DISCOURSE EXPECTATIONS IN A NON-NATIVE LANGUAGE

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DETEC2015, University of Alberta
June 19, 2015

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• Learning to communicate effectively in a non-native language is quite achievable.

• Becoming truly native-like is [exceedingly rare/impossible].

WHY?
Learning to communicate effectively in a non-native language is quite achievable.

Becoming truly native-like is [exceedingly rare/impossible].

How do L1 and L2 speakers differ?
“What (...) emerges is that it is not necessarily the case that L2ers’ linguistic representations are ‘defective’; but the need to integrate different kinds of linguistic properties may subject L2ers to particular processing pressures.”

(White, 2011)
The RAGE hypothesis

Non-native speakers have reduced ability to generate expectations.

(Grüter, Rohde & Schafer, 2014, submitted)
Event structure and coreference

Emily brought Melissa a drink. She ...

... thought Melissa was thirsty.

She = Emily (‘Source-continuation’)

... said ‘thank you’.

She = Melissa (‘Goal-continuation’)

Event structure and coreference

Emily brought Melissa a drink. She ...

Emily was bringing Melissa a drink. She ...
Event structure and coreference

(Rohde, Kehler & Elman, 2006; Kehler et al., 2008)

Figure 1: Effects of verbal aspect on pronoun interpretation
(conservative assessment of ambiguity)

(effect partially) replicated in Japanese
(Ueno & Kehler, 2010, in press)

effect replicated in Korean
(Kim, Grüter & Schafer, 2013, in prep.)
Experiment 1: written story continuation

Grüter, Rohde & Schafer, 2014, submitted
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>Cloze test¹ (proportion acceptable responses)</th>
<th>Versant English Test² (overall score, range 20-80)</th>
<th>Self-rated English proficiency (out of 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1-English (n=39)</td>
<td>24 (18-66)</td>
<td>0.84 (.60-.98)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9.3 (7-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2-English (n=48)</td>
<td>24 (18-51)</td>
<td>0.55 (.24-.80)</td>
<td>51 (34-80)</td>
<td>6.0 (2-9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1-Japanese (n=23)</td>
<td>25 (18-51)</td>
<td>0.54 (.36-.68)</td>
<td>49 (40-61)</td>
<td>6.2 (4-9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1-Korean (n=25)</td>
<td>23 (20-32)</td>
<td>0.56 (.24-.80)</td>
<td>53 (34-80)</td>
<td>5.8 (2-8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do learners understand grammatical aspect in English?
• Task 2 (Truth value judgments)

Do learners use grammatical aspect to create discourse expectations?
• Task 1 (Story continuations)
Do learners understand grammatical aspect in English?

• Task 2 (Truth value judgments)

adapted from Gabriele (2005, 2009)

➢ Do learners know that progressive-marked (transfer-of-possession) verbs denote an incomplete event?

Brenda is feeding the bowl of soup to Anne.

TRUE when the soup is in the process of being consumed.
FALSE when the bowl is empty.
Story continuations

2 (aspect) x 2 (prompt type) design

**COMPLETED EVENT (PERFECTIVE)**
Emily *brought* a drink to Melissa. She ___________________________
Emily *brought* a drink to Melissa. ______________________________

**ONGOING EVENT (IMPERFECTIVE)**
Emily *was bringing* a drink to Melissa. She ______________________
Emily *was bringing* a drink to Melissa. __________________________

Latin square design, 5 items/condition + 20 fillers
(10 verbs: *bring*, *feed*, *give*, *mail*, *pass*, *push*, *roll*, *serve*, *take*, *throw*)
Story continuations

- data annotated for coreference

Emily brought/was bringing a drink to Melissa. (She) ________________

She thought Melissa was thirsty.  
(SOURCE-continuation)

Melissa said “Thank you.”  
(GOAL-continuation)

She did not want it.  
(ambiguous: 4/4% of L1/L2 data)

It was Coke.  
(other: 12/13% of L1/L2 data)
Results: Coreference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L1-pro</th>
<th>L1-free</th>
<th>L2-pro</th>
<th>L2-free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Source coreference</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- L1-pro: 48% perfective, 70% imperfective
- L1-free: 12% perfective, 25% imperfective
- L2-pro: 41% perfective, 49% imperfective
- L2-free: 12% perfective, 13% imperfective
Main effects:
- **Aspect** ($b=.73$, $p<.001$)
- **Prompt** ($b=2.52$, $p<.001$)
- **Group** ($b=.70$, $p<.01$)

Interactions:
- **Aspect** $\times$ **Group** ($b=.89$, $p<.05$)

Both L1 & L2 speakers use prompt type

Reduced effect of aspect in L2
Experiment 2: aural story continuation

Schafer, Rohde & Grüter, 2015-CUNY poster
Schafer, Takeda, Camp, Rohde & Grüter, 2015-ICPhS proc.
She ... wanted to make her happy.
Exp2

2 (aspect) x 2 (focus) design

**COMPLETED EVENT (PERFECTIVE)**
EMILY brought Melissa a fancy drink. She _______________________
Emily brought MELISSA a fancy drink. She _______________________

**ONGOING EVENT (IMPERFECTIVE)**
EMILY was bringing Melissa a fancy drink. She _____________________
Emily was bringing MELISSA a fancy drink. She _____________________

Latin square design, 5 items/condition + 20 fillers
(10 verbs: bring, e-mail, feed, give, hand, pass, present, roll, serve, throw)
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>Versant English Test$^1$ (overall score, range 20-80)</th>
<th>Self-rated English proficiency (out of 10)</th>
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<td>L2-English</td>
<td>24 (20-44)</td>
<td>51 (36-80)</td>
<td>6.0 (3-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>43 (36-57)</td>
<td>5.6 (4-8)</td>
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<td>L1-Korean</td>
<td>22 (20-26)</td>
<td>57 (37-80)</td>
<td>6.3 (3-8)</td>
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</table>

$^1$Pearson (2011; http://www.versanttest.com)
Results: Coreference
Main effects:
- Aspect ($b=.38, p=.02$)
- Focus ($b=.89, p<.001$)

Interactions:
- Aspect $\times$ Group ($b=.44, p=.11$)

- both L1 & L2 speakers use focus
- reduced effect of aspect in L2
Experiment 3: visual world eye-tracking
• capture referential biases *before* anaphor is encountered
  
  (cf. Pyykkönen & Järvikivi, 2010, for implicit causality)

• adapt design used in ERP study by Ferretti et al. (2009) to show influence of verbal aspect on processing of pronouns
Sue handed/was handing a timecard to Fred.

She/He asked about the upcoming meeting.

→ strongest evidence of surprisal at pronoun following perfective + Source-match
Exp3: trial structure

preview [2000ms]

context Donald brought Melissa a fancy drink.

silence [2500ms]

continuation He obviously liked hosting parties.

pause [250ms]
[1500ms]

question Who liked hosting parties?

{mouseclick on box corresponding to answer}
Participants

- L1-English (n=42/ongoing)
- L2-English … to come
Donald brought Melissa a fancy drink.

She obviously liked hosting parties.
Donald brought Melissa a fancy drink. She obviously liked hosting parties. He obviously liked hosting parties.
Donald brought Melissa a fancy drink.
Donald was bringing Melissa a fancy drink.
→ more looks to Source after Progressive than Past, *before* anaphor is encountered (for L1 speakers)
Exp3: (preliminary) findings

- The effect of aspect/event structure on coreference has an anticipatory component.

- Support for interpretation of Story Continuation results as due to discourse expectations.
The RAGE hypothesis

Non-native speakers have reduced ability to generate expectations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiment</th>
<th>L1 aspect</th>
<th>L1 prompt</th>
<th>L2 aspect</th>
<th>L2 prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exp1 (written story cont.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp2 (aural story cont.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp3 (visual world)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
thank you

- NSF Standard Grant BCS-1251450

- Our fabulous RAs: Amber Camp, Bonnie Fox, Ivana Matson, Aya Takeda, Eric Stepans, Alexis Toliva