**Guessing before hearing:**

**phonotactic cues predict inflectional morphology**

**Alternative titles:**

**More than meets the eye:**

**phonotactic cues predict inflectional morphology**

**Phonotactic Cues Predict Inflectional Morphology:**

**Eye-tracking Evidence from Monolinguals and Late Learners**

People who start learning a foreign language after puberty have persistent difficulty acquiring inflectional morphology (Hopp 2010). Representational and computational accounts have proliferated in the last decade (see XX, for a review), but have concentrated on the processing of suffixes, supposedly the root of the problem. However, Authors (2016) proposed additional explanations in terms of late learners’ impoverished abilities to use acoustic cues to anticipate suffixes before hearing them. They found that late beginning learners used vowel duration to anticipate suffixes in the L2 less effectively than late advanced learners and monolinguals. To further evaluate language experience effects on L2 morphosyntactic anticipatory processes, this study compared 25 Spanish monolinguals to two groups of English late advanced learners of Spanish: 28 non-interpreters and 26 professional interpreters. Interpreters are superior than non-interpreters in XX and YY (Cristina fill out info and refs)).

The participants completed an L2 proficiency test, a language background questionnaire, and six oral tasks: eye-tracking, production, online gating, semantic bias (monolinguals only), verbal working memory (letter-number sequencing test), and phonological short-term memory (forward digit span test). This presentation focuses on the eye-tracking task, for which participants listened to sentences in Spanish and chose one of two words in the screen, while their eye movements were recorded with an EyeLink 1000 eye-tracker. There were 66 sentences: 18 practice, 32 fillers, and 16 experimental (8 per condition: phonetically longer vowel (*c****o****l* “cauliflower”), phonetically shorter vowel (c**o**les “cauliflowers”)). In English and Spanish, vowels in monosyllabic words typically have longer duration than in bisyllabic words due to polysyllabic shortening, i.e. [o] in *c****o****l* is phonetically longer than [o] in *c****o****les* (Lehiste, 1972; Reetz & Jongman, 2009), and vowels in CVC syllables (s**o**n “they are”) have longer duration than in CV syllables (s**o** “under”) (Delattre, 1966).

Logistic growth curve analysis was used to analyze the time course fixation for vowel environment (shorter vowel environment, longer vowel environment) and group (Monolinguals, Non-interpreters, Interpreters). The analysis revealed that all participants were highly accurate selecting the correct word before (pre-suffix fixations) and after (suffix and post-suffix fixations, and key press) hearing the suffix, but the interpreters behaved more native-like (faster anticipation) than the non-interpreters. These findings indicate that language experience guides L2 morphosyntactic anticipatory processes.