Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 2017

Variable Properties: Their Nature and Acquisition

GURT 2017

March 10-12
Georgetown University

Conference Program

Schedule Overview

Friday Morning, March 10

Time	Event
8:30 AM	**Registration and Coffee** ICC Galleria
9:00 AM	**Welcome Address: Elizabeth Zsiga, Department Chair** ICC Auditorium
9:15 AM	**Plenary: David Lightfoot (Georgetown University)** ICC Auditorium
10:00 AM	**Plenary: Elan Dresher (University of Toronto)** ICC Auditorium
11:00 AM	**Coffee Break** ICC Galleria
11:30 AM	**Plenary: Lisa Green (University of Massachusetts Amherst)** ICC Auditorium
12:30 PM	**Invited Lunch for Plenary Speakers and Junior Scholars**
2:00 PM	

Friday Afternoon, March 10

	ICC 101 Syntactic Change	ICC 103 Morphosyntax	ICC 105 L2 Acquisition	ICC 107 Sociolinguistics	ICC 108 Phonology
2:00 PM	Andrea Ceolin	Masha Fedzechkina and T. Florian Jaeger	Colloquium: Evaluating Explanations of Variability in Second Language Acquisition: Constructional and Phonological Evidence Organizer: Lourdes Ortega	Jorge Aguilar-Sanchez	Betsy Sneller
2:35 PM	Marit Westergaard and Terje Lohndal	Iris Edda Nowenstein and Anton Karl Ingason		Gareth Roberts and Masha Fedzechkina	Matthew Carlson
3:10 PM	Ahmad Alqassas	Sunny Park-Johnson		Emily Walters, Abby Walker and Jennifer Hay	Alex McAllister and Marianna Nadeu
3:45 PM	Marlyse Baptista	Luke Adamson		Brent Laing	Graziela Bohn
4:20 PM	Hang Jiang	Norbert Corver	Paul John and Walcir Cardoso	Elizabeth Peterson	Ross Krekoski
4:55 PM	Ceolin et al.	Daniel Currie Hall and Elizabeth Cowper	Isabelle Darcy and Rob Bedinghaus	Robin Queen	
5:30 PM	Reception ICC Galleria				
7:00 PM					

Saturday Morning, March 11

Time	Event
9:00 AM	**Registration and Coffee** ICC Galleria
9:30 AM	**Plenary: Gillian Sankoff (University of Pennsylvania)** ICC Auditorium
10:30 AM	**Plenary: Natalie Schilling (Georgetown University)** ICC Auditorium
11:30 AM	**Coffee and Poster Session** ICC Galleria / **NSF Information Table** ICC Galleria
1:00 PM	Break for Lunch
2:00 PM	

Saturday Afternoon, March 11

	ICC 101 Syntax	ICC 103 Morphosyntax	ICC 105 L2 Acquisition	ICC 107 Sociolinguistics	ICC 108 L1 Acquisition
2:00 PM					
	Dan Milway	Eva Berkes and Suzanne Flynn	Jarvis et al.	Jennifer Nycz	Goldie Ann Mcquaid
2:35 PM					
	Akitaka Yamada	Teodora Radeva-Bork	Luke Plonsky and Kazuya Saito	Kinga Koźmińska	Goeun Chae
3:10 PM					
	Katelyn MacDougald	Raymond Mougeon, Françoise Mougeon and Terry Nadasdi	Leah S. Bauke	Kevin Viner	Marjorie Pak
3:45 PM					
	Lauren Halberstadt and Paola Dussias	Aretousa Giannakou and Ioanna Sitaridou	Isabelle Lemee and Helene Blondeau	Gregory Guy	Wanette Reynolds
4:20 PM					
	Sara Sanchez-Alonso, Ashwini Deo and Maria Pinango	Heidi Getz	Danielle Daidone and Sara Zahler	Jonathan Morris	Myrto Grigoroglou and Anna Papafragou
4:55 PM					
	Ariana Bancu	Theresa Biberauer	Mitchell Sommers and Joe Barcroft	Edvan Brito	Alicia Avellana, Lucía Brandani, Hannah Forsythe and Cristina Schmitt
5:30 PM					
	Merete Anderssen and Marit Westergaard	Masha Fedzechkina, Becky Chu and T. Florian Jaeger			
6:00 PM	Champagne Reception ICC Galleria				
7:00 PM					

Sunday Morning, March 12

Note: Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 12 at 2:00 AM

Time	Event
9:00 AM	**Registration and Coffee** ICC Galleria
9:30 AM	**Plenary: Maria Polinsky (University of Maryland)** ICC Auditorium
10:30 AM	**Plenary: Elissa Newport (Georgetown University)** ICC Auditorium
11:30 AM	**Coffee Break** ICC Galleria
12:00 PM	**Plenary: Charles Yang (University of Pennsylvania)** ICC Auditorium
1:00 PM	**Closing Discussion** ICC Auditorium
1:30 PM	

Conference Schedule and Abstracts

Friday AM

Welcome Address: Elizabeth Zsiga

Plenary Speaker: David Lightfoot

Discovering variable properties

Generativists often see children acquiring their internal, individual language system by flicking on/off switches on binary parameters and evaluating the generative capacity of I-languages against a corpus of sentences. These ideas are deeply problematic and invite alternatives.

Here I argue that children parse the external language they hear (E-language) and postulate specific I-language elements required for certain aspects of the parse, making use of what UG makes available, notably through the bottom-up procedures of Merge and Project. The aggregation of those elements constitutes the complete I-language. When E-language shifts, children may parse differently and thus attain a new I-language, as revealed in work on syntactic change. Children discover variable properties of their I-languages through parsing; there is no evaluation of I-languages and no binary parameters. This way we can understand the emergence of the profuse idiosyncratic properties of modern English in ways that parameters do not help.

Plenary Speaker: B. Elan Dresher

Contrastive feature hierarchies in phonology: Universality and variation

Jakobson's *Kindersprache* (1941), widely considered to be a ground-breaking work, has nevertheless been much criticized for its hypothesis that phonological development proceeds in a fixed order; subsequent investigation has found considerably more variation than Jakobson had supposed. Controversy over this issue has obscured Jakobson's more basic insight that learners gradually acquire the contrastive features of their language in a hierarchical order, whereby a small number of initial broad contrasts are elaborated until the full set of contrasts of the adult language has been acquired. I propose that it is the concept of a contrastive feature hierarchy that is universal, not the features themselves or their ordering. I further adopt the Contrastivist Hypothesis, which holds that only contrastive features can be computed by the phonology. The connection between contrast and activity implies that learners are guided both by phonological activity and by surface phonetics in acquiring the feature hierarchy for their language. I argue that these principles suffice to account for many of the ways that phonological systems resemble each other. I will show how contrastive feature hierarchies contribute to accounts of the synchrony, diachrony, and acquisition of phonology, allowing for considerable variation, but governed by a uniform universal template.

Plenary Speaker: Lisa Green

All zeros are not equal: Sometimes nothing is nothing and sometimes it is something

Overt 3rd singular marking on verbs is claimed to be absent from the adult African American English (AAE) grammar (Labov, 1972; Green 2002, 2011) although native speakers of AAE may produce 3rd person singular verbal morphology in limited contexts. On the other hand, past tense marking, although produced variably, is part of the AAE grammar (Labov 1972; Green 2011). Newkirk and Green (2016) claim that in the early stages, children use bare forms of verbs to mark events without reference to tense or aspect. In later stages, children also use bare forms of verbs or zero morphological marking in variation with overt morphological marking to indicate tense (and aspect):

(1)   She **go** to the chicken and **picks** up eggs.

(2)   The cat **spilled** the milk and the dog **make** a mess on the floor.

In this paper, I investigate past and non-past contexts in data from over 800 developing 3- to 5-year-old AAE speaking children to test the claim that not all non-overt or zero morphological marking (e.g., *She go to the chickens*) is equal. The data reveal patterns in zero marking associated with 3rd person singular –*s* and past tense morphology that are related to the difference in their connections to the AAE grammar. Furthermore, the data also reveal that although developing AAE resembles adult AAE in zero morphological marking, such marking in some stages in child AAE grammar may not be equivalent to zero marking in adult AAE.

Friday PM

Syntactic Change
Chair: Charles Yang

Constraints on Old English genitive variation
Andrea Ceolin

I show that the alternation between prenominal and postnominal genitive noun phrases in Old English is mainly a factor of constituent weight, and there is no evidence for a syntactic change in progress. The claim is supported by a corpus search on the prose texts of the YCOE.

V2 Norwegian heritage language: Variation and vulnerability
Marit Westergaard and Terje Lohndal

Based on data from a spoken corpus, this paper discusses the loss of Verb Second (V2) word order in Norwegian heritage language spoken in the US. It is shown that the context for V2 (non-subject-initial declaratives) is severely reduced, and that there is a clear correlation with non-V2 word order.

Syntactic variation and change in Jordanian Arabic negation
Ahmad Alqassas

This paper investigates syntactic change in the most variable category in Jordanian Arabic, namely negation. Internal factors (syntactic and pragmatic) block the spread of stage 3 negation using the enclitic negative marker by itself (the new marker from a Jespersen Cycle perspective), despite phonological factors that spread stage 3.

Modeling variation and competing I-languages in creole genesis: A synchronic and diachronic view   3:45 PM–4:15 PM

Marlyse Baptista

This paper challenges the notion that variation in creole languages is due to a continuum punctuated by a basilect and acrolect. Instead, this study proposes that variation within a single variety and across varieties is reflective of competing I-grammars and feature recombinations both synchronically and diachronically.

Analysis versus synthesis: Causative constructions   4:20 PM–4:50 PM

Hang Jiang

Archaic Chinese and Modern Chinese differ over a range of constructions on the analytic-synthetic continuum. I will describe the change in the first part of this presentation considering a possible connection between prosodic morphology and light-verb syntax, and also explore some implications for language acquisition throughout the history of Chinese.

Language history and population diversity   4:55 PM–5:25 PM

Andrea Ceolin, Guido Cordoni, Cristina Guardiano, Monica Alexandrina Irimia, Dimitar Kazakov, Shin-Sook Kim, Giuseppe Longobardi, Dimitris Michelioudakis and Nina Radkevich

We propose a method to calculate syntactic distances which relies on a theory of language acquisition based on parameter schemata, syntactic cues and no negative evidence. We show that insights from long-range comparison and population history can be used to test and refine models of language variation and learnability.

Morphosyntax   ICC 103
Chair: Ruth Kramer

Trade-off between effort and robust information in cross-linguistic morphosyntax   2:00 PM–2:30 PM

Masha Fedzechkina and T. Florian Jaeger

We find that learners trade off production effort against robust message transmission and restructure the input only when cue production requires a substantial effort increase. Learners' preferences parallel the typological correlation between word order freedom and case-marking and provide a possible explanation for diachronic and typological data.

Featural dynamics in morphosyntactic change   2:35 PM–3:05 PM

Iris Edda Nowenstein and Anton Karl Ingason

We investigate two side effects of Icelandic Dative Substitution, an effect of Person Specific Retention and an Elsewhere Condition Death Rattle. We analyze those in terms of Yang's (2002, 2016) model of acquisition and change and derive two ways in which universal feature inventories impose constraints on linguistic change.

Acquisition of case ellipsis alternation by young Korean heritage speakers   3:10 PM–3:40 PM

Sunny Park-Johnson

This study investigates young Korean heritage speakers' acquisition of the variability of case ellipsis (CE), in which Korean subjects and objects are permitted to appear without case markers in certain contexts. Despite the reduced input in Korean, child heritage speakers pattern similarly to monolingual Korean learners.

Past tense doublets: How grammatical architecture constrains variation   3:45 PM–4:15 PM
Luke Adamson

Recent research in Distributed Morphology has forwarded the hypothesis that root polysemy is only conditioned locally. The current study finds corroborating evidence from past tense doublets, which are never semantically differentiated, because Tense is not close enough to verbal roots. This finding has implications for the range of possible variation.

Adverbial -*s*: Categorial manifestation and variation   4:20 PM–4:50 PM
Norbert Corver

What is the grammatical nature of adverbial -*s* (e.g., *sideways*) and what underlies cross-linguistic and cross-constructional variation in the appearance of this -*s*? I propose that -*s* is an affixal realization of nº/aº and variation relates to properties of the selected root ($\sqrt{}$). Data come from Dutch (varieties) and English.

Scope variation in contrastive hierarchies of morphosyntactic features   4:55 PM–5:25 PM
Daniel Currie Hall and Elizabeth Cowper

Arguing that morphosyntactic features are organized into contrastive hierarchies as in Dresher's (2009) approach to phonology, we show that contrastive scope offers insights into variation and diachronic change. We illustrate with English number features, contrasting with Mandarin, and English tense/aspect features, contrasting with Romance and earlier stages of English.

Colloquium: Evaluating Explanations of Variability in Second Language Acquisition: Constructional and Phonological Evidence   ICC 105

Introduction by organizer-discussant Lourdes Ortega   2:00 PM–2:05 PM
Variability is taken to be a characteristic of late-onset second language (L2) learning. This colloquium evaluates three explanations of variability among L2 users when compared to first-language (L1) users. A first explanation is that variability arises from having less robust representations and/or less automatized access, by comparison to L1 users. If so, as proficiency increases, variable performance should decrease. This is a tacit assumption in most second language acquisition (SLA) research. Yet another explanation is that cross-language interactions arising from knowing a first language (and in the case of multilinguals other languages) induce variability. In this second scenario, variability would remain a characteristic of bilingual usage regardless of proficiency. This explanation is favored by researchers of crosslinguistic influence in SLA (e.g., Jarvis, Odlin) and bilingualism researchers (e.g., J. Paradis, Sorace). A third explanation—originating in cognitive science—attributes variability to a trade-off between production ease and communicative goals (e.g., Jaeger, T. Gibson, Piantadosi). In this scenario, L2 and L1 variability would be qualitatively similar, only that in L2 the trade-off would have more dire consequences, because of deeper vulnerability to stressors. The presenters and the organizer-discussant will contrast the variability observed in L2 samples with the variability expected for the same phenomena in monolingual usage. Two presentations deal with constructional and two with phonological variability.

'It is clear… that? or to?': Second language users' variable knowledge of the introductory-IT construction   2:05 PM–2:30 PM
Sakol Suethanapornkul

Second language (L2) users' knowledge of the two *introductory-IT* frames (e.g., it is {important} to/it is {clear} that) was probed in a psycholinguistic experiment and compared to a collexeme analysis conducted on the 17.4-million-word BNC. Variability of L2 users' knowledge was attested and likely reflects limited amounts of input.

Variability in the English motion event constructions of Korean-English bilinguals: A staple of adult bilingualism?   2:30 PM–2:55 PM
Hae In Park

Motion events were elicited in English from late Korean-English bilinguals and compared to L1 baselines. The L2 lexicalization patterns were mostly English-like but the constructional repertoires were much wider than those of either L1 counterpart. I argue that variable constructional knowledge might be a salient difference between monolinguals and bilinguals.

Acquisition of the acoustic cues associated with L2 Zapotec tones: Explaining intra- and inter-learner variability   2:55 PM–3:20 PM
Kate Riestenberg

Child L2 Zapotec learners vary in tone production accuracy as a factor of vocabulary knowledge. Even when vocabulary knowledge is similar, however, the acoustic correlates of tone they produce are variable. Further, intra-learner variation is related to tone salience and word frequency. Several cognitive and input-based explanations will be evaluated.

Same yet different: Variability in bilinguals' and monolinguals' phonemic /i/ and /ɪ/ distinction in English   3:20 PM–3:45 PM
Mari Sakai

Both advanced Spanish-English sequential bilinguals (*n*=16) and English monolinguals (*n*=20) showed categorical knowledge of English /i/ and /ɪ/ on perception and production tasks. However, as cognitive demands increased, the bilinguals' performance became markedly more variable than that of monolinguals. A staple of bilingual competence may be greater vulnerability to stressors.

Discussion session led by Lourdes Ortega   3:45 PM–4:15 PM

L2 Acquisition I   ICC 105
Chair: Lourdes Ortega

Understanding L2 phonological variation: The role of the lexicon   4:20 PM–4:50 PM
Paul John and Walcir Cardoso

Based on empirical data involving variable i-epenthesis by Brazilian Portuguese ESL learners, we propose that L2 variation is typically lexical rather than derivational. L2 variation stems not from variable phonological processes but from lexical items having dual underlying representations which compete for selection at the moment of speaking.

Rapid lexical encoding of a dialectal variant in L2 Spanish during study abroad   4:55 PM–5:30 PM
Isabelle Darcy and Rob Bedinghaus

We examine the acquisition of dialectal variation (Andalusian-Spanish s-aspiration) for lexical access in a second language. Study abroad learners completed a lexical decision task twice (three months apart). Their recognition of s-aspirated L2 words improved (unlike US-based learners'). One semester of exposure rapidly triggered lexical updates to include s-aspirated forms.

Sociolinguistics I   ICC 107
Chair: Natalie Schilling

Sample size, research design, and power for generalizability of results in the study   2:00 PM–2:30 PM
of language variation and change: Looking back to move forward
Jorge Aguilar-Sanchez

The present work addresses the concerns of research design related to the generalizability of results. My interest in this paper is to introduce, without criticism, the concern that the practice followed in our field may be producing underpowered studies due to their weakness in design.

The effect of social biases on the retention of redundant variation: An   2:35 PM–3:05 PM
artificial-language study
Gareth Roberts and Masha Fedzechkina

We conducted an iterated-learning experiment in which participants learned an artificial language with two dialects; both had SOV word order, but one marked case redundantly. Over generations case markers disappeared rapidly, but were retained longer in a condition where participants were biased socially towards users of the case-marking dialect.

Gendered words in New Zealand English   3:10 PM–3:40 PM
Emily Walters, Abby Walker and Jennifer Hay

We explore the words that are used relatively more often by men or women in two corpora of spoken New Zealand English: the Canterbury Corpus, and the Quake Box Corpus. Our analysis suggests that while many of the most gender-skewed words reflect stylistic differences, the majority are the result of different conversations being had.

The language of deception: A cross-cultural analysis   3:45 PM–4:15 PM
Brent Laing

Studies on linguistic features of deception have not addressed the issue of universality. This study analyzed truthful and deceptive discourse of English-speaking Americans and Ghanaians, finding significant differences between the groups' deceptive and baseline (truthful) speech. Law enforcement analysts should become aware of cross-cultural differences in verbal deception strategies.

Variation of English-sourced pragmatic borrowings in Finnish   4:20 PM–4:50 PM
Elizabeth Peterson

The variation of English-sourced pragmatic borrowings with heritage Finnish forms in Finnish discourse; how and why the forms enter into mainstream Finnish, as well as a description of their variable meaning. The focus is on the acquisition of pragmatic variation at the societal level, due to language contact.

What cooperative shepherding reveals about language variation   4:55 PM–5:25 PM
Robin Queen

Interactions between shepherds and their stockdogs illustrate the basic contours of a model of language variation based in the desire for referential understanding and a specific sociocognitive concept of the interlocutor. Shepherds modify language to be referentially accessible to the stockdog, who is nonetheless understood as non-linguistic.

Phonology   ICC 108
Chair: Jennifer Nycz

Allophonic systems as a variable within individual speakers   2:00 PM–2:30 PM
Betsy Sneller

Using naturalistic data collected during and allophonic restructuring in Philadelphia, this paper argues that allophonic systems may act as a competing variable in the speech of speakers who were raised during a period of phonological change, suggesting that abstract phonological rules may be the target of phonological competition.

To repair or not to repair: Gradient coactivation of phonotactic grammars in   2:35 PM–3:05 PM
bilingual speech perception
Matthew Carlson

Two experiments with Spanish-English bilinguals showed that a robust perceptual illusion in Spanish (an illusory [e] preceding illicit [#sC] sequences) varies dynamically following a brief interval using English (which allows [#sC]). This suggests a dynamic, gradient integration of languages in the multilingual mind, that flexibly adapts as conditions demand.

Acoustic and articulatory correlates of incomplete neutralization: Evidence from 3:10 PM–3:40 PM
lateralization in Puerto Rican Spanish
Alex McAllister and Marianna Nadeu

This study presents a novel articulatory analysis of the lateralization of coda tap /ɾ/ in Puerto Rican Spanish. Electropalatographic data collected from 4 speakers show significant differences between /l/ and non-tap realizations of orthographic /r/. Results indicate that lateralization may be both gradual and a case of incomplete neutralization.

How to get there from here: Building hierarchies in Brazilian Portuguese   3:45 PM–4:15 PM
Graziela Bohn

This study presents the acquisition of tonic and pre-tonic vowels in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) by three children aged from 1;0 to 3;5, assuming the Contrastive Hierarchy Theory (CHT) (Dresher 2003, 2009). We address two issues regarding acquisition within the CHT: variability and restructuring. Results indicate that children may take different paths in acquiring phonology and restructure their grammar.

Phonetic complexity and phonological activity as two constraints on the acquisition of contrasts
4:20 PM–4:50 PM

Ross Krekoski

This paper proposes that two fundamental constraints, the presence of phonological activity and the relative algorithmic complexity of phonetic representations of candidate phonologies, together serve to condition the acquisition of hierarchically organized contrasts in the tonal systems of several related Chinese languages descended from Middle Chinese.

Saturday AM

Chair: Jennifer Nycz

Plenary Speaker: Gillian Sankoff

ICC Auditorium
9:30 AM–10:30 AM

Transmission revisited

In investigating the relationship between language change across the lifespan and language change in history, a first step is to consider the temporal incommensurability of the two processes. Conditioned by biology, language change across the lifespan is temporally constrained, involving the differential plasticity of individuals at different life stages. It is also conditioned by the different social environments in which people are immersed as they grow, mature, and age. The linguistic input found early in the life course, at the stage of greatest plasticity, comes typically from the most socially restricted environment, and these two influences are in an inverse relationship: plasticity decreasing while social contacts increase. On the other hand, the temporal progress of language change may range anywhere from decades to centuries.

Labov's 2007 model of transmission relates language change to the life course via the concept of incrementation in intergenerational acquisition: changes in progress are incremented across successive cohorts of those acquiring the language. But insofar as change may involve the replacement of one element of linguistic structure by another, the process of loss also requires examination. Based largely on my own longitudinal research on Montreal French, this paper reviews the evidence provided by studies of transmission and of lifespan change, examining loss as well as acquisition. I propose that examining the mutual influence of the social and the biological may help to explain why some changes have a very long tail.

Plenary Speaker: Natalie Schilling

ICC Auditorium
10:30 AM–11:30 AM

The value of small communities in a big data world

In this era of 'big data', it's increasingly tempting to base our linguistic and sociolinguistic studies on large corpora, often of internet data, and to focus on big-picture patterns of language and dialect variation and change. For example, we might focus on changing usage patterns for variable features over centuries as revealed in corpora of historic written records, or on national dialect maps grounded in large-scale telephone surveys or crowd-sourced data from social media.

In this talk, I demonstrate how the in-depth, in-person sociolinguistic study of small communities can augment large-scale studies of the geographic and social pattering of dialect variation and change. Drawing examples from real- and apparent-time study of Smith Island, in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, I demonstrate that (1) the phonological systems of small communities at dialect borders are not necessarily "weaker versions" of the phonological systems of large cities or core dialect areas (e.g. Labov 2016: 590); (2) socially conditioned intra-community dialect variation is present in even the smallest, seemingly homogeneous communities; and (3) sustained interaction between researchers and community members in small communities affords access to intra-individual variation and its social meanings, over time and across situations.

Underlying the distinctive patterns of variation and change we find in small communities are factors such as close-knit social networks allowing for the cross-generational transmission of subtle intra-community patterns of variation, endocentric orientations emphasizing intra-community social distinctions, and the importance of small dialects as symbolic of locally grounded community identity in an ever-globalizing world.

Poster Session

Syntactic ambiguity: Non-promotional "passives" in Unangam Tunuu (Aleut)   P01
Edwin Ko

Non-promotional "passives", whereby subjects become suppressed and objects remain in-situ, are subject to differing analyses (i.e. passive or active). By employing diagnostics proposed by Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir (2002), I provide evidence that non-promotional "passives" in Unangam Tunuu (or Aleut), a language of Alaska, are in fact actives, and not passives.

Chinese Americans' stylistic variation of NCS LOT in Troy, Michigan   P02
Mingzhe Zheng

Previous variationist studies of the Northern Cities Shift focus on overall participation, with no attention paid to a vowel's stylistic variation. In this paper, variation of Chinese Americans' LOT vowel was found between speech styles, which suggests that despite their participation, minority groups evaluate language changes differently from majority groups.

Maps and medias: A perceptual dialectology approach to evaluating language   P03
attitudes towards south-perceived American speech
Marie Bissell

This study provides evidence that everyday speakers of English in the United States think about and assign characteristics to speakers in a way that interacts significantly with both region and gender. Analyzing this data in light of language attitude acquisition research offers insight into how individuals perceive and process variation.

The relation of working memory, declarative memory and procedural memory as   P04
individual differences in SLA
Scarlet Wan Yee Li and Yanhui Zhang

This presentation discusses how the relationship of working memory, declarative memory and procedural memory as individual differences affects L2 attainment under explicit and implicit training conditions for bilingual adults in Hong Kong. The interactions among the memory systems are crucial factors in understanding L2 skill acquisition across developmental stages.

Bilingual children's comprehension and production of direct object clitic gender in   P05
Spanish
Naomi Shin, Barbara Rodríguez, Molly Lunde and Aja Armijo

The current study tested 15 Spanish-English bilingual children's (ages 4;0–5;6) comprehension and production of direct object clitic gender (*lo/la/los/las*, 'it/them'). Results indicate accurate production, but difficulty with comprehension, suggesting a possible lag in comprehension of pronouns during language development.

Variation in gender in North American Icelandic: A longitudinal case study   P06
Sigridur Bjornsdottir

This paper presents a case study of attrition/change in the gender system of a bilingual speaker of North American Icelandic (NAI), based on longitudinal corpus data. The focus will be on the nature of the variation attested and the direction of the change.

Age of acquisition as a predictor of adult language variation P07

Gustavo Guajardo

This paper examines whether variation in adult language results from the complexity of the varying structures during child language acquisition. Using corpus data and findings in the acquisition literature, we show that the later a structure is acquired, the more likely it is to display variation in adult language.

Individual differences in the processing of pronominal ambiguity in English and P08
Spanish: An ERP investigation

Alison Gabriele, Lauren Covey, Nick Feroce and Robert Fiorentino

We examine variability in the processing of pronominal ambiguity in English and Spanish using ERP. Results revealed two distinct groups with one showing an Nref, which indexes referential ambiguity, and the other, a broad positivity. The size of the Nref in both languages was positively correlated with working memory.

The role of conceptual animacy in variable morphosyntax P09

Pablo Requena

Before language emerges, young children learn to categorize entities based on animacy. With the emergence of language, children need to learn their language 'partitions' the animacy continuum, or manifests itself. We present experimental data that suggests how children's early conceptual animacy may map onto Spanish morphosyntactic variation constrained by animacy.

Children's identification of foreigner talk P10

Danielle Labotka and Susan Gelman

Although children consistently demonstrate social evaluations of non-native speakers, children's understanding of Foreigner Talk –the speech native speakers adopt when speaking to non-native speakers– remains unexplored. We tested children's ability to match Foreigner Talk with non-native speakers and found that children match Foreigner Talk with non-native speakers by age five.

Acquisition of plural morphology in the context of variable input: An eye tracking P11
study

Cristina Schmitt, Carolina Holtheuer, David Gomez and Karen Miller

Off-line tasks show that children exposed to variable realization of number marking in the NP take much longer to reach adult levels when compared to children exposed to categorical realization of number. In this paper we present results from an online task confirming the offline results.

Immersion effects on Spanish L2 learners' and heritage speakers' knowledge of P12
DOM and prepositional particles

Elisa Tellez and David Giancaspro

This study tested the effect of study abroad immersion on second language learners' and heritage speakers' production and acceptance of (non-)target forms of differential object marking (e.g., Veo a/*___ José) and prepositional particle selection (e.g., soñamos con/*de la playa) in Spanish. Results demonstrate minimal effects of immersion on participants' variable knowledge of these forms.

Spanish está (or va?) cambiando: Language variation in Ecuadorian Spanish P13
Emily Sabo

This study examines Progressive Aspect in Ecuadorian Spanish. Analysis of fieldwork data collected in 2016 reveals extensive synchronic variation in the forms that can be recruited to encode Progressivity in this variety. However, their distribution seems to be explained by subtle semantic differences, degree of grammaticalization and register effects.

Variation in issuing criticism and directives: The case study of Russian and Kazakh P14
meeting chairs.
Aisulu Raspayeva

Applying Politeness Theory, I examine leadership styles of two female Russian-speaking chairs (of Russian and Kazakh origins) at teacher meetings and show how they vary in employing different types and amount of politeness techniques in their criticism and directives. This resulted in *directness* (power-focus) or *indirectness* (solidarity-focus) strategies.

Saturday PM

Syntax ICC 101
Chair: Paul Portner

A label theoretic explanation of the resultative parameter 2:00 PM–2:30 PM
Dan Milway

This paper presents an account of how a variable semantic property (resultative secondary predication) could be acquired from a surface phenomenon (compounding). It does so by applying Chomsky's (2013; 2015) label theory to previous empirical work on adjectival resultatives (Kratzer 2004; Snyder 2001).

An account from the formal semantics on the change from the polar-interrogative 2:35 PM–3:05 PM
to the wh-interrogative
Akitaka Yamada

This is a case-study of diachronic formal semantics (cf. Eckardt 2006; Deo 2015). By examining a semantic change of the *ka*-marked clause in Japanese, this study answers the question as to how the semantic change shows similar/different properties to the typical syntactic change discussed in previous studies of diachronic syntax.

On the complementizer status of "for": Microvariation in infinitival 3:10 PM–3:40 PM
complementation
Katelyn MacDougald

The distribution of *for* in *to*-infinitival complements is examined in a nonstandard English lect allowing [...*believe* [*for* DP *to*...]] strings. Variation is related to a microparametric change instantiated by the widespread acceptability of *believe*-type subject control. The theoretical repercussions for Case theory are addressed, and an alternative analysis is advanced whereby *for* merges as a subpart of a determiner.

Investigating how variation in codeswitched language affects comprehension   3:45 PM–4:15 PM
Lauren Halberstadt and Paola Dussias

Given the close link between language usage and language processing, there is a need to examine the processing of codeswitches in speakers who regularly engage in codeswitching. We examine the effect of variation in codeswitched language on production and comprehension by creating a corpus and using two psycholinguistic experiments.

Constrained variation of copula use in monolingual and bilingual varieties of   4:20 PM–4:50 PM
Spanish
Sara Sanchez-Alonso, Ashwini Deo and Maria Pinango

The expansion of the Spanish copula *estar* into *ser* domain is investigated in monolingual and heritage speakers. We propose that *estar*'s presuppositional content motivates its expansion leading to constrained variation in copula use. Experimental data support this hypothesis in four monolingual varieties. Heritage speakers show more restrictions in copula use.

Syntactic variation in a trilingual community   4:55 PM–5:25 PM
Ariana Bancu

This study was conducted in a trilingual community in Romania, featuring Transylvanian Saxon (TrSax), German, and Romanian. I take a language contact approach to syntactic variation in TrSax, and show that new structures transferred from German. However, Romanian has a significant influence on the distribution of native and transferred patterns.

Word order variation in Norwegian heritage language: Complexity, frequency or   5:30 PM–6:00 PM
crosslinguistic influence
Merete Anderssen and Marit Westergaard

This paper presents corpus data on word order variation in Subject and Object Shift constructions in Norwegian Heritage Language spoken in the US, comparing this to data on the same phenomena in L1 acquisition. The findings from the two populations are discussed in terms of frequency, economy and crosslinguistic influence.

(Morpho-)Syntactic Acquisition   ICC 103
Chair: Hector Campos

The acquisition of long-distance wh-movement by two groups of multilinguals   2:00 PM–2:30 PM
Eva Berkes and Suzanne Flynn

We examined elicited production data at two levels of English proficiency of groups of multiple language learners whose background languages differ only minimally: Hungarian/German/English and Hungarian/Spanish/English. Nuanced differences and certain enhanced syntactic fluency were found in acquisition patterns, which we attribute to differences in syntax in learners' background languages.

Variable word order(s) in Slavic from early on   2:35 PM–3:05 PM
Teodora Radeva-Bork

The paper examines the L1-acquisition of noncanonical word orders in Slavic, concretely the alternations between Verb-Object and Object-Verb. I discuss naturalistic and elicitation data from Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian and Czech for ages 1;7-6;0 to show children's early mastery of variable word order and disassociations found between production and comprehension.

Preverbal object clitic en in the speech of monolingual and bilingual Francophones   3:10 PM–3:40 PM
Raymond Mougeon, Françoise Mougeon and Terry Nadasdi

Our study shows that age of acquisition of French and degree of exposure to French at the community level exert a strong influence on the frequency of preverbal object pronoun EN vs that of post-verbal pronoun (*DE*) *ÇA* in the speech of adolescent or young adult bilinguals residing in Ontario.

Attrition at interfaces: Null subjects in attrited and heritage Greek in Chile   3:45 PM–4:15 PM
Aretousa Giannakou and Ioanna Sitaridou

The present study deals with the distribution of subjects in attrited and heritage Greek in contact with Spanish in Chile. Greek and Spanish are typologically similar null subject languages. The (mis)use of overt/null subjects and preverbal/postverbal subjects in neutral and focused contexts is examined in bilinguals regarding the Interpretability hypothesis.

Input-driven learning of morphosyntactic contingencies   4:20 PM–4:50 PM
Heidi Getz

Correlations between word order and word structure are widespread in natural languages, and manifest early in language development. This paper offers a learning-based, input-driven theory of how these correlations are acquired and why they are so prevalent cross- linguistically, supported by quantitative studies of spontaneous speech and miniature language experiments.

Learning from commands: The case of Afrikaans and Namibian German   4:55 PM–5:25 PM
Theresa Biberauer

Positive and negative imperatives frequently exhibit quite different syntax (Zanuttini 1997, Isac 2015). The acquisitional significance of imperative contrasts has never been systematically probed, however. Focusing on Afrikaans and Namibian German, two contact-varieties spoken in southern Africa, we demonstrate imperatives' central role in establishing both core and variable syntax.

Learners' processing preferences explain cross-linguistic word order variation   5:30 PM–6:00 PM
Masha Fedzechkina, Becky Chu and T. Florian Jaeger

In a miniature language learning experiment, we find that some commonalities and differences in cross-linguistic word order preferences can be explained by principles of human information processing. Specifically, we find that despite having several alternatives allowed by the grammar, learners consistently preferred word orders that increased processing efficiency.

L2 Acquisition II   ICC 105
Chair: Cristina Sanz

Effects of crosslinguistic similarity of form and salience of meaning on L2 lexical recall   2:00 PM–2:30 PM
Scott Jarvis, Torri Raines, Olga Sormaz, Talal Alharbi, Logan West, Sudiman, Qiuqu Qin and Naomi Otsuji

This study investigates the effects of crosslinguistic similarity and lexical complexity on learners' ability to learn new words in an unrelated language. The variables examined include structural familiarity, structural viability, semantic familiarity, and conceptual salience. Results show strong effects for structural familiarity and smaller but significant effects for other variables.

Variation in L2 pronunciation: A proposed framework and systematic review   2:35 PM–3:05 PM

Luke Plonsky and Kazuya Saito

This paper proposes a framework for pronunciation assessment based on three dimensions: (a) global accent vs. specific segmentals/suprasegmentals; (b) task type: closed vs. open-ended; (c) scoring conditions: subjective (rater judgments) vs. objective (acoustic analyses). Using this framework, we systematically review L2 pronunciation measures and provide empirically- grounded recommendations for future research.

The role of variable properties in second language acquisition   3:10 PM–3:40 PM

Leah S. Bauke

This paper examines whether speakers of V2 languages (Norwegian/Dutch/German) apply V2 to non-V2 languages in second language acquisition contexts. We examine whether L2 speakers of English interpret wh-+particle questions (cf. 1) as ambiguous or as object questions instead of subject questions.

The variable use of future temporal reference in the speech of learners of French L2 in Canada   3:45 PM–4:15 PM

Isabelle Lemee and Helene Blondeau

This paper provides a comparison of the variable use of future temporal reference in the speech of Anglophones users of French L2, who have recently developed bilingual community practices in Montreal, and Anglophones users of French L2, who have mainly learnt French in a formal setting in Ontario where French is a minority language.

Structural and frequency effects on the variable production of Spanish L2 taps and trills   4:20 PM–4:50 PM

Danielle Daidone and Sara Zahler

This study examines the effect of frequency and Spanish phonological structure on the variable L2 production of taps and trills in Spanish. We found that higher frequency correlated with more occlusions in trill production, and that one-occlusion trills were differentiated from taps by a longer duration.

A within-participants comparison of the effects of talker and amplitude variability on L2 vocabulary learning   4:55 PM–5:25 PM

Mitchell Sommers and Joe Barcroft

This within-participants study tested the extended phonetic relevance (EPR) hypothesis' prediction that only phonetically relevant sources of acoustic variability improve vocabulary learning. Positive effects of talker, but not amplitude, variability were observed. These findings are consistent with the EPR hypothesis and speak to the mechanism underlying effects of acoustic variability.

Sociolinguistics II   ICC 107
Chair: Gillian Sankoff

Shifting accents & evolving style: Stylistic variation among mobile speakers   2:00 PM–2:30 PM

Jennifer Nycz

I examine stylistic variation in (oh), (o), (aw), and (ay) among expat native Canadian English speakers (four each in NYC, D.C.) All style-shift with (aw), but only New York speakers show topic-based (oh) variation, suggesting mobile speakers maintain native socio-indexical links and learn new links, but only if very salient.

How can locality be expressed through language use? linguistic practices of a group of post-modern polish migrants in the UK   2:35 PM–3:05 PM
Kinga Koźmińska

This paper examines how locality is expressed through linguistic detail in a transnational context of the post-EU enlargement Polish migration to Britain. An analysis of linguistic practices of a group of Polish-speaking migrants reveals how in the globalized world, variation is embedded in circulating discourses on language, culture and national identity.

The conditioning variables of obligatory Spanish subjunctive use by second-generation NYC bilinguals   3:10 PM–3:40 PM
Kevin Viner

This paper analyzes naturalistic data from first- and second-generation NYC Spanish speakers regarding obligatory subjunctive use. Statistically significant findings show that the generational groups use the obligatory subjunctive differently. Close examination, however, suggests that second-generation bilinguals generally command obligatory subjunctive use, but do exhibit signs of a variable mood grammar.

Variation and mental representation   3:45 PM–4:15 PM
Gregory Guy

This paper presents evidence from variable processes in English, Spanish, and Portuguese demonstrating several aspects of mental representations. Morphological structure and exceptional allomorphy are revealed when variable processes affect word classes differently. Morphological acquisition is observable in child language variation. Homophonous morphemes can be distinguished by differential variable behavior.

Disentangling (r) variation in Welsh   4:20 PM–4:50 PM
Jonathan Morris

This paper examines (r) variation in Welsh. Data were collected from 32 speakers living in two areas of North Wales. The linguistic and extra-linguistic factors which influence variation will be presented. The origins of these patterns will then be discussed with reference to language contact, acquisition, and individuals' language use.

Word-final /s/ glottalization and its intersections with race/color and regional origin in a Rio de Janeiro favela   4:55 PM–5:25 PM
Edvan Brito

The present paper analyzes the results of a sociolinguistic variation study of word-final /s/ in Brazilian Portuguese, focusing on glottalization or aspiration. The data used in the study consist of seventeen sociolinguistic interviews conducted in the summer of 2015 with twenty-two residents of City of God, Rio de Janeiro.

L1 Acquisition

ICC 108

Chair: Elissa Newport

Leveraging machine-learning failures to understand how children master variable allomorphy systems   2:00 PM–2:30 PM

Goldie Ann Mcquaid

Variable *a*-prefixing (the stars was A-SHINING) is used to probe Optimality-Theoretic learning models. Taken together variability and interacting grammatical components present a unique challenge, not only to learning models, but also to the child acquiring such a system. Properties children likely exploit in acquiring a-prefixing are treated.

L1 acquisition of variable use of case particles in Korean   2:35 PM–3:05 PM

Goeun Chae

Using child corpus data obtained from four Korean-learning children, this study addresses L1 acquisition of variable use of nominative and accusative case particles in Korean to investigate how the natural patterns of case drop displayed in adult grammar emerge in child grammar.

The acquisition of English article alternations: Variation, competition, and the default   3:10 PM–3:40 PM

Marjorie Pak

Many English speakers have an alternation between [ði] and [ðə] in the definite article that bears a striking resemblance to the familiar *a~an*: ði__V, ðə__C. I present an acquisition model for *a~an* and ði/ðə that accounts for a previously unnoticed asymmetry in the (inter- and intraspeaker) variability of both alternations.

Variable use of fingerspelled subject referent forms among young heritage signers   3:45 PM–4:15 PM

Wanette Reynolds

Nominal subject referent tracking forms in ASL (American Sign Language) narratives of six hearing elementary school-aged heritage signers (HS) are compared to age-matched Deaf peers. The results highlight differences between the two native-signer groups, namely the increasing preference of fingerspelling by HS and the variable frequency of fingerspelling within the HS group.

Children's adjustments of informativeness during language production   4:20 PM–4:50 PM

Myrto Grigoroglou and Anna Papafragou

In this study, we asked whether adults and 5-year-olds adjust their event descriptions to (a) the typicality of event components, and (b) the listener's visual access. Although both factors affected adults' descriptions, children's informativeness was heavily context-dependent and emerged only in "genuine" interactions, where the listener was called to (re)act.

How to be faithful to the input in a situation of language contact   4:55 PM–5:25 PM

Alicia Avellana, Lucía Brandani, Hannah Forsythe and Cristina Schmitt

We examine the acquisition of agreement and direct object realization by children exposed to two varieties of Spanish in Buenos Aires, Argentina: Rioplatense and Paraguayan Spanish. Comparisons between parental input and children's production show that children use all the forms but do not make use of the same featural composition.

Please note: Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 12 at 2:00 AM.

Sunday AM

ICC Auditorium
9:30 AM–10:30 AM

Plenary Speaker: Maria Polinsky

Bilingual grammars: A case for structural reorganization
Ellipsis constructions are well known for having two readings: strict, and sloppy. For example, the sentence "The linguist blamed himself, and the logician did too", is ambiguous between the strict reading (the linguist and the logician both blamed the linguist) and the sloppy reading (the logician blamed the logician, that is, himself). All factors being equal, English speakers show a strong preference for the sloppy reading in coordination contexts. Similar preference for sloppy readings is observed in a number of other languages (Dutch, German, Russian). While the sloppy-reading preference under ellipsis is strong in monolingual Russian, it disappears in Heritage Russian: the Russian language spoken by unbalanced bilinguals who are dominant in English (better known as heritage speakers of Russian). The disappearance of the sloppy reading is particularly surprising given that both Russian and English favor that reading. I argue that the restructuring of Heritage Russian ellipsis follows from changes in the aspectual system and in the inventory of null pronominals available to heritage speakers. As a result, what may appear to be unexpected change is actually well motivated by systematic restructuring in the heritage language. These results indicate that heritage speakers differ from the monolingual baseline in underlying representations, not in processing alone.

ICC Auditorium
10:30 AM–11:30 AM

Plenary Speaker: Elissa Newport

Children and adults as language learners: Rules, variation, and maturational change
Our recent research has investigated children and adults' learning of rules and variation by using miniature language learning techniques. We have produced different types of miniature languages: some either observe or violate word order regularities that are widespread in natural languages; others exemplify morphological patterns that are either productive, variable, or lexically restricted in natural languages. Our learners are young children and adult college students, who are asked to listen to a sample of sentences in these miniature languages and then produce novel sentences or judge their grammaticality. In every case there are important differences between learners as a function of their ages. Young children learn categorical rules and categorically follow patterns that are widespread in natural languages, even when their linguistic input exemplifies these patterns only probabilistically. Adult learners acquire the statistical patterns of the input. Older children are consistently in between, producing regular patterns somewhat more often than they appear in the input. These results suggest that the outcome of learning is quite different at different ages and that many of the properties of natural languages may depend heavily on the distribution of learners within their linguistic communities. What we do not know – and is not well suited to study via miniature language techniques – is whether individual learners change their representations of their primary languages as they age, or whether their initial age of learning determines these representations in a lifelong way.

Plenary Speaker: Charles Yang

On the acquisition of language variation
Children often regularize variable linguistic input in categorical ways (Singleton & Newport 2004, Hudson Kam & Newport 2005), thereby planting the seed of radical language change (Lightfoot 1997). At the same time, children are also exceptionally attuned to the structural and probabilistic aspects of language use (Roberts 2002, Smith et al. 2009), which is ultimately the basis for stable linguistic variation (Labov 1989). How do we reconcile these seemingly conflicting findings?

I propose that in order for children to acquire linguistic variation, they must acquire it as a categorical system first. That is, in order to learn that the variants A and B probabilistically apply to a linguistic class (e.g., a set of words), children must learn that A and B is applicable to every member of the class in the first place. Drawing on the statistical analysis of adult input and children's production (Yang 2013) and a general principle of learning and generalization (Yang 2016), I suggest that such rules are learnable if and only if children focus on relevantly high frequency words, echoing the proposal of "Less is More" (Newport 1990), that cognitive constraints and limitations may in fact benefit the acquisition of language. Only then can learners match the probabilistic distribution of linguistic variation, including the potential for changes across lifespan (Sankoff & Blondeau 2007).

Closing Discussion: David Lightfoot