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| **Pronoun resolution in L2 learners and native speakers** |
| Leah Roberts |
| **Background** |
| Language users are constantly occupied with reference resolution, as new information must be integrated into the current discourse model constructed so far, and linking referring elements to their antecedents in the preceding discourse is a critical task. Even closely-related languages may differ in the set of referring expressions (like pronouns) available, and so the L2 acquisition of such phenomena has been a topic of great interest to SLA researchers. Despite the large body of work on the topic, it is as yet not clear the extent of the impact of a learner's first language on their acquisition of phenomena like pronouns, nor the extent to which learners are able to process such referential expressions like native speakers. |
| **Aims & Design** |
| Using traditional SLA research methods such as judgment and language production tasks together with eye-tracking methods (both visual world and reading), inthis project we are interested in the acquisition and real-time comprehension of pronominal expressions by a range of L2 learners and bilinguals. We investigate how learners from a null subject language (e.g., Turkish) acquire subject pronouns in their overt subject target language (e.g., Dutch), and how they put this knowledge to use during real-time comprehension. In another set of studies, we examine the processing and acquisition of subject pronouns versus demonstratives by learners of languages that are closely related (Dutch-German). In a third set of studies, we examine how native speakers and learners link an elided clause with an antecedent in discourse, during the processing of VP-ellipsis and VP-anaphora. |
| **Funding** |
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| **Collaborators** |
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| **Impacts** |
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| **Publications** |
| Schumacher, P., Järvikivi, J., Ellert, M. & Roberts, L. (in prep). 'Resolving the German subject pronouns *er* and *der* in auditory sentence comprehension: A visual world eye-tracking study.'  Roberts, L., Duffield, N. & Matsuo, A. (2012). Processing VP-ellipsis and VP-anaphora with structurally parallel and non-parallel antecedents. *Language and Cognitive Processes.*  Duffield, N., Matsuo, A. & Roberts, L. (2009). Factoring out the parallelism effect in VP-ellipsis: English vs. Dutch contrasts. *Second Language Research*, 25, 427-467.  Roberts, L., Gullberg, M. & Indefrey, P. (2008). Subject pronoun resolution in second language discourse: An eye-tracking study with Turkish and German learners of Dutch. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 30(3), 333-357. |