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Multilingualism and eyetracking: using eye movements to study second and foreign language processing

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Recent technological advances allow to record people's eye movements while they are being exposed to auditory and/or visual (linguistic) input. These movements and fixations can reveal what it is that people pay attention to as well as what elements in the speech stream are used to comprehend the world around us. During this talk, I will focus on eyetracking as a technique to study the processing of second and foreign languages.

One well-known technique concerns the 'visual world paradigm' in which participants listen to speech directing them to manipulate one of several clearly separable objects. This technique is well-suited for studying the incremental processes underlying language processing and has previously revealed that native speakers of gendered languages can use gender-marking on the article and/or adjective to predict the upcoming noun. The first project I will discuss examined the potential predictive use of gender-marking in Dutch and, in particular, whether late advanced Polish learners of Dutch can use Dutch gender information or whether they (in)correctly transfer gender information from their native language Polish.

The second project used a completely different design to study the role of language familiarity on the processing of subtitled television. Participants' eye movements were recorded while they watched a multilingual television program (*Metropolis*) consisting of scenes with a soundtrack in a language the participants were proficient in (i.e., English), a familiar language (i.e., Spanish), and unknown languages (e.g., Swahili). This project has revealed some very interesting findings concerning the processing of subtitles and overall showed that subtitles are cognitively very effective as they lead to better recollection of information.

Studierende und andere Interessierte sind herzlich eingeladen!

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