

The selectivity of native language attrition (SiLA) workshop

Informatics Forum, University of Edinburgh
13 - 14 October 2017

MEETING DESCRIPTION

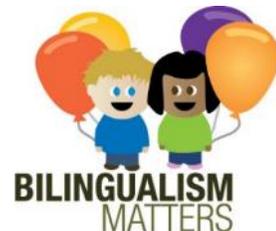
Very broadly, language attrition can be defined as changes in a speaker's native language (L1) as a result of increased use of another language (L2). Among the most intriguing questions in research on bilingualism is the selectivity of L1 attrition in first-generation speakers. What exactly changes in the L1? Why are some linguistic properties more vulnerable than others to change under conditions of diminished exposure and use? Are these the same properties that are variable in heritage speakers, who may have experienced language attrition at an earlier age? An understanding of the relationship between L1 attrition and L2 acquisition in late bilinguals can advance our understanding of language and cognition in multilingualism.

This workshop is hosted by Bilingualism Matters at the University of Edinburgh, and is part of the ESRC-funded Seminar Series on Language Attrition (ES/M001776/1).

Organizing committee:

Antonella Sorace (University of Edinburgh)

Roumyana Slabakova (University of Southampton)



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FRIDAY 13 OCTOBER

09:00 – 09:30	Welcome, opening remarks	Antonella Sorace (University of Edinburgh) & Roumyana Slabakova (University of Southampton)
09:30 – 10:30	Native language change in successful second language acquisition	INVITED SPEAKER: Kinsey Bice (Penn State University)
10:30 – 11:00	COFFEE BREAK	
11:00 – 11:35	Asymmetries in L1 prosodic attrition in late English-Arabic and Arabic-English bilinguals	Amirah Alharbi, Anouschka Foltz and Ineke Mennen
11:35 – 12:10	How does L2 immersion modify interference between L1 and L2?	Joanna Durlik, Patrycja Kałamała, Jakub Szewczyk, Zofia Wodniecka and M. Teresa Bajo
12:10 – 12:45	Longitudinal study of Bulgarian L1 VOT in English-speaking environment	Marie Dokovova
12:45 – 14:15	LUNCH AND POSTER SESSION	
14:15 – 14:50	Investigation of neural substrates of the "L1 after L2" slowing effect. ERP evidence for the reduced activation account.	Zofia Wodniecka, Jakub Szewczyk, Patrycja Kałamała, Paweł Mander and Joanna Durlik
14:50 – 15:25	Syntactic and Lexical First Language (L1) Attrition: Greek Speakers Under Attrition from L2 English	Natalia Nannou and Georgia Fotiadou
15:25 – 16:00	L1 attrition of prosody in Greek immigrants to Austria: comparing first-generation immigrants and 2nd generation heritage speakers	Dimitra Chousi and Ineke Mennen
16:00 – 16:30	COFFEE BREAK	
16:30 – 17:05	Vulnerability of Syntax and Pragmatics in Norwegian Heritage Language	Marit Westergaard and Terje Lohndal
17:15 – 18:15	Exploring a Minimalist account of vulnerability in L1 syntactic attrition: changes in linguistic input and intake.	INVITED SPEAKER: Laura Dominguez (University of Southampton)
19.30	DINNER	

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SATURDAY 14 OCTOBER

09:00 – 09:35	Economy of movement, Frequency and Cross-linguistic Influence in Heritage Language: Subject Shift and Object Shift in Norwegian	Merete Anderssen and Marit Westergaard
09:35 – 10:10	Vulnerable Domains in Child Heritage Language: Evidence from Heritage Greek	Evangelia Daskalaki, Vicky Chondrogianni, Elma Blom, Froso Argyri and Johanne Paradis
10:10 – 10:45	Grammatical gender as a challenge to L1 attriters and L2 learners	Monika Schmid
10:45 – 11:15	COFFEE BREAK	
11:15 – 11:50	The student had become the master: anaphora resolution in Italian-Turkish late and simultaneous bilinguals	Anna Lia Proietti Ergun
12:00 – 13:00	Attainment, Averaging, and Attrition of Grammatical Properties: Age of Onset of Acquisition, Language Dominance, and Length of Residence Effects	INVITED SPEAKER: Janet Grijzenhout (Leiden University)
13:00	LUNCH AND END OF WORKSHOP	

POSTERS

Celia Gorba Masip. *L2 influence on perception and production of L1 initial bilabial stops by Spanish learners of English: the role of L2 experience* (alternate oral presentation)

Mehmet Akkuş, Cigdem Sagin-Simsek and Ad Backus. *A Preliminary Note on Language Attrition: Converbial Constructions in Dutch-Turkish*

Marie-Louise Van Heukelum. *L1 attrition in the L1 environment: Rethinking the role of input*

Wenjia Cai. *First language attrition at the interface among Chinese-English late bilingual speakers (on-going study)*

Marcela Depiante. *Ellipsis in Spanish L1 Attriters*

Eimear Guendel. *Can lost knowledge of a language be retrieved? An exploration of the Savings Paradigm with respect to the attrition and reactivation of lexical knowledge in the case of the Irish language* (alternate oral presentation)

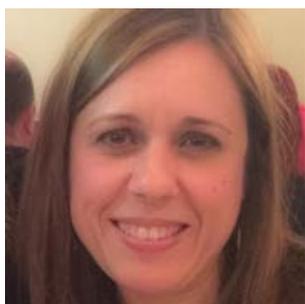
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INVITED SPEAKERS



Native language change in successful second language acquisition ***Kinsey Bice, Penn State University***

At times, second language learners encounter a point during learning in which they find themselves at a loss for words in their L1, particularly in study abroad or immersion contexts. While unsettling, this experience is commonly reported and scientifically documented. However, given the proficiency and circumstances of these learners, this disruption to the native language cannot be considered attrition. Instead, recent research has revealed that changes in the ability to access and use the L1 may be a critical part of acquiring a new language. Proficient bilingualism is characterized by robust and automatic parallel activation of the two languages. Learning a second language, therefore, requires the learner to develop mechanisms to manage the resulting cross-language interactions. Although early research on the parallel activation of the two languages focused primarily on the L2, we can now document the consequences of this process for the L1. Those consequences can be observed when the two languages converge and when they conflict, producing competition that requires resolution. The changes that occur as a result of successful L2 acquisition differ in how they appear in the phonology, lexicon, and grammar of the native language, but critically, they can be argued to be necessary for successful L2 learning. In this talk, I will review the evidence on the selectivity of L1 changes that characterize and result from the process of successful L2 acquisition. I will present the results of a number of completed and ongoing studies that illustrate these changes in behavior and brain activity. I will also consider the evidence that individual differences in the openness of the native language to these changes may be related to the success of L2 acquisition.



Exploring a Minimalist account of vulnerability in L1 syntactic attrition: changes in linguistic input and intake ***Laura Domínguez, University of Southampton***

In this talk I will examine how current Minimalist approaches to language acquisition (e.g. Lidz and Gagliardi 2015) can account for the selectivity of native syntactic attrition. After reviewing existing psycholinguistic explanations of attrition, I will argue that a purely linguistic account can provide a parsimonious explanation to this phenomenon. More importantly, such an approach can account for the fact that although syntactic attrition is theoretically possible, it is quite constrained and not widely attested. I will show that: a) the type of evidence available in the input of attriters is crucial to trigger grammatical changes in the L1 grammar of these speakers; b) changes in L1 grammars are favoured when the Input becomes 'Intake', a process consisting of the "acquisition and manipulation of Input" (Putnam and Sanchez 2013), which constrains any potential restructuring of the L1 grammar.

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In order to illustrate these claims, I will review empirical studies on changes in native knowledge of null and postverbal subjects, two properties traditionally associated with the null subject parameter in bilingual Spanish-English contexts (Domínguez 2013; Domínguez and Hicks 2016, 2017). The participants of the study are a group of bi-dialectal Spanish speakers in Miami (exposed to Cuban and Mainland Spanish varieties with different grammatical properties concerning null and postverbal subjects) and a group of bilinguals (exposed to Mainland Spanish and English). Differences in the outcomes of L1 changes between these two groups (i.e. only the bi-dialectal group behave differently than the monolingual controls) show that prolonged exposure to dialectal variation in Spanish within the community leads to the reconfiguration of formal feature specifications of the L1 (Domínguez and Hicks, 2016). The same type of L1 grammatical restructuring was not attested for the bilingual Spanish speakers, who have become in contact with English and have not been exposed to L1 input with different grammatical characteristics. This supports the claim that syntactic native representations are particularly vulnerable to attrition if specific changes in the L1 input occur, the type that bilinguals are sensitive to and facilitate Intake.



Attainment, Averaging, and Attrition of Grammatical Properties: Age of Onset of Acquisition, Language Dominance, and Length of Residence Effects

Janet Grijzenhout, Leiden University

To develop native competence, recent research suggests that for some linguistic properties it matters most when (or at what age) language learners are exposed to them and for other aspects it matters most how long learners are exposed to them. The suggestion that I would like to make here is that those aspects of language for which an early age of onset of acquisition (AoA) is important tend to be more stable across the life span, whereas aspects for which language dominance and length of exposure (LoE) matter most may change to a value 'in between' two languages, and language skills for which a later AoA and a longer stabilization phase are needed are more vulnerable and tend to decline with diminished exposure due to increased use of another language. First generation migrants are thus expected to undergo some specific changes in their grammar that they pass on to the next generations, gradually leading to heritage language change.

No natural human language is uniform. Infants need flexibility in the input to establish the range of what counts as 'a stressed syllable' or 'a voiceless aspirated stop'. Furthermore, Meisel (2009) and others suggest sensitive phases for the acquisition of grammatical properties which involve a short onset, an optimal period during which native acquisition happens easily, and a gradual offset during which the optimal period fades out. This phase is followed by a period of increased daily use to stabilize the property at hand. For instance, sensitivity for prosody starts in the womb (DeCasper & Fifer 1980, Nazzi et al. 1998, Lust 2006). The optimal age for perceptual acquisition of intonation and sound contrasts seems to be between 2 and 14 months and the production of word-stress, phonemes, allophonic variation and phonotactic

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constraints are acquired with relative ease during the first three years of life. In both perception and production, a stabilization phase is essential for the property to be fully mastered. Phoneticians have established that the most important acoustic correlate of stress in English and Dutch is a change in F0 aligned with segmental structure. Trofimovich & Baker (2006, 2007) show that this particular property is relatively difficult to acquire later in life. It is also a property that seems to resist attrition. The second most important perceptual cue for stress is the duration ratio between stressed and unstressed vowels. To acquire this property in a second language, AoA seems to be irrelevant. L2-speakers of stressed languages end up with duration ratios intermediate between monolingual speakers of the respective L1 and L2, and L2 speakers of languages without stress need at least 10 years of daily use before they reach English native-like syllable-duration ratios. VOT and vowel-duration ratios are linguistically stable properties during adulthood for monolinguals and typical 'averaging' rather than 'attrition' properties for bilinguals: language dominance plays a crucial role in how VOT values or vowel-duration ratios develop in post-adolescent bilingual adults. On the other hand, pause frequency and duration of pauses are acquired relatively late in L1, they are relatively easy to acquire for an L2 later in life, and vulnerable in the sense that they become less native-like in L1 with increased use of another language.

The paper furthermore seeks to establish whether similar generalizations can be made for other phonological properties and for inflection and word-order phenomena. I will also report on some ATHEME project results with respect to heritage languages in Europe which suggest that averaging and attrition in first-generation speakers leads to different inputs for their second-generation children evoking changes in grammatical representations from the second-generation onwards.