Research Seminars on Chinese Linguistics and L2 Chinese

汉语语言学与二语习得研讨会

Lent Term 2019
<@ Room 8-9, FAMES>

The Research Seminars on Chinese Linguistics and Second Language (L2) Chinese are held by the Chinese Linguistics and L2 Chinese research group of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (FAMES), Cambridge. The aims of these seminars are to provide a platform for researchers to discuss recent development in the field, to present their work and to receive feedback from fellow researchers. The seminars are supervised by Dr. Boping Yuan. For more information, please contact Tongkun Liu (TL394@cam.ac.uk).

The seminars in Lent Term 2019 are arranged as follows. All are welcome.

1. L3 acquisition of Mandarin sentence-final question particles by Cantonese-English bilinguals *presented by* **Dr Yanyu Guo** (4-6pm Friday 8th February 2019)

2. Interfaces in the Chinese *ba* construction and their representations in English-Speaking learners' L2 Chinese grammars *by* **Tongkun Liu** (4-6pm Friday 15th February 2019)

3a. Covert objects and VP ellipsis in English speakers' L2 Chinese: Evidence of the incremental model of L2 speech production mechanisms *by* **Lilong Xu** (4-5pm Friday 22nd February 2019)
3.b. Definiteness in Heritage, L2 and L3 Mandarin grammars: Empirical evidence for the source of transfer in L3A *by* **Jingting Xiang** (5-6pm Friday 22nd February 2019)

4a. Absence of L1 transfer of ellipsis at L2 Chinese initial stages: Evidence from L2 Chinese oral production by English and Korean speakers *presented by* **Dr Boping Yuan** (4-5pm Friday 8th March 2019)
4b.Temporal-Aspectual Sentence Final Particles in English and Cantonese Speakers' L3 Mandarin Chinese *presented by* **Dr Yanyu Guo** (5-6pm Friday 8th March 2019)

5. L2 acquisition of gapping constructions in Mandarin Chinese by English speakers *by* **Chenyang Zhang** (4-6pm Wednesday 13th March 2019)

1. L3 acquisition of Mandarin sentence-final question particles by Cantonese-English bilinguals

Presented by **Dr Guo, Yanyu** (4-6pm Friday 8th February 2019; Room 8-9, FAMES)

Abstract: This study aims to test possible transfer sources at the initial stage of third language (L3) acquisition by examining the acquisition of four Mandarin sentence-final particles (SFPs) by Cantonese-English bilinguals. Unlike the case in English, in both Mandarin and Cantonese, a statement can be converted into a question by merging an SFP at a sentence final position. Cantonese is therefore structurally closer to Mandarin than English and is thus predicted to be the source of transfer on the basis of the Linguistic Proximity Model (LPM; Westergaard et al., 2016) and the Typological Primacy Model (TPM; Rothman, 2010, 2011, 2015). An offline Acceptability Judgement Task (AJT) and an online Cross-Modal Priming Task (CMPT) were employed. The AJT results show that the learners' Cantonese facilitated them in acquiring the features of the Mandarin question particles, which supports the predictions of the TPM and the LPM. In addition, the online processing data indicate that the L3 learners' implicit knowledge developed later than their explicit knowledge.

2. Interfaces in the Chinese *Ba* Construction and Their Representations in English-Speaking Learners' L2 Chinese Grammars

by **Liu, Tongkun** (4-6pm Friday 15th February 2019; Room 8-9, FAMES)

Abstract: There are multiple semantic and/or pragmatic constraints on the elements of a well formed *ba* construction in Mandarin Chinese, e.g. the main verb in the *ba* construction should be of semantic [manipulate, resultative] properties and the retained object in the *ba* construction should be semantically possible, pragmatically necessary and forming a 'part-whole' relationship with the post-*ba* NP. Whether or not English-speaking learners of L2 Chinese are sensitive to these interface constraints in sentence processing and whether they can ultimately build these interfaces in there L2 Chinese grammars are of great interest in the current research project. In this seminar, I would like to report the results and findings from the main experiment of the research, which consisted of a self-paced reading task, an on-line judgement task and an acceptability judgement task.

3a. Covert objects and VP ellipsis in English speakers' L2 Chinese: Evidence of the incremental model of L2 speech production mechanisms

by **Xu, Lilong** (4-5pm Friday 22nd February 2019; Room 8-9, FAMES)

Abstract: Objects are obligatorily overt in English, but they can be covert in Chinese. The

object of a Chinese sentence can be deleted if it refers to the topic of the sentence (Huang, 1984). However, it has recently been argued that some gaps in object position should be analyzed as the result of movement and VP ellipsis (Huang, 1991; G. Li, 2002; Liu, 2014). It has been argued that the object can be covert due to VP ellipsis in a sentence where the verb phrase is identical to that in the preceding coordinate sentence. However, when its verb differs from the verb in the preceding sentence, it is unacceptable to have a covert object in the second sentence (Liu, 2014) (see "the verbal identity condition", Goldberg, 2005). This ongoing study investigates whether English native speakers who learn Chinese as their second language (L2) show developmental progress in the use of Chinese covert objects.

To achieve this goal, the study used a cross-modal picture-description task (CPT) that made use of structural priming. An acceptability judgment task (AJT) was also included. The study found that L2 beginners tended to produce complete sentences without covert objects even if they were exposed to priming sentences where objects were phonetically silent. Priming effects were not evident until later stages of L2 development (i.e. at intermediate and advanced levels). It is found in the AJT that all learner groups can accept covert objects in the verbal-identity condition. This finding is consistent with the incremental model of L2 speech production mechanisms that states that the development of L2 speech production mechanisms is incremental in nature and that derivations, such as ellipsis, are not accessible in L2 speech production until the later stages of L2 development (Yuan & Zhang, 2018).

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Yuan,B & Zhang, L (2018). An Incremental Model of L2 Speech Production mechanisms: Developmental Evidence from Structural Priming of Object Ellipsis in L2 Chinese Speech Production. Oral presentation at 18th international symposium processability approaches to language acquisition (PALA)

3b. Definiteness in Heritage, L2 and L3 Mandarin grammars: Empirical evidence for the source of transfer in L3A

by **Xiang, Jingting** (5-6pm Friday 22nd February 2019; Room 8-9, FAMES)

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Abstract: The study of L3 acquisition (L3A) within formal linguistics perspectives is still in its infancy as compared with the decades of development in the study of L2 acquisition (L2A). In particular, studies on L3A in the literature mostly involve at least two Roman-Germanic languages, and little attention has been paid to language triads with more than one Asian languages (Ranong & Leung, 2009; lan Tsang, 2009). In this presentation, we are going to report on a study on the encoding of definiteness in heritage, L2 and L3 Mandarin grammars. By investigating a less-studied combination of English, Cantonese and Mandarin, we aim to find empirical evidence that contributes to one of the most important tasks in the research of L3A: identifying the source of transfer in L3 grammars (Alonso and Rothman, 2017).

As is well-known, articles are one of the locations marking the [±definite] features in languages like English (Hawkins, 2015). In contrast, in Mandarin, an article-less language, the [±definite] features are represented through a more complicated system with the support of bare nouns ([±definite]), numerals ([±definite]), classifiers ([-definite]), or demonstratives([+definite]), and the selection of noun phrases is influenced by subject/object positions as well as different types of definiteness, e.g. anaphoric definiteness or associational definiteness. In order to examine how heritage, L2 and L3 speakers of Mandarin express different types of definiteness in real time, we conduct an online picture-elicited production task with pictures and a corresponding offline acceptability judgement task. The participants are carefully selected monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual speakers including: 1) L1 English L2 Cantonese L3 Mandarin speakers, 2) L1 Cantonese L2 English L3 Mandarin speakers, 3) L1 English L2 Mandarin speakers, 4) Mandarin heritage speakers born in the U.K., and 5) monolingual speakers of Mandarin.

4a. Absence of L1 transfer of ellipsis at L2 Chinese initial stages: Evidence from L2 Chinese oral production by English and Korean speakers

Presented by **Dr Yuan, Boping** (4-5pm Friday 8th March 2019; Room 8-9, FAMES)

Abstract: This presentation reports on an empirical study investigating the role of L1 in the development of L2 speech production, by examining two types of elliptical structures in English and Korean speakers' L2 Chinese oral production. Chinese allows vP ellipsis licensed by a model verb, as in (1), and ΣP ellipsis licensed by the auxiliary shi 'BE', as in (2), (c.f. Soh 2007). The scope of ellipsis licensed by shi is larger than that licensed by the model verb, as the latter includes a vP whereas the former a negator, a model verb and a vP.

Like Chinese, English also allows ellipsis licensed by a model verb, as in (3) and (4) (c.f. Merchant 2001, 2004). Although the auxiliary do in English can license ellipsis, apparently similar to shi 'BE' in Chinese, it can only license vP-ellipsis, as shown in (5),

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and it cannot license ΣP-ellipsis, as in (6). This is because the position of the English auxiliary do is at the head of ModP, the same position as model verbs in English but different from shi 'BE' in Chinese (c.f. Soh (2007). Accordingly, what is elided after the dummy do is a vP rather than a ΣP and therefore, unlike Chinese, ΣP-ellipsis is not licensed in English.

Korean equivalents to English and Chinese model verbs like will and hui cannot license a vP-ellipsis, as in (7). This is because items like -eul 'will' in (7) are verbal suffixes, and thus deleting a verb phrase in a sentence and leaving the suffix stranded would render the remnant of the sentence ungrammatical.

Like Chinese, but unlike English, Korean allows the axiliary ya 'BE' to license ΣP-ellipsis, the scope of which can include an auxiliary or/and a negator, as illustrated in sentences in (8), which is analogous to shi-licensed ΣP-ellipsis in Chinese. According to Kim and Sohn (1998), the dummy ya is inserted to the head of TP, which is higher than model elements in Korean.

Schwartz and Sprouse (1994, 1996) propose a 'Full Transfer' hypothesis that L2 learners' steady-state L1 grammar is entirely transferred into the initial state of their L2 grammars. Given the cross-linguistic differences and similarities between Chinese, English and Korean with regard to vP- and ΣP-ellipsis, it was predicted that in their L2 Chinese oral production, English-speaking learners of L2 Chinese would produce more vP ellipsis licensed by a model verb than Korean-speaking learners and that Korean-speaking learners would produce more ΣP-ellipsis licensed by shi than English-speaking learners, at least at L2 Chinese initial stages.

English-speaking learners (59), Korean-speaking learners (69) of L2 Chinese and native speakers of Chinese (16) participated in the study. Apart from other tasks, they all completed an Utterance-Recall Task (URT), in which they listened to priming utterances recorded in a computer and then they were required to orally recall the utterance they had heard in Chinese. The results of the URT indicate that there is absence of L1 transfer at English and Korean speakers' initial stages of L2 Chinese oral production development, as both English- and Korean-speaking learners of L2 Chinese produced few utterances with vP or ΣP-ellipsis in the URT. Instead, they produced an overwhelming number of non-elliptical utterances, in spite of the fact that they were primed with vP and ΣP-ellipsis utterances in the URT. The absence of L1 transfer is evident until post-initial stages, where, when primed with utterances with vP-ellipsis, English-speaking intermediate and advanced learners produced significantly more utterances with vP-ellipsis than Korean-speaking intermediate and advanced learners. In contrast, when primed with ΣP-ellipsis utterances, Korean-speaking intermediate and advanced learners produced significantly more utterances with ΣP ellipsis than English speaking intermediate and advanced learners. We account for the absence of L1 transfer until L2 post-initial stages in our study

on the basis of a syntax-stylistics interface.

(1) Zhangsan bu   hui   likai Yingguo, Lisi   ye   [TP [ΣP bu [ModP hui [vP likai   Yingguo]]]]].
'Zhangsan will not leave the UK, and Lisi will not either.'

(2) Zhangsan bu   hui   likai Yingguo, Lisi   ye   [TP shi [ΣP bu [ModP hui [vP likai   Yingguo]]]]].
'Zhangsan will not leave the UK, and Lisi will not either.'

(3) John will leave the UK and Bill will [vP leave the UK] too.

(4) John will not leave the UK, and Bill will not [vP leave the UK] either.

(5) John likes Mary, and Peter **does** [vP like Mary] too.

(6) a. *Zhangsan **will** leave the UK, and Lisi **does will** leave the UK too.

   b. *Zhangsan **will not** leave the UK, and Lisi **does will not** leave the UK either.

(7) John-i   sakwa-lul   mek-eul. Mary-to   sakwa-lul *(mek-)**eul**.
John-NOM apples-ACC   eat-will   Mary-too   apples-ACC   eat-**will**
'John will eat apples. Mary will too.'

(8) a. John-i   sakwa-lul meke. Mary-to [ΣP sakwa-lul meke] **ya**.
   John-NOM apple-ACC eats   Mary-too   apple-ACC eats   **BE**
   'John eats an apple. Mary does too.'

   b. John-i   sakwa-lul mek-**eul**. Mary-to [ΣP sakwa-lul   mek-eul] **ya**.
      John-NOM apple-ACC eat-**will** Mary-too   apple-ACC   eat-will **BE**
   'John will eat an apple. Mary will too.'

   c. John-i   sakwa-lul   mek **ani-**ha.   Mary-to   [ΣP sakwa-lul mek **ani-**ha]   **ya**.
      John-NOM apple-ACC   eat **neg-**does   Mary-too   apple-ACC eat **neg-**does   **BE**
   'John didn't eat an apple. Mary didn't either.'

4b. Temporal-Aspectual Sentence Final Particles in English and Cantonese Speakers' L3 Mandarin Chinese

Presented by **Dr Guo, Yanyu** (5-6pm Friday 8th March 2019; Room 8-9, FAMES)

Abstract: This paper reports on an empirical study examining the transfer source in third language (L3) acquisition at the initial stage and the morphosyntactic development at later stages. Both Mandarin and Cantonese use Sentence Final Particles (SFPs) to denote temporal-aspectual meanings, while English employs tense/aspect markers to express those meanings. Hence Cantonese is predicted to be the source of transfer in our L3 study on the basis of the Typological Primacy Model (TPM; Rothman, 2010, 2011, 2015) and the Linguistic Proximity Model (LPM; Westergaard et al., 2016). Data from a sentence-picture matching task confirm the prediction that initial transfer is from the structurally/typologically similar language Cantonese and the transfer is facilitative. The results also show that mapping problems (Lardiere, 2007), and lack of enough evidence in the L3 input can result in unacquirability of a certain particle.

5. L2 acquisition of gapping constructions in Mandarin Chinese by English speakers

by **Zhang, Chenyang** (4-6pm Wednesday 13th March 2019; Room 8-9, FAMES)

Abstract: This study focuses on the L2 acquisition of gapping-like constructions in Chinese by English speakers. Unlike English, the distribution of gapping in Chinese is restricted by semantic properties of the VP and the second nominal in the gapped construction, for instance, generosity (Paul 1996) and eventuality (Liu & Han 2015) of VP, existentiality and definiteness of the second nominal in the gapped sentence (Tang 2001), and etc. As seen in the examples in (1), gapping in Mandarin Chinese is unacceptable when VP is generic (Paul, 1996).

(1) *Zhangsan xihuan pingguo, Lisi [ ] juzi.
     Zhangsan like   apple   Lisi   orange
     'Zhangsan likes apples and Lisi oranges.'

However, gapping in English is not subjective to such constraints, as seen in the English translation in (1). In the current study, I discuss the following questions:

I. Whether the mechanism that achieves the gapping-like constructions in Mandarin Chinese is the same mechanism that achieves canonical gapping in English.

II. If not, which syntactic operation accounts for gapping-like constructions in Mandarin Chinese?

III. If English learners of Chinese are sensitive to the semantic constraints on the distribution of gapping in Chinese.

IV. If so, are they constrained in the same degree as native speakers?

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