**Call for papers**

**Can motion event construal be taught? Pedagogical and experimental approaches to restructuring event cognition patterns**

Organisers: Fraibet Aveledo and Jeanine Treffers-Daller (University of Reading)

Workshop dates: 23-24th April 2020

Venue: University of Reading, Whiteknights Campus, Graduate School

**Keynote speakers**:

Panos Athanasopoulos (University of Lancaster): Thinking in multiple languages: The case of goal-oriented motion events

Teresa Cadierno (University of Southern Denmark): Motion event construal in second language learners: From research findings to pedagogical implications and implementations

Alim Tusun (University of Cambridge): Uyghur-Chinese early successive bilinguals’ acquisition of caused motion expressions

We invite abstracts for a workshop which will bring together researchers who have studied how motion event construal is expressed by second language learners or bilinguals either in naturalistic or experimental settings. It is well known that there are differences in the ways in which motion is expressed in different languages. In English, as in Germanic languages, manner of motion is often expressed in the main verb (*Angela* ***ran*** *into the shop*) whereas in French, and other Romance languages, the main verb generally contains the path of motion and the manner is optionally expressed in a satellite (*Angela entre le magasin (****en courant****) “Angela entered the shop running”*). Restructuring these patterns in the process of acquisition of another language with a different set of patterns is known to be very difficult (Cadierno & Ruiz, 2006; Navarro & Nicoladis, 2005). Further evidence for the complexities involved in restructuring can be found in the bidirectional crosslinguistic influence in learners’ and bilinguals’ motion event construals, among children as well as adults (Aveledo & Athanasopoulos 2015).

Although the learning difficulties for L2 learners and bilinguals are well attested, there is little research which focuses on how a new way to talk about movement through space can be taught. Pedagogical strategies to teach motion events are virtually non-existent as this aspect of grammar is generally neglected in the L2 syllabus. Solutions proposed by the research community include Bylund and Athanasopoulos’ (2015) suggestion that multimodal input (film clips with action scenes) helps to restructure motion, while Laws, Attwood and Treffers-Daller (under review) show that an Input Processing approach (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993) has a positive effect. We hope that the workshop will inspire more researchers to develop new studies with innovative pedagogical approaches towards the teachability of motion and that findings from these studies can shed new light on the difficulties involved in restructuring this domain in the process of L2 learning.

**Deadline for submission of abstracts**: Monday 23 March 2020

Information and submission of abstracts: [motionevent2020@gmail.com](mailto:motionevent2020@gmail.com)

**Abstracts of keynote speakers**

**Thinking in multiple languages: The case of goal-oriented motion events**

**Panos Athanasopoulos**

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The linguistic relativity hypothesis suggests that language affects cognition, in predictable ways. If so, which language do multilinguals rely on as a source for cognitive categorisation? Recent research shows that speakers of languages with no obligatory grammatical aspect (e.g., German) tend to establish holistic event perspectives, mentioning the endpoint/goal of some action when describing an event, e.g., “two nuns walk to a house”, and paying more attention to event endpoints when matching scenes from memory. Speakers of aspect languages (e.g., English) are more prone to defocus the endpoint of an event and instead direct attention to its ongoingness, which is reflected both in their event descriptions, e.g., “two nuns are walking”, and in non-verbal similarity judgements (Athanasopoulos & Bylund, 2013; von Stutterheim et al, 2012). This talk summarizes empirical evidence from the past 5 years or so, probing the extent to which non-verbal event cognition patterns may change as a function of additional language learning. Data on L2 users with different bilingual profiles (e.g., foreign language learners and functional multilinguals) and different language constellations (e.g., L1 isiXhosa-L2 English, L1 German-L2 English, L1-English-L2 German, L1 Swedish-L2 English, L1 Afrikaans-L2 English, and Afrikaans-English-isiXhosa-isiZulu-seSotho multilinguals) were collected by means of a non-verbal similarity judgement task, where participants had to match a target scene that had intermediate degree of endpoint orientation, with two alternate scenes with low and high degree of endpoint orientation, respectively. Analyses reveal that the learning and use of a typologically different additional language(s) may indeed lead to restructuring of motion event cognition. However, the extent of this restructuring is dependent on the intricate relationships between language proficiency and length of L2 exposure on the one hand, and on age of onset of bilingualism and language testing context on the other hand, while frequency of L2 use and language of education also present as significant variables for cognitive outcomes in functional multilinguals.

**Motion event construal in second language learners:**

**From research findings to pedagogical implications and implementations**

*Teresa Cadierno (University of Southern Denmark)*

Since Talmy’s (1985, 1991, 2000) and Slobin’s (e.g., 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2003,2004, 2006) groundbreaking work on the expression of motion events in typologically different languages, research on motion event construal in second languages has increased exponentially. This research has generally shown that adult L2 learners experience difficulties when learning to re-think for speaking about motion in a foreign language.

In this lecture I will first outline some of learners’ difficulties in motion event construal, both in relation to the expression of voluntary/spontaneous and caused-motion. Then I will discuss the pedagogical implications of these findings, which point to the need for some type of L2 instructional intervention, and I will review some recent studies that have combined insights from motion typology research and different L2 pedagogical approaches.

**Uyghur-Chinese early successive bilinguals’ acquisition of caused motion expressions**

*Alimujiang Tusun* (University of Cambridge)

The relative impact of universal cognitive factors versus language-specific properties constitutes a key question in language acquisition in childhood. The past two decades witnessed the flowering of this line of inquiry in the domain of spatial language and our understanding of such issues have greatly improved. However, extant studies have focused on L1 and 2L1 scenarios (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Hickmann et al., 2018) while the context of early successive bilingualism (ESB) has not received sufficient attention, despite its relevance for our understanding of the nature of child bilingualism and language acquisition more generally (cf. Meisel, 2018). Furthermore, the languages or language combinations featured are mostly Indo-European while the vast majority of other language (combinations) remain unexplored.

To further the discussions on the role of universal vs. language-specific factors and cross-linguistic influence in spatial language development and to redress the Eurocentricity that characterise much research on bilingualism, the present study examines the early successive bilingual acquisition of caused motion expressions in two non-Indo-European languages. Specifically, four groups of Uyghur-Chinese bilingual children (AO»3; aged 4;6, 6;5, 8;4 and 10;6) were invited to narrate short cartoons depicting a wide range of caused motion event. Their verbalisations were analysed in terms of where particular semantic components are encoded (information locus), what semantic components are selected for expression (information focus), how many semantic components are jointly expressed in one utterance (information density) and how the various semantic components are syntactically organised in discourse (syntactic packaging).

Our findings show the simultaneous but differential impact of both language-specific properties and universal cognitive factors in ESB acquisition of motion expressions. The observed differences in the developmental trajectories of the two languages, especially as evidenced by children’s consistently higher utterance density in Chinese, points to the weightier role of language-specific constraints. However, the increase in utterance density, i.e. children’s ability to focus on and retain more semantic components for expression over time regardless of language indicates the contribution of their developing general cognitive abilities. Bilinguals follow the adult pattern of expressing caused motion in their L1. In their L2 Chinese, they bypass the shared lexicalisation pattern in their two languages up until age 8 and opt for the construction that is specific to their L1, presumably because this option is syntactically less complex (mono-clausal) compared to the shared bi-clausal option. As such, cross-linguistic influence seems to be shaped by structural/typological overlap on the one hand and the complexity of the structures involved on the other.

Although the present study is not explicitly concerned with pedagogical issues in its design, some tentative observations on the teaching of caused motion in L2 Chinese could be made. Recall that the bilinguals’ circumventing the shared lexicalisation pattern between Uyghur and Chinese until age 8 was explained by arguing that the shared alternative represents a syntactically complex structure. In fact, similar observations abound in other L2 contexts. Ji & Hohenstein (2014) showed that English learners of Chinese relied more on the syntactically simple construction and they very rarely produced the complex construction, even at the advanced stage. In a study on French’s learners’ expression of caused motion events in Chinese, Arslangul et al. (2018) found that even advanced learners consistently departed from the target lexicalisation pattern and significantly, the V-framing property of French did not seem to influence the learners’ acquisition and production of the V-framing pattern in Chinese (see similar observations in Hendriks et al., 2008 for English learners of French; Hohenstein et al., English-Spanish bilinguals).

To the extent that these different learner populations are comparable, one unmistakable tendency is their preference for syntactically simple options, oftentimes at the cost of not conforming to the target pattern. Why this is the case may differ for bilinguals vis-à-vis L2 learners, but the point is clear as far as the L2 teaching is concerned, i.e., syntactic complexity is an important factor to consider. Teachers may, therefore, benefit the learner by not only introducing how semantic components of caused motion are typically *lexicalised*, but also by explicitly dissecting of the internal semantic relations of caused motion (e.g., the foregrounding and backgrounding of the sub-events) and explicating how such relations are *syntactically* (re)organised.