The Expression of Temporality by L2 Learners of French and English:

Acquisition of Time, Aspect, Modality

University of Montpellier 3

22-24 May 2014

Conference website: https://sites.google.com/site/l2acquisitionoftemporality/

Plenary speakers
- Prof. Jacques Bres (Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3)
- Prof. Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig (Indiana University)
- Prof. Maya Hickmann (Université Paris 8) (to be confirmed)
- Prof. Monique Lambert (Université Paris 8)

Conference Organisers
Pascale Leclercq (University of Montpellier-III), Martin Howard (University College Cork), Isabelle Ronzetti (EMMA-University of Montpellier-III)

Scientific Committee
Dalila Ayoun (University of Arizona), Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig (Indiana University), Jacques Bres (University of Montpellier-III), Amanda Edmonds (University of Pau), Henriette Hendricks (Cambridge University), Maya Hickmann (University of Paris-VIII), Alex Housen (Free University of Brussels), Maria Kihlstedt (University of Paris-Ouest), Emmanuelle Labeau (Aston University), Monique Lambert (University of Paris-VIII), Kevin McManus (University of York), Leah Roberts (University of York), Inès Saddour (University of Toulouse Le Mirail), Rafael Salaberry (Rice University), Alexandra Vraciu (University of Barcelona)

This conference aims to bring together researchers working on the acquisition of temporality in French and English learner language.

The creation and production of discourse require reference to different semantic domains, such as time, space, events and entities (vonStuterheim & Klein 1989). Discourse structure and the creation of utterance meaning are strongly linked to the use of linguistic forms (such as verb morphology, lexical aspect, connectors, adverbs) in the expression of time, aspect and modality: at text level, Hopper 1979, Reinhart 1984, Thompson 1987, vonStutterheim & Klein 1989 suggest that such forms allow a distinction to be made between foregrounded events (through perfective marking) and those which serve a background function (through imperfective marking). At utterance level, speakers are therefore required to choose how they present narrative events through their choice of such linguistic forms.

Since the conceptual expression of time and space is strongly influenced by the linguistic means available in a particular language, various researchers have suggested that their acquisition in a second language necessarily requires learners to reconceptualise,
partially at least, how they express time and space in another language (see Slobin 1996, 2003, Lambert, Carroll & vonStutterheim 2003).

With a view to exploring the challenge that such reconceptualization poses, the study of the acquisition of verb morphology has given rise to numerous research projects in SLA, with the aim, among others, of identifying whether universal stages of acquisition exist for a particular L2 irrespective of the learner's L1. In the 1980s, for example, the European Science Foundation Project explored such stages underlying the tense-aspect development evidenced by naturalistic immigrant learners (see Dietrich, Klein & Noyau 1995). Within a classroom context, such stages in the acquisition of verb morphology have also been investigated such as in the case of Bartning & Schlyter's (2004) study of Swedish learners of French, Housen’s work with child L2 learners (Housen 2002), as well as Bardovi-Harlig’s work in a North American context (Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 2000).

Work by Lambert, Carroll and vonStutterheim (Carroll & vonStutterheim 1997, Lambert, Carroll & vonStutterheim 2003) has extended the scope of analysis to include more advanced learners with a view to exploring how the learner's L1 may continue to constrain at a conceptual level how the learner uses the forms specific to the L2. In particular, their work points to the challenge that a reconceptualization of L1 form-function relations poses when it comes to acquiring the specific relations at play in the L2, even in very advanced stages of acquisition.

A further area of investigation has been to compare the domains of first and second language acquisition (see Hendricks 1999, Schlyter 1998), as well as the role of inherent lexical aspect on tense-aspect development in relation to the Aspect Hypothesis (see Ayoun 2005, Collins 2002, Rohde 1996, Salaberry 1998), while heritage language speakers have also received some attention (Montrul & Slabakova 2003).

Notwithstanding the insights provided in this burgeoning area of SLA study (for a succinct synthesis, see Slabakova 2002), certain questions have received limited attention. For example, work remains to be done in the case of modality and the acquisition of modal verbs, and similarly in the case of aspectuo-temporal periphrastic markers. Likewise, the relationship between the expression of time and space is an area for fruitful investigation, along with the potential pedagogic application of existing research findings on the acquisition of temporality.

Against this background, where tense-aspect research has had a long and fruitful history within SLA, this conference aims to complement previous research perspectives by providing a dynamic exploration of recent, up-to-date issues in contemporary L2 tense-aspect research in relation to L2 French and English in particular.

Proposals for paper presentations are invited on the following themes:

- The acquisition of tense, aspect and modality in L2 French and/or English
- The relationship between the acquisition of verb morphology and inherent lexical aspect
- The acquisition of discursive means for temporal reference (temporal connectors, clause linking)
- The acquisition of aspectuo-temporal and modal verbs in learner production (e.g. try to, finish doing, want....)
- The relationship between the acquisition of time and space in learner language
The role of proficiency level in the acquisition and use of aspectuo-temporal markers, along with the relationship between learner proficiency levels, tense-aspect marking and language testing

The role of the L1 and other languages in L2 acquisition of tense-aspect

The role of learning context in the acquisition of tense-aspect (naturalistic, classroom, study abroad, immersion)

The role of instruction in L2 tense-aspect development

Tense-aspect from a processing perspective

Approaches to data collection methods in tense-aspect research

Tense-aspect in heritage language speakers

The role of technology in identifying and distinguishing verb forms in learner language

Proposals for 20-minute paper presentations focusing on L2 English and/or French should be submitted in the form of a 400-word abstract (excluding bibliography). The deadline for receipt of abstracts is 30 September 2013. Abstracts in English or French should be sent by email attachment to pascale.leclercq [at] univ-montp3.fr or mhoward [at] french.ucc.ie

Doctoral and young researchers are especially welcome to submit an abstract.

It is envisaged that a publication will follow the conference.

Language policy: presentations in French or in English are accepted. All speakers will be asked to provide a handout or a power point presentation in English.

Bibliography


HOUSEN, Alex (2002) 'The development of tense-aspect in English as a second language and the variable influence of inherent lexical aspect' in Rafael Salaberry (ed) *The L2 Acquisition of Tense-Aspect Morphology*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: Benjamins


SCHLYTER, Suzanne (1998) 'La saisie de l’imparfait chez les enfants monolingues, les apprenants adultes et les enfants bilingues' *LINX* 38

SLABAKOVA, Roumanya (2002) 'Recent research on the acquisition of aspect: an embarrassment of riches?' *Second Language Research*

