

THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 6.1.2022

16:15-17:45

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The Long-Term Effect of Explicit Positive Evidence: Hebrew Speakers Unlearning Resumptive Pronouns in L2 English

In this talk I will present a longitudinal study investigating the unlearning of resumptive pronouns by 18-year-old Hebrew-speaking learners of English as a second language (L2), both before and after exposure to different types of manipulated L2 input.

227 learners and 48 native-speaker controls were tested using a grammaticality judgment and correction task concerning ungrammatical resumed relative clauses (RCs) in L2 English, spanning 4 relativization sites: subject, direct object, indirect object (prepositional dative), and oblique, exemplified in (1)-(4) respectively (the resumptive pronouns are marked in bold).

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| (1) *The girl that she tells Jonathan funny jokes | (Subject RC) |
| (2) *The secretary that the entire team loves her | (Direct Object RC) |
| (3) *The girl that Michael sent some chocolate to her | (Indirect Object RC) |
| (4) *Tina hurt the boy that she threw a pencil at him | (Oblique RC) |

169 of the learner participants were then divided into two groups, and both were exposed to the same input flood: texts abundant with occurrences of gapped subject, direct object, and oblique RCs in the L2. The texts were read in class and translated into the learners' L1 (Hebrew). In one of the groups, the learners' attention was drawn to the gapped RCs abundant in the input, comparing them to their resumed equivalents in Hebrew (in the case of direct object and oblique RCs), using a method dubbed *explicit positive evidence*. In contrast, in the other group, RCs were not emphasized explicitly. Two post-teaching tests were administered: immediately after the teaching sessions and a year post-teaching.

Both learner groups improved immediately post-teaching concerning both RC types involved in the input flood (namely, direct object and oblique RCs) and RC types uninvolved in the input flood (i.e., indirect object RCs). However, a year post-teaching, only the group exposed to explicit positive evidence preserved the improvement recorded immediately post-teaching, and only in RC types involved in the input flood and stressed using explicit positive evidence. This suggests that only input flood combined with explicit positive evidence, rather than input flood alone, can have long-term effects upon the L2 grammar.

The findings are examined in face of questions concerning L1 transfer, full vs. partial access to UG in L2 acquisition, the effect of input manipulation upon L2 acquisition, and two possible accounts for differences arising between the different RC types: accessibility vs. configuration.

Click [here](#) to see the colloquium program.