

SPiLL



Short Papers in Language and Linguistics

Cardiff University

Issue (ii), Spring 2021

Editorial

Dear Readers,

Can you feel it? The days growing slightly longer and the sun almost getting warm? Though we're still locked down at home, is that a glimmer of hope we can feel about seeing the postgrad office once more? We might not all be craving that queue in the café for an interesting-looking falafel sandwich, but we here at SPiLL are longing for those corridor chats, coffee-break rants and brain-picking questions. That's why we're super excited to be bringing you the second issue of SPiLL – full to the brim with updates, musings and tips from our community of taught and research postgrads at ENCAP and beyond. Phonetics, punctuation and presenting skills – we hope you find something in issue (ii) that piques your interest.

We're trying something a little different on page 15, so make sure to check it out if you're in need of a well-earned break from work.

Invitation to give feedback

We're really proud of the past two issues of SPiLL and we'd love to know what you think. If you can spare a couple of minutes we'd love it if you could give some feedback using [this form](#). The feedback you give will help us plan and deliver issues which continue to be engaging, varied and crucially community-focused. We're a small editorial team, but we're driven by the wider postgrad community to provide a safe space for academic discussion. We look forward to hearing your thoughts!

Twitter

In order to facilitate engagement with the papers in this issue, we're hoping to set up regular discussions using Twitter so authors of SPiLL papers can answer your questions. Make sure you follow us @SPiLL_Cardiff

We really hope you enjoy. Happy reading!

Katharine Young and Ellen Bristow
Co-founders and editors of SPiLL

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What can I submit to SPiLL?

up to 1000 words on any of the following:

MA/PhD research topics & plans
Research methods
Ethics
Literature reviews
Data analysis
PGR tips and tricks
Book reviews



The semi-important mark

Tamara Tarchichi (ENCAP, Cardiff University)

Keywords: Semicolon, Punctuation, Academic Writing, Communication Technology

There can be no denying that with the influence of communication technology new grammar and punctuation habits have emerged which have significantly impacted the ways in which we communicate with each other today. Our current use of punctuation continues to serve both rhetorical and grammatical functions when we write, and is the driving force in our need to be understood. Yet it has been established that with our current preference and use of certain punctuation marks, other marks have taken a back-seat. Perhaps this is especially true today given our need for speed in transmitting information is severely favoured over keeping grammatical formalities.

This present-day trend towards a more oral and informal style of writing that has even altered the way many university students use punctuation today. The shift has seen new and innovative ways in which students writers are punctuating text, and begs the question in whether traditional rules continue to inform students' punctuation choices.

This often leaves me to wonder: "Do student writers, who are indeed punctuating in new ways, have a rudimental understanding of the

techniques of writing in a traditional manner to begin with?".

"So what if they don't?" you say.

A fair question, and here are my thoughts on it:

I see the role of punctuation as essential to the comprehension and transmission of a text. It is a pragmatic feature to the disambiguation of our message delivery: would you not agree? Take the semicolon mark for example. It functions to link together two independent sentences which are closely matched in thought. Particularly in academic writing, the semicolon is seen as essential in marking coherence between two independent clauses. Its rhetoric and stylistic element allows a visual point in which student writers could place the newsworthy information at the most prominent position in text. Yet, a poor understanding of semicolon use by university students has often led to run-on and fragmented errors, comma-splice errors, and even errors in the use of conjunctive adverbs.

If the semicolon, then, is used vaguely, or even incorrectly, it can greatly misconstrue or even misrepresent information. Not very convincing? The following example showcases how the semicolon, if applied incorrectly or ambiguously, could lead to turbulence in matters where it counts.

In the 1900s, a man in the United States walked into a bar and was denied an alcoholic drink. Offended by the act, he sued the owner of the bar for unwarranted refusal of a service. After seeking a lawyer for the case it was discovered that the bar was operating under a legal, but old statute, which read: "That no sale of spirituous or intoxicating liquor shall be made between the hours of 11 at night and 6 in the morning; nor during the Lord's day, except that if the licensee is also licensed as an Innholder that he may supply such liquor to guests who have resorted to his house for food and lodging". As a result of punctuation, the lawyer filed an injunction against the bar owner to prevent him from selling alcohol between 11:00 PM and 6:00 AM due to the position of the semicolon mark in the statute. Countering the call of ban, the bar owners' lawyer disputed that the semicolon, "was meant to be and should be construed, as a matter of fact, of being a comma". This should be particularly the case, it was argued, since the bar was situated inside a hotel; therefore, the Innholder exception would apply. Otherwise, the clause would negate all the rules in the statute.

After much turmoil, and the involvement of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, the verdict was for



punctuation to be disregarded in this matter.¹

“There’s remedy for that: just avoid the semicolon!” you counter.

While we can certainly exclude the semicolon from our writing completely, could we really escape its inordinate consequences? This next example provides fatal evidence.

In 1927, two men were convicted of murder in New Jersey. The sentence of the verdict was written as the following: “We find the defendant, Salvatore Merra, guilty of murder in the first degree, and the defendant Salvatore Rannelli, guilty of murder in the first degree and recommend life imprisonment at hard labor”.

From this verdict, the judge interpreted the life imprisonment to be applicable only to Rannelli, since “guilty of murder in the first degree” followed Rannelli’s name alone. With this reasoning, the judge sentenced Salvatore Merra to death, despite the lawyer’s argument that life imprisonment was to be in fact applied to both men; otherwise, a semicolon would have separated the verdict of Merra’s from Rannelli’s.

As consequence for this punctuation error, Merra went to the electric chair three days later.

Whether I have convinced you—albeit slightly— or not— is minuscule in comparison to what ensued on Merra. Perhaps the issue here, it can be argued, is really not about the semicolon; conceivable

social and political matters are a large part of this discussion, undoubtedly. However, the very essence of using punctuation in writing, academically or professionally, is to communicate, exchange information, and express thoughts and ideas clearly and concisely. It is the great moving force of the written medium. Therefore, the semicolon—to an extent— can be seen vital in achieving reasoning, logic, and coherence in our written text, and its relevance—to a degree— should not to be reduced to another discussion on grammar (and then forgotten).

Think of its impact in these following situations:

- A San Francisco court in 2004 rejected a statue allowing gay marriage because the phrases were wrongly separated by a semicolon.
- A slogan on a subway excited a New York Times writer one morning; he expressed his excitement over seeing a semicolon in a full-blown published article² — that The Guardian reprinted!
- The retired French president Nicolas Sarkozy once demanded the preservation of the point-virgule (semicolon, in French) by demanding its use in all his official written correspondence.
- Distinguished writers like Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf—to name a few—favoured the use of the semicolon to break long and complex thoughts.

- Mark Twain, it has been said, was once mocked for his dependence on the semicolon that he decided to publish a story without punctuation marks. Instead, he left a short note at the bottom wishing the reader to punctuate according to his/her own taste.

- The popular book *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* by Lynne Truss was once unfavoured for incorrectly using the semicolon twice in the book’s preface.

- The novelist Milan Kundera once fired a publisher who wanted to replace the semicolon with a full-stop.

So, while using the semicolon may very well be just a matter of choice, emphasis on its preservation, in any context, could significantly influence how information is exchanged in any context—that is, outside of the world of academia, or very much in the depth of it.

Notes

¹ For more on this case (and other) see Cecelia Watson’s 2019 book titled: *Semicolon, The Past, Present, and Future of a Misunderstood Mark*.

² See New York Times 2008 article titled *Celebrating the Semicolon in a Most Unlikely Location*.

The Influence of Nominal Form on Temporal Semantics: Part I

Alex Carr (ENCAP, Cardiff University. Funded by Wales DTP ESRC)

Keywords: temporal semantics, nominality, lexical aspect, word formation, event nominals

Introduction

The following paper is a small product from the first study of my thesis. While, here, I will focus on the relationship between nominal form and temporal semantics, my thesis expands on this relationship, considering the simultaneous influence of nominal form, count/mass status, abstract/concrete status and genre on the semantic behaviour of nominals. This paper will first provide a brief background to the topic at hand, before then describing the methodology undertaken. The paper will then detail the results of the study. Unfortunately, that is where this paper will end, as it represents the current progress of my thesis. For a discussion on the results presented in this paper, you might just have to wait for a future edition of SpiLL.

Nominal Semantics and Time

From the perspective of semantics (meaning), nominals have been traditionally associated with notions of ‘time-stability’, considered to typically express static objects that do not belong to the temporal domain, e.g. table (Langacker 1991, p.298; Givon 2001, p.51). Despite this view on nominal semantic behaviour, nominals continue to indicate their capacity to express

temporal meaning. For instance, the nominal fire construes a dynamic event, as a fire can take place, and be observed over time (Vendler 1967, p.141). Further, recent studies have shown that certain deverbal nominalizations (Balvet et al 2011), deadjectival nominalizations (Arche and Marín 2014) and underived nominals (Huyghe et al 2017) can express temporal meaning. However, while this research has largely focused on the identification of temporal meaning in different nominal forms, significantly less work has examined the specific character of these temporal meanings in relation to different nominal forms. Accordingly, in this ever-so-short paper, I will identify the extent to which different nominal forms vary in relation to temporal semantic behaviour.

Methodology and Analysis

The methodology pursued in this study was composed of various parts. Initially, a random sample of 1664 nominal instances was taken from the British National Corpus (2021) using part-of-speech tagging. These nominal instances were then coded using 3 distinct annotation procedures. First, to avoid semantic ambiguity in the annotation process, the nominal instances were coded for their expression of ‘experiential’ meaning, using a Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL)

experiential metafunction analysis. Within the linguistic framework of SFL, the experiential metafunction relates to how language is used to talk about one’s experience of the world, including the worlds within one’s mind, to describe the events, states and entities present within them (Thompson 2014, p.24). The examination of the experiential metafunction allowed for the functional analysis of 1664 nominal instances in their “social environment” (Hasan 2009, p.37). For further information on experiential metafunction, see Halliday (2014). An example of this annotation is shown below in Figure 1, indicated in yellow. Blue sections display the nominal instance and its surrounding text.

After the experiential analysis was completed, the nominal instances were annotated for their expression of ‘lexical aspect’. Lexical aspect relates to the ‘inherent’ temporal structures of construals denoted by situations (Smith 1997). Fundamentally, these temporal structures concern the lexical aspect features of Dynamism (whether a situation is dynamic or not), Duration (whether a situation is durative or not) and Telicity (whether a situation expresses an endpoint or not). Overviews on these features are found in Vendler (1967) and Smith (1997). Together the lexical aspect features traditionally

Figure 1. Example of experiential metafunction annotation.

Pre.Noun.Text	Noun	Post.Noun.Text	Exp.Function.of.NG	Exp.Function.of.N	Next.Higher.Unit.of.NG
in temperate climates and in subtropical regions with winter rainfall. The adults are slender reddish-brown	worms	up to 1.0 cm long, occurring on the surface of the abomasal mucosa and are only visible on close inspection. The larval	Participant in Clause	Thing	Clause = Main

combine to form five ‘situation types’: States; Activities; Accomplishments; Achievements; and Semelfactives. A summary of these situation types is outlined in Table 1 below. In addition to the traditional situation types, ‘Objects’ was included in the annotation for this study, as, unlike verbs, nominals express the capacity to construe atemporal structures (Fábregas and Marín 2012, p.36). For instance, a rock does not interact with time – it construes an atemporal semantic structure, i.e. an Object.

Table 1. Lexical aspect features of situation types (Smith 1997).

Situation Type	Dynamic/Stative	Durative/Punctual	Telic/Atelic
States	Stative	Durative	N/A
Activities	Dynamic	Durative	Atelic
Accomplishments	Dynamic	Durative	Telic
Achievements	Dynamic	Punctual	Telic
Semelfactives	Dynamic	Punctual	Atelic

To identify the situation type expressed by each nominal instance, diagnostic syntactic tests (DSTs) were applied to the instances, e.g. did NOUN take place? DSTs signal whether a situation can satisfactorily function in particular syntactic constructions that indicate the presence of certain lexical aspect features. The information provided from successive DSTs is a binary code that represents the temporal structure of a particular situation type.

Lastly, the nominal instances were annotated for their word formation type. This process involved researching the etymology of each nominal instance in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED 2021) and

classifying them with regards to 8 distinct word formation types: (1) Borrowing; (2) Compound; (3) Morphologically Derived from Adjective (MDA); (4) Morphologically Derived from Noun (MDN); (5) Morphologically Derived from Verb (MDV); (6) Other; (7) Transcategorization, i.e. ‘conversion’ (TC); and (8) Underived. These 8 word formation types were chosen as they represented the most prevalent word formation types in the sample.

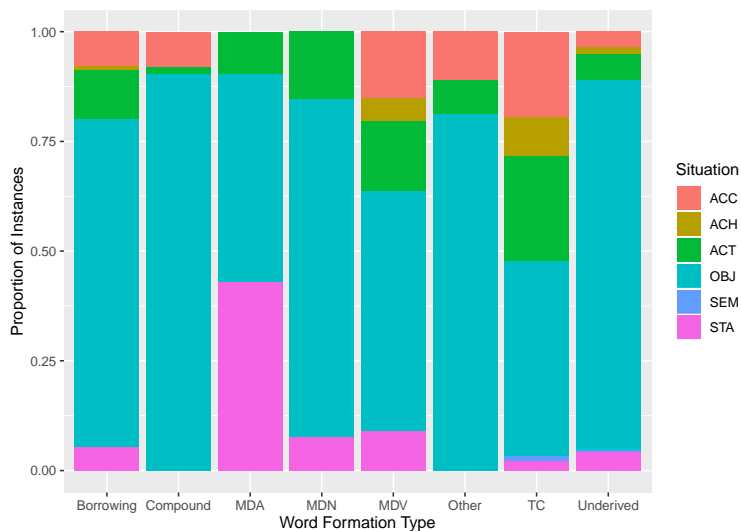
After the annotations were completed, the frequency data from the lexical aspect annotation and the word formation type annotation was used in a Fisher-Exact test analysis. This analysis allowed for the assessment of whether nominal form and temporal semantics share a significant relationship, and, if so, where significant differences in situation type distribution lie amongst word formation types. The Fisher-Exact test was used as it provides a robust statistical test that effectively handles low frequency data (Levshina 2015, p.211). An overview of the relationship between nominal form and temporal

semantics is presented in Figure 2 below, where each bar represents the situation type distribution expressed by a word formation type.

Results: The Divergence of MDA, MDV and TC

In Figure 2, rather expectedly, Object is the predominant situation type expressed. Objects were expressed by Borrowings 74.8%, Compounds 90.5%, MDAs 47.6%, MDNs 76.9%, MDVs 54.6%, Others 81.3%, TCs 44.3% and Underiveds 84.4%. Rather interestingly, this predominant orientation to Objects was only just expressed by MDAs, which also expressed a large amount of States (42.9%). Most notably however, MDVs and TCs displayed the weakest orientation to Objects, and exhibited the greatest variation in situation type, expressing Accomplishments 15.2% and 19.3%, Achievements 5.1% and 9.1%, Activities 16.2% and 23.9%, Objects 54.6% and 44.3%, Semelfactives 0% and 1.1% and States 9.1% and 2.3% respectively.

Figure 2. Barplot of situation type proportion expressed by word



formation type.

Taking the situation type frequencies expressed by the word formation types, a Fisher-Exact test was calculated to compare the frequencies of Accomplishments; Achievements; Activities; Objects; Semelfactives; and States across the 8 word formation types. Overall a significant dependence was identified $p < 0.001$, signalling that nominal form does share a significant relationship with temporal semantics. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected. To assess where the significant differences in situation type distribution lay between word formation types, post-hoc Fisher-Exact tests were conducted on each word formation type distribution comparison, e.g. Borrowing vs Compound. These results are available in Table 2 below. To avoid incorrectly disregarding the null hypothesis, the ‘Bonferroni’ correction was applied to the results - the alpha level was divided by the amount of pairwise tests conducted in the post-hoc tests ($.05$ divided by $28 = 0.0017857142$).

In Table 2, 15 of 28 word formation type comparisons returned a significant difference, displaying the divergent semantic behaviour expressed by different nominal forms. These differences were generally apparent when MDA, MDV and TC were considered. In particular, the most different situation type distribution was expressed by MDAs. MDA was involved in 7 significant situation type distribution comparisons. The semantic behaviour expressed by MDAs was significantly different to that of every other word formation type in this study. TCs expressed the

second most different situation type distribution, involved in 6 significant distribution comparison differences. MDVs also expressed a semantic behaviour that was rather divergent from other word formation types, recording 4 significant situation type distribution comparisons.

Number	Comparison	p.value
1	MDV : TC	$p = 0.095$
2	MDV : Borrowing	$*p < 0.001$
3	MDV : MDA	$*p < 0.001$
4	MDV : MDN	$p = 0.0175$
5	MDV : Compound	$*p < 0.001$
6	MDV : Underived	$*p < 0.001$
7	MDV : Other	$p = 0.0025$
8	TC : Borrowing	$*p < 0.001$
9	TC : MDA	$*p < 0.001$
10	TC : MDN	$*p < 0.001$
11	TC : Compound	$*p < 0.001$
12	TC : Underived	$*p < 0.001$
13	TC : Other	$*p < 0.001$
14	Borrowing : MDA	$*p < 0.001$
15	Borrowing : MDN	$p = 0.266$
16	Borrowing : Compound	$p = 0.015$
17	Borrowing : Underived	$p = 0.0035$
18	Borrowing : Other	$p = 0.211$
19	MDA : MDN	$*p < 0.001$
20	MDA : Compound	$*p < 0.001$
21	MDA : Underived	$*p < 0.001$
22	MDA : Other	$*p < 0.001$
23	MDN : Compound	$p = 0.002$
24	MDN : Underived	$p = 0.202$
25	MDN : Other	$p = 0.009$
26	Compound : Underived	$p = 0.154$
27	Compound : Other	$p = 0.236$
28	Underived : Other	$p = 0.076$

Table 2. Post-hoc Fisher-Exact test results for comparisons of semantic behaviour expressed by different word formation types.

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CLCR SPRING SEMINAR SERIES

February 10th 2021: Tony Young (Newcastle University)
Displacement and Professional Reintegration: Intercultural Communicative Competence and the Refugee Emergency in Europe

February 24th 2021: Yunfeng Ge & Hong Wang (Shandong Normal University)
Discourse studies on Chinese civil trials based on CLIPS corpus

March 3rd 2021: Janny Leung (University of Hong Kong)
An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Decisions by Facebook's "Supreme Court"

March 17th 2021: Louise Sylvester (University of Westminster)
Reframing the interaction between native terms and loanwords: Some data from occupational domains in Middle English

March 24th 2021: John Bateman (Bremen University)

April 21st 2021: Eneas Caro (Universidad de Sevilla) & Marina Asián (Universidad de Almeria)

April 28th 2021: Melody Pattison

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Acquisition of the voicing contrast in word-initial stop consonants: a case study of an infant with a cochlear implant

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Keywords: Cochlear Implantation, Production, Voicing Contrast

In typical early language acquisition, the infant undertakes several phonological challenges before they master target-like speech production. In English and Spanish, one of these phonological tasks involves the acquisition of a voicing contrast (e.g., the distinction between the first consonant of *bat* versus *pat*). Existing research provides a foundation for how contrastive pairs are acquired by typically-developing infants (Macken and Barton, 1978 and McLeod and Crowe, 2018), with the emergence of voiced consonants usually before their voiceless pairs (Eilers et al. 1984:282). Less research has investigated the acquisition of this phonological discrimination in atypical populations, such as those with a hearing impairment, and the potential impact that delayed auditory access could have on target-like discrimination and production of contrastive pairs. This case study aims to better inform our understanding of how the voicing contrast is acquired by a child who was born with severe hearing loss. The research attempts to answer the following question: how does the acquisition of voicing contrast in word-initial stop consonants take place in an infant with a cochlear implant?

The CHILDES Clinical MOC dataset (Moreno-Torres 2021) provided access to original recordings and transcripts of a Spanish child, who was given the pseudonym Berta. The pre-implantation data—at 17 months (or 1 year 5 months)—did not include any vocalizations and therefore the analysis was of speech after implantation. Cochlear implantation was carried out at 18 months (1;6) and the data comprised infant productions between the ages of 17 (1;5) and 66 (5;5) months. This research studied 20 word-initial consonant tokens in each recording session: 10 bilabial and 10 alveolar stops (half voiced and half voiceless). Any consonants that overlapped with caregiver speech or non-verbal sounds (e.g., cries or feeding, in accordance with Laing and Bergelson, 2020:5) were excluded from the analysis because there was no available target word or transcription accuracy was questionable in these instances.

The data in this analysis is personal and therefore the issue of ethics is a crucial one. CHILDES is an opensource databank and is published in accordance with data protection guidelines, its data has been anonymized and made publicly available. These factors minimize all immediate ethical concerns when working with a vulnerable population.

Phonetic transcriptions and instrumental analyses were carried out at six-monthly intervals (between ages 1;11 and 5;2) to review infant vocalizations following cochlear implantation at 1;6. Narrow phonetic transcriptions in ELAN (2019) documented infant vocalizations of word-initial stop consonants alongside their respective target word. Target accuracy was calculated for each of the analyzed consonant tokens ([b], [p], [d], and [t]) and was classified as either ‘target voicing’ or ‘non-target voicing’. Production accuracy was categorized depending on voice onset time (VOT), which was either voiced (0-25 msec) or unvoiced (>25 msec) in accordance with Ladefoged (2011:97).

My evidence presents that Berta was able to distinguish the voicing contrast in production of bilabial and alveolar stop consonants. Furthermore, although she did not reach consistent, target-like accuracy by age 5;2, evidence is consistent with existing research (Lightbown and Spada, 2013, and Moreno-Torres and Torres, 2008), in that bilabials emerged before alveolars, and voiced tokens emerged before their voiceless pairs. Figure 1 summarises the target accuracy of produced tokens across all of the data and indicates that voiced consonants were more accurate (overall) than their voiceless pairs. It also reveals fewer voiceless tokens—columns [p] and [t]—than voiced ones in Berta’s productions (preceding 3;05).

Early data documented that there were no productions of any relevant consonant tokens at 1;11, which is interesting as it indicates delay from typical onset of babbling (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). Figure 2 illustrates a sporadic spread across voicing accuracy and suggests that the distribution of these tokens did not follow a consistent trend between 2;05 and 5;02 (i.e., the distance between [b] and [p] did not gradually become wider/more distinct over time).

Figure 3 conveys a more stable shape in the emergence of distinction between voiced and voiceless alveolars, indicating that a phase of familiarization may be necessary in emergent productions after cochlear implantation—between 1;11 and 3;05—after which, a more linear shape of learning takes place. Interestingly, unlike in bilabial productions, the early productions of alveolars appear to gradually get further apart.

Taken together, Figure 2 and Figure 3 present that voiced consonants emerged before their voiceless pairs, which strengthens the notion that voiced consonants are more salient in auditory input and consequently emerge sooner than voiceless pairs in early vocalizations.

Finally, Figure 4 illustrates a low positive correlation ($r = 0.17$) between age and VOT values (Gries 2013:147), suggesting that Berta steadily improved discrimination between contrastive pairs with age with aspiration length slowly increasing in voiceless tokens.

Figure 1: Stacked Barplot of Target Accuracy Across Consonants

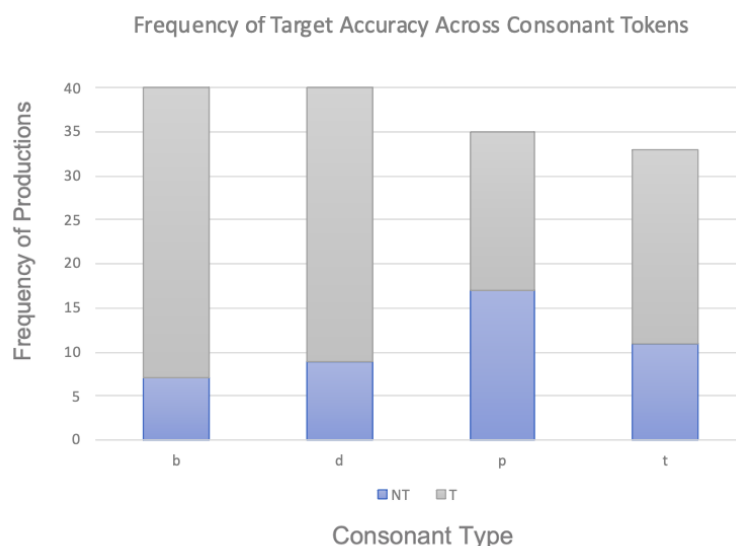


Figure 2: Barplot of VOTs Across Bilabial Tokens

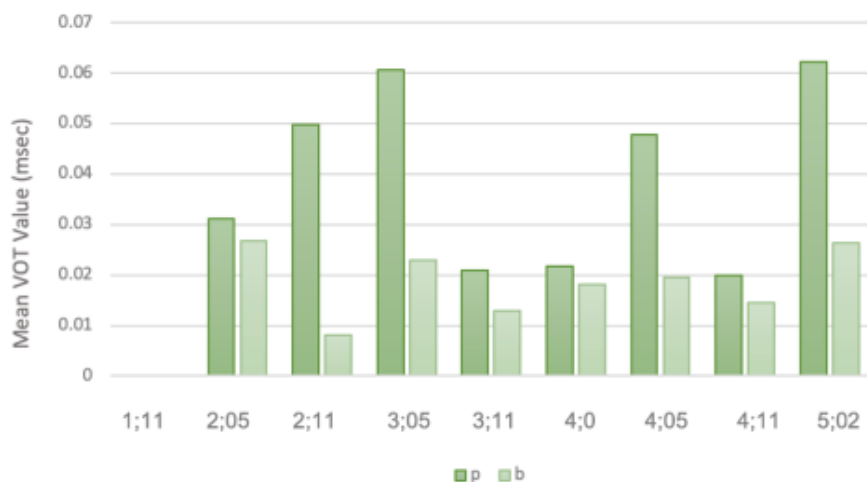
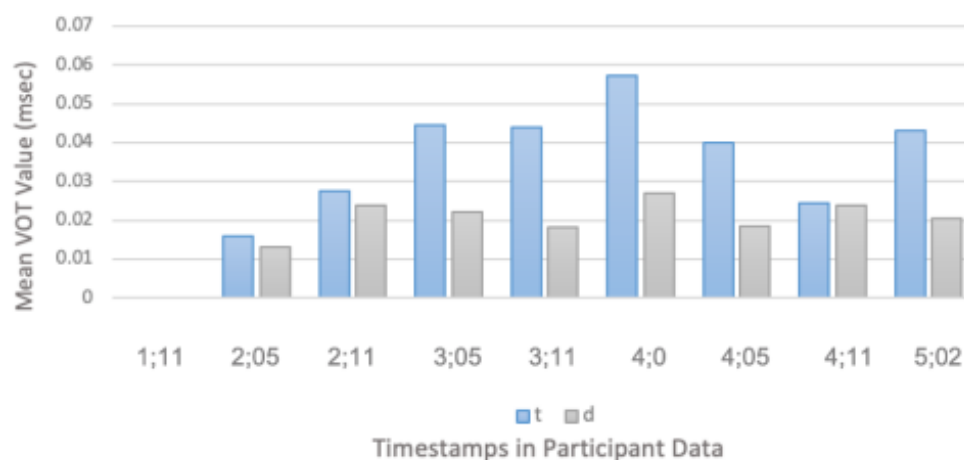


Figure 3: Barplot of VOTs Across Alveolar Tokens



‘+’ marks age at cochlear implantation, ‘Alv’ marks alveolar tokens, ‘Bil’ marks bilabials.

In sum, the distribution of voiceless consonant VOTs across the longitudinal data show agreement with production behaviours widely documented in typical phonological development research. The results indicate varying degrees of success when taking age, articulatory requirements, and acoustic features into consideration.

To conclude, this study presents evidence that the voicing contrast in Spanish can be acquired after cochlear implantation despite a significant delay to auditory input. Furthermore, by 3;11 Berta showed an ability to differentiate between voiced and voiceless pairs of bilabial and alveolar stops, despite inconsistent and unstable target-like accuracy by the age of 5;2. My findings show consistencies with behaviours observed in typically-developing infants, which suggest that Berta’s discrimination/production of contrastive pairs appear to emulate delay to (rather than deviance from) the typical speech trajectory. Although she did not reach stable, target-like accuracy by 5;2, Berta did acquire the voicing contrast in an order of articulatory placement that concurs with Macken and Barton (1978).

Distribution of VOT Across Age

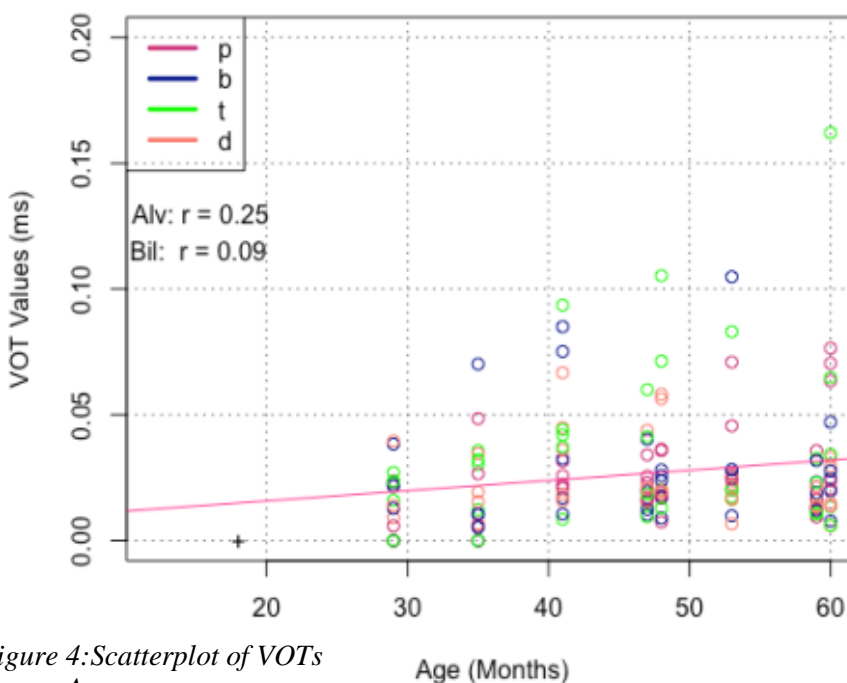


Figure 4: Scatterplot of VOTs Across Age

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In conversation with Ethan Evans

‘Spice up your....presenting!’ maintaining engagement online

Ethan Evans (ENCAP, Cardiff University)

Ethan Evans is a part-time PhD student at Cardiff University. His PhD thesis examines the life and work of the nineteenth-century novelist George Eliot from a queer and trans studies perspective. Outside of his PhD, Ethan co-chairs the interdisciplinary Intersec+ions network alongside Beth Pyner. He is also a keen runner and regularly misplaces his glasses. Ethan's pronouns are he/him. You can follow him on Twitter: @authorethan

Covid-19 has meant we have all had to (very quickly!) adapt and enhance our skills to be able to teach and deliver conference papers online. We spoke to English Literature PhD student, Ethan Evans, to find out what tips and tricks he has for presenting online and maintaining audience engagement. Here's what he had to say...

How do you approach preparing to deliver an online talk/teaching?

I'm a visual thinker. So, I find that designing a PowerPoint very early-on in the process helps me to structure a talk. Essentially, it enables me to break down my ideas about a topic into individual slides, which may then become individual paragraphs on the page. It also helps me to work out whether I've got too

much material for my timeslot. (Like, fifty slides for a fifteen-minute talk is just too much, right?)

Plus, playing around with PowerPoint makes me feel creative. And I find that the creativity of slideshow animations and visual images often seeps into my writing. It adds a sparkiness, an enthusiasm, to my script. And I'm a firm believer in academic writing being fun and enjoyable to read, as well as intellectually stimulating.

Then, when I've got a working draft and a fully animated PowerPoint ready to go, I always like to have a run through, whether that's with my family, or with some friends over Skype. And this is where I make the most changes to my presentation. Sometimes I can be so close to a project that I miss little things. Perhaps I've taken for granted that my audience will have a prior understanding of a certain concept. Or I've made awkward transitions between points in my argument. Practicing a talk with my friend helps me to work on all of these things, and it's an effective way of gauging my rough timing too. So, practice definitely makes perfect!

Do you have any tips for how to help your audience stay motivated/engaged with the content you are delivering?



I think a strong PowerPoint helps here. Don't be afraid to use colour and images. Definitely include key quotations on your slides too. (I like to follow along as the presenter reads their quotations out. This helps me to take it all in). And most importantly, I think, you should just be your brilliant self. Bring your excitement, your passion, your energy for your topic. Make us feel that. If you enjoy what you're talking about, we definitely will too. Presenting is such a nerve-wracking experience, but know that everyone in that room is rooting for you.

Do you have any online tools and/or visual aids you use to help maintain audience engagement?

Mentimetre is a fantastic resource. I've used it to make word clouds, seminar evaluation forms, and MHRA referencing quizzes with (arguably) the cheesiest elevator music you've ever heard.

What do you think is key to helping students/audience members feel confident in participating in online discussions/asking questions?

I think accessibility is key. Wherever possible, I would encourage organizers to consider providing captions for live events (whether that be textual or in the form of a British Sign Language interpreter), as well

as making access copies available for those who need them. At Intersec+ions, we are editing recordings of our seminar series and we hope to upload them onto our WordPress site with English language captions. So, if you're unable to make our 5pm slot, you can hear our brilliant speakers at a time, or as many times, that works for you and your schedule.

I also think it's important to give your students or audience members lots of options when it comes to participating in a discussion or asking a question. Especially as talking out loud to a Zoom-room full of people can sometimes feel quite intimidating. (I still get soooo nervous asking questions at an online seminar series!) So, you could encourage your audience to respond to your questions with a GIF, or a Zoom 'reaction' (like a groovy thumbs-up, or an applause). You could also signpost them to the chat function in Zooms, Skype, or Microsoft Teams, which enables them to type their responses both during and after an event. Surveys, polls, and quizzes are great options too because they enable participants to respond anonymously.

But ultimately, I'm not an expert on this, and it would be wrong of me to speak on behalf of all audiences. So, I would strongly encourage anyone thinking about giving an online presentation to reach out to the organizers of your event and/or your prospective audience. Introduce yourself and ask them in advance what would work best for them and their needs. You can then tailor your presentation methods accordingly. Research—in all its myriad forms—should be accessible and inclusive of everyone.

Is there anything that has surprised you about presenting online?

Online presentations are definitely helping to boost my confidence and self-esteem. There's something really comforting, or reassuring, about being able to present my work in the comfort of my own home, in my Ethan safe space.

Do you have any final words of wisdom you would share with other postgraduates looking to present online?

Believe in yourself. You can do this. You are everything you need to be and more.



CALL FOR PAPERS

Call is now open for SPiLL
issue (iii)

submit a short paper - no
more than 1000 words ex.
refs to spill@cardiff.ac.uk

submissions close
4th June 2021

WE LOOK FORWARD TO
HEARING FROM YOU!

Call for Papers: Disinformation, Language and Identity

Abstract deadline: 15th March 2021.

Online Workshop, Cardiff University, 30 April 2021

Disinformation is the intentional spread of information known to be false. The use of social media as a disinformation dissemination tool has grown in recent years, leading to the identification of disinformation as one of the biggest threats to global democracy (World Economic Forum 2016). Increasingly, a different range of actors contribute to the construction and communication of disinformation, featuring in some key global challenges from COVID-19 to the US elections. As a result, a comprehensive understanding of disinformation requires contributions from numerous fields.

This online interdisciplinary workshop focuses on the interplay of language, identity and disinformation. We hope that exploring synergies between different approaches to disinformation research can help us to answer questions like: How are dominant narratives of disinformation constructed online? How do fake news circulate across different communities online? How can we use quantitative methods to understand the spread of disinformation? How can we use qualitative methods to understand the construction and spread of disinformation narratives across communities?

We welcome abstracts from a range of disciplines including applied linguistics, computer science, sociology, and psychology. We particularly invite PhD students and early career researchers to share ongoing research in the area.

Topics could include but are not limited to:

- Identity performance in contexts of disinformation
- Language and/or Community formation online
- Genres/narratives of disinformation
- Fake news and polarization
- The spread of disinformation across networks
- Behaviours of 'bad actors' online
- Methodological and ethical issues in disinformation research.

If your research is not part of these themes but can contribute to discussions of the spread of disinformation online, please summarise the broader theme of your paper in your abstract.

Confirmed Speakers

Dr. Philip Seargeant (Open University): Complementary genres of disinformation: conspiracy theories and 'fake news'.

William Dance (Lancaster University): Paper title to be confirmed

Format

The event will be held on 30th April 2021. The event is funded by the ESRC and participation is free.

Registration to the event will open on 9th April 2021.

Abstract Submission

Deadline: 15th March 2021

Abstracts should be a maximum of 300 words (**excluding** references). We advise that you include the following information in your abstract submission:

- Title of paper
- Author name, affiliation, and contact information
- A short introductory statement which explains the background/significance of your research
- An explanation of methodologies/ frameworks used
- A brief overview of the main findings of your research
- A short concluding statement

Please submit your abstract in Word format to Aurora Goodwin (ENCAP, Cardiff University) at GoodwinA3@cardiff.ac.uk. We will notify all authors of the outcome by 30th March and advise next steps.

Organisers

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact Aurora Goodwin (GoodwinA3@cardiff.ac.uk). The event is organised by the Centre for Language and Communication Research, in collaboration with the Crime and Security Research Institute at Cardiff University.

Take a break!

(Maybe grab a Kit Kat? At the very least, a cup of tea...)

At the end of each issue, we will feature links to a song, a short TEDTalk and/or a short language and linguistics video. These are stressful, busy times and, as the Dave Brubeck Quartet suggest in our first featured song, we all need to remember to take 5...



SCAN ME

Dave Brubeck, *Take Five*:
<https://youtu.be/tT9Eh8wNMkw>

SCAN ME



Anna Babel, *Who counts as a speaker of a language?* TedTalk, February 2020:
https://www.ted.com/talks/anna_babel_who_counts_as_a_speaker_of_a_language_dec_2020?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare



SCAN ME

Ever wondered if you can train a cat to communicate? You need to meet Billi...

BilliSpeaks, *This Cat's Favourite Word is Exactly What You'd Expect*:
<https://youtu.be/TPJwzL8awJk>

