

## Do L2 lexical and syntactic development go hand in hand?

A central question in second language acquisition research is how instructed learners can acquire new features not present in the first language. Bates & Goodman (1997) suggested that in first language acquisition, children's development of syntactic features relies on vocabulary size. With the increasing role for the lexicon in terms of the specification of syntactic features due to the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995), it seems logical to ask what the L2 lexicon needs to look like in order for L2 learners to acquire new syntactic (uninterpretable) features. There have not yet been extensive studies in L2 acquisition in this area. Previous work by David et al (2009) found correlations between L2 vocabulary diversity and global measures such as MLU. Treffers-Daller & Rogers (2014) found a link between receptive vocabulary size and the acquisition of strong uninterpretable Tense features in L2 French. This exploratory study seeks to investigate whether there is a relationship between the acquisition of receptive and productive vocabulary and the acquisition of uninterpretable feature bundles associated with CP, TP and DP. Further, this study will consider whether there are constraints on the acquisition of uninterpretable features due to the nature of the mental vocabulary network, e.g. threshold limits.

This pilot study seeks to provide initial proof of concept and so a fine-grained analysis of 20 English speaking learners of French will be carried out. The participants are all French undergraduate students who previously studied French at secondary school. They took part in a battery of tasks including a cloze test as a measure of general proficiency, a receptive vocabulary test (X-lex), a written story re-telling task (the Finite Story by Dimroth et al (2010)) and a written composition task.

Initial results from the first 10 participants and the written story-retelling task showed a significant correlation between measures of lexical diversity (D) and MLU (similar to David et al 2014). They also showed significant correlations between diversity and DP (gender), TP (verb movement) and CP (embedded clauses). No significant relationships were found with general proficiency or receptive vocabulary size. Further analysis is ongoing but these initial results suggest that the acquisition of vocabulary, at least in terms of diversity, is related to the acquisition of uninterpretable features. The implications of what this means for L2 mental lexicon will also be discussed.