



LONDON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH FORUM

PhD Spring Conference

Date: Friday 19th of March 2021, Time: 14:00 – 17:20,

Venue: Online (via Zoom)



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Programme

14:00 - 14:05	Welcome (Ana)
14:05 - 14:35	Presenter: Sharona Moskowitz , Discussant: Irimi Mavrou
	The influence of student perception of teacher emotional intelligence and happiness on foreign language learning
14:35 - 15:05	Presenter: Astrid Morrison , Discussant: Peter Skehan
	The effects of communicative functions of speaking tasks on speakers' fluency in L1 and L2
15:05-15:35	Presenter: Katya Petrova , Discussant: Christos Pliatsikas
	High variability prosodic training for mandarin learners of English
15.35 - 15:45	Break
15:45 – 16:15	Presenter: Cornée Ferreira , Discussant: Andrea Révész
	The development of L2 writing among Dutch young learners of English and the mediating effects of exposure to English outside of the English classroom
16:15 - 16:45	Presenter: Najla Alrwaita , Discussant: Froso Argyri
	The effects of diglossia on cognition: Evidence from executive function tasks in young adults
16:45 – 17:15	Presenter: Yeonwoo Jung , Discussant: Eloi Puig-Mayenco
	Investigating the effects of multimodal digital feedback on second language development through video-conferencing tasks
17:15 – 17: 20	Closing remarks (Ana)

Abstracts

(in order of appearance in the programme)

Presenter: Sharona Moskowitz (Birkbeck, University of London)

Supervised by Jean-Marc Dewaele

Title: The influence of student perception of teacher emotional intelligence and happiness on foreign language learning

Most students have private beliefs and opinions about their foreign language teachers, who often assume the role of facilitator, authority figure, and lead motivator. Not only is the student-teacher relationship reciprocal, it is usually interwoven in complex and dynamic ways. This study investigates how student perceptions of ESL/EFL teachers relate to student self-reported attitudes and motivation. Data were collected from 129 high-intermediate to advanced ESL/EFL students. General background information was gathered to control for factors such as the number of years of past English study and exposure to English outside the classroom. An online questionnaire was administered consisting of sections about student perceptions of teacher Trait Emotional Intelligence using an adapted version of the TEIQue 360° Short Form (Petrides & Furnham, 2006), student perceptions of teacher happiness using an adapted version of the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle, Martin & Crossland, 1989), and student self-reported FL motivation and attitudes using an adapted form of the AMTB (Gardner, 1985). Respondents were also asked about teacher classroom behavior, as past research shows that teachers with a higher level of TEI tend to be more enthusiastic and enjoy their students more (Dewaele & Mercer, 2018).

Findings reveal that students who report a higher score for their teacher's TEI and happiness indices themselves show greater levels of FL motivation and positive feelings and lower levels of anxiety. The results also indicate that while both teacher TEI and happiness are influential, teacher TEI matters more to students than teacher happiness. The aim of this project is threefold: to give students a voice, as they are rarely given a platform to honestly express their opinions of their teachers, to shed light on the complex student-teacher relationship and its potential influence on foreign language acquisition, and to offer practical suggestions for applied use by teachers in the foreign language classroom.

Sources:

Argyle, Martin, & Crossland. (1989). Happiness as a function of personality and social encounters. In J. P. Forgas, & J. M. Innes (Eds.), *Recent Advances in Social Psychology: An International Perspective* (pp. 189-203). North-Holland: Elsevier,

Dewaele, J.-M., & Mercer, S. (2018). Variation in ESL/EFL teachers' attitudes towards their students. In: Mercer, S., & Kostoulas, A. (Eds.), *Language Teacher Psychology* (pp. 178-195). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.

Petrides, K. V. & Furnham, A. (2006). The role of trait emotional intelligence in a gender-specific model of organizational variables. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36, 552-569.

Presenter: Astrid Morrison (University of Reading)

Supervised by Parvaneh Tavakoli

Title: The effects of communicative functions of speaking tasks on speakers' fluency in L1 and L2

Fluency is known as a complex concept to define and measure (Chambers, 1997; Koponen & Riggensbach, 2000). Research in this area has shown that several factors affect L2 fluency including learners' learning experiences (Valls-Ferrer & Mora, 2014), their proficiency level (De Jong et al., 2013) and even their first language (L1) (Huensch & Tracy-Ventura, 2017 and Duran-Karaoz & Tavakoli, 2020). While such findings have been very useful in helping understand fluency, there are many aspects of language and communication potentially affecting fluency which have not been researched. One of these aspects is the communicative function of language. In other words, what we intend to do with our speech (e.g., congratulate or apologise to someone) could have an effect on how our speech is produced.

This study aims at exploring different communicative functions of speech as a possible factor that could affect speakers' oral fluency both in their L1 and L2. This research takes a quantitative an experimental approach with a 3x2 factorial design, focusing on three different communicative functions (i.e., congratulating, complaining and giving bad news) which have been performed by the participants in two different languages, Spanish and English. Data has been collected from three groups of participants: English L1 speakers, English L2 speakers and Spanish L1 speakers, who performed three different tasks based on these different communicative functions. The participants' responses are measured for fluency in terms of speed, repair, breakdown and composite measures.

This presentation will show preliminary results from the analysis of L2 English participants. The emerging results show how speakers' fluency behaviour is affected by communicative functions of tasks. Considering the importance given to fluency, the results of this study would have important implications for how fluency is assessed, especially in the L2 teaching and testing contexts.

Presenter: Katya Petrova (UCL Institute of Education)

Supervised by Kazuya Saito (UCL Institute of Education) and Adam Tierney (Birkbeck, University of London)

Title: High Variability Prosodic Training for Mandarin Learners of English

Due to the influence of L1's speech regularities (Kuhl, 1992), many L2 learners likely resort to suboptimal perceptual strategies when they encounter new speech categories later in life (Best, 1995; Flege, 1995). For example, Mandarin Chinese speakers have difficulties processing L2 English lexical stress on perception (Archibald, 1993; Yu, et al., 2010) and production levels (Zhang et al., 2008). This is arguably because whereas Chinese speakers can attend to the majority of the relevant acoustic cues (i.e., F0, vowel duration, intensity; Gandour, 1978, 1983; Howie, 1976), they are prone to using different cue weighting strategies from L1 speakers (Zhang et. al., 2008). Importantly, L2 Chinese speakers' cue weighting patterns and proficiency levels are subject to a great deal of individual variation (Qin, Zhang, & Wang, 2019).

My PhD study aims to enhance the prosodic performance of native Mandarin speakers of English with limited immersion experience in the UK (Length of Residence < 1 month) by using the extensively-researched training method, i.e., High Variability Phonetic Training (HVPT). During the HVPT training, participants will be exposed to target exemplars embedded in diverse phonetic, lexical, and speaker contexts. Participants' L2 performance will be tested before and after training via not only perception and production measures, but also cue weighting measures. To further examine the source of individual differences, a set of aptitude measures will be adopted to tap into participants' prosodic sensitivities on behavioural (psychoacoustic discrimination tests) and neurophysiological levels (EEG tests).

In line with Flege's theoretical view on the presence of plasticity in adult L2 speech learning (Flege, 1995), and extending DeKeyser's aptitude-interaction hypothesis (DeKeyser, 2012), my predictions are two-fold. First, training can be facilitative of L2 prosody acquisition: participants can improve perception and production dimensions, as well as attain more nativelike cue weighting strategies. Second, participants' improvement patterns will be tied to their pre-existing prosodic sensitivities.

Presenter: Cornée Ferreira (University of Reading)

Supervised by Parvaneh Tavakoli

Title: The development of L2 writing among Dutch young learners of English and the mediating effects of exposure to English outside of the English classroom

There is a paucity of research on L2W to inform educational policy and practice in the Netherlands. Though L2W is not a core aim in Dutch primary or lower secondary education, some English L2W ability is assumed by the age of fifteen. This study is aimed at gaining understanding in the L2W development (in terms of CALF) among sixty Dutch YLs, while also investigating the possible mediating effects of English (writing) instruction in primary school and exposure to English outside of school. Data are gathered by using a questionnaire, a descriptive writing task, and a persuasive writing task at the beginning (time1), middle (time2) and end (time 3) of the YLs' first year in secondary education. The CALF measures include: The learners' ability to use subordination, their accurate use of verb tenses, the type-token ratio in their texts, the number of low frequency words used, and number of words written in 20 minutes. A MANOVA is used to explore the relationships between variables (time, exposure and previous education). The time1 data show that on average YLs who leave primary school are able to write at A2 level of the CEFR. Initial results show that a more complex task prompt the YLs to use more complex language structures, including subordination. The YLs report varied experiences of primary English and limited exposure to written English outside of school, but frequent exposure to spoken English via music, films, and gaming. Positive correlations are observed between exposure to spoken English and CALF scores.

Presenter: Najla Alrwaita (University of Reading)

Supervised by Lotte Metevard, Christos Pliatsikas, and Carmel Houston-Price (University of Reading)

Title: The Effects of Diglossia on Cognition: Evidence from Executive Function Tasks in Young Adults.

Previous literature has suggested a bilingual advantage in executive function. Bilinguals practice language inhabitation; deciding to use the target language and to ignore the irrelevant one, this ability is known as inhabitation control which is part of the executive function. Inhibitory control is said to be the motivation behind this bilingual advantage. It has been recently suggested that, just like speaking two distinct languages, participants who speak two different dialects may possess the same superior cognitive advantages found in bilinguals. The language situation in Saudi Arabia is known as diglossic: with the existence of one formal language (functioning as a high variety) that is used in formal situations, and one dialect (functioning as a low variety) that is used for everyday language. This study aims to find if the same cognitive advantages found in bilingual speakers will also be found in bidialectal speakers in Saudi Arabia. In order to do that, we have tested Saudi participants: young adults between 18-40, our control group is English speaking monolinguals of the same age groups. The proficiency of Saudi participants in Standard Arabic was measured through a vocabulary test. All participants had to fill the Language and Social Background Questionnaire: self-rating questionnaire. Three domains of executive function were tested: first, inhibitory control was measured through the flanker and the stroop tasks. Second, shifting was measured through the color shape task. Third, working memory was measured through the backward digit span for children, and the N back task. Results show no diglossic advantage, these results will be discussed in relation to the conversational context and the amount of switching between the two dialects.

Presenter: Yeonwoo Jung (UCL Institute of Education)

Supervised by Andrea Révész

Title: Investigating the Effects of Multimodal Digital Feedback on Second Language Development through Video-conferencing Tasks

A substantial body of second language (L2) acquisition research attests that recasts can benefit L2 development. However, little is known about their effectiveness in synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) contexts. Furthermore, most SCMC studies on recasts have been limited to the text-based mode. So far, only a few studies have empirically examined the role of recasts in improving L2 grammatical accuracy in the context of video-conferencing (e.g., Monteiro, 2014; Rassaei, 2017). More importantly, one critical issue of these studies is that they have only addressed the effects of oral recasts without considering other possible SCMC recasts in video-conferencing such as multimodal recasts (i.e., oral and written recasts together). The present study aims to fill this gap by comparing the extent to which various digital recasts can facilitate L2 grammatical development during video-conferencing tasks. An additional aim of the current study is to examine whether individual differences in working-memory capacity may mediate the impact of unimodal and multimodal recasts on attentional allocation during video-conferencing.

This study will employ a pretest–posttest–delayed posttest design. The participants will be 80 adult EFL learners, randomly assigned into four treatment conditions: (a) oral recasts only, (b) written recasts only, (c) multimodal recasts, and (d) no recasts. During the treatment, participants will work on a series of communicative video-conferencing tasks and their eye movements will be recorded. Fifteen participants will also participate in a stimulated recall session. Three assessment tasks—a spontaneous oral production task, an oral production task, and a written production task—will be utilized to detect any improvement in participants' ability to use the linguistic target, the past progressive form. A battery of working memory tests will also be administered.

Results from a series of mixed-effects models and qualitative analyses will provide insights into the pedagogical potential of multimodal recasts provided during video-conferencing tasks. They will also advance our understanding about whether working memory mediates the effects of digital recasts on L2 grammar learning in video-conferencing contexts.