

# 54<sup>th</sup> Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages

Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, May 9-11, 2024

## Presentation abstracts

### 1. Code-switching in *Si ggiri cu mia*, a local variety TV show of Calabria

Angelo Cannistrà (University of Texas at Austin)

Code-switching refers to the use of two or more languages either in the same sentence or in the same discourse. Many studies on CS have focused on conversation analysis, but few of them have analyzed CS in the context of entertainment television.

The present paper represents a pioneer study on CS between Italian and *dialetto* in the context of a local Italian television show, *Si ggiri ccu mia*, a variety show broadcast only in the Southern Italian region of Calabria. Using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, I address the following research questions: 1) What are the functions that CS fulfills in the show? 2) Is the content of the program sections influential on the use of different codes?

The show presents four segments: introduction, cultural section, culinary section, random interviews with locals. Results reveal that CS between Calabrese and Italian carries out precise pragmatic functions, such as: humorous, clarifying and compensative. In addition, results show that Calabrese is not used in the cultural sections of the program. Therefore, the sole use of Italian in the cultural sections highlights the prestigious status of the Italian language, and shows how *dialetto* is inferior in terms of status and limited to informal conversations.

### 2. The syntax and semantics of Italian exceptive-exclusive constructions

Luisa Seguin (University of Maryland)

Exceptive constructions express an exception to a generalization (1) (Potsdam, 2019; Vostrikova, 2021).

The exceptive phrase (*eccetto Yuri* ‘except Yuri’) is excluded from the domain of the associate (*tutti gli studenti* ‘all the student’). These constructions carry three inferences (von Stechow, 1993; Vostrikova, 2021; a.o.): the containment inference (Yuri is a student), the domain subtraction (everyone who isn't Yuri came), and the negative inference (Yuri did not come).

Unlike English exceptive (*except*), Italian exceptives are not restricted to universal quantifier associates (2). However, when co-occurring with an existential quantifier, numeral, or wh-word associate, they get an exclusive reading. Exclusives express exclusion: in (2) some students who aren't Yuri came, but the speaker is not saying anything on whether Yuri came or not.

- (1) *Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i tutt-i gli*  
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL all-M.PL the  
student-i.  
student-M.PL  
'Except Yuri all students have arrived.'
- (2) a. *Eccetto Yuri, sono arriva-t-i alcun-i/tre*  
EM Yuri be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.PL some-M.PL/three  
student-i.  
student-M.PL  
'Excluding Yuri, some/three students have arrived.'
- b. *Eccetto Yuri, chi è arriva-t-o?*  
EM Yuri who be.PRS.3PL arrive-PST.PTCP-M.SG  
'Excluding Yuri, who has arrived?'

In this talk, I will argue that structures like (1) and (2) differ both syntactically and semantically. *Eccetto* + universal quantifiers constructions (1) are ‘true exceptives’: they carry all three inferences. Furthermore, they have an underlying clausal structure, which involves ellipsis. On the other hand, *eccetto* + existential quantifiers, numerals, and wh-words constructions (2) are phrasal. Furthermore, the latter do not carry any of the inferences mentioned above. In fact, they subtract an entity, Yuri, from the common ground, in an ‘anti-topic’ behavior.

### **3. Spanish Lexical Borrowings in L2 Portuguese among the Venezuelan Diaspora in Brazil: Linguistic Factors and Community Norms**

Marina Cárcamo-García (Seattle University)

This presentation delves into a usage-based and systematic variationist analysis of Spanish lexical borrowings in L2 Portuguese among 36 Venezuelan migrants in Brazil. It investigates linguistic factors such as semantic classification (synonymic or unique) and cognate status of lexical items, focusing on their influence on borrowings compared to monolingual Portuguese nouns. The analysis, based on 36 sociolinguistic interviews collected in Campinas (Brazil), reveals that borrowings account only for 13.8% of tokens, with unique terms (lexical items lacking direct equivalents) being more frequently borrowed. Cognate and semi-cognate words from Spanish are favored, indicating a higher permeability when languages resemble. Frequency and diffusion analyses show that established and widespread borrowings prevail, yet the community displays a penchant for lexical innovations. The study underscores the importance of a community-based quantitative approach in variationist sociolinguistics, addressing challenges in discerning borrowings between cognate languages and examining their social and lexical integration. It also contributes to understanding borrowings in non-WEIRD (Western, Educated speakers from Industrialized, Rich, Democratic nations) communities, as urged by recent calls in social science research (e.g., Bayley & Escalante, 2022).

### **4. Inalienable possession (and lack thereof) in Spanish**

Imanol Suárez-Palma (University of Florida)

In this talk, I revisit the phenomenon of inalienable possession between a dative argument and a body-part noun in Spanish. Specifically, I look at contexts where the inalienable possession interpretation is obligatory, as in constructions containing monoeventive verbs of perception, and those where the inalienable reading becomes optional, namely with bi-eventive predicates denoting a change of state. I offer a possessor raising and applicative hybrid analysis, whereby the inalienable possessor originates inside the body-part DP and raises to the specifier of an applicative head to license dative case; the position AppIP occupies in the derivation determines the dative’s interpretation as a mere possessor (low applicative), or as an affected possessor as well (middle applicative). Alternatively, cases where the dative is not understood as the inalienable possessor but simply as affected occur when this argument is an additional one originating in the specifier of the middle applicative head (Cuervo 2020), and the possessor of the body-part noun is encoded internally via a clitic or strong possessive, or by means of a genitive PP inside the DP. Thus, I propose the existence of two types of affected applicative heads: (i) one whose specifier is available for the possessor inside the possessum DP to move into to be case licensed, and (ii) another introducing an additional argument in its specifier.

### **5. Centralization of unstressed vowels in Mexican Spanish**

Beth MacLeod (Carleton University)

Do Spanish vowels become more central when they are unstressed? If so, does that difference contribute to distinguishing stressed and unstressed vowels in production in addition to f0, duration, and intensity?

To answer these questions, 48 native Mexican Spanish speakers read aloud 20 pairs of disyllabic Spanish words where the first vowel was stressed or unstressed. Target vowels were analyzed for duration, mean f0, and mean intensity, and Euclidean distance from the centre of the F1-F2 acoustic space was calculated. Statistical analysis found that all vowels except /e/ are significantly more central than their stressed counterparts, supporting work for other dialects. However, when Euclidean distance was included as a fixed effect with f0, duration, and intensity in a logistic mixed effects model predicting vowel stress, it was not significant while f0, duration, and intensity were. This suggests that while unstressed vowels are more central than stressed, these formant differences are likely not as strong as cues to stress than f0, duration, and intensity.

This study sets the stage for future work determining the relative cue weighting of centralization versus these three main cues of stress in perception.

## **6. A Corpus Study of Italian Stress and Gemination to Inform a Moraic Analysis of Syllable Weight**

William Oliver (Stony Brook University)

This study tests the phonetic predictions of the bimoraic norm of Italian stressed syllables (Repetti, 1989), which states that Italian stressed syllables are bimoraic. Furthermore, it investigates the phonetics of the two geminate types in Italian: Lexical and syntactic.

Welch two-sample t-tests compared the lengths of 'V.C, 'VC<sub>i</sub>.C<sub>i</sub>, and VC<sub>i</sub>.C<sub>i</sub> sequences, where C<sub>i</sub>.C<sub>i</sub> is a geminate. Assuming a correlation between moraic structure and segment length, the findings did not align with the model derived from the bimoraic norm. Due to this disparity, I propose revising the bimoraic norm model by incorporating mora sharing, which has been proposed for similar phenomena in Lebanese Arabic (Khattab & Al-Tamimi, 2014), Levantine Arabic, and Malayalam (Broselow et al., 1997). This updated model suggests that stressed vowels are dominated by two moras, rather than solely emphasizing that stressed syllables are bimoraic.

Moreover, this study aimed to address the mixed findings regarding the lengths of Italian geminate types in prior research (Di Benedetto, 2021; Payne, 2000, 2005; Stevens Hajek, 2005). A linear regression model compared the effect sizes of geminate type and stress on VC ratio and revealed that geminate type significantly impacted VC ratio but stress had a greater effect.

## **7. GSR and Suppletion in Bolognese Clitics**

Edward Rubin (University of Utah) & Aaron Kaplan (University of Utah)

Bolognese's clitic system shows complex alternations in which phonotactic constraints are satisfied by suppletion and vowel epenthesis, sometimes with surprising results: in some contexts, the attested suppletive form necessitates epenthesis that would have been unnecessary if another allomorph had been chosen instead. In this paper we argue that Gradient Symbolic Representations (Smolensky & Goldrick 2016) permit an account of this behavior. This framework allows the grammar's preference for one allomorph over another to be encoded in the underlying activities assigned to each allomorph. Under the right conditions, those preferences can be strong enough to create outputs that require additional repairs despite the availability of a disfavored allomorph that needs no such repair. This analysis compares favorably to one couched in the theory of Lexical Selection, which is designed specifically for suppletion. We implement our analysis in Noisy Harmonic Grammar to account for variability in the realization of certain clitics, and we show that the resulting model correctly predicts the realization of a variety of clitic combinations.

## **8. Modeling phonological and phonetic variation in regional Italian mid-vowel systems**

Margaret Renwick (University of Georgia) & Joshua Griffiths (Northeastern University)

What phonological and phonetic factors influence the realization of mid vowels in Italian? Many Italian regional varieties have 7-vowel systems (Full Contrast), but in some cities positional neutralization occurs as lax vowels [ɛ ɔ] are restricted to closed syllables (Conditioned Contrast). We consider the relative contributions of grammar, including the tension between lexical faithfulness and contrast enhancement mediated by syllable structure, and the phonetic factor of vowel duration. Acoustic corpus data demonstrate that stressed mid vowel quality is variable within words, but that the use of [e ɛ], [o ɔ] differs systematically according to the absence vs. presence of positional neutralization. The vowels' distributions are subjected to modeling using seven weighted constraints in Maximum Entropy Grammar, with constraint scaling for non-grammatical effects of duration. We find that in Full systems, faithful forms are generally preferred. In Conditioned systems, contrast enhancement drives a preference for Open-Syllable Tensing and Closed-Syllable Laxing in front vowels; for back vowels, faithfulness predominates. Faithfulness holds greatest sway in longer vowels, while markedness dominates in shorter tokens. These results provide a formalization of mid vowel variation across regional Italian varieties, and show that height in both Full Contrast and Conditioned Contrast systems varies phonetically with duration.

## **9. Universal quantification, collective, and distributive interpretations among heritage speakers of Spanish**

Jess Ward (University of Illinois at Chicago), Gabriel Martínez Vera (Newcastle University), Julio César López Otero (University of Houston), Marina Y. Sokolova (Norwegian University of Science and Technology), Megan Tzeitel Marshall (University of Illinois at Chicago), Adam Cleveland (University of Illinois at Chicago) & Liliana Sánchez (University of Illinois at Chicago)

## **10. Morphosyntactic convergence with passives in heritage Spanish speakers**

Erin Mauffray (UCLA) & Victoria Mateu (UCLA)

This study investigates the effects of target language frequency, dominant language transfer, and task type in Spanish heritage speakers' (HSs) knowledge of two verbal passives: the periphrastic passive, e.g., *los libros fueron publicados*, which also exists in English (the dominant language of the HS group), and the *se*-passive, e.g., *los libros se publicaron*, which only exists in Spanish but is much more frequent than the periphrastic passive. We ask, (1) Can HSs be primed to produce periphrastic and/or *se*-passives? And if so, (2) Do short- and long-term priming effects reflect target-like abstract structural representations? We find that HSs show both immediate and persistent priming effects with both passive types, and they successfully reject ungrammatical passive sentences in the AJT. HSs' production and performance patterns with both passive types converge with NS controls', despite *se*-passives not existing in their dominant language, and periphrastic passives typically emerging after HSs' language dominance shift. Given advanced L2ers' deviant performance on *se*-passives in previous studies, this suggests that early language experience offers an important advantage for HSs in the morphosyntactic domain.

## **11. DOM in Romanian and Spanish among Romanian-speaking L2 speakers of Spanish: evidence from semi-spontaneous production**

Julio César López Otero (University of Houston) & Adina Camelia Bleotu (University of Bucharest)

The study investigates bidirectional crosslinguistic influence (BCLI) among Romanian-speaking L2 Spanish learners, focusing on differential object marking (DOM) in both languages. While Romanian and

Spanish exhibit similar DOM systems, they vary in the factors influencing object marking. The research involved highly proficient Romanian-Spanish bilinguals, Spanish native speakers, and Romanian monolinguals, analyzing transitive structures in narratives. Results from a narrative task in both Spanish and Romanian suggest that Romanian-Spanish bilinguals employ different strategies than Romanian monolinguals in Romanian. Nevertheless, this group of bilinguals presents transitive strategies that are similar to those displayed by Spanish monolinguals in their Spanish narratives. In other words, bilinguals show reduced use of DOM in Romanian compared to their monolingual counterparts, but no differences compared to Spanish monolinguals, potentially indicating L1 attrition rather than BCLI. Previous findings from the same group of bilinguals gathered from more controlled production tasks and acceptability judgment tasks indicate that semi-spontaneous production such as narrative tasks can lead to avoidance strategies, as some bilinguals exhibited ungrammatical DOM usage in Romanian in controlled production tasks (i.e., EPT), possibly influenced by Spanish. The study sheds light on L1 attrition dynamics in Romanian-Spanish bilinguals, a less-explored area compared to other language pairs in contact with Spanish.

## **12. DOM of definite animate common nouns in Romanian. An experimental study**

Ion Giurgea (Romanian Academy) & Alina Tigău (Romanian Academy, University of Bucharest)

Romanian differential object marking (DOM) is a very complex phenomenon, based on the interaction of several triggers, depending on which DOM may be obligatory or optional. With person-denoting overt nouns, DOM is usually described as optional, except with bare nouns and DPs associated to an external dative possessor, where it is ruled out. Optional DOM is correlated with semantic effects which are usually described in terms of specificity. For definites, previous studies have identified presupposition of existence as a pre-condition for DOM, a strong preference for absence of DOM for generics, and a strong preference for DOM in the case of anaphoric definites and definites embedding pronominal and human proper name possessors. We tested these generalizations (especially the last two, which are very recent) by means of three experiments: a production experiment, using translations from English, an experiment testing the acceptability of continuations of a given sentence, and an experiment testing the acceptability of single sentences. Our results show that DOM is indeed preferred with anaphoric definites, but it is not obligatory. A similar level of preference is observed with certain types of non-anaphoric familiar definites. For definites lacking epistemic or scopal specificity, there is no preference for DOM, but DOM is not excluded. The same situation is found with definites that arguably obtain an ‘attributive reading’, where only the function of the referent is relevant (e.g. *First of all, ask **the driver!***). Moreover, definites embedding a pronominal or (human) proper name possessor came out as marginal without DOM and always received DOM in the production experiment.

The fact that DOM, a phenomenon that is usually governed by *formal* properties, is sensitive to the *semantic* type of definite expression, provides support for those analyses in which the semantic differences between the relevant types of definites have a *structural* correlate, rather than being a mere by-product of pragmatics.

## **13. A phase-based approach to focus derivations: the case of Camuno**

Matteo Fiorini (University of Utah)

## **14. Comparing two experimental designs for the study of subject islands in Spanish**

Laura Stigliano (The Ohio State University), Marisol Murujosa (CONICET), Matías Verdecchia (CONICET) & Eszter Ronai (Northwestern University)

Subject islands are of theoretical interest for multiple reasons. First, an ongoing debate exists about whether they are truly islands. Second, it has been proposed that their islandhood is influenced by factors



## 17. The bottlenecked path from imperial-era lenition to Old French regular velar onset voicing

Clayton Marr (The Ohio State University)

## 18. Acadian French between Gallo-Romance and Algonquian

Stephane Goyette (Acadia University)

Compared to (seventeenth century Parisian or Modern Standard) French, Acadian French exhibits five distinctive features:

- 1-Use of *je* as a subject clitic pronoun marking both first person singular and plural verbs.
- 2-General use of a third person plural ending *-ont*
- 3-Use of a distinctive *passé simple* form, marked by singular /i/, plural /ir/ for all verbs.
- 4-Use of the verb “avoir” as the sole *passé composé*-marking auxiliary verb.
- 5-In nominal morphology, none of the irregular plurals of Parisian French have survived.

The goal of the proposed presentation is to argue (refining, not refuting, the accepted history of Acadian French) that the typological make-up of Acadian French can be accounted for in a more satisfactory fashion by assuming that, in addition to the accepted hypothesized language contact situation between Parisian and Poitou-Saintongeais oil varieties, the genesis of Acadian French involved L2 acquisition by Micmac and speakers of other Algonquian languages.

## 19. Teasing Apart Practical and Expressive Imperatives: Evidence from Spanish

Seungho Nam (University of Connecticut) & Aarón Sánchez (University of Connecticut)

Imperative clauses are commonly associated with directive speech acts, known as practical readings. On the other hand, it is well-established in the literature that they can also be used for wishes, referred to as expressive readings. Semantic approaches have embraced this distinction within a single framework. Specifically, Kaufmann (2012) captures the role of a salient decision problem in practical readings and its absence in expressive readings. We argue that Spanish imperatives require a stronger semantics as they disallow most expressive readings. Expressive readings are possible only if the imperative subject gets the descriptive interpretation, i.e. if it is interpreted as individuals with the contextually salient role of the subject rather than being strictly interpreted as the addressee(s). The observation suggests both the proposition and the subject must be accessible in the semantics of Spanish imperatives to facilitate the role of the subject in both readings. In practical readings, the subject acts as an agent making a choice within the decision problem, while in expressive readings, it expresses a set of unspecified individuals.

## 20. From deictic to discourse marker: the *LÀ* form in traditional Acadian French narratives

Carmen L. LeBlanc (Carleton University)

In French, the deictic *LÀ* (‘there’) has developed functions relating to the organization and articulation of oral discourse. In a corpus of narratives and traditional tales in Acadian French, *LÀ* was used in the following contexts:

### Deictic usages

- Locative adverbial indicating place
- Temporal adverbial indicating time
- Demonstrative suffix of emphasis

### Discursive usages

- Discourse marker
- Discourse particle

The question was whether *LÀ* had lost all deictic functions in discursive usages. In narratives, *LÀ* appears in a succession of statements and thus is both temporal deictic and discourse-structuring marker. It has retained certain components of its previous deictic functions, a process common to items progressing on a cline from lexical to grammatical to pragmatic. As a discourse particle, *LÀ*'s semantic content is null, its

role is to break up statements and manage interaction between speaker and interlocutor. We hypothesize that the functional extension to discursive usages proceeded from grammaticalization. Attested as locative (9<sup>th</sup> c.) and then temporal (13<sup>th</sup> c.) adverbial, *LÀ* first appears as a suffix on demonstrative pronouns (12<sup>th</sup> c.) and on nouns (14<sup>th</sup> c.), marking the retreat of the deictic function in favor of a less notional usage and opening the door to discursive usages.

## **21. Standardization and Grammaticalization in 17th-Century Neapolitan: A Comparative Romance Analysis**

Riley VanMeter (The University of California, Berkeley)

In this study, I explore standardization and grammaticalization in 17th-century Neapolitan through a comparative Romance analysis, focusing on methodological approaches to bridge translation studies and comparative linguistics. Previous research has used diverse methodologies to position languages along a grammaticalization continuum, but here I adopt a novel approach by analyzing parallel translations to quantify grammaticalization through paradigmaticity and paradigmatic variability. Utilizing Giambattista Basile's 1634 "Lo Cunto de li Cunti," I examine the morphosyntactic features of past-participle auxiliary choice, possessive adjective position, and mood alternation, positioning Neapolitan within the Romance grammaticalization continuum. Contemporary Neapolitan, standard Italian, and their mother-language Latin are also positioned along the cline, contextualizing 17th century Neapolitan within the greater continuum.

Results find that contemporary spoken Neapolitan is overall the most grammaticalized, while the literary Neapolitan of the source text is still more grammaticalized than spoken neo-standard Italian and notably more so than the literary Italian of the text's translation. This research challenges traditional diachronic views of grammaticalization by highlighting sociolinguistic factors that influence the change, notably language standardization, suggesting intervention and codification slow grammaticalization processes. I also introduce questions of how a translator's idiolect, language history, and bilingualism influence expression of competing structures with differing grammaticalizations across languages.

## **22. A Study of the Latin Inchoative Affix *-sk-***

Stephen Cutts (University of New Orleans)

I present the following as the most plausible explanation for the development of the inchoative in Vulgar Latin and its subsequent transition to Romance:

*Step One.* Latin inchoative second conjugation verbs were usually deverbatives, and originally denoted the beginning of a state, or sometimes an action. These inchoative *-ēscō -ēscēre* verbs combined with certain denominative verbs, mainly derived from adjectives in *-iō -īre*, in the fourth conjugation:

*Step Two.* Later, in a large section of the Latin-speaking territory, the earlier *-ēscō* endings were replaced by *-īscō*, giving rise to the form *-īscō -īre*. After the initial blending of the second conjugation inchoatives with the fourth conjugation denominative-causative verbs, the *-ēscō* affix entered into competition with *-īscō*.

*Step Three.* Additional, striking innovations affecting the inchoative conjugation occurred in several of the Romance languages. The new *-īscō -īre* form grew in vitality and productiveness until it overshadowed the old *-iō -īre* conjugation. In several Romance languages, the *-ēscō* and *-īscō* endings were extended to other verb forms.

To strengthen this thesis, I look at modern Catalan, wherein most *-ir* conjugation verbs take the inchoative affix. In its Valencian dialect, the affix manifests the *-ēscō -īre* blended form, with the vowel *e* for one form and the vowel *i* for all the rest.



### 23. A corpus study on experiencer object light verb constructions across Romance languages

Niklas Wiskandt (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf)

### 24. Deixis and Person in Romance Demonstratives

Judy Bernstein (William Paterson University), Francisco Ordóñez (Stony Brook University) & Francesc Roca (Universitat de Girona)

Demonstratives in Romance languages display greater morphological complexity than the definite articles that developed from them, illuminating the internal structure of both sets of forms. Building on the work of Leu (2015), Bernstein et al. (1999), and others, we claim that Romance demonstratives can be decomposed into a deictic or locative component and a definite article, and that an agreement relation holds between these two syntactic heads: a deictic head (DeicticP) is valued and interpreted as distal or proximal when it agrees with a person feature (1<sup>st</sup> corresponding to proximal, 2<sup>nd</sup> corresponding to medial, or 3<sup>rd</sup> corresponding to distal) in a D head (DP; see Terenghi 2023, Guardiano & Stavrou 2020, Bernstein 2008, Longobardi 2008). The general structure we propose is schematized in (1), and (2) provides an instantiation for Italian.

- (1) [DeicticP [DP ]]  
(2) [DeicticP *qu-* [DP *ello* ]] (Italian)  
*quello*  
'that'

When a definite article is decoupled from its demonstrative source, it retains its person feature and loses its deictic/locative feature. The syntactic complexity of the structure correlates with the overall interpretation of the (extended) DP.

### 25. The order of direct and indirect objects in Spanish ditransitive constructions: a usage-based approach

Javier Rivas (University of Colorado Boulder)

Using data from spoken Spanish, we conduct a variationist analysis of the variable position of postverbal objects in ditransitive clauses. We consider two variants: Verb (V) - Direct Object (DO) - Indirect Object (IO) and V-IO-DO, as in shown in (1):

- (1) a. V-DO-IO: *le dediqué una canción a mi hija*  
b. V-IO-DO: *le dediqué a mi hija una canción*  
'I dedicated a song to my daughter'

Although (1a) is generally considered the “perfect” or preferred order, our analysis shows that both V-DO-IO and V-IO-DO constructions present similar rates in Spanish. Additionally, the results of the linear regression models reveal that the occurrence of V-IO-DO order is favored by first and second person IOs as well as tracking IOs, and disfavored when the DO is non-referential. We use discourse (information packaging) and cognitive (chunking) factors to account for these results. Taking into account their high token frequency and their recurrent usage patterns, we also suggest that predicates of verbal transfer (e.g., *decir* ‘say’, *contar* ‘tell’, *preguntar* ‘ask’) may take the lead in the use and spread of the V-IO-DO order. Using variationist methodology, this study contributes to the field of constituent order typology by providing a fine-grained analysis of Spanish.

## 26. The role of language dominance and bilingualism type (L2/heritage Spanish speakers) in the production of language-specific allophones of /p/ and /b/ during a short-term study abroad

Brendan Regan (Texas Tech University), Julia Millán Gómez (Texas Tech University) & Sara Cantero Viúdez (Texas Tech University)

## 27. Testing language dominance on transfer to L3 French with an offline task

Caroline Mekhaeil (University of Toronto)

There are several models that have been developed to explain the source of transfer to an L3 (Hermas, 2010; Ghezlou & al., 2018; Rothman, 2011; Flynn & al., 2004 and Westergaard & al., 2017). However, these models don't address numerous issues like transfer to an L3 in simultaneous bilinguals. This study examines how individual language dominance in previously-learned languages might determine the source of transfer to an L3.

We tested the influence of dominance in Arabic and English as L1s on French as an L3 in 18 children aged 7 to 10 years. We used a questionnaire and an oral production task (frog's stories) to confirm the dominant language in each child. Then, testing adjective placement, a preference task (where participants had a picture and two sentences on the screen, and they had to choose the correct sentence that describes the picture) was used to test the source of transfer to French, the L3.

Although preliminary results do not reach statistical significance between the two experimental groups ( $p=0.228$ ), they do show a tendency to having the dominant language as the source of transfer to French L3 in two conditions: (i) the placement of evaluative adjectives and (ii) the agreement in gender between the adjectives and the nouns in post-nominal adjectives.

Group	Condition 1 Noun omission	Condition 2 Placement of evaluative adjectives	Condition 3 Placement of concrete adjectives	Condition 4 Agreement in gender between nouns and concrete adjectives	Condition 5 Agreement in gender between nouns and evaluative adjectives
English dominants	49 (82%)	36 (60%)	37 (62%)	33 (55%)	42 (70%)
Arabic dominants	32 (67%)	25 (52%)	21 (44%)	31 (65%)	32 (67%)
French natives	42 (100%)	42 (100%)	41 (98%)	36 (86%)	42 (100%)

## 28. Features of French clausal ellipsis

Marc Authier (The Pennsylvania State University)

French has two pro-forms that can substitute for a proposition: the clitic *le* 'it', and the pronoun *ça* 'that', neither of which alternates with a silent element such as *pro*. There are, however, contexts in which *le* does alternate with a silent category and never alternates with *ça*; for example, in modal ellipsis sentences like (1).

(1) Ils ne m'ont pas aidé. J'estime cependant qu'ils (l')auraient pu/\*ils auraient pu ça.

'They didn't help me. I believe, however, that they could have.'

Because this *le* can co-occur with *wh*-extraction (2), it cannot be a pronoun.

(2) Il n'a pas dit lesquels il veut tester et lesquels il ne le veut pas.

'He didn't say which ones he wants to test, and which ones he doesn't.'

I will argue that this *le* is the overt realization of an E-feature, which has a silent counterpart in more colloquial styles. I will further show that it occurs in two distinct types of ellipsis: (a) modal ellipsis, which need not involve extraction out of the ellipsis site, and (b) clausal ellipsis in comparatives, ACD

constructions, etc., all of which *must* involve extraction to the left periphery. A formal analysis will be provided.

### **29. Verb-Echo Answers in Galician Arise from V-Stranding VP-Ellipsis**

Laura Stigliano (The Ohio State University) & María Morado Vázquez (The Ohio State University)

Sentences containing object gaps have recently received considerable attention in the ellipsis literature. The debate revolves around whether these instances of Verb-Stranding VP-Ellipsis or Argument Ellipsis. This study focuses on Verb-Echo Answers in Galician, a relatively understudied Romance language. Verb-Echo Answers is a type of answer to a yes/no question, where the affirmative answer is an “echo” of the finite verb in the question, and the negative answer is an echo of the finite verb in the question combined with sentential negation.

In this presentation, we discuss new data from Galician that sheds light on the theory of ellipsis. We challenge previous claims regarding the distribution of Verb-Echo Answers in Galician, ultimately concluding that an Argument Ellipsis analysis is not on the right track. Instead, we posit that these answers stem from Verb-Stranding VP-Ellipsis, aligning with previous accounts of object gap constructions in languages like Greek, Irish, and Hungarian, among others. Importantly, this offers further support for the existence of this mechanism as a way of deriving object gaps more generally. Finally, we propose an ellipsis licensing mechanism through Agree, which accounts for the distribution of this elliptical construction.

### **30. V-Movement, Subject Clitics, and Inversion: Problems and Solutions**

Edward Rubin (University of Utah)

Building on new evidence from Bolognese, this paper proposes an account for the appearance and distribution of phi-related subject clitics both within and among Gallo-Italic grammars that relies only on independently motivated mechanisms. It notes problems for previous accounts that include additional subject clitic specific functional heads and varying height of head-movement. Instead, it proposes that subject clitics depend on standard Agree, and that they are a consequence of an extra uPhi (“agreement doubling”) beyond the one inherited from C. Inversion in interrogatives is purely syntactic, and follows from strictly cyclic head-movement of V up to C. These two separate uPhis underlie the distinct patterns of syncretisms and gaps in paradigms for verbal agreement suffixes and subject clitics in particular grammars, and generalizations among them. Furthermore, gaps in a paradigm of subject clitics, like gaps in an agreement paradigm, do not imply a lack of Agree, but only a lack of overt exponents. Independently motivated syntactic mechanisms thus feed independently motivated morphological mechanisms. The syntax determines word/morpheme order, while morphophonology determines their realization.

### **31. Unveiling Linguistic Power Play: Urban Signage Dynamics at the U.S.-Mexico Border**

Natalia Mazzaro (University of Texas at El Paso)

The purpose of this research is to understand the linguistic ideologies behind language choice and the social hierarchies that exist in the bilingual context of the U.S.-Mexico border by comparing the use of Spanish and English in the urban signage of two border cities: Ciudad Juárez (CJ), Mexico and El Paso (EP), Texas. Based on the analysis of 3,000 pictures (1,400 from EP and 1,600 from CJ), results show a significantly weak presence of Spanish (10.8%) in EP, which has a predominantly Hispanic population (82%) and a large presence of English (35.5%) in CJ, which does not align with its strong Spanish monolingual population. The high percentage of English in CJ is remarkable, considering the national and state advertising regulations requiring public signs to be in Spanish. The analysis reveals that English holds prestige in both urban areas, predominantly present in regions with high socio-economic status.

Conversely, Spanish predominates in locations with lower socio-economic status. In essence, opting for English carries commercial and economic significance, while opting for Spanish bears symbolic weight, reflecting ties to Mexican culture and identity. This examination of the linguistic environment underscores the disparate distribution of English and Spanish and the implications for the field of language policy and planning.

### **32. Variation of the Personal Infinitive in Portuguese**

Vanessa Revheim Cunha (University of Georgia), Allonah Ezro-Christy (University of Georgia) & Jill McLendon (University of Georgia)

This study investigates the different factors that influence the variation of the Portuguese personal infinitive (PI), an uncommon verbal form that marks the infinitive for person and number, but lacks specification for tense. Data from the Sketch Engine ptTenTen20 corpus is used to empirically determine if European (EP) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP) dialects differ in their use of the PI, whether it is limited to formal (written) registers, and to evaluate the influence of clitic pronouns on its variation. Corpus metadata included tags for were used to determine dialect, via website extension, and register information, including Legal, Encyclopedia, and News subcorpora as formal, and Blog as informal. Data were coded with R and analyzed with a logistic regression fixed-effects model.

This quantitative analysis represents one of the few attempts to statistically examine previous claims about the PI and its use. Results show certain clitics and dialect as significant factors. However, register was not a statistically significant predictor, and despite claims that the PI has been lost in colloquial BP (Pires & Rothman 2019), instances are found of the PI in BP blogs, the informal register.

### **33. Low surprisal, high entropy, and the emergence of Portuguese /ẽĩ/**

Andre Zampaulo (Saint Louis University)

One of the most controversial issues in the historical phonology of Portuguese refers to the emergence of its word-final nasal diphthong /ẽĩ/, spelled *-ão* and *-am* in the modern language. The goals of the present study are, thus, twofold: (i) to present a unified account of the changes that led to the emergence of final /ẽĩ/, consistent with a quantifiable theory of phonological change; and (ii) to apply information-theoretic tools as a contribution to the advancement of theoretical approaches to sound change. By analyzing data from a corpus of historical Portuguese (Davies & Ferreira 2006-), this study proposes that the change events incurred by the Old Portuguese word-final nasal sequences derive not only from a likely phonetic ambiguity that characterized each nasal subsystem in the different historical periods in question, but also—and decisively—from the instability of high frequency sounds and the uncertainty they contributed to those subsystems before the changes took place. This is observed in the diphthongization processes (i.e., /ẽᵖ/ > /ẽĩ/ and /õᵖ/ > /õĩ/), as well as in the dissimilation process (i.e., /õĩ/ > /ẽĩ/) that led to the unification of all original nasal sequences in /ẽĩ/ in the standard variety of Portuguese.

### **34. Endangered Romance varieties in the Istria-Kvarner region, Croatia: Status of Istriot, Istro-Romanian and Istro-Venetian and corpus building for documentation and research**

Margaret Renwick (University of Georgia), Keith Langston (University of Georgia), Zvezdana Vrzic (New York University) & John Hale (University of Georgia)

This presentation discusses the status of three understudied Romance varieties spoken in the multilingual Istria-Kvarner region in northwestern Croatia – Istriot, Istro-Romanian and Istro-Venetian – and describes the building of a multilingual spoken corpus with the multifaceted goals of language documentation and description, the study of language contact phenomena, and development of NLP technologies to assist in this work. We discuss the decisions that must be made in the collection, transcription, and annotation of spoken language data and the many challenges posed by creating a corpus of this type. The corpus

comprises 15 hours of audio data for each of these macro-varieties, including speakers that represent different local varieties and different age groups. Data are collected in the form of sociolinguistic interviews conducted by native speakers in order to elicit relatively casual/informal speech. Our choices for the transcription and annotation of the data are also determined by the different goals of the corpus and the nature of the data themselves. Issues include the development of orthographic conventions for these non-standardized varieties and a common system for morphosyntactic annotation. We also discuss the use of automatic speech recognition systems and other tools to assist in the time-consuming tasks of transcription, alignment, and annotation.

### **35. Constructing Corpora for Interactional Sociopragmatics Research**

Jesus Adolfo Hermsillo (Stanford University) & Evelyn Fernandez-Lizarraga (Stanford University)

Despite occurring frequently in interaction, certain linguistic features may not naturally arise in traditional sociolinguistic interviews. YouTube videos present a novel source of data for studying sociopragmatic phenomena that are empirically challenging to characterize due to their interactional nature. We present a principled approach for constructing corpora using YouTube data and demonstrate its effectiveness across two case studies. The first case study presents a variationist analysis of predicates of personal taste (e.g., *es muy delicioso, está bien sabroso*) in Mexican cooking shows. The second case study examines the variable use of definite articles with proper names (e.g., *la Maria*) within a friend group of transgender women in central Mexico. We use tools from natural language processing to retrieve and annotate transcripts with contextual and linguistic information. The quantitatively driven approach developed here enables us to create representative samples from vast amounts of naturalistic data. These samples can facilitate further qualitative analyses, inform the nature of aggregate-level patterns, and advance sociopragmatic research through a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.

### **36. Predicative possession choice in Argentinean Spanish: An experimental study**

Martin Fuchs (The Ohio State University), Kendra Dickinson (Rutgers University) & Scott Schwenter (The Ohio State University)

In this paper, we delve into the intricate distribution and aspectual analysis of predicative possession in Argentinean Spanish, specifically examining the distinction between HAVE-possessives and WITH-possessives. Contrary to previous descriptions that primarily emphasize aspect as the main differentiator, this study presents experimental data obtained from Argentinian Spanish to challenge and refine this perspective. Through a force-choice survey administered to 59 participants from Argentina, the study reveals nuanced preferences in possessive choice. The findings indicate that *tener* NP (HAVE-possessive) is predominantly favored in durative contexts, whereas *estar con* NP (WITH-possessive) tends to be preferred when accompanied by limiting adverbs. Statistical analysis further corroborates these preferences, highlighting the influence of temporal adverbs on the selection of possessive constructions. In proposing a refined aspectual analysis, our study suggests that *tener* NP conveys imperfectivity in relation to a superinterval of the reference interval, while *estar con* NP aligns the possessive interval with the reference interval. By accommodating the variability and overlapping distributions of these constructions, this approach enhances the cross-linguistic generalizability of constraints on predicative possession studies.

### **37. French sentential coordination in diachrony: Syntactic change in Old and Middle French**

Bryan Donaldson (University of California, Santa Cruz) & Ivy Shaw (University of California, Santa Cruz)

We report on an ongoing project aimed at better understanding how strategies of sentential coordination interact with word order and syntactic change in Old French and into Middle French. In particular, we focus on the alternation between two elements, the conjunction *e(t)* ‘and’ and the sentence adverb *si* ‘thus, and,’ both of which can occur sentence-initially (although occupying different syntactic positions) and can function as roughly equivalent linking elements between two conjoined clauses (Fleischman 1991; Foulet 1928; Marchello-Nizia 1985; *inter alia*).

Our data span the period from 980 to 1456, and we analyze diachronic change, intertextual variation, and contribute to debate on properties of the “mystery particle” (Fleischman 1991: 251) *si* in Old/Middle French and in particular the participation of *si* in sentential coordination. Our results also contribute to our understanding of the syntactic change by which French transitioned from a “relaxed” V2 language (Wolfe 2019), to a stricter V2 language, only to have this V2 grammar break down and evolve into a SVO grammar.

### **38. A diachronic study of the positioning of adjectives in French**

Arielle Roadman (Indiana University)

The focus of this study is to trace the positionings of adjectives in French throughout time (before or after the noun). Historical linguists claim that the most common position for adjectives in Old French and Middle French was pre-nominal (before the noun) but at some point in time, this trend was reversed since the most common position today is post-nominal (after the noun). Very few quantitative studies have been carried out to assess when this happened. What is more, the situation of adjective positioning in French today is a little murky. Some claim that, because of contact with English, adjectives are now following the English pattern and are being placed more often before the noun. Though this has been tested a few times, the results are often inconclusive. Thus, the goal of this corpus study is to contribute data to both of these questions based on texts spanning from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The results show a neat decline in pre-nominal adjectives throughout time, with the 17<sup>th</sup> century being the turning point. The 21<sup>st</sup> century data shows that some types of adjectives are preferred pre-nominally, but not all.

### **39. Morphological intensification from Latin to Spanish: A corpus-based approach to the evolution of Spanish *-ísimo* from the 13th - 17th centuries**

David Alan Hair (University of North Georgia)

From Latin to Old Spanish and continuing into Modern Spanish, intensification has been expressed through various lexical and morphological means. The most common intensifier *mu*y (< Lat. MULTUM ‘a lot’) coexists with *bien* (< Lat. BENE ‘well’) as well as other lexical intensifiers and the morphological intensifying suffix *-ísimo* (< Latin superlative -ISSIMUS), all sharing the functional equivalence of ‘very’ in English. The morphological intensifier *-ísimo* is shown to have fallen into disuse during Old Spanish, with a resurgence in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. This paper traces the use of this morphological intensifier from Spanish diachronic corpus data from the 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries utilizing chronicle texts from the *Digital Library of Old Spanish*.

The results of a data analysis point to an open historical view of coexisting intensifier forms from Latin that are recycled over time in language use and suggest a refocusing on their conditioning according to factors such as adjective quality, adjective type, and discourse context. The use of intensification as a linguistic universal and an area of frequent innovation and change continues to provide ongoing opportunities to discover dynamic features of our languages and to compare them cross-linguistically.

#### **40. Absolute MOST in Romanian**

Carmen Dobrovie-Sorin (Romanian Academy, LLF/CNRS) & Ion Giurgea (Romanian Academy)

We show that the postnominal MOST of Romanian allows, besides the relative reading, an absolute non-proportional reading, manifested in examples such as (1):

- (1) Lebedele [cele mai multe] sunt negre.  
swans-the [SUP more many] are black  
'The largest/most numerous group of swans is black'

This invalidates the presumed inexistence of the absolute reading of superlative quantitatIVES (Szabolcsi 1986, Gawron 1995) as well as Hackl's (2009) hypothesis that the proportional reading is a special guise of the absolute reading of MOST. We argue that the impossibility of the absolute reading of MOST holds for the prenominal position (crosslinguistically, including Romanian), due to the prenominal MOST sitting in Spec,MeasP, which conflicts with the DP-internal scope position of EST required for the absolute reading. The postnominal position is an adjectival position, which can establish a legitimate relation to the DP-internal EST. Even in this case, the absolute reading of MOST is hard to obtain and requires specific contextual settings. We explain this by the need for a partitioning operator that turns the join semi-lattice denoted by the plural NP into a set of non-overlapping pluralities, which is a legitimate argument for -EST.

#### **41. Overt path in motion events: child language as a magnifier for event structure**

Irene Amato (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) & Artemis Alexiadou (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

Children tend to produce more transparent morphological realizations than adults, preferring a one-to-one mapping between form and conceptual structure (Alexiadou et al. 2021; Guasti, et al. 2023). In this paper, we show that children produce more transparent and/or redundant combinations of motion verbs + prepositions than adults.

This article reports the results of a corpus search on the production of motion verbs by Italian-speaking children and adults. The aim of this study is twofold. On the one hand, it presents an investigation of motion verbs in a verb-framed language as Italian. On the other hand, it contributes to our understanding of first language acquisition in the domain of motion events.

The presence of analytic and redundant types in some verb-framed languages suggests introducing more fine-grained distinctions into Talmy's typology of motion events, and more flexibility in Folli & Harley (2020)'s theory. Italian seems to belong to the category of "weak verb-framed languages" (Troberg 2023). With its transparency, child language might help to understand how and why path behaves differently depending on the meaning, the construction, and the language.