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How L2-learners' brains react to code-switches [Recurso electrónico] : an ERP study with Russian learners of German / Esther Ruigendijk, Gerd Hentschel, Jan Patrick Zeller

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'

References: p. 221-223

This Event Related Potentials (ERP) study investigates auditory processing of sentences with so-called code-switches in Russian learners of German. It has often been argued that switching between two languages results in extra processing cost, although it is not completely clear yet what exactly causes these costs. ERP presents a good method to (start to) answer this question, since different ERP effects provide insight in the underlying processes that take place. We presented three groups of speakers (German first-language speakers, Russian speakers with intermediate and Russian speakers with very good knowledge of German as a second language) with German sentences that either ended 'normally' i.e. with a word that fitted the meaning of the sentence, or with a semantically unexpected word, or with the Russian translation of the semantically normal German word. Comparing the two groups of Russian speakers allows for examining the influence of proficiency on the processing of code-switches. The results showed that the semantically unexpected word elicited an N400 in both the first language (L1) and the more proficient second language (L2) group, but not in the less proficient L2 group. Code-switches resulted in an N400-like pattern in all three groups, and also in a Late Positive Component (LPC), which was most pronounced in the less proficient L2 group. This positivity is, although somewhat later, quite similar to the well-known P300 effect that is found with stimuli with unexpected external properties.

Second language research. – 2016 (April), v. 32, n. 2, p. 197-223

1. Code-switching 2. ERP 3. German 4. LPC 5. N400 6. P300 7. Russian 8. Second language learning

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The influence of foreign scripts on the acquisition of a second language phonological contrast [Recurso electrónico] / Lionel Mathieu

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'

References: p. 166-169

Recent studies in the acquisition of a second language (L2) phonology have revealed that orthography can influence the way in which L2 learners come to establish target-like lexical representations (Escudero et al., 2008, 2014; Escudero and Wanrooij, 2010; Showalter, 2012; Showalter and Hayes-Harb, 2013). Most of these studies, however, involve language pairs relying on Roman-based scripts. In comparison, the influence of a foreign or unfamiliar written representation on L2 phonological acquisition remains understudied. The present study therefore considers the effects of three L2 scripts on the early acquisition of an Arabic consonantal contrast word-initially (e.g. /ħal/-/xal/). Monolingual native speakers of English with no prior knowledge of Arabic participated in a word-learning experiment where they were instructed to learn six pairs of minimally contrastive words, each associated with a unique visual referent. Participants were assigned to one of four learning conditions: no orthography, Arabic script, Cyrillic script, and Roman/Cyrillic blended script. After an initial learning phase, participants were then tested on their phonological knowledge of these L2 minimal pairs. The results show that the degree of script unfamiliarity does not in itself seem to significantly affect the successful acquisition of this particular phonological contrast. However, the presence of certain foreign scripts in the course of phonological acquisition can yield significantly different learning outcomes in comparison to having no orthographic representation available. Specifically, the Arabic script exerted an inhibitory effect on L2 phonological acquisition, while the Cyrillic and Roman/Cyrillic blended scripts exercised differential inhibitory effects based on whether grapheme-phoneme correspondences activated first language (L1) phonological units. Besides revealing, for the first time, that foreign written input can significantly hinder learners' ability to reliably encode an L2 phonological contrast, this study also provides further evidence for the irrepressible hold of native orthographic rules on L2 phonological acquisition.

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1. Foreign scripts 2. L2 phonological acquisition 3. L2 phonological contrast 4. Lexical representation 5. Orthography 6. Vocabulary learning

3**Learning (not) to predict [Recurso electrónico] : grammatical gender processing in second language acquisition / Holger Hopp**

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'

References: p. 303-307

In two experiments, this article investigates the predictive processing of gender agreement in adult second language (L2) acquisition. We test (1) whether instruction on lexical gender can lead to target predictive agreement processing and (2) how variability in lexical gender representations moderates L2 gender agreement processing. In a pretest-posttest design, Experiment 1 trained 34 intermediate first language (L1) English learners of German on gender assignment. After training, the L2 group showed predictive gender processing; yet, performance correlated with accuracy in gender assignment. Experiment 1 suggests that target knowledge of lexical gender in the L2 lexicon is a prerequisite for predictive use of gender agreement in L2 syntax: Non-target gender assignment would lead to partially erroneous gender prediction such that use of gender agreement is costly for the parser and therefore abandoned. To test this account, Experiment 2 investigated predictive processing in 42 German native speakers who have target-like gender assignment and agreement. In a between-group design, one group received target input and the other received filler items with non-target gender assignment. The latter group subsequently stopped using gender agreement predictively in all experimental trials. Hence, L2 problems with gender agreement can be emulated in native processing. Taken together, the experiments suggest that variability of lexical gender assignment affects processing of gender agreement in natives and non-natives. We interpret the findings in the context of current probabilistic theories of implicit learning and processing adaptation.

Second language research. – 2016 (April), v. 32, n. 2, p. 277-307

1. Gender 2. Instruction 3. L2 processing 4. Morphosyntax

4**Production and perception of the English /æ/-/ɑ/ contrast in switched-dominance speakers [Recurso electrónico] / Joseph V. Casillas, Miquel Simonet**

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'

References: p. 193-195

This study investigates how fluent second-language (L2) learners of English produce and perceive the /æ/-/ɑ/ vowel contrast of Southwestern American English. Two learner groups are examined: (1) early, proficient English speakers who were raised by Spanish-speaking families but who became dominant in English during childhood and, as adults, lack communicative abilities in Spanish, and (2) Spanish-speaking late learners of English who continue to be dominant in Spanish. The participants provided data in three tasks: one production and two perceptual. The study finds that both learner groups differ from native controls in their production and perception of the /æ/-/ɑ/ contrast. The findings shed light on our understanding of the relative effects of age (at onset of language exposure) and language dominance (at time of testing) by showing that sequential bilingualism impacts phonetic behavior even when speakers have become dominant in the target language.

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1. Early language exposure 2. English vowel contrasts 3. Perception 4. Second language learning

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Source(s) of syntactic cross-linguistic influence (CLI) [Recurso electrónico] : the case of L3 acquisition of English possessives by Mazandarani-Persian bilinguals / Nader Fallah, Ali Akbar Jabbari, Ali Mohammad Fazilatfar

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'

References: p. 242-244

This study investigates the role of previously acquired linguistic systems, Mazandarani and Persian, in the acquisition of third language (L3) English at the initial stages. The data have been obtained from 31 students (age 13-14 years), testing the placement of attributive possessives in a grammaticality judgment task, an element rearrangement task and an elicited oral imitation task. The participants consist of three groups: The first two groups have Mazandarani as the first language (L1) and Persian as the second language (L2), but differ from each other with respect to the language of communication, Mazandarani and Persian, respectively. The third group has Persian as the L1 and Mazandarani as the L2, with Persian as the language of communication. English and Mazandarani pattern similarly in the target structures. That is to say, possessors precede possessed nouns and possessive adjectives come before nouns. In contrast, in Persian, possessives occur post-nominally. The results of this study reveal that none of the proposals tested (e.g. the L1 Factor, Hermas, 2010, 2014a, 2014b; the L2 Status Factor, Bardel and Falk, 2007; Falk and Bardel, 2011; the Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM), Flynn et al., 2004; the Typological Proximity Model (TPM), Rothman, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015) could account for the results obtained. This study provides support that at the initial stages of L3 acquisition, syntactic transfer originates from the language of communication, irrespective of order of acquisition.

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1. Cross-linguistic influence 2. Multilingualism 3. Third language acquisition 4. Transfer

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Uneven reassembly of tense, telicity and discourse features in L2 acquisition of the Chinese shì ... de cleft construction by adult English speakers [Recurso electrónico] / Ziyin Mai, Boping Yuan

Este artículo se encuentra disponible en su edición electrónica. Su acceso electrónico es a través del enlace de 'Acceso al documento'

References: p. 274-276

This article reports an empirical study investigating L2 acquisition of the Mandarin Chinese shì ... de cleft construction by adult English-speaking learners within the framework of the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis (Lardiere, 2009). A Sentence Completion task, an interpretation task, two Acceptability Judgement tasks, and a felicity ranking task were administered to learners with intermediate and advanced Chinese proficiency (n = 76). The results reveal an initial mapping between the target Chinese structure and the English it-cleft construction. The relevant tense, telicity and discourse features are added in an uneven feature-by-feature manner in the subsequent feature reassembly. It is proposed that feature reassembly tasks involving cross-domain operations (e.g. from prosody to syntax) are more complicated and more difficult to accomplish than those taking place within the same linguistic domain.

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1. Discourse 2. Feature reassembly 3. L2 Chinese 4. Tense and aspect
