

Eurosla 24

is organised by the Centre for Language Learning Research (CLLR) of the Department of Education, University of York.

Book of Abstracts

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Illustration front cover by Sarah Philips

Printed by Design and Print Solutions, University of York, UK



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Access to explicit knowledge and disfluency phenomena in L2 oral production.

In the SLA research of the last fifteen years the implicit/explicit distinction has acquired prominence as a central theoretical construct in relation to the definition of linguistic knowledge, types of instruction, learning processes, retrieval of linguistic information and corrective feedback (DeKeyser 2003, 2013, De Jong 2005, Ellis 2005, Ellis and Loewen 2007, Hulstijn 2005, Long 2007, Long et al. 2011). As a consequence of this trend, the discipline has witnessed an increased theoretical and methodological interest in identifying reliable test measures of implicit and explicit knowledge (Han and Ellis 1998, Ellis et al. 2009).

Though the relationship between disfluency (self-correction, pauses) and monitoring phenomena has been established in the literature (Levelt 1983, Kormos 1999, 2000a, 2000b), the former has not received much attention as a potential indicator of access to explicit knowledge in the light of the implicit vs. explicit debate.

The aim of this study is to analyze the occurrence of disfluency phenomena in oral production under two experimental conditions:

- (1) a picture description task with no verbal cues;
- (2) a picture description task similar to the task in condition (1), with added verbal cues.

The data was collected from 47 participants (37 Intermediate learners of Italian and 10 native speakers) and the linguistic target elicited was the oral production of sentences containing *passato prossimo*, a compound Italian past tense, an example of which is given in (3):

- (3) Maria è arrivata a Londra alle 2
[Maria is3ps arrivedfs in London at 2]
'Maria arrived in London at 2'

The following two phenomena were considered indicative of access to analysed knowledge during online oral production:

- (i) self-correction (whether targetlike or not)
- (ii) pauses in the verbal phrase (between auxiliaries and past participles and in the past participle)

The research questions the study addresses are the following:

- (a) How does the presence vs. absence of verbal cues correlate with the presence of different types of disfluency phenomena?
- (b) Does analysis of access to explicit knowledge, in terms of monitoring, confirm previous findings indicating that tasks including an element of constrained response are a better measure of explicit knowledge than free production tasks?

The collected audio data was transcribed and coded for speech analysis using the CLAN/PRAAT software. A statistical analysis was subsequently run to determine the correlation between self-correction episodes and the presence vs. absence of verbal cues. Pauses and filled pauses longer than 300ms (DeJong and Bosker 2013) occurring between auxiliaries and past participles and internal to past participles were measured for both experimental conditions and a second analysis