Language and Linguistics

15th LangUE 2021

Abstracts: Talks

Day 1 – 10th June

Qidu Fu. Family language policy and Danzhounese maintenance: A case study of a rural-to-urban migrant family [Talk]

Abstract: The phenomenon of Danzhounese (also known as the Tan-Chou dialect, spoken in Hainan Province of southern China) maintenance in rural-to-urban families has been unexplored. To examine this phenomenon, I conducted a case study focusing on a rural-to-urban migrant bilingual family based on Spolsky's (2009) model of family language policy. Data for this qualitative case study was collected through individual and group interviews, fieldwork observations, face-to-face interactions, WeChat conversations, and WeChat posts in the rural and urban areas. The data analyzed by the constant-comparative method (Fram, 2013) suggested that (1) the family held positive language ideologies (Danzhounese as an identity maker, a language medium, a communication facilitator, and a uniting force); (2) Danzhounese was the dominant language used in the family domains; (3) the family adopted the management techniques of using Danzhounese as a dominant home language, becoming Danzhounese teachers, immersing children in Danzhounese activities and environments, and making rules of speaking Danzhounese. Finally, practical implications based on these findings were provided for Danzhounese maintenance in rural-to-urban migrant families.

References
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Andreas Rouvalis. Prefixoids in the secret Greek gay language Kaliarda [Talk]

Abstract: The current paper investigates the prefixoids in Kaliarda, the secret language of homosexuals in Greece. Following Halliday's framework (1978), I define Kaliarda as an anti-language; a language that provides speakers with secrecy in communication.

Prefixoids have been widely discussed in the literature (Ralli 2020· Booij & Hüning 2014). From a diachronic perspective, the creation of prefixoids is a result of prefixation (Amiot 2005) which falls into the spectrum of grammaticalization (Bybee 2010). Synchronically, prefixoids constitute an intermediate category between affixes and stems (Ralli 2020). As an independent category in the morphological continuum (Ralli 2014), prefixoids not only share features with the categories with whom they border but also have their own distinct features (Ralli 2020).

To define the items belonging in the category of prefixoids, I utilize the criteria proposed for Greek by Dimela (2010), which take into account phonology (form erosion), morphology (boundness, lack of categorial selection) and semantics (semantic bleaching). I present the prefixoids found in Kaliarda dividing them into three categories; prefixoids from Standard Modern Greek (SMG), prefixoids from the Greek slang vocabulary and domestic ones which refer to the prefixoids which have been created and used solely by speakers of Kaliarda.

I show that Kaliarda uses mostly domestic prefixoids. I propose that this tendency stems from the need to make Kaliarda different from SMG to a maximum extent, which in turn makes impossible for outgroups to understand what is being said.

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Lewis Baker. The Role of Linguistic Input in Modelling L1 Grammatical Attrition [Talk]

Abstract: Grammatical attrition refers to restructuring of L1 grammatical representations due to a change in the speaker's primary linguistic data (PLD) in adulthood, typically due to migration. This study seeks to contribute to the theoretical modelling of this phenomenon by testing a recent, untested model of grammatical attrition: The Attrition via Acquisition (AvA) Model (Hicks and Domínguez, 2019, 2020).

In the model, the possibility of attrition is determined by the availability of intake (processed input) and the potential for Feature Reassembly (FR) (Lardiere, 2009) of a previously acquired L1 structure. Intake, and therefore attrition, is facilitated where the speaker is exposed to a linguistic input that is more similar to their L1. Furthermore, attrition is predicted only for an L1 structure which has an analogous L1 and L2 form, yet these forms differ in their respective functional feature specifications. This allows the possibility of L1 features being re-assembled to match the L2 intake. This is hypothesised to be facilitated for L1 structures which would need to undergo less complex FR to match the L2 input.

To investigate the role of intake, this study uses the same L1 grammar exposed to three different inputs of varying typological similarity to the L1. There are three groups L1 German speakers who are late-sequential bi-dialects/bilinguals. They moved to either Bavaria, the UK or Spain in adulthood and have lived there for over 15 years. Two grammatical structures per language pairing will be investigated. These differ in the relative complexity of FR required for them to attrite. The control group consists of L1 German speakers residing in Germany. I aim to recruit 30 participants per group.

Experimental Design and Predictions:

There will be one Acceptability Judgement Task per property. Data collection is set to begin soon, and I expect to have at least preliminary results by the time of the conference. Results from all tasks will be compared statistically both within and across groups and the explanatory value of the AvA model and its predictions analysed in light of these data.

References:
Hicks, G. and Domínguez, L. (2019) 'A model for L1 grammatical attrition.', Second Language Research. doi: 10.1177/0267658319862011.
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Lardiere, D. (2009) 'Some thoughts on the contrastive analysis of features in second language acquisition', Second Language Research, 25(2), pp. 173–227. doi: 10.1177/0267658308100283.

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Ahmad Khatatneh. Copular Clauses in Modern Standard Arabic [Talk]

Abstract: Copular elements differ in form cross-linguistically. English, for instance, requires a copula in all types of copular finite clauses. Unfortunately, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) lacks present tense copula. Therefore, it employs the personal pronoun hu 'he' in some types of copular clauses. In specific, the pronoun appears in specificational clauses, see (1a). In contrast, the pronoun is excluded in predicational (verbless) clauses, see (1b). Furthermore, specificational and predicational copular clauses inherit other differences such as referentiality and reversibility, as highlighted in table (1) below.

(1) a. Al-tabib *(hu) Jacoub
the-doctor-NOM (3.M.Sg)def *(PRON(3.M.Sg)) Jacoub-NOM
'the doctor is Jacoub .' Specificational Clause
b. Jacoub (*hu) rayie
Jacoub-NOM (*PRON) cool NOM (3.M.Sg)
' Jacoub is cool.' Predicational Clause

Table 1
Predicational Specificational
Reversible Irreversible Reversible
Referentiality <e> <e, t> <e> <e>
Pronoun Present tense: ∅
Past tense: copula Present: Pronoun
Past: Copula

Previous studies suggested that this pronoun performs Partee's (1987) "ident-type-shift" operation, i.e., it combines two referential expressions and resolves the type mismatch between them. However, this proposal seems problematic if we consider copular clauses with honorary NPs, (2) is illustrative. In particular, copular clauses with honorary NPs and specificational sentences are uniform in the availability of the pronoun and reversibility. Nevertheless, they contrast in that the subject and the predicate of copular clauses with honorary NPs are non-referential.

(2) a. 'afdal makan li-laikhtiba' *(hu) taht alsarir
Best place to-hide *(PRON) under thebed
the best place to hide is under the bed

In this abstract, I adopt Den Dikken's (2006) relators and linkers framework to account for the

aforementioned characteristics. In particular, I submit the pronoun in MSA copular clauses as a focus marker and a linker, i.e., a functional head accommodates the subject and the predicate and allows the predicate to invert around the subject. In the case of predicational clauses, I advocate a null relator, i.e., functional head accommodating the two arguments. These proposals provide a uniform structure for copular sentences in MSA despite the tense of the sentence. They also allow Arabic to resemble English by reducing the difference between them to whether the relator has phonological content or not.

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Andrea Brugnoli. Presentation: Directionality and syllable weight in Italian and German secondary stress [Talk]

Abstract: Directionality of secondary stress (SS) refers to the direction of parsing a word into rhythmical units (feet) and can either be left-to-right (ˌxx)x or right-to-left x(ˌxx). The directionality of SS may be disrupted by heavy syllables (e.g. closed by a consonant), which may attract SS. Both Italian and German are thought to have a left-to-right directionality (Alber 2009). German also seems to show a partial influence of syllable weight on secondary stress (Alber 1997), while no data have been collected for Italian so far. With respect to the phonetic correlates of SS, Eriksson et al. (2016) found F0 variation, duration and spectral emphasis as possible correlates of SS in Italian, while no reliable correlates of SS have been found in German (Kleber and Klipphahn 2006). The present work provides some new empirical data with regard to directionality, syllable weight and the phonetic manifestation of SS in Italian and German.

Methodology: 22 Italian and 7 German native speakers have been recorded reading 10 nonce words with two initial open syllables (e.g. it. so.mo.ra.mén.to) in order to see whether they put SS on the first (left-to-right directionality) or on the second syllable (right-to-left directionality). In order to investigate the influence of syllable weight on SS, the same participants were asked to read 10 nonce words with a second closed syllable (e.g. it. lo.rem.ba.mén.to), to see whether the second heavy syllable attracted stress. In all cases the collocation of SS was judged by ear. In order to analyze the phonetic correlates of SS, duration, F0, F2, intensity and spectral tilt have been measured on real words having the same structure as the nonce words.

Results: The results suggest a left-to-right directionality for both Italian and German, and a clear influence of syllable weight in Italian but only in part in German. With regard to the phonetic correlates, in Italian intensity was found to be a correlate of SS, while no reliable correlates were found for German.

References:

Alber, B. (1997). Quantity sensitivity as the result of constraint interaction.

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Eriksson, A., Bertinetto, P., M., Heldner, M., Nodari, R., Lenoci, G. (2016). The Acoustics of Lexical Stress in Italian as a Function of Stress Level and Speaking Style.

Kleber, F., & Klipphahn, N. (2006). An Acoustic Investigation of Secondary Stress in German.

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Day 2 – 11th June

Xiaolong Lu. The processing of chunks in Mandarin Chinese: a psycholinguistic approach [Talk]

Abstract: Chunks as a type of multi-word sequences exist in many languages and are also widespread in both formal writings and informal speech. The study of chunks has been proved to be central to the attainment of native-like fluency and idiomaticity in L2 learning (Wray, 2002). Previous studies focus largely on collocations and phrases as parts of chunks in English instead of other languages such as Chinese. The holistic hypothesis (Schmitt et al., 2004) predicts that participants including native speakers (NSs) and learners (NNSs) would respond to chunks more rapidly than to non-chunks, which require syntactic analysis.

The goal of this study is to test whether chunks in Chinese are also quicker and easier to process by L2 learners than their equivalent non-chunks. To do this, I conducted a grammaticality judgment test with a 2×2×2 mixed design, showing grammaticality (grammatical v.s. ungrammatical) and chunk (chunks v.s. non-chunks) as within-participant variables, and participant group (NS v.s. NNS participants) as a between-participant variable. Sixty participants from one American university joined the test, including 45 learners of Chinese in different proficiency levels and 25 native speakers of Chinese. All learners of Chinese were asked to fill a questionnaire to tell their Chinese learning backgrounds (e.g. learners' age, gender, if you are Chinese heritage speakers, years of learning Chinese, times or length of staying in China) before doing the test. After my data collection, R studio was employed to do statistical analysis.

The result is displayed in Figures 1 and 2. It significantly shows that chunks are processed more quickly with fewer errors made by two groups of participants, while they spend more time reading non-chunks. The finding is not only consistent with the test of English chunks in Jiang and Nekrasova (2007), but also supports the holistic hypothesis. Implications regarding Chinese as L2 learning and teaching are provided as well.

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Mia Tarau. The plight of the Romanian Roma: Investigating linguistic human rights in national legislation, institutional practices, and local attitudes [Talk]

Abstract: Indigenous and minority communities around the world are becoming increasingly successful in reclaiming their identities (Kaplan & Baldauf Jr., 1997; May, 2012) as a consequence of being officially granted linguistic human rights, meaning access to both mother tongue and an official language in their daily lives (Grin, 2005; Kontra, Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999).

In the shadow of these developments lies an ethnic group whose plight seems little changed centuries after their arrival and settlement in Europe. Lacking territorial reference, linguistic homogeneity and cultural unity, the Roma continue to struggle for survival, particularly in Eastern Europe and (notoriously) in Romania (Agarin, 2014; Goldston, 2010; Guibernau, 2013; McGarry, 2014; Pogany, 2006; Van Baar et al., 2019). Although Romania has been a European Union member state since 2007, which has meant increasing pressure on Romania to facilitate Roma "inclusion" into mainstream society, most social action-based initiatives to achieve this goal seem to have failed to date. As an alternative course of action, then, could their language (Romani) be instrumental in strengthening their Romanian community? Using narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen, 2013; Wells, 2011) as a framework for my research, I aimed to investigate the extent to which the linguistic human rights of the Roma are acknowledged and granted in Romania in national policy and through national and local practices, and whether Roma and non-Roma citizens are experiencing the impact of these policies in their daily lives. My data came from multiple sources: national legislation, interviews with local government representatives (both Roma and Romanian), and life stories from both Roma and Romanian citizens. My findings revealed that national legislation does grant the Roma their right to live in their own language, and that Romanian governing bodies appear to enact these policies as per European Union requirements. Surprisingly (?), the topic of Roma political representation has stirred heated debate among Roma party leaders and Romanian and Roma citizens alike. The most interesting discussion, however, regards the way in which my Roma interviewees perceived the role, impact and need for Roma political representation, as well as the need for linguistic human rights in Romania, irrespective of ethnic identity.

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Claudia Vanessa Tapia Castillo. Developing growth language learning mindsets to improve English academic achievement and L2 motivation [Talk]

Abstract: Research has demonstrated that growth mindsets, the belief that ability can be enhanced by effort, positively impact motivation, learning, and academic achievement. Individuals can learn to develop a growth mindset; therefore, an online intervention to promote growth language mindsets was carried out in this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether online sessions and classes to encourage growth language learning mindsets could change students' mindsets, motivation for learning English, and academic achievement. Also, this research aimed to find out whether there was a connection between mindsets and motivation, students' mindsets and their teachers' mindsets, and students' mindsets and their English marks. Eighty-six secondary students from Chile and fourteen Chilean teachers of English participated in this study. Teachers responded to an online questionnaire with close-ended questions on one instance. Students answered an online questionnaire with close-ended questions on three occasions and diary entry questions throughout the process. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative analyses were carried out. The results showed that the online sessions to promote growth mindsets changed students' mindsets and motivation to learn English. Online English classes using a growth mindset approach also improved students' English achievement. There was a weak but significant correlation between mindsets and motivation; however, there was no statistical relationship between students' mindsets and their teachers' mindsets and students' mindsets and their marks in English. These results suggest that it is necessary to raise awareness of the importance of this theory amongst teachers as this could help towards learners' improvement of English motivation and accomplishment.

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Laurence Craven. The Effect of Different Forms of Written Corrective Unfocused Feedback on Academic Writing Students' Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency [Talk]

Abstract: Many researchers over the past few decades have studied the effects of written corrective feedback (WCF), and believed that WCF helps students to improve their writing, until Truscott (1996) published his critique of the practice. Since Truscott's controversial article, a multitude of studies of corrective feedback have been conducted (Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Suzuki, Nassaji and Sato, 2019) with varying and sometimes conflicting results. Due to different research designs and forms of feedback that create issues of comparability among the studies, as well as the scarcity of studies on unfocused WCF, definitive conclusions are difficult to obtain. To add to the body of research on unfocused WCF, this study examined the effects of direct, indirect and metalinguistic WCF on the complexity, accuracy and fluency of 138 Arabic and Urdu L1 EFL students' writing. It also attempted to discover if the moderating variables of aptitude, attitudes and proficiency have a role to play in the uptake of written corrective feedback. Students in four intact groups were designated as groups comprising of a direct, indirect and metalinguistic WCF group and a control group. Students then wrote argument essays and were given three rounds of WCF and feedback support sessions over fourteen weeks, while learners in the control group received no feedback. Students wrote text revisions and new texts and the results showed that on text revisions, there was a form of trade-off that is dependent on feedback type. In other words, direct and metalinguistic feedback lowered fluency, while they increase lexical diversity, and indirect feedback increased fluency while it lowered lexical diversity. On new texts, there were no significant gains from the unfocused feedback. The moderating variables of proficiency and aptitude did not have any significant relationships with gains in complexity, accuracy and fluency measures, but attitudes towards feedback had a weak negative correlation with gains in complexity and fluency.

References:

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Suzuki, W., Nassaji, H. and Sato, K. (2019) The effects of feedback explicitness and type of target structure on accuracy in revision and new pieces of writing. System 81: 135–45.

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