Report on the summer school
"Linguistic Theory in Second and Foreign Language Teaching"
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This report reviews the work of the summer school "Linguistic Theory in Second and Foreign Language Teaching" jointly organised by the University of Braunschweig and Minin University Nizhny Novgorod in August-September, 2018. The summer school was partially supported by the Ministry of Science and Culture of Lower Saxony under the funding scheme "PRO*Niedersachsen".

In the post-method era (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2006), the link between linguistic theory and language teaching practice is becoming obscure; and in need of being continuously fostered. Until now, both language theorists and practitioners have consistently underestimated potential benefits of a cross-disciplinary dialogue and their role as its main agents. This event attempted to bridge the research-teaching divide and brought together the most successful practices in language teaching and recent findings from experimental SLA research that are immediately related to those practices. The contributions covered the key components that form communicative competence of a learner (Council of Europe, 2001:13), specifically, phonetics and phonology, morphology, and syntax.

Martin Neef (University of Braunschweig) sketched out a framework of phonology as an autonomous system that can be described independently of phonetics (Autonomous Declarative Phonology). In this framework, a particular sound of German can be treated as its phoneme if it can be contrasted to other phonemes in minimal pairs. This approach is particularly suited for systematic reflection on the phonology of a language and contrastive

analysis of different phonological systems, which provides a conceptual matrix for phonetic training and literacy development in a foreign language.

The workshop by Sara Grech (University of Malta) addressed the problem of phonological variety in world Englishes. If English is a Lingua Franca (ELF) or an International Language (EIL) it should be understood equally well across the globe. The workshop shows this is not always the case: There is no "correct" English- its phonology is a phenomenon that should be taught in its variety, through classroom tasks that raise metalinguistic awareness.

The keynote lecture by Roumyana Slabakova (University of Southampton) highlighted certain implications of research in acquisition of morphology on classroom instructions. Similar-looking morphemes often have different grammatical functions in different languages. Due to functional differences, morphology is the location of cross-linguistic variation and can be metaphorically called the *bottleneck* of language acquisition. Classroom instruction and practice should aim at getting morphological features successfully re-adjusted to the correct grammatical functioning in the new language in the process of second / foreign language acquisition.

The key-note by David Stringer (Indiana University Bloomington, USA) opened a window onto adult L2-learners' syntax processing. An empirical analysis of conventional expressions in an elicited production task reveals that, although most learners are aware of contextually appropriate expressions, only advanced learners use them grammatically correctly. Rather than blindly using conventional expressions as unanalysed chunks, learners play around with them using their available grammatical knowledge at a particular stage of language acquisition. Thus, error-free production of formulaic language should be seen as the end-state of L2 grammatical development. L2 learners' performance on conventional

expressions is determined by the amount of rule-based grammatical knowledge the learners possess.

Development of pragmatic competence involves appropriate use of grammatical elements when their meaning is (partly) pre-defined by pragmatic context (Council of Europe, 2001). The workshop with Andreas Trotzke (University of Konstanz) gave a concise overview of the most well-researched phenomena of this type. Carrie Ankerstein (University of Saarbrücken) showed that insufficient command of individual cohesive devices is generally detrimental for L2 writing. School textbooks provide exhaustive lists of connecting devices with a particular function. However, they lack information on context-appropriateness of individual connectors. As a result, logical connectors are commonly misused and L2 writing can look clumsy. Since the grammar-pragmatics domain is poorly reflected in available textbook materials for L2 instruction, the development and assessment of pragmatic competence remains a burning issue across countries. The first steps to solving the problem were proposed by Kseniia Kashleva (Moscow Higher School of Economics, Russia). She presented an assessment tool for the use of cohesive devices as part of the narrative competence of L2 Russian learners. L2 learners exposed to the target language on a daily basis demonstrate a feel for certain customized phrases and their pragmatic appropriateness in different contexts.

Contradictory findings on the development of pragmatic competence and individual differences in language development across other linguistic domains were also revealed in research presented by Maria Andria (University of Barcelona). Andria studies the impact of naturalistic language environment (stay abroad context) on students' language skills, across different linguistic domains. While students can become competent in target language politeness patterns, a period abroad has little influence on the development of writing skills. Students who take a period abroad during their studies differ dramatically from their stay-at-

home peers. Furthermore, studies comparing students with and without international experience would be more informative if delayed post-tests are added.

The plenary by Heather Lotherington (York University, Canada) set the tone for a discussion of the challenges that teachers face working with students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. The advancement of digitally-mediated communication empathises the advantages of linguistic diversity in the learning process. Tanja Rinker (University of Tübingen) demonstrated the potential of learners' L1 as a viable means to shape linguistic awareness in a multilingual classroom. She presented selected classroom activities that enable the learner to consider the target language through the lens of their mother tongue and actively engage in drawing metalinguistic conclusions. Shahir Nashed (Quatar Foundation International) estimated the chances in the status of Arabic as a Foreign Language. It is now becoming one of the available foreign languages. There is a number of decisions that have to be made regarding learning outcomes and course content. Classical Arabic of Quran as the subject matter of the course is rejected in favour of the so-called Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Nevertheless, learners should be made aware of the existing social and regional varieties of Arabic as well as of systematic differences between Arabic and German.

Plurilingualism is also advancing into classrooms where teachers and learners share their preferred language of instruction. In subject-specific courses at Russian universities, the use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction presents a challenge and is used infrequently However, if students experience a foreign language in profession-related settings early on, they might be more eager to take part in study abroad programmes and build up international professional networks. Olga Mironova (Minin University of Nizhny Novgorod) evaluated the results of a project where teachers in non-philological university subjects were encouraged to partially implement English as a medium of instruction in a Russian-speaking classroom. While initially the participating teachers were reluctant to switch into English, the

number and duration of English-speaking episodes in class increased as the project progressed and yielded good results in mastering the non-linguistic subjects.

No discussion of language acquisition / learning of an individual is complete without assessing levels of proficiency. The workshop with Laia Arnaus (University of Wuppertal) highlighted the approaches that provide well-rounded assessment of proficiency in non-native languages. On top of commonly known measurements, such as Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) and fluency in words per minute, proficiency can be assessed through lexicon growth and passive receptive vocabulary measurement. Proficiency in L2 and L3 can be successfully assessed through independent tests; the influence of other language(s) on the assessment of the language at stake cannot be overlooked. Marina Sokolova (University of Southampton, UK) presented a paper on the issue of language proficiency as a possible indicator of bilingualism. An overview of C-test results and background questionnaires of average participants in linguistic experiments show that an average secondary school in Russia provides enough linguistic information to develop the grammar system of second language. A random sample of participants tested ten years after they finished school reached the same (low)intermediate level of proficiency in English as an average school-leaver, even if the L2 had only been used incidentally.

Collaborative work of language teachers and theoretical researchers during the summer school assessed the current state at the confluence of theoretical SLA research and language instruction across major linguistic domains and in different language learning settings. The summer school approached the concept of student-oriented language learning. It suggested that collaborative effort between instructors and researchers enables considering both general tendencies in L2 development and individual learning pathways for customized course design and material selection

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