

RTS Research Methods in second language pedagogy

Tuesday 26 August 2014 10.30- am 3.30 pm

Room: BA-05.LG.04

with our invited visitor **Professor Barbara Hinger**, University of Innsbruck, who will talk about her work on “Research Methods in Language learning and pedagogy”

After her talk there will be opportunity for each HDR students to present their work (at their stage of progress), discuss it with participants and receive feedback

As well as professor Hinger other staff will also on hand to contribute to the discussion

Light refreshments provided

Time	Presenter(s)	Title of presentation
10:20-10:30	Welcome & Session Chair: Dr Satomi Kawaguchi	
10:30-11:30	Prof. Barbara Hinger University of Innsbruck, Austria	Research Methods in second language pedagogy
Chair: Dr Chong Han		
11:30-12:00	Rabiah Tul Adawiyah Mohamed Salleh	Malay and English bilingual first language development of morphology and phonology: the case of plurals
12:00-12:30	Wanhua Wu	Acquisition of mandarin classifiers by Mandarin-English bilingual children in China: A comparative study with their monolingual peers
12:30-1:00pm	Lucija Medojevic	Development of English lexicon and morphology in 5-year-old Serbian-Australian bilinagual children attending first year of schooling in Asutralia
Light Refreshments		
1.00pm :-1:30		

Afternoon Session		Chair: A/Prof. Bruno Di Biase
1:30-2:00	Amirah Nasser Almansour	Code Switching as a Language Learning Strategy Used by Saudi Arabian Female EFL Learners
2:00-2:30	Yuan Ma	The relationship between task complexity and linguistic performance in Chinese L1-English L2 learners
2:30-3:00	Fouad Abi-Esber	The influence of cultural taboos on learning English as a second language: A case study of Lebanese students
3:00-3:10	Ass/Prof. Bruno Di Biase	Some thoughts on future perspectives on research methods in multilingualism

Abstracts

(in order of appearance)

Malay and English bilingual first language development of morphology and phonology: the case of plurals

Rabiah Tul Adawiyah Mohamed Salleh

The present study investigates the bilingual developments of Malay and English, focusing particularly on the development of morphological and phonological categories involved in encoding plurality in each of the two languages. Morphologically, the study will examine the formation of reduplication in the encoding of Malay plurals on the one hand, and plural [-s] and [-es] in encoding English plurals as well as their morphophonological interplay. This research concentrates on plurals first because of the considerable differences in their encoding in the two languages and secondly because of their phonological differences, eg., in allowing consonant clusters. The English plural “phonological makeup” (Ettlinger & Zapf, 2011) is complex. Plural is marked on nouns by the inflection /s/, pronounced as [s], [z] or [ez] depending on whether it follows voiceless consonants (e.g. *cats*), voiced segments (e.g. *dogs*) and stridents (e.g. *watches*). Thus, phonologically, this study would focus on the production of final consonant clusters as most English plurals yield words with two adjacent consonant at the end of a syllable. Unlike English, plurality in Malay is expressed morphologically in various forms of reduplication and phrasal constructions involving numeral classifiers such as ‘*rumah-rumah*’ ‘houses’ and ‘*tiga buah rumah*’ ‘three (numeral) fruits (classifier) houses’ (Tadmor, 2009). The purpose of this research, then, is to investigate the development of plurals in Malay and English of a 2-year-old child exposed to both languages from age 2; 6 (2

years and 6 months) up till 3; 6 (3 year and 6 months) in an Australian environment. To summarise, the goals of the study are to observe and assess how different morphological and phonological structures of plurality emerge and develop in the production of a child growing up in a simultaneous bilingual environment and to assess if the two grammars of the respondent manifest interaction.

Acquisition of mandarin classifiers by Mandarin-English bilingual children in China: A comparative study with their monolingual peers

Wanhua Wu

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In Mandarin, a classifier is obligatory in a noun phrase containing a numeral and/or a demonstrative or certain quantifiers (Li &Thompson, 1981). Previous studies on acquisition of classifiers by Mandarin-speaking monolingual children have reported similar results that in comprehension studies children often correctly select referents on the basis of classifiers (Fang 1985, Hu 1993, Chien et al. 2003, Li et al. 2010), but in production they often use “general” classifiers like *ge* and *zhi* instead of the correct and specific classifiers (Erbaugh 1986, Hu 1993, Myers and Tsay 2000). However, little has been reported in the literature on how Mandarin-English bilingual children in mainland China acquire Mandarin classifiers. This study reports two experiments adopted from Ning & Gu 2013 (similar to Hu 1993 and Chien et al. 2003) on how successive Mandarin-English bilingual children comprehend and produce classifiers while they are acquiring English at the same time. Five Mandarin-English bilingual children (4 to 6 years old) whose parents are native English speakers and nine monolingual Mandarin-speaking children (4 to 6) from the same kindergarten in Xi’an China are recruited. They participated in the elicited tasks for comprehension and production of Mandarin classifiers. The preliminary results show that the bilingual subject group demonstrated the same pattern of classifier acquisition in comprehension and production as their monolingual peers. There are no qualitative differences between these two groups, although individual differences are found within these two groups. These initial findings are consistent with the previous research on monolingual children’s acquisition of Mandarin classifiers. However, quantitative differences such as pace of development are evident in this bilingual subject group.

References

- Chien, Y. C., Lust, B., & Chiang, C. P. (2003). Chinese children's comprehension of count-classifiers and mass-classifiers. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics*, 12(2), 91-120.
- Erbaugh, M. S. (1986). Taking stock: The development of Chinese noun classifiers historically and in young children. In C.Craig (ed.) *Noun classes and categorization*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.

Development of English lexicon and morphology in 5-year-old serbian-australian bilinagual children attending first year of schooling in asutralia

Lucija Medojevic

This study investigates lexical and morphological development in English in two Serbian-Australian bilingual children and one Australian-English monolingual child over their first year of schooling in Australia. For the bilingual children, Serbian is their heritage language and Australian English the mainstream language of the school and other social environments. The first year of school attendance was a time when a dramatic reversal occurred in the rate of exposure to these two languages. Oral production data were collected from these children at three-month intervals over the year. The bilingual children's lexical and morphological development was compared with the Australian monolingual peer. Processability Theory (Pienemann, 2005; Bettoni & Di Biase, in press) was used to measure morphological development. Results revealed that before school attendance the bilingual children showed some inaccuracy in morphological markings including past-tense *-ed* and 3rd person singular *-s* on verbs. However, after the first few months of school attendance, these errors disappeared and the bilingual children's English grammatical accuracy became indistinguishable from their monolingual peer while their lexical production turned out to be better than their monolingual peer. These results show that bilingual children's language development does not lag behind once they start schooling in an exclusively English environment.

Code Switching as a Language Learning Strategy Used by Saudi Arabian Female EFL Learners

Amirah Nasser Almansour

Code switching is a widely used discourse function. It has been widely researched to gain insight into discourse strategies as well as the characteristics of bilingual speech. Although it is commonly used in other aspects of life, code switching is not officially used in teaching and learning. While some studies have suggested that it creates linguistic confusion, in recent years, researchers have found it a potentially useful tool for teaching and learning in contexts where L1 is dominant. Innovative learning strategies could create more desirable outcomes in Saudi Arabia, a country where learning English is important but often unsuccessful. Since the majority of the population is bound together by a high degree of cultural homogeneity and a common mother tongue, Arabic, code switching could be a potential effective language-learning tool in acquiring specific skills, such as grammar. This study therefore examines whether code switching can enhance and facilitate Saudi students' learning of English grammar. Using a mixed-methods approach and two female-only groups of participants, this research tests the effectiveness of code switching as a learning tool. Preliminary results suggest that limited code switching can help to improve student performance. However, excessive code switching reduces the improvement. The reasons behind this are currently under investigation.

The relationship between task complexity and linguistic performance in Chinese L1-English L2 learners

Yuan Ma

This study aims to investigate the relationship between task complexity and linguistic performance in Chinese L1-English L2 adult learners in terms of morphology and syntax. The framework used for task complexity is Robinson's (2005) Cognition Hypothesis which claims that cognitively complex tasks encourage L2 learners to produce more complex language to meet the demands the tasks make and this eventually promote grammatical accuracy as well. To date his hypothesis has not been tested for developmental stages of learners. Hence, Processability Theory (Pienemann, Di Biase & Kawaguchi, 2005) has been used to measure learners' language development as one of the independent variables to test Robinson's hypothesis. The central question for this paper, then, is whether there is a systematic and measurable relationship between learner's linguistic performance according different task complexities and learner's proficiency level. Figured in this way, the study has the potential to connect two currently unrelated theories of second language acquisition which could reciprocally benefit from such connection.

The informants were 30 Chinese L1 adult learners of English L2 in Australia. They were divided into three groups based on their English proficiency levels. They were high, intermediate and low proficiency level group respectively, with 10 learners in each group. All informants were engaged in three active-passive alternation tasks: 1) self-paced picture description task; 2) 'Fishfilm' time-constrained event description task; and 3) time-constrained picture description task, 3) Cognitive complexity variables relating these tasks in this study are "+/- planning time" and "+/- few elements" which were listed in Robinson's Triadic Component Framework (2011). The results of the study showed that learners' performance varies according to the cognitive complexity. Learners' performances on cognitively simpler tasks were overall better than on more complex tasks. Learner's English proficiency level seems to be a stronger predictor of their linguistic performance rather than task complexity.

The influence of cultural taboos on learning English as a second language: A case study of Lebanese student

Fouad Abi-Esber

Learning English as a second language can be challenging for thousands of students. As soon as those students settle into their classroom, some may discover that their interaction and learning is hindered by cultural taboos. For instance, what is culturally appropriate verbal behaviour in one cultural context may be culturally inappropriate in another. Theoretical framework. This paper investigates the influence of cultural and social taboos on Lebanese students learning English as a second language in Australia. It examines the role of gender, socioeconomic class, religion and age. The paper aims to see whether Lebanese students modify their taboos as a result of settling in Australia. It focuses on how Lebanese students perceive the impact of taboo in their interactions with their peers and teachers. Furthermore, the study is intended to make educators and other stakeholders aware of the effect of their own cultural taboos on learning English as a second language. Finally, it is anticipated that the research will increase awareness of cross-cultural sensitivity to cultural taboos.