J-SLA Newsletter 2014 May

Golden Week has come and gone so quickly. We hope that you all had time to relax. Now, it is back to reality. Yes, the J-SLA annual conference is just around the corner! This month's newsletter is a friendly-reminder of our event, including hotel information and the abstracts of our guest speakers,

The 14th Annual Conference of the Japan Second Language Association

Dates: May 31 - June 1, 2014

Place: Kwansei Gakuin University, Nishinomiya Uegahara Campus

(http://global.kwansei.ac.jp/)

* Please check the website for access to the campus:

http://global.kwansei.ac.jp/about/about_203240.html

Accommodation (Please be aware that there is no conference rate at any hotels.)

- Takarazuka Hotel

    1-46 Umeno-cho, Takarazuka-shi, Hyogo-ken 665-0004, Japan

    665-0004

    TEL +81-797-87-1151

    FAX +81-0797-87-9833

http://www.hankyu-hotel.com/cgi-bin2/cms2/index_en.cgi?hid=26takarazukah

- Takarazuka Washington Hotel

    2-2-2, Sakae-machi, Takarazuka, Hyogo Prefecture 665-0845, Japan

http://takarazuka-wh.com/ (Japanese site only)

For English, please refer to

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g1022826-d1067761-Reviews-Takarazuka_Washington_Hotel-Takarazuka_Hyogo_Prefecture_Kinki.html

- Hotel Takezono Ashiya

    10-1 Ohara-cho, Ashiya City, Hyogo 659-0092

    TEL: (0797) 31-2341   (From overseas: 81-797-31-2341)

    FAX: (0797) 23-2656 (From overseas: 81-797-23-2656)

    E-mail: info@takezono.co.jp

http://www.takezono.co.jp/englishsite.html

- Hotel Novotel Koshien Osaka West

    3-30 Koshien Takashio cho, Nishinomiya City, Hyogo, 663-8166, Japan

    TEL: (+81)7/98481111

    FAX: (+81)7/98485111

    E-mail room@novotelkoshien.com

http://www.novotel.com/gb/hotel-4977-novotel-koshien-osaka-west/index.shtml

- Toyoko-inn Osaka Hankyu Juso Station (West exit)

    1-13-4 Honmachi Juso Yodogawa, Osaka City, Osaka, 532-0024, Japan

    TEL : 06-6302-1045　　FAX : 06-6302-1046

http://www.toyoko-inn.com/hotel/00154/ (Japanese site only)

Please find the abstracts of our invited speakers above: Dr. Claudia Felser and Dr. Harald Clahsen.

Native vs. non-native processing of discontinuous dependencies

Claudia Felser

Potsdam Research Institute for Multilingualism, University of Potsdam, Germany

A growing body of research on L2 processing has investigated the real-time comprehension of discontinuous syntactic dependencies. The results from these studies appear to be very mixed, with L1/L2 differences being reported for some syntactic phenomena and L1/L2 similarities for others. Cross-study comparisons are often made difficult by the fact that different research teams have used different L1/L2 combinations, learners at different proficiency levels, and different experimental methods and designs. The possibility of L1 transfer is often not controlled for. In my talk I will present a set of findings from recent studies that have all used the same experimental technique (eye-movement monitoring during reading), similar kinds of L2 learners (high intermediate to advanced), and the same target language (English). Although obviously limiting in terms of generalizability, narrowing down the focus in this way should allow for easier cross-study comparability of findings.

Taken together, the results from these studies reveal a fairly systematic pattern, with L2 learners tending to show native-like processing performance for 'forwards-looking' syntactic dependencies but not for 'backwards-looking' ones. Forwards-looking dependencies to be considered include wh-dependencies and various kinds of island constraint, and backwards-looking ones include reflexive binding, bound variable anaphora and antecedent-contained deletions.

I will explore possible reasons for the observed differences between forwards and backwards-looking syntactic dependencies in L2 processing by considering the nature of the different types of search processes involved, the role of processing resource limitations, and the necessity of accessing or computing detailed syntactic representations for successful dependency formation.

Morphology in Child and Adult Learners' Spoken Language Comprehension

Harald Clahsen

Potsdam Research Institute for Multilingualism, University of Potsdam, Germany

Language acquisition research has traditionally focused on the development of linguistic knowledge in spoken and written language production. Successful acquisition of linguistic knowledge, on the other hand, presupposes the ability to comprehend and process the linguistic input the language learner is exposed to. While most previous psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic research on language comprehension has focused on mature speakers in their native language (L1), several recent experimental studies have also examined the mechanisms that language learners employ during comprehension. In this talk I will present results from some of our recent experimental studies on morphologically complex words in child and adult learners' spoken language comprehension.

My focus will be on two morphological phenomena. Study 1 examined verb inflection in German (specifically past participle formation) using cross-modal lexical priming experiments. Study 2 examined plurals inside compounds in English using eye-movement monitoring during listening as well as acceptability judgements. We tested both mature and child L1 speakers as well as advanced adult second language (L2) learners, L1 Russian speakers for study 1 and L1 German speakers for study 2.

I will make two main arguments, firstly, that morphological processing in both the L1 and the L2 can best be understood in terms of a lexical (i.e. word-specific) storage/retrieval system plus a grammatical system of (rule-like) computations (*dual system hypothesis*), and secondly, that the division of labour between these two systems is substantially different in child L1 and adult L2 learners. While developmental changes in children's performance on morphologically complex words are attributable to lexical learning and advances in lexical retrieval, L2 performance in this domain indicates a reduced sensitivity to morphological structure and analysis relative to L1 processing, and greater reliance on non-structural (e.g. lexical) information sources during language comprehension instead (*shallow-structure hypothesis*).

Please check the J-SLA homepage (http://www.j-sla.org/en/event/j-sla2014/) for details about the conference program. We look forward to seeing you at the annual conference.

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