3MT® THREE MINUTE THESIS

FOUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

York St John's Three Minute Thesis Competition

Thursday 2 May 2024
2.00pm to 4.00pm | De Grey 017

Programme of Speakers

Welcome

The Three Minute Thesis competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by Doctor of Philosophy students. Developed by The University of Queensland, 3MT cultivates students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills.

The competition supports their capacity to effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

Grunge and Sociomusicology

Sintija Brence

My thesis investigates the political activism and ideology of the 1990s Pacific Northwest movement - Grunge. Through the methodology of sociomusicology and the political investigation of music, my research is important because it showcases that grunge movement was strategic and politically motivated. A record was set in Seattle of estimated 3000 people registering to vote in a single day in 1992, as Pearl Jam performed a free show in Magnuson Park and encouraged the 30`000 attendees to vote. Booth Gardner (Democratic governor of Washington) proudly pointed out in 1993 that he is the: ''governor of the home state of Nirvana, the hottest new rock band in the country''. Whilst at the same he passed bills that aimed to censor music and prevent kids from attending rock shows. Explaining to Nirvana`s manager Danny Goldberg that ''It sends a message that needs to be sent''. Grunge music is still important today, as Soundgarden became the first heavy rock band to perform at the presidential inauguration in 2013. Likewise, grunge fashion is still popular, and grunge changed negative associations of thrifting culture to positive ones, attracting high class consumers. It is a political movement which supports Democrat politics and protests the Republican Party. The significance of this study lies in the way that it outlines how the movement maintained its political agenda in the mainstream format and how important is alternative music for society and politics. Also, this research is significant as it outlines how New Democrats revolutionised the use of alternative music in politics. Likewise, this research is significant as it showcases how the alternative genre label and its emergence, was a strategic tool of censorship in order to control the new wave of musicians and to minimise the political aims, and influence of the music.
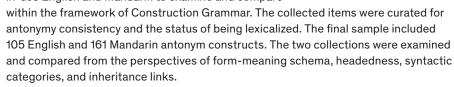
The Antonym Construction: A Comparison between English and Mandarin

Lixin (Lindsey) Chen

All languages have antonym pairs but may differ in the ways of using them. The use of antonymy in the form of antonym co-occurrence has been examined and compared between English and Mandarin with the conclusion that antonym pairs could co-occur on lexical level in Mandarin but not in English. That might be refuted with the identification of the antonym co-occurrence on lexical level in English like frenemy (friend-enemy) and humblebrag.

Therefore, this study identified and collected the items of antonym co-occurrence on lexical level from in-use English and Mandarin to examine and compare within the framework of Construction Grammar. The collected items were curated for antonymy consistency and the status of being lexicalized. The final sample included 105 English and 161 Mandarin antonym constructs. The two collections were examined and compared from the perspectives of form-meaning schema, headedness, syntactic categories, and inheritance links.

In addition to the typological differences between English and Mandarin, the observation demonstrates that the antonym constructions in both languages make use of the unity and contrast inherent in antonymy to communicate the meanings more than a binary contrast. Both can be nominalized or adverbialized, have the property of neutralized headedness, and are a complex of multi-inheritance links across lexical and phrasal levels.

Construction Grammar proves effective in facilitating this original joint analysis of the English and the Mandarin antonym constructions. Such effectiveness is credited to observing the antonym constructs as a form-meaning pair in use. Construction is thus proposed as a parameter in future contrastive studies. With the universality of the understanding and use of antonymy on lexical level confirmed between English and Mandarin, further research including more languages will be worthwhile in verifying such cognitive and linguistic universal.

From lab to classroom: structural priming and ESOL learners' comprehension and production of passives

Sidriana Scheffer

The structural priming (SP) phenomenon is defined as a tendency for speakers to reuse previously encountered sentence structures (Ziegler & Snedeker, 2019). Although SP is well documented in language production in first (L1) and second (L2) languages, research in production and subsequent comprehension of target structures with L2 learners is still sporadic and more limited as a potential L2 tool to foster language learning in instructional contexts. This research is an interface between the psycholinguistics paradigm of priming and applied linguistics and aims to transfer research findings of SP into classroom settings. Specifically, it seeks to investigate whether previous exposure to passive constructions influences ESOL learners' comprehension of target structures when compared to the prime condition. Next, it examines whether a priming treatment would assist ESOL learners' comprehension and production of passive in a classroom setting mediated by computer-assisted language learning (CALL). To address the first aim, 48 ESOL learners participated in a behavioural experiment using the self-paced reading method. The findings revealed a statistically significant priming effect for the comprehension of passive yet only when the lexical verb was repeated across prime and target suggesting that the effect depends on lexical repetition. The second aim will be achieved by employing a pretest-priming-posttest design in a cohort of 16 learners at an upper-intermediate level to measure whether implementing priming tasks via CALL affects learners' production and comprehension of passives and subsequent learning. It is predicted that learners will show an immediate improvement in both comprehension and production of passive and syntactic knowledge tested before and after the treatment session. The findings might encourage L2 researchers to broaden the empirical basis of L2 priming research including unrepresentative groups of the general population and L2 tutors to try out priming activities in their classrooms to elicit complex syntactic structures.

"Sometimes it can be torture but at the same time it's really nice": Neurodivergent pupils' experiences of the transition to secondary school.

Kathryn Lewis

Leaving primary school and starting secondary school is a significant milestone for the majority of children across the UK. For some, it's an exciting fresh start, with opportunities to study more interesting subjects, make new friends, and become more independent. For others, changes including new peers and school staff, increased academic demands, and different expectations can lead to anxiety, lower grades, disengagement, or even exclusion from school.

For children who are neurodivergent, a term used here to refer to children who absorb or process information in a different way to the majority of their peers, the challenges associated with starting secondary school can be even more significant. For such children, including those who are autistic, dyslexic, dyspraxic or have ADHD, new busier environments can lead to sensory stress, changes to routines can be confusing, and making new friendships and navigating new social hierarchies can be overwhelming. As a result, many neurodivergent children report being unhappy in school, and moving to secondary school has been associated with higher rates of peer victimisation, school exclusions, and poorer mental health outcomes.

To understand what moving to secondary school is like for neurodivergent pupils, it is important to provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to share their first-hand individual experiences, and to recognise the importance of the rich insider knowledge and insight these pupils have. Gaining this expertise has however been neglected in the past because of misguided assumptions that such pupils either would not want to, or are unable to, share their thoughts and experiences. As such, research foregrounding the first-hand experiences of neurodivergent pupils is limited. Researchers therefore have a responsibility to engage with students in a way that is accessible and inclusive, and promotes individual voices.

In my PhD, I am using creative and participatory qualitative research methods to directly engage with neurodivergent pupils in exploring the school transition experience. Such methods include drawing, card sorting, walking interviews, body mapping, and comic book creation. Giving pupils a choice of accessible and creative ways to discuss their experiences is beneficial in supporting building strong research relationships, ensuring children feel safe and heard, and producing rich and meaningful data. Through engaging directly with neurodivergent experiences, strategies can be developed to improve the move from primary to secondary school for all pupils, and to promote the adoption of inclusive and neurodiversity-affirming school transition practices.

How do children learn to read the minds of others?

Debra Fayter

If it was pouring with rain and I said "Oh look, a lovely day for a picnic!" you would probably infer that I was being sarcastic. You'd most likely realise that I didn't honestly think it was a good day to bring out the strawberries and champagne! My research traces the development of children's understanding of other people's thoughts in social situations, a skill known as 'theory of mind'. Pre-school children gain an awareness that people have thoughts and feelings which may not reflect reality. I am interested in how school age children build on this to fill in the gaps between what people are saying and doing and what they might be thinking. "Why does Mummy say to Granny that she likes her new hairstyle but she told Daddy that it made Granny look really old?"

I want to explain the development of more 'advanced' theory of mind. We know little about how children go from becoming aware that people have their own thoughts to developing more advanced skills, such as understanding white lies. There is evidence that children who speak more than one language might develop theory of mind differently to monolingual children, but it's not yet clear why. Do bilingual children have better 'meta-linguistic skills' (awareness of language), helping them to infer what other people mean by what they say? Or perhaps the experience that bilingual children gain with switching between two modes of communication helps them to distinguish between the words and the thoughts? My research includes both monolinguals and a diverse group of bilingual children in Years 1 and 2 (ages 5 to 7). Understanding others' thoughts is a step towards developing empathy. If we wish for a fair and just society we need to know more about how our children develop these important skills.

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