CROSS-LINGUISTIC GENDER INTERFERENCE EFFECTS IN L2 LEARNERS: THE EFFECT OF TYPOLOGICAL DISTANCE, COGNATE STATUS AND GENDER CONGRUENCY

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Background

• In early acquisition stages, retrieval and access to L2 representations are strongly linked to L1
• Cross-linguistic interference occurs when linguistic properties of the two languages interfere with processing mechanisms
• Our study systematically investigates cross-linguistic interference effects in three bilingual populations of varying typological distance: Dutch-Spanish, German-Spanish and Italian-Spanish
• Participants complete a production picture naming task and a comprehension task (violation paradigm) while their EEG is recorded

Research Questions

• What is the role of language similarity on cross-linguistic interference effects?
• Does cross-linguistic interference occur as a function of cognate status, or the interaction with gender-congruency across the two languages?
• How do cognate status and gender congruency modulate cross-linguistic interference?

Methods and Design

Experiments
Experiment 1: Dutch-Spanish L2 Learners
Experiment 2: German-Spanish L2 Learners
Experiment 3: Italian-Spanish L2 Learners

Main experimental tasks
Picture-Naming Task
Comprehension Task

Manipulations
• Cognate status: die Gitarre/ la guitarra vs. la cortina/ der Vorhang
• Gender congruency: die Gitarre/ la guitarra vs. la cortina/ der Vorhang
• Violation type: la guitarra vs. el guitarra

Hypotheses

• Behavioural evidence for cross-linguistic interference:
  • Shorter processing latencies for cognates (cognate facilitation effect)
  • Shorter processing latencies for gender-congruent items (gender-congruency effect)?
• Electrophysiological (ERP) evidence for cross-linguistic interference:
  • Production Task - N200 reflecting response inhibition and L1 suppression as a function of cognate status and gender-congruency
  • Comprehension Task – P600 reflecting syntactic and semantic violations as a function of cognate status and gender-congruency

References


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