

AATSEEL 2024

Presentation Abstracts

Friday, February 16

Session 1: 8:00am-10:00am

1 Stream 1A: Reimagining the Teaching of Slavic and East European Literatures and Cultures I: Cultural Texts and Significant Learning Experiences

Transforming the Teaching of Cultural Texts in Translation

Benjamin Rifkin, Fairleigh Dickinson University

I will first describe L. Dee Fink's concept of "significant learning" and then demonstrate how it can be applied to the teaching of cultural texts, illustrated by sample learning activities for teaching of a poem (Akhmatova's "Lot's Wife"), a work of prose fiction (Katerli's short story "The Old Woman, Slowly ..."), a work of film (Abuladze's film *Repentance*), and a music video (Gazmanov's "Born in the USSR"). Attendees will not have to be familiar with the texts chosen to understand the example learning tasks and how those activity frameworks can be applied to other texts of their choosing for their target culture.

Critical Disability Studies and the Teaching of East European Cultures

Benjamin Jens, The University of Arizona

This paper will argue for the incorporation of disability-centered texts and films from Eastern Europe in survey or topic-specific courses in order to question and interrogate ideas of "normality" and stigma in both the target cultures and our own. Specifically, this paper will outline strategies to collaboratively engage with and develop students' intercultural knowledge through a critical assessment of Ruben Gallego's *White on Black (Beloe na chernom)*, Russia, 2002) and the film *Kills on Wheels (Tiszta szivvel)*, Attila Till, 2014, Hungary). This paper will explore depictions of disability in these works, with an eye to creating significant learning experiences for students to broaden their intercultural competence. Applying the theories of Ato Quayson, Jose Alaniz, and others working in Disability Studies, this paper will show how these works provide multiple opportunities for dialogue, whether in terms of historical era (Soviet vs post-Soviet), culture (Russia, Eastern Europe, and USA), diversity of conditions, gender, etc.

Power Plays: Embodying *The Bronze Horseman* in the Classroom

Kathleen Scollins, University of Vermont

Alexander Pushkin's narrative of the founding and flooding of St. Petersburg presents a poetically balanced portrait of imperial Russia's power imbalances: a three-part cycle, each

their softness. Data was collected from French students (n=29) learning Russian, with 13 beginners and/or in their first year of their bachelor's degree (zero semester's group) and 16 intermediate/advanced learners (2-4 semesters' group). Moreover, 16 French native listeners with no knowledge of Russian and 22 native Russian listeners served as control groups.

In this cross-sectional study, students determined similarity/difference between Russian pseudowords with consonants varying in softness. Two sets of minimal pairs of Russian pseudowords were created: 40 pairs (n=80 pseudowords) with hard/soft contrasts (e.g., /dalka/–/dal'ka/), and 20 (n=40 pseudowords) with jod/no jod contrasts (e.g., /dun'ij/–/dun'iji/). Ten additional pairs (n=20 pseudowords) were used for the training block. Participants completed a linguistic background questionnaire. Subsequently, participants listened to the pairs in an AX discrimination task and determined whether they were the same or different (similar to Dupoux 1997). All participants heard all stimuli combinations (n=240), which were counterbalanced in 4 blocks. Error rates and reaction times were analyzed using mixed models.

Results showed that French speakers with no knowledge of Russian had higher error rates (mean=43%) compared to both Russian learners (mean=32.7%) and Russian speakers (mean=18%), $ps<0.04$). Our findings suggest that tested participants improve their perception of Russian sounds with instructional processes. Moreover, two main observations are worth noting: i) the perception of soft/hard Russian consonants remains insignificant but ii) the perception of jod/no jod clusters enhances progressively throughout instruction, with a noticeable improvement after only one semester (60 hours). Other measures should be also considered (like reaction times and group error rates). Moreover, these empirical findings are worth further investigation among Russian learners with other L1s (such as English).

References:

- Dupoux, Emmanuel, Christophe Pallier, Nuria Sebastian, and Jacques Mehler (1997). A Destressing “Deafness” in French? *Journal of Memory and Language* 36(3), p. 406-21.
- Kor Chahine, Irina, Ekaterina Uetova (2023). Spelling Issues: What Learner Corpora Can Reveal About L2 Orthography. *Corpus* 24, p. 1-19.
- Ogneva, Anastasia (2018). Spelling errors in L2 Russian: evidence from Spanish-speaking student. *Estudios interlingüísticos* 6, p. 116-131.
- Simonchyk, Ala, and Isabelle Darcy (2018). The Effect of Orthography on the Lexical Encoding of Palatalized Consonants in L2 Russian. *Language and Speech* 61(4), p. 522-546.

Variations in acquisition of Bulgarian lexical prosody by English and Mandarin Chinese native speakers

Mirena Patseva, Sofia University

The importance of lexical prosody for comprehensibility and intelligibility of L2 speech is recognized in the teaching of pronunciation (Munro 2021: 146) today. It has been suggested that teaching should involve raising learners' awareness about prosody patterns (Chun, Levis 2021: 621). This paper examines the prosody of speech produced by English (EN) and Mandarin Chinese (MC) learners of L2 Bulgarian (BG), a language with contrastive lexical stress. The paper aims to outline the L2 learners' deviations in stress positions and their phonetic realization

in BL. We test the hypothesis that L2 word prosody is controlled by language specific and individual strategies. Instrumental phonetics methods are applied in this analysis, including stress perceptive tests and L2 learners' recorded production using Praat software (Boersma, Weenink 2022). The following parameters were obtained: speaking rate and articulation rate, mean stressed syllable duration, stressed vs. unstressed syllable duration ratio. Among the common tendencies in the stress realization is the overuse of prominent syllables and scarce acoustic prominence of the main stressed syllables: the stressed vs. unstressed syllable duration ratio is: 1,53 (BG); 1.22 (MC); 1,19 (EN).

The recorded stress errors in both groups show a preference of initial pattern in disyllabic words and competition of penultimate and antepenultimate in three-syllabic words, as well as disregard for the stress characteristics of affixes. A difference between both groups is that only EN learners reduce the unstressed syllables. Some MC learners “open” the syllable by addition of a vowel (dă.re.ha.ta instead of dre.ha.ta ‘the garment’) in order to cope with consonant clusters. The results are implemented in teaching guidelines of prosody using Praat visualization. Allowing learners to compare their own production with that of native speakers can be helpful in directing their attention to those difficulties that need to be overcome.

Influence of L1 to L2 acquisition in Russian Motion Verb Constructions

Hyug Ahn, Sungkyunkwan University

The current research investigates L1 transfer effects in Korean and English speakers' acquisition of motion verbs in Russian. According to Talmy (1985), Korean and English/Russian are distinguished as verb-framed and satellite-framed languages, respectively, depending on whether Path is conflated with the verb or expressed as a satellite.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a correlation between a participant's general language skill and Correct Answer Rate (CAR) for each element.

Hypothesis 2: a. Korean students show a relatively better CAR in Manner, while American students are better with questions for Path.

In order to verify hypotheses, two experiments will be conducted with 50 Korean and American learners of Russian, and with 10 Russian native speakers (control group). The first experiment examines the acquisition of lexicalization patterns of Manner and Direction. The second experiment examines Manner and Path prefixes. A participant will be requested to fill the blank in the description of a picture with an appropriate motion verb form. Hypothesis 1 is confirmed instantly by the result. CAR for Direction appears lower than CAR for Manner or for Path, because Korean and English do not have a grammatical category of Direction as Russian. The optionality of Manner expression in Korean clearly has transfer effects, but American learners are expected to score better in the questions for Path. However, Path prefixes show different results, because Path is cognitively more salient as “Boundary-crossing” motion (Slobin and Hoiting 1994). The details of all prefixes and motion verbs will be investigated thoroughly in the research.

Reference

Slobin, D., and N. Hoiting. 1994. “Reference to movement in spoken and signed languages: