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Keynote papers
How different experiences modulate the role of cognition in bilingual development

Elma Blom
Utrecht University

It is often assumed that young minds soak up languages like sponges. In this presentation, I will show that children’s language development and use is not without mental effort, however. Studies with bilingual children are particularly insightful as these show that cognitive ability impacts on bilingual language development, and that bilingual experiences impact on children’s cognitive development.

In the first part of this talk, I will discuss the role of cognitive ability in bilingual language development thereby focusing on children’s executive functions. The executive functions are a set of domain-general cognitive functions used to manage and control behavior and thought. These functions are typically employed in more challenging circumstances when going on automatic is ill-advised. New data gathered from bilingual children support the conclusion that children’s executive functions support their vocabulary development, in particular in the majority language.

The second part will be dedicated to the question whether and how bilingual experiences have an impact on children’s cognitive development. Many studies have demonstrated that bilingual children have enhanced executive functions, suggesting that growing up bilingually provides children with cognitive training. These findings are not without controversy, however, raising the question which bilingual experiences trigger cognitive effects. Findings from recent research will be discussed that shed light on this issue.
Come in / Entrez: An invitation to corpus-based research in motion typology

Bert Cappelle
Université de Lille

When we want to talk about an entity moving along a path in a particular way, the language we speak nudges us into certain encoding choices. Speakers of Dutch or English often rely on a particle to express information related to the path of motion. Speakers of French or Spanish typically express this information in the verb root itself. Wide attention has been given to Leonard Talmy’s (1974, 1985, 1991, 2000) work on such differences in ‘lexicalisation patterns’ between languages. While Talmy is credited with the familiar typological distinction between ‘satellite-framed’ and ‘verb-framed’ languages across the world, I concur with, inter alia, Woldersgaard (2017: 13-15) that we should not ignore Strohmeyer (1910), Sapir & Swadesh (1932), Bergh (1940, 1948), Malblanc (1944), Vinay & Darbelnet (1958) and Tesnière (1959) as precursors to systematic comparisons of motion expressions in some Germanic and Romance languages.

In this talk, I will first argue that English and French are not as perfectly satellite-framed and verb-framed, respectively, as these languages are often assumed to be. In line with the view that French prefixed verbs (e.g. re-venir) may represent a satellite-framed encoding strategy (cf., inter alia, Pourcel & Kopecka 2006), such verbs in a French source text trigger a particle verb as translation more readily than do non-prefixed French source verbs, as reported in Cappelle & Loock (2017). Nonetheless, one cannot deny that French and English, given their general typological nature, differ in the basic structures they put at speakers’ disposal to express change of location or change of state. As the same study reveals, a clear trace of this difference is found in the much lower number of particle verbs in English texts translated from French compared to English texts translated from German.

English texts translated from a Romance language also contain fewer manner-of-motion verbs than English texts translated from another Germanic language (Cappelle 2012). This finding weakens Levin & Rappaport Hovav’s (in press: 1) generalization that “[a]cross languages, clauses containing descriptions of similar events are likely to include the same conceptual components, but these may be distributed differently across the constituents of the clause” (emphasis added). These authors acknowledge, though, that manner information is often omitted in motion event descriptions where path is lexicalized in the verb. I will demonstrate that translations into a single source language can show the impact of different source languages’ typological natures – and, in the words of Slobin (1996), of their concomitant different ‘rhetorical styles’.

Finally, I will suggest some steps towards using corpora to explore the expression of visual motion events, which involve ‘fictive’ or actual movement of the gaze from the eyes to a perceived object or from one object to another. In a forthcoming paper (Cappelle to appear 2019), I show that when expressing such events, speakers of Dutch, English and French largely hold on to the encoding habits they exhibit for expressing the movement of concrete entities, despite French lacking verbs that conflate the act of looking with path of looking (Matsumoto 2001, Slobin 2009).
References


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Integrating gestures. Cognitive grammar multimodal

Silva Ladewig

European-University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)

Recent years have seen an upsurge interest of linguists in gestures and with it a multimodal approach to grammar has started to develop. This approach advocates the view that linguistic structures can be found in modalities other than spoken and signed languages, namely gestures. Three different dimensions of a gesture-grammar link have been studied so far. The first has been referred to as a “grammar of gesture” (Müller et al. 2013) which shifts the focus of attention to structural and functional patterns observed within the gestural modality that resemble those of a spoken and signed grammar. Examples include the gestural expression of aspect (Becker et al. 2011; Duncan 2002) or negation (Calbris 2003, Harrison 2018). A second field of research is the examination of stabilized patterns of gestures and spoken units referred to as “multimodal constructions” (Andrén 2010; Zima 2014). And third, linguists have started to investigate gestures’ role in the formation of spoken syntactic structures, attesting them the capability of taking over syntactic functions by realizing syntactic slots of spoken language (Fricke 2012, Ladewig 2014a).

By using the example of a recurrent gesture, that is the “cyclic gesture” (Ladewig 2014b), this talk will sketch out all the three aspects. To be more precise, it will be shown that a) this gesture can become grammaticalized and develop into a marker of aspect in signed languages, b) together with speech, this gesture has formed multimodal constructions (Ruth-Hirrel 2018), and c) it can realize the syntactic slots of verbs in spoken language (Ladewig 2014a). In presenting the empirical findings, a usage-based and unified perspective to both speech and gesture is taken which combines Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 2008) with a linguistic gesture studies approach (Müller et al. 2013). Moreover, in developing a multimodal approach to Cognitive Grammar (Ladewig to appear), this talk makes a strong case for considering language and gesture as “manifestations of the same underlying conceptual system that is the basis for the human expressive ability. Thus, [it is proposed] that the general principles of cognitive grammar can be applied to the study of gesture” (Wilcox & Xavier 2013: 95).

References


Papers
Reasoning and epistemic vigilance:
The relevance of the Spanish evidentials *por lo visto* and *se ve que*

Marta Abelda¹, Carolina Figueras²
¹University of Valencia, ²University of Barcelona

The two Spanish evidentials *por lo visto* (‘apparently’) and *se ve que* (‘one can see/you see that’) carry out an attenuation function. *Por lo visto* is mainly reportative in colloquial conversations and semiformal interviews. It is also used to introduce inferential evidence. Following the classification by Squartini (2008), *por lo visto* tends to bring out ‘circumstantial inferences’, and, to a lesser extent, to mark generic inferences. *Por lo visto* rarely precedes conjectures. These features reveal that this evidential aligns with objectivity, allowing the speaker to show less involvement toward the evidence (Cornillie & Delbeque 2008). When introducing inferential evidence, *por lo visto* conveys a higher epistemic commitment toward the reliability of the evidence (Albelda in press).

In contrast, *se ve (que)* is generally an inferential marker both in colloquial conversation and in semiformal interviews. When used as a reportative, the source of the information is usually left unspecified. Employed as a marker of inferential evidence, *se ve (que)* mostly introduces generic inferences and conjectures, which indicates that the speaker is showing more involvement and subjectivation, while, at the same time, expresses a weaker epistemic commitment toward the evidence introduced in discourse (Albelda in press; Cornillie & Delbecque 2008).

Taking as a point of departure this characterization, our aim in this presentation is to expand the semantic and pragmatic description of *por lo visto* and *se ve (que)* by conducting an explanation of both evidentials in the framework of the argumentative theory of reasoning developed in Mercier and Sperber (2011), and Sperber and Mercier (2012, 2017).

Reasoning, according to the predictions of the argumentative theory of reasoning, is the result of evolution, and the product of human socialization. It has, therefore, an argumentative function (Sperber & Mercier 2017). Cognitively, reasoning represents a specific meta-representational module that produces and evaluates reasons. Since there is the risk of manipulation, misinformation and deception, humans have developed a mental mechanism that checks the validity, strength, coherence, and consistency of premises and conclusions, as well as the trustworthiness of the communicator: the epistemic vigilance mechanisms (Mercier & Sperber 2011; Oswald 2011; Padilla 2014).

Within this framework, we regard *por lo visto* and *se ve (que)* as evidentials that introduce conclusions (in the form of claims, assumptions) to be verified and accepted by the audience, activating thus the corresponding mechanisms of epistemic vigilance and reasoning in interaction (Figueras in preparation). We pay specific attention to the particular argumentative structures in which both evidentials are commonly deployed. To this aim, we contrast the oral and written evidential uses of *por lo visto* and *se ve (que)*, to find the differences and commonalities in the use of these two evidentials in both communication modalities. We combine quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis of the patterns and range of interpretations of each evidential, specifically with regard to the differences between oral and written discourses. For the oral corpora, we focus on colloquial conversations (Val.Es.Co, Valencia; COJEM, Palma de Mallorca; COGILA, Granada), and semiformal interviews
(PRESEEA, Valencia, Castellón, Málaga, Alcalá). For the written corpora, we select press articles and essay books from the corpora CREA (RAE).

References
Albelda, M. In press. ¿Atenuación del compromiso del hablante?: el caso de los evidenciales _por lo visto_ y _se ve que_. Rilce.
Forward and reverse transfer from Dutch to German – Comparing transfer by second language learners and language attriters

Marie Barking, Maria Mos, Ad Backus
Tilburg University

Language transfer plays a crucial role in the fields of second language learning, where there is transfer from the native language to the one being learned (forward transfer), and language attrition, where there is transfer from the new to the native language (reverse transfer). However, no research so far has directly compared these two types of transfer. The question here is whether the cognitive mechanisms that underlie both forward and reverse transfer are similar, as would be expected in a usage-based approach. To answer this question, this project compares transfer from Dutch to German by native speakers of Dutch who learned German as a second language and native speakers of German living in the Netherlands. Specifically, it focuses on the position of prepositional phrases, which are placed more often after the verb in Dutch than in German. Increased use of prepositional phrases in this so-called postfield position in German can therefore be interpreted as transfer from Dutch.

The project combines corpus and experimental data by the same participants. The corpus consists of approximately 60,000 German e-mails, which were written by native speakers of Dutch and native speakers of German living in the Netherlands. The results showed that there is no categorical difference between the second language learners and language attriters concerning the extent of transfer (i.e., the percentage of prepositional phrases in the postfield position). At the same time, the extent of transfer and the speakers’ language dominance are correlated: the more a speaker is dominant in Dutch, the more transfer this speaker experiences. This relationship is moderated by the speakers’ native language: while dominance and the extent of transfer are highly correlated for the native speakers of German, they are not for the native speakers of Dutch. With respect to verb-specific patterns and placement preferences, there are large individual differences: some speakers use certain verbs and prepositions exclusively with the postfield position, while others never do so. Speakers also differ in their type-token ratio as a measure of lexical variation in the postfield position. However, this variation cannot predict the overall extent of transfer. To follow up on these individual differences, a personalized reaction time experiment was conducted, in which participants were asked to judge sentences that they themselves had frequently used in the corpus data. The results showed that it is a combination of the general language pattern and the lexically specific items in the sentences that influences the speakers’ grammaticality judgements. Overall, these results suggest that the cognitive mechanisms underlying transfer are shared by second language learners and language attriters, which in turn provides evidence for the usage-based approach.
Reasoners quite frequently endorse fallacies as they accept conclusions coming from invalid rules of inference (cf. Mercier & Sperber 2017 for a recent summary). Pragmatic accounts of language put forth a hypothesis according to which the endorsement of fallacies, even if invalid from a purely logical point of view, is licenced on pragmatic grounds through the general mechanism of pragmatic enrichment, the so-called invited inferences, that is the passage from if...then to if and only if (Geis & Zwicky 1971; van der Auwera 1997; Horn 2000). However, recent experimental studies (Bonnefond & Van der Henst 2009; Bonnefond et al. 2012) did not reveal the existence of such pragmatic enrichment, at least in a similar way to the pragmatic enrichment we observe for other logical words such as and, or or quantifiers (cf. Noveck & Reboul 2008 for a summary).

Our hypothesis is that speakers do not enrich the meaning of conditionals if they don’t have to. This claim does not agree with the original position concerning invited inferences according to which speakers automatically enrich conditionals to biconditionals (Geis & Zwicky 1971). Our assumption is that speakers do pragmatically enrich the meaning of conditionals but only in specific conditions when the appropriate context and lexical formulation are provided.

In order to test this hypothesis, we conducted two reading time experiments in which we measured (i) the effect of the context on the process of perfection of conditionals (contentless (containing only letters) vs. contentfull (involving everyday causal scenarii, cf. Cummins 1995 and subsequent work)) and (ii) the effect of the lexical formulation of the major premise (conditional vs. biconditional).

Our preliminary results reveal the existence of a clear difference in reasoners’ performance in contentless vs. contentfull contexts. The rate of endorsement of fallacies in contentless contexts is at the level of 54% while in contentfull contexts the rate increases to ~15% for conditionals and decreases to ~10% for biconditionals. This result suggests that reasoners interpret conditionals as biconditionals and, thus, that pragmatic enrichment does take place. To verify this finding, further analyses will be performed on reaction times.

References
A cognitive and usage-based account of humour

Marta Buján
Universidad de Valladolid

Communication is inherently multimodal. A comprehensive account can only be achieved through careful exploration of how modalities interplay. Multimodal expression is linked to the vocalisation pole in Langacker’s current discourse space, which accounts for how meaning making is grounded in discourse. This cognitive approach to language blurs the boundaries between traditional dichotomies in linguistics, thus allowing for a more comprehensive account of communication.

Humour is arguably one of the most complex instances of communication. The purpose of my study is to gain an insight into how humour is cognitively grounded and multimodally conveyed. To that end, I bring together current theories of humour under the umbrella of cognitive linguistics. Furthermore, I explore possible associations between the multimodal expression of humour and underlying construal mechanisms in humorous instances, as well as humour types. Many studies have been conducted on the markers of irony or sarcasm, with conflicting results. Less attention, though, has been devoted to non-ironical humour. In addition, most of the literature is limited to staged humour, with just a handful of studies focusing on spontaneous humour.

This paper will present the results of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of a sample of 14 interviews in a contemporary American late-night show: The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. Only interviewees’ speech is analysed to avoid scripted questions and remarks. The sample has been imported, humorous instances transcribed, and annotated in ELAN on multiple tiers, namely transcription, humour type, underlying construal mechanism, gestures and prosody. Prosodic contrast between humorous and non-humorous instances is analysed through Praat. Humorous instances have been selected on the basis of laughter caused in the audience.

The results bear out existing literature, with no humour-specific function of gestures detected. No prosodic contrast has been identified between humorous and non-humorous instances. Furthermore, no face expressions or head movements are consistently related to humour nor help to predict it. No recurrent pattern of association has been found between construal mechanisms, humour types and gestures. With regards to the cognitive analysis, cognitive shifts required for humour to arise are accounted for as disruptions in different elements of the current discourse space.

References
Constructional polysemy or compositional enrichment? A semantic-pragmatic framework for discourse markers

Ludivine Crible
F.R.S.-FNRS & Université catholique de Louvain

Discourse markers are defined as “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (Schiffrin 1987: 31) such as *mais*, *donc* or *alors* in French. They are famous for their polyfunctionality, which has been explained and modeled under several different theoretical frameworks. Among them, Construction Grammar has more recently been used to illustrate how discourse markers can activate different interpretations by changing one aspect of their form (Fried & Östman 2005; Fischer 2015; Aijmer 2016).

This study proposes a Construction-Grammar inspired framework to account for the different types of polyfunctionality that discourse markers can display. In particular, the study focuses on three mechanisms of meaning variation:

(i) polysemy (different but related constructions);
(ii) multidimensionality (a single construction in different domains);
(iii) underspecification (a construction enriched through compositionality).

With these notions, it is possible to effectively capture the broad functional spectrum and high variation of discourse markers in an economical model. The overarching goal is to improve the reliability of functional corpus-based analyses by reducing the number of semantic labels and by providing stable criteria to distinguish between these labels.

The study develops and illustrates this constructional framework as it applies to two of the most frequent discourse markers in spoken French, viz. *et* ‘and’ and *donc* ‘so’, on the basis of corpus-based examples. Occurrences of these discourse markers and their annotated senses were extracted from the spoken multi-genre DisFrEn corpus, where they were manually disambiguated (Crible 2017). They were then reanalyzed in terms of the three concepts developed in the present study.

The constructional analysis of *et* and *donc* led to the following results: polysemous *donc* spreads into a causal and a non-causal sister constructions, which can be further specified across several domains; monosemous *et* can acquire additional readings through compositional enrichment.

This proposal relates to Fischer’s (2006) division of labor across an invariant meaning, a structural context and a frame. However, in contrast with previous research, the present study overcomes the limitations of case studies and strives towards a comprehensive framework that potentially covers any discourse marker, including the very frequent and challenging *et* ‘and’.

References


‘Stress deafness’: Can music help?

Pauline Degrave

Université catholique de Louvain

Neuroscience has recently reported that music and speech are intertwined: some neural responses in music and speech are common (Peretz et al. 2015) and music can induce lasting changes in the brain among others for speech processing, such as pitch, syntax or phoneme processing (Marie et al. 2011). Besides these neurological observations, many behavioral studies report a facilitation effect of music on (foreign) language acquisition. On the one hand, musical characteristics of the learner, such as musical training or aptitude, seem to benefit language performance (Chobert & Besson 2013, Kolinsky et al. 2009). On the other hand, the use of music in language teaching methodology, such as songs or rhythmical activities, appear to facilitate language acquisition (Ludke 2016, Schôn et al. 2018).

In our study, we aimed to analyze if music, either as a characteristic of the learner or used in language teaching methods, could help learners to perceive lexical stress. Lexical stress is indeed often problematic for speakers of a language that do not contain lexical stress. Dupoux et al. (2008) even speak about ‘stress deafness’: French speakers would be – under some conditions – ‘deaf’ to lexical stress, for example in Dutch (Michaux 2016).

In order to evaluate whether music can influence lexical stress perception, we tested three groups of French learners of Dutch: one group of musicians and non-musicians (N = 46), one group of university students of Dutch (N = 80) and one group of secondary school pupils in a Dutch (non)-CLIL context (N = 120). They all performed a XAB discrimination task: they heard stimuli of three Dutch words varying in the position of the word stress and mentioned which of the two last matched with the first one. The stimuli were either naturally spoken, either spoken with a beat on the stress, either sung. After the perception tests, participants filled in different questionnaires to evaluate their musical profile. The first results show that both musical characteristics of the participants and musical characteristics of the stimuli facilitate lexical stress perception.

References


Towards a constructional approach of discourse-level phenomena: The case of the Spanish interpersonal epistemic stance construction

Renata Enghels
Ghent University

This talk explores the functional and formal behavior of the interpersonal epistemic stance construction in contemporary Spanish. This construction houses a series of routinized expressions which the speaker (a) directly addresses to the interlocutor using a second person verbal form, (b) to assert the probability of the described state of affairs being true, and (c) to negotiate his own point of view towards the content of a proposition. Previous studies have mainly focused on the pragmatic marker status of the second person form *sabes* ‘you know’, and have come to opposite conclusions. Whereas, based on its functional properties, most authors (Cuenca 2013) do not hesitate to include *sabes* in the category of grammaticalized discourse markers, Martin Zorraquino and Portolés (1999) are more reluctant, mainly because 2nd person markers are said not to fulfil Hopper’s (1991) “freezing condition”.

This analysis aims at going beyond the traditional account in terms of grammaticalization, and provides a constructional approach. It has indeed been argued that even a broad definition of grammaticalization, encompassing the development of lexical items which come to serve discourse-related functions, cannot capture the complexity of the different types of change at work within this domain (Hilpert 2013; Traugott in press).

As a starting point, I posit that the development of *sabes* as pragmatic marker can hardly be understood without taking into account the composite network of epistemic expressions a Spanish speaker has at his disposal when performing particular discourse related functions. In line with this idea, the analysis pursues a double goal. First, with regard to the specific case study, it aims to provide insight into the taxonomy of the interpersonal epistemic stance construction in general, and the mechanisms of change which led towards the entrenchment of *sabes* as a pragmatic marker in present-day Spanish. Second, on the theoretical level, it further argues in favor of a constructional approach to discourse related phenomena. The central idea is that different expressions with analogous and overlapping functions and formal characteristics, are instances of an overarching construction (Fischer 2015). The empirical analysis is documented by spoken corpus examples extracted from nine corpora (including COLAm, CORLEC, Coral-Rom, VAL.ES.CO, PRESEEA, and COSER), collected in recent decades (1970s-2010), and is mainly informed by frequency data measuring different properties of the construction and its variants.

References
Swear word production: The relative contributions of social, cultural and individual factors to the production of swear words

Shlomit Ritz Finkelstein, Taylor J. Block, Lynne C. Nygaard
Emory University

Swear words differ from the rest of language: they express and evoke emotions rather than exchange information and ideas (e.g., Finkelstein 2018; Jay & Janschewitz 2007). We hypothesize that the emotional effects of swear words depend on judgments by language users regarding how taboo, offensive, or familiar they are in a particular sociocultural context.

Previous studies suggest that tabooess, offensiveness, and familiarity of swear words, indexed by averaging individual ratings of a population (e.g., Janschewitz 2008), influence the response time (RT) of reading or listening to swear words compared to emotionally neutral words (e.g., Siegrist 1995; MacKay et al 2004), with longer RT for swear words than for neutral words. Short-term (MacKay et al 2004) and long-term habituation (Stephens & Umland 2011) decrease the special effect of swear words. In the current study, we measured the effect of subjective ratings of tabooess, offensiveness, and familiarity on production of swear words in order to better understand the relative contributions of cultural norms and semantics to the linguistic status of swear words.

Our experiment adds three new aspects to the swearing literature: (i) We present a production study – North American participants, raised in North-American culture with American-English native language, were asked to utter words that appeared on a computer screen. Time to initiate a naming response (RT) was the dependent variable. (ii) Our analyses rely on individual ratings of tabooess, offensiveness, and familiarity of each participant rather than on population averages. (iii) In addition to comparing taboo to neutral words, we have included meaning-matched nontaboo words to directly evaluate the effects of semantics.

Stimulus words were of five kinds: neutral, non-taboo sexual words, taboo sexual words, non-taboo racial words, and taboo racial words. Participants read the word list out-loud three times to evaluate habituation to the different classes of words during the experiment. Afterward, participants rated each of the words for their tabooess, offensiveness, and familiarity and also reported their frequency of swearing.

Our results show: (i) participants took significantly longer to initiate production (RT) of swear-than neutral- or meaning-matched nontaboo words. This finding is consistent with previous comprehension studies and may suggest reliance on similar underlying systems; (ii) no significant differences were found between the RT for sexual- and racial-taboo words, suggesting that tabooess plays a stronger role than semantics in the special response to swear words; (iii) although RT to all words showed habituation across repetition, differences between nontaboo and taboo words persisted, suggesting little differential habituation to tabooess; (iv) ratings of tabooess and offensiveness were positively correlated with RT, consistent across participants and previous ratings (Janschewitz 2008), and independent of ratings of familiarity, indicating judgments of tabooess are shared and may serve as a proxy for culture.

These findings suggest that tabooess significantly impacts the production of spoken words, regardless of their putative underlying meaning. The effects of tabooess may primarily reflect the affective potency of these words in the sociocultural context in which they are learned and produced.
Vowel length in Dutch verbs: A case of iconicity?

Ad Foolen  
Radboud University Nijmegen

Recent iconicity research (cf. Dingemanse et al. 2015, Blasi et al. 2016, Lockwood 2017) has shown that non-arbitrary signs play a stronger role in natural languages than 20th century structuralist and generative theories suggested. Every full-fledged cognitive-functional theory of language is well advised to take non-arbitrariness on board. Iconicity research contributes insights in how language is grounded in sensory experience.

One of the best known findings in iconicity research is the bouba-kiki effect. Besides the role of consonants, the different quality of vowels (/u/ vs. /i/) plays a role. Vowel quantity (length) has been less studied. Bross (2018) is one of the few studies focusing on length. He found an association between vowel length and object length for German nouns.

The question is whether similar effects regarding vowel quality and quantity can be found for other parts of speech. Cluskey (2013) is one of the few papers who studied such effects, focusing on vowel quality (/u/ vs. /i/) in verbs. He found a correlation between lower vowels and slower speed.

The present paper focuses on vowel quantity (length) in Dutch verbs. A random sample of 120 verbs was put together, all with one full syllable (optionally a second one with a schwa vowel), divided into 4 groups:

1. Verbs with short vowels: *stoppen* ‘to stop’, *vallen* ‘to fall’
2. Verbs with long vowels: *slaan* ‘to hit’, *lezen* ‘to read’
3. Verbs with diphthongs: ei/ië, ou/au, ui, phonetically [ei, au, œy], as in: *kijken* ‘to look’, *kauwen* ‘to chew’, *huilen* ‘to weep’,
4. Verbs with a combination of 2 phonemes aai, ooi, oei, eeu [ai, oi, ui, eu]: *zaaien* ‘to sow’, *gooien* ‘to throw’, *sproeien* ‘to spray’, and *geeuwen* ‘to yawn’.

The semantics of the four groups was analyzed with regard to the feature ‘length of the process’. It was found that the verbs with short vowels typically refer to short processes or processes with a sudden end. Verbs with long vowels or diphthongs refer to longer processes (no systematic difference was found between these two groups). The verbs in the last group also refer to longer processes, but in addition, they typically imply a process with a ‘curved change’. This group will be analyzed in more detail.

References
Integration of discourse-referential categories in constructional networks

Mirjam Fried
Charles University, Prague

Taking a set of discourse markers which have developed out of independent morphosyntactic units, the talk aims at showing how the relationships between the relevant grammatical and discourse units can be captured through integrated constructional maps. The maps provide a way in which the discourse-referential items can be naturally integrated in the network of related but distinct pieces of grammar, through feature sharing at various levels of representation (morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, prosodic). Using data from conversational Czech (both Old and Modern, extracted from the Czech National Corpus and Old Czech texts) and drawing on previous work that details the specifics of the developments in question (Fried 2011, 2015), I try to capture the relationships between a pronominal and fully referential dative-marked NPs (1) and markers of various interpersonal relations (2), which originate from the referential datives.

(1) a. a líbilo se vám to?
   and appealed.PAST.3SG.N REFL you.DAT it.NOM
   ‘And did you like it?’ (lit. ‘did it appeal to you?’)
b. vona nám nenesla, ta líška
   she.NOM us.DAT NEG.bear.fruit.PAST.3SG.F tha hazelnut.bush.NOM.SF.F
   ‘it didn’t bear us [any fruit], that hazelnut bush’

(2) a. vona vodešla a já vám sem vo tom přemýšlela i v noci
   she left and I.NOM you.DAT AUX about it think.PAST.1SG even at night
   ‘she left and [imagine] I kept thinking about it, even at night’
b. to se nám to tady začíná hezky rýsovat
   DM REFL us.DAT it here starts nicely shape.up.INF
   ‘why, it’s beginning to turn [into] quite a picture on us here, [look, everybody]!”

Among the challenges is the need to reflect the decreasing compositionality, restricted distribution, and the emergence of new pragmatic meanings and syntactic behavior that become predictably associated with the new discourse category. Once the new interpretations become fully established members of a different functional inventory, they display various discourse-referential variants; the nuances have to do with the person (1st, 2nd) and number (sg./pl.), and they range from marking simple contact with the interlocutor to subjective assessment to signaling evidentiality. The reorganization of form, meaning, and function gives these markers the status of grammatical constructions, i.e. multilayered pieces of grammar that are conventionally tied to certain types of discourse contexts, morphosyntactic constraints, and speaker-hearer expectations. In order to capture both the transition path and the newly formed category, I propose to take advantage of the tools provided by constructional representations; this includes the fundamental assumption that equal importance must be accorded to the internal, feature-level specifications of a pattern and to the external description of its holistic properties. The proposal is suggested as a general approach to capturing the emergence of discourse-level entities that can be identified as distinct grammatical constructions and integrated into broader constructional networks.
References
The concept of NATURE and multimodal viewpoints in hospitality advertising

Martyna Górecka¹, Daniel Michaud Maturana¹2

¹Hotel Management School Maastricht, Zuyd, ²Université catholique de Louvain

This contribution delves into (i) the different conceptualizations of NATURE in hotel advertising, and (ii) the relation between the conceptualizations of NATURE and the presented viewpoints to promote the establishment. The study is related to research concerning multimodal viewpoint constructions in different types of discourse (Dancygier and Vandelanotte, 2017; Borkent 2017; Guilbeault, 2017) and to studies regarding hospitality advertising (cf. Hansen, A. 2002; Hartmann, P., Apaolaza, V., & Alija, P. 2013; Hu, H. H. S., 2012). The analysis is based on the concepts of multimodality and viewpoint (Dancygier and Sweetser, 2012) and on the concept of construal operations (Verhagen, 2007). The corpus used is composed of 958 Spanish and Latin American hotel-sites. The method consisted of (i) a classification of the names referring to NATURE attending to the level of inclusiveness, e.g. NATURE-PLANTS-PALMS, NATURE-PLACES-OASIS, (ii) an analysis of the conceptual relation between the name and other information related to NATURE in the website, (iii) a comparison between the conceptualization of NATURE in the different hotel sites, and (iv) a classification of the different viewpoints represented in advertising.

The results show that:

a) the concept of NATURE in the name reappears in different forms in the information offered: (i) in a more abstract and subjective conceptualization, e.g. name Hotel las orquideas (Hotel the orchids) → concept reappears in jardines acogedores (welcoming garden); (ii) in an unbounded and discrete conceptualization, e.g. name Hotel Rosa del Paseo (Hotel Rose of the Walk) → concept reappears in volcanes, playas, parques (vulcans, beaches, parks); or (iii) in a figure in the conceptualization of space, e.g. name Dos Palmitos B&B (Two Small Palms) → concept reappears in ubicado al lado del Canal Panamà (located on the side of the Panama Canal);

b) the multiplex conceptualization of NATURE, the interaction of different construal operations and the blending of the conceptual domain of NATURE with other domains, such as LOCATION or ACTIVITY, are cognitive mechanisms in multimodal hotel advertising which determine the viewpoints presented to the consumer;

c) the advertising viewpoint network is constructed by conceptualizations of nature in different frames, e.g. cultural and active tourism, tourism and sustainability and tourism and gastronomy.

References


Discourse structure in Construction Grammar: On insubordinate conditionals in Spanish

Pedro Gras

*Universiteit Antwerpen*

Constructionist approaches are based on the principle that the linguistic knowledge of a speaker can be represented as a network of grammatical constructions, conceived as conventional pairings of form and meaning. It is generally assumed that form includes any phonic, morphologic and syntactic features, while meaning includes any semantic, pragmatic or discursive ones (see, for example, Croft & Cruse 2004). According to this view, discourse properties of a grammatical construction are part of its meaning and not of its form.

However, several studies have shown that certain grammatical constructions that express relations between clauses usually occur in certain types of discourse contexts (Fillmore 1989, Evans 1993). From this perspective, discourse position could be understood as a feature of the construction’s form, analogous to the position of other pieces that work within the sentence, such as attributive adjectives in relation to a noun, for example. In this line, Linell (2009) proposes that the external syntax of a construction must specify its restrictions regarding the contexts in which it can appear.

An interesting case to analyze the relationship between grammatical constructions and discourse information is Spanish insubordinate conditionals, exemplified in (1).

(1) A. ¿Vamos a la playa?  
   ‘What about going to the beach?’
   B. ¡Si está lloviendo!  
   Lit. If it’s raining! ‘But it’s raining!’

From a formal point of view, these constructions pair two conflicting features: on the one hand, they superficially resemble conditional sentences, in that they are headed by the conditional marker *si* ‘if’; but, on the other, they behave syntactically and prosodically as main clauses, in that they generally constitute a turn in conversation –without possible main clause material in the preceding turn—and have non-continuation prosody (Elvira García 2016). From a semantic point of view, these constructions introduce propositions that question some aspect of the previous turn, and therefore, tend to occur as dispreferred second parts of an adjacency pair (Montolio 2001, cf. Schwenter 2016). Indeed, this is what happens in example (1), in which speaker B questions the appropriateness of the speaker A’s proposal to go to the beach.

The goal of this paper is to discuss the role of discourse information in the representation of grammatical construction through the analysis of Spanish insubordinate conditionals. Using data from a corpus of colloquial conversations (Briz & Val.Es.Co. 2002), each token has been analyzed according the *discourse unit* in which the construction occurs (turn, utterance, preface, extension, etc.) and the *discourse positions* in which the construction is placed in relation to these units (independent, initial, medial, or final).

The results of the analysis show that it is not possible to assign to all tokens of the construction a single discourse position, but they occur in several positions, although not all occur with the same frequency. The results can be taken as evidence for a radial representation of constructions, in which the discourse information is not represented in the general schema, but
in basic level constructions that exhibit different levels of prototypicity, according to their frequency.

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Receptive knowledge of intensifying compounds: Belgian French-speaking learners of Dutch and English

Isa Hendrikx
Université catholique de Louvain

Intensification can be expressed cross-linguistically by several morphological and syntactic constructions (among others, Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003; Hoeksema 2011, 2012; Rainer 2015). While intensifying adjectival compounds (henceforth IAC) (e.g. ice-cold) are a productive means to express intensification in Dutch and in English, in French this construction is hardly productive. In consequence, French-speaking learners may encounter difficulties acquiring IAC in L2 Dutch/English.

Within the context of a research project on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in French-speaking Belgium (cf. Hiligsmann et al. 2017), we explore the impact of CLIL input on the acquisition of IAC in the L2. Our sample consists of French-speaking sixth grade secondary school pupils (aged 17-19), in CLIL and non-CLIL settings, learning Dutch (CLIL n=132; non-CLIL n=100) or English (CLIL n=90; non-CLIL n=90). A corpus study on written productions of these learners has already revealed that the CLIL students display an overall greater written proficiency (in terms of lexical diversity among others) (Bulon et al. 2017) and a more native-like use of intensifying constructions (Hendrikx et al. forth.). Since IAC were quite infrequent in the learner corpora, the present study uses a multiple-choice exercise to evaluate the learners’ receptive knowledge of IAC. Based on the literature on the acquisition of vocabulary and collocations (Laufer & Paribakht 1998; Pignot-Shahov 2012; Koya 2005; Gylstad 2007), we hypothesize that their receptive knowledge of IAC will exceed their productive knowledge.

In order to distill the effect of CLIL, we include other target language exposure variables in our analysis (i.e. the number of years of target language learning and the current informal contact with the target language). We also include measures of receptive L2 vocabulary knowledge (PPVT-IV1 or PPVT-III-NL2) and of productive L2 vocabulary knowledge (MTLD3), as predictors for a learner’s receptive knowledge of IAC.

Preliminary results indicate that CLIL pupils develop greater receptive knowledge of IAC, both for L2 Dutch and L2 English. In English, current informal contact and the number of years of target of language instruction do not significantly affect this result, but the learner’s receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge do. In Dutch, CLIL is the best predictor for receptive knowledge of IAC, but in contrast to English, current informal contact also has a small significant effect on the receptive knowledge of IAC. Surprisingly, receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge do not predict receptive knowledge of Dutch IAC. Overall, we conclude that CLIL positively affects receptive knowledge of IAC.

References

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"Lying in the air but standing in the cold": A contrastive study of nominal phrases with posture verbs in German and Dutch

Manon Hermann
Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles

German and Dutch are two closely related Germanic languages that use many posture verbs, not only to describe the concrete position of an entity, but also to designate its location in space (see De Knop & Perrez 2014 and Lemmens 2006).

In this contribution we study the use of Germ./Dt. verbs stehen / staan ('to stand') and liegen / liggen ('to lie') in abstract and fixed phrases, such as Germ. in der Luft liegen (literally 'to lie in the air' = 'to be in the wind, to be expected'), Dt. in de kou laten staan (literally 'leave sb. standing in the cold' = 'to ignore or exclude sb.').

Among these phrases we are looking more specifically at the subcategory of complex noun-verb phrases (commonly referred to as "Funktionsverbgefüge" in German). In these constructions the noun carries the main meaning and the verb has only a functional role (see Fleischer 1997 and Eisenberg 2013). Examples: Germ. zur Verfügung stehen / Dt. ter beschikking staan ('to make available').

Numerous examples from the corpora "DeReKo" (IDS) and "Corpus Hedendaags Nederlands" are analysed, with two aims:

(1) On the basis of Serra-Borneto (1996) and Lemmens (2006), we focus on the opposition of Germ. stehen-liegen and Dt. staan-liggen in both languages in order to identify the conceptualizations that motivate their use. The conceptualizations of prepositions and nouns that are combined with the verb are also examined. E.g. the German verb stehen often occurs with a nominal group introduced by the preposition unter ('under') and including a noun that conceptualizes control: Germ. unter Beobachtung stehen ('to be under observation'), unter Druck stehen ('to be under pressure').

(2) In a contrastive German-Dutch analysis we compare each nominal phrase with its counterpart in the other language. We further examine the phrases’ constituents in both languages and also study their frequency. The use of posture verbs, which at first sight seems very similar in both languages, is however characterized by a large number of differences.

References
Non-verbal embedded depictions:
Some formal and functional considerations

Hui-Chieh Hsu, Geert Brône, Kurt Feyaerts
University of Leuven

Depictions, as defined by Clark (2016), are physical scenes people create and display with a single set of actions at a single place and time, for others to use in imagining the scenes depicted. It follows that depictions account for the part of communication where the relation between the semiotic signal and its denotation is iconic, rather than symbolic or indexical. Based on the relation between a depiction and its adjacent or accompanying speech, Clark further identifies four types of depictions; among them is the embedded depiction, which takes up a grammatical slot in a descriptive utterance, as illustrated by the following examples of talk shows guests sharing past experiences.

(1) On working on Broadway: “… sometimes it’s like twenty seconds, for like full-on [fingers spread and bent, palms towards body, hands alternately moving downwards in front of head and torso, as if clothes were being put on], out you go.”

(2) On being denied priority boarding while traveling with an infant: “… and I was like, but [arms bent inwards, hands touching, moving back and forth on the frontal plane, as if holding and rocking a baby]. She needs to go on the plane.”

Instead of using descriptive speech and uttering an NP (costume change) in 1 or a clause (I have a baby with me) in 2, the guests coordinate gestures to stage depictions iconic to the scenes in the actual events, allowing the addressee to understand and imagine the scenes in a perceptually tangible fashion. Being able to “fill in gaps” on different grammatical levels in speech, embedded depictions are effectively not unlike words, phrases, or clauses.

Curiously, much as non-verbal embedded depictions are ubiquitous, they have received little attention, compared to the large body of research on co-speech multimodal phenomena. In view of the gap, we examined ca. 5.5 hours of American TV talk show data, from a Construction Grammar-informed (Croft, 2001) perspective, yielding a total of 82 tokens, which are defined formally in terms of gesture phrase. The tokens confirm the form-meaning pairings that are non-verbal embedded depictions can indeed be syntactically and semantically integrated into their embedding discourse. In addition, functions frequently served by the tokens, as well as the formal contexts of the functions, are identified.

The findings provide insights into the functional motivations for the embedding of non-verbal semiotic signals in verbal discourse, demonstrating their integral role in language use (Fricke, 2012; Ladewig, forthc.), also lending empirical support to multimodal depictions being constructions as defined by Construction Grammar (Zima & Bergs, 2017).

References

Dutch *euh* and *euhm* as multimodal discourse markers in conversation

Annelies Jehoul
KULeuven

*Uh* and *um* are extensively studied in different languages (mostly English), but still, confusion remains about their function in interaction. Although labels such as *filled pauses*, *fillers*, *hesitation markers* and *disfluencies* suggest that the elements do not convey any meaning or even that they are disruptive, many studies have showed that *uh* and *um* on the contrary facilitate the listener’s understanding of the talk. For example, *uh* and *um* help interlocutors to recognize upcoming complex words faster, warn them for an upcoming delay and indicate that important information will follow (Fox Tree 2001, Clark & Fox Tree 2002, Kjellmer 2003).

Recently, studies show that *uh* and *um* are used with a discourse marking function. Rendle-Short (2004) found that in monologues, *um* occurs frequently at the beginning of a new section of talk, helping the listener structuring the information. The same distribution is found in Dutch monologues, where *euh* and *euhm* tend to occur at strong discourse boundaries (Swerts 1998). Also in conversation, *uh(m)* may fulfill a discourse marking function. Local (2004) found that *uh(m)*, preceded by the conjunction *and*, links turns to an earlier turn in interaction, thus fulfilling a back-connecting function. Moreover, Crible et al. (2017) showed that filled pauses are often clustered with discourse markers, not disrupting, but rather enhancing the fluency of the talk.

In the present study, a multimodal corpus of Dutch conversations will be analyzed to identify and quantify instances of *euh(m)* with a specific discourse marking function: structuring a storytelling sequence. For this purpose, a dataset of 10 triadic interactions between well-acquainted students was collected. Each triad held a conversation of fifteen minutes, resulting in a dataset of approximately 2.5 hours of interaction. In this dataset, all instances of *euh(m)* were coded, as well as the accompanying empty pauses, gestures and eye gaze.

Preliminary results show that, when a speaker is involved in a storytelling sequence, *euh(m)* may indicate a returning to the topic of the story after a digression. The back-connecting function described by Local (2004) thus seems to appear in Dutch interactions as well, even without an accompanying conjunction. Moreover, back-connecting with *euh(m)* is frequently coordinated with a perspective shift, for example when a personal account is momentarily suspended in order to give general background information. In these cases, the perspective shift is also reflected in a shift in the speaker’s eye gaze. A detailed multimodal analysis will point out how these storytelling structuring cases of *euh(m)* can be distinguished from other instances (for example, *euh(m)* occurring in self-corrections or prefacing responses) with respect to accompanying empty pauses, co-occurring gesture and eye gaze.

References


On Polish connectors expressing opposition and sentence structure

Anna Kisiel
KULeuven

Basing on previous studies (Urbańczyk 1992, Wajszczuk 1997, Grochowski 2000, 2016) Polish connectors can be defined as contextual units, i.e. units relating elements of a sentence in which they appear with elements of a preceding sentence. The presented paper concentrates on their other constitutional feature, mentioned in literature but not yet discussed in details for Polish language, i.e. changeable position in a sentence. Positional preferences marking various functions of metatextual units (connectors, conjunctions, particles) in thematic-rhematic structure (Bogusławski 1977, Wajszczuk 1997, Danielewiczowa 2012, Grochowski, Kisiel, Żabowska 2014) seem to differentiate this layer of lexis into word classes. The paper aims at confirming this hypothesis.

In the paper, I examine how deep Polish connectors can go in the sentence (cf. Altenberg 2006, Dupont 2015, Zufferey, Degand 2017). As a result a general structure for Polish connectors is presented. It is argued that their position is restricted to a thematic part that they can precede, follow or enter respecting normal Polish word order requirements and inseparability of certain groups (like propositional phrases, cf. Kosek 2004). This differentiate them from other language units sensitive to thematic-rhematic structure, such as conjunctions (Wajszczuk 1997) or particles (Grochowski, Kisiel, Żabowska 2014).

As a testing material a subgroup of connectors of opposition has been chosen: zaś ‘whereas’, za to ‘while, on the other hand’, tymczasem ‘while’, natomiast ‘whereas, however’, z kolei ‘in turn’. The frequency of their occurrence in each of the aforementioned positions is measured basing on the language data extracted from a balanced version of National Corpus of Polish. Additionally, the corpus of spoken Polish (Spokes) is consulted to distinguish any specific prosodic preferences of the connectors of opposition. Individual preferences for a certain position are explained with reference to the meaning of each of the tested units (cf. Kisiel 2015).

References

Mass-like categories in lexical plurals.
A gradual view on the mass/count distinction

Peter Lauwers
Ghent University

Despite the empirical objections (both distributional and semantic) that have been raised again the (C)ount /vs./ non-count (henceforth (M)ass) distinction, it is generally conceived as binary. This position will be challenged in this paper, based on evidence coming from lexical plurals (Acquaviva 2008).

Lexical plurals are “plural forms (oats, remains) in which plurality constitutes an inherent lexical specification” (cf. Booij, 1994; Acquaviva, 2008); they are “always” plural (cf. pluralia tantum), at least for a particular sense. As such they cannot be accounted for by means of a grammatical rule yielding nouns that mean ‘many x’ as opposed to the meaning of the corresponding singular form ‘one x’. As result, these plural forms are [- count], or more precisely, they exhibit count deficiency.

The following claims will be defended:

(1) the count M/C distinction should be conceived as a gradient based on degrees of conceptual individuation (Langacker (1987: 205; Grimm 2012), which can be captured by means of distributional properties

(2) The internal structuring of this cline is parallel to that of the typology of singular mass nouns (i.e. compact, dense, granular aggregates, collectives/superordinates); this observation is confirmed by the fact that lexical plural mass nouns fall within the scope of typical mass > count transfers, such as the universal sorter (’kinds of N’) and packager (’plusieurs rillettes’ = several portions of rillettes, i.e. a kind of pâté).

The analysis is based on extensive corpus research on 30 lexical plurals in French (Ten Ten Corpus, closed web corpus of 10 billion words), completed by acceptability judgments (12 subjects). For each item, a distributional profile has been built on the basis of its frequency of occurrence with the following critical determiners: definite determiners, des (indefinite plural), quelques (’some’), plusieurs (’several’), différents (’different’), divers (’various’) and cardinal numbers. In addition, acceptability has been tested for distributive (individuating) reciprocal expressions (l’un (les uns) après l’autre (les autres) ‘the one(s) after the other(s)’ and delimitative or « stubbornly distributive » adjectives (Schwarzschild 2011). I also included a picture description task (cf. Barner & Snedeker (2005) to test whether lexical plural nouns still accept number-based comparisons.

Although the diagnostics show that many lexical plurals are mass-like, still, they are not completely identical to mass nouns, as suggested by un peu de (‘a bit’) and some specific semantic nuances observed in the literature.

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Multimodality and viewpoint in Chilean denunciatory popular art

Daniel Michaud Maturana\textsuperscript{1,2}, Barbara De Cock\textsuperscript{1}, Karin Berlien Araos\textsuperscript{3}
\textsuperscript{1}UCLouvain, \textsuperscript{2}Hotel Management School Maastricht, Zuyd, \textsuperscript{3}Universidad de Valparaíso

Multimodal viewpoint constructions have been studied in different types of discourse, such as comics and political discourse (Dancygier and Vandelanotte, 2017; Borkent 2017; Guilbeault, 2017), but not in dissident popular art like the Chilean tapestry (henceforth \textit{arpilleras}) (Adams, 2012).

This contribution uncovers the mechanisms of multimodal meaning in relation to the viewpoints of dissidents by analyzing the message represented in the arpilleras. The corpus is composed of 60 photos of arpilleras that were smuggled to the Netherlands to raise international awareness about poverty and repression in Chili. The analysis is based on the concepts of multimodality and viewpoint (Dancygier and Sweeter, 2012) and on the concepts of framing (Fillmore, 2006), windowing (Talmy, 2000) and focal adjustments (Langacker, 1987). The methodology consists of (i) grouping the arpilleras that represent a similar scene (whether with or without text), (ii) categorizing the types of images and utterances represented (e.g. institutions and represented speech) and (iii) analyzing the construal operations that built the message and reveal the viewpoint of the dissidents.

The conclusion, in the first place, is that the verbal modality interacts with the image in order to determine specific viewpoints, in this case that of the poor, the relatives of the ones who suffer persecution and even of “disappeared” citizens (De Cock & Michaud Maturana, 2014 and 2018). In the second place, we conclude that viewpoints in multimodal communication are determined through different cognitive mechanisms such as: (i) conceptual elaboration, e.g. adding the utterance “\textit{community food}” to only one of the two images of \textit{food} in the arpillera, (ii) the profiling of the temporal perspective between two images by using references such as “past” and “today”, thus establishing a chronology, and (iii) subjective conceptualizations, e.g. by adding speech representation to the images representing the artisans who produce the arpilleras, as in the arpillera below.

\textit{Photography: arpillera desaparecidos.}
References
Assessing L2 oral performance with the help of relational co-occurrences

Magali Paquot¹,², Vaclav Brezina³, Zoé Broisson², Dana Gablasova³, Huberts Naets²
¹FNRS, ²UCLouvain, ³Lancaster University

Recent studies have shown that statistical co-occurrences, i.e. co-occurrences extracted and ranked with the help of association measures such as the mutual information (MI) score, can be used to describe EFL learner performance across proficiency levels (e.g. Durrant & Schmitt 2009, Granger & Bestgen 2014). Paquot (2017), for example, focused on relational co-occurrences (i.e. where the co-occurring words appear in a specific structural relation such as verb + direct object or adjective + noun) in French EFL learner academic writing and showed that phraseological indices based on the MI are better able to gauge language proficiency than traditional measures of syntactic and lexical complexity.

Most studies so far, however, have explored EFL learner use of statistical co-occurrences in upper-intermediate to advanced writing and focused on learner groups representing a limited number of first languages or language families. The main objective of this study is therefore to explore learners’ use of co-occurrences in the Trinity Lancaster Learner Corpus (Gablasova et al. 2017), i.e. roughly 4 million transcribed words from the Trinity College London spoken language exams, and answer the following main research questions:

- To what extent can relational co-occurrences be used to describe L2 oral performance at different proficiency levels (from B1 to C1/C2)?
- Does phraseological competence develop in the same way across different learner groups (i.e. Chinese vs. Hindi vs. Spanish speakers of English)?

In this presentation, we focus on verb + object co-occurrences as these structures have repeatedly been shown to be a major hurdle for English L2 learners (e.g. Nesselhauf 2005). Co-occurrences were extracted from the learner spoken corpus with the help of regular expressions and evaluated on the basis of MI scores computed from the ENCOW16AX corpus (see Paquot 2017 for more information on the methodology). Preliminary results suggest that phraseological competence develops (slowly) from B1 to C1/C2 in spoken language but with variability within and across proficiency levels and L1 groups.

In the very near future, we aim to investigate whether, as shown by Paquot (2017) for L2 writing, co-occurrences are also better than measures of lexical diversity and sophistication at discriminating between L2 spoken samples at various proficiency levels in the Trinity Lancaster Learner Corpus.

References


Transitivity in passive-like structures in Spanish, French and English

Emeline Pierre
Université catholique de Louvain

This paper aims to investigate the use of different structures that allow for expressing the passive voice. I will focus more concretely on constructions with a transitive verb where a patient undergoes an action performed by a defocused agent, in Spanish, French and English in formal and informal written registers. Taking into account syntactic features and register variation, I will concentrate on constructions based on a reflexive pronoun (se in Spanish and French), man-impersonals (on in French), numeral-based indefinite pronouns (uno in Spanish and one in English), non-anaphoric third person plurals and periphrastic passives. Analyzing data from comparable corpora, I aim to evaluate the potential impact of transitivity on the selection of passive-like structures across the languages under study and to determine to which extent transitivity is a key element in register variation.

Various researchers (Halliday 1967, Hopper & Thompson 1980, Quesada 1998, Næss 2007) have already studied the notion of transitivity and have demonstrated its primordial role in syntactic studies. In their pioneering research, Hopper & Thompson (1980) decomposed transitivity into ten parameters. It is expected that these ten syntactic components affect, positively or negatively, the degree of transitivity of the clause and impact the selection of passive-like structures.

The languages selected for the present study pertain to the Indo-European language group and may share some grammatical properties. However, it is hypothesized that these languages do not always resort to the same structures and apparently similar constructions may convey slightly different meanings, hence the importance of establishing and examining a selection of passive related structures. My two research questions will thus be: (1) how may the degree of transitivity affect the selection of passive-like structures in Spanish, French and English? (2) is there a possible influence of the genre on the degree of transitivity in the expression of passive voice? In order to carry out the analysis, I will also resort to Hopper & Thompson’s theory as well as to the cognitive grammar approach to transitivity developed in Maldonado’s (2000, 2008) work. A particular attention will also be given to the type of verb process.

Preliminary results show that formally identical structures function differently according to the language. For example, in written data, the Spanish periphrastic passive, compared to its French counterpart, seems to prefer kinetic verbs. Similarly, the non-anaphoric third person plural tends to appear with a punctual verb in Spanish and a non-punctual verb in French. According to Hopper & Thompson (1980), the more components a clause has, the more transitive it is. Following this postulate, the structures under analysis in the present study display a different degree of transitivity. For instance, results suggest that, in French, a clause with a non-anaphoric third person plural would have a higher transitivity than a clause with the man-impersonal device on. The first analyses already suggest register variation. A look at the parameter mode reveals that, both in the Spanish and French formal corpora, all structures resort to the mode realis while structures in the informal corpora display a wider variation. In summary, this investigation reveals that both transitivity and its components as well as register variation may influence the selection of the passive-like structures.
References


Constructions, the basic descriptive units of construction grammar, are organized into networks that range from entirely concrete constructions to fully schematic ones (Fried & Östman 2004: 15-18). However, the vertical stratification of this ‘constructicon’ is only rarely taken into account in corpus studies with a constructionist background (for exceptions, see a.o. Boas 2010, Lenci 2012). We will argue that this leads to several problems, the most fundamental of which we call the Problem of Precedence. This problem asks which level in the constructicon is most relevant in the study of e.g. a particular alternation. To answer this question, we introduce a methodological approach that incorporates the vertical dimension.

To illustrate this approach, we investigate the alternation between the Dutch transitive construction and the naar-construction, as in (1)-(2) (cf. Haeseryn et al. 1997: 1168, Broekhuis 2004: 122), based on the Sonar corpus (Oostdijk et al. 2013). We start at the most schematic level and use collocational analyses to identify the verbs doen ‘do’ and kijken ‘look’ as the most prototypical verbs of the transitive and naar-construction. Next, we calculate the semantic proximity of each alternating verb to doen ‘do’ and kijken ‘look’ in distributional vector space, and use this proximity to predict the choice between both constructions.

We then descend a level in the constructicon and investigate the alternation separately for each alternating verb. Here, we apply the same procedure to the object slot. Finally, we descend even further and investigate the alternation separately for e.g. zoek (naar) slachtoffer ‘search victim’ and zoek (naar) woord ‘search word’. While we focus on semantic differences, we will control for processing-related and lectal factors.

(1)  
Zakkenrollers zoeken voornamelijk (naar) slachtoffers in het openbaar vervoer,...  
(WR-P-P-G-0000152205.p.4.s.3)  
‘Pickpockets primarily search their victims in public transportation, …’

(2)  
Het soort liefde dat (…) deed haar (naar) nieuwe dingen verlangen.  
(WR-P-P-B-000000132.p.1726.s.15)  
‘The kind of love that (…) made her long for new things’

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Linguistic taboo phenomena (such as the use of offensive terms) are one of the least studied aspects in foreign language teaching, both in its referential (concepts referring to stigmatized realities) and non-referential facets (expletives, insults). In previous studies, it has been observed that deciphering sexual metaphors is especially complex for foreign language students (De Cock & Suñer 2018). In addition, it has also been studied that producing taboo words creates less anxiety in a foreign language (Harris et al. 2003). This can lead to an inappropriate use of swearwords by students, who do not have sufficient knowledge about them in the L2 and who do not perceive their pragmatic effects. Therefore, the adequate learning of the taboo lexicon constitutes a risk factor for L2 students, since it might entail a higher production of socio-pragmatic errors.

In this paper we intend to explore the knowledge of non-referential taboos in Belgian Dutch-speaking students of Spanish. Based on a questionnaire study, we intend to (1) observe the level of knowledge of taboo words and (2) analyse its use in real contexts. To do so, we have selected communicative situations that include an expletive (joder, coño and hostia - lit. ‘fuck, cunt, hostie’), from two Spanish corpora: a written source (reading tasks performed within a permanent evaluation framework, Escalona 2011, 2016) and a spoken source (sociolinguistic interviews, Pizarro Pedraza 2013). In these contexts, students have to perform three tasks: 1. Explain the pragmatic function of the expletives in particular contexts; 2. Classify the expletives according to their level of offensiveness in a five-point Likert scale and explain their classification; and 3. Select the most appropriate variant in a context with a gap.

Due to the nature of our questions, we expect to present qualitative and quantitative results. On the one hand, the qualitative analysis of the explicit judgments triggered by questions 1 and 2 will show what aspects (previous knowledge, contextual, conceptual) help them interpret the pragmatic functions and the degree of offensiveness of each particular expletive. On the other hand, through quantitative analysis we will explore what factors (social profile, Spanish learning history) may be related to the knowledge and judgments about the taboo expletives. Our preliminary qualitative analyses show that participants draw on different aspects of the expletive in order to deduce its meaning (observed frequency outside of the questionnaire, literal meaning, context of use), sometimes leading to inadequate interpretations. As for the quantitative analysis, our hypotheses are that linguistic immersion will favour a greater knowledge of the taboo words and a more adequate use; and that the gender of the students may be related to their attitudes regarding the offensiveness of the expletives.

References

Criminal news events and their sociocultural conception in diverging contexts: A linguistic framing analysis

Afrooz Rafiee
Radboud University Nijmegen

News articles are typical examples of social discourse, in that they provide a reconstructive conceptualization of social events for their audience. These texts are produced in a specific context and, therefore, are affected by political, journalistic, sociobehavioral and cultural factors; these factors will unavoidably influence the form and/or the content of the communication in some way. As discourse is always contextually situated (Hart 2011), it is reasonable to expect distinct sociocultural contexts to construe different representations of similar realities (Carbaugh 2007). In this presentation, we ask: How do news articles in two different cultures construct similar realities (here, criminal cases) through news narratives?

“The ways events and issues are organized and made sense of […]” is referred to as framing (Reese 2001: 7). Framing has less been addressed from a linguistic perspective. The relatively few discourse analytic studies of framing suggest comprehensive but less replicable models for finding frames at a micro linguistic level. We investigate news reconstructions of crime events in national Iranian and Dutch print journalism. On the basis of a model of analysis that is explicit enough to allow for replication, we analyze linguistic framing in one hundred crime-reporting articles from both sensational and quality papers. In our approach, conceptualization of reality is investigated through the linguistic representation of news actors, their actions and their circumstances, at lexical and syntactic levels. The findings show that the two cultures are different in their reconstructive conceptualization of similar events. For instance, in Iranian media, officials are more explicitly present and put in prominent positions whereas in Dutch media the reverse pattern is observed.

A second question is how specific textual representations relate to their sociocultural context. In our discussion, we explain how specific linguistic representations of social events may have been shaped by contextual factors; also, we discuss how the linguistic representations may in turn shape these two contexts. Concluding, we argue that news discourse and its production is a culturally situated practice which entails that news must be analyzed ethnographically at the level of discourse, production and reception.

References
No offence! Exploring the implicit affective connotation of swear words in different groups of Dutch speakers

Laura Rosseel, Eline Zenner, Dirk Geeraerts
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Despite the important role of swearing in social interaction (Jay 2009), relatively little empirical research has been carried out on the implicit affective connotation of this type of words from a perceptual perspective. Most studies focus on the production of swear words (SW, e.g. Dewaele 2017). Research that does concentrate on the perception of SW tends to be restricted to language users’ explicit knowledge of the emotional value or offensiveness of these words measured through questionnaires and interviews (e.g. Beers Fägersten 2012, Dewaele 2016). Much less is known about the implicit affective associations with SW (with a few exceptions such as Harris et al. 2003 or Eilola & Havelka 2011 who use methods like skin conductance and Stroop tasks). Yet, a better understanding of the emotional value language users attach to different types of SW would be useful for language variation and change research, for instance for studies focussing on the borrowability of SW or research on the euphemism treadmill, to name just two. That is why we set up an explorative study into the implicit affective connotations of SW: which characteristics of SW determine their affective value and how does this value vary for different groups of language users? In our study, we focused on the perception of swearing in native speakers of Belgian Dutch.

Building on Degner et al. (2012), we used the affective priming paradigm to measure implicit associations with SW. Affective priming is a social psychological measure that has recently been introduced to sociolinguistics (Speelman et al. 2013). Participants were presented with a series of benchmarked visual target stimuli which had to be categorized as being positive (e.g. a picture of a smiling baby) or negative (e.g. a picture of an attacking shark). Each target stimulus was preceded by a subliminal prime stimulus. These prime stimuli consisted of a varied range of SW. The idea is that participants are able to categorize a target stimulus faster if it is preceded by a prime which shares the same valence as the target. Hence, measuring participants’ reaction times can inform us about the affective value of the prime stimuli, i.e. our selection of SW. This selection was compiled using different sources (corpora, focus group interviews and previous research, like Zenner et al. 2012) and included SW of different source domains, as well as SW that are originally Dutch and SW that are borrowed from other languages. For these loanwords, a distinction was made between different levels of entrenchment.

In addition to exploring the perception of SW based on characteristics like source domain and level of entrenchment, the study aimed to gain insight in whether and how different groups of language users vary in their perception of taboo words. The respondent variables this experiment capitalized on were gender (Dewaele 2017), region and personality (e.g. Extraversion and Neuroticism, Dewaele 2017). Hence, data was collected in two larger cities (Gent, Antwerp) and two provincial towns (Londerzeel, Lier) controlling for age and level of education (Dewaele 2017).

References


Context and corpus – This talk describes the discursive expression of civil resistance against organized mafia crime syndicates in Italy based on two episodes of *Cose Nostre* (RAI 2016, about 1 hour each), Italian video documentaries about civil anti-mafia resistance, by a local Calabrian entrepreneur (Gaetano Saffioti) and Sicilian public manager (Antonio Candela), as they undergo intimidation by the ‘Ndrangheta and Cosa Nostra and yet keep on defying the mafia’s law of silence (Ambrosoli 2016).

Framework and objectives – This work in progress takes further the potential of a social, discursive and multimodal cognitive linguistic approach to discourse in Italian video documentaries (Hart 2016, Balirano et al. 2017) and uses multimodal event construal as a central notion (Hart 2013), in order to specify the generic committing crime and offense frame in FrameNet which focus on agentivity of perpetrators and law enforcement.

1. We examine naming and argumentative strategies for criminal/non-criminal actors, as they are individualized, singularized, aggregated or collectivized and included/excluded in Italian transitivity, e.g. through depersonalization and/or passivization (Catalano 2011, Van Leeuwen 2013).

2. We analyze and compare the types of economic actor offenses and resistance, which frame both intimidation and, more importantly, acts of resistance in profit organizations not associated traditionally with the drug wars/shootouts, such as the building industry or public health.

3. We describe multimodal force-dynamic (transitive) schemes in which mobsters and their victims appear together as agents and/or undergoers. We bring in the agentive impact of activists on their local communities, activist organizations, co-workers and/or family members (Sambre 2017). The focus is on event construal in spoken predications, and systematically examines visual overlap on this micro-level.

(Provisional) results – We highlight the potential discursive role of non-criminal actors against a traditional representation of mafia victims/perpetrators in terms of transitive relations as undergoer/agents respectively. Naming of actors is shown to follow different paths in the two documentaries at stake: the explicit individualization of (convicted) mafia bosses and famous activists or implicit backgrounding/exclusion of reference to mafia syndicates on the spoken/visual level.

References


A contrastive study of IAW structures

Steven Schoonjans
KU Leuven

The Wh-IAW construction has repeatedly been mentioned in publications pleading in favor of Construction Grammar, both in English (Fillmore 1985 on Wh the heck, Wh the devil and Wh in heaven’s name) and in German (Stefanowitsch 2011 on Wh in aller Welt ‘Wh in all world’), as in (1-2). The IAW structures, i.e. the elements inserted after the question word, are considered as a kind of intensifiers that mark “incomprehension of the speaker with regard to the sentence’s proposition” (Stefanowitsch 2011: 190; my translation).

(1)  What the heck did you see? (Fillmore 1985: 81)

(2)  Was in aller Welt will Frau Merkel erreichen? (Stefanowitsch 2011: 190)
    ‘What in aller Welt does Merkel want to achieve?’

While the Wh-IAW construction presents a rewarding example for Construction Grammar (not just in German and English), the IAW structures themselves are largely unstudied. The goal of this presentation is to contribute to filling this gap by exploring the field of IAW structures in wh-questions in different languages, with a focus on German and French. Since IAW structures resemble modal particles in being downtoning elements in Waltereit’s (2006) sense, a comparison with modal particles will also be part of the talk.

The talk consists of three parts. The first part will look at how many and what elements can be used as IAW structures in the respective languages and to what extent they correspond across languages, showing (among other things) that the field of IAW structures in German is considerably wider than in French. In the second part, I will turn to topology and show that, despite differences in sentence structure, similar topological tendencies can be observed for IAW structures in German and French. The final part of the talk will consist of a comparison with modal particles as typical downtoning elements in Waltereit’s (2006) sense, a comparison with modal particles will also be part of the talk.

The inventory of modal particles considerably longer in German as well, we also retrieve (albeit with slightly different strengths) the same topological tendencies as for the IAW structures in both languages. The topological analysis will be based on a systematic corpus study using data from COSMAS-II for German and from FranText and CoMeRe (in order to reach a comparable dataset) for French, while for the former issue (broadness of the field), the dataset will be expanded to also include internet observations of structures that are missing from the corpora.

References


The sociocognitive foundation of desubjectivizing constructions in Spanish

María José Serrano
Universidad de La Laguna

Sociolinguistic approaches are centred on the role of the speaker as a user, but the relationship between speaker and usage is still a matter that needs to be explored in depth. From a cognitive viewpoint, linguistic variation is built on general principles of human cognition, and on the interaction of participants with the physical environment.

Meaning in morphological and syntactic variants is a multi-layered phenomenon encompassing cognitive properties that give rise to pragmatic-discursive values that otherwise exhibit social and situational distribution among participants. This is the sense in which morphological and syntactic variants can be considered meaningful and socially conditioned choices. The confluence of cognitive linguistics and sociolinguistics has become evident in recent times because the two approaches share many basic commonalities in the study of variation.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between the statistical patterning of linguistic choices or variants and the meaningful use of such variants in particular contexts by different kind of speakers. Morphosyntactic variants are choices constructed in a meaningful way that reveal perceptions of real-world events, projected stylistically into the domain of discourse and interaction.

The variants which will be analysed in the present investigation are the impersonal Spanish periphrasis hay que + infinitive (‘it should be/it must be’), the clitic se (‘it’) and the second-person object te (‘you/to you’). Each variant conveys a gradual desubjectivizing meaning, provided by cognitive salience. The present research will use the Corpus Interaccional del Español (310,759 words), which comprises a wide range of genres and communicative situations. From these texts, we gathered 1,740 examples of variants hay que, te, and se. The analysis was both qualitative and quantitative. The latter was accomplished by measuring the weights of the occurrences of each variant and the crosstabulations between them by using Rbrul package.

To adequately explain this variation, it is necessary to consider some elements that covary with variants and the role these elements play in the use of variants. We depart from the assumption that these variants will be used in different communicative settings by different kinds of participants acting as either speakers/writers or addressees. The factors selected to analyse variants were the following: genre or channel of communication, sex/gender of the speakers, and sex/gender of hearers/addressees. They were treated as statistically fixed elements.

Results revealed that speakers use the desubjectivizing constructions that they consider most suitable for the accomplishment of their communicative purposes. Such usages exhibit an unequal sociolinguistic distribution across different kinds of interactions. For example, we will demonstrate that men tend to use constructions that are less desubjectivizing (se and deictic te), while women show a preference for more desubjectivizing constructions like periphrasis hay que + infinitive and desubjectivizing te.
What is background and what is foreground? Phatic functions and modal functions of Spanish ¿no? and ¿sabes?

Gloria Uclés Ramada
University of Valencia

The present contribution aims to explore the meaning of two conversational markers in Spanish, which are in some contexts equivalent to tag questions: ¿no? and ¿sabes? Besides their phatic value – due to their evident function of calling the attention of the hearer – it has been claimed that these particles also display modal values, such as mitigation (García Vizcaíno 2005, Montañez 2015, Uclés 2017), reinforcement (Albelda 2007) or to request affiliation (Uclés in press). Most of the literature that focuses on these devices has one thing in common: they all present the functions listed for the markers as closed categories that do not interplay with each other. However, in most contexts, it is not clear whether these markers are used solely with a phatic value or more than one value operating at once is to be found. This presentation is concerned with disentangling the phatic meaning as a previous step towards distinguishing other functions. A cross-generic corpus study has been carried out considering two oral genres: informal conversations and interviews. All markers for which added functions cannot be found are analysed regarding a series of properties (type of sequence, type of speech act, position in the utterance and, in the case of explicative, the kind of information contained in the utterance). Two analyses of the same corpus have been carried out separately. This has made possible to distinguish the contexts in which the phatic value is easily identifiable from the ones where boundaries are not easily established. The preliminary results point to the following:

A. It has been commonly agreed to assign only the phatic function to markers found in medial position of an utterance.
B. Final position has revealed to be the item where more conflict has arisen.
C. Most of the markers with only phatic values are found in assertive speech acts.
D. There seem to be genre-related differences: a higher number of markers bearing solely phatic meaning can be found in interviews than in conversation.

References
Smoothly moving through mental spaces patterns in the linguistic marking of space shifts in news narratives

Kobie van Krieken
Radboud University

When processing narratives, readers construct a network of mental spaces through which they move as the story unfolds. Different spaces can be profiled at different points in the narrative and shifts between spaces occur frequently. Keeping track of this dynamic network is a highly complex process that, despite the cognitive load it demands, progresses miraculously smoothly. The present study aims to examine to what extent this process is facilitated and guided by linguistic structures.

To attain this aim, a cognitive linguistic corpus analysis of news narratives is conducted. News narratives construct a complex network of mental spaces (Van Krieken et al. 2016): a Reality Space representing the deictic center of reader and journalist here-and-now (publication date); a Narrative Space representing newsworthy events there-and-then (crime, accident); and a Legitimizing Space representing information provided by the news actors to the journalist at a time in-between the newsworthy events and the present (press conference, court case). The present study examines to what extent and how shifts between these three spaces are linguistically marked.

A corpus of 100 crime news narratives published between 1960 and 2009 in 11 different Dutch newspapers was collected, divided into sentences \( N = 3,923 \) and subsequently analyzed by two independent coders on two variables. First, the space in which each sentence was anchored was determined (Reality Space; Narrative Space; Legitimizing Space; \( \kappa = .88 \)). Second, all sentences marking a shift from one space to another space were identified \( N = 648 \) and analyzed on the type of linguistic element signaling the shift (temporal adverb or tense shift; speech or thought report; other; none; \( \kappa = .92 \)).

Results show that shifts between spaces were significantly more often linguistically marked (86.6%) than not marked (13.4%). Furthermore, the type of linguistic marker differed significantly across the various shifts \( \chi^2(15) = 627.64, p < .001 \). Shifts from the Narrative Space to the Legitimizing Space were most often marked by a speech or thought report, whereas shifts from the Legitimizing Space to the Narrative Space were typically not marked. Shifts from the Legitimizing Space to the Reality Space were mostly marked by a temporal adverb or tense shift, whereas shifts from the Reality Space to the Legitimizing Space were most often marked by a speech or thought report. Finally, shifts from the Narrative Space to the Reality Space and vice versa were in the vast majority marked by a temporal adverb or tense shift. These findings demonstrate that the marking of shifts between mental spaces in news narratives follows clear patterns, thereby advancing our understanding of the relation between the linguistic and the cognitive representation of narrative discourse.

References
“The voice of the people”: Populism and speech & thought representation

Maarten van Leeuwen, Freek van Vliet
Leiden University

In the analysis of political discourse, relatively little attention has been paid to the question how politicians employ viewpoint techniques strategically in their speeches (cf. Van Leeuwen 2015: 121-122). This paper aims to contribute to filling this gap, by showing how cognitive-linguistic insights about speech and thought representation can contribute to the study of populism.

One of the key characteristics of populist discourse is “people-centrality”, i.e. populists, more than other politicians, put “the people” in the centre of attention of their discourse (e.g. Rooduijn & Akkerman 2017, Moffitt 2016). Populists often do not only refer frequently to “the man in the street”, but also attribute to “the people” their own voice and will (e.g. Vossen 2009, Canovan 1999). In our paper, we will illustrate how cognitive-linguistic insights about speech and thought representation and mental space theory can be used to analyse in a fine-grained way how populists create the impression that they are giving “the people” their own voice in the debate, and what such an analysis yields for the analysis of populist discourse. We will do this by means of a case study.

In our case study, we will investigate how and to what extent the Dutch populist politicians Geert Wilders (Freedom Party, PVV) and Rita Verdonk (Proud of the Netherlands, ToN) give “the people” their own perspective in a series of parliamentary speeches in the period 2008-2010. Starting point for our analysis is Vossen’s (2009) conclusion that in Verdonk’s discourse “the voice of the people” resonated more strongly than in Wilders’ discourse, which suggests that Verdonk attributed to “the people” their own viewpoint more strongly than Wilders did. However, Vossen’s conclusion is based upon a ‘somewhat impressionistic analysis’ (Vossen 2009: 456). We will report on a systematic analysis of how and to what extent Wilders and Verdonk give “the people” their own viewpoint. This analysis, carried out by using Sanders’ (2009, 1994) method and categories of speech & thought representation, contradicts Vossen’s (2009) observations: our systematic analysis suggests that “the voice of the people” is more strongly present in Wilders’ speeches than in Verdonk’s addresses.

References
Internet memes be like discourse constructions!

Lieven Vandelanotte
UNamur & KU Leuven

Recent work in cognitive linguistics has begun to address the question of the conventionalizing, construction-like features of Internet memes, analysing them as ‘multimodal’ constructions combining image and text in consistently patterned ways (Dancygier & Vandelanotte 2017, Zenner & Geeraerts forthcoming). In addition to building on, extending and modifying existing linguistic constructions, image-text memes or ‘image macros’ use images to ‘fill in’ constructional slots normally expressed verbally, as with the clausal subject in a ‘Good Girl Gina’ meme like ‘Gets mad at you. Tells you why’. Furthermore, established image macro memes may give rise to ‘ordinary’, purely textual, linguistic constructions, as when memetic phrasal templates like “one does not simply” or “that moment when” enter journalistic or advertising parlance.

This study uses an extensive set of manually collected Internet memes to refine existing analyses, considering memes as highly condensed forms of mini-discourse. Among the factors that enable memes to convey their meaning in discourse are (i) frame metonymy, with frames either borrowed from existing cultural artefacts or created more ad hoc and serving to categorize types of behaviour (as silly, impossible, or whatever the case may be), and (ii) simile (cf. Lou 2017), in the case of such simulative memes as when, be like or me: ... also me: ... memes.

This paper argues that formal aspects of memes – such as the use of text superposed onto an image, of text divided meaningfully across top and bottom, or of a particular font – signal the memetic nature of the artefact and thereby significantly guide and constrain typical discourse expectations: topics to be dealt with will be relatively light-hearted and the response expected is humorous (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2014). The polyphonic, responsive nature of memes marks them out as inherently strongly dialogic. Memes’ belonging to series and families of memes is an integral part of their meaning, and this reliance on a broader community of discourse sharing, or at least familiar with, certain attitudes, beliefs and conventions invites comparison with Brône & Zima’s (2014) study of ad hoc routines in political discourse. Unlike their examples, however, the discourse sequence to be taken into consideration in the case of memes cannot be neatly marked off in time and space, but continues online across a series of exchanges between and across expanding circles of Internet users.

References
Variation is information: Analyses of variation across items, participants, time, and methods in metalinguistic judgment data

Véronique Verhagen, Maria Mos, Joost Schilperoord, Ad Backus
Tilburg University

In research involving metalinguistic judgments great changes occurred over the past 50 years. Traditionally, theorizing was based on the relatively unsystematic analysis of judgments by few speakers on relatively few tokens of the structures of interest, expressed by means of a few response categories. This practice has been criticized, which led to inquiries involving larger sets of stimuli, larger numbers of participants, and/or multiple test sessions. An unavoidable consequence is that the range of variation that is measured increases tremendously. What to make of the variability that is observed? Instead of discarding variation as mere noise, we examine what it can reveal about the representation and use of linguistic knowledge. In a usage-based framework, variation is part and parcel of our linguistic experiences, and therefore also of our mental representations of language. By means of metalinguistic judgment data, we demonstrate how to quantify and interpret variation across items, participants, time, and methods.

91 native speakers of Dutch assigned familiarity ratings to 79 Dutch prepositional phrases (e.g. *in de tuin* ‘in the garden’, *rond de ingang* ‘around the entrance’) that cover a wide range of frequency in the corpus SoNaR. Participants performed the judgment task twice within a period of one to two weeks, using either a 7-point Likert scale or a Magnitude Estimation scale. We explicate the principles according to which the different types of variation can be considered information about mental representation, and how they can be used to test hypotheses regarding linguistic representations:

- **H1** Variation across items correlates with corpus frequencies
- **H2** Variation across participants is smaller for high-frequency phrases than for low-frequency phrases
- **H3** Variation across time is smaller for high-frequency phrases than for low-frequency phrases
- **H4** The variation across participants is larger than the variation across time

Question: To what extent is there variation across rating methods?

Hypotheses 1 to 3 were supported by the data, hypothesis 4 was not. Our analyses indicate that familiarity judgments form methodologically reliable, useful data in linguistic research. The ratings obtained with one scale were corroborated by the ratings on the other scale; there was a near perfect Time1-Time2 correlation of the mean ratings in all experimental conditions; and the majority of the participants had high self-correlation scores. Mixed-effects models show that higher phrase frequency led to higher familiarity ratings. In addition to variation across items, we observed variation across participants and variation across time. These types of variation are likely to be a reflection of the dynamic character of cognitive representations as more, or less, densely populated clouds of exemplars that vary in strength depending on frequency and recency of use. This implies that while a single familiarity rating can be a true score, it does not offer a complete picture, and that prudence is in order in the interpretation of a difference in judgment between participants on the basis of a single measurement. Finally, we discuss differences between Magnitude Estimation and Likert that deserve attention and that ought to be taken into account when selecting a particular scale.
Saving five people or two: The foreign language effect persists

Evy Woumans, Sofie Ameloot, Wouter Duyck
Ghent University

Recent research into multilingualism and decision-making suggests that people who are presented with a moral dilemma in their foreign language (FL) will more readily opt for the utilitarian response than when presented with the same dilemma in their native language (NL) (e.g. Costa et al. 2014). The dilemma that is classically given is the Footbridge, in which a person is standing on a bridge over railway tracks and is asked to push a big man standing next to them in order to save five people below from getting hit by a railway trolley. Doing so, the big man will die, but the five people will live. Deontology dictates you must not sacrifice a life, whereas utilitarianism prescribes you should. The aim of the present study was to see whether the FL effect persists when gains are lower. We thus employed both the Original Footbridge as well as an adapted version, in which only two people would be killed by the trolley. A total of 227 participants completed one of these two dilemmas, either in their NL or FL. The FL condition was once more split up into a second (L2) and third (L3) language condition, depending on the proficiency of the participant. As our assumption was that FL processing leads to a decrease in deontological responses (i.e. blunted deontology; see Hayakawa et al. 2017), analyses were performed on the percentages of deontological responses. Employing binomial statistics, we compared proportions of choices in NL as a baseline to determine any FL effects. For Original Footbridge, we discovered a significant difference of 16% between NL (77%) and FL (61%). In the adapted version the 7%-difference between NL (97%) and FL (90%) was also highly significant. The results of our study therefore mirror those of previous research also reporting an FL effect on the Footbridge dilemma, even for the less profitable Adapted Footbridge. Furthermore, in the original version, the effect was present for both L2 (59%) and L3 (64%), whereas in Adapted Footbridge, there was only a considerable difference between NL and L3 (83%). This finding seems to confirm that there is indeed an emotional processing distinction for languages with varying levels of proficiency (see, for instance, Harris et al. 2006), which, in turn, substantiates the supposition that the FL effect relies on emotional attenuation.

References
Taboo, humor and social marketing communication: 
A match made in heaven?
Eline Zenner, Tine De Bock, Nikita Nowicki
KU Leuven

Offensive advertising refers to either the advertising of offensive products (“unmentionables” such as underwear, condoms, or alcohol) or to a subform of “shock advertising” or “controversial advertising” meant to grab attention through the use of offensive language and/or imagery (Waller 1999, 2005). In social marketing communication, tailored to selling ideas rather than products or services (promoting behavioral change with respect to preventive healthcare, social demeanor etc.), this type of “shock advertising” has typically come in the form of fear appeals (e.g. Thompson et al. 2009 on campaigns stigmatizing hard-core smokers). In this paper, we instead focus on the effect of insulting the recipient of the slogan on intended behavior change.

In an exploratory experiment that introduces usage-based lexicological approach and taboo research (Allan & Burridge 2006) to social marketing communication research, we specifically crafted three versions of a slogan meant to advise people against the use of the polysemous item mongool (used either as a highly offensive reference to people with Down syndrome, or as an insult – ‘idiot’). Building on the template “Welke NOUN gebruikt nu het woord mongool?” (‘What NOUN uses the word mongool?’), three nouns were selected to fill the pivot slot. The selected nouns vary in taboo rates (Roest et al. 2017 based on Moors et al. 2012), ranging from not offensive (persoon ‘person’) over moderately offensive (ezel ‘ass’) to highly offensive (mongool). We expect the highest effectiveness and intended behavior change (measured for our respondents through the scales used in Kees et al. 2006) for the most insulting version of the slogan (measured for our respondents through the scales of Roest et al. 2017). Additionally, exposure to and attitudes towards people with Down syndrome (measured through Morin et al.’s 2013 scale) are expected to moderate the relationship between offensiveness and intended behavior change.

A total of 301 participants completed the survey, 144 of whom (47.8%) are regularly in contact with people with Down syndrome. A manipulation check reveals that the mongool-slogan is effectively perceived as most insulting by our participants (F (2, 230) = 74.727, p < 0.001), although this is – contrary to our expectations – not the slogan that leads to the strongest intention for behavior change. For people who are regularly in contact with people with Down syndrome, the most neutral slogan (with person ‘person’) leads to the highest intended behavior change, whereas the moderately insulting slogan with ezel (“ass”) leads to the highest behavior change for people who are not regularly in contact with people with Down (F=2.388, df= 2, 0.1 > p > 0.05, partial η2= 0.021 for a two-way ANOVA). These results will be discussed from a usage-based perspective, linking insights from research on taboo, polysemy, and stereotypes.

References