involves lexical expansion, language creativity and cultural mediation.

Some might be tempted to argue that as the major corpora (in/over the 100 million word bracket) show the incidence of any particular idiom usage to score rather poorly on frequency counts, a language pedagogy guided by cost-benefit criteria should devote correspondingly limited attention to the phenomenon. We would outrightly disagree with this approach for a number of reasons. Number one, on empirical grounds, our business press headline corpus shows a high incidence of FEI use. If we take headline discourse to be a privileged discourse type, both formally and functionally, a high incidence in such a discourse type is intrinsically significant. Secondly, this incidence simultaneously evidences a marked tendency towards creative use in that the FEIs, as well as appearing in their canonical form – that favoured as general and specific dictionary entries – also appear adapted, modified or in some way altered to better take on board contextual meaning or subject-matter content (Pragglejaz Group 2007). In this way, they interact creatively with numerous other rhetorical devices such as for example, punning, humorous effect, interface (see White and Herrera, at press), repetition, alliteration, expectation switch, lexical substitution, euphony and so on. Thirdly, they constitute an area sensitive to cultural comparison and contrast and in this respect we comparatively deal with English and Spanish instantiation, since conceptual structures underlying headlines sometimes reflect different culture and belief systems (Wolf and Polzenhagen 2007). Fourthly, for the language learner, their use is a net contributor to raising cultural awareness, on the one hand, and, on the other, an object lesson in the dynamicity of grammatical use, bringing together syntax and semantics. With the aid of empirical instantiation, our paper will tackle all these factors.
References


‘Basic-level salience’ is a fundamental concept in Cognitive Psychology and related disciplines. It captures the phenomenon that the basic level of categorization is psychologically more salient than other levels (Rosch et al. 1976). However, findings showing that basic-level words possess a superior status in human communication and vocabulary learning (Rosch et al. 1976; Kövecses 2006) so far pertained only to individuals’ L1. In this paper, we argue that Rosch et al.’s insights are highly relevant in L2 contexts as well. To test the hypothesis that basic-level salience can be evidenced in L2 vocabulary learning, an experiment was conducted among 69 Chinese adult learners of English. On a series of slides, participants were simultaneously presented with different pictures and three English words at the super-ordinate, basic, and subordinate level. This presentation was followed by a picture naming task, in which participants were expected to write down the first English names that came to their mind. The main results of this experiment are as follows: 1) L2 basic-level words are the most readily given responses in the picture naming task, suggesting the existence of the basic-level salience in L2 vocabulary learning; 2) the presence of the basic-level salience is a matter of degree, influenced by factors such as concept familiarity and, what we call, the “first-encountered-first-retrieved” effect.
To- vs. ing-Complementation of Advanced foreign Language Learners: Corpus- and Psycholinguistic Evidence

In Construction Grammar (Goldberg 2006), highly frequent syntactic configurations are assumed to be stored as symbolic units in the mental lexicon alongside words. Gries and Wulff (2005) presented experimental and corpus-based evidence in favor of attributing such an ontological status to constructions also for German learners of English. In this study, we elaborate on Gries and Wulff (2005), considering the example of gerund and infinitival complement constructions in English (She tried rocking the baby vs. She tried to rock the baby) This study combines corpus-linguistic and experimental evidence to investigate the question whether these patterns are also stored as constructions by German foreign language learners of English.

In a corpus analysis based on 3,343 instances of the two constructions from the British component of the International Corpus of English, a distinctive collexeme analysis was computed to identify the verbs that distinguish best between the two constructions (Gries and Stefanowitsch 2004); a selection of these verbs was used as experimental stimuli in a sentence completion experiment and a sentence acceptability rating experiment. Two kinds of short-distance priming effects were investigated in the completion data: we checked how often subjects produced an ing-/to-/'other'-construction after having rated an ing-or to-construction (rating-to-production priming), and how often they produced an ing-/to-/'other'-construction when they had produced and ing-or to-construction in the directly preceding completion (production-to-production priming). Furthermore, we considered the proportion of to-completions before a completion at item I in the questionnaire as a measure of a within-subject accumulative priming effect.

We found no rating-to-production priming effects in the expected direction, but a weak effect in the opposite direction; short-distance production-to-production priming effects from ing to ing and from 'other' to to, but not from to to; and a clear accumulative production-to production priming effect for both constructions. In the rating task, we found that subjects rate sentences significantly better when the sentential structure is compatible with the main verb's collexeme distinctiveness. The findings of this study add to the growing body of literature testifying to item-specific knowledge in general as well as language learners' verb-specific knowledge in particular (Ellis 2002). The results reflect that German foreign language learners of English exhibit behavior that is fully in line with a constructionist account and particularly emphasize the similarity of L1 and L2 with regard to the mental representation of constructions.
References

