

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

LEXICAL STUDIES RESEARCH NETWORK CONFERENCE

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Two aspects of receptive vocabulary knowledge: Visual vs. aural

The purpose of this study is to identify the gaps between visual and aural aspects of receptive vocabulary knowledge. A set of parallel online receptive visual and oral tests was developed. The 15 target words and 45 distractor words were randomly chosen from each frequency band of the JACET 8000 to construct four-multiple questions. 140 students voluntarily took this test. It took about 15 minutes to complete each task. The result showed that the scores of the visual and the aural tests declined until level five, but from level six upward the gaps didn't follow this pattern. On every frequency band, the scores of the visual test were significantly higher than those of the aural test. The gaps in scores between visual and aural became larger up until level 6, but the differences were not straightforward on level 7 and 8. These results may suggest that learners need to learn words intentionally on level 4 and 5.

Klara Arvidsson

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Individual differences in the acquisition of idiomatic competence in L2 French – an ongoing pilot study

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Studies show that spoken language abounds with conventional ways of combining words to convey messages and to fill discursive functions (e.g. Pawley & Syder, 1983), here broadly labelled idiomatic language use. Previous research shows that it is generally difficult for L2 learners to acquire idiomaticity, but that some learners are more successful than others (e.g. Dörnyei et al., 2004). This spurs the overarching research question of this on-going pilot study: What characterizes the learner of L2 French whose idiomatic competence develops the most during a semester abroad? The participants of my study are Swedish speaking university students in French who spend a semester abroad in France. Development of idiomatic competence will be measured by a pre- and post test design, and the results will be examined in the view of individual differences, such as general proficiency level, intensity of contact with native speakers, multicultural effectiveness and identity experience while using the L2.

Tom Caton

Cardiff University

What is the effect of short term Study Abroad (SA) on language learners' vocabulary knowledge?

Research I carried out in early 2015 looked at Japanese short-term SA participants' productive vocabulary size and established that some changes were measurable. Although this was only a small case study involving a small single group of students, it suggests that further detailed examination could reveal interesting changes in lexical development and yield further results. My presentation will summarize some previous studies into vocabulary changes during SA programmes and suggest that using a combination of receptive and productive vocabulary testing instruments could help our understanding of lexical size and growth rates as they relate to different language levels over a limited time frame. It is hoped that this research will be of practical use in the setting up and administration of future programmes.

Stephen Cutler

Cardiff University

Chunking and the memorisation of spoken text in L2 learners of English

A potentially useful method of investigating the acquisition and usage of formulaic sequences in L2 speakers of English is to have them memorise unfamiliar but useful multi-word sequences. Analysis of spoken output following such memorisation can suggest how a sequence has been stored in the speaker's mental lexicon and provide an opportunity to explore factors that may influence the memorisation process. Due to working memory limits (Cowan, 2010), one such factor is likely to involve the way that longer utterances are chunked during learning.

This presentation reports on an initial pilot study designed to investigate how different ways of presenting spoken text to a learner may influence how it is memorised and subsequently used. Six intermediate/advanced Japanese speakers of English were each given 12 different utterances to memorise. Two independent factors were investigated: how the utterance was presented to the participant (as a whole utterance; in smaller chunks; or on a word-by-word basis) and the length of the utterance. The target utterances were then elicited in a series of speaking tasks, and the recall, accuracy and fluency of their usage formed the dependent measures. A repeated Greco-Latin Square design was used to ensure that experimental conditions were spread evenly over all participants and all target utterances.

Kevin Donnelly

What's the point of linguists?

Computer-based natural language processing has made great strides over the last decade. In view of that, this short talk asks whether in fact we need linguists any more if computers will suffice for all "practical" purposes (as opposed to the theoretical discussions linguists like to indulge in)? Is this a bad thing, and if so, why? And can linguists do anything to push back?

Mike Green

Cardiff University, Kansai Gaidai University

Why are phonological patterns memorable?

Previous classroom-based experiments have found evidence of a mnemonic advantage for collocations with phonological patterns, after awareness-raising activities. In this session, possible explanations for this phenomenon will be discussed, together with an outline for an experiment plan which will attempt to determine the extent to which phonological patterns, such as assonance and alliteration, facilitate the processing of Adjective - Noun collocations with low-intermediate L2 learners. Various aspects of the data collection and analysis will be discussed and potential drawbacks identified.

Caroline Handley

Cardiff University

Investigating the nature of word associations: Linguistic or conceptual?

I will introduce the replication study I am conducting of the first experiment in a paper by Santos et al. (2011), investigating the nature of word associations. The original experiment was part of a series of three experiments, designed to test Barsalou et al's (2008) Language and Situated Simulation (LASS) theory of conceptual processing. The authors hypothesize that language is processed via two parallel systems, linguistic and conceptual, and that word associations will activate the linguistic system more frequently and more quickly than the conceptual system. According to the categorisation system they devised, word association responses were indeed more often linguistic and linguistic responses were quicker than conceptual ones. However, in replicating this experiment, issues have been found with their categorisation of responses, which will be discussed in this presentation, as well as potential solutions and the implications for replicating the original results.

References

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Tadamitsu Kamimoto

Kumamoto Gakuen University

The Likert scale revisited

The Likert scale is often used to measure attitudes and opinions in L2 acquisition research. The literature shows that there are many forms available, suggesting that users appear to have adopted whatever form seems reasonable and convenient. However, an exemplary item is usually displayed in both numbers and words, ranging from 1 ("strongly agree") to 5 ("strongly disagree") while the remaining items are only in numbers. Researchers assume that words and numbers represent the same entity. Wells and Smith (1960) offered contrary evidence. This paper attempts to re-examine the effects of its scale format on results. The Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007) was used. A total of 70 multiple-choice items were followed by a 4-point confidence scale, which asked students to express how confident they were in their answers. The "number" and "word" versions were randomly distributed to students. Results show no statistical difference of raw scores between the two groups but the "number" group showed an inclination to assess their confidence level higher across the word frequency levels than the "word" group did. Details are to be reported and implications are to be discussed at the presentation.

Emma Marsden

University of York (with co-authors: Kara Morgan-Short and Jeanne Heil (University of Illinois at Chicago))

Open science, pre-registration and multi-site replication in SLA research: A case study, investigating attention to form during aural and written comprehension in Spanish L2

The open science movement is well underway, with several initiatives promoting transparency and rigour in research, encouraging the sharing of materials and data as well as replication to test reliability and generalisability. This presentation describes one such initiative that used the Centre for Open Science's platform 'the Open Science Framework'.

I first outline key aspects of the open science movement relevant to second language researchers, including the purpose and process of pre-registering a multi-site replication study.

I then describe our specific study, which investigated whether paying attention to grammatical forms interfered with comprehension of a passage more than paying attention to lexical items. This work emerged out of VanPatten's (1990) and Wong's (2001) findings that in an aural task learners who paid attention to grammatical forms ('la' (the) and verb inflection '-n') had lower comprehension scores than those who attended to a lexical item ('inflación' inflation). Concerns about the very different salience of the items to be attended led to conceptual replications of these studies, which used different materials and were in the written modality (Leow et al., 2008; Morgan-Short et al., 2012). These replications found no evidence for interference with comprehension. However, as these replications were in the written modality and with different materials, it was not easy to compare these findings with the earlier aural studies.

The current project ran 1) an exact replication of Leow et al. (2008) and Morgan-Short et al. (2012) but in the aural modality and 2) a conceptual replication in a new, written paradigm that prevents learners 'back tracking' in order to attend to specific features (Rapid Serial Visual Presentation). Data from these two studies will be presented. Results suggest that findings in earlier studies have been dependent on the materials and research design. We discuss the implications for the role of replication research in SLA.

The talk will close with an update on ongoing replications at other sites and an evaluation of some of the benefits and challenges of conducting an international multi-site replication study.

References

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Paul Meara

Cardiff University, Swansea University

Simple Model Lexicons

Most modern work on vocabulary in an L2 acknowledges that words in a lexicon form some sort of a network structure. However, this idea hasn't really been developed. Apart from some work on word associations - which tends to look only at immediate links between words - the implications of the network structure idea have hardly been explored at all. This paper outlines how we can model lexical structures using simulations. These simple models

generate some surprisingly complex behaviours. We can use these emergent properties to generate interesting and novel questions about how L2 lexical networks might develop, grow and decay, and how an L2 vocabulary network might perform under stress.

Paul Rayson

Lancaster University

Speeding up the development of multilingual semantic lexicons

We originally started research on the UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS) tagger and lexicons for English in 1990. It took two three-year projects to complete the software system and create the single word and multiword expression lexicons (totalling around 80,000 entries). These lexicons form a key component of our semantic tagger which therefore has wide coverage of English lexemes and accurately represents coarse-grained meanings from our semantic field taxonomy of 232 tags. We recently applied the Historical Thesaurus of English (HTE) to extend the tagger with a much larger and historically accurate taxonomy (225,131 categories). The HTE took researchers at the University of Glasgow 40 years to complete. In collaborative projects in the intervening years, we extended the USAS tagger to other languages (Finnish and Russian) where the two lexicons took around one year each to create manually. In 2013, Scott Piao and I began work on a new method to bootstrap the creation of multilingual semantic lexicons for Chinese, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish taggers in collaboration with various research teams. Our approach initially used bilingual dictionaries to map the English lexicon and now includes parallel corpora and machine translation methods resulting in lexicons for twelve languages in total. However, we still rely heavily on manual checking by native speakers where the automatic methods fail to correctly capture cross-lingual differences and for multiword expressions which are particularly challenging to map automatically. All these lessons will be useful as we begin the creation of a Welsh semantic tagger in the CorCenCC project.

Csaba Szabo

Open University

Exploring the Mental Lexicon of the Multilingual: Testing vocabulary knowledge and cognate recognition in the L1, L2 and L3

Recent empirical findings in the field of Multilingualism have shown that the mental lexicon of a language learner does not consist of separate entities, but rather of an intertwined system where languages can interact with each other (e.g. Cenoz, 2013; Szubko-Sitarek, 2015). Accordingly, multilingual language learners have been considered differently to second language learners in a growing number of studies, however studies on the variation in learners' vocabulary size both in the L2 and L3 and the effect of cognates on the target languages have been relatively scarce (Cenoz, 2013). This paper, therefore, investigates the

impact of prior lexical knowledge on additional language learning in the case of Hungarian native speakers, who use Romanian (a Romance language) as a second language (L2) and learn English as an L3. The study employs an adapted version of the widely used Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007), the Romanian Vocabulary Size Test (based on the Romanian Frequency List; Szabo, 2014) and a Hungarian test in order to measure vocabulary sizes, cognate knowledge and response times in these languages. The findings, complemented by a self-rating language background questionnaire, indicate a strong link between Romanian and English lexical proficiency.

John Racine

Cardiff University

What can priming methodologies tell us about second-language word association?

Recent second-language word association (WA) studies are changing the way WA researchers view their data. New means of categorizing associations (e.g., Fitzpatrick, 2006) show promise in more precisely mapping the types of lexical processes underlying WA responses. Employing these new categorization schemes, further research has demonstrated that subject's WA responses remain relatively stable across languages and tasks (e.g., Fitzpatrick, 2007; Fitzpatrick & Racine, 2014). These two strands of research generate competing hypotheses. On the one hand, if researchers are employing categorizations that are psychologically valid, responses within any given category may arise from specific, possibly discrete, cognitive processes. These processes should be manipulable under experimental conditions, resulting in changes in response types and failing to support the hypothesis that WA responses remain stable. On the other hand, if one's response-type preferences remain stable despite experimental manipulation, it may be the case that the categories to which response types are assigned are not psychologically valid. To examine these competing hypotheses, three priming studies were performed, testing the influence of cue order and directed association tasks on first- and second-language WA responses. The purpose of these studies was to determine whether, and to what extent, subjects continue to respond in accordance with their individual response preferences despite these manipulations. Which participants' responses (NS or NNS) showed significant priming effects and under what conditions will be discussed.

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Marlene Schwarz

University of Vienna

Measuring vocabulary learning from Extramural English in Austria

Nowadays Austrian learners of English are exposed to a considerable amount of L2 input during their leisure time due to the position of English as a global lingua franca and its use in youth culture. Research on the impact of informal learning from Extramural English (EE) on language development is still relatively scarce, but first studies suggest that EE can have positive effects on language skills, and especially on vocabulary knowledge (e.g. Sundqvist 2009; Verspoor et al. 2011). This applied linguistic study aims to investigate the engagement with EE and its potential for vocabulary learning among Viennese upper secondary school students. Data will be collected with the help of a questionnaire survey, language diaries and follow-up focus group interviews as well as several vocabulary measures.

This paper will focus on the challenges involved in the selection and administration of vocabulary tests under practical constraints in authentic educational contexts. In order to provide rich information about students' lexical profiles the goal is to measure students' recognition of written and spoken word form and knowledge of form-meaning links for receptive vocabulary size and to explore possible differences in productive knowledge using a word association format.

References

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