

Introduction

We begin this year's yearbook with a paper by Silvina Montrul, who provides an overview of research on heritage language acquisition; a topic that has caught many researchers' interest over the past decade. Heritage speakers are bilinguals who were exposed to a minority language at home and it is common for them to experience language shift during childhood. Many college-age heritage speakers turn to the foreign or second language classroom to learn, relearn, or expand their knowledge of the home language. The paper reports on recent experimental research related to the question whether heritage speakers are similar to, or different from, post-puberty second language learners, and ultimately, whether heritage languages can be successfully reacquired (or *relearned*) in the classroom after the critical period.

The next paper is by Patrizia Giuliano who investigates how both native speakers and learners of English and Italian build textual cohesion when faced with a narrative task involving several referential restrictions: contrasts of entity and polarity, maintenance of the same predication, temporal shifts. The results show that even at very advanced (and almost native) levels, learners tend to exploit formal and conceptual means resembling those of their mother tongue, demonstrating by that that they have not completely abandoned the L1 specific "perspective taking".

Ren's study concerns pragmatic development in Chinese learners' L2 English 'study abroad' students and a control group of 20 'at home' students focusing on the effect of learning environment on the use of refusals in L2 English. The results show that although there was little pragmatic development of L2 English refusals when examined at

the group level, there were some differences were found at an individual level on with regard to choice of speech act.

Howard investigates the relationship between sociolinguistic development and grammatical development in Irish university students' L2 French, with the general hypothesis that grammatical stability is crucial for sociolinguistic development to take place. Five longitudinal case studies are presented allowing for the comparison of both grammatical and sociolinguistic development over the course of one year. The analysis focuses on the sociolinguistic variables of *ne* deletion, /l/ deletion, *nous/on* variation, variable marking of futurity and variable liaison realization; while the grammatical features analyzed regard the use of verbal morphology in order to express past time, futurity, conditionality, modality and number and person. The findings indicate that although grammatical stability is an important prerequisite for sociolinguistic development, it is not always enough, and it is not the only factor that comes into play. Naturalistic exposure also seems to be primordial for sociolinguistic development.

In the next paper, Ozanska-Ponikwia and Dewaele examine the relationship between personality traits and frequency of use and self-perceived proficiency of English L2 of 102 adult Polish immigrants in the UK and in Ireland, using a sociobiographical questionnaire. The results show that there is a relationship between immigrants' personality profile and L2 use and self-perceived proficiency in the L2. That is, immigrants who spent more time in the target language community use the L2 more often and also report that they are more proficient in their L2. Furthermore, the authors conclude that a number of personality traits are linked to L2 use, and that 'openness' is

the most important one when it comes to individual differences in L2 use and development in immigrants.

In her paper, Els Schoonjans reports a study of the impact of differences in the learning context on oral L2 fluency outcomes in a group of young German L2 learners of English. The author investigated how differences in L1 and L2 *prominence* (status, functions roles and domains of use) in the wider learning context affect L2 fluency, which was operationalized as speed, breakdown and repair fluency. The results show that the dimensions of fluency are affected differently by elements in the learning context, thus confirming the multilayered approach to the construct.

Marije Michel, Folkert Kuiken and Ineke Vedder's paper also looks at L2 oral production, reporting the results of three investigations into task-based L2 performance in which they examined how changes in the number of elements referred to in a task affect L2 production, and how this relates to cognitive task complexity. The oral task performances of 152 participants were assessed, by means of global measures of linguistic complexity, accuracy, and fluency as well as a task specific measure. The authors also examined potential differences between monologic and dialogic tasks. The results overall showed that dialogic, or interactive, tasks consistently guided L2 performers towards greater accuracy, lexical complexity, and fluency, whereas there were few effects of the manipulation of the number of elements, and the findings are discussed with reference to Robinson's Triadic Componential Framework.

The final paper in this year's volume is by Christie Brien and Laura Sabourin, who report on a cross-modal lexical-decision study on L2 effects on homonym processing in the L1, with monolingual English speakers and Canadian English/French

bilinguals who acquired L2 French at distinct periods. Earlier research has found the processing of homonyms is rather complex, as they have many lexical properties; for instance, *train* contains semantic (*a locomotive/to instruct*) and syntactic (*noun/verb*) properties, each affecting interpretation. Previous studies have found homonym processing influenced by lexical frequency as well as syntactic and semantic context. The early bilinguals revealed no significant differences compared to monolinguals, which, according to the authors, supports the Reordered Access Model (Duffy et al., 1988). However, the late bilinguals revealed longer reaction times, syntactic priming effects, and lexical frequency effects, which by is taken as evidence of a heightened sensitivity to surface cues influencing homonym processing in the L1 due to a newly-acquired L2.

We hope that you agree that these papers represent some of the most interesting work being undertaken in the field of second language acquisition research today.

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