

Abstract

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Schematisation in Second Language Acquisition: How Learners Detect, Use, and Extend Abstract Linguistic Patterns

In the theoretical framework of usage-based construction grammar (see e.g. Croft & Cruse 2004; Goldberg 1995, 2006), linguistic knowledge is considered to be represented as form-meaning pairings, so-called *constructions*. Constructions can be of different complexity and granularity (see e.g. Goldberg 2006: 5) and are said to be acquired on the basis of domain-general cognitive mechanisms, such as analogy, categorisation, schematisation, or chunking (see e.g. Tomasello 2003).

Comparable to other cognitive systems, language is seen as a complex network, which is often referred to as 'constructicon' in the literature (see e.g. Goldberg 2003; Taylor 2012). One issue of debate concerning this network is on which levels of abstraction and with which degree of redundancy constructions are stored. Generally, more abstract schemas are assumed to help process language in production and perception in a more efficient way since a more general representation of a construction requires less storage and mental capacities (cf. Goldberg 2006: 62). Despite the importance of more abstract levels of representation, there is a considerable lack of empirical evidence on the questions of how much detail is retained in memory, how we form more abstract generalisations and under which circumstances we rely on more schematic representations rather than on item-specific knowledge. In light of these issues, this project seeks to address these questions by investigating foreign language learners' representation of language, as their linguistic system is still developing and thus highly dynamic, which allows to investigate specifically the emergence of schemas. The focus of this talk will be the introduction to the theoretical concepts and questions for this project.

References

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