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LinGhentian Doctorials

17-18 December 2024

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KEYNOTE

Tuesday 17 December 2024, 10:10-11:00

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Combining qualitative and quantitative methods: insights from research on newly arrived migrant students in Flanders

Shauny Seynhaeve

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In this keynote, I aim to share my insights into how qualitative and quantitative research methods can be complementary in addressing research topics, using the case of Newly Arrived Migrant Students (NAMS) in Flanders as a focal point. Specifically, I will explore two strategies to combining quantitative and qualitative research:

(1)   Expanding on existing qualitative findings through a complementary quantitative study.

Research has shown that NAMS face significant inequities in their educational trajectories in Flanders. They are disproportionately placed in vocational tracks (Merckaert & Bex, 2018) and have higher rates of grade retention and school dropout (Van Avermaet et al., 2017). Both Emery (2020) and I (Seynhaeve, 2024) have examined this issue from different methodological perspectives. Emery (2020) used qualitative fieldwork, conducting interviews and observations with NAMS and teachers to explore their educational trajectories. In contrast, my colleagues and I (Seynhaeve et al., 2024) adopted a quantitative approach, analyzing factors statistically linked to NAMS' lower success rates. Together, these complementary methods provide deeper insight into the complex role of language in shaping NAMS' educational trajectories, a topic I will explore further in this keynote.

(2)   Integrating both approaches within a single research project.

During the COVID-19 crisis, significant concerns emerged regarding the impact of school closures and Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) on vulnerable student populations (Drane et al., 2020). Research across various contexts highlighted the negative effects of online teaching on academic achievement (Lewis et al., 2021; Maldonado & De Witte, 2022), with pronounced disparities for students from less-educated (Engzell et al., 2021) and lower-income households (Haelermans et al., 2022). In my dissertation, I investigated how NAMS were affected by these measures during the pandemic through two complementary approaches. First, in 2022, 23 NAMS were interviewed to explore their experiences with online interaction in an ERT environment. Second, a large-scale quantitative study examined the impact of the pandemic-affected school years (2019-2020 and 2020-2021) on NAMS' pass rates compared to their mainstream peers. While the quantitative findings reveal no differential impact of COVID-19 measures on NAMS' overall educational success, the qualitative analysis raises important questions about their language learning

opportunities during this period.

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SESSION 1: DIVERSITY IN LANGUAGE

Tuesday 17 December 2024, 11:30-12:30

Attitudes towards gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch: a thematic analysis

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As gender-neutral pronouns gain visibility, they offer solutions to linguistic gaps that have long existed for referring to individuals outside the traditional binary. The Dutch Language Union has acknowledged the forms *hen* and *die* as gender-neutral pronouns in Dutch. For instance, "Sasha ging uit gisteren. *Hen* had een leuke tijd met *hun* vrienden." (Sasha went out yesterday. *They* had a great time with *their* friends.) Additionally, these pronouns have been proposed as a suitable strategy for generic reference, such as in the sentence, "Als een persoon een nieuwe vaardigheid wil leren, dan moet *die* veel oefenen." (If a person wants to learn a new skill, *they* should practice regularly.) While some embrace gender-neutral pronouns as a step toward greater inclusivity, others are critical of this language change.

In this study, we explore attitudes surrounding Dutch gender-neutral pronouns by analysing participants' comments from three broader survey experiments that tested the comprehensibility and appreciation of Dutch gender-neutral pronouns. Participants (N = 1,359) were offered multiple opportunities to leave comments in open text boxes throughout the surveys. Although they were never explicitly asked to share their opinions on gender-neutral pronouns, several participants took the opportunity to do so. All comments that mentioned gender, pronominal strategy or gender-inclusive language were taken into account for the analysis. We identified 259 participants (mean age = 46.06, range: 18–86; 5 non-binary individuals, 132 women, and 122 men) who left one or more relevant comments.

We conducted a thematic analysis of the comments related to gender-inclusive language, using the guidelines by (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022). While the analysis was largely inductive, it was shaped by the following research questions: 1) What arguments for and against gender-neutral pronouns are spontaneously brought up by participants? 2) Are there varying opinions towards different gender-neutral pronouns? We will present the identified themes at LinGhentian Doctorials 2024 and compare them to the four dimensions of criticism against gender-fair language outlined by Vergoossen et al. (2020) and the thematic analysis of attitudes towards both generic and nonbinary pronouns by Hekanaho (2020). The comparative perspective allows us to see whether arguments for and against gender-inclusive language are similar or different for different languages at different stages of language change.

We think that this qualitative approach is of particular value because attitudes towards gender-neutral pronouns should be considered and addressed when implementing gender-fair language strategies (Vergoossen et al. 2020). Identifying

and understanding arguments both in favour and against gender-neutral pronouns can inform linguistic guidelines and help language policymakers.

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Gender-neutral pronouns in French: effects on reader perception and gendering strategies

Chloé Vincent

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In recent years, a renewed activism for gender-fair language has led to the introduction of gender-neutral pronouns in several languages. In French, the pronoun *iel* gained public attention following its addition to the online dictionary *Le Robert* in 2021, sparking considerable political and media debate. It is increasingly used in progressive circles to promote inclusivity, addressing not only male bias but also the representation of all genders. An alternative gender-neutral pronoun, *al*, remains relatively unknown and rarely used (Alpheratz, 2018). Both *iel* and *al* have been adopted by some individuals within the LGBTQ+ and queer communities (Knisely, 2020). In this paper, we investigate how the French gender-neutral pronouns *iel* and *al* (as in example 1) are perceived by readers, and what gender associations they evoke.

(1)   *Sasha est non-binaire, iel/al habite à Gand.*
        Sasha is non-binary, they live in Gent.

We do so by investigating how various referential strategies used in a newspaper article affect readers' gendered perception of a character when asked to provide an open-ended description.

The data presented here are part of a 2 (cueing) x 4 (referential strategy) between-subjects experiment in which 400 participants read a newspaper article about a photographer. Half of the participants were informed that the photographer is non-binary and uses gender-neutral pronouns (cueing condition). In addition, the referential strategy was manipulated, in that the article referred to the photographer using either gender-neutral pronouns (*iel* or *al*), binary pronouns (*il* or *elle*), or by repeating the name (*Sasha Favre*). After reading the article, participants were asked to describe the photographer ("Écrivez quelques mots ou quelques phrases pour décrire comment vous imaginez Sasha Favre. Vous pouvez parler de ses caractéristiques physiques, de personnalité, ses loisirs, etc.").

The short texts written by the participants were coded as referencing a person grammatically gendered as feminine, masculine, or non-gendered, depending on the nouns, pronouns and agreement forms used. Some participants (n=10) were excluded as they refused to provide a description.

This contribution provides an exploratory quantitative analysis of participants' (non-) gendered strategies in describing the photographer depending on the newspaper article version they read. Descriptive statistics indicate that without cueing (i.e. when participants were not informed that the photographer is non-binary and uses gender-neutral pronouns), the descriptions after reading binary pronouns match the pronoun gender (*il* and *elle* prompted masculine and feminine descriptions respectively). After reading a text with no binary gender information, *al* prompted balanced descriptions (a similar number of feminine, masculine and non-gendered descriptions), while *iel* and name repetition prompted as many gendered as non-gendered descriptions, but female gendering was dominant over male. When cueing was provided, non-gendered descriptions increased in the binary condition; proportions remained stable for the *al* condition, and the female dominance observed with *iel* and name repetition dissipated.

These results will be discussed in light of additional data gathered in the experiment. To conclude, we will reflect on further analyses aimed at deepening our understanding of mental gender representations associated with gender-neutral pronouns in French.

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SESSION 2: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE

Tuesday 17 December 2024, 13:30-15:00

Towards an anticausative-passive continuum: some considerations on a scalar division based on diachronic data from Latin

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This presentation discusses how the binary distinction between a causal event (e.g., *John opens the door*) and a noncausal event (e.g., *The door opens*) is unsatisfactory to explain the diachrony of anticausativization in Latin. Verbs undergoing the causal-noncausal alternation in Latin can be construed with a causal alternant, an externally caused, transitive predicate, as in (1), and a noncausal alternant, in which the situation has been represented as occurring spontaneously (with deagentivization), as in (2). These verbs lack an Agent-oriented meaning component, allowing semantic fluctuation in the transitive subject, which could be (i) an Agent (1a), (ii) an Instrument (1b), or a Force (1c) (Næss, 2007, pp. 107-109; Ongenae, 2024; Van Valin & Wilkins, 1996).

(1)   a.   *oculos   ut   exsicces.*

                eye.ACC.M.PL   so_that   dry_out.SBJV.PRS.2SG.ACT

                "So that you dry up the constantly tearing eyes."

                (MARCELL. med. 8, 39)

        b.   *Pampini   uitium   tumorem*

                vine_leave.NOM.M.PL   vine.GEN.F.PL   swelling.ACC.M.SG

                pedum   exsiccant.

                feet.GEN.M.SG   dry_out.IND.PRS.3PL.ACT

                "Vine leaves dry up the swelling of the feet."

                (MARCELL. med. 36, 65)

        c.   *Eccausin* (...)   *quod   exsiccat   omnem*

                e.ACC.F.SG   REL.NOM.N.SG   dry_out.IND.PRS.3SG.ACT   all.ACC.M.SG

                stomachi   umorem.

                stomach.GEN.M.SG   liquid.ACC.M.SG

                "(...) eccausis [a heating], which dries out all the liquid of the stomach."

                (MARCELL. med. 20, 10)

There are three strategies for anticausativization (transformation of a causal event into a noncausal event) in Latin, namely the mediopassive strategy with the morphology in -r, which is syncretic with the passive marker (i.e. an Agent-backgrounding operation) (2a), the labile strategy, the use of the active intransitive (2b), and the reflexive strategy with the reflexive pronoun *se* and the active voice (2c) (Cennamo, 2022; Cennamo et al., 2015; Gianollo, 2014; Ongenae, 2024). A theoretical uncertainty is whether inactivization with an expressed Force should be classified as a passive (Comrie, 1985, p. 326; Siewierska, 1986, p. 78) or as an anticausative (Haspelmath, 1993; Kulikov, 1998; Zúñiga & Kittilä, 2019, pp. 41-53). In case of an expressed Force, both the mediopassive, as in (2a) and the labile strategies, as in (2b) can be used, while the reflexive strategy in (2c) is clearly reserved for internal causation without an external Force. In this talk, we propose a frequency-based scalar division between passive and anticausative diathesis based on (i) the absence or presence of deagentivization, and (ii), in case of deagentivization, the presence or absence of an external Force. The research is conducted with Latin data from 200 to 600 CE drawn from the *Library of Latin Texts*.

(2)   a.   *carne*   *leprosi,*   *quae*   *tumescentibus*

flesh.ABL.F.SG   leper.GEN.M.SG   REL.NOM.F.SG   swelling.ABL.N.PL

uulneribus   *scinditur.*

wound.ABL.N.PL   split.IND.PRS.3SG.MPASS

"(…) leper's flesh, which splits through swelling wounds."

(GREG. M. in euang. 2,39)

b.   *ut*   *abunde*   *cruore*   *diffuso*

so_that abundantly   blood.ABL.M.SG   spilled.ABL.M.SG

meatus   *fluminis*   *spumaret*

stream.NOM.M.SG   river.GEN.N.SG   foam.SBJV.PST.3SG.ACT

"(…) so that the stream of the river foamed abundantly through spilled blood."

(AMM. 17, 13, 14)

c.   *vitium (…)*   *ruperit*   *se*

disease.NOM.N.SG   break.IND.FUT.3SG.ACT   REFL.ACC

"The disease will have broken [itself]."

(CHIRON 384)

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Competition in sentential negation: a corpus analysis of *ne…pas* and *ne…point* in Classical French

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This project aims to investigate the diachronic evolution of *ne…pas* and *ne…point* in Classical French. Using a corpus-based approach (*Frantext*), we focus on syntactic and semantic contexts in literary texts from the mid-16th to 18th centuries to understand the factors that influenced the trajectories of these two forms.

From the 17th onwards, the Classical French period was marked by intense efforts to codify Standard French, which was modeled after the linguistic usage of the ruling elite (Battye et al., 2000). In this context, it is of interest that French grammarians noted subtle distinctions in the meaning of *ne…pas* and *ne…point*. For example, Laurent Chiflet (1659) writes in his *Essai d'une parfaite grammaire de la langue françoise* (cited in Lafond-Zine, 2014: 391) that "*Pas* et *Point*, signifient le même : hormis que *point* nie plus absolument que *pas*, qui n'est qu'une simple négation." This nuanced difference suggests a period of competition between *ne…pas* and *ne…point*, as speakers navigated context-specific uses for each.

The following graph compares the token frequencies (per million words) of *ne…pas* and *ne…point* in the *Frantext* corpus across decades. In the early 17th century, *ne… point* usage surged, the form emerging as a competitor to *ne… pas*. However, the Classical period also witnessed an increase in the use of *ne…pas*, particularly in the mid-17th century, at times surpassing *ne…point*. By the late 17th century, *ne…point* began to decline, giving way to *ne… pas*.
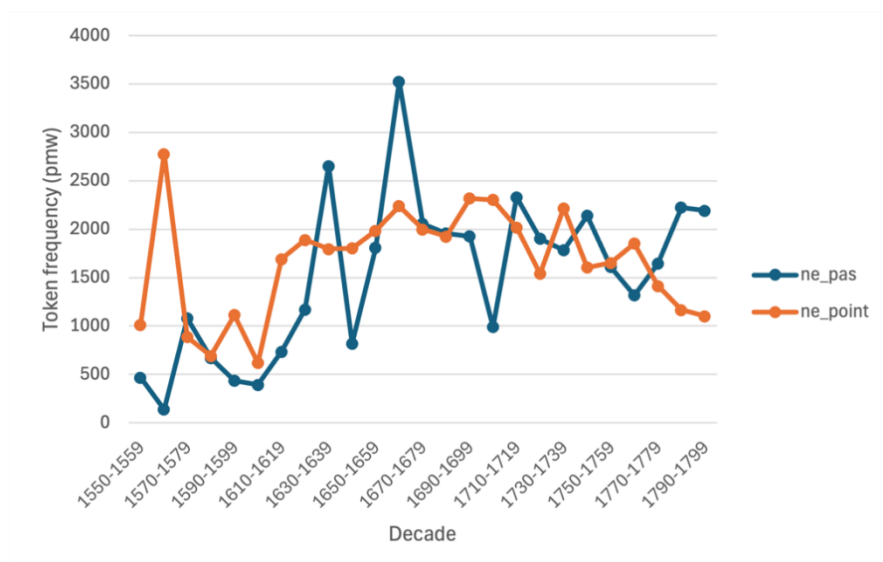

Figure 1: Token frequency (per million words) for each decade.

We analyze this shift through the types of verbs each negator accompanied and the syntactic constructions they favored. For example, *ne…pas* often pairs with 'minimizing' constructions, where it negates elements of small size or minimal value:

(1) […] qu'ils n'en espanchassent pas **un** **seul** **brin**.
'… that they do not spread a single strand of it.'

(Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*, 1580, in Lafond-Zine, 2014: 330; our translation)

In (1), *ne… pas* combines with *un seul brin* to emphasize that the situation will not hold even for the smallest element ('not even a strand'), and thus not at all (i.a. Breitbarth, 2014: 19). The negative expression *ne…pas* is reinforced by a minimizer to express emphatic negation in statements where *ne…pas* alone might lack sufficient force.

Conversely, *ne…point* appears predominantly in contexts of 'absolute' negation, where the negation applies without exception or limitation:

(2) Or ne me faut mes fors escu, **dont** je n'ai point.
'Now I don't need anything else except a shield, of which I have none.'
(*La queste del Saint Graal*, ca. 1220, in Hansen, 2012: 248)

In (2), *ne…point* indicates the complete lack of the relevant object, conveying emphatic negation without syntactic reinforcement.

Drawing on Hansen's (2012: 247) concept of 'functional differentiation' between the negators in Medieval French, we propose that expressive differentiation between *ne…pas* and *ne…point* played a crucial role in Classical French. *Ne…pas* functioned as the unmarked, neutral form for standard sentential negation, whereas *ne…point* served as the marked, contextually restricted form.

However, this differentiation faced challenges as the frequency of *ne…point* declined (Figure 1), likely due to evolving expressivity needs. We investigate possible factors contributing to this shift, exploring the complex interplay of expressivity, prescriptive pressures, and language change in shaping the trajectory of sentential negation in Classical French.

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Readers above all else? Translated crime *feuilletons* in the Flemish newspaper *Vooruit:* translation techniques and story selection in relation to the theoretical readership

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As has been shown extensively, both *feuilleton* adaptations (see e.g. Law, 2000, p. 7) and translations of crime fiction (Robyns, 1990, pp. 23-29; Buzelin, 2022, p. 16) have often been subject to far reaching changes with respect to the source text (cf. the *belles infidèles*), especially before the turn of the 21st century. However, a study of three interwar crime *feuilletons* in the Flemish newspaper *Vooruit*, which were translated from English into Dutch, adds nuance to these findings. Although omissions and other translation choices naturally have an impact on the texts, the essence of all three texts was preserved. Thus, it seems that, as Buzelin (2022, p. 18) proposes, the question should not be whether a translation is *fidèle* or *infidèle*, but rather to whom it is faithful (or not).

Given that *feuilletons* were a firm favourite among the then readers of *Vooruit* (De Nil, 2005, p. 194-195), I will mainly focus on that (theoretical) readership: the "workers" of Ghent, as editor-in-chief Edward Anseele addressed them in the very first issue of *Vooruit* (31 August 1884). With the use of two examples, I will argue that both the translator's choices and the newspaper's selection of stories show a 'faithfulness' to the (intended) readers of *Vooruit*, although, at first sight, they seem to create a setting that is at odds with the living conditions of those readers. More specifically, I will highlight the foreignizing translation strategy for geographical terms and the selection of stories that are set within the upper classes.

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SESSION 3: LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Wednesday 18 December 2024, 11:00-12:00

A writing assistant to ENLIGHTen the way: GenAI and the Reader Engagement Framework

Enya Strobbe

Department of Linguistics (Ghent University)

The recent surge of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) usage by the general public is drastically changing the way users interact with information (Universiteit Gent, 2024a). It has allowed people to outsource certain cognitive tasks to AI, leading to an unprecedented impact on 'knowledge work' (McKinsey, 2023), i.e., labor that draws its importance from critical thinking, creativity, and interpersonal skills (IBM Education, 2023). The work of linguistic researchers falls under this category, which is why we are currently in need of a better understanding of how GenAI might impact our field and how it can become a tool of service.

Taking steps in this direction, Ghent University's English department has provided ways to educate students on the (scholarly) use of GenAI. One of these was the Virtual Exchange program "Illuminating the role of AI in today's (written) world: Challenge Based Learning in intercultural, interdisciplinary teams," organized by the ENLIGHT Network in 2023. During this program students addressed a challenge related to the emergence of AI in the context of academic writing. As a participant, I worked with students from different European universities and disciplines to create a handout in which we discussed how different AI tools could be used during the writing process. Additionally, we evaluated how engaging these texts were based on criteria formulated in the Reader Engagement Framework, or REF (Haas 2018), thus determining the advantages and limitations of these tools when creating (academic) texts.

Inspired by the results of our work, I decided to continue that line of research for my master's dissertation. Specifically, I will look into how certain GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT and Gemini, can become a writing assistant that helps writers use the REF. By formulating different prompts to create multiple iterations of an assistant, I seek to gain a better understanding of how GenAI can become a writing tool that pushes writers to think critically about their work and how they apply the concepts of the framework.

To evaluate how successful GenAI is at guiding users through the REF, I will provide third-party readers (all of whom are familiar with the framework) with different texts, some written completely by GenAI, some written with the help of AI, and some written entirely by me. Without initially disclosing who/what the writer is, I will ask them to grade the texts based on how adequately they fulfill the criteria of the REF. The answers will hopefully reveal the configuration that results in the most engaging text, therefore providing valuable insight into what effective cooperation between GenAI and writers

can look like in this new information era.

GenAI is becoming a ubiquitous technology in our field (Universiteit Gent, 2024b), which is why linguists would be remiss to neglect it and its possible uses. Through my research, I hope to contribute to our understanding of what GenAI is capable of in terms of academic writing and the ways in which GenAI can become an opportunity to augment knowledge instead of automating it.

Presentation of collocations in Business English dictionaries for learners: a study of *OBED* and *LBED2*

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Business English education in China is experiencing unprecedented growth in academia and industry. Learners' dictionaries serve as indispensable auxiliary tools for foreign language education. However, research on dictionaries for business English learners still remains limited. Presentation of collocations can help English learners build frequency of use and create semantic networks and sentence structure patterns of collocations.

The research investigates two highly esteemed and market-leading dictionaries, *Oxford Business English Dictionary for Learners of English* (*OBED*) and *Longman Business English Dictionary (Second Edition)* (*LBED2*) and focuses on entries under the letter "D" beginning with "da" and "de". The research addresses two questions: (1) What are the different ways of presenting collocations in two dictionaries? (2) How is the presentation of collocations in two business English learner's dictionaries regarding coverage, position, semantic and grammatical treatments? The research sorts out seven collocation presentation ways of the two dictionaries. From the perspective of macrostructure, collocations can be presented as headwords (including variants), subentries and run-ons; from the perspective of microstructure, collocations are listed in explanation and examples; from the perspective of mediostructure, collocations are listed in collocation boxes and references.

The study leverages two business English corpora—the Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus (HKFSC) and the Business English sub-corpus of the British National Corpus (BNC2014-Business). Both corpora help learners understand common expressions, language trends, and usage patterns in business contexts. The research employs the functions of keyword in context (KWIC) and GraphColl to investigate the frequency and coverage of collocations.

The study evaluates the presentation of collocations from the perspective of Lexical Priming Theory and posits that collocations are interconnected within specific contexts. Learners are predisposed to embrace language structures that align with their prior experiences, while exhibiting resistance toward those that diverge (Hoey, 2005, p13). Certain aspects of the two dictionaries are worth learning from: 1) collocations are placed under headwords with stronger lexical strength; 2) semantic networks are established through cross reference; 3) clear instructions are provided; 4) collocations are presented based on grammatical structure. The study meanwhile reveals the following deficiencies: 1) omission of high-frequent collocations ; 2) incomplete presentation of collocations ; 3) unclarified semantic connections between collocations and confusing displays of collocations with different meanings. The study proposes the following strategies to improve collocation priming: including more high-frequent collocations, highlighting high-frequent collocations, introducing collocation banding, and incorporating complementary exercises. Finally, the study offers a template of the collocation presentation in business English learners' dictionaries.

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SESSION 4: EXPLORING GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Wednesday 18 December 2024, 13:00-14:00

'Although … but …': a cross-linguistic survey of para-hypotactic concessives

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The present study is concerned with concessive constructions ('although p, q'), exemplified for English in (1). Simply put, concessives assert two propositions p and q, which normally do not go together (König 1988: 146). In (1), for example, *it was raining* (=p) and *I went to the beach* (=q) cooccur, contrary to the common expectation that one would normally not go to the beach if it is raining.

(1)   ***Although*** *it was raining, I went to the beach*.

In many languages (including English), the subordinate clause p is marked by a subordinating conjunction, e.g. *although* in (1). In other languages, however, concessives have not only a subordinator, but may also contain an element usually associated with coordination rather than subordination. This is the case in Veracruz Huasteca Nahuatl, an Uto-Aztecan language from Mexico, which combines the subordinator *maske* 'although' with the coordinator *pero* 'but' – both obvious loans from Spanish *por más que* 'however much' and *pero* 'but', respectively.

(2)   ***maske***   *kaui-tl*   *ach-kuali-yaya*   ***pero***   *ti-mauilti-to-h*

athough   weather-abs   neg-good-ipfv   but   2pl.sbj-play-purp-pl

'Even though the weather wasn't good, you went to play.' (Olguín Martínez 2016: 114)

This phenomenon is known as "**para-hypotaxis**", a term coined by Sorrento (1929) for languages like Old Italian, Latin, Ancient Greek, and Biblical Hebrew. Para-hypotaxis was long thought to be archaic and restricted to a few languages, but recent studies have shown that this phenomenon is also attested in present-day, unrelated languages (Bertinetto & Ciucci 2012; Ross et al. 2018; Olguín Martínez 2022). These studies are mainly concerned with temporal ('when/while') and conditional ('if') clauses. Para-hypotactic concessives, on the other hand, have received far less attention. This is surprising, because whereas para-hypotaxis has been described as cross-linguistically rare (Bertinetto & Ciucci 2012: 92; Ross et al. 2018), this phenomenon seems relatively common in concessives. A further example from Indonesian is shown in (3).

(3)   ***Biarpun*** *kamu*   *gendut,*   ***tetapi***   *kamu*   *tetep*   *muat*
      although 2sg   fat   but   2sg   still   fit
      kok   *masuk*   *di*   *hati-ku*
      mod   enter   in   heart-1sg.poss
      'Although you are fat, you still fit into my heart.' (Instagram, my glosses)

In this talk, I will present preliminary data from an ongoing typological study on para-hypotaxis in concessive

constructions. My data are based on a **global sample of ca. 50 languages**, mostly based on descriptions of concessives in reference grammars. I investigate the following research questions:

(i)   In which languages are para-hypotactic concessives attested? How common is this phenomenon cross-linguistically?

(ii)   Are para-hypotactic concessives found exclusively or more often in languages of a certain type, e.g. languages with sentence-initial subordinators?

(iii)   Are para-hypotactic concessives are more common in certain parts of the world than in others?

(iv)   Are there any signs of borrowings, cf. the Spanish loans *maske* and *pero* in (2)? Is there any evidence for pattern replication, i.e. cases where languages did not borrow words for 'but' or 'although', but rather the para-hypotactic 'although *p*, but *q*' pattern itself? Olguín Martínez (2022: 29–33) suggests that this happened among various unrelated languages in southern Mexico. Can similar linguistic areas be identified elsewhere in the world?

Abbreviations

1/2/3: 1st, 2nd, 3rd person – abs: absolutive – ipfv: imperfective – mod: modal marker – neg: negation – pl: plural – poss: possessive – purp: purposive – sbj: subject – sg: singular

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Chinese EFL Learners' projecting clauses in interpersonal grammatical metaphor for argumentative writing

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Research on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) often emphasizes English for Academic Purposes (EAP), as academic writing is a crucial skill for English learners. Recently, studies in this field increasingly incorporate Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which identifies Grammatical Metaphor (GM) as a powerful tool in meaning-making. Interpersonal Grammatical Metaphor (IGM) represents a linguistic phenomenon that adjusts the negotiability and arguability of an utterance. Projecting clauses, a major manifestation of IGM, add additional layers of wording and meaning by co-opting ideational resources to serve interpersonal functions. This study investigates the way Chinese students use projecting clauses in IGM to achieve argumentative objectives while maintaining audience engagement in English essays. To this end, we employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, with data from the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE). Our qualitative analysis establishes a categorical framework based on the engagement and evaluative domains of projections, which we then apply to the corpus for quantitative coding and comparison. The analytical framework further interprets these comparisons through the lenses of metafunction, register, and first-language influence. Initial findings suggest that Chinese learners favor subjectivity and directive expressions in argumentative writing. This study contributes valuable insights that can support Chinese and global EFL learners in developing an effective academic tone to achieve their writing purposes.

SESSION 5: CODE-SWITCHING

Wednesday 18 December 2024, 14:00-15:00

Intensification strategies in the English-Spanish speech of Miami bilinguals

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The study presented here investigates the speech variety of the bilingual community of Miami, which features a high degree of English-Spanish bilingualism. Multilingual communities are known to display a wide variety of contact-induced phenomena (Heine & Kuteva, 2005), such as convergence or codeswitching. Within the speech community of Miami, the current study specifically explores intensification, a site of analytic-synthetic conflict between English and Spanish grammars. English predominantly uses lexical-analytic strategies (e.g. 'very beautiful', 'a big house') for intensification (Quirk et al., 2007), whereas Spanish employs more morphological-synthetic (e.g. *guapísimo*, *un casón*) markers (Pena, 1999; Lázaro Mora, 1999).

Concretely, the current study aims to investigate which preferences Miami bilinguals have in terms of the language or strategy of choice and which factors influence these preferences. An important factor in this respect is the semantic-pragmatic function of the intensifier. However, intralinguistic factors are expected not to suffice in explaining the attested intensifying patterns. Therefore, extralinguistic factors are also considered, especially those concerning the language proficiency, acquisition and attitudes of the participants with respect to the use of both English and Spanish. Additionally, in order to map contact-induced convergence effects in the speech variety of Miami, a comparison is made between the intensifying strategies used in this bilingual speech community and those used in two relevant monolingual communities, one English (the southeastern U.S.) and one Spanish (the city of Havana).

To investigate intensification within the communities under consideration, a thorough analysis of naturalistic corpus data is carried out. These data are taken from the Miami Corpus of BangorTalk (Deuchar et al., 2008), the Santa Barbara Corpus (Du Bois et al., 2005) and the Havana subcorpus of Ameresco (Albelda Marco & Estellés Arguedas, 2010). The Miami Corpus, which is investigated in its entirety, consists of approximately 265,000 words from more than 35 hours of spontaneous conversation produced by 83 Miami bilinguals recorded in 2008. From the corpora of Santa Barbara and Havana, samples are taken of approximately 23,600 words each.

In total, 1,282 intensifying constructions are found in the Miami Corpus, including 902 unilingual English, 369 unilingual Spanish and 11 bilingual English-Spanish constructions. Additionally, a wide variety of both analytic and synthetic intensifiers is found. Although many more English than Spanish intensifiers are found, as well as more analytic than

synthetic, the proportion of synthetic forms is much higher among the Spanish intensifiers than the English ones. It is also found that an intensifier's semantic-pragmatic function does not correlate with the language in which it appears. Instead, the language of choice correlates much more strongly with the extralinguistic variables under consideration.

As for the comparison with the monolingual communities, it is found that Miami bilinguals use significantly more synthetic intensifiers in English compared to monolingual English speakers, while using fewer synthetic intensifiers in Spanish than monolingual Spanish speakers. The qualitative and quantitative description of intensification in the speech variety of Miami bilinguals offered in this study sheds light on the construction of bilingual grammars from unilingual ones in an increasingly multilingual world.

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Towards an integrative account of English-Tagalog intra-word code-switching

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Bilinguals often switch back and forth between their languages during speech production in a phenomenon called code-switching (Grosjean, 1997). While the switching of languages at the clausal level is well-documented in code-switching research (Vanhaverbeke & Enghels, 2021), intra-word code-switching (IWCS) has only been controversially attested in but a few language pairs, and its research remains limited (Stefanich et al., 2019). However, IWCS is a remarkably productive and highly salient phenomenon in both nominal and verbal domains in English-Tagalog code-switching in the Philippines (see example [1]; Bautista, 2004; Flores, 2020). This makes this understudied and typologically distant language pair highly relevant for studying switching at the morpheme level.

(1)   *Nag*-prepare   *ang mga* agencies   *ng mga* biosafety requirements

PFV-prepare   ACTFOC.PL-agency-PL   PFOC.PL-biosafety requirement-PL

'The agencies prepared biosafety requirements'.

Furthermore, the complex sociolinguistic landscape of the Philippines where bilingualism and code-switching are the norm rather than the exception allows for a more nuanced characterization of the sociolinguistic predictors of English-Tagalog IWCS. Rather uniquely for the Philippines, spoken and written code-switching varieties have emerged, each having their own sets of community norms. Extralinguistic information such as one's socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and gender identity are often transmitted to interlocutors through the use of characteristic code-switching features (Casabal, 2018; Garvida, 2013; Pascual, 2016, Reyes, 2017).

In light of this complex interplay of language and society, I aim to develop an integrative account of IWCS. In my project, I will look at the numerous switching structures that Filipino bilinguals produce to determine the shape of intra-word code-switching. These structures will then be experimentally validated using experimental psycholinguistic techniques to determine their acceptability (Valdés Kroff et al., 2018). Finally, under the account of social indexicality, I aim to relate the intraword code-switching structures to the relevant speech communities which use them as markers of identity (Barnes & Chappell, 2023; Dickinson, 2023). In practice, this integrative account will be implemented through a pioneering approach involving the creation and analysis of a vast, naturalistic corpus, the implementation of an eye-tracking while reading paradigm, and lectometric and variationist analyses. This multimethod approach brings together insights from structural, psycho-, and sociolinguistics in order to generate a descriptively and explanatorily adequate account of intra-word code-switching across different speech communities (Beatty Martínez et al., 2018; Parafita Couto, 2021).

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SESSION 6: MULTIMODALITY

Wednesday 18 December 2024, 15:30-16:30

Multimodal analysis of T-Shirt inscriptions in Kermanshah: emphasis on cultural messages and identity

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This study conducts a multimodal analysis of T-shirt inscriptions in Kermanshah, Iran, examining the cultural and social messages conveyed through these wearable texts. While substantial research has addressed stickers, graffiti, and other visual forms of public expression (Chiluwa, 2008; Hasrati et al., 2016), limited attention has been given to T-shirt inscriptions, particularly in Iranian contexts where such messages reflect a blend of global and local influences. Kermanshah, situated at the crossroads of traditional and modern cultural currents, provides a unique lens for exploring these dynamics in a society balancing heritage with the pressures .

This qualitative research employs the appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005) to systematically categorize and interpret the content of 150 T-shirt inscriptions collected from prominent shopping centres in Kermanshah. The AF places a lot of stress on the function of emotions and judgments as relational resources that can show how individuals place themselves regarding specific discourses or communities. Data analysis revealed six main categories of inscriptions: (1) social relationships, identity, and culture; (2) religious beliefs and practices; (3) advertisements; (4) references to drugs and alcohol; (5) offensive content; and (6) popular social themes. Additionally, the inscriptions in the dataset were exclusively in English, emphasizing the influence of globalization and Western cultural trends. This language choice signifies an engagement with global identities and aesthetics, distancing the expressions from local linguistic traditions while still navigating sociocultural tensions in a distinctly Iranian context.

Moreover, the findings indicated that T-shirt inscriptions can convey a wide range of cultural, social, and religious messages. These messages may include positive and inspiring life advice or, conversely, negative and offensive statements that impact both the wearer and those who read them. These categories emerged inductively from the data and reflect patterns of usage specific to the region. The findings show that certain categories, such as identity and popular social themes, are more prevalent, reflecting the wearers' desire to express alignment with social groups or ideals. Meanwhile, categories like offensive content or references to drugs and alcohol are less common, aligning with cultural sensitivities and societal norms in Kermanshah.

The study highlights that T-shirt inscriptions, distinct from other public expressions like graffiti or stickers, carry a uniquely personal yet public form of communication. Unlike graffiti, which is stationary and anonymous, T-shirts are mobile and actively associated with the wearer's identity. As noted by Chiluwa & Ajiboye, 2016), T-shirt messages and slogans often reflect the ways youths construct their identities, engage with their environment, and express socio-economic aspirations. Similarly, Kelly (2003) examines image projection and expression of identity through T-shirts in Hawaii. Public expression through fashion in Iran is especially significant given its sociopolitical and cultural complexities, making T-shirt inscriptions a powerful medium for personal and social messaging.

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Examining a non-linguistic phenomenon as a language: the case of aikido

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This paper makes a case for the martial art of aikido as a system similar to a language, offering a novel way to analyse its complex interactions and engage critically with linguistic theories. Considering aikido as a form of embodied, multimodal, multisensory, and contextual meaning-making creates the opportunity to examine it as a social system with communicative potential. Drawing on Duranti's (1997) claim that the boundaries of language expand when it is equated with social interaction and informed by Schlenker's (2018) concept of superlinguistics, which investigates cognitive activities analogous to language, this paper establishes preliminary connections between aikido and linguistics.

The study examines aikido as an embodied pedagogy in intercultural business communication training using a mixed-methods approach. It involved a training experiment with surveys and observations to assess learning gains and participant satisfaction. The sample consisted of 73 participants, including employees, employers, and entrepreneurs. It identifies two linguistic features in aikido: indexicality and code-switching. First, the movements in aikido are indexed with a meaning. For instance, the gesture of extending a hand at the beginning of an aikido interaction not only signifies entering into physical engagement but also metaphorically represents entering into a conversation with openness, curiosity, and tranquillity. This gesture becomes an indexical sign within communication training, symbolising the intention to connect constructively rather than confront. Second, participants switch easily and frequently between the embodied language of aikido and named languages (e.g., Dutch) to reinforce both conceptual and embodied expressions of aikido. For example, switching occurs between the movement of a pivoting turn and the explanation as "to turn a challenging question into an opportunity." The meaning-making possibilities of aikido surpass the expression typical of named languages and involve moves, gestures, postures, facial expressions, sensory engagement (using the senses), and context (space, materials, environment, and ecology).

Applying linguistic concepts and methodologies to a seemingly non-linguistic system uncovers valuable insights into both the structure and meaning of – in this case – aikido itself as well as the broader nature of language. Scholarship has only just begun to explore the structure and meaning of aikido interaction and other non-standard social systems. There is much room for further research from a linguistic perspective. More generally, the study of non-linguistic phenomena through a linguistic lens opens new avenues for inquiry.

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POSTER SESSION

Tuesday 17 December 2024, 15:00-17:00

Cross-linguistic analysis of pain expression: a comparative study between English and Chinese

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Effective communication of pain in healthcare settings is vital for accurate diagnosis, patient satisfaction, and appropriate treatment. However, expressing pain poses linguistic and cultural challenges, especially across languages. This study aims to explore how people express pain in English and Chinese, identifying similarities and differences. It will examine both native speakers and second-language learners to uncover key linguistic and cultural distinctions.

In English, pain can be described as a process ("My knee hurts"), a quality ("a sharp pain"), or a condition ("a headache"). This versatility is reflected in pain assessment tools like the McGill Pain Questionnaire, which categorizes pain into sensory, affective, and evaluative dimensions. However, these tools are primarily developed within Western frameworks and often fail to account for the diverse ways in which cultures interpret, experience, and express pain. In contrast, Chinese pain expressions are deeply influenced by Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which introduces terms like 气痛 [qì tòng] ("qi pain"), describing disruptions in vital energy, and 风湿 [fēng shī] ("wind-damp"), referring to pain associated with environmental factors like humidity or wind. Communication styles also play a significant role. For instance, in Chinese, an indirect expression such as 有点儿不舒服 [yǒu diǎnr bù shūfú] ("feeling a bit uncomfortable") may convey significant pain. For Western healthcare providers unfamiliar with this nuanced communication, such phrases may be mistakenly interpreted as indicating mild discomfort, potentially leading to misjudgments in care.

This study will employ a combination of corpus-based analysis and participant-driven data collection. Corpus analysis will focus on large-scale linguistic corpora (such as the British National Corpus and the Chinese Web Corpus) to identify patterns in pain-related vocabulary, metaphorical usage, and contextual variations. Participant-driven data will be collected through three methods: (1) free listing, where participants provide pain descriptors in their native and second languages; (2) real-life healthcare scenarios, where authentic patient-provider interactions are observed to capture pain communication in context; and (3) one-on-one interviews to gain deeper insights into participants' linguistic choices, challenges, and cultural perspectives.

Quantitative analysis, supported by tools such as Sketch Engine and R, will focus on corpus-based frequency and collocation patterns, highlighting commonly used terms unique to each language. Qualitative methods, including contrastive, descriptive, and discourse analyses, will examine the socio-cultural nuances in pain expressions. The study will also

perform error analysis on data from second-language learners, identifying specific linguistic and cultural challenges in describing pain.

By identifying gaps in current assessment frameworks, this study aims to propose adjustments to these tools, making them more linguistically and culturally inclusive. Such adaptations would enable healthcare providers to better understand and respond to pain expressions from patients of diverse backgrounds, ultimately improving patient care and cross-cultural communication in clinical settings. This research will contribute to applied linguistics, healthcare communication, and cross-cultural healthcare training, highlighting the need for more inclusive pain assessment and communication practices. The findings could inform healthcare providers, educators, and policymakers, advancing efforts to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps in healthcare, thus supporting more effective, patient-centered care worldwide.

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Putting measurement to the test: assessing the construct validity of implicit and explicit measurement instruments for low-educated learners.

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Second language learners with no or interrupted schooling make up a large, yet vulnerable population in the world today (UNESCO, 2017), making it essential to understand how literacy levels impact second language development. Recent research into this group of learners suggests that their metalinguistic awareness and learning processes differ substantially from those of functionally literate and highly educated learners (Kurvers, 2015; Bigelow et al., 2006). Therefore, accurate measurement is critical for understanding how didactic interventions specifically impact low-literate language learners. However, in the field of Applied Linguistics, validation of measurement instruments is often skewed toward highly educated language learners, leading to concerns regarding generalization beyond that convenience sample (Andringa & Godfroid 2020; Ellis & Roever, 2021). Given this sampling bias, the current study investigates the construct validity of tests that target implicit and explicit knowledge (Ellis & Roever, 2021) - including an Elicited Imitation Test (implicit) and a Grammaticality Judgment Test (explicit). Many-facet Rasch analysis and factor analysis will be used to detect bias at item level and determine the suitability of these instruments. The research population includes low-literate learners of Dutch alongside a control group of highly educated learners, allowing for a direct comparison. To isolate the impact of literacy from psychometric variables, the RAVEN intelligence test and the Forward Digit Span Task for working memory will be used. Both measurement instruments are designed to be minimally influenced by literacy level or level of education (respectively Pearson, 2020; Juffs, 2005). Given the cognitive demands of tests involving abstract reasoning, we anticipate lower outcomes for low-educated learners, as they often face challenges with general literacy and test literacy, which require heightened metalinguistic awareness. By validating language assessment tools for low-literate populations, this study challenges conventional language assessment practices and broadens applicability beyond the mainstream, educated demographic. During my poster presentation, I will briefly discuss preliminary results of the pilot and the theoretical and empirical implications of this research for the field of Applied Linguistics.

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Characterization of the subtypes of the insubordinate construction [se ao menos] in Brazilian Portuguese

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Insubordinate constructions (ICs), despite being recurrent in speech and writing, are commonly marginalized in the grammars of different languages, often regarded as atypical uses of subordinate clauses. According to Evans (2007), an IC is a construction that shows signs of subordination but occurs independently, without the main clause. Among the types of ICs, we can mention those like "if only I had money…" (*se ao menos eu tivesse dinheiro…*, in Portuguese). It is understood that Evans' (2007) definition does not encompass all the functions and uses expressed by ICs; therefore, several authors have shown that insubordinate conditional constructions (ICCs) have different functions compared to their subordinate uses, such as the [se ao menos] constructions in Portuguese, where the conditional meaning fades and the semantics of desire or wish would become evident. This is reflected in the association of morphosyntactic patterns such as the use of imperfect subjunctive or verbal periphrasis with past markings, as discussed by D'Hertefelt (2015) regarding these constructions in Germanic languages. The author, in her typology, proposes the *potential*, *irrealis*, and *counterfactual* subtypes, related to the degree of (im)possibility of fulfilling the expressed desires, indicated by different mode-temporal markings on the verbs. The research developed here aims to investigate data on the form of the construction and how its semantics reflect the meaning of desire or wish. The idea of pairing form and meaning is derived from the proposals of Cognitive Construction Grammar (GOLDBERG, 1995). For this investigation, 1,027 occurrences of the [se ao menos] construction in Portuguese were analyzed, they were collected from the social network Twitter (currently X) during 2021 and 2022, to help us describe specific uses of this construction in Brazilian Portuguese (BP), comparing them to what has been stated about this construction in Germanic languages according to D'Hertefelt (2015). Using this data, we seek to propose a typology of these ICCs in BP, relating the subtypes found to markings in the form and expanding the proposals of D'Hertefelt (2015) for uses in Portuguese. Partial results indicate different ways of marking subtypes in BP, especially a variation in temporal-mode marking. All occurrences from the corpus were found to be in the imperfect subjunctive, unlike the typology proposed by D'Hertefelt (2015), where we can see subtypes being marked with different conjugations, such as the indicative, for example. Additionally, it is quite common to see different patterns of verbal periphrasis that seem to contribute to the definition of formal markings in BP. Furthermore, some uses that convey the semantics of an ironic or sarcastic wish appear in the corpus but are not documented in D'Hertefelt's typology (2015). This use is not considered to be a new subtype of the construction, but we believe it conveys a new layer of meaning indicated by the use of discourse markers.

Acknowledgments

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Mapping across: on intermodular communication and the mapping a concept to a language-internal root

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Language is assumed to be modular (cf. Chomsky, 1993, 1995; Chomsky & Lasnik, 1991; Sadock, 2012): Syntax, semantics and phonology constitute their own separate modules, distinct computational units which function independently of one another. Modules are domain-specific and hence cannot understand the vocabulary of other modules or parse their categories. Communication, therefore, cannot happen directly, but must happen by means of translating concepts from the one into the other. This translation is done by means of mapping rules. Syntax, for instance, builds up a chunk and sends it off (or maps it over) to the semantic and phonological component, where it must be translated (or matched) to their internal vocabulary (cf. Scheer, 2012; Selkirk, 2011).

Within a Minimalist approach, this intermodular communication is done by means of phases (Chomsky, 2001, 2008; among others). A phase roughly corresponds to the idea of a chunk and is the driving mechanism used for mapping an element from the one component to the other. However, this mechanism is purely language-internal; there is not yet any neurobiological evidence for this mapping outside of that. How, for instance, can a concept be encoded within a language and mapped from a neural assembly onto a lexical item? Are there any direct correspondences between the neural infrastructure and linguistic theorizing (e.g. 1 neuron = 1 syllable)? And what are the mechanisms driving these mappings? This touches upon what is called Mapping Problem from neurobiology to Language (and linguistics; cf. Poeppel & Embick, 2005; Poeppel, 2012, 2014; Stockall & Gwilliams, In Press).

The focus of this poster is on the mapping of conceptual information from neural assemblies to a language-internal element, and how this may be done. Putting aside the discussion on how concepts are encoded (cf. Koch, 2004: 30; Waydo et al., 2006; Paradis, 2000; Quiroga, 2012), a concept is mapped onto language; as a concept is language-external, it must be translated to (or matched with) an element from the language-internal vocabulary, to something that can encode the core concept and carry it within the Language-domain. Such an element may be a Root carrying the conceptual content (in the sense of Harley 2014). The goal of this poster is to provide a preliminary discussion on how a concept can be mapped onto such a conceptual Root.

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