

## Diachronic metathesis: Theoretical considerations

Stephanie Berg, The University of Edinburgh

---

In historical linguistics and philology, many changes have been labelled cases of metathesis, while diachronic metathesis itself has been discussed very little, and its definitions are varied and vague (e.g. Hume 2006, Crystal 1997). In order to properly analyse this kind of change, if metathesis is indeed a possible sound change, there needs to be an explicit definition and clear diagnostics.

Metathesis, whether synchronic or diachronic, is peculiar. Unlike other phonological processes which target one phoneme (or its component features), metathesis takes two phonemes and transposes them. Descriptively, this means that in cases where the expected sequence is  $\alpha(\dots)\beta$ , we instead see  $\beta(\dots)\alpha$ . Metathesis must be distinguished from displacement, which involves one target sound moving from its original position in a word to a new position; this can often be mistaken for metathesis, and when the displacement occurs only across one other sound, it looks identical to metathesis.

Another matter to consider is whether diachronic metathesis can be phonetically gradual. As it appears that synchronic metathesis affects entire segments and not individual features, the conclusion can be drawn that it does not occur gradually (Buckley 2011). The Neogrammarians excluded metathesis from the family of regular sound change, as it appeared far too sporadic, but work in modern theoretical linguistics has made it possible to postulate a diachronic metathesis of the exceptionless variety. Following Bermúdez-Otero's (2007) typology of sound change, I argue that true diachronic metathesis is a phonological change, characterised by being both phonetically and lexically abrupt. Thus, diachronic metathesis would involve a modification to the phonological system of a language, introducing a synchronic metathesis rule by way of phonologization. The relative rarity of diachronic metathesis can be seen as reflecting how unlikely it is for a speaker to make the kind of misanalysis during acquisition to lead to this kind of phonologization (Hale & Reiss 2008). However, if we accept that synchronic metathesis is possible as a systematic phonological operation, we can accept that regular diachronic metathesis, too, is possible.

## References

- Bermúdez-Otero, Ricardo. 2007. Diachronic phonology. In Paul de Lacy (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Phonology*, 497–518. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buckley, Eugene. 2011. Metathesis. In Marc van Oostendorp, Colin J. Ewen, Elizabeth Hume & Keren Rice (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Phonology*, 1380-407. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Crystal, David. 1997. *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hale, Mark. 2007. *Historical linguistics: Theory and Method*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hale, Mark, Kissock, Madelyn & Reiss, Charles. 2015. An I-Language approach to phonologization and lexification. In Patrick Honeybone & Joseph Salmons (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of historical phonology*, 337-358. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hale, Mark & Reiss, Charles. 2008. *The Phonological Enterprise*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## MAKE AND FORCE AS VERBS OF CONTROL

---

Angela Cao, The University of Edinburgh

We argue that the gradability of CONTROL, a sub-dimension of agency, accounts for the distinguishing between the uses of *make* and *force*. CONTROL, like its name perhaps implies, seems to mean that two agents are at odds with each other. The zero-sum game of tic-tac-toe is thus an ideal context to observe the gains and losses of CONTROL, as what is beneficial to one player is detrimental to the other. To measure how CONTROL varies across different situations, we define sequences of tic-tac-toe game-states using structural equation models (SEMs) from Pearl (2009).

Helpfully, Pearl (2009)'s framework also defines the Probability of Sufficiency (PS). Lauer and Nadathur (2018) have previously argued that *make* is a sufficiency causative. Unlike this previous work, Pearl's proposed definition of PS is probabilistic:  $PS \triangleq P(y_x | y', x')$ , i.e. PS measures the probability that the occurrence of  $x$  produces  $y$ . Furthermore, since the "production" implies transitioning from the absence to the presence of both  $x$  and  $y$ , we condition  $P(y_x)$  on situations where they are both absent. Thus, PS gives the probability that setting  $x$  would produce  $y$  in a situation where  $x$  and  $y$  are both absent. To measure PS in our formerly defined SEM, we can use the version of the Rewind, Revise, and selectively Re-run (RRR) heuristic introduced by Lassiter (2017). Presented with a statement such as *X placing x at t forced Y to place y at t + 1*, we can Rewind to  $t - 1$ , Revise  $X$  to place  $\neg x$ , and selectively Regenerate the outcome that  $Y$  would still have placed  $y$ . Thus, we build on Lauer and Nadathur with our proposed definition of CONTROL which takes in two measurements: (1) PS, and (2) the implication that the result, or most probable result (defined with a utility function), is not desired by  $Y$ , which is related to Lauer and Nadathur's idea of a cancellable COERCIVE IMPLICATION that arises with uses of *make*. We can choose the optimal play for each player's turn using the minimax algorithm, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

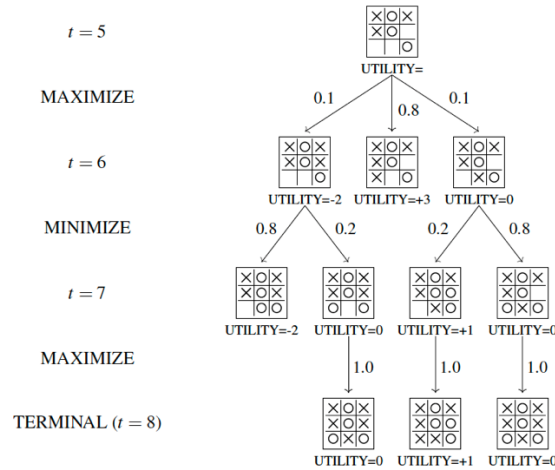
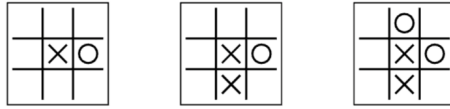


FIGURE 1. Iterating through a partial game using the minimax algorithm, where maximizer=  $X$  and minimizer=  $O$ . Assuming  $\rho = 0.8$ ,  $P(X \text{ wins}) = 0.82$  at  $t = 5$ .

This leads us to Hypothesis 1: The lower the probability of choosing the optimal move, the less acceptable *force* and *make* become. In order to support this hypothesis, we would run an experiment where participants are presented with three timesteps (referred to as  $t$  through  $t+2$ ) of a tic-tac-toe game and asked to rate the felicity of an action taken at  $t+1$  making or forcing the move taken at  $t+2$  (a rough draft is shown in Figure 2). The stimuli of three tic-tac-toe frames would vary based on the value of  $\rho$ . We would expect that as  $\rho$  converges towards 0, both *force* and *make* become less felicitous. To analyze our data, we can use a linear mixed-effect model with variations on statement type as a fixed effect and variations on  $\rho$  as a random effect.

Now assume a constant  $\rho$ . For **Hypothesis 2**: We expect to find that all uses of *force* are subsumed within uses of *make*, although the inverse is not true. Regarding the latter comparison, uses of *force* will not be felicitous where *make* is just in the case that PS significantly differs. Since our argument is that *force* and *make* are gradable and that *make* subsumes *force*, this boundary may vary inter-participant.



For each of the following sentences, mark how accurately the description describes the scene.

Xena marking X in the second photo forced Oona to mark O in the third photo.

Not accurate  Very accurate

Xena marking X in the second photo made Oona mark O in the third photo.

Not accurate  Very accurate

FIGURE 2. Example of what participants will be presented with.

## Testing online reading of vague vs. precise expressions in differently informative contexts

---

Elisabetta Ciccone, The University of Edinburgh

This study provides new experimental perspectives on the linguistic phenomenon of semantic vagueness (Peirce, 1902; Russell, 1923; Channell, 1994; Cutting, 2007). Over the last few years, linguistic vagueness has been widely discussed from a theoretical point of view, by philosophy, semantics and pragmatics scholars, but with limited experimental support. The few experiments carried out on semantic vagueness were mostly of behavioural offline and metalinguistic type (e.g., asking participants to provide definitions of vague expressions or extensions' ranges: Bonini et al., 1999; Serchuk et al., 2008, 2011; Alxatib, Pelletier, 2011; Egré, Zehr, 2018). However, the real-time processing of vague expressions is yet to be explored.

The aim of the study is to address this omission by exploring the reading behaviour of vague expressions in different contexts. That is why, we investigated further the conclusion of a previous study in which the results show that vague expressions require less cognitive effort in reading, suggesting that those are interpreted cursorily, without retrieving exact referents. This is particularly interesting if we consider the intuition of vagueness as an effective persuasive implicit strategy (Lombardi Vallauri, 2019), which is made possible by a reduction of *epistemic vigilance* (Sperber et al., 2010).

Since we consider vague expressions' informativeness to be a context-dependent feature, we designed an experiment to look at the reading behaviour of vague vs. precise equivalent expressions in precisising (i.e., informative) vs. non-precising (i.e., under-informative) contexts. We created 40 trials, made of a context sentence followed by a target sentence. Combining the above-mentioned independent variables, the experiment accounted for the following four conditions:

- A. Under-informative context - vague target
- B. Informative context - vague target
- C. Informative context - precise target
- D. Under-informative context – precise target

A	<p>Louis is in Venice, and he would like to have a coffee. He has <b>a few coins</b> in his wallet and he decides to go to a café.</p> <p>He doesn't know that coffee is <b>very</b> expensive in Venice.</p>	B	C	D
	<p>Louis is in Venice, and he would like to have a coffee. He has <b>three euros</b> in his wallet, and he decides to go to a café.</p> <p>He doesn't know that coffee is <b>very</b> expensive in Venice.</p>		<p>Louis is in Venice, and he would like to have a coffee. He has <b>three euros</b> in his wallet, and he decides to go to a café.</p> <p>He doesn't know that coffee costs <b>five euros</b> in Venice.</p>	<p>Louis is in Venice, and he would like to have a coffee. He has <b>a few coins</b> in his wallet, and he decides to go to a café.</p> <p>He doesn't know that coffee costs <b>five euros</b> in Venice.</p>

The experiment was designed and built with Experiment Builder and conducted by using EyeLink 1000, on a sample of about 60 English native speakers. We created two versions of the experiment, in order to check for different levels of attention and controlled reading. One version of the experiment only required participants to read the sentences, by pressing a button from a button box once they had finished reading a sentence. In the second version, to avoid mechanical button-pressing and shallow reading performances, participants were made aware that seven out of forty stimuli, would be followed by a random comprehension true/false sentence. The true/false sentences did not address information conveyed through the target expressions, but rather contextual information.

A preliminary data analysis suggests that reading times may increase with the level of precision provided. Since the data analysis is in process we will have more precise results in the next future.

# Multilingual acquisition of grammatical gender: The role of typological similarity

---

Charlotte Englert, Ilaria Venagli, & Tanja Kupisch, Universität Konstanz

**1. Background** Language acquisition of multilingual speakers has received increasing attention during the last two decades. A fundamental question of third (L3) and additional (Ln) language acquisition concerns the role of previously acquired languages. The key concept is transfer which can be broadly defined as the “influence of previous linguistic knowledge on the development and/or performance of a target non-native language” (Rothman 2013: 223). Two prevailing L3-models make opposing assumptions about transfer: While the Typological Proximity Model (TPM) (Rothman 2013) suggests full transfer of the grammar of one background language based on overall perceived typological similarity to the target language, the Linguistic Proximity Model (LPM) assumes property-by-property transfer possibly from several background languages based on structural similarity (Westergaard et al. 2017). The goal of the study was the investigation of transfer of grammatical gender as an inherent lexical feature of nouns. In two experiments we addressed the following questions: (i) Is there one unique transfer source or is there transfer from several background languages? (ii) What happens when two background languages are typologically similar to the target language? (iii) What is the role of structural similarity, proficiency and recency of the background languages?

**2. Gender assignment experiments** Participants assigned gender to unfamiliar Franco-Provençal nouns in two experiments. Franco-Provençal (FP) is a Romance language bearing resemblance to French and to a lesser extent Italian (Stich 2001). In the experiments 75% of the nouns were orthographically more similar to French (measured by Levenshtein distance), whereas 25% were more similar to Italian. In Experiment 1 participants with two possible transfer sources (German and French) were tested, in Experiment 2 participants with three possible transfer sources (German, French and Italian). There was a gender mismatch between the German and French (Exp. 1) and the French and Italian (Exp. 2) translation equivalents of the FP-nouns. Transfer was operationalized as a match of the assigned gender in FP and the gender of the corresponding noun in one of the background languages. The data was analysed using generalised mixed-effects models. In Exp. 1 there were gender matches with both German and French and in Exp. 2 there were matches with both French and Italian. In both experiments, no significant effect of proficiency was found. A higher recency score (calculated

from a background questionnaire) led to more transfer from French (and Italian). This effect was significant for French in Exp. 1 (Fig. 1) and Italian but not French in Exp. 2. Increasing structural similarity to French (and Italian) also led to a higher proportion of transfer from the respective language. This effect was significant in both experiments (Fig. 1 for French in Exp. 1).

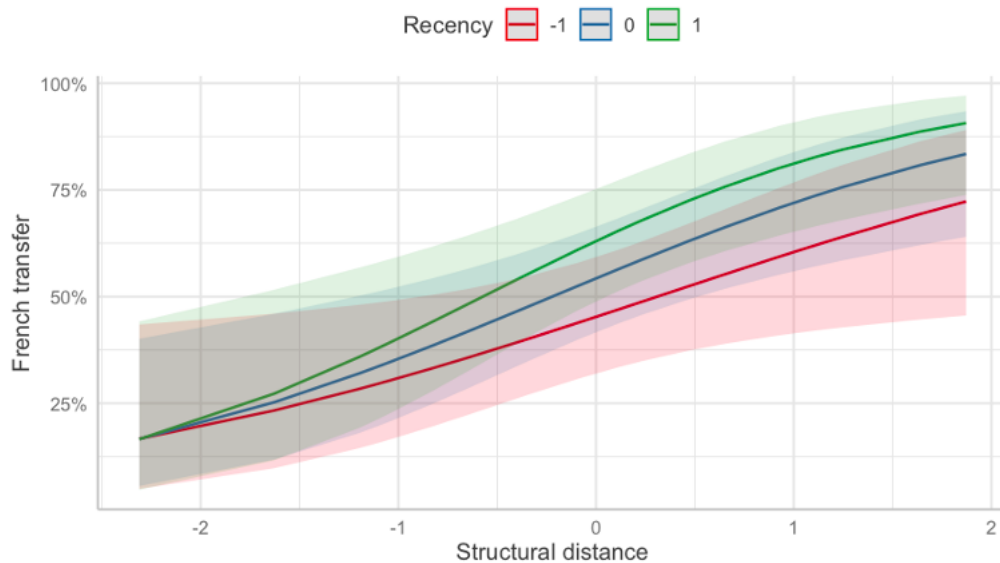


Figure 1: Transfer from French in Exp. 1 as a function of structural similarity and recency of French use: Recency scores are divided in high (1), middle (0) and low (-1).

**3. Discussion** The experiments provide evidence for property-by-property transfer from several background languages and the importance of structural similarity on the basis of the individual nouns. This confirms the predictions of the LPM. No evidence for full transfer as predicted by the TPM was found. Interesting insights are also provided by the participants' comments on how they made their gender decisions: While they confirm that direct transfer of the gender feature took place they also reveal that many participants relied heavily on morpho-phonological cues. With regards to the role of proficiency and recency, we find a significant effect of the latter but not the former.

## References

Rothman, Jason. 2013. Cognitive economy, non-redundancy and typological primacy in L3 acquisition: Initial stages of L3 Romance and beyond. *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory* 5. 217–247.

Stich, Dominique. 2001. *Francoprovençal. Proposition d'une orthographe supra-dialectale standardisée*. Paris: Université Paris V Thèse de doctorat.

Westergaard, Marit, Natalia Mitrofanova, Roksolana Mykhaylyk & Yulia Rodina. 2017. Crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of a third language: The Linguistic Proximity Model. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 21(6). 666–682.

# “Grievable Lives”: A corpus-based comparison of Ukrainian and other refugees in British newspapers

---

Madeleine Ferris, The University of Edinburgh

*“They seem so like us. That is what makes it so shocking. Ukraine is a European country. Its people watch Netflix and have Instagram accounts, vote in free elections, and read uncensored newspapers. War is no longer something visited upon impoverished and remote populations. It can happen to anyone.” (Daniel Hannan, The Telegraph, 26th February 2022)*

Previous research into the British Media’s treatment of refugees has found an overwhelmingly negative bias towards those fleeing conflicts, particularly the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (Baker and McHenry 2005, Greenslade 2005, Gabrielatos and Baker 2008).

On February 24th, 2022, a new refugee situation emerged, as Russia escalated the Russo-Ukrainian war by invading Ukraine. Many Ukrainians fled the conflict to neighbouring countries in Europe and those beyond. In the UK, the Ukrainian national anthem was played at football games and people opened their homes to house those displaced (Guardian, March 15th, 2022). This provides contrast to other refugees who have been presented as ‘sneaking’ and ‘flooding’ (Gabrielatos and Baker 2008).

This research utilises corpus linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how Ukrainian refugees are presented in UK media. It situates the research in comparison to studies done on MENA refugees, to examine whether there is bias and provide possible interpretations.

Gabrielatos and Baker (2008), investigated how Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Immigrants and Migrants (RASIM) were linguistically defined and constructed and the attitudes that were presented in UK newspapers between 1996 and 2005 (p.8). They found ‘nonsensical terms’ such as ‘illegal refugee’ (p.5) and vast negative prosodies within their corpus, where RASIM were often presented in negative terms, particularly by tabloids, connected to their legality, economic burden/threat, and criminality.

Using their study as a model and utilising a specially created “Ukrainian refugee” corpus, created from tabloid and broadsheet newspapers from the UK, data on keywords, collocates, and the prosodies within them will be presented. Interpretations of discovered bias differences in this study compared to Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) are to be discussed in terms of social theory put forward by Judith Butler. This looks at ‘grievable lives’ and the way that those lives we deem more valuable are often those that are not already ‘lost’ because they are more like our own (Butler 2016). In this interpretation, the Ukrainian lives are presented as more grievable and consequently deserving of our aid to help prevent their loss.

The talk will be of interest to those looking for demonstrations of the usefulness of corpus analysis as a basis for CDA and those interested in inherent but unconscious biases towards refugees reflected and presented by British media.

In a short and illuminating talk, the researcher will

- Provide light background into previous corpus work on refugees
- Present specific examples of major points of comparison between Ukrainian and other refugees, particularly from the MENA region.
- Offer interpretations based on theory by Judith Butler.
- Suggest avenues for further research

**Keywords:** Ukrainian Refugees, British Newspapers, Bias, Corpus Analysis, Judith Butler

### References:

- Baker, P., & McEnery, T. (2005). A corpus-based approach to discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in UN and newspaper texts. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 4(2), 197–226. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.4.2.04bak>.
- Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., Khosravini, M., Krzyżanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society*, 19(3), 273–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926508088962>
- Butler, J. (2016). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* London: Verso.
- Elgot, J. (2022, March 15). More than 100,000 Britons offer to take in Ukrainian refugees.

*The Guardian*. Retrieved December 8, 2022, from  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/15/homes-for-ukraine-website-crashes-refugees>

Gabrielatos, C., & Baker, P. (2008). Fleeing, sneaking, flooding. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 36(1), 5–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424207311247>

Greenslade, R. (2005). *Seeking Scapegoats: The Coverage of Asylum in the UK Press*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research. Retrieved December 8, 2022, from  
[https://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/wp5\\_scapegoats\\_1359.pdf](https://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/wp5_scapegoats_1359.pdf)

Hannan, D. (2022, February 26). Vladimir Putin's monstrous invasion is an attack on civilisation itself. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved December 8, 2022, from  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/02/26/vladimir-putins-monstrous-invasion-attack-civilisation/>

# Sociolinguistics of Sub-Roman Britain – Social Impact on British Latin Shift

---

Jack Heitman, The University of Edinburgh

When and how British Latin (BL) died (while continental Romance thrived), the extent of bilingualism in the Roman/ sub-Roman period, and the fate of the Britons (the paucity of Celtic influence on Old English (OE)) is much debated. In order to answer and reconcile these unknowns, I propose to explore the possibility that BL did not initially disappear, and that the early British population who shifted to Germanic were not wholly, or perhaps even mainly, Celtic-speaking, but that, in at least the SE Lowland zone, BL was alive leaving traces of substratum influence on vernacular OE.

I must first investigate the nature of cross-linguistic impact which depends on social situations and mechanisms of language shift. I will use evidence from curse tablets and inscriptions (Tomlin, Charles-Edwards 2013, Blänsdorf 2012), as well as comparative studies to mirror the language environment of sub-Roman Britain. Central to findings will be presenting the ability of modern sociolinguistic theories to be applied to the pre-modern era.

This will shed light on critical implications in uncovering potential unidentified substratum BL (phonological) influence of OE, in addition to gaining a more accurate view of when, why, and how BL died as a vernacular.

Reconciling and answering the unknowns of the language environment in sub-Roman Britain requires the establishment of a more accurate model of language shift. Combining the underlying empirical facts including findings from historical linguists, archeologists, historians, and geneticists will unite the different disciplines and their respective evidence under one model that can be agreed upon. Sociolinguistic theories such as language of the household, the gender paradox, and L2 bilingualism underpin language shift situation and will be core to the language shift model.

I hypothesize that Romano-British society did not collapse instantaneously or uniformly, and the Saxon takeover was piecemeal of a land of mainly Latin speakers in the Southeast Lowland Zone. Incoming Saxons opened their household during the conquest, accepting dependents,

and women had better opportunity to join the Saxon kindred who were predominantly male and had permeable social boundaries and fluid markers of identity.

Saxon identity provided access to kindred: law, patronage, security, and social mobility/opportunity for women and children. Language was a key marker of identity, therefore, to join the kindred, women dependents innovatively switched to Old English. Since Germanic identity (linked to the Continent) was critical to the kindred, women learned and passed on a prestige form of Old English and completely stopped using, learning, and teaching Latin. Passing on Latin would be disadvantageous for their children who needed to fully integrate into the kindred.

British Latin saw a massive decrease in ethnolinguistic vitality within a generation, from locality to locality, by the identity conversion of women who determined the language of the next generation. This differs from continental survival of the Romance languages where there was less need for identity shift within the communities and there was an establishment of mutually beneficial relationships between the indigenous and Germanic migrants.

# *Constraints on Inflection in Lexical Cloning*

---

John Hotson, The University of Edinburgh

## **1 Introduction**

Lexical cloning (LC) is a phenomenon in colloquial speech where some lexical item is repeated with additional contrastive focal stress on the first element (here marked with SMALL CAPITALS) to convey some prototypical or highly salient meaning (1).

- (1) a. I'll make the tuna-salad and you make the SALAD-salad.  
b. They're not FAN-fans.

It has been analysed both as a form of reduplication (Ghomeshi et al. (2004)) and as an example of compounding (Hohenhaus (2004)) with both approaches holding certain advantages; I have therefore chosen to use Horn's (2006) term, Lexical Cloning, to avoid any theoretical commitments. The phenomenon has been noted in a range of different languages including English, German, Italian (Wierzbicka, 1992) and French (Mau, 2002).

## **2 Inflectional constraints**

One aspect of LC which has gone understudied is the role of inflection; it has been noted that there is a degree of variation regarding whether inflection is present on both elements (e.g. CATS-cats) or only on the second element (e.g. CAT-cats). This raises an issue for compounding analyses, as standard compound rules only allow inflection on the compound as a whole. Here we explore in greater detail the principles that govern whether inflection is repeated in LC, concentrating primarily on English plurals. We present below a table of the most common LC forms for a variety of types of English plural (2).

	No Suffix	Suffix (short)	Suffix (long)
No Stem Change	SHEEP-sheep	GLOVE-gloves	KISSES-kisses
Stem Change	MICE-mice	KNIVE-knives	CHILDREN-children

(2)

These data allow us to hypothesise two rules (3):

- (3) 1. LC Stem Identity Constraint: The reduplicant in an LC construction must fully copy the stem of the base.
2. LC Suffixing Constraint: Short suffixes are only present on the base while longer suffixes are present on both elements

While Rule 1. appears to be absolute, with forms such as MOUSE-mice being entirely unacceptable, Rule 2. is significantly more flexible. Most speakers will accept either form but prefer repeating the inflection for forms with *-Iz/* while omitting it for forms with *-/z/* or *-/s/*. What has not previously been noticed is the behaviour of the "near-regular" plurals such as *mouths* or *knives* which involve both stem mutation and suffixing. Here, we have three possible ways in which cloning could occur: *KNIFE-knives*, *KNIVES-knives* or *KNIVE-knives*. The first form is disallowed by Rule 1. but speakers will accept both of the other two forms. In fact, although when asked directly most speakers will discount *KNIVE-knives* as "knife is not a word", when it is elicited obliquely or simply presented to them *KNIVE-knives* is generally preferred. The same effect can be seen more strongly with *MOU/D/-mou/D/s* as there is no orthographic difference in this case.

### 3 Discussion

This observation has a significant impact on our theories for LC formation. If LC is a compounding process we would expect to see either forms like *KNIFEknives* or at most *KNIVES-knives*. Mutation of this kind is not found in English compounds. In reduplication, on the other hand, such effects are commonplace. As such this finding strongly supports an analysis of LC as reduplication. In short, we have identified one strong rule governing LC inflection- that any stem mutation must be copied- and one weaker rule- that omitting the suffix is preferred, particularly for small suffixes. In cases with both mutation and suffixing only the mutation is obligatory suggesting a reduplication analysis of LC.

### References

- Jila Ghomeshi, Ray Jackendoff, Nicole Rosen, and Kevin Russell. Contrastive focus reduplication in english (the salad-salad paper). *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 22:307–357, 2004.
- Peter Hohenhaus. Identical constituent compounding – a corpus-based study. *Folia linguistica*,

38(3-4):297–332, 2004. ISSN 0165-4004.

Laurence Horn. Speaker and hearer in neo-gricean pragmatics. Waiguoyi Issue, 164:2–26, 01 2006.

Thorsten Mau. Form und Funktion sprachlicher Wiederholungen. Lang, 2002.

Anna Wierzbicka. Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction. De Gruyter, Inc, Berlin/Boston, 1992. ISBN 3110125382.

# From Re complementation to Spread through the PCM

---

Elena Isolani, University of Cambridge

Re complementation consists of the double occurrence of “that”-complementizer within the same clause, with potentially different featural contours. The declarative spread phenomenon rather indicates that the declarative feature is shared by two distinct elements, even of a different kind, within the same structure. These two phenomena, show a complementary behaviour, which is analysed under the Parametric Comparison Method (PCM), a parametric approach aimed to define the parameters which regulate the phenomena that operate in a specific syntactic domain and their functional implicatures (Longobardi, 2001a; Guardiano & Longobardi, 2005). Two parameters that respectively regulate re complementation and declarative spread are proposed:

- PC1 (CDS) *Declarative Spread*. Is the declarative feature simultaneously realized in two distinct positions, one in ForceP and the other below?
- PC2 (CRP) *Re complementation*. Can two complementizers of the same kind appear within the same clause?

This paper has the objective to outline whether there are some functional implicatures between re complementation and declarative spread phenomena given their complementary behaviour. Regarding re complementation, consider (1):

1) Susi dice [<sub>ForceP</sub> **que** a los alumnos, [<sub>TopP/FinP</sub> (**que**) les van a dar regalos]] (Villa-García, 2012)

Whereas the higher *que* is endowed with [+declarative] feature, there is no evidence that this is the case for the lower *que* as well. As for the declarative spread, Ledgeway (2003, 2005) observed that numerous SIDs show a dual complementizer system, like *ca - che*, where the first complementizer is associated with FinP, while the second one with ForceP:

2) Bastava **che** la mia Aurora **che** superba m'è ritornata (Ledgeway, 2003)

Structures (1) and (2) are both instances of re complementation, but only (2) can also be labelled as a case of spread. According to the PCM, this contrast can be disentangled by introducing at least one sub-parameter of PC1:

- PC1a *Recomplementation and same feature*: Does the recomplementation occur between two complementizers sharing the same featural contour?

If PC1a is positive, then PC2 is irrelevantly positive, meaning that there is no point in seeking the value of PC2, as it is already established by PC1a. In order to determine the value of PC1a, a viable option is to consider if an Agreement relation is instantiated between them, namely if the higher complementizer acts like a probe to find a matching element, that is the lower complementizer. This is what happens in (2):

2') Bastava [<sub>ForceP</sub> **che**<sub>ca</sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> la mia Aurora [**che**<sub>ca</sub> [<sub>FocP</sub> SUPERBA [<sub>FinP</sub> t<sub>ca</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> m'è ritornata]]]]]]

*Ca* is endowed with [+declarative] feature and, in turn, moves to a more prominent position. Throughout this process, it turns into *che*, provoking a recomplementation phenomenon involving the same feature.

To define the parametric implicatures between PC1 and PC2 it is necessary to introduce a sub-parameter which predicts whether the recomplementation affects complementizers sharing the same feature content. In order to validate the its value, the existence of an Agree relation between the higher and the lower complementizers is required. The presence of a dual complementizer system in Ledgeway's (2003, 2005) terms is an instance of that.

Guardiano, C., & Longobardi, G. (2005). Parametric Comparison and Language Taxonomy. In M. Batllori, M. Hernanz, C. Picallo, & F. Roca (Eds.), *Grammaticalization and Parametric Variation* (pp. 149–174). Oxford University Press.

Ledgeway, A. (2003). Il sistema completivo dei dialetti meridionali. *Rivista Italiana Di Dialettologia*, 27, 89-147.

Ledgeway, A. (2005). Moving through the left periphery: the dual complementiser system in the dialects of Southern Italy. *Transactions Of The Philological Society*, 103(3), 339-396.

Longobardi, G. (2001a). Formal syntax, diachronic minimalism and etymology: the history of French *chez*. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 32(1), 275–302.

Manzini, M. R., & Savoia L. M. (2011). The structure and interpretation of (Romance) complementizers. In M. R. Manzini, & L. M. Savoia (Eds.), *Grammatical Categories : Variation in Romance Languages* (pp. 13-48). Cambridge University Press.

Paoli, S. (2007). The fine structure of the left periphery: COMPs and subjects: Evidence from Romance. *Lingua* 117(6). 1057-1079. (8) Villa-García, J. (2012). Recomplementation and locality of movement in Spanish. *Probus*, 24(2), 257 – 314.

# Elective Bilingualism: Thai-English bilingual family support on Facebook

Kamolwan Jocuns, The University of Edinburgh

---

This research reports on a pilot study which is a part of a PhD project on elective bilingualism family language policy. Elective bilingualism is a situation when families voluntarily add L2 to their family language policy and use it alongside their L1. The context of this study is in Thailand where the majority population (90.73%) use monolingual Thai in their household (National Statistical Office Thailand, 2010). Previous studies in monolingual contexts such as South Korea, China, and Thailand suggest the addition of English to family language policy is driven by neoliberalism and globalization of English (Seo, 2021b; Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Jocuns & Jocuns, n.d.) In those studies, English is not parents' L1, and the addition of English into families also comes with challenges ranging from a lack of English competency as well as objections from people around them. Online communities are one of the sources parents seek English language support (Seo, 2021a). In this study, I explore Thai families who adopt English elective bilingualism and use it alongside Thai in Thailand, where English is not widely spoken. The focus is on parents on Facebook online communities where they share their Thai-English bilingual experience as well as seek support for Thai-English bilingual parenting. The parent participants are recruited from Thai Facebook bilingual parenting groups. First, I post a demographic survey to obtain general information about parents in Facebook parenting communities. Then parents are asked if they would like to provide more information by having an online interview with me. The interview is semi-structured based on the following core questions: 1.) why did you adopt English in your family? 2.) why did you join/create Facebook bilingual parenting communities? and 3.) What do you usually do on Facebook bilingual parenting communities? The presentation will discuss perspectives from both social media page/group moderators as well as parents who are members of Facebook communities. I will also discuss how bilingual parenting portrayed on social media platforms influence bilingual parenting. The results will serve as a catalyst for developing further studies on elective bilingualism and online parenting.

## References

- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L., & Wang, W. (2018). Parents as agents of multilingual education: Family language planning in China. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 31(3), 235-254.

- National Statistical Office Thailand. (2010). ตารางที่ 7 ประชากร จำแนกตามภาษาที่ใช้พูดในครัวเรือน เพศ และเขตการปกครอง. <https://www.nso.go.th/sites/2014/Pages/pop/table-stat.aspx>.
- Seo, Y. (2021a). An emerging trend in English education in Korea: 'Maternal English education' (eommapyo yeongeo) *English Today*, 1–6.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0266078420000048>.
- Seo, Y. (2021b). Parental Language Ideologies and Affecting Factors in Bilingual Parenting in Korea. *English Teaching*. 76(1): 105-124.
- Jocuns, K.F. & Jocuns, A. (in press) Family Language Policies in Thailand: Multiliteracy practices and global English. To appear, in Thorsten Brato, Mirjam Schmalz & Sarah Buschfeld (eds.), *Acquisition and Variation in World Englishes: Bridging Paradigms and Rethinking Approaches*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

# **An investigation into the linguistic landscape of four neighborhoods in Saigon, Vietnam**

---

Chi Le, University of Glasgow

The main purpose of this dissertation is to investigate linguistic landscape (LL) of four neighborhoods in Saigon, Vietnam. There has been no LL study of Saigon, yet this city deserves attention thanks to its diverse characteristics of multilingual societies. This study is intended to fill not only this gap regarding the research setting but also the methodologies since prior LL research solely focused on either quantitative or qualitative analysis. This study applies mixed methods to explore multilingualism reflected in the LL while gaining insights into the communities' reactions to the LL.

The main data is collected in representative areas of four neighborhoods including Western Zone, Little Japan, Korean Town and China Town. 790 signs are recorded and categorized as bottom-up and top-down, monolingual and multilingual to find out the relationships between types of signs and languages while considering language policies and population. The language combinations and semiotic features are also taken into account to gain significant understanding of the writing in the LL. The main finding is that whereas Vietnamese, the official language, is often seen on top-down signage, other foreign languages especially English are present on bottom-up signs. Also, there are some intriguing variations regarding the LL representation across the four neighborhoods.

Apart from LL analysis, the study involves online in-depth interviews with (1) 7 locals who live outside the four neighborhoods to explore their perceptions and language practices within the LL and (2) 7 Hoa ethnic participants' reactions to their own LL as well as their language use and language maintenance in life. This part not only helps explain the phenomena occurred in the LL but also reveals the interviewees' actual interactions with the LL which is perceived to connect with cultural identities, history, periods of time, and even political complexes.

## Semantic Change Factors Evaluation

---

Zihang Peng, The University of Edinburgh

This study investigates what linguistic and non-linguistic factors are significant to cause lexical semantic change. This study first uses computational method to automatically detect semantic change. Then, a logistic regression is used to investigate whether the predictors such as part-of-speech, frequency, polysemy and technology can significantly predict semantic change (the dependent variable). It has been shown that linguistic factors such as frequency and polysemy have no effect in inducing semantic change. Moreover, it has been found that frequency is correlated with polysemy. It has also been found that technological advancements can significantly induce semantic change. Verbs are found to be less likely to undergo semantic change. Verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives do not differ in terms of semantic change rates.

# The correlation between word associations and encyclopaedic knowledge in learning English as the second language

---

Anastasiia Petrenko, University of Cambridge

Some linguists assume that language learners tend to memorize new words by categorizing and relating them to the knowledge that they have already had, i.e. encyclopaedic knowledge (Oxford and Crookall 1990, Littlemore 2009, Aitchison 2012, Lightbown and Spada 2013). Such knowledge cannot be automatically transmitted from the mother tongue to the second language, but it can be the background for the second language learning and categorization (Kaplan and Murphy 2000, Ionin et al. 2008, Aitchison 2012, Lightbown and Spada 2013, Ramonda 2019). Language learners can organize new L2 words in categories, grouping them with each other with the help of word association networks and L1 encyclopaedic knowledge (Kaplan and Murphy 2000, Ionin et al. 2008, Aitchison 2012, Lightbown and Spada 2013, Ramonda 2019). We assume that the second language category knowledge builds up in the course of time: students with the elementary level of English tend to use only frequent concrete words in their speech and writing; as their level of English is improving, they start using more and more abstract words and notions in their interactions.

In order to verify such a hypothesis, an experiment on word associations was conducted, in which 40 English learners, divided into two groups according to their English language levels (A2 and B2 on the CEFR Global Scale (Council of Europe Portal 2021)), took part. Participants were told to type any associations with three words: two concrete notions 'food' and 'clothes', and an abstract one 'autumn' in 30 seconds given for each of the words. Then the results were compared to the most frequent collocations with the words 'food', 'clothes' and 'autumn' found in the British National Corpus (the British National Corpus 2021) to check the degree of similarity with natives' word associations.

Finally, B2 participants provided twice as many word associations for 'food', 'clothes' and 'autumn' in a 30-second period than A2 learners, and their encyclopaedic knowledge applied in the second language acquisition helped them to use more abstract notions in different forms such as abstract nouns, verbs, adjectives, participles and gerunds, whereas A2 learners predominantly expressed word associations in form of concrete nouns.

Regarding the results of experiment and corpus data comparison, it proved that English learners with a higher level provides more associations which were more similar to the natives' ones. The B2 learners even expressed the higher number of collocations for 'autumn' than it was found in the corpus, which could be the evidence for a stronger association between the participants and the season as the experiment was carried out in autumn, which verified the strong correlation between the encyclopaedic knowledge and word associations in the second language acquisition.

### References:

1. Aitchison, J. (2012) *Words in the mind: an introduction to the mental lexicon* Malden: John Wiley and Sons
2. British National Corpus (BNC) (2021) *British National Corpus (BNC)* (Online) <https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/> (accessed 17/12/22)
3. Council of Europe Portal (2021) *Global scale – Table 1 (CEFR 3.3): Common Reference levels* (Online) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale> (accessed 17/12/22)
4. Ionin, T., Zubizarreta, M. and Maldonado, S. (2008) Sources of linguistic knowledge in the second language acquisition of English articles in *Lingua* Vol. 118 Issue. 4 pp554-576
5. Kaplan, A. and Murphy, G. (2000) Category Learning with Minimal Prior Knowledge in *Journal of experimental psychology. Learning, memory and cognition* Vol. 26 Issue. 4 pp829-846
6. Lightbown, P. and Spada, N. (2013) *How languages are learned* Oxford: Oxford University Press
7. Littlemore, J. (2009) *Applying cognitive linguistics to second language learning and teaching* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
8. Oxford, R. and Crookall, D. (1990) Vocabulary Learning: A Critical Analysis of Techniques in *TESL Canada Journal* Vol. 7 Issue. 2 pp9-30
9. Ramonda, K. (2019) The role of encyclopedic world knowledge in semantic transparency intuitions of idioms in *English Language and Linguistics* Vol. 23 Issue. 1 pp31-53 (Online) <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/english-language-and-linguistics/article/role-of->

encyclopedic-world-knowledge-in-semantic-transparency-intuitions-of-  
idioms/19571C533EDDD63BD1D1B50E63117562 (accessed 17/12/22)

## Contrastive Topics and Pronoun Resolution in QUD

---

Amanda Popadich, The University of Edinburgh

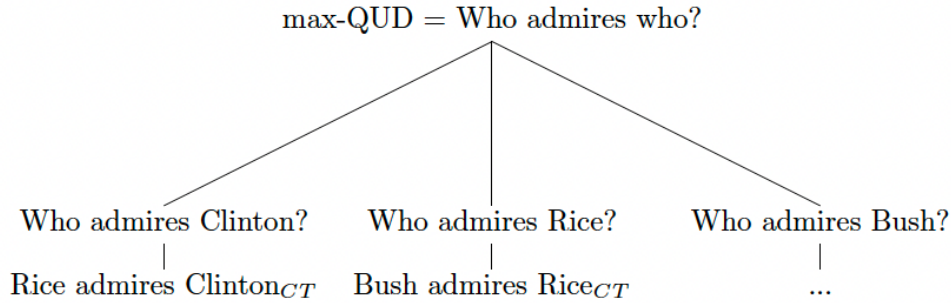
For a while, the argument for a bias towards assigning a pronoun to a referent in the matching grammatical role in an antecedent clause seemed to be a reliable analysis. However, the Coherence driven approach better explained the variation in observed behavior. But it did not explain the syntactic parallelism bias that is still so often observed. Kehler et al. (2008) sought to understand this. They found that utterances where a Result relation was operative favoured resolving the pronoun to its non-parallel element, and those with a Parallel relation favoured resolving the pronoun to its syntactically parallel element (Kehler et al. 2008).

Subsequently, Kehler (2009) showed that there is in fact no constraints on pronouns referring to their non-parallel element. Instead, it is a matter of accentuation that allows for different interpretations. Therefore, the question remains, why are referring expressions deaccented when referring to their parallel elements and what is the role of accenting? Kehler (2009) attempts to resolve this question with reference to Question-Answer congruence and accent placement. However, it is not yet clear the relationship is between accenting and congruence.

Using Information Structure principles of prosodic prominence, and Alternative Semantics definitions of questions, I propose the formal definitions of alternative sets and the d-trees, given specifically by Contrastive Topic placement (Büring 2003), necessarily entail implicit QUDs that constrain the available antecedent for a referring expression in Parallel relations. Additionally, through comparing focal alternative sets defined by Roberts (1998) and the q-alternative sets of QUDs, congruence is established. To illustrate this analysis, I use the same utterance example while varying the placement of Contrastive Topic. For instance, where  $De = \{Rice, Bush, Clinton\}$ :

- (1)  $a =$  'Rice admires Clinton',  $b =$  'and Bush admires HER.' [intended meaning: her=Rice],  $q =$  'Who admires who?'

a. D-Tree:



b.  $q\text{-alt}(max - QUD) = \{x \text{ admires } y \mid x, y \in D_e\}$

c.  $f\text{-alt}(a) = \{\text{Rice admires Clinton, Bush admires Clinton}\}$

d.  $f\text{-alt}(b) = \{\text{Bush admires Rice, Clinton admires Rice}\}$

e. since  $f\text{-alt}(b) \subset q\text{-alt}$ , move  $b$  is both congruent to question max-QUD.

The following example is the case where incongruence arises from the speaker attempting to not use contrastive topic but still refer to the non-parallel element.

- (2)  $a =$  'Rice admires Clinton'  $b =$  'Bush admires her.' [intended meaning: her=Rice],  $q =$  'Who admires Clinton?'

a. D-tree:

max-QUD: Who admires Clinton?

|  
Rice admires Clinton and Bush worships Rice

b.  $q\text{-alt}(QUD) = \{x \text{ admires Clinton} \mid x \in D_e\}$

c.  $f\text{-alt}(a) = \{\text{Rice admires Clinton, Bush admires Clinton}\}$

d.  $f\text{-alt}(b) = \{\text{Bush admires Rice, Clinton admires Rice}\}$

e. since  $f\text{-alt}(b) \not\subset q\text{-alt}$ , move  $b$  is incongruent with max-QUD.

Thus, I show the inference process – from an utterance to a d-tree, through Contrastive Topic placement – where the listener uses the most maximal QUD to set up the q-alternative sets. This set is compared to the focal alternatives of the original utterance and congruence is established. Finally, I conclude that the syntactic parallelism constraint is such that when a Parallel relation is operative an unaccented referring expression can never refer to its non-parallel element because the referent it is attempting to bind to does not logically exist as an element in the set of possible alternatives.

## References

- [1] Buring, Daniel. 2003. "On D-Trees, Beans, and B-Accents." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26 (5): 511–45.

- [2] Kehler, Andrew, Laura Kertz, Hannah Rohde, and Jeffrey L. Elman. 2008. "Coherence and Coreference Revisited." *Journal of Semantics* (Special Issue on Processing Meaning) 25 (1): 1–44. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3424618/>.
- [3] Kehler, Andrew. 2009. "Ellipsis and Anaphora in a QUD Model of Discourse," *University of Michigan Workshop in Philosophy and Linguistics*. 1-31
- [4] Roberts, Craige. 1998. "Information Structure in Discourse: Towards an Integrated Formal Theory of Pragmatics." *Semantics and Pragmatics* Volume 5, Article 6: 1–69. <https://doi.org/10.3765/sp.5.6>.

# Categorisation bias for animacy in the learning of noun classification systems

---

Ponrawee Prasertsom, Kenny Smith, & Jennifer Culbertson, The University of Edinburgh

Noun classification systems, such as noun classes and gender, often categorise nouns based on their semantics. Cross-linguistically, properties such as sex, animacy and shape typically serve as a basis for classification, but other salient properties such as colour never do (Aikhenvald, 2000; Corbett, 1991; Seifart, 2010). One fruitful line of research suggests that typological generalisations such as this one reflect biases in learning (e.g., Culbertson et al., 2013, 2017; Maldonado & Culbertson, 2022). In two planned experiments, we test whether 1) this tendency/limit is a result of a learning bias for animacy over colour as a basis for noun classification, and 2) whether the bias (if any) is language-specific, as sometimes suggested (Adger, 2018; D'Alessandro, 2021; Leivada & Barceló-Coblijn, 2021).

The designs for the experiments, subject to minor adjustments, are as follows. In Experiment 1 (Figure 1), participants are trained and tested on artificial nouns, presented through text and audio and accompanied by the pictures of their referents. The nouns are combinations of animacy and colour values: 2 animacy categories (*animate* vs. *inanimate*)  $\times$  2 entity types  $\times$  2 colour categories (*warm* vs. *cold*)  $\times$  2 colours (all pictures shown in Figure 2). Then, they are trained on the use of an artificial determiner that, depending on the condition, inflects based on either animacy or colour the head noun. At test, they have to choose the correct determiner for the nouns. We predict that, if there is an animacy bias, participants who learn animacy-based noun classes will perform better at test than those who learn colour-based noun classes. In Experiment 2 (Figure 2), participants categorise the referents expressed by nouns in the first experiments into two groups. We predict that, if there is a bias for animacy (or even one for colour) is non-linguistic, participants will exhibit the same categorisation tendency as in the first experiment.

We will run, report and discuss the results of these experiments. If we do not observe the bias in Experiment 1, it might be because both colour- and animacy-based noun classification systems are already easy to learn in isolation, but one of them could still take precedence when both are present (as in semantic vs. phonological cues to noun classes; Culbertson et al., 2019). Thus, we may discuss follow-up experiments that attempt to probe the bias by forcing

participants to generalise from ambiguous input into either animacy- or colour-based systems (the *extrapolation* paradigm; Culbertson, to appear). Finally, if we find that the bias exists, we will discuss deeper hypotheses about its origins, such as the fact that animacy is more predictive of other features than colour (Aikhenvald, 2000; Lee, 1988), as well as how to test them.

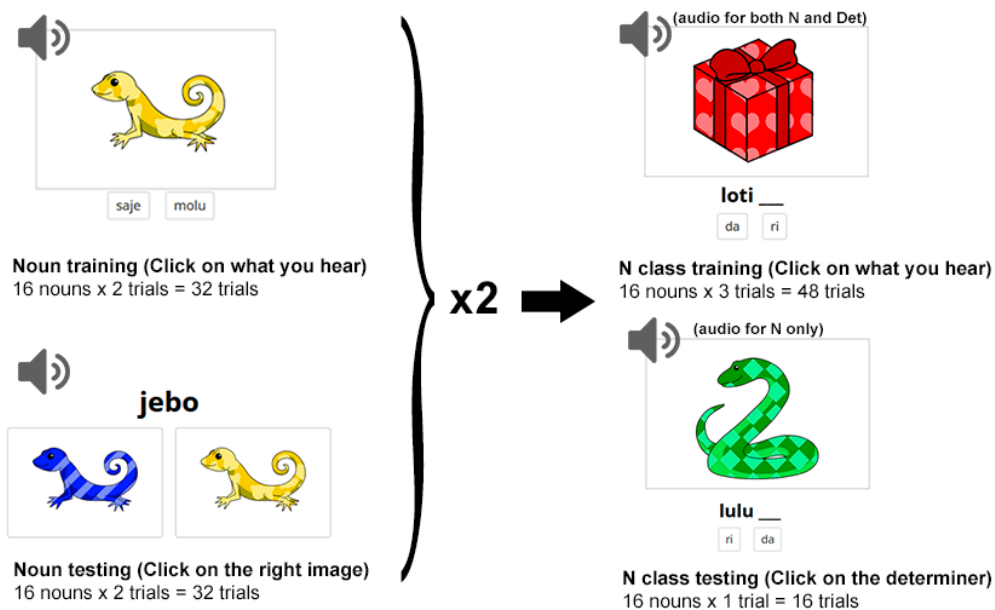


Figure 1: Experiment 1. Participants learn artificial nouns (left), then learn variants of an artificial determiner, *ri* and *da* (right).



Figure 2: Experiment 2. Participants drag each of the pictures (also used in Experiment 1) into each of the two provided boxes to categorise them.

## References

- Adger, D. (2018). The autonomy of syntax. In N. Hornstein, H. Lasnik, P. Patel-Grosz, & C. Yang (Eds.), *Syntactic structures after 60 years* (pp. 153–176). De Gruyter.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501506925-157>
- Aikhenvald, A. (2000). *Classifiers: A typology of noun categorization devices*. OUP Oxford.
- Corbett, G. G. (1991, April 26). *Gender* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139166119>
- Culbertson, J. (to appear). Artificial language learning. In J. Sprouse (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of experimental syntax*. Oxford University Press.
- Culbertson, J., Gagliardi, A., & Smith, K. (2017). Competition between phonological and semantic cues in noun class learning. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 92, 343–358.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2016.08.001>
- Culbertson, J., Jarvinen, H., Haggarty, F., & Smith, K. (2019). Children’s sensitivity to phonological and semantic cues during noun class learning: Evidence for a phonological bias. *Language*. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.0.0234>
- Culbertson, J., Smolensky, P., & Wilson, C. (2013). Cognitive biases, linguistic universals, and constraintbased grammar learning. *Topics in Cognitive Science*, 5(3), 392–424.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/tops.12027>
- D’Alessandro, R. (2021). Not everything is a theory. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 47(1-2), 53–60.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/tl-2021-2005>
- Lee, M. (1988). Language, perception and the world. In J. A. Hawkins (Ed.), *Explaining language universals* (pp. 211–246). Blackwell.
- Leivada, E., & Barceló-Coblijn, L. (2021). Why don’t languages grammaticalize [±poisonous]? *Biolinguistics*, 14 (Special Issue), 51–58.  
<https://doi.org/10.5964/bioling.9155>
- Maldonado, M., & Culbertson, J. (2022). Person of interest: Experimental investigations into the learnability of person systems. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 53(2), 295–336.  
[https://doi.org/10.1162/ling\\_a\\_00406](https://doi.org/10.1162/ling_a_00406)
- Seifart, F. (2010). Nominal classification. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 4(8), 719–736. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2010.00194.x>

## Italian tough constructions: the role of *si*

---

Leonardo Russo Cardona, University of Cambridge

Tough constructions (TCs) involve a dependency between the internal argument of the lexical verb and the subject of the copula in sentences like (1), which has represented a major problem for generative syntax, as this type of movement should be in principle banned (Chomsky, 1977, 1981; Hicks, 2009 among many others):

(1) John is tough to please

Romance languages also have TCs. Italian, in particular, has (at least) two ways of realising them:

(2) *Questi libri sono facili da leggere.*

these books be.PRES.3PL easy.PL DA read.INF

(3) *Questi libri sono facili da leggersi.*

these books be.PRES.3PL easy.PL DA read.INF=SI

‘These books are easy to read.’

In this work, I will first show that the presence of the clitic *si* -which is normally responsible for some non-active (reflexive, anticausative, impersonal, passive, and middle) readings in Italian (Burzio, 1986; Cinque, 1988; D’Alessandro, 2008; Dobrovie-Sorin, 2006)- imposes a number of syntactic and semantic constraints on Italian TCs, stemming from the obligatory middle interpretation (i.e. a non-agentive, property reading, as defined by Lekakou (2005)) that *si* constructions acquire in non-finite clauses under certain conditions. So, there is no real optionality between (2) and (3).

To this end, I will assume an independently motivated derivation of *si* constructions that accounts for significant syntactic differences between the impersonal, passive and middle usages, building on Cinque’s (1988) seminal insights and more recent work by Roberts (2010), Pescarini (2015), and Giurgea (2019). A fundamental property of this derivation is that *si* has a [person] feature in passives and impersonals but not in middles. I point out that this also

makes *si*-TCs like (3) far less problematic for syntactic theory than their English counterparts, as they do not violate locality.

Subsequently, I will clarify how this derivation can explain some of the TC facts and show that *si*-TCs and finite *si*-middles (exemplified by 4) are comparable in many other respects, focusing on the role of the adjectives/adverbs found in these constructions (*tough* adjectives/adverbs), which are crucial for the availability of the middle reading.

(4) *Questi libri si leggono facilmente.*

these books SI read.PRES.3PL easily

‘These books read easily.’

Finally, I posit the existence of a silent *tough* adjective and a silent *tough* adverb with a modal reading to account for the existence of constructions that have extremely similar characteristics to *si*-TCs and *si*-middles.

(5) *Questi funghi sono Ø da mangiare/mangiarsi.*

these mushrooms be.PRES.3PL Ø DA eat.INF/eat.INF=SI

‘These mushrooms are to be eaten/for eating.’

(6) *Questi funghi si mangiano Ø.*

These mushrooms SI eat.PRES.3PL Ø

‘These mushrooms are edible.’

In fact, the analysis provided for the pair (2)-(3) holds for the two options in (5), but (5) has a modal meaning ambiguous between a deontic and possibility reading, which – I argue – is conveyed by the null *tough* adjective. Similarly, the same modal reading is found on the middle *si* construction in (6).

### References

- Burzio, L. (1986). *Italian Syntax*. Springer Netherlands.
- Chomsky, N. (1977). On wh-movement. In P. Culicover, T. Wasow, & A. Akmajian (Eds.), *Formal Syntax* (pp. 77–132). Academic Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on government and binding: The Pisa lectures*. Mouton de Gruyter.

- Cinque, G. (1988). On Si Constructions and the Theory of Arb. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 19(4), 521–581.
- D'Alessandro, R. (2008). *Impersonal 'si' constructions*. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Dobrovie-Sorin, C. (2006). The SE-Anaphor and its Role in Argument Realization. In M. Everaert & H. Van Riemsdijk (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax* (pp. 118–179). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Giurgea, I. (2019). On the Person Constraint on Romanian se-passives. In M. Marchis Moreno & M. Reeve, *Agreement, case and locality in the nominal and verbal domains*. Language Science Press.
- Hicks, G. (2009). Tough-Constructions and Their Derivation. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 40(4), 535–566.
- Lekakou, M. (2005). *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated*. UCL PhD thesis.
- Pescarini, D. (2015). *Le costruzioni con si: Italiano, dialetti e lingue romanze*. Carocci editore.
- Roberts, I. G. (2010). *Agreement and Head Movement: Clitics, Incorporation, and Defective Goals*. MIT Press.

# Blaming the poor for their own poverty? A critical discourse analysis of poverty-related discourses on Chinese social media

---

Yanni Sun, Lancaster University

Despite the nuances, poverty is invariably associated with stigma and shame in different cultures (Walker et al., 2013). It is often perceived to be a result of personal failure and inability (Chan et al., 2022; Chase & Walker, 2013). Existing studies indicate people in China despite living in a socialist state do not hold a very positive attitude to people in destitution. Xu et al. (2022) found media and ordinary people in China have unfavourable views of the poor. Alesina & Giuliano (2011) observed Chinese express fewer preferences for redistribution than people in Eastern and Northern Europe, and Latin America. Yan (2014) found the upper- and middle-income group in China tend to attribute poverty to individual factors such as abilities and efforts. Xu et al. (2022) agreed “policy rhetoric has recently prioritised laziness as causing poverty” and this view is “widely shared by China’s middle class” (p. 756). Research about poverty discourses in China is scarce (Cheng & Ngok, 2020), and the findings are far from decisive.

To explore well-educated middle-class or near middle-class Chinese citizens’ attitude to poverty, my research resorts to data from *Zhihu*. 80% of *Zhihu* users hold a bachelor’s degree or above (Zhang, 2020). It means they are well-educated middle-class who often lead public opinions in China (Peng et al., 2022). To reveal the distinctive features of poverty discourses in China, I also consulted the data from *Quora* (*Zhihu* is its Chinese equivalent) and use it for reference. The following questions will be investigated:

- 1) What do Chinese users in *Zhihu* attribute poverty to? How do they legitimise the attribution?
- 2) How do Chinese users in *Zhihu* differ from users from other countries in *Quora* in terms of attribution of poverty? Who are more likely to blame the poor?

182 relevant questions with the most answers and their top 10% answers ranked according to the number of likes from *Zhihu* were collected. The same number of questions and the same proportion of their answers in *Quora* were also collected to form a reference corpus.

I adopted a corpus-based critical discourse analysis approach. The data will be annotated in two steps: first, the causes of poverty stated or implied in the answers will be coded; second,

the topoi legitimising the attribution of poverty will be coded. This is an on-going project and I only finished coding the causes of poverty in *Zhihu* corpus. I will finish coding both corpora by the end of March. After that, the annotation results of *Zhihu* corpus will be discussed with reference to the results based on *Quora* corpus. Current coding results reveal that *Zhihu* users mostly attributed poverty to external factors such as unfair social system, privileged elites, misfortune and even government, and only a minority nominate individuals traits such as narrow eyesight and laziness as the causes. That seems to suggest contrary to what was discovered in previous studies, Chinese middle-class citizens might not tend to believe that the poor are responsible for their own poverty.

# *Willingness to communicate in English as an L2: Investigating Greek and international learners' perspectives and teachers' perspectives and strategies in Greece and Ireland*

---

Artemis Topouzi, Mary Immaculate College

The present study aims to examine students' self-reported willingness to communicate (WTC) in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL/EAL) contexts and to investigate teachers' perspectives on the importance of WTC in class. This study will also explore teaching strategies that may facilitate the students' WTC. It aims to understand what EFL and ESL teachers do in their teaching practices to promote students' WTC and how these practices affect students' WTC. An investigation will be made between Greek students (18-22 years old) studying in Greece (EFL) and mixed nationality students studying in Ireland in universities/colleges and private language institutes (EAL). The study will explore students' perspectives on WTC and factors affecting their WTC and the teachers' perspectives on WTC and their teaching strategies to encourage WTC. The theoretical framework for this study is based on research by MacIntyre et al. (1998). MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model of WTC drew together linguistic, communicative, and social-psychological variables as factors contributing to L2 WTC. Their model was constructed in a Canadian bilingual context, where the majority of subjects used English as a native language (L1) and French as a second language (L2). Due to the fact that different types of learners will be examined, the goal of this study is to explore the variety of influences on WTC, whether differences in educational establishment, the background knowledge of the learner group, and teachers' practices in the classroom may impact on students' WTC in English.. The study intends to get deeper insights not only into communicative events in the classroom but also the ways the students change or retain their WTC, in this way shedding light on 'the relationship among teachers' cognition, practice, and students' learning' (Kubanyiova and Feryok, 2015, p. 436). A qualitative approach to research design will be employed in order to investigate the students' perspectives on WTC and their teachers' strategies. Semi-structured interviews of students and teachers from each country will be carried out. The interviews will be transcribed and thematically (Guest et al., 2012) analysed using NVivo (Guest et al., 2012) to understand the participant's experiences and perspectives. Classroom observations (15-20) will also be used as research instruments in order to gain the thoughts and views of the participants and to describe events where teachers facilitate their students' WTC. Classroom observations will will be transcribed to form a corpus that will be

analyzed turn-by-turn using discourse analysis. This approach will provide insights into how teachers' activity types influence the students' participation in the conversations.

**Keywords describing proposed research:**

**Willingness to communicate, EFL teaching and learning, teaching strategies, Greek Irish context, thematic analysis**

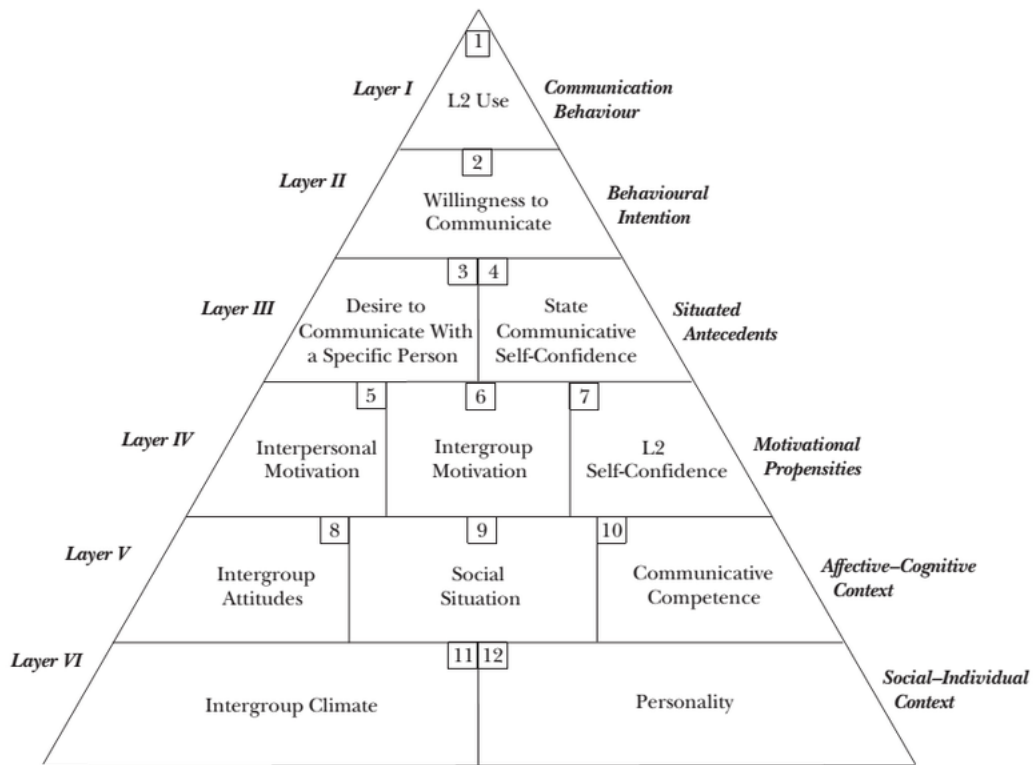


Figure 1: MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) Heuristic model

## Simultaneous Language Learning in Flanders, Belgium

---

Marie Vercauteren, University of Glasgow

How English as a Global Language affects the motivation to learn French among Flemish pupils

Language learning motivation is one of the thriving factors in additional language acquisition and therefore filling the remaining research gaps in this area of expertise is essential. One branch of knowledge that needs further attention is the concept of English as a Global Language (EGL) and how it can possibly interfere with the motivation to learn other languages. This study aims to determine how EGL may affect the motivation to learn French among Flemish pupils. 71 participants between the age of 18-25 completed a retrospective questionnaire regarding their motivational trajectory. Quantitative data were analysed using Excel Spreadsheets and the IBM SPSS Statistics Platform, and a thematic analysis was conducted for the qualitative data. Findings indicated that the Additional Language Learning (ALL) motivation for French declines significantly over the years with the main reasons being the perceived difficulty of the language and the lesson materials/teaching approaches, while it increases slightly for English, the main reason being the perceived usefulness of the language. Statistically, these motivations seem to be correlated neither negative (as was assumed) nor positive, but qualitative data seems to indicate that this depends on the learner. The main implication of these findings is that the motivation to learn French could probably be increased by adjusting lesson materials and teaching approaches towards a more top-down, task-based approach.

# Diasporic Change and Linguistic Landscape: A Comparative Study in Edinburgh's Chinese Restaurants

---

Ashley Xing, The University of Edinburgh

Food and language are two important cultural markers to which diasporans attach their ethnic identities, and ethnic restaurants are where they interrelate—on shopfronts, menus, notices, signs, etc. Linguistic Landscape (LL), is referred as the visibility of languages on objects that mark the public space in a specified territory (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The shaping of LL is contributed by various actors such as institutions, governments, firms, individuals, etc. In the space of individually-run restaurants, the LL-actors are mainly the owners or staff who design the LL elements more freely according to personal strategies. The study explores the interconnection between food, language and ethnicity to unpack the linkage between LL and diaspora.

To do this, a comparative analysis of LL in Chinese restaurants sit around central campus of the University of Edinburgh where Chinese diasporans are more active (Old town) and those located away from the area (New town), will be carried out. Many Chinese restaurants opened around the campus buildings because they targeted at the Chinese students who live and study in the area. This forms a comparison with the restaurants distant from the area where they are built more sparsely and the diaspora is less condensed, so the clientele make-up can be different. The comparative method will allow me to uncover the ethnic minorities' agency on LL: their LL decisions and language attitude reflected in the social practices of languages in the contrasting locales where the diasporic population density is different. By using the special Chinese geographic-diasporic features in the urban center of Edinburgh, The research examines:

1. The visibility and interaction of Chinese (simple/traditional) and English (and other languages, should there be) within landscape of Chinese restaurants in Edinburgh; how the languages are distributed or stratified differently in the restaurants of different geographical range in the city.
2. How LL-actors (restaurant owners or staff) make decisions of linguistic objects in the restaurant space and how this reflect their language attitude.
3. The role of Chinese as a minority language in the area, i.e., whether it enhances commodification of the space or serves for informational function.

The research employs an ethnographic perspective to understand LL as the product of the dynamic and complex social fabric of a diversified neighborhood. For the ethnographic fieldwork, the researcher takes on-site photographs of the interior and exterior of the selected Edinburgh's Chinese restaurants, especially shopfronts, menus, notices, advertisements and other linguistic signs. Besides, semi-structured interviews with the restaurant owners are involved to facilitate the geosemiotic interpretation of the meaning of the spatial design. The researcher positions themselves as an insider participant (Abas, 2019), to be one of the LL audience and a researcher engaged in ethnographic fieldwork.

# Scalar Implicature in Face-threatening Contexts: Processing of Scalar Quantifier “Some” in Mandarin

---

Baoyi Zeng, The University of Edinburgh

The interpretation of scalar terms is moderated by many factors including context and individual differences. When a face-threatening situation arises in a context, speakers should adopt politeness strategies to mitigate the severity of the threat, and listeners interpret the sentences bearing corresponding strategies in mind. When interpreting scalar terms, facethreatening scenarios generate higher politeness demand, and interlocutors tend to use semantic interpretations of the scalar term.

The present study explored the moderating effect of face threat on the interpretation of scalar terms in Mandarin. We examined its effect on processing speed, and how individual differences contribute to this process, using a picture-sentence verification paradigm. Based on previous studies, a more rigorous experimental design was used in the present one. Social motivation is explicitly embedded into discourse to guide the participants to engage in pragmatic inference driven by politeness strategies. Results showed that subjects were more likely to adopt the semantic (broader) interpretation of quantifiers in the presence of face threats. The need for politeness facilitated faster inference from "some" to "all", as indicated by the ratio of congruent choices and response time respectively. Such a process is modulated by individual differences. Participants with high empathy levels tend to simultaneously make inferences under neutral scenarios, without an explicit hint of social motivation.

The current experiment revealed that individuals could effectively extract contextual politeness strategies in face-threatening contexts. This strategy accelerated individuals' reasoning about the semantic interpretation of hierarchical quantifiers, helping them balance social motivation and information exchange motivation in conversations.