

15th LangUE 2021

Abstracts: Posters

Day 1 – 10th June

Azzam Alobaid. ICT multimedia learning tools: role and impact on ESL learners' development of speech fluency—YouTube as an example [Poster]

Abstract: Evidence shows that the use and exposure to ICT multimedia learning tools in education plays a significant role and creates a positive impact on ESL/EFL learners' achievement across various stages/ levels of L2 learning and development (Aoki, 2010). This study proposes using YouTube, as a widely used ICT multimedia learning tool, to provide and enhance the comprehensible input of the target language for learners' language proficiency development (Krashen, 1985); this work hypothesizes that learners' engagement with and exposure to (by way of the narrow listening technique, Krashen, 1996) the provided and enhanced multimedia comprehensible input can ultimately lead to improving their L2 oral fluency over time. This research takes advantage of the cognitive advantages of multimedia learning for ESL learners through exposure to ICT multimedia learning tools, namely YouTube. This work seeks to understand whether and how much such multimedia learning tools can actually help ESL learners improve their speech fluency. In this work, a battery of 17 quantifiable performance variables of quantitative and qualitative nature was employed to measure the progress of 14 bilingual Arabic ESL learners' speech fluency in New Delhi over five months.

The findings show statistically significant differences in several (n.9) but not all quantitative and qualitative aspects of the learners' L2 speaking fluency after the actual exposure to YouTube over five months as long as factors like engagement, enhancement and intelligibility are provided by its multi-mediated comprehensible input. However, other aspects of speech fluency (n.8) developed slightly but with no statistically significant difference. Furthermore, there is statistically significant evidence to suggest an existing strong and positive correlation between the development of learners' L2 speech fluency and the frequent exposure to and high engagement rate with ICT tools like YouTube which is proposed in this work for the development of ESL learners' speech fluency. It was concluded that ICT tools like YouTube can be helpful for ESL learners and thus recommended for optimization of speaking fluency.



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Language and Linguistics

Muneerah Al Shuhail. Presentation: Learning a Second Language: A Vehicle to Another Self [Poster]

Abstract: Learning a new language has implications on the learner's sense of self i.e. identity (Duff, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2011). This is based on the idea that this process involves a learner being put in different positions and going through new experiences which may result in changes on the personal level (Norton & Mckinney, 2011). In addition, language learning cannot be separated from the target language's culture and values which might lead the learner to re-evaluate his/her own social and cultural views (Duff, 2011). Although research on the relationship between language learning and identity has gained attention in recent years, most studies focus on how learner identity affects the learning process and its outcomes. However, not much attention has been paid to how language learning may lead to changes in how a person views themselves. In this study, the goal is to investigate whether learning English as a foreign language (EFL) affects how Saudi female learners (n=6) view themselves. The study uses second language socialization as a theoretical framework because of its comprehensive approach that acknowledges the dynamic nature of identity (Duff, 2011, 2013). A longitudinal multiple case study design is used in this investigation. The data from interviews and monthly diaries were analysed following the reflexive thematic analysis model (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The results indicated that participants associated learning EFL with being more knowledgeable, confident, and understanding. As they learned English language and learned through English they were able to establish identities for themselves as successful, independent and unique individuals. These findings signal that socialization takes place in foreign language settings and has implications for the identity of the learner.

List of references:

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Maria Boghiu. A Cognitivist analysis of the metaphor in Petrarch's Epistles [Poster]

Abstract: The study of metaphor has long been considered as pertaining solely, or mostly, to the realm of literature; during the 20th century, nevertheless, it has become clear that metaphor is more than a simple rhetorical figure, as it used to be considered. Metaphor is actually an instrument of thought, as the Cognitivist school has claimed and established through all types of research. It allows us to build abstract concepts based on the concrete information we receive from the external stimuli.

In this presentation, I will focus on the conceptual metaphor, as defined in the works of Lakoff and Johnson, Croft and Cruse, and other scholars of the Cognitivist school and beyond, in an analysis applied to a corpus which consists of 25 of Petrarch's Epistles, randomly selected out of all the collections available (Familiars, Seniles, Sine nomine, Varias and Metricas). After the identification of the conceptual metaphors provided by the corpus, and their categorization on the basis of the target-domain, we engage in a deeper analysis of some of the most interesting occurrences, trying to identify the underlying implications from a cognitive, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic point of view, as well as the cultural references to which Petrarch is likely to allude.

There will also be an outline of the research results, from a statistical perspective, which will allow us to identify the most representative image schemas and target domains. These results will be accompanied by visual support, in the form of graphs and diagrams aiming at providing a better understanding of the data presented.

References (a selection):

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Münir Özturhan, Aysen Tuzcu and Şebnem Yalçın. Exploring L2 learners' sensitivity to grammaticality and structure difficulty: An eye-tracking study [Poster]

Abstract: In second language (L2) research, the grammatical sensitivity of L2 learners has been mostly investigated by using L2 learners' response times and accuracy scores in grammaticality judgment tests (GJT) (Shiu, Yalçın & Spada, 2018). Recently, the eye-tracking methodology has been used to examine learners' grammatical sensitivity in the L2 (e.g., Godfroid et al., 2015), because of its potential to shed light on L2 learners' processing behaviors (Godfroid, 2019). However, how the difficulty of the target grammatical structures employed in GJTs affects the eye movements of L2 learners is a question that still needs to be answered. In this study, we explore this question using eye-tracking methodology as a tool for examining the processing of (un)grammatical sentences with two target structures (i.e., more/less difficult) by L2 learners of English.

We collected the data from 58 adult Turkish learners of English (29 advanced/29 intermediate) and manipulated task stimulus (grammatical vs. ungrammatical) and target structure (passive voice and past progressive tense) to test L2 learners' sensitivity towards GJT items. Passive voice and past progressive tense were chosen because these two structures differ in input frequency, phonological saliency, and structure formation (Shiu et al., 2018). We also explored the role of proficiency in detecting (un)grammaticality of two different target structures in GJTs. The experimental items consisted of 30 grammatical and 30 ungrammatical sentences that had equal numbers of passive voice and past progressive tense items.

Six standard eye-tracking measures (first fixation, gaze, regression path, rereading and total duration measures and probability of regression out) were entered into linear/logistic regression models using R. The results showed that both groups were faster in processing the grammatical sentences with the past progressive structure whereas the sentences with the passive voice were processed faster when these sentences were ungrammatical. In addition, participants with intermediate proficiency showed slower processing than participants with advanced proficiency in all sentences. These findings indicate that proficiency is a converging factor for processing patterns of two proficiency groups and causes a processing lag for the intermediate group for both structures. Moreover, the processing behaviors of L2 learners change depending on the task stimulus and target structure of the items in the GJT.

References: Godfroid, A. (2019). Routledge. Godfroid, A. et al. (2015). *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 37(2), 269-297. Shiu, L. J., Yalçın, Ş., & Spada, N. (2018). *System*, 72, 215-225.



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Hamza R'Boul and Mohamed Belrhiti. University Students' Language Attitudes: The Place of English in Moroccan Sociolinguistic Situation [Poster]

Abstract: After the end of the French colonial administration in the 20th century, Morocco has been struggling with its postcolonial positionality that has resulted in linguistic dependency. Although Moroccan authorities have adopted several linguistic policies to recover the country's Arabic roots, the French has continued to hold an essential place in the Moroccan sociolinguistic situation. French has been dominant in the fields of business, higher education and diplomacy. This has rendered French as a linguistic code associated with privilege-bearing status, modernity and prosperity while local languages are perceived as traditional elements associated with culture and conservatism. However, in recent years, English has continuously gained a greater status in Morocco. Multiple English teaching schools and Anglophone universities have been founded in recent years boosting Moroccans' desire to learn English, especially among the youth. That is why researchers and officials have repeatedly claimed that English may replace French in the future. All these ideas indicate that multilingualism in Morocco is characterized by power struggles between local and foreign languages. The premise here is that multilingualism in Morocco does not necessarily entail equal appreciation and visibility of all languages which may result in the relegation of local languages. Therefore, this study aims to examine university students' languages attitudes in relation to local and foreign languages, especially English. The study will use a questionnaire and interview to elicit students' perceptions about languages in Morocco. The findings are expected to clarify the status of English in Morocco and how it is perceived by the youth. This study would offer significant insights into multilingualism in Morocco and how it may be reshaped in the next years.



Day 2 – 11th June

Srabasti Dey. Interpretable features in Phase theory: How to motivate their inheritance theoretically? [Poster]

Abstract:

Feature inheritance in phase theory enabled simultaneous Value and Transfer, preventing uninterpretable features from going on to the next phase along with the phase edge (Richards 2007). Chomsky (2008) notes that even interpretable features like tense, mood emerge on C, generalising that all features originate on phase heads. Empirical evidence also attests that tense can be seen in C in languages (van Gelderen 1993, Platzack and Holmberg 1995).

However, independent theoretical motivation for inheritance of interpretable features is bleak since they can go on to the next phase without violating any Minimalist conditions, as Gallego (2011) illustrates (α and β stand for phase head and nonphase head respectively):

- a. [α P α [iFF] [uFF] . . . [β P β . . .]] before FI (all features in α)
 - b. [α P α [iFF] . . . [β P β [uFF] . . .]] after FI (uFF are inherited by β)
- [from Gallego 2011]

Biberauer and Roberts (2010) claim that T's tense or 'verbal' properties are distinct from its agreement or 'nominal' properties, which in a way boils down to a distinction between uninterpretable and interpretable features. In other words, the two kinds of features work differently in the narrow syntax. Thus, though uninterpretable and interpretable features are both said to be amenable to feature inheritance, only the former has a theoretical motivation. In the cases where we do see the percolation of interpretable features from phase heads to non-phase heads, it has to be on some other principle.

This paper would consider if the inheritance of interpretable features can be motivated by the other operations in the narrow syntax such as Transfer as in (Obata 2011), or the labelling algorithm. This would theoretically distinguish between the inheritance of interpretable and uninterpretable features while still explaining why interpretable features like tense were seen on T rather than phase head C.



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Chandera Gunawardena. Measuring implicit and explicit knowledge in second language English [Poster]

Abstract: Previous research shows that due to nonfacilitative transfer, second language (L2) speakers do not develop implicit knowledge of certain grammatical structures (Pienemann, 1989; Ellis, 2006). Therefore, the present paper investigates whether L2 English speakers whose first language (L1) is Sinhala (hereafter L2 speakers) could acquire implicit knowledge of English object pronouns. To achieve this goal, it compares data collected via an acceptability judgement task (AJT) and a production task (PT). The AJT measured explicit knowledge, whereas implicit knowledge was measured by the PT.

The two tasks tested knowledge of English object pronouns in L1-Sinhala–L2-English interlanguage. The object pronominalization differs in Sinhala and English. The object pronouns are expressed overtly in English. Sinhala also has overt object pronouns.

Additionally, it allows null object pronouns, which are ungrammatical in English (as in 1-b). Under the facilitative transfer from Sinhala, L2 speakers would be target-like on object pronouns. On the other hand, under the nonfacilitative transfer, they would accept null object pronouns. A prediction was also made regarding the two tasks. If L2 speakers had acquired explicit and implicit knowledge of object pronouns, they would be target-like on object pronouns in the two tasks.

L1-Sinhala–L2-English speakers (n=28) served as an experimental group. Native English participants (n=17) served as a control group. The AJT presented 10 grammatical (as in 1-a) and 10 ungrammatical (as in 1-b) tokens in two-part dialogues. Participants rated the 2nd utterance in each dialogue on a six-point Likert scale. In the PT, the participants responded to 10 questions designed to elicit object pronouns.

1. Do you see your friends?

a. Yes, I often see them. S-V-ObjPro

b. *Yes, I often see. *S-V- \emptyset

In the AJT, the L2 speakers differentiated between the grammatical (S-V-ObjPro) and ungrammatical (*S-V- \emptyset) structures. Further, A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run for each structure, with Grammaticality as the within-subjects variable and Group as the between-subjects variable. The analysis yields no main effect of Group or Group-by-Grammaticality interaction. However, in the PT, they used *S-V- \emptyset structure frequently. Therefore, the results suggest that implicit knowledge of object pronouns is unavailable in L1-Sinhala–L2-English interlanguage.



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Language and Linguistics

Alice Karbanova. A Poem set to Music – Perception of a Complex Semiotic Object
[Poster]

Abstract: Language and music are human universals involving perceptually discrete elements organised in hierarchically structured sequences. Given their similarities, a joint research can strongly contribute to the knowledge of each separate domain and give an encompassing account of the human cognitive processing of any sign system. In the past decades, this topic has gained a significant scientific interest and my research therefore draws on the latest findings from cognitive and neurosciences. There is copious evidence for the intricate relationship of syntax processing in language and music, yet a considerable lack of studies focusing on the semantic processing. A song, compound semiotic construction, permits the use of interference paradigm that appears to be a promising approach to study whether music and language processing interact or not. I conduct this research in order to test the initial hypothesis that in semantic appraisal of such a multisensory object, the musical meaning prevails, despite the fact that there have been studies suggesting otherwise. Given that the perception of a song engages overlapping neural substrates and mechanisms for the processing of both music and language, it seems plausible to expect transfer effects between the two domains. The foreseen EEG and behavioural studies, comprising an appraisal and matching task, which due to the pandemic could not yet take place, use the poems put to music by Boris Vian as stimuli and explore the extent to which language and music compete for processing resources. I use a novel theoretical approach based on the same analysis in practical behavioural and neurological experiment. The musical accompaniment provides additional contextual information and in spite of being at an early stage of the research, the findings seem to suggest its power to override the linguistic semantics. The hypothesised result is therefore that the musical semantic reference is perceived as predominant. I hope to shed light on the different perceptual and cognitive operations underlying this effect. In the presentation I will also outline the methodological challenges that a researcher faces when examining a compound perceptual object.



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Sahar Mehrparvar. On the Fine Structure of the Left Periphery: Evidence from Persian [Poster]

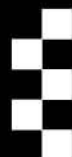
Abstract: Languages might exhibit variation in moving the different constituents around. Some languages, such as English, have a rigidly fixed word order in most circumstances, but some languages allow scrambled sentences. It is a well-known fact that Persian has scrambling since Karimi (2005) has proposed several analyses until now in the Persian language. She argues that “Persian scrambling is not an optional rule, and its major role is to function of semantic and discourse outputs”. Karimi (2005) analyzes Persian scrambled sentences in the framework of the Minimalist Program by arguing the interaction of semantic and discourse functional factors with the syntactic properties of the word orders. Therefore, the non-canonical sentence structures might affect expressing a marked state of affairs from the perspective of information structure. The terms information structure or more specific as the topic and focus are a matter of discussion. In the previous studies in Persian by Karimi (2005) the positions of topics and focus in a clausal spine are assumed. Moreover, within the cartographic approach, Rizzi (1997) put forward a richly articulated structure of the left periphery (i.e. the CP). He assumed that CP can be split into more than one type of projection (Rizzi, 1997). Therefore, in this study, the positions of the scrambled constituents are discussed comparatively based on Karimi’s approach, as well as the cartographic approach proposed by Rizzi (1997) to figure out which approach is more applicable in the Persian language to indicate the distribution of topical and focal information.

Regarding the position of scrambled constituents, it is shown that both approaches, Rizzi’s and Karimi’s approaches, are applicable in illustrating the scrambled constituents’ position in Persian. The only problem with Karimi’s approach is that the topic projection is not recursive and the position of the background topic is only after the focus. Meanwhile, the cartographic approach can illustrate scrambled constituents in Persian sentences in a better way as topics are recursive and they can be posited in two different layers.

Furthermore, in this research, the scrambling of the specific and non-specific objects in ditransitive sentences is investigated to find the effect of the specificity of the object on the scrambling of the sentences. The result shows that ditransitive sentences with either the specific or non-specific objects can be scrambled distinctively and the non-specific object movement encounters some more limitations.

Karimi, S. (2005). A minimalist approach to scrambling: Evidence from Persian. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

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