L_SLARF LONDON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH FORUM

London Second Language Acquisition Research Forum (L-SLARF):

PhD Conference 2025

Date: 10:00 – 13:00, Saturday 22 November 2025

Venue: Room 822, Institute of Education, University College London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

Join online at:

https://ucl.zoom.us/j/97393227572

Programme

10:00 – 10:10	**Welcome**
10:10 – 10:45	Presenter: **Izumi Hosaka** (University College London) Discussant: Peter Skehan
	Exploring spacing and domain-general auditory aptitude in high variability training for second language prosody
10:45 – 11:20	Presenter: **Abrar Alshehri** (University of Reading) Discussant: Kazuya Saito
	Thinking fast, speaking smoother: The role of recognition and recall knowledge of adjective–noun collocations in L2 oral fluency
11.20 – 11:40	**Break**
11:40 – 12.15	Presenter: **Lucien Li-Chung Chang** (University College London) Discussant: Parvaneh Tavakoli
	L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition from listening: The roles of modes of input and individual differences
12.15 – 12:50	Presenter: **Chin Yew Kieu** (University of Reading) Discussant: Ana Pellicer-Sánchez
	Reconceptualising textual enhancement: Expanding the construct of salience and revisiting individual differences in attention in an experimental study
12.50 – 13.00	**Closing remarks**

Note: Each paper will be 35 minutes (20 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for Q&A).

Abstracts

(in order of appearance in the programme)

Presenter: Izumi Hosaka (University College London)

Supervisor: Kazuya Saito

Exploring spacing and domain-general auditory aptitude in high variability training for second language prosody

Recent findings highlight the moderating role of domain-general auditory processing in phonetic training outcomes (e.g., Zhang et al., 2024; Kachlicka et al., 2019), emphasizing the need to optimize training designs to enhance learning and accommodate learners' perceptual differences. One promising avenue is spaced practice, a well-established cognitive principle whereby distributed learning enhances long-term retention (Cepeda et al., 2006). While spacing benefits have been consistently demonstrated in L2 vocabulary and grammar learning (e.g., Kim & Webb, 2022), their application to L2 pronunciation—particularly prosody—remains underexplored.

A quasi-experimental, pretest–training–posttest–delayed posttest design was implemented with 100 Japanese EFL learners, randomly assigned to massed, equal spacing, expanding spacing, or control groups. Six HVPT sessions targeted disyllabic and trisyllabic high-frequency words (BNC/COCA 1k–2k; Nation, 2017) through perceptual training with explicit feedback. Learners' performance was assessed through a forced-choice stress identification task, a comprehensibility rating task with accurately and inaccurately stressed words, and a delayed sentence repetition task.

The study aims to examine (1) whether brief, self-directed HVPT enhances learners' perception and production of English word stress, (2) how spacing affects learning and retention, and (3) whether spacing interacts with auditory aptitude in predicting training success. The findings will contribute to understanding how cognitive and temporal factors jointly shape L2 prosodic learning and inform more personalised approaches to pronunciation instruction.

Presenter: Abrar Alshehri (University of Reading)

Supervisor: Parvaneh Tavakoli & Natalia Kampakli

Thinking fast, speaking smoother: The role of recognition and recall knowledge of adjective–noun collocations in L2 oral fluency

Collocations, such as public school and heavy rain, play a crucial role in language processing and use. Growing evidence suggests that collocations are processed, perceived, and produced faster than novel word combinations (Sonbul, 2015; Wolter & Gyllstad, 2011). This processing advantage can alleviate the cognitive load during conceptualisation and free up attentional resources required for formulation and articulation, thereby facilitating more fluent speech (Kormos, 2011; Siyanova-Chanturia & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2019; Skehan, 2014). However, limited research has explored how L2 learners' collocational knowledge and processing capacity relate to their oral fluency.

The present study, part of a larger project, investigates the extent to which L2 collocation knowledge—operationalised at two levels (recognition and recall) and measured in terms of both accuracy and processing speed (i.e., reaction time) —predicts different dimensions of utterance fluency, including speed, breakdown, repair, and composite measures. A quantitative predictive correlational design was employed to examine the relationships among these variables. Participants were seventy-five L1 Arabic-speaking learners of English with no prior experience of living in English-speaking countries. They completed two narrative tasks in counterbalanced order to elicit speech samples, from which oral fluency was measured.

Two psycholinguistic tasks were designed to assess participants' L2 adjective–noun collocational knowledge and processing at both recognition and recall levels. Adjective–noun collocations were pooled from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Recognition knowledge and processing speed were measured using an Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT), while recall knowledge and processing speed were measured using an innovative Collocation Processing Test (ColloPro) developed for this study.

The data analysis is currently underway, but the emerging results suggest a positive relationship between collocational knowledge at both levels and different aspects of fluency. In other words, higher AJT and ColoPro scores, along with shorter reaction times, tend to correspond to greater fluency.

References:

Kormos, J. (2011). Speech production and the Cognition Hypothesis. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Second language task complexity: Researching the cognition hypothesis of language learning and performance* (Vol. 2, pp. 39–60). John Benjamins .

Siyanova-Chanturia, A & ,.Pellicer-Sánchez, A. (2019). Formulaic language: Setting the Scene. In A. Siyanova-Chanturia & A. Pellicer-Sánchez (Eds.), *Understanding Formulaic Language* (1 ed., pp. 1-15). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315206615-1

Skehan, P. (2014). Limited attentional capacity, second language performance, and task-based pedagogy. In P. Skehan (Ed.), *Processing perspectives on task performance* (pp. 211–260). John Benjamins .

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Wolter, B., & Gyllstad, H. (2011). Collocational Links in the L2 Mental Lexicon and the Influence of L1 Intralexical Knowledge. *Applied linguistics*, *32*(4), 430-449. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amr011

Presenter: Lucien Li-Chung Chang (University College London)

Supervisors: Ana Pellicer-Sánchez

L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition from listening: The roles of modes of input and individual differences

Research has investigated how listening facilitates incidental vocabulary acquisition, but it has only examined gains from listening-only conditions, where second language (L2) learners have no control over input. With the prevalence of online streaming platforms, learners are now used to controlling input themselves by self-paced listening (pause/rewind) and speed manipulation. How these two modes facilitate vocabulary learning is, however, unexplored. Moreover, vocabulary learning studies from other modalities, such as reading and viewing, have shown that proficiency, cognitive abilities, and awareness of target words are factors affecting incidental vocabulary learning outcomes (e.g., Godfroid & Schmidtke, 2013; Montero Perez, 2020). Researchers have also hypothesized these are the factors that may affect learning from listening (Vidal, 2011), but few empirical studies have been conducted.

Against this background, the aim of the present study was to explore the role of listening modality on incidental vocabulary learning, as well as the roles of awareness, proficiency, and cognitive abilities in this process. 133 Taiwanese L2 learners of English were asked to listen to four texts in one of the three conditions (listening-only, self-paced listening, and speed manipulation). They completed 12 tests on cognitive abilities (auditory perception and working memory), prior vocabulary knowledge, and proficiency. Their knowledge of target vocabulary in the listening passages was assessed before and after the listening activity with form/meaning recognition and meaning recall tests. Thirty additional participants participated in stimulated recall interviews after the listening.

Mixed-effects models showed listening modality did not affect learning. Stimulated recall data showed participants' primary focus during the treatment was comprehension but not unknown words, which might explain the lack of effect of modality on learning. Proficiency and visual short-term memory were significantly correlated with vocabulary learning. Auditory processing was correlated with meaning recognition and meaning recall. Declarative – not automatic – vocabulary knowledge was correlated with meaning recognition.

Presenter: Chin Yew Kieu (University of Reading)

Supervisor: Parvaneh Tavakoli

Reconceptualising textual enhancement: Expanding the construct of salience and revisiting individual differences in attention in an experimental study

Research on written input enhancement within second language (L2) acquisition has predominantly focused on Textual Enhancement (TE), an approach that increases the perceptual salience of target linguistic forms within the input via typographical modifications. Despite the proliferation of empirical studies, TE's findings have remained inconclusive, in part, arguably due to methodological limitations in several studies (e.g., insufficient operationalisation and measurement of "noticing", inadequate control for individual differences in attention). These limitations led to unresolved theoretical questions on TE, obfuscating the relationship between enhancement, noticing and acquisition. Furthermore, it remains unknown whether the sole reliance on typographical cues in TE could also be a contributing factor to the problem.

The primary aim of this study is to examine the extent to which a different approach to TE may promote noticing and acquisition of linguistic forms among elementary L2-Mandarin learners. Specifically, it proposes and empirically validates a novel TE-design inspired by Pedagogical Translanguaging, based on a more holistic framework of salience. The Translanguaging TE (TTE) will be compared with the conventional textual enhancement (CTE) in a within-subjects repeated measures experimental design to evaluate the relative impact of TTE-input on noticing and acquisition of two grammatical structures.

"Noticing" will be measured using eye-tracking, supplemented with qualitative insights from retrospective verbal reports. The degree to which findings from both measures converge/diverge will also be evaluated. For "acquisition", both grammaticality judgement tests and multiple-choice-question tests will be used across three time points (pre-tests, immediate and delayed post-tests). In studying the moderating impact of individual differences on attention, attentional efficiency will be measured using the Attentional Network Test of Interactions while attentional capacity will be indexed by working memory capacity and measured using the symmetry span task. Quantitative analyses will be conducted using mixed effects modelling to clarify the complex relationship between enhancement, noticing and acquisition.