BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
LANGUAGE AND COGNITION (ELC3)

http://elc3.elc-postgraduateconference.es/

Santiago de Compostela, 21-22 September 2012

University of Santiago de Compostela / University of Vigo
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Welcome and acknowledgments

Dear ELC3 participants,

We would like to heartily welcome you to the Third International Conference on Language and Cognition (ELC3) and to the city of Santiago de Compostela. We hope that you will profit from the high quality papers to be presented during the conference sessions, as well as from the exchange of ideas and feedback in a friendly, informal and intellectually stimulating setting. We also invite you to find some spare time to enjoy the lively atmosphere of Santiago and its busy old streets, to discover its cultural and historical heritage and to have a taste of the Galician gastronomy and wines.

The organisation of ELC3 has been possible thanks to the cooperation of a number of individuals and institutions. First, we would like to thank the conference contributors and the plenary lecturers for showing their interest in sharing their most recent work at the conference. We are also grateful to the academics who helped us in the difficult task of selecting the papers from the large number of abstracts received. We are also thankful to the English Linguistics Circle and to the members of its five research groups (VLCG, SPERTUS, PCC, LVUG and MMTAFL), for their guidance, support and encouragement, especially to the team leaders Teresa Fanego, Ignacio Palacios, Isabel Fraga, Javier Pérez-Guerra and Rosa Alonso. Last but not least, we are grateful to the following institutions for their generous contribution to this conference:

European Regional Development Fund, Autonomous Government of Galicia (Directorate General for Scientific and Technological Promotion, grant CN2011/011), University of Santiago de Compostela (Facultade de Filoloxía) and University of Vigo (Vicerrectorado de Investigación).

The Organising Committee of ELC3
FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

9:00-10:00
RECEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS
(Salón de graos, ground floor)

10:00-10:30
OPENING SESSION

11:00-12:00
PLENARY LECTURE Prof. María del Pilar García Mayo:
Attention to form in second language learning: Collaborative grammar tasks
Chair: María Luisa Roca Varela

11:30-12:00
COFFEE BREAK

PANEL A (Room 11, 2nd floor). Chair: Fátima Faya Cerqueiro
Register variation and the dative alternation in 20th-century American English. Melanie Röthlisberger
A comparative assessment of the models used for the classification of verbs used without an object in Contemporary English. Tania de Dios

PANEL B (Salón de graos, ground floor). Chair: Martiña Piñeiro de la Torre
The effects of elicitation on the acquisition of the English past simple tense by speakers of Spanish. Hanne Roothooft
“He was /gəʊɪŋ/ to have a /bæθ/’. ‘Twenty /pɔrsent/ of /pɪpel daʊnlɒd mʊsik/’. A preliminary study of the difficulties shown by Spanish students in the learning of English pronunciation. Yolanda Joy Calvo

12:00-14:00
LUNCH

14:00-16:00
LUNCH

PANEL A (Room 11, 2nd floor). Chair: Carla Bouzada Jabois
The category of possession: The restrictive approach. Viatcheslav Yatsko and Tatiana Yatsko
Metaphor within-cultures variation. Metaphors of ‘the Islamic veil’, ‘female’s body’ and ‘culture integration’ among the main stream British and Spanish cultures and the Islamic sub-culture. Ghufran Khir Allah

PANEL B (Salón de graos, ground floor). Chair: Sofía Bemposta
Language-related episodes (LREs) and learning opportunities in an EFL setting. Does gender play a role? Agurtzane Azkarai and María del Pilar García Mayo
Neurolinguistic approach to the study of bilingualism. Agnese Sampietro

16:00-17:30
Crosslinguistic influences on motion expression in English and Spanish. Iria Gael Romay, Samantha N. Emerson, Teresa Fanego, Şeyda Özçalıskan, Paloma Núñez-Pertejo and Gwen Frishkoff
Perspectival construal patterns in language, cognition and interaction: Their acquisition, structure and foundations. Michael Pleyer

18:00-19:00
PLENARY LECTURE Prof. Graeme Trousdale:
Cognition, constructions and change
Chair: Evelyn Gandón Chapela

21:00
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<td>10:00-11:30</td>
<td>Are isolated <em>if</em>-clauses independent clauses? Evidence from spoken British and American English. Beatriz Mato Míguez</td>
<td>Accounting for interlanguage variability in verbal morphology. Akiko Muroya</td>
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<td>10:00-11:30</td>
<td>The rise and fall of word formation patterns. An empirical study of German <em>ung</em>-nominalisation and infinitive conversion. Stefan Hartmann</td>
<td>Appraisal in media discourse: Analyzing subjectivity and intersubjectivity in a deaf organisation’s press release. Almudena Pascual Iglesias</td>
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<td>10:00-11:30</td>
<td>Foreign lexical elements in English guidebooks and their translation into Spanish. A contrastive analysis. Alexandra Santamaría Urbieta</td>
<td>The effect of emotional valence on disambiguation processes: A completion study involving relative clauses in Spanish. Marcos Díaz, Isabel Fraga, Ana Piñeiro, Javier García Orza and Sara Riveiro Outeiral</td>
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<td>11:30-12:00</td>
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<td>Academic writing: A corpus study of collocational units. Eva Lucía Jiménez Navarro</td>
<td>Automatic sentiment detection in Terry Pratchett’s Discworld. Luis Espinosa Anke</td>
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<td>12:00-13:00</td>
<td>Spelling-to-sound instances of loanwords in the Late Modern English period. Ursula Kirsten Torrado</td>
<td>Mismatches in functional discourse grammar. Lucía Contreras-García</td>
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<td>PLENARY LECTURE Prof. José Manuel Igoa:</td>
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<td>13:00-14:00</td>
<td>The role of recursion in language and other cognitive domains</td>
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<td>14:00-14:15</td>
<td>CLOSING SESSION</td>
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<td>WALKING TOUR OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA</td>
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How to teach the grammar of a second language seems to have been a perennial question of concern for educators (Larsen-Freeman 2009). Although Krashen (1981) claimed that formal grammar teaching had no role to play because grammar lessons could only improve explicit (learned) knowledge rather than implicit (acquired) knowledge, research carried out by Swain and colleagues (Allen, Swain, Harley & Cummins 1990; Swain 1985, 2005) within the context of Canadian immersion programmes provided evidence against his claim. The Canadian research studies showed that even learners who had been exposed to large amounts of meaningful input in the second language (L2) fell short of reaching grammatical accuracy.

Recent research on L2 acquisition points to the need for a comeback to attention to formal aspects of language within a communicative context (Nassaji & Fotos 2011). One of the ways in which teachers can foster learners’ attention to form in the classroom is by means of communicative tasks carried out in collaboration. According to Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky 1978; Gánem-Gutiérrez forthcoming), knowledge is socially constructed by interaction and is then internalised. By speaking about a problem or the procedures for completing a task, the learners gain control of the situation and can organise, plan and coordinate their actions and those of their peers.

This talk will offer an overview of recent research in ESL/EFL settings which illustrates how several collaborative tasks such as dictogloss, text-reconstruction or jigsaw foster dialogue among the members of dyads and offer opportunities to improve the knowledge of the target language. The construct of collaborative dialogue has been operationalised through language-related episodes (LREs), defined by Swain & Lapkin (1998: 326) as “any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others.” Lines for further research will be offered and a call to bridge the gap between research on second language acquisition and the classroom setting will be made (García Mayo 2012).

References


The role of recursion in language and other cognitive domains

José Manuel Igoa
Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain)

Recursion has been considered an outstanding property of language and other cognitive abilities. It has been recently claimed to be a distinguishing feature of the human language faculty from other animal communication systems, and has even been thought to play a primary role on the evolution of human language. However, the very definition of recursion and its alleged uniqueness in human language has brought about some controversy in Linguistics and the Cognitive Sciences. My major aim in this talk is to throw some light on this controversy, in an attempt to clarify the scope and limits of the concept of recursion in its application to various domains of human cognition. First I will trace the origin of recursion in the formal sciences (i.e. Mathematical Logic) and will compare it with other related notions, such as computation, discrete infinity and embedding. I will then consider the ways that recursion has been handled in discussions about the origin of human language and the kind of evidence that has been brought to bear on these issues. In particular, I will focus on comparative studies that have examined recursive abilities in nonhuman species, and on the application of recursion to cognitive domains other than language (e.g. music, navigation, mental time travel, and theory of mind) both in humans and other animals. Finally, I will try to substantiate the claim that recursion as a property of human language and thought should be given only one meaning, though it may be reasonably applied to different areas of inquiry, from generative mechanisms and procedures in language and thought to algorithms and real-time cognitive processes. The extent to which any (or all) of these actually have this property is a matter of empirical study.
Cognition, constructions and change

Graeme Trousdale
University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom)

In this talk, I will begin by reviewing some of the neurolinguistic evidence (Pulvermüller, Cappelle & Shtyrov, forthcoming) for the existence of constructions in a speaker’s knowledge of language, particularly concerning the storage and representation of atomic, as opposed to complex, signs. This evidence raises interesting questions concerning the nature, and indeed the existence, of a syntax-lexicon continuum, which is at the heart of many usage-based approaches to language structure and language change. The second part of the talk recasts the notion of the continuum in terms of a language network (Hudson 2007), and focuses on complex schemas, and the place of atomic substantive elements (e.g. ‘words’) within them. Finally, the discussion turns to language change, and the creation of schemas as generalisations across instances of use. By way of example, I consider the development of the English way-construction (Israel 1996; Traugott & Trousdale, in preparation), its status as part of the syntax-lexicon continuum, and the manner in which schemas develop over time.

References


Causal relations in European Portuguese: A sociolinguistic study on argumentative texts

Joana Aguiar
University of Minho (Portugal)

Keywords: syntactic variation, causal relations, gender, education, age

To answer the questions whether and how social factors influence the use of some syntactic structures we analysed the distribution of clausal connections that convey causality in argumentative texts.

Although causal connections are well described for Portuguese (Paiva 1998; Lobo 2003; Lopes 2004; Peres & Mascarenhas 2008; Silvano 2010), there are not many studies on the frequency of occurrence of these structures in written or in oral texts and on the influence of social variables, such as education level (Lopes 2004) or gender. Overall, there is still a lack of variationist studies on this topic in particular and on syntax in general. Despite the fact that in recent years sociolinguistic methodology has been applied to other fields besides phonology, such as morphology and syntax (Winford 1996; Kroch 2001; Mondorf 2002; Pintzuk 2003; Macaulay 2005; Kortmann 2006; Cheshire 2003, 2005; among many others), most studies focus on verb forms, negation and pronoun agreement. Thus, the objective of this paper is to demonstrate that clausal connections can also be analysed from a variationist point of view. Considering syntax as the linguistic object of sociolinguistic analysis is not pacific though. Some of the main obstacles are the definition of the variables and their semantic equivalence, the scarce frequency of occurrence of some phenomena in the generalisation of the results, and the interference of individual discourse style (Winford 1996; Cheshire et al. 2005; Cheshire 2009).

In order to observe semantic equivalent variables, only syntactic structures that convey the same semantic relation, in this case causality, will be analysed. Thus, each causal relation will be encoded according to: type of causal relation (Sweetser 1990);
type of structure (coordination, subordination, juxtaposition); item of connection; and position (for adverbial clauses only).

The corpus is composed by argumentative texts written by European Portuguese speakers, stratified according to gender, education and age. Because several studies (Aries & Johnson 1983; Tannen 1990; Herring & Paolillo 2006) indicate that texts written by female informants tend to be mainly about relations and men’s texts about objects, the themes and the number of words per texts were controlled. Recent studies on the distribution of causal clauses in English, focusing only on adverbial clauses, show that women tend to use more causal clauses than men. Also, women seem to postpone the adverbial clauses more often than men do (Mondorf 1996; 2002), which may indicate a lower commitment in relation to what is stated (Mondorf 2002). In relation to the influence of the education level, a study on narrative texts written by European Portuguese students shows that the syntactic strategies to express causal relations are still in development in the 9th grade (Lopes 2004).

Our preliminary results indicate that in European Portuguese the majority of the adverbial clauses that convey causality are postponed. Also, the education level of the informant, rather than the gender, may influence the type of clausal connection used to convey causal relations.

References


Language-related episodes (LREs) and learning opportunities in an EFL setting: 
Does gender play a role? 
Agurtzane Azkarai & María del Pilar García Mayo 
University of the Basque Country (Spain) 

Key words: LREs, EFL, gender, tasks, collaborative work 
Research on language and gender has documented male-female differences in the way language is used (Tannen 1990; West & García 1988). Although the role of gender in second language acquisition (SLA) research has not received excessive attention, this individual variable might play an important role in research conducted within the framework of the Interactionist Hypothesis (Long 1996). Such research has indicated that interactional exchanges may influence learning processes and promote SLA by providing learners with opportunities to receive input and feedback and produce output in ways that could lead to notice mismatches between their interlanguage and the target language.

One of the key features of interaction is that it provides learners with opportunities to attend to linguistic form in meaningful contexts. These opportunities are referred to as language-related episodes (LREs) (Kowal & Swain 1994). As the interaction that occurs as a result of engaging in LREs has been claimed to be a site where L2 development may take place (Swain & Lapkin 1998), any effect of gender on the incidence and resolution of LREs might differentially influence language learning opportunities available to male and female learners. The incidence of LREs has been shown to be influenced by the type of task learners engage in (Alegria de la Colina & García Mayo 2007).

The current study investigates interaction by males and females in mixed- (male-female) and matched- (male-male, female-female) gender dyads in order to determine the extent learner gender influences the incidence of LREs while carrying out different tasks. Inspired by recent work by Ross-Feldman (2007) with ESL learners, we conducted a study with 44 intermediate EFL learners (22 males and 22 females) with three research questions in mind:

(i) Does type of dyad influence the incidence of LREs?
(ii) Does type of task influence the learners’ production of LREs? That is, do information gap-tasks generate more LREs than collaborative tasks?

(iii) If LREs are generated, are they resolved or left unresolved?

The participants carried out four tasks, two information-gap tasks (picture description and picture placement) and two collaborative tasks (dictogloss and text reconstruction). Their conversational interaction (20 hours) was transcribed and codified. LREs were analysed on the basis of their incidence and their (non) resolution. The findings showed that (i) there was no significant difference between the LREs generated by matched- and mixed- gender dyads (in line with Ross-Feldman’s results); (ii) there was a significant task effect (LREs were more common in those tasks where a writing component was included - in line with Adams and Ross-Feldman, 2008-) and a significant group x task interaction effect, and (iii) most LREs were resolved in a target-like manner. These findings will be commented on in light of recent research on attention to form and task-based interaction.

References


Fostering plurilingual instruction in the classroom or how to complement the teaching of Romance languages in an Anglophone environment

Carlos Cernadas Carrera, María Alonso Alonso & Laura Torrado Mariñas
University of Vigo (Spain)

Keywords: plurilingual education, Interdependence Hypothesis, heuristics, language creativity, significant learning, translanguaging

The present proposal is part of a more extensive work that we are currently carrying out in order to offer a response to the existing demand –particularly in the European context– for bringing theory and practice together in the field of foreign language education. Accordingly, linguistic theory will be directly applied to a specific philosophy and methodology to favour a plurilingual approach to the teaching of French, Spanish and Portuguese to students who speak English as their first language. Our interest in plurilingual education departs from the fact that contemporary society requires the constant implementation of new abilities. The methodology that we aim to employ in the classroom is inspired by the need to establish parallels between the source language or L1 –English in this particular case– and three different Romance languages through meaningful learning. The main purpose of such an approach is to make the most of the students’ potential in foreign language acquisition. This certainly implies the need to consider a plurilingual environment in foreign language classrooms so as to take advantage of the students’ knowledge of Romance languages acquired in other subjects that form part of academic curricula.

With this aim in mind, we will offer an overview to our project in this presentation, which will be articulated in three different parts. Firstly, and to tighten the argument behind our study, we will introduce the way in which our proposal embraces heuristics as the educational philosophy to follow, Cummins’s Interdependence Hypothesis as the
linguistic theory on which to support itself, and creativity as the methodological concept that gives form to this study. Secondly, we will explain the way in which the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth, CEFRL) will serve us as a guide to consider the practical approach that we will apply to multilingual variations. Following the CEFRL’s expected learning outcomes, we will attempt to identify common problems in the students’ performance of the three languages in order to design different activities and ideas to share our work with teachers and students of French, Spanish and Portuguese as foreign languages in Anglophone institutions. Finally, we will also explain the further avenues of research that we would like to perform to endow the present project with an eminently practical orientation.

All in all, our main interest is to suggest that it is of paramount importance to consider the linguistic structures shared by the three Romance languages under study and English to promote the transfer of a cognitive/academic competence. This is our key motivation for claiming that an active development of plurilingual sensitivity is needed for students to benefit more effectively from foreign language instruction. The chief intention behind complementing foreign language independent modules with this interdisciplinary approach is to favour the students’ linguistic sensitivity so that English students of French, Spanish and Portuguese will be able to understand the differences and similarities among these languages and adapt their knowledge of them to diverse communicative situations.

Mismatches in functional discourse grammar

Lucía Contreras García
University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Keywords: mismatches, transparency, Functional (Discourse) Grammar, syntax-semantics interface, interjections

The present work discusses representational mismatches within the theoretical framework of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG, Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008, 2010) and links their treatment to the theory’s main architectural tenets. It will be
suggested that the relation that exists between the allowance or rejection of mismatches between the various levels of representation (pragmatic, semantic, morphosyntactic and phonological), on the one hand, and the theory’s architecture, on the other, is of a fully deterministic nature. A mismatch will be defined as an unexpected, non-isomorphic correlation between representations at distinctive levels of representation (see Francis & Michaelis 2000). The main architectural features of Functional Discourse Grammar that will be related to the appearance and the type of representational mismatches will be:

a) Derivationality i.e. whether the grammatical framework shows levels that are derived from each other such that the relation between them is predictable and iconic or whether the levels of representation are relatively or fully autonomous in nature (see Sadock 2002; Jackendoff 2002).

b) Directionality i.e. whether there exists a clear order in which the mapping between levels of representation takes place such that one level of representation is always the source level and the other levels are always target levels, or whether there is no specific mapping order such that all levels are both source and target levels (see Zwicky 1972).

c) Interface transparency i.e. whether the mapping between levels of representation imposes or merely favours isomorphism.

In order to illustrate the claim that the appearance of representational mismatches in Functional Discourse Grammar is a consequence of the architectural choices the grammatical framework makes as to a)-c), the case of interjections will be discussed. The data to illustrate this claim will be real-world examples in the French and Dutch language. It will be argued that the Functional Discourse Grammar framework displays a non-derivational yet strongly directional (top-down) architecture that shows a non-transparent interface and thus allows for mismatches in the representation of interjections. This will explain why the semantic and the morphosyntactic levels fully disappear in the representation of interjections such that all the information is provided by the pragmatic and phonological levels.

Finally, the approach that Functional Discourse Grammar has regarding mismatches
will be briefly compared to that of mainframe Generative Grammar (e.g. Chomsky 1981), which possesses opposite architectural features regarding a)-c) and an opposite treatment of mismatches. A comparative methodology will help assess the treatment of interjections in both Generative Grammar and Functional Discourse Grammar and relate this to their architectural tenets. This will result in further evidence for the claim that there is a strong relation between a grammatical model’s architectural tenets and its treatment of representational mismatches.

References


Get + past participle constructions in Present-day spoken Indian English: 
Exploring the passive gradient

Eduardo Coto Villalibre
University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

Keywords: get constructions, passive gradient, get-passives, agent by-phrase, subject responsibility, subject animacy, verb type, semantic nuance, Indian English

One of the syntactic peculiarities of Indian English is the high frequency of get-passives (cf. Collins 1996: 54). The definition of the English get passive, however, is very broad and includes various get constructions which form a fuzzy set. A number of linguists, among them Svartvik (1966: 138), Granger (1983: 103), Quirk et al. (1985: 167-171) and Collins (1996: 45), place these constructions on a gradient according to their degree of passiveness. The gradients posited so far differ from one another in several respects; a corpus study of get constructions in Present-Day spoken British English reveals the following categories (cf. Coto Villalibre 2012). At the top end we find archetypical get-passives, with the passive auxiliary get followed by a dynamic verbal past participle and an animate human agent by-phrase; the whole construction is non-gradable and has an equivalent active counterpart (The deer got shot by the hunter). The next type of get constructions, known as ‘semi-passives’, share both verbal (active analogue, agent-like phrase) and adjectival properties (premodification, coordination of the past participle with an adjective, substitution of get by a lexical copular verb such as become, feel or seem), as in They got really excited about their new house. Further down in the scale are ‘pseudo-passives’, which have neither an active counterpart nor the possibility of agent addition and where get is a copular verb followed by a non-gradable stative past participle (He has to get shaved first thing in the morning). Close to the periphery we find ‘adjectival passives’, which fulfil criteria such as the ability to be used attributively, to be premodified by a degree adverb, to be coordinated with another adjective, or to replace get with a lexical copular verb, as in The young girl got terribly frightened. On the very periphery of passive get constructions we find, on the one hand, idiomatic expressions as get used to, get rid of or get fed up with, and, on the other hand, ‘reflexive passives’, which have get as a main verb taking an intervening NP (reflexive or not) functioning as object before the participle (He got himself killed or She got her hair cut).
The present paper provides a preliminary approach to get + past participle constructions in Present-Day Indian English, with the aim of finding out the factors determining the highly frequent use of this construction. As get-passives feature mainly in conversation, it concentrates on the spoken part of the Indian component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-IND; cf. Greenbaum 1996), using the corresponding part of ICE-GB as a benchmark corpus. The paper will, firstly, discuss the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of get-passives, as well as the similarities and differences between get- and be-passives, and secondly, classify the get constructions identified in the corpus on the above-mentioned gradient. It will examine whether the prototypical characteristics of get-passives apply to all the constructions and will also address other issues, such as the factors that may shed light on the reasons determining the choice of (different types of) get constructions: the information status of subjects, type of verb and semantic nuance of the construction.

References


A comparative assessment of the models used for the classification of verbs used without an object in contemporary English

Tania de Dios
University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

Keywords: English verb, (in)transitivity, direct object, object deletion, taxonomy

The transitive vs. intransitive dichotomy has been employed in the description of virtually any grammatical theory since time immemorial. However, the intricate nature of this opposition tends to be minimised in most reference books and grammars and even in some specialised studies where these terms are systematically associated to the simple ideas ‘verb with an object’ and ‘verb without an object’ respectively. Nevertheless, the incredible popularity of this view of grammar is by no means related to its exactitude, especially as far as the treatment of intransitivity is concerned. Thus, although the common association of the idea ‘verb without an object’ with the tag intransitive “may be very appealing because it makes the categorisation of English null-object verbs simple” (Liu 2008: 298), it has been claimed that “it ignores the significant semantic and syntactic differences among the different types of verbs grouped under this label” (Liu 2008: 298). This implies, therefore, that the most widespread use of the word intransitive is somehow inaccurate, inasmuch as it seems to have served as an umbrella term under which an actually quite heterogeneous group of constructions are encompassed. The study of this heterogeneity appears, then, to be necessary for (i) the achievement of a proper description of the distinct classes of the English verbs used without an object, and (ii) the attainment of a better understanding of the notion of intransitivity to which this kind of verbs have been traditionally and erroneously related.

So far, not many references to this specific topic have become available in the literature, and of the accounts that have been posited, many cannot be considered as providing a complete description of the English verbs used without an object. The aim of the present study is to carry out an in-depth analysis of the most outstanding frameworks for the classification of this kind of verbal elements, which will ultimately allow me to reach an informed decision as regards the suitability of each of the proposals. With this purpose in mind, I will review the treatment that such verbs receive in the three standard reference grammars of the English language, namely Quirk et al.
(1985), Biber et al. (1999), and Huddleston & Pullum (2002), as well as in more specialised literature. The approaches adopted in the different works examined in this paper present us with a variety of taxonomies which go from the ten-category classification offered by Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 298-308), to the succinct model put forward by Dilin Liu (2008), who, postulating the existence of only four classes of English verbs used without an object –i.e. (i) pure intransitive verbs (ii) ergative-intransitive verbs (iii) transitive-converted intransitive verbs of activity, and (iv) object-deleting verbs– seems to offer the best, although not perfect, model for the classification of English objectless verbs.

References


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The effect of emotional valence on disambiguation processes: A completion study involving relative clauses in Spanish

Marcos Díaz, Isabel Fraga, Ana Piñeiro, Javier García-Orza & Sara Riveiro Outeiral
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University of Málaga (Spain)

Keywords: emotional words, affective valence, sentence completion task, ambiguous relative clauses, pleasant words

Previous studies on this research area (Fraga, Piñeiro, Acuña-Fariña, Redondo & García-Orza, in press) have demonstrated that the emotional dimension of ‘arousal’ (which ranges from calmness to excitation) plays an important role when participants are asked to complete ambiguous sentences with the following structure: ‘... NP-de-NP + RC...’. In particular, high arousal nouns in Spanish tend to semantically attract the RC independently of their position within the sentence (NP1 or NP2). E.g. *Los vecinos*
intentaron detener la guerra de la calle que tantas muertes había provocado (disambiguated towards guerra-NP1) versus Los policías investigaron el mercado del sexo que practicaba Juan con su novia (disambiguated towards sexo-NP2) (Fraga, Piñeiro, Acuña-Fariña & Redondo 2008).

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the genuine effect of another important emotional dimension, namely ‘affective valence’ (which ranges from unpleasantness to pleasantness). In order to do this, the arousal levels of the words contained in NP1 and NP2 were kept constant.

Forty-five participants volunteered to do the experiment. The questionnaire was formed by 97 sentence preambles (37 fillers and 60 experimental preambles of the kind ‘... NP-de-NP + RC…’). The experimental preambles had an ambiguous nature that participants had to solve by disambiguating them towards one of the two possible nouns (N1 vs. N2). All the nouns used in the complex noun phrases were taken from the Spanish adaptation of ANEW (Redondo, Fraga, Padrón & Comesaña 2007). The distribution of the experimental items was as follows: 20 experimental preambles contained a pleasant noun (a noun with high valence levels) in NP1 position (e.g. La niña observó la estrella del póster que…); another 20 had a pleasant noun in NP2 (e.g. El niño descubrió la historia del libro que…) and the remaining 20 preambles had neutral nouns in both NP1 and NP2 (e.g. El mecánico reparó la llave del motor que…). As previously mentioned, the arousal level of these words was kept constant in order to neutralise the effect of this emotional dimension.

Overall, the results showed a disambiguation preference towards the NP where the pleasant noun was located (NP1 in the first condition and NP2 in the second one). Interestingly, in the neutral-neutral condition, participants followed a ‘high attachment strategy’ (attachment with the NP located higher in the syntactic tree –which is the typical strategy followed in Spanish), but they changed their preference towards a ‘late closure strategy’ (attachment with the second NP) if NP2 contained a pleasant word. Moreover, the proportion of sentences disambiguated towards NP1 when it contained a pleasant noun was significantly higher than that of sentences disambiguated towards the NP1 when both NPs contained neutral nouns. These results constitute clear evidence of
the strong effect that affective valence (on its own) exerts on disambiguation processes.

References

Automatic sentiment detection in Terry Pratchett’s Discworld
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Keywords: sentiment analysis, opinion mining, semantic orientation, information retrieval, sentistrength, Terry Pratchett

Sentiment analysis is the task to automatically identify positive or negative opinions, emotions and evaluations (Jain & Nemade 2010), and it has recently received remarkable attention (Goyal & Daumé III 2011). Its main focus has been the web, especially movie reviews and consumer products (Tang, Tan & Cheng 2009), opinion trends in social networks (Thelwall et al. 2010; Wiley & Sons et al. 2012) or emotions in emails (Mohammad & Yang 2011). Classifying a text by determining whether a term has positive or negative polarity is a frequently adopted approach (Lehrer 1974; Turney & Littman 2003; Mohammad et al. 2009; Mohammad 2011). Other methods focus on the detection of emotions such as anger, joy, sadness or disgust (Bellegarda 2010; Mohammad & Turney 2010; Mohammad 2011). However, one field that remains relatively unexplored is sentiment analysis in fictional texts. Some of the work in this area has focused on describing stories according to their emotional trajectory (Alm & Sproat 2005), crowd-sourcing a big emotional lexicon to analyse fairy tales and novels (Mohammad 2011) and studying the emotion associated to specific characters of a novel.
instead of those associated with whole document (Elsner 2012).

This paper studies three opinion mining systems that were not primarily intended to deal with long fictional texts. They are: Thumbs-up thumbs-down approach (Turney 2002), an external emotion lexicon (Hu & Liu 2004) and Sentistrength (Thelwall et al. 2010). All these systems are applied to Sir Terry Pratchett’s Discworld saga (39 books). The results are then compared with a human survey, where 50 participants rated from 1 to 10 the sentiment in each novel.

The main research questions of this paper are:

(1) How efficient is a sentiment analysis system when dealing with figurative language?

(2) Does any of the systems studied replicate in any way human judgement when assigning emotion scores to a novel?

(3) Is it possible to infer a pattern in the writing style of an author using sentiment analysis systems?

The justification for the corpus selection is as follows: Sir Terry Pratchett has been extensively reviewed and criticised, both by experts and scholars, and by a considerable fan-base (+500k Facebook fans and +5000 Twitter followers). This is relevant for the research because it gives the opportunity to gather a relatively large amount of data regarding the classification of these novels with little effort.

The methodology consisted in scoring each relevant word or phrase (depending on the approach followed) with a positive or negative score, and then adding these scores for obtaining the overall sentiment score of each book. These results were normalised and compared with human judgement.

Results show that whereas it seems difficult at this stage to replicate human judgement by using any of the proposed systems, the dictionary in Hu & Liu (2004) is the most similar one (~.60 Pearson Correlation Coefficient). These results also suggest that negative words are more associated with darkness in Pratchett’s latest novels (2009
onwards). This can be deduced from the fact that human scores and those obtained with Hu & Liu’s (2004) approach are very similar in these last books, and all of them received a negative score.

References


The rise and fall of word formation patterns. An empirical study of German ungender nominalisation and infinitive conversion

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Keywords: historical linguistics, corpus linguistics, diachronic change of word formation patterns, morphological productivity, history of German language

The formation of German nominal abstracts has undergone a significant diachronic change: some word formation patterns have become completely unproductive, and their respective word formation products are synchronically recognised as simplex words (e.g. Fahrt ‘drive/journey’ < Germanic *far-di); other patterns have taken their place, e.g. ungender nominalisation (e.g. Landung ‘landing’, Bildung ‘education’, Heizung ‘heating installation’), which this paper focuses on, or Infinitive Conversion (e.g. das Tanzen ‘dancing’ from tanzen ‘(to) dance’), which is in turn about to replace ungender nominalisation (cf. Barz 1998; Werner 2010).
This paper presents the results of an extensive corpus study taking into consideration a great amount of Middle High German (MHG, 1050-1350), Early New High German (ENHG, 1350-1650), and New High German (NHG, 1650-today) texts. It is shown that *ung*-nominalisation exhibits a massive increase of word formation restrictions (as observed earlier by Demske 1999, 2000; Ehrich & Rapp 2000), while nominalised infinitives fill the gaps resulting from that process. In other words, *ung*-nominalisation might just be on its way to becoming unproductive, as it happened before to the word formation patterns yielding the above-mentioned *Fahrt* or such abstracts as *Freu-de* ‘joy’ (also being recognised as a simplex word in modern German). Therefore, the study of German *ung*-nominals might give some valuable insight into the diachronic development of certain word formation patterns from a completely transparent method of coining new words to a mere relic only to be retrieved by the informed scholar in some lexicalised, now-simplex words.

In an attempt to account for this development, I will argue that there is a strong connection between the lexicalisation of word formation products, their respective cognitive construal, and the morphological productivity of the corresponding word formation patterns. In the case of *ung*-nominalisation, the lexicalisation of certain frequent *ung*-nominals can be explained as an increase of prototypicality: the meaning of the respective word formation product moves away from the semantics of their respective base verb, in some cases to the point that it designates something concrete or even animate (e.g. *Bedienung* ‘waiter/waitress’), thereby adopting more (semantic) features of a prototypical noun. If this happens to a great variety of products of the same word formation pattern, this process does not leave the word formation pattern itself unaffected; rather, it reduces its transparency and thereby increases the restrictions on the formation of new words.

References
Academic writing: A corpus study of collocational units

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Keywords: collocation, corpus study, academic discourse, frequency of occurrence, research article

This study aims at analysing the most frequent collocations used in academic writing in order to know how these collocational patterns appear to be fundamental for the description of this genre. Although large scale studies of collocations in this type of specialised corpora are scarce, there are some studies which can be considered antecedents to the work presented here (Gledhill 1995, 1996, 2000; Verdaguer & González 2004; Stuart & Botella 2006; Štefic, Mravak-Stipetić & Borić 2010; Menon & Mukundan 2010). For instance, the work by Gledhill (1995, 1996, 2000) deserves a special mention since he is the first researcher who has worked on English collocations in RAs. He defines collocations not only from a statistical point of view, but also a textual one; that is, collocations are recurrent expressions used in authentic, naturally occurring texts.

This work has also been particularly influenced by the concepts of discourse community and genre suggested by Swales (1990). Regarding the concept of
collocation, we posit that collocations are recurrent combinations (Sinclair 1991) of two linguistic elements which appear together due to or influenced by grammatical or semantic factors. We support the notion of collocation suggested by F. J. Hausmann (1979, 1985, 1989, 1990, 1991) as we state the constituent elements of a collocation do not enjoy the same status; in other words, one of the components determines the choice of the other. In this sense, our frequency analysis has been done with regards to the base, or headword, of the collocation.

Our corpus consists of 50 RAs written by researchers of the UCO (Spain). We calculate the frequency of occurrence of collocations in order to know the most recurrent non-specialised language collocations used in this genre. Besides, as grammar and lexis cannot go separately, our approach is a lexico-grammatical one. On the one hand, we provide an illustration showing the most frequent syntactic types of collocations. On the other hand, a semantic analysis seems to show that the most recurrent bases found in the corpus can shed some light on the semantic content of the genre. This way we contribute to the description of the RA as a genre initiated by Bazerman in 1988.

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Walter de Gruyter.


‘He was / gəʊɪn / to have a /bæθ /’, ‘Twenty /pɔrsent/ of /pɪpel daʊnlɒd mʊsɪk/’. A preliminary study of the difficulties shown by Spanish students in the learning of English pronunciation

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Keywords: EFL, spoken English, pronunciation, mistakes, Spanish learners of English

English pronunciation, as one of the major components of the so-called ‘speaking skill’, is considered the most difficult aspect to acquire and develop for Spanish learners of English (Martínez Flor, Usó-Juan & Alcón Soler 2006; Aliaga-García 2007). Several reasons may explain this situation: the irregular correspondence between English spelling and pronunciation, the lack of many similarities between the phonological
systems of English versus Spanish, personal and external factors such as motivation, language aptitude or L2 background and the fact that, apart from being intelligible, a good pronunciation also entails speaking with fluency and accuracy.

Due to these difficulties, in the last decades, several studies (Kenworthy 1987; Sánchez Benedito 1994; Alcaraz & Moody 1999; Palacios Martínez 2000; Estebas Vilaplana 2009) have been carried out to identify the specific problems native speakers of Spanish encounter with English pronunciation.

This paper intends to be a contribution to the previous research but in a more precise and detailed way, i.e., by considering the difficulties Spanish students of different levels of English proficiency have with English pronunciation, namely secondary school, Bachillerato and English Philology. Both their problems as a whole group as well as the difficulties found in each of them will be taken into account. In this line, this project aims at 1) identifying and analysing the pronunciation difficulties of a group of twenty-five Spanish learners of English belonging to different levels of proficiency concerning English pronunciation while carrying out several spoken tasks, 2) comparing the problems identified across the different levels, and see whether students from the higher levels of education selected have overcome some pronunciation difficulties typical of previous stages of language learning and 3) outlining the main segmental phonetic problems teachers of English should focus on according to the results obtained.

For the collection of data, two research materials will be used: 1) a description of some photos which represent a story with a specific beginning and ending and, 2) the reading of a text of 160 words, extracted from a textbook addressed to students of third year ESO (Obligatory Secondary Education).

A data base will be created in which 1) the recordings of the data collected will be transcribed by using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and taking the variety of RP as a model and 2) the specific pronunciation problems of each individual will be identified. Following Collins & Mees’ (2003) taxonomy of pronunciation mistakes, the errors made by these students will be classified by distinguishing those which may lead to communicative failure, from those which do not impede communication and
therefore, may be regarded as minor problems.

The paper will conclude with some reflections derived from the previous analysis which will be relevant for the teaching of English pronunciation at the different levels.

References


Metaphor within-cultures variation. Metaphors of ‘the Islamic veil’, ‘female’s body’ and ‘culture integration’ among the main stream British and Spanish cultures and the Islamic sub-culture

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Keywords: conceptual metaphor, Islamic veil, French ban, LAICITE, burka, Islam and Europe, oppressed women

Metaphor within culture variation is an innovative theory in cognitive linguistics which claims that conceptual metaphors tend to vary within the same culture (Kovecses 2005). That is, the understanding of a particular image or concept could be done through the embodied experience that correlates with each culture background (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). The fact that recent societies/cultures have complex diversities of subcultures leads to the assumption that conceptual metaphors could vary within the same culture (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Koveceses 2005). In this paper, a comparative study of conceptual metaphors in British and Spanish cultures has been done in order to test metaphor within-cultures variation theory. In order to do so, the study has analyzed a set of data collected form British newspapers, which consists of 18 articles, 10 interviews and 34 comments all written or done by British and Spanish women form both the mainstream British culture and the Islamic British subculture. Moreover, the work focuses on the variation of metaphorical structures used in conceptualizing the images of ‘the Islamic veil’ ‘female’s body’ and ‘cultural integration between these social varieties. The analysis shows that each social variety, in the selected data, understands the investigated images according to different embodied experiences. Needless to say, these differences could be related to religious, political and social factors. Thus, the religious ideologies show profound influence in constructing the ‘veil’ metaphors in the Islamic subculture. On the other hand, the ‘liberation’ of western women in the western society in addition to other political factors explains several metaphorical structures in the mainstream British culture. Furthermore, this contradiction in understanding the image of the veil leads to the emergence of other metaphors express the ‘cultural integration’ between these varieties. Overall, the combination between the study of metaphorical structures and within-culture social and religious varieties seems to be useful in understanding the within-culture variation in understanding the images of the
‘Islamic veil’, ‘female body’ and ‘cultural integration’.

**References**


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**Spelling-to-sound instances of loanwords in the Late Modern English period**

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*Keywords*: sound-to-spelling, loanwords, borrowings, Late Modern English, phonetics, spelling, corpus

Indubitably, borrowing has been a productive and widespread mechanism of word formation in the history of the English language. One striking feature of English is, as suggested by Guijarro Ojeda & Ruiz Cecilia (2004: 215), that it contains thousands of borrowings and that the English language has adopted or acquired lexical words from any foreign language it has been in contact with very easily, owing to different motivations (Hock & Joseph 2009). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between English pronunciation and spelling in the loanwords borrowed in the Late Modern English period and the way in which some loanwords are respelled to maintain a similar pronunciation to the ‘donor language’ (Haspelmath 2008: 46). Thus, this paper outlines the features that point out sound-to-spelling relationships in loanwords (i.e., phoneticised respellings). The most prevailing examples of loanword spelling adaptations will be provided to attest how loanwords in English are nativised, especially those words that record a change in spelling to make the loanword become more inborn or natural.

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Are isolated if-clauses independent clauses? Evidence from spoken British and American English

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Keywords: isolated if-clauses, insubordination, grammatical status, corpus-based study, spoken English

If-clauses of the type shown in (1) and (2) are similar in form to conditional clauses, as the one illustrated in (3), but vary in some aspects:

(1) Okay if you’d like to get dressed now.

(2) If I’d somewhere to go, some friend’s room.

(3) If he had invited us properly, we would have attended his wedding.

They are used with a different illocutionary force, i.e., a polite request and a wish on the part of the speaker, respectively. If-clauses of this type also differ from conditionals in that the corresponding matrix clauses are lacking. These constructions seem to have undergone a process that Evans (2007: 367) has recently termed ‘insubordination’, i.e., “the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie, appears to be formally subordinate clauses.” Lesley Stirling (1999) was the first to refer to this kind of clauses with the term ‘isolated if-clause’ and to carry out a detailed study for Australian English. Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 945) and Ford (1993), in turn, refer in passing to the use of if-clauses of the type shown in (1) unconnected to a matrix clause in order to express offers or requests.
Isolated if-clauses issuing a wish on the part of the speaker (cf. (2) above) seem to be well established in the language and often contain the adverb only (i.e. if only). As regards the directive type of isolated if-clause illustrated in (1), Stirling’s results seem to suggest that their use is connected to issues of politeness. Given that these clauses express a meaning of the type ‘I want you to do X, but you have the option to refuse it’, they leave the choice of performing or not the requested order to the hearer, avoiding thus a face-threatening act. As Ford notes, “when one makes an offer (…) an if-clause is a workable format for suggesting the plan of action and at the same time displaying a recognition, or conceding to the fact, that the plan is contingent and the other party may prefer another option” (1993: 139). Indirection is also one of the functions insubordination may serve; through it, the directive implication is left hanging in the air and the hearer’s face is put off the record.

The present paper intends to analyse this type of constructions in contemporary spoken English, on the basis of data extracted from the Diachronic Corpus of Present-Day Spoken English (Aarts & Wallis 2006) and the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (Du Bois et al. 2000-2005) In particular, I will consider their grammatical status, providing evidence to consider them as independent clauses and the stage of insubordination they seem to have reached.

References
Accounting for interlanguage variability in verbal morphology

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Key words: adolescent second language acquisition, morpho-syntactic interface, variability in L2 verbal inflections, Japanese-English interlanguage, the Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis

In generative second language (L2) research, two different views have been taken on the considerable observed variability in the use made of verbal inflections by L2 learners (e.g. He likes sweets/He like sweets). One is that it results from a deficit in syntactic knowledge (a position taken by the Minimal Trees Hypothesis/Organic Grammar (e.g. Vainikka & Young-Scholten 2005) and the Representational Deficit Hypothesis (e.g. Hawkins & Hattori 2006; Tsimpli & Dimitrakopoulou 2007). An alternative view is that it is the result of difficulty in mapping from morphology to Phonetic Form (a position taken by the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (e.g. Prévost & White 2000a, 2000b) and the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (e.g. Goad & White 2004), or in assembling features into new lexical items (the Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis, e.g. Lardiere 2009).

This study tests three of these hypotheses in four different syntactic contexts (affirmatives/negatives/adverb insertions/wh-interrogatives): Minimal Trees/Organic Grammar, Prosodic Transfer and Feature Re-assembly. The focus is on attempting to explain what factor causes L2 learners to produce variable forms of verbal morphology: the absence of L1 functional features, the differences in either prosodic structures or feature configurations between L1 and L2. The source of evidence is written and spoken production data elicited from adolescent Japanese classroom learners of English. A
picture stimulus production task was designed to examine both morphological and syntactic properties associated with IP (subject-verb agreement, past-tense markers, strength of inflection, null/overt subjects, Nominative Case), CP (wh-movement) and DP (articles, plural inflection). Participants are 90 junior high school students (aged 13-16) to investigate L2 grammars at the initial-state and in early development and 30 university students (aged 19-20) in later development.

The results show both difference and similarity among the four syntactic contexts. This provides evidence that selective variability in verbal morphology is a consequence of problems in mapping between levels of representation. The implications of the findings for explaining the nature of interlanguage variability in adolescent L2 learners are discussed.

References


Appraisal in media discourse: Analysing subjectivity and intersubjectivity in a deaf organisation’s press release

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Keywords: appraisal, subjectivity, intersubjectivity, media discourse, deaf community, identity, non-integrationist ideology

The last two decades have witnessed a growing interest in uncovering underlying subjectivity in discourse. The interpretation of where people stand and their positioning with respect to others is enclosed within a linguistic framework denominated appraisal. Considering all the literature published on the issue, it is worth noting that, up-to-date, appraisal studies on media releases seem quite deceptive. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to media discourse aimed at minority groups, such as the deaf group. Therefore, the main goal of this paper was to examine the insistent presence of subjectivity and intersubjectivity to signal the importance of Appraisal Theory and other subjectively-related issues –such as the mystification of responsibility– in media discourse. A written transcription from a previously signed press publication belonging to CODA Australia, an organisation for children of deaf parents, is what forms the unit of analysis. The notions of attitude, attribution, passivisation and nominalisation are chosen as main parameters for the attainment of that analysis. Regarding methodology, a qualitative analysis is carried out to match each expression with their particular parameter, and a quantitative one to determine which parameter has a highest degree of presence in the text. The results demonstrate the abundance of attitudinal words, as well as a non-integrationist ideology which recognises the identity of the writer/speaker’s group as a deaf one.

References
Perspectival construal patterns in language, cognition and interaction: Their acquisition, structure and foundations

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Keywords: cognitive linguistics, construal, perspective, perspectivation, language acquisition, developmental psychology, psycholinguistics, interdisciplinarity

Terms like ‘perspective’, ‘perspectivation’, and ‘construal’ play a central role in Cognitive Linguistics (e.g. Croft & Cruse 2004; Verhagen 2007; Langacker 2008). They try to capture the fact that when speakers express conceptualisations in interaction, they make use of the perspectival potential of language in order to direct attention to specific aspects of a situation while backgrounding others. From the point of view of Cognitive Linguistics, this phenomenon can be seen as one of the most fundamental and important features of language use and structure (e.g. Geeraerts 2006).

Over historical time languages have evolved structured and highly elaborated construal operations that enable speakers to alternate between and express different perspectives on the same topic. Importantly, however, these inventories of perspectival linguistic constructions draw on general cognitive resources, capacities and constraints, which Cognitive Linguistics seeks to uncover (e.g. Bybee 2012; Pleyer 2012).

Indeed, the importance of perspective in the constitution of meaning and the sharing of experiences and knowledge in discourse has also been recognised by other disciplines in cognitive science. Here, fields which are of particular relevance to the Cognitive-Linguistic enterprise of analysing the nature of perspectival construal patterns in language as well as their cognitive foundations are language acquisition research (e.g. Clark 1997; Tomasello 2003), developmental psychology (e.g. Moll & Meltzoff 2011; Wellman 2011) and psycholinguistics (e.g. Barr & Keysar 2006).

As Cognitive Linguistics sees language as tightly integrated with human cognition, I propose in this talk that treating the notion of perspective as an interdisciplinary, integrative concept at the interface of these domains of research in cognitive science promises to be highly profitable. More specifically, I will argue that integrating analyses and theorizing from Cognitive Linguistics, language acquisition research,
developmental psychology and psycholinguistics will yield a richly cognitively and linguistically plausible model of the acquisition, structure and cognitive foundations of perspectival construal operations in language.

To illustrate this, I will present relevant convergent results and analyses from these different disciplines on perspective-taking and -setting in language, cognition and interaction. I will then present a corpus study using data from the CHILDES corpus (MacWhinney 2000) and offer an analysis of the acquisition of perspectival construal patterns in English in discourse (cf. Langacker 2001; Radden & Dirven 2007). Most crucially, I will then demonstrate how these analyses can be enriched by and integrated with work from developmental psychology and psycholinguistics on the cognitive foundations and structure of perspective-taking and -setting. To further underline the fruitfulness of such a highly interdisciplinary enterprise, I will also outline how the results presented here could be extended to Cognitive-Linguistic approaches to second language acquisition and teaching (e.g. Robinson & Ellis 2008; Littlemore 2009).

References


Effects of perceptual training on the perception and production of English vowels by native speakers of European Portuguese

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Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, speech perception, perceptual training, pronunciation, computer-based learning

Many studies have demonstrated that computer-based perceptual training programmes can be effective in improving second language learners’ perception of segmental speech contrasts, but only a few have aimed at observing the transfer to production. Also, to my knowledge, there has been no research which analysed the effects of phonetic training on the pronunciation of English vowels by native speakers of European Portuguese. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the effect of high-variability phonetic training on the perception and production of three English vowel contrasts /i-ɪ/, /ɛ-æ/ and /ʊ-u/
by thirty Portuguese EFL learners. More specifically, the research objectives of this study are to: 1) investigate which target vowel pairs will be more easily perceived and produced by the L2 speakers; 2) analyse which acoustic cues (durational or spectral quality) L2 speakers rely on to perceive and produce the L2 vowels; 3) investigate whether training has a positive effect on the perception of the English vowel contrasts by EP native speakers; 4) investigate whether natural-stimuli-based perception training will lead to production improvement; 5) by means of a retention test, investigate whether the effects of perceptual training will remain after the training is over.

In order to carry out this research, two sentence-reading tests will be designed so as to investigate the production of English and European Portuguese vowels and an alternative-forced-choice identification task with natural stimuli will be applied to test the participants’ perception of English vowels. The same test structure will be used for pre-, post-, and retention tests. The perceptual training will consist of five sessions divided into two blocks: (1) discrimination tasks and (2) alternative-forced-choice identification sequences followed by immediate feedback. In the first three sessions the learners will perform 1.1) a categorical AX discrimination task and 1.2) a two-alternative forced choice task, and in the last two sessions 2.1) an oddity discrimination task and 2.2) a seven-alternative identification task.

Based on previous studies (Rauber 2010; Bion et al. 2006), it is expected that: 1) the least difficult pair to perceive and produce will be /i-ɪ/, followed by /ʊ-u/, and then /ɛ-æ/; 2) L2 learners will rely mostly on vowel duration to perceive and produce the English vowels; 3) even with a limited number of training sessions, perceptual training will have a positive effect on the perception of L2 vowels, that is, the ability to identify these L2 sounds will improve; 4) perception training will also lead to production improvement even without any specific production training, showing there is a link between perception and production; 5) long-term positive effects of perceptual training will still be observed three months after the training is over.

Two theoretical frameworks will be addressed in order to explain the findings of this study, namely the Speech Learning Model (SLM) developed by Flege (1995) and the L2 Perceptual Learning Model (PAM-L2), proposed by Best & Tyler (2007) which
is based on the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM, Best 1995). These theoretical models will be used to describe how L2 phonological categories are mapped onto existing L1 categories.

References


Crosslinguistic influences on motion expression in English and Spanish
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Keywords: crosslinguistic, motion, Talmy, lexicalisation, oral narratives
According to Talmy (1991, 2000, 2007), languages can be divided into ‘Verb-framed’ (V-languages; e.g., Spanish, Turkish, Korean) which codify path within the verb (La chica entró en la casa) and ‘Satellite-framed’ (S-languages; e.g., English, German, Russian) which codify path outside the verb in elements like satellites allowing the verb to express concepts such as manner (The girl walked into the house).

Due to these typological differences, speakers of S-languages have the potential to encode a greater number of path segments in fewer words as compared to V-languages.
Furthermore, these speakers have the ability to express manner more easily without the use of subordinate phrases. Consequently, S-languages have been shown to express manner more frequently and in a wider variety of contexts than V-languages (Özçalışkan & Slobin 1999; Slobin 2004). Nevertheless, recent studies have indicated that the patterns of motion expression in these languages may be shifting closer to each other, as a result of influence between the two. For example, Martinez Vazquez (2001) predicted that Spanish will evolve in the direction of English due to the growth of Spanish speakers using English in their daily lives, the impact of English translations on Spanish, and the number of bilingual speakers using ‘Spanglish’. According to her, this gradual change could have begun in general motion verbs and then spread to other verbs in which manner is more salient. Likewise, Romay-Fernández (2011), on the basis of corpora of British English from the 60’s and 90’s, found that the behaviour of certain English neutral manner of motion verbs, such as walk or jump, is becoming more similar to the behaviour of the corresponding verbs in V-languages in the cline of manner and path salience.

The proposed presentation will examine differences and similarities in the expression of motion in a group of fifty native speakers of English from Georgia, USA and fifty native speakers of Spanish from Galicia, Spain. Data was collected as part of a larger study (in progress) which studies the acquisition of words expressing either path or manner of motion in a novel word learning paradigm. As part of a series of tasks, participants were asked to view a short cartoon based on the characters Tweety Bird and Sylvester and to retell this story to the experimenter. Narrations were video-recorded, transcribed, and coded for elements expressing path, ground, and manner.

Results are expected to show that the differences between the two languages in patterns of motion expression, as outlined by Talmy (1991, 2000, 2007), are becoming less noticeable. Specifically, it is expected that while the descriptions produced by native speakers of English will contain more expressions of manner than those of Spanish speakers, the manner verbs that they choose will be more neutral (e.g., walk rather than meander). Conversely, it is expected that speakers of Spanish will produce more marked expressions of manner in their descriptions. Furthermore, it is expected that English speakers will also use less complex constructions of path and ground
elements, that is, expressing only one path in each phrase rather than multiple ones. Also considered will be the implications of this research and future directions.

References


Neurolinguistic approach to the study of bilingualism

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Keywords: bilingualism, brain, neurolinguistics, second language acquisition, language functions

Since the late nineteenth century, neurolinguistics became interested in studying the brain of bilingual people. The observation of patients affected by polyglot aphasia, and especially their recovery patterns, made it possible for the first time to advance the hypothesis that bilinguals might have a brain organisation of language functions different from monolinguals.

In this paper, a review is made of the different hypothesis on brain organisation in a bilingual person; the neurocognitive mechanisms that enable the same person to use two or more languages are also analysed. Due to the complexity of the phenomenon and the variety of approaches in the scientific literature, bilingualism has been analysed from multiple perspectives, particularly neurolinguistics, cognitive psychology and speech pathology.

Actually, researchers have abandoned the hypothesis of a different neuroanatomical location of the two or more languages in a bilingual. A plausible explanation for the different patterns of language recovery in bilingual aphasics is found in terms of activation / inhibition.

The recent application of neuroimaging techniques to research on the bilingual brain has significantly contributed to the advancement of the discipline and has opened new debates, as the hypothesis of a greater right lateralisation of language in bilinguals.

Researchers have also developed several models to try to explain the processing of two languages. These models also seek to provide a coherent justification to interference phenomena, such code-switching.

The review realised in this paper will also be a starting point for future research in the field of foreign language learning. Brain organisation and mechanisms in bilinguals will be taken into account in both the analysis of existing methods of foreign language
learning, as in the development of new learning materials.

The bilingual brain is a recent research field, in which much is still to be studied. The researchers’ interest in bilingualism, as well as the social implications of this phenomenon, provides hope for the future of the research.

**Foreign lexical elements in English guidebooks and their translation into Spanish. A contrastive analysis**

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*Keywords: translation, guidebooks, foreign lexical elements, contrastive analysis, discourse*

The topic of this presentation is based on an aspect found in the analysis of a previous preliminary study in which the main objective was to determine the differences and similarities in the discourse of guidebooks in English (Source Texts) and their translation into Spanish (Target Texts). Due to the length of the guides, this research was limited to those chapters in which the writer includes information that the reader and traveller need to know before they start their journey like, for instance, health issues, security or even warnings for those women who decide to travel alone. In order to carry out the analysis, twenty guidebooks were selected, ten in English and their corresponding translations into Spanish. All of them have been issued by the same publisher (Lonely Planet), but describe different countries and cities like Barcelona, Berlin, Japan, London, Mexico, Morocco, New York, New-Zealand, Rome and Thailand. Five of these are cities and the other five are countries.

Here I will focus specifically on the foreign lexical elements found in the ST and the procedure used by the translator to include them in the TT. These elements are very common in guidebooks mainly because they allow the reader to feel closer to the destination of the journey he or she will start shortly and, also, because they turn up to be a basic dictionary in which the traveller can rely on to move around the city or country of his or her choice.
The main objective is to carry out a contrastive analysis through which we will determine the way the translator faces the translation of these lexical elements from English into Spanish.

Technology has played an important role in translation research with the help of TRADOS. This computer assisted translation software suite has provided us with the so-called *WinAlign* tool which has allowed us to align the ten pairs of texts and analyse them in a simpler way.

The use of different strategies in the task of translation allows us to determine the role of the translator and the decisions he or she has to make in order to present, in theory, a text closer to the TT than to the ST. Therefore, through this study I attempt to find out what strategies have been used in the translation/adaptation of foreign lexical elements in the guidebooks mentioned above from English into Spanish.

Since the guides compiled belong to the same publisher, we expect more similarities than differences in the choice of lexical elements and even typographical features between the STs and the TTs. However, we still need to know whether the translator often resorts to strategies like explicitation and omission or keeps closer to the ST.

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**The effects of elicitation on the acquisition of the English past simple tense by speakers of Spanish**

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*Keywords: second language acquisition, corrective feedback, elicitation, grammar, past tense*

A number of studies have shown beneficial effects for oral corrective feedback on second language grammar acquisition. However, so far we have not found any studies investigating the effects of elicitation (defined by Lyster & Ranta (1997) as a technique in which “teachers elicit completion of their own utterance by strategically pausing to
allow students to fill in the blank”) on grammar acquisition. We therefore carried out a study consisting of a pre-test, two treatment sessions of about 1 hour and 15 minutes each and a post-test, which aimed to measure the effects of elicitation on the acquisition of the English past tense by 10 adult students of English at intermediate level in a Spanish language school. Both the pre- and post- test consisted of a written grammaticality judgment test, a pronunciation test and two picture stories told by the students. The first treatment involved telling personal anecdotes and the second one focused on telling fairytales. All sessions were recorded and transcribed.

After analysing the treatment sessions, a total of 78 past tense errors was identified, 71% of which were followed by elicitation from the teacher. 85% of these elicitation moves led to uptake (see Lyster & Ranta 1997) and 73% of those led to repair (the error was corrected). Lyster & Ranta found that elicitation always led to uptake, but only to repair in 46% of the cases, which means that in our case the technique proved much more effective at pushing students towards self-correction.

Looking at the grammaticality judgment test, we found that most students’ explicit knowledge of the simple past tense was high.

The pronunciation test was included because a pilot study had shown that some consonant clusters cause problems for speakers of Spanish and some students are not aware of the pronunciation rules for regular past tense verbs. Indeed, some students did not pronounce the -ed ending in verbs such as waited. Also, a lot of regular past tense forms were marked as unclear, because the endings were hard to distinguish.

Unfortunately, only 4 out of 10 students attended all four sessions, 1 of whom missed the grammaticality judgment tests. Of those 4 students only 1 made a clear improvement when we compare the oral pre-test and post-test results. However, 2 other students attended the first 3 sessions and one of those shows some improvement from the first treatment session to the second. Also, within the second treatment session, 4 students had 2 story-telling turns and 3 of them showed improvements from the first turn to the second.

The fact that we could not identify improvement for all students and in some cases
even a decrease in accuracy from one session to another might be due to our design, as the telling of personal anecdotes left the students free to use the verbs they knew, whereas the fairytale task was more controlled. Moreover, for future studies we suggest using a similar task to the treatment tasks in the pre- and post-tests.

References

Register variation and the dative alternation in 20th-century American English

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*Keywords: Dative alternation, text type, register variation, American English, Brown Corpora*

Previous studies of the dative alternation (*I gave Mary the book* vs. *I gave the book to Mary*) have laid their focus on the various parameters that influence the choice of ordering, such as animacy, pronominality, definiteness, giveness and syntactic weight (see Bresnan et al. 2007; Bresnan & Nikitina 2009; Bresnan & Ford 2010; Collins 1995; Grimm & Bresnan 2009). Grimm & Bresnan’s (2009) study is the first to draw on data from the Brown-family of corpora. Testing the diachronic changes that they found (with respect to the factors ‘syntactic weight’, ‘pronominality’ and ‘thematicity’) against four general text types –Fiction, Learned, Press and Prose– they suggest that the changes are general across the different varieties of text in the Brown corpora (Grimm & Bresnan 2009).

My paper builds on Grimm & Bresnan’s (2009) work but extends the amount of data by including three rather than two corpora from the same variety, adding B-Brown (American English, 1931) to the dataset. For this study, I make use of all 15 text categories included in the Brown-family of corpora. For informative prose, those are press reportage, editorials and reviews, religion, skills and hobbies, popular lore, biographies and memoirs, government documents, and scientific writings, for
imaginative prose, there are texts of general fiction, mystery and detective fiction, science fiction, adventure and western fiction, romance and love stories, and humour. All three subcorpora are syntactically analysed using the dependency parser Pro3gres (Schneider 2008). By using three corpora of American English that span evenly across the entire 20th century I will be in a position to draw more decisive conclusions about register variation and diachronic changes in 20th-century American English.

A logistic regression analysis that takes into account the parameters animacy, pronominality, syntactic weight, giveness and thematicity illustrates how these factors differ in their strength. By including a third data point as well as two more parameters, I will be able to verify Grimm & Bresnan’s (2009) suggestion that text type variation does not play a role in the dative alternation. Hence, my study adds to previous research of syntactic alternations while being based on parsed data and thus allowing for more controlled and data-driven retrieval of variable contexts.

References


The category of possession: The restrictive approach

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Keywords: the category of possession, predication analysis, prototypical and transitional possessive sentences

In contemporary linguistics possession is regarded as one of the main categories. According to the generally accepted point of view possession represents relationship between two entities, manifested by the schematic structure X POSS Y, where X and Y are nominal expressions referred to as ‘possessor’ and ‘possessee’ (Taylor 2001: 2).

Investigations of the category of possession have been conducted within scopes of taxonomic and restrictive approaches. The taxonomic approach, as we see it, is based on the principle of a univocal correspondence between the linguistic form and content: any phrase that contains lexical and grammatical manifestations of possession (’s or lexical verb have) is considered to be possessive. The restrictive approach holds that lexical and grammatical possessive markers can express not only possessive meaning but also other types of meaning such as existence or location.

Hence, one of the main aims of this approach is to distinguish between prototypical and transitional possessive sentences. This paper aims at distinguishing between prototypical and transitional possessive sentences on the basis of predication analysis as described in (Brinton 2000: 276–279). Consider the following example (all examples are taken from Corpus of Contemporary American English - COCA).

(1) He bought the franchise for $140 million in 1989.

This sentence expresses the idea of transfer of ownership from X to Y. It has the following distinct prototypical features of inchoative and agentive semantics: X expressed by the personal pronoun has a specific reference; the sentence refers to the specific period of time and the quantifier also has the specific meaning, which enhances inchoative semantics.

In some situations the intensity of agentive and inchoative semantics can decrease. The factors that determine such a decrease include: presence of an external causer that
affects X’s actions; repetition of situation manifested in indefinite verb forms and/or indefinite referential characteristics of X and other participants; structural-semantic relationship between the names of participants; argumentative context.

Sentence (2.1.) expresses the idea of continual repetitive actions that identify specific features of X, by which X can be distinguished from other X-es. Agentive and inchoative semantics is neutralised and the sentence is crossed-categorised into the stative one. The following distinctions of stative semantics can be singled out: 1) reference to the whole class rather than to the individual person (sellers, buyers); 2) structural semantic relations between the names (cf. real estate brokers (hyponym) and sellers (hypernym)); 3) the indefinite form of the verb (Present Simple) (sell, buy); 4) argumentative context, in which stative utterances serve as evidence confirming truthfulness of the conclusion (brokers are necessary). The argumentative marker is a causative-consecutive phrase (that’s why), which associates the evidence with the conclusion.

(2.1.) Real estate brokers sell “houses,” sellers sell and buyers buy “homes.”

(2.2.) That’s why brokers are necessary.

Being agentive in form (2.1.) is stative in its semantics.

References


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