Anaphora Resolution in Advanced L2 Speakers of English
(Abstract)

It has been noticed that very advanced L2 speakers may exhibit non-convergence with native speakers in certain structures, not others. The Interface Hypothesis (Sorace and Filiaci, 2006) proposes that structures involving an interface of syntax and other cognitive domains such as pragmatics are more challenging than structures only involving syntactic computation. In English, it is commonly assumed that the choice of referent for reflexives such as "himself" is specified by the syntactic/structural configuration of the sentence (Chomsky, 1981), whereas the resolution of non-reflexive pronouns relies more on non-structural factors such as semantic and discourse factors (Hobbs, 1979; Kehler, 2002).

This study investigates whether and why advanced L2 speakers of English from different L1 backgrounds exhibit non-convergence in anaphora resolution with native English speakers, centering around two accounts: crosslinguistic influence from L1 and general L2 processing inefficiency. The study investigates pronouns and reflexives in Picture Noun Phrases (PNPs, e.g. *Sheldon showed Leonard the picture of him*) using a picture verification task. Reflexives in PNPs rely more heavily on structural constraints than non-structural constraints, whereas pronouns exhibit more evenly matched competition between structural and non-structural constraints (Kaiser et al., 2009).

The results show that non-convergence in L2 ultimate attainment at interface structures is not due to interface *per se*. It is the presence or absence of the conflicts of different types of constraints that predicts whether or not there is non-convergence at interface structures. The interface provides the possibility of having conflicts of different types of information and various types of interface structures predict various degrees of non-convergence. Non-convergence in the reflexive conditions likely reflects crosslinguistic influence, whereas non-convergence in the pronoun conditions may reflect processing inefficiency as L2 speakers more generally. Crosslinguistic influence and processing inefficiency are not mutually exclusive in relation to the non-convergence with native speakers at advanced stages in L2 acquisition.