

DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

24-25 May 2018, Institute of Multilingualism

Multilingualism: Acquisition, Education, and Society
University of Fribourg | Institute of Multilingualism

Doctoral Workshop: Defining and Operationalizing Constructs in (Applied) Linguistics: the case of CAF

Prof. Dr. Alex Housen, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Chair: Prof. Raphael Berthele, University of Fribourg

Abstract

Theory construction in applied linguistics and second language acquisition research has been said to be problematic for various reasons, including the fact that central constructs are poorly defined and operationalized (Gregg 2003; Norris & Ortega 2008, 2009).

I will illustrate this state of affairs by taking the case of the constructs of Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency (CAF), which have figured prominently as research variables in the applied linguistic and SLA literature since the 1990s. I will discuss how these three constructs have been defined, operationalised and measured and show the often critical mismatches between the interpretations that researchers want to make about these constructs (esp. about Complexity) and the measures that they use to make them.

Students will be asked to think about the key constructs in their own Phd research and explicate how they have defined and operationalized them.

Participation

Doctoral students of the program's partner universities (Fribourg, Berne, Lausanne and Geneva) are eligible to participate. Students from other Swiss universities may participate depending on places available.

To register, please contact Naomi Shafer (naomi.shafer@unifr.ch) by April 30th, 2018.

Location: Institute of Multilingualism, rue de Morat 24, 1700 Fribourg (room K1.03)

👉 www.institute-multilingualism.ch

PhD programme on Multilingualism

The workshop is part of the doctoral programme Multilingualism: Acquisition, Education, and Society. It is organized by the Institute of Multilingualism and the study domain Multilingualism and foreign languages at the University of Fribourg and carried out in close collaboration with the Center for the Study of Language and Society of the University of Bern and with professors from the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne.

References

Gregg, K. 2008. "SLA Theory: Construction and Assessment". In Doughty, C. & Long, M. (Eds), *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. London: Blackwell (pp. 830-865).

Norris, J. & Ortega, L. 2009. "Measurement for understanding: An organic approach to investigating complexity, accuracy, and fluency in SLA". *Applied Linguistics* 30:4.555-578.

Norris, J. & Ortega, L. 2008. "Defining and measuring SLA". In Doughty, C. & Long, M. (Eds), *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. London: Blackwell (pp. 716-761).

Invited speaker

Alex Housen received his Licence degree in Germanic Philology from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, an MA in Applied Linguistics & TESL from UCLA and a PhD in Linguistics from the VUB. From 1996 till 2002 he was a post-doctoral research fellow of the Belgian Fund for Scientific Research. He is currently Professor of English Linguistics and Applied Linguistics in the department of Language and Literature of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. His research interests include second language acquisition, (second) language teaching, bilingualism and bilingual education, and English linguistics (esp. morpho-syntax).

Programme

Thursday, May 24th

12:00 Arrival and lunch

13-14 Introduction (A. Housen and R. Berthele)

coffee break

14:15-16:30 PhD projects

Friday, May 25th

09:15-10:15 Talk and discussion
A. Housen)

coffee break

10:45-12:15 PhD projects

12:15-12:30 Wrapping up
(R. Berthele)