The function of interruptions and overlaps in an unstructured mixed-gender group conversation

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While a lot of quantitative analysis has been done on the frequency of interruption by the two genders in conversation, there has been a lack in qualitative analysis in examining its function. West and Zimmerman have classified irregularities into overlaps (speaker starts speaking slightly before the end of the current speaker's turn) and interruptions (speaker violates current speaker’s turn). The term “interruption” therefore for some linguists has been seen in a negative light, as an irregularity/obstacle in conversation. However, some scholars in the field like Coates Tennen and Schegloff propose that this kind of intrusions in conversation often function as supportive movements, showing agreement and encouragement indicative of the active involvement of the listener in the conversation. This “co-construction” of the discussion is quite common phenomenon in discussions among women as Coates (1996) points out, even at the presence of male speakers. The present study reveals that this is particularly encouraged when there is a considerable amount of shared knowledge between the interlocutors. The purpose of the paper is to examine the function of interruption based on a mixed gender (2 women-1 man) conversation among friends.

References


The Effects of Implicit and Explicit Corrective Feedback on Learner Noticing and Language Accuracy Improvement.

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The role of corrective feedback (CF) on language acquisition has been the centre of debate in both language pedagogy and SLA. Although the acquisitional value of CF (i.e., a form of negative evidence informing learners that a particular utterance is problematic in relation to target language norm) is still controversial, many researchers advocate the beneficial effect of CF on learners’ language development in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Iwashita, 2003; Long, 1996; Saxton, 1997; Strapp et al., 2011, etc.). Some empirical studies claim that CF can prompt learners to notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language and possibly push them to modify their output (i.e., repair). Some researchers suggest CF can prevent language fossilisation (Selinker, 1972) because it allows learners to create form-meaning connections (Long, 1996) and confirms or disconfirms their language hypotheses (Chaudron, 1988). CF can be implicit or explicit; however, not all types of CF appear to be facilitative of language learning. Studies have also found that teachers’ CF is often ambiguous, inconsistent and unsystematic and thus not effective in promoting acquisition (Han, 2002; Long, 1977; Nystrom, 1983).

The present study examined the effects of implicit and explicit CF on learners’ accuracy development of past simple and present perfect while engaging in communicative tasks. The research questions are 1) To what extent does the recast feedback sequence (RF) have an effect on learners’ noticing and learner’s uptake while engaging in the language tasks? ; 2) To what extent does the metalinguistic feedback sequence (MF) have an effect on learners’ noticing and learners’ uptake while engaging in the language tasks? ; 3) To what extent do the two different types of feedback sequence have an effect on the learners’ ability to use the target structures more accurately as attested by pre and post treatment tests? The participants were 32 students in four classes of a Speaking and Listening I course in a Thai university who received different types of CF on their errors: recasts, metalinguistic feedback, no feedback and random (naturalistic classroom). The data were collected by means of observations, audio-recording of class interactions, learning journals and interviews. Learners’ subsequent development on the target features was measured by pre-, post-, delayed post-test and oral production tasks. The database consists of 24 hours of audio taped class interaction which was transcribed for the purpose of analysis, and then coded for instances of error related episodes, CF moves, uptake and evidence of noticing. Preliminary findings will be reported.

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References


Gender difference in the representation of linguistically related iconic gestures in L1 Urdu speakers

Muzaffar Hussain

Speech and gesture are planned unconsciously together in speech production, and where languages differ in the way they syntactically encode similar meanings, accompanying gestures will also differ (Gullberg 2010). Recent studies have shown cross-linguistic differences in how motion events are encoded both in speech (Talmy 1985) and linguistically related gestures (Kita, & Ozyurek, 2003; Hussain 2011). Urdu is one of the verb-frame languages. Urdu native speakers use two separate verbs in speech and produce two iconic gestures to represent manner of motion event to goal (Hussain 2011). However, the present study investigates variations between male and female L1 Urdu speakers in gestural representation of manner of motion events to goal. A total number of twenty male and female participants were shown a video clip, a scene in which a man rolls down the hill. This is an example of ‘manner of motion event to goal’. In typical Urdu sentence this might be expressed as:

(i)  
Wo chakar khata howa pahar say nechay aya.
He rolling (part) (part) hill from come down (past).
He came down the hill while rolling.

L1 Urdu speakers used two separate verbs one for manner chakar khata howa (rolling) and the other for path nechay aya (come down) to express this event in speech. Simultaneously they produced two separate iconic gestures, one for manner rolling and the other for path come down. The participants were asked to re-tell the story which was video-taped. The data were analysed through annotations. The results showed that L1 Urdu male participants used more free space in gestural representation of manner of motion event to goal than their female counterparts. The study concludes that within a single linguistics community there are gender based variations in gestural representation of manner of motion events to goal.

References:


Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has at least five verbs which can be classified as modal verbs. These verbs, which are further subdivided into two types, share some semantic and morpho-syntactic properties which make them relatively distinct from other lexical verbs. The poster here aims to address, in a summarised way, three aspects of these modal verbs. It first identifies the modal meaning of these modal verbs. Then, it provides a descriptive account of their morpho-syntactic properties. Lastly and most importantly, it attempts to theoretically account for both the semantic and morpho-syntactic properties of these modal verbs. This will include analysing the structure of some sentence examples of these modal verbs occur. The analysis which will be provided here will be within the framework of Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG).

References

Evaluation of language teaching materials used at Armenian Language Saturday School in London

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In the theory of second language acquisition the evaluation of language materials has always been dependent to the local context of the materials usage (McDonough & Shaw: 2003; McTomlinson: 2003; Harwood: 2010; Grath: 2002). In this project, we aim to address the issue of materials appropriateness, whether materials originally designed for everyday schools in the Republic of Armenia (‘Mayreni 3’ and ‘Mayreni 4’ by David Gyurdchinyan) can satisfy educational needs for teaching Armenian at the Armenian Language Saturday School in London. To evaluate the materials with the aim of avoiding some possible drawbacks while creating new materials, it is proposed to use the evaluation framework presented by Littlejohn (2011). In this project the students (10-14 students, 11-14 year-old) and the teachers express their attitudes towards the materials used for teaching the language by filling in questionnaires and giving interviews. The question of whether the materials correspond to the school’s official educational aims and recommendations given to the teachers is explored through the study of the documents and the interview with the head teacher. Finally, the classes are observed to identify to what extent, if any, the teachers adapt the materials and what are the main reasons for doing that. In the conclusion, if needed according to the results of the study, we propose a piece of new materials to achieve a better match with the context.

References:


Problems with *wh*-questions in Modern Standard Arabic

Mansour Alotaibi

Abstract

The Minimalist framework assumes that *wh*-phrases are undergo movement. However, this is not the case with Modern Standard Arabic in where the NP is the object of SVO in main clause, but it is an acceptable where the NP is the object of an SVO subordinate clause.

It is also not the case where the NP immediately follows a preposition, a noun, or the complementizer ‘anna ‘that’. They require a resumptive clitic (i). *Wh*-phrases bear nominative case although they are related to non-nominative position (ii).

It is also not the case where the NP is the post-verbal subject of a VSO in main clause. This is because of the agreement between the preposed NP and the verb is poor which causes ungrammatical sentences.

The strongest evidence against a movement approach is shown from structure which has the complementizer ‘an ‘that’ which must be followed by a verb. Assuming there is movement suggests that although the complementizer ‘an cannot be followed by an overt preverbal subject it can be followed by a preverbal subject gap.

The alternative of a movement account is one in which the *wh*-phrases are nominative base-generated and there is a pro in the position questioned. One problem arises with object position because it is not a position where pro can appear, i.e. the *wh*-object has accusative case which is associated with the gap case. Another problem arises with examples where the *wh*-phrase is a PP. Pro is a nominal element, therefore cannot appear in a PP position.
It has been widely assumed in the literature on restrictive relative clauses that reconstruction (a situation
where some element X behaves as if it were c-commanded by some other element Y even though it is
not c-commanded by Y on the surface) is a diagnostic for movement. For example, in the picture of himself that John painted, himself is
coreferential with John even though John does not c-command it. This is assumed to provide evidence that picture of himself has moved from the object position of painted.

In this paper, I provide a counterargument to the claim that reconstruction involves movement. There
are examples such as The picture of himself in Newsweek dominated John's thoughts (Pollard and Sag, 1994: 279) where a reflexive himself is not c-commanded by its antecedent John at any level of
representation. This is further supported by examples from another language; Arabic.

I also provide an argument against the very idea of head raising; if the head raising analysis is
untenable, then relative clauses provide a further example of where movement cannot account for
reconstruction facts. I draw inter alia on work of Kayne (1994), Borsley (1997) and (2001), Bianchi
(2000), and Aoun and Li (2003).

References

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123-140.


Siraiki distinguishes between three non-finite verb forms: gerunds, infinitivals and what has been maintained in the literature as obl(ique) (Shackle1976). I will present in this oral presentation the morpho-syntactic differences and similarities between these three non-finite verb forms through diagnostics, and classify different categories to the third type of obl. infinitives. These tests and diagnostics will help determine the nominal nature of the gerunds in contrast with the predicative (i.e., verbal) nature of infinitives. The third type will be classified as having participial nature among some uses, with category neutral (adjectival/verbal/nominal) status. Based on these characteristics, LFG representations of English participle/infinitivals and Siraiki infinitivals and gerunds will be presented at astructure, c-&f-structures.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY