

**Constructionist Approaches to Language Pedagogy – CALP 4**

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**Friedrich Alexander Universität, Erlangen-Nürnberg**

**The Book of Abstracts**

**Getting out of the CASA and into prosody and pragmatics**

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Herbst and Hoffmann (2018) propose a new construction-based way of analyzing complex and authentic utterances in the language classroom. While their Constructionist Approach to Syntactic Analysis (CASA) offers a refreshing alternative to previous proposals, it does not spell out how the occurrence of certain sequences may be pragmatically licensed, as the following opening sentence from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets illustrates.

(1) Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much.

In (1), the expression thank you very much differs from its more usual occurrence as a stand-alone utterance, in which it conveys gratitude for the interlocutor’s previous action (as in A: “Here is your free beer.” B: “Thank you very much!”). More specifically, it is used here to indicate the reported speakers’ disagreement with an insinuated value judgment. In our view, students learning about language use should be made aware of communicative routines in which syntactic, semantic, and subtle pragmatic information come together. Moreover, learners should be encouraged to discover unique prosodic properties that can come with conventionalized form-function pairings (see also Lacheret and Legallois 2013), such as sentence-final thank you very much.

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**Phraseological competence in Italian as a foreign language**

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In the light of a new conception of vocabulary acquisition which focuses on lexical units, the

question arises on the extent to which L2 learners are able to use these units correctly. Since

little research has been done on this topic in the field of Romance and particularly Italian

language didactics, it is necessary to empirically diagnose the current state of learners' knowledge and competence. The project consists of a lexicographic part and an empirical study in different universities.

The doctoral project is based on the corpus-driven compilation of a list, in which the most

frequent phrasemes (de. Phrasem; Bürgel/Siepmann 2016) in the Italian language will be

identified. Methodologically, this phase of the project follows the work of Martinez/Schmitt

(2012) for English and Bürgel/Siepmann (2016) for French.

Based on this list, an empirical study on the written language production of university students is being planned. The research questions to be answered are 1. To what extent Italian language students use the most frequent phrasemes correctly in their written production and 2. How their competence differs at the beginning and at the end of their studies.

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**Effects on entrechment of time constructions in German and Japanese learners of Swedish as a foreign language**

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In this talk, we will present an experimental study, based on a phrasal decision task, in which we compare data (response time and accuracy) from Japanese speaking learners of Swedish as a foreign language with data from German speaking learners (Olofsson & Prentice 2020). Our aim is to investigate the issue of the influence of typologically close and distant L1s, as well as the effects of other factors, related to participants’ linguistic background and learning context, on the entrenchment of Swedish time constructions in FL learning (cf Schmid 2017). The investigated constructions are exemplified in (1a–b).

(1) a. Två år senare ‘two years later’

b. Tre öl senare ’three beers later’

Preliminary results indicate that, compared to the German participants, Japanese participants somewhat slower when processing productive uses of the time constructions (as in 1b). The Japanese learners’ responses are also less accurate. One explanation may be a greater L1 influence in the German participants, resulting in generalisations over congruent constructions, i.e. dia-contructions (Höder, Prentice & Tingsell), being entrenched in their mental constructicon. Results from a comparison of Swedish and German corpus data (Olofsson & Prentice, forthc.) show no clear indication of cross-linguistic differences in usage, but some rather interesting similarities, which we will discuss in relation to the experimental findings.

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**Pedagogical recommendations for teaching argument structure constructions**

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This paper presents some pedagogical recommendations for teaching argument structure constructions to second/foreign learners of English following principles of construction grammar such as surface generalisations (Goldberg 2002) and exemplar-based approaches (Bybee, 2013). Using the causative alternation (The bottle shattered vs. The bullets shattered the bottles) as a case study, we will show the importance of using local generalisations at the level of interaction between the theme (the entity undergoing the event), the verb, and the construction. Based on semantic groupings of the themes that occur in these two ‘alternating’ constructions, we propose both a schematic approach (properties shared by the themes overall) and a local approach, by providing examples of theme-verb-construction combinations. Our manually annotated corpus data (approx. 11,000 instances of 29 verbs in the two constructions) is used to identify the cues that are the most helpful in the choice of a construction over another, following principles of associative learning (Ellis 2006a, 2006b). Providing learners with semantically coherent sets of examples of each construction should help them identify constructional meaning and generalise this meaning to new instances (Goldberg, Casenhiser & Sethuraman 2004).

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**A constructionist perspective on primary English course books: The role of chunks**

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Research on primary EFL in Germany reveals students’ proficiency in naming English nouns, yet highlights a need for enhancing productive speaking (BIG-Kreis 2015, Engel 2009, Kersten 2015). Moreover, secondary school English teachers often perceive teaching grammar as a challenge in grade five due to the variance in students’ grammatical pre-knowledge developed in primary school (Brunsmeier 2019, Kolb 2019). An increased focus on so-called chunks (i.e. formulaic sequences) in early foreign language teaching could foster a more idiomatic and fluent language use. Here, construction grammar approaches, challenging a strict vocabulary-grammar divide (e.g. Hilpert 2019) and underscoring the prevalence of prefabricated phrases in everyday language use (e.g. Ellis et al. 2016), provide a key theoretical foundation. Publications on early language acquisition from a usage-based perspective emphasise the importance of “whole, meaningful utterances” (Tomasello 2009: 75). Along these lines, this presentation focuses on the importance of chunks in early foreign language teaching. A mixed-methods analysis of primary English coursebooks will be presented, addressing questions such as: To what extent are chunks included in older and newer editions of the books? What types of chunks can be found (e.g. closed routines as “I’m sorry!” vs. patterns with open slots as “Do you like ... ?”) Finally, the talk examines to what extent open patterns are integrated into exercises aiming at enhancing productive and creative speaking.

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**Constructicon Building and Its Application in Second Language Teaching of Young Chinese Learners**

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It is well recognized in China teachers and students are often faced with many challenges with grammatical structures due to their abstract meaning and high (partial) productivity (Lin & Jiang 2012, Meng 2019).

Since construction teaching can improve students’ grammar performance (Lyngfelt et al. 2018; Boas 2022), we build a constructicon for English teaching in Chinese middle schools based on 315 English textbooks. The procedure includes data collection, data processing (which includes topic extraction, frame labeling, syntactic pattern labeling, construction labeling) and online learning platform building (which includes setting up a retrieval interface and designing exercises for each construction). In the constructicon, each entry includes the form and meaning of the construction, its related semantic frames, its related constructions, verbs that can appear in its slot, and instances of the construction from the texts we collect. Based on this constructicon, a construction teaching experiment is carried out in a junior middle school in Shanghai. The experiments continue for 2 months and involve 180 students. Four constructions are taught in class. It is found that students’ performance in grammar tests has improved significantly with construction teaching.

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**The role of verb predictive validity and standardized L2 proficiency in the acquisition of the *as*-predicative construction by L2 speakers of English**

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Associative learning theory suggests that we can infer certain outcomes based on the predictive validity of cues in the environment, the cue-outcome relationship being unidirectional in nature (Wagner & Rescorla, 1972). Contextualizing this in L2 construction learning, we investigate independent contributions of the predictive validities of verbal and constructional information in the processing of the *as*-predicative construction (*People regarded him as successful*, see Gries et al., 2005) by L2 speakers of English, and the modulating effects of L2 proficiency as measured by a standardized proficiency test – to better understand the role and interplay of asymmetrical dependencies and L2 proficiency in L2 construction learning. Using the BNC, we calculated two ΔP values (Allan, 1980) for the top verbs in the *as*-predicative: ΔP(construction|verb) – the probability of a constructional outcome given a verb, and ΔP(verb|construction) – the probability of encountering a specific verb in a construction. 72 university students from Australia (26 L1, 46 L2) completed sentence fragments with verbs varying along the two ΔP indices (cue validity increases as ΔP approaches 1). Although both groups were more likely to supply the *as*-predicative when ΔP(construction|verb) was high (estimate = 0.82283, z-ratio = 5.879, p < 0.0001), L2 speakers were affected less by the verbs’ predictive validity (contrast = -0.414, z-ratio = -3.67, p = 0.0002), however, this was mitigated by L2 proficiency. ΔP(verb|construction) was an insignificant predictor (we investigate this further in a follow-up experiment). The results suggest that L2 constructional knowledge is affected by the unidirectional predictive validity of verbs, thus supporting a unidirectional associative basis for L2 construction learning (Desagulier, 2016; Ellis, 2008); and that b) linguistic experience (L2 proficiency) supports the formation of more precise estimates of form-function mappings, consistent with usage-based principles.

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**Using (or building?) L2 constructions: a study of Dutch L2 English learners’ expressions**

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This study investigated if, and how, Dutch L2 English learners (N=167) use selected L2 constructions. Task-elicited learner expressions for two notions (DEPOSITING MONEY and DONATING MONEY) were analyzed for different levels of schematicity. Taking a cognitive usage-based approach, the assumption was that L2 learners have available target-like L2 constructions for each notion: fixed phrases, slot-frames (put money/NP in the bank; give money/NP/AdvP to charity, as retrieved by WebCorp), and abstract schematic constructions.

However, the analysis indicates that the learners used L2-specific productive mechanisms drawing on their existing L1 Dutch and L2 English constructions. Firstly, the expressions follow abstract L2 English verb-argument constructions (caused-motion VOL for DEPOSITING MONEY; caused-possession to-dative for DONATING MONEY); further, they can be grouped into schematic slot-frames (the most frequent being put NP on DET bank and give NP to NP). However, at the most specific level, the learners seem to split the notions into partial mappings (e.g., in DONATING MONEY: PROCESS, THING, RECEIVER) and insert a linguistic solution for each mapping (e.g., \*give money on a good doel).

To conclude, it seems L2 learners would benefit from learning, and being taught, whole target-like L2 expressions for the notions rather than building them up from partial constructions.

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**Adapting a linguistic constructicon resource to L2 learners and instructors: a challenging endeavor**

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We present the challenges faced and decisions made in creating the Russian Constructicon (https://constructicon.github.io/russian/) as a multifunctional resource. We focus on two crucial categories of target users, linguists and L2 learners & instructors, and show that they have somewhat conflicting needs and expectations. While linguists want a maximally comprehensive inventory and its description, L2 learners and instructors are most interested in strategic constructions as “shortcuts” for language learning explained in a clear and concise way.

Is it possible to create a design that would benefit both types of users? Or will the constant balancing between their expectations result in poor compromises, and the outcome product would still satisfy neither of the types of users?

We suggest that constructicon-building is a challenging process of constant change and calibration of both the content and format for optimal representation. In this talk, we will offer our solutions to three major issues: 1. What level of granularity is the most appropriate for representingconstructions? 2. What constructions should be included in a constructicon-resource? 3. What format of construction representation is the most optimal for both types of users?

**Investigating Literacy Effects on Verb-Argument Constructions in Turkish Learners of English**

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Verb-argument constructions (VACs) are constructions with fixed elements in them (e.g., V across N) and have been studied extensively in L2 English learners (Ellis et al., 2014; Römer et al., 2014; Römer & Berger, 2019). There is evidence that speakers with different L1s differ in their knowledge of verbs in English VACs when compared against an L1 corpus (e.g., Römer & Yilmaz, 2019). Römer and Berger (2019) report a more native-like use and productivity of VACs in L2 learners with growing proficiency but print exposure was not accounted for. To the researchers’ knowledge, the VAC knowledge of L2 English speakers and how print exposure enhances has not been researched. There is evidence that print exposure modulates linguistic knowledge (e.g., Dabrowska 2015, 2019) as it provides more varied input than spoken language (Roland et al., 2007). This ongoing study analyzes English VAC knowledge of 20 VACs, using the VAC survey from Römer et al. (2014), in Turkish learners of English and tests if higher levels of print exposure results in a closer resemblance to that of native speakers’ VAC knowledge. Based on previous findings, we hypothesize that L2 speakers who read more will resemble L1 speakers with regard to VAC knowledge. To investigate VAC knowledge, we replicate Ellis et al.’s (2014) VAC survey asking participants to provide as many verbs as they can for each VAC (e.g. he/it \_\_\_\_ about the….). We also investigate print exposure with self-reported literacy and author recognition tasks (Acheson et al., 2008). Using the argumentative essays of the participants, we will also cross-check individual speakers’ performance and VAC knowledge, and see whether this knowledge translates into actual output. Implications of the findings will be discussed considering constructionist approaches to language teaching and material design.

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**Construxercise!: a new digital resource with construction-based exercises for L2 Russian**

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In this talk, we will discuss how we can bridge the gap between a constructicon resource and second language (L2) learners, drawing our insights from the actual practice of construction-based teaching. We suggest that having a constructicon resource, even with a user-friendly design, might not be enough to successfully engage L2 students with its content.

We 1) summarize the accommodations for L2 learners available in the Russian Constructicon

(https://constructicon.github.io/russian/) and 2) turn our focus to an innovative pedagogical

resource Construxercise! Hands-on learning of Russian constructions

(https://constructicon.github.io/construxercise-rus/) created on the basis of the Russian

Constructicon (Author et al. 2022).

The resource offers a course of 12 lessons containing over 150 exercises for mastering 57 Russian discourse constructions. These educational materials can be used as either a central or

complementary teaching resource, and either in class or for self-guided study. Construxercise! Was piloted in a conversational Russian course (A2-B1 CEFR levels) in 2022 and student feedback was evaluated. The resource arguably provides a useful means for organizing conversation practice in L2 instruction that empowers students and is applicable for mixed-level groups.

The talk will detail our methodology, the choice of constructions, system of exercises, and benefits from close collaboration with the students.

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**Drunkonyms and collostructions: How to talk about being drunk**

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The English language is famous for its large number of drunkonyms, i.e. words that can be used to refer to the state of drunkenness – from blind and hammered to pissed, smashed and wasted. Various lists of words have been compiled in the past (e.g. Levine 1981). However, most of the terms seem to be relatively infrequent, and they also appear to fall out of use relatively quickly. In view of Michael McIntyre’s (2009) claim that it is possible to use any word to mean ‘drunk’ in English, this contribution therefore approaches the issue from a constructionist perspective. In a corpus-based study, we tested whether it is possible to model the expression of drunkenness in English as a more or less schematic (set of) construction(s). Our study shows that while corpus evidence for truly creative uses is scarce, we can nonetheless identify constructional and collostructional properties shared by certain patterns that are used to express drunkenness in English. For instance, the pattern be/get + ADV + drunkonym is strongly associated with premodifying (and often strongly intensifying) adverbs such as completely, totally and absolutely. The paper concludes with an overview of established uses and potential creative patterns.

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**Analysing language proficiency in Greek-English bilingual adults:**

**the role of input and aptitude**

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Ultimate attainment in second language (L2) acquisition is a key focus. While some L2

speakers attain native-like proficiency in the L2, most fall short of native mastery. Past

research has centered on the influence of age, suggesting that late L2 learners may

struggle to achieve native-like mastery (DeKeyser, 2000; Granena & Long, 2013; Johnson

& Newport, 1989; Lenneberg, 1967). Nonetheless, this explanation fails to account for

late learners who successfully acquire the L2 and early learners who struggle with it. For

that reason, researchers argue that language aptitude (Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam,

2008; Li, 2015; Sparks et al., 2011) and exposure (Flege & Liu, 2001; Moyer, 2011) may

also be contributing factors in L2 acquisition. Crucially, recent research even suggests

that aptitude plays a role in native language (L1) acquisition (Dąbrowska, 2018) and input

effects have also been reported for L1 development (Unsworth, 2013). This study aimed

to investigate the impact of input and aptitude on the grammatical proficiency in the L1

and the L2 of 75 Greek speakers who learned English as a foreign language. The results

demonstrated a strong correlation between exposure and proficiency in the L2, and a

notable relationship between aptitude and grammar in both languages, particularly in the

L1. This underscores the importance of exposure and aptitude in language acquisition for

both languages and has implications for L2 teaching and learning.

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**Construction-based L2 teaching: Which constructions should be taught?**

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When taking a construction-based approach to L2 teaching, a teacher is immediately faced with the question of which constructions to choose. So is anyone who produces construction-based teaching material. Since the choice must depend on the students, their previous knowledge and their needs and goals, a possible key may be their teaching materials. These texts represent the kind of literacy required for success at school, which vouches for the relevance of learning the constructions used in them. The next question would then be which of these constructions that may require teaching.

The best suited judges of this should be the students' teachers. Hence, we asked some school teachers and students in teacher programs to identify potentially difficult expressions in teaching aids used in early high school. Their observations were then further analyzed to discern constructional patterns. Recurring structures among the problem candidates included, unsurprisingly: complex noun phrases, coordination structures, implicit elements, metaphors, and time expressions. The most striking result, however, is that potential problems were associated with combinations of constructions rather than individual constructions. This suggests that we, both as teachers and as constructionist researchers, should pay more attention to the interplay between constructions.

**The potential of analyzing code-mixing for language pedagogy**

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Code-mixing, i.e. the use of more than one language in a single utterance, is a typical feature of bilingual language use (e.g. Muysken 2000, Gardner-Chloros 2009). While children’s code-mixing is sometimes frowned upon in public discourse, there is a broad consensus

in the academic community that the knowledge and use of multiple languages can entail a number of communicative and cognitive advantages. From a Construction Grammar perspective, code-mixed utterances can prove particularly helpful in finding the “building

blocks” that children make use of when learning their first language(s). More specifically, code-mixed utterances can help detect fixed chunks (like What’s this?) and frame-and-slot patterns (like What’s X?) that play a key role in child language acquisition. From a pedagogical perspective, the same data can be useful in several ways: Many of the patterns detected in first language acquisition possibly function as a gateway to greater productivity and using them in early educational contexts can foster multilingual children’s language

acquisition (Hartmann & Quick 2021). Especially if the data contain mixes between the learners’ first language and the language that they are currently learning, code-mixed utterances can serve as a window to parallels and differences between the languages involved.

**Identifying Strategic Input for Language Learners or ‘How to identify what to teach?’: A Diasystematic Construction Grammar Approach**

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In my PhD-project (Goll forthc.), I investigate the multilingual speech of individuals from the Danish minority in Südschleswig, the most northern part of Schleswig-Holstein (Germany). These individuals, mostly raised in German-speaking households and attending Danish-speaking institutions, are predominantly multilingual. Among this community, the Danish contact variety South Schleswig Danish (SSD) has emerged.

Employing Diasystematic Construction Grammar (DCxG; Höder 2012, 2014, 2018), I analyze the usage of language-unspecific (diaconstructions) and language-specific (idioconstructions) constructions within one multilingual network of constructions, forming a multilingual constructicon. My questionnaire data (n=144), which focused on morpho-syntactic SSD-structures, does not only uncover sociolinguistic insights into SSD-usage but also offers theoretical insights with potential implications for language acquisition research. Specifically, my data supports the idea that learners, based on generalizations in their L1 (Herbst 2016: 37), tend to prefer diaconstructions, both schematic and less schematic, over idioconstructions.

By following Cognitive Pedagogical Grammar, like Ruiz de Mendoza & Pilar Agustin Llach (2016), and Pedagogical Construction Grammar, such as De Knop & Mollica (2022) and Nesset & Janda (2022), DCxG can serve as a valuable tool to model pro-diasystematic innovations in language learning contexts. This approach, thus, aids in the identification of elements like false friends and common language mistakes, thereby facilitating the discernment of what to teach, ultimately enhancing cognitively plausible language acquisition.

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**Applied construction grammar, contact language, and the teaching of constructions with clitic pronouns in Catalan**

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Traditionally, Catalan language learning in secondary school has applied an L1 language learning methodology in which grammar has not been connected to speaking or writing skills, and neither to metalinguistic reflection. However, contact language between Spanish and Catalan in Catalan-speaking areas has increased in the last decades, and most of the scholar environments need L2 instruction for the Catalan language, focusing especially on those grammatical features that are not shared in both Romance languages. In previous studies (Segura-Llopes 2016, Segura-Llopes et al. in press [2023]), we designed a cognitive constructional approach (Goldberg 2006, Ellis 2013, Herbst 2016) to learn the construction with the partitive clitic en namely to promote the knowledge of the form and favour its acquisition and use (Cat. en vull dos ‘I want two [of them]’), which is a grammatical feature not shared by Spanish (Sp. Quiero dos).

In this talk, we will first present a constructional approach for four constructions with clitic pronouns and the corresponding teaching materials: i) en-partitive construction, ii) ho-transitive construction, iii) hi-locative construction, and iv) li-la-ditransitive construction. Second, we will report an experimental instruction in secondary school in which two different grammatical approaches are compared (traditional vs. constructional) to observe the efficacy of the constructional model as a pedagogic grammar especially regarding the focus on form strategy (Milian 2014; Nassaji 2017).

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**Preposition learning with MAP – A patternbank of argument-marking prepositions in German**

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Foreign language instruction materials largely seem to agree on the view that prepositions are hard to learn (cf. Forstreuter/Egerer-Möslein 1978, Thomson/Martinet 1986: 64, Swan 1995: 444, Theissen/Klein 2013: 7, Hoffmann 2014: 372). One of the major obstacles mentioned in connection with German prepositions concerns their governed uses (*vor Optimismus sprühen* ‘to sparkle with optimism’, *an/unter Heuschnupfen leiden* ‘to suffer from hay fever’). While most pedagogical textbooks merely list these supposedly idiosyncratic [V+P+N]-sequences (cf. Schulz/Griesbach 1982: 243-244), the web-based corpus-linguistic *Musterbank argumentmarkierender Präpositionen* (MAP) represents them as instances of argument structure patterns (ASPs) with a more general meaning (e.g. ‘similarity’ for instances like *nach Kaffee schmecken* ‘to taste of coffee’ and *nach Bestechung riechen* ‘to smell of bribery’). We will show how the qualitative and quantitative information in the different types of MAP articles may be used to introduce learners to individual ASPs via their “pathbreaking predicates” (cf. Ellis/Larsen-Freeman 2009: 95-97) before these are shown to alternate with less typical predicates and how the conception of MAP as a network of ASPs may be exploited to “scaffold” learners towards semantically more abstract patterns (cf. Wee 2007: 29, Holme 2010: 127).

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**Ambiguity Resolution of Relative Clause Ambiguity by Persian Learners of English**

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There is a burgeoning of ambiguity research in the literature (Zimmer 2017; Pan, Schimke and Felse, 2015; Witzel, Witzel and Forster, 2012, to name just a few). Syntactic type of ambiguity has also been researched (e.g., Felser, 2017; Was, Sansosh, and Graham, 2018). Relative clause ambiguity is particularly of significance as it lends itself to cross-linguistic variation. While there have been research studies conducted on different languages (e.g., Papadopoulou and Clahsen, 2003), Persian has never been exposed to scrutiny in terms of online processing. The current study was an attempt to address the gap in the literature and to that end used both offline and online methods to investigate to find out how Persian learners of English resolve relative clause ambiguity. 24 participants took part in the current study. The results of the offline study showed that Persian learners of English transfer their native language strategies to L2 learning situations. However, the results of the online study showed that the participants did not transfer their native language preferences to the L2 situation. Moreover, the lexical properties of words did not influence these learners’ ambiguity resolution strategies. Reasons for the findings are discussed.

**Key Words: Reaction Time, Relative Clause Ambiguity Resolution, Self-paced Reading**

**Universality of Prepositions? Examining the Translations of German Nouns with Governed Prepositions auf and an in English, Polish, and Ukrainian**

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This study explores the German prepositions auf and an, which are governed by nouns, and their translations in English, Polish, and Ukrainian. The study collected data from the Langenscheidt Großwörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache (3rd edition, 2019) and used multiple dictionaries and corpus data to analyze translations, aiming to identify commonalities and differences in the usage of these prepositions across the languages. The findings indicate that the constructions of German nouns with prepositions auf and an were not universally translatable across the three languages studied.

Only 28% of these constructions in German have equivalent translations in English, while in Polish and Ukrainian, it is 38% and 41%, respectively. Instead of using only on, i.e. the English equivalent, English uses various prepositions such as of, to, for among others. In Polish, if the preposition on is not used, alternative prepositions like do ‘to’ (nienawiść do matemytyki 'Hass auf Mathematik'), dla ‘for’ (dedykacja dla Joanny 'Widmung an Joanna'), w ‘in’ (interes w zarządzaniu 'Interesse an Management') are employed, as well as the genitive case without any prepositions (oferta usług 'Angebot an Dienstleistunge'). Ukrainian, on the other hand, uses the preposition on slightly more frequently than Polish or English, as well as the genitive case (запаси залізних руд 'Reserven an Eisenerzen') and other prepositions such as до ‘to’ (промова до людей 'Rede ans Volk'), за ‘for’ (провина за зраду 'Schuld am Verrat'), про ‘about’ (висновки про ситуацію 'Rückschlüsse auf die Situation').

The results of this study reinforce the belief that universal constructions are rare or non-existent in all languages (Croft 2001, Tomasello 2003). This broad empirical analysis adds to the existing body of knowledge on the differences in the usage of prepositions across languages, and can be useful for language learners, translators, and researchers in linguistics.

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**Estonian infinitival constructions from a Pedagogical Construction**

**Grammar Perspective**

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The presentation describes the compilation of two Estonian L2 resources that are being developed at the Institute of the Estonian Language: the Estonian Grammar Profile (Kallas et al., 2021; Üksik et al., 2021) and the language portal Sõnaveeb for Learners (Koppel et al., 2019). The Institute is currently expanding these resources to offer language-specific descriptions of grammar competence from A1 to C1 levels, using the frameworks of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2020) and Pedagogical Construction Grammar (Boas, 2022).

We will explore a case study of Estonian infinitival constructions. Estonian has two infinitives, the ma- and da-infinitive, which can both occur as main verbs with different auxiliaries and as complements of different governing verbs. For example, the modal verb pidama ‘must’ combines with the ma-infinitive, while the verb võima ‘can’ requires the da-infinitive. This variation makes it difficult for learners to acquire the use of different infinitival constructions.

We will outline the methodology for corpus-based identification of infinitival constructions and their description in the aforementioned resources. In the Grammar Profile, constructions are described at all proficiency levels while the functions and usage are described as level-specific. In the language portal constructions are presented as schematic constructions along with usage examples.

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**The German FrameNet Constructicon as Resource for Language Teaching and Learning**

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The German FrameNet Constructicon (www.framenet-constructicon.hhu.de; cf. Ziem, Flick,

Sandkühler, 2019) is a repository of German constructions, i.e. form-meaning pairs of varying

schematicity, idiomaticity and complexity. The German Constructicon as a continually growing structured repository of constructions and the relations holding among them is designed for documenting a language at a specific point in time. On top of that, constructions and constructicons may also serve rather practical purposes, first and foremost language learning and teaching (cf. Geeslin et al., 2023; Herbst, 2016). What, then, does it take to turn a

constructicon in a resource for language learning and teaching? On the basis of annotated

corpus data in the domain of COMPARISON constructions, the talk discusses ways to re-use

data for foreign language learning and teaching. We focus on what we consider to be the four

most important cornerstones: (a) classifying each construction in terms of the language level

(A1 to C2) to address the target group in the best possible way; (b) simplifying construction

entries, including construction elements (CEs), to make them accessible for foreign language

learners based on their specific level of proficiency; (c) turning selected annotated sentences

into cloze texts for illustrating constructional variation and creating authentic exercises; and,

finally, (d) explicating constraints operating on the target constructions and their elements by

using constructional collo-profiles and collocation information relevant for language learners

(cf. Bui, 2021; Hausmann, 1984). We show that these parameters may be applied to any type

of construction regardless of its degree of schematicity, idiomaticity and productivity.

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**Semantic Transparency of Idioms: A Cross-Linguistic Analysis**

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This study investigates the comprehension of idiomatic constructions and the role of semantic transparency in their processing, focusing on Persian, German, and English idioms. Idioms are essential in everyday communication but can be challenging for language learners.

Two prevailing theories of idiom comprehension are the lexical representation hypothesis, which suggests idioms are stored and retrieved as individual items (Swinney and Cutler, 1979), and the idiom decomposition hypothesis posits that idioms are partially decomposable, with speakers sharing intuitions on how components’ meanings contribute to the overall idiomatic meaning (Gibbs Jr, 1986). Experiments have produced varied results regarding these hypotheses. Tabossi et al. (2008) found faster processing of idioms regardless of their transparency, while others observed quicker processing of transparent idioms (Liu and Su, 2021; Bortfeld, 2003).

This research explores collective intuitions and understandings of idiom transparency and opacity, and their impact on comprehension, by assessing familiarity, meanings, and ratings of idiom transparency in participants’ L1 and L2. By examining the role of transparency in L1 and potential differences in L2, this study aims to offer insights into idiom comprehension and inform strategies for addressing the challenges idioms pose for language learners. Furthermore, the investigation may have implications for the construction grammar framework, highlighting the form and meaning relations of idioms and their representation in L1 and L2 speakers.

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**A usage-based approach to measuring success in language learning**

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In our presentation, we will introduce a game-based assessment tool - the interactive "Wuschel" app, named after its main character - that was developed for preschool children with German as L1 or L2. Building on the theory of use-based language acquisition (Tomasello 2003), the assessment takes into account empirical findings on children's language production in authentic communicative situations (e.g. Behrens et al. 2016) and aims to evaluate children's productive communicative skills in meaningful contexts. "Wuschel" is supplemented by a system for data collection and transfer to a server, data management, efficient methods for transcribing the audio recordings and an algorithm for evaluating the quality of the children's spatial language (Schug/Haberzettl 2018). In addition, results from a study in Saarland daycare centres with "Wuschel" will be presented. 100 children are tested twice at 6-month intervals in order to compare the language acquisition of two groups: a group that attends daycare centres with a special focus on language development and a group that attends daycare centres without such a focus. As the daycare centres with a focus on language development pursue a language fostering concept that is integrated into everyday life, the "Wuschel" app with its focus on everyday communication situations is particularly suitable for their evaluation.

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**Using a contrastive approach to metaphor to assist physics teaching in English and German**

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Physics is rich in metaphor, allowing us to communicate and understand such non-intuitive phenomena as time dilation or quantum tunneling in terms of more familiar experiences. However, the subjective interpretation integral to communication via metaphor also poses challenges to physics teaching, an explicit goal of which is often objective and unambiguous interpretations of theory and experiment.

Here, concrete examples are used to demonstrate how explicitly contrasting similar metaphors used to teach physical phenomena across more than one language can be used to highlight and address potential ambiguities and gaps in learners’ scientific understanding (for example, understanding the fine distinctions implicit in the English description of light as wavelike and its German description as wellenförmig can be helpful in clarifying learners’ understanding of which aspects of the wave metaphor are applicable to light phenomena).

The results of experiments conducted into the use of previously unresearched English and German metaphors relating freedom and physical energy (evident in phrases such as “a photon is captured” and “energy was liberated”) are presented and discussed. The ultimate intention of this research is to establish concrete suggestions for those teaching and learning physics in the mixed language environments found at many German universities and research institutes.

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**Language Testing Items in CxG**

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Language testing (LT) is an important part of L2 teaching, because LT can have positive or negative backwash effects, influencing learners’ overall motivation to learn a language (Heaton 1989). Construct validity, as a term in LT, is concerned with how we define language, teach, and test it in the classroom (Brown 2000). It also governs if a test is claiming what it claims to test. With Construction Grammar (CxG) approaches to language and L2 teaching, construct validity has moved from traditional approaches of lexis-grammar-meaning separation to a composite model (Römer, 2017). If L2 teaching follows a CxG approach to instructional practices and material design, the same shift will inevitably be needed in LT. This paper therefore discusses how a constructionist approach to L2 teaching could shift conventional methods in second language testing. Specifically, the paper focuses on the shift of construct validity in L2 testing in classrooms and illustrates how this shift may look in L2 testing items. Assuming our teaching and materials follow a usage-based constructionist approach, the example test items (see Appendix) will showcase testing L2 learners’ (1) statistical distribution (2) form-meaning, and (3) item specificity based on CxG literature (e.g., Goldberg, 2019; Herbst, 2020). In line with this discussion, we will propose ways to create more constructionist testing items in the form of multiple choice questions, cloze tests, and true-false questions; that is, the types of test items frequently used in classrooms. These suggestions will encompass testing for form-meaning compositely, testing for item specificity in constructions, and testing L2 speakers’ knowledge of statistical distributions using corpora.

**Appendix**

(1) statistical distribution [example 1] (2) item specificity [example 2] (3) form and meaning [example 3]

(Example 1)
Select the odd one out that **cannot** complete the blank.

A. The (1)\_\_\_\_\_\_ rabbit disappeared after a while.
 (1) a) scared b) frightened c) afraid d) agitated

B. She gave (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_ a flower.
(2) a) the table b) the husband c) the teacher d) the gardener

(Example 2)
Put the words in order to build a sentence. There is one extra item in each sentence.

a) I // him // book // to // donate // a // give → \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
b) disappear // she // make // the // rabbit // let → \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(Example 3)
Listen to the audio and mark the statements as TRUE or FALSE

1) AUDIO: … and as such, Sally talked her way to fame. [1a/b tested cx – the way cx]

1a) Sally talked and became famous without any obstacles \_\_\_\_\_

2) AUDIO: … Allegedly, the doctor was found in his office with the evidence. [2a tested cx – the unevidentiality cx, 2b tested cx– the passive cx]

2a) The reporter did not experience this first hand \_\_\_\_\_
2b) The person who found the doctor is known \_\_\_\_\_

**Constructing the (adequate) norm? What construction solutions in the writing processes of L2 and L1 learners may tell us about norm-setting in foreign language teaching.**

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This contribution would like to approach the discussion about the ideal L1-speaker and the written standard as a role model for foreign language learners from a learner-corpus-centred perspective: 40 learner text-productions (*Frog-Story*, A2/B1) were compared to 29 text-productions by L1-Spanish-students (*bachillerato*-level) in order to analyse the gap between learners and a native speaker who is comparable in terms of age, education and cognitive maturity.

On the one hand, the analysis focuses on a construction that only exists in the target language (DOM) and whose use in the L1 learners' productions shows, according to the results so far, that the use of DOM is dependent on textual development. For example, the frog is only marked via DOM when an affective relationship to it as a referent is established in the narrative thread. The L1 students' writing productions could therefore be used to illustrate authentic language use in the classroom. On the other hand, it also analyses how coherence is constructed: How do learners and L1 learners connect their propositions. Which connectors are used? Initial results show that L1 learners do not exhibit a high degree of variation in the use of connectors (*pero, entonces, como* as dominant connectors) and that although learners have textual competence in terms of constructing coherence, difficulties in constructing coherence are more likely to be due to a lack of construction knowledge.

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**The German ditransitive construction: A challenge for foreign learners**

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The study focuses on the German ditransitive construction in a contrastive perspective. It replicates tests conducted by De Knop & Mollica (fc. 2023) with Italian students of German which aimed at defining the challenging issues related to the learning of German ditransitive constructions. The tests revealed that a mere functional description of the ditransitive construction and its constituents is not satisfactory, especially to explain the order of both objects (indirect and direct) in pronominal form (Lenerz 1977). This order is fundamentally different in Italian. As the order of the objects is similar in French and German in the 3rd person, we expect French-speaking students to have fewer difficulties than Italian learners with the German ditransitive construction – at least for the instantiations in the 3rd person singular or plural. This similarity can be exploited for the development of a proper teaching methodology according to the principle of scaffolding, which can start from examples in the 3rd person, to then move to examples in the 1st or 2nd person which have a different object order. Just like in the study by De Knop & Mollica (fc. 2023), we advocate a teaching methodology based on visualization and structural priming which takes into account the whole construction. This is being tested with a posttest which shows promising results.

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**Corpora**

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Sketch Engine, <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>

**Pedagogical construction grammar meets third language acquisition: Learning and teaching the construction [Verb of motion + preposition + noun] in Spanish classes at German Grammar Schools**

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The use of prepositions is one of the most difficult grammar topics for Spanish learners. The highly-frequent prepositions a ‘to’, de ‘of’ and en ‘in’ are often confused or omitted, especially in motion verb constructions (Campillos Llanos, 2014). This is due to their low salience and polysemous character (Wulff & Ellis, 2018), as well as crosslinguistic influence (e.g. Rothman, 2019; Höder et al., 2021).

In this presentation, I will discuss the results of a pilot study on crosslinguistic influence in the construction [motion verb + a/de/en + noun], conducted at the beginning of the second year of learning (9th grade) at a German grammar school (Gymnasium) in Baden-Württemberg. The results of two groups of pupils are contrasted: The first group learns English and French, followed by Spanish as a third foreign language, while the second group learns only English and Spanish.

Building on these results, I will also present and discuss first experiences with concrete teaching sequences that draw attention to form-meaning pairs, as suggested in Pedagogical Construction Grammar (Bürgel et al., 2021; Herbst 2017), which could help us to avoid such interferences.

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**Acquisition of the ditransitive construction from a lexeme-based perspective: How are lexical and grammatical constructions related?**

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The ditransitive construction has received much attention in Construction Grammar research (e. g. Goldberg 2006, 2019). However, interest in the ditransitive construction has mostly been limited to English and has seldom been studied in spoken data. Furthermore, research has so far been conducted from a constructional viewpoint (→ coercion), while the function of the lexemes, specifically verbs in these constructions, has rarely been investigated within a Construction Grammar framework. Thus, the nature of lexemes as constructions and their relationship to grammatical constructions remains largely unknown. In my research project I will take a lexeme-based approach and analyze the use of verbs which frequently occur in German ditransitive constructions in child and adult language. Analyses will be conducted based on the longitudinal Rigol corpus from the CHILDES database consisting of spontaneous child-adult interactions between the age of 2-7. The aim of the study is to detail the emergence of the German ditransitive construction from a lexeme-based perspective and to look at the interrelationship between lexemes (themselves phonologically specific constructions) and grammatical constructions in spoken data. Additionally, my paper will provide a concrete operationalization of network models of Construction Grammar as proposed by Diessel (2019) and others based on spontaneous language data.

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**Reevaluating Constructions for Realizing Interactional Strategies in Textbooks: Insights from a corpus-based study of classroom discourse**

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This paper presents results from a classroom-based study in which qualitative analysis of classroom discourse was used to explore the relationship between the constructions language learners were exposed to in textbook materials for the realization of interactional communication strategies and the constructions they actually used to accomplish these strategies during a subsequent communicative practice task. The textbook materials had largely presented full interrogative structures, yet in the corpus data, the learners often used other constructions quite successfully, in particular the discourse marker you know? on rising intonation to realize comprehension checks and the discourse marker so, often in combination with you think or you mean, to realize confirmation requests. Closer analysis suggested that the use of these constructions demonstrated considerable pragmatic competence on the part of the learners rather than a lack of learning. Moreover, the use of these constructions to enact these specific pragmatic functions is well-attested in empirical studies of discourse markers (cf. e.g. Schiffrin 1987, Crystal 1988, Erman 2001, Müller 2005, Kaur 2009), further suggesting the need to reevaluate the types of constructions traditionally presented for the realization of common interactional strategies in language learning materials.

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**Individual Differences in German Noun Phrase Agreement and its Mental Representations**

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It is usually argued that native speakers master the morphological system of their language by around the age of 5 years. At the same time individual variation has been demonstrated for of the Polish dative (cf. Dąbrowska 2008a, 2008b), indicating a non-linear and diverse acquisition process. German has an established ‘case of doubt’ called the dative variation (cf. Moulin 2002, Münzberg & Hansen 2020, Nübling 2011). For our study on this phenomenon, we expected productivity and the ability to provide target forms to differ (sometimes considerably) among individuals beyond the previously discussed -em/-en dative variations.

Participants were asked to complete a gap text and a verbal repetition task that focused on German adjectival noun phrase agreement. For example:

(a) Solche Dinge sind von \_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Interesse!
 (groß) (allgemein) (wirtschaftlich)

(b) Solche Dinge sind von \_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Interesse!

 (weik) (öbelig) (harklich)

Overall, the results indicate that participants have a good command of the morphological system and that error rates are comparably low. However, as expected, the dative condition exhibits individual variation beyond the known -em/-en variation. Participants have more difficulties inflecting nonce words than real words and their level of education seems to have an influence on provided forms: The higher the level of education, the lower the error rates and the more homogenous the target forms and vice versa.

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**Intensification of adjectives in young L2 learners of German and Italian**

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We will present a comparative study in which we analyzed the use of the intensified adjective construction [[X] int [Y] ADJ ] AP ‘very Y’ in the Italian and German sub-corpora of Kolipsi-1 (Glaznieks et al. forthcoming), a learner corpus for L2 German and Italian. The corpus consists of written essays (around 470,000 tokens) from the multilingual Italian province of South Tyrol. Applying a Diasystematic Construction Grammar (DCxG) approach (Höder et al., 2021), which allows us to distinguish idio- from diaconstructions of Italian and German, we replicated previous research from a different multilingual area (Van Goethem &amp; Hendrikx 2021) and analyzed the occurrence of the [[X] int [Y] ADJ] AP ‘very Y’ construction in the Kolipsi-1 corpus on different levels of schematicity using mixed-effect models.

Our research question was: Are there differences in the way L2 Italian and L2 German young learner from the multilingual Italian province of South Tyrol use adjective intensification in written essays?

We found the main difference between learners of Italian and German on the most abstract level of analysis, where we investigated the effect of different variables (e.g., L1, linguistic environment) on the choice of morphological ([[X] AFFIX [Y] ADJ ] ADJ ) or syntactic intensification types (e.g., [[X] ADV [Y] ADJ ] AP ). For L2 Italian learners, the linguistic environment is a significant predictor for their choice (Spina et al., in preparation). L2 German learners prefer intensifying adverb constructions regardless of their L1 or linguistic environment.

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**er geht \*oben und \*unten [...] und dann geht er runter – Learning and teaching L2 German path encoding in motion constructions**

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The encoding of motion events is known to be challenging for second language (L2) users, particularly if the lexicalization patterns of their first language (L1) diverge from those of the L2 (e.g., Treffers-Daller & Tidball 2016). German is assumed to be a typical satellite-framed language with high manner salience (DeKnop & Gallez 2013) and dense information packaging (Madlener, Skoruppa & Behrens 2017). Given the broad range of path encoding options in German, L2 users of German have been found to display particular challenges with respect to the formal and functional differentiation of these path encoding devices (i.e., local adverbs, e.g., *unten* ‘at the bottom’, directional adverbs, e.g., *runter* ‘down’, double adverbs, e.g., *herunter* ‘down.here’, verb particles, e.g., *unter*- ‘down’, and prepositions), their combinatorial potential and restrictions (Liste Lamas 2015; Madlener-Charpentier & Liste Lamas 2022).

In this presentation, we discuss characteristics of the target language input that might contribute to these challenges as well as implications for L2 learning and teaching. We sketch teaching options that go beyond the traditional L2 German teaching focus on prepositions (semantics, case marking), focusing instead on directional adverbs, their use in different constructions, and their differentiation with other path encoding devices as a core L2 difficulty for learners with different L1s (Madlener-Charpentier & Liste Lamas 2022). We consider both implicit and explicit options, also including contrastive elements.

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**The role of input variability in foreign language construction learning: a primary school intervention**

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Upon finishing L2 learning at primary school, many students lack productive vocabulary knowledge, specifically regarding structures like verb-argument-constructions (e.g. [*Verb*] *about* [*Noun*]), indispensable for increasing communicative agency, as expected by curricula.

Across cognitive domains, increased initial input variability (the variation in our experience with different exemplars, e.g*.* [*talk/think/rant/wonder*] *about* [*god/bicycles/dogs*]) can improve generalization (i.e. [*Verb*] *about* [*Noun*]), and enhance learning. In controlled experiments, increased input variability proved beneficial for children’s generalization of linguistic information to novel contexts (e.g. Wonnacott et al., 2012). Such findings drove our investigation into extending the benefits of input variability to real classrooms.

Following a usage-based constructionist approach to language learning, we report on one of two quasi-experimental teaching intervention studies (each lasting two weeks) with two British Year 2 classes learning L2 German (age 6; 20 students/class). The reported intervention, comprising of a high (HV) and low (LV) input variability condition, focused on 16 German 'approach' event verb-argument-constructions (*Zum X* [*robbt/schleicht/rutscht/etc.*] *der/die/das Y*; *To the X* [*approach verb*] *the Y*), featuring one (LV) or four different verbs (HV) in the construction’s verb slot. Post-tests indicated that children exposed to increased input variability demonstrated better generalization to novel contexts compared to controls. Our findings align with controlled experiments, suggesting that increased input variability might be beneficial to construction learning in ‘noisy’ classrooms, and potentially motivating larger interventions.

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**Goal orientation: Russian motion verb constructions in the classroom**

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Motion verbs represent a challenge for students of Russian as a foreign language, because a

number of spatial prefixes combine with paired motion verbs to form prefixed motion verbs

of perfective and imperfective aspects. Grammars and textbooks traditionally adopt a lexical

approach, detailing how prefixed motion verbs are formed and discussing their meaning. While it is well known that prefixed motion verbs combine with prepositional phrases (PPs) with spatial meanings, such “prefixed motion verb + PP constructions” are traditionally not discussed in depth.

The present study adopts a constructional approach. On the basis of a thorough analysis of corpus data, we demonstrate which prefix–preposition combinations are most widespread and offer detailed recommendations for classroom practice.

Besides illustrating the value of a constructional approach to pedagogical grammar, our study has theoretical implications. It has often been claimed that there is a goal-bias in the encoding of motion events (e.g., Talmy 1975, Ikegami 1979, Lakusta and Landau 2005 and 2012, Markovskaya 2006, Regier and Zheng 2007, Stefanowitsch 2018). Our investigation lends support to this claim but suggests that prefixes and prepositions behave differently. In our data, prepositions display a strong tendency for goal-orientation, while the goal-bias of prefixes is less strong.

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**Aptitude, grammar, and reading comprehension: The influence of modality**

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Aptitude is a key predictor of adult native grammar proficiency (Dąbrowska, 2018; Llompart & Dąbrowska, 2023; Winckel & Dąbrowska, under review), while print exposure exposes individuals to rare vocabulary (Hayes & Ahrens, 1988) and structures in written language. Our study explored how print exposure and aptitude impact children's receptive grammar and reading comprehension. We investigated the potential advantages of exposure to specific constructions via different modalities in an intervention.

In an intervention study with South African 12-year-olds, we assessed language aptitude, reading comprehension, reading fluency, print exposure, and receptive grammar. Participants were exposed to target constructions through audio or written modalities, followed by a post-intervention assessment of receptive grammar. Using correlations and linear regression models, we determined the impact of reading fluency, print exposure, and aptitude on reading comprehension and receptive grammar. We also examined how baseline measures and the intervention influenced post-intervention receptive grammar scores.

Our analysis revealed that grammatical sensitivity, a component of language aptitude, and print exposure significantly predicted baseline receptive grammar, which, in turn, influenced the learning process when exposed to specific structures. Additionally, print exposure and aptitude emerged as significant predictors of reading comprehension, possibly by supporting vocabulary development and providing exposure to complex structures.

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**Comparison of animal verbs in German and Swedish motion constructions with L1- and L2-learners**

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One of the most discussed problems in linguistics is the encoding of motion events. Talmy (1985, 2000) claims that there are two basic strategies languages use to encode motion events. German and Swedish in this respect belong to the satellite-framed languages. In these types of languages, MOVE and MANNER are encoded in the verb whereas the PATH information is said to be encoded in the prepositional phrase. However, the syntactic productivity seems to be language-specific. The comparison of Swedish and German motion constructions reveals language-specific restrictions concerning the verb slot of motion constructions (Guse in press). The use of animal verbs like älga ˈto move like a mooseˈ or froga ˈto move like a frogˈ in Swedish motion constructions (Olofsson 2022) can be an interesting starting point for language observations with L1-Learners but can also be discussed in heterogeneous classrooms. Learners will raise questions concerning the possibility of using animal verbs in their L1-language, questions concerning language-specific norms and their exploitations (Hanks 2013), and questions about the meaning potential of lexical items and constructions.

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**How to learn and teach “case”?  The German dative**

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The category «case» is well established in linguistic theory and pedagogy, with high heterogeneity between languages and across POS-categories (Eisenbeiss et al. 2010). German has four cases, with the dative showing a long developmental trajectory with errors ranging well into school-age (Szagun 2019). The morphological realization of the dative differs between different types of determiners, pronouns and adjectives, as it correlates with gender, number, and (in)definiteness. From an input-driven and constructivist approach, we do not expect rule-based acquisition of structural case across constructions, such that the global question “when do children acquire ‘the dative?’” is a misconception. In line with usage-based and Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2001) proposals I will argue (based on coded data of six German children and their input with a total of 200’000 dative tokens) that overt case marking starts from construction- and lexically-specific islands, e.g., case-marked pronouns with certain verbs, or case-marked determiners with certain prepositions.

I will present quantitative data on which overt forms and collocations dominate in adult and child language in different part-of-speech categories (pronouns, determiners), and to discuss to whether the preferential patterns in adult and learner language could serve as stepping stones in language pedagogy, e.g. in the design of picture books or textbooks for learners of various ages.

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**Event Construal in L2 German: Teaching Particle Verbs to Learners of V- and S-Framed English**

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Current mainstream teaching materials on particle verbs (PVs) mainly focus on morphosyntactic aspects with the recommendation to learn word lists by heart. Such an approach overshadows the multiple challenges for English speakers learning German. Minimally, they need to notice (Schmitt, 2001) which English PVs correspond directly to a German PV (e.g., ausgehen –go out) and which ones do not (abfahren –leave). They also need to know which particles are used as metaphorical extensions from their spatial meanings (andrehen—turn on), and when the meaning of the core verb cannot be literally translated (aufhören—stop). To date there have been only few studies on L2 German (e.g., Madlener-Charpentier & Liste Lamas, 2022).

The current investigation explored the effect of usage-based learning materials on a) learning, b) retention, and c) transfer of skills. Forty-nine novice learners of German were either in a control condition or exposed to materials focusing on the polysemy of particles, explaining the spatial as well as the metaphorical meaning of prefixes. The development of materials was based on Dewell (2011), Lüdeling and de Jong (2002), and Tyler and Evens (2004). Findings demonstrated no significant difference in learning outcomes immediately after the treatment and a small but significant higher level of retention one week later for the experimental group. A dictogloss task, assessing transfer skills, did not result in any significant differences. However, learner errors varied in the two conditions. Learners in the control group drew mostly on their L1 knowledge of PVs, while learners in the experimental group showed more variability in their errors.

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**On double standards in language acquisition research**

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Adult L2 learning is often said to be “fundamentally different” from child language acquisition (cf. Bley-Vroman 1990, 2009, DeKeyser 2000, Paradis 2006) in that is “nonconvergent” (that is to say, there is considerable variation in the learning outcomes, with different learners acquiring different grammars – while child learners are assumed to converge on the same grammar) and “unreliable” (while native speakers reliably supply the correct form when required, adult L2 learners’ performance is inconsistent – sometimes they supply it and sometimes they don’t).

In this paper, I argue that – at least with regard to grammar – these assertions are myths which ultimately stem from the fact that researchers studying child and adult language acquisition are interested in different questions and use different criteria for assessing mastery. There is vast variation in ultimate attainment in native speakers, particularly when we consider the grammatical abilities of illiterates and heritage language speakers. Furthermore, native speakers also show unreliable performance: this is most obvious when we consider the behaviour of children acquiring their L1, but can also be observed in adults.

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