LingPhil Summer School 2020

Palma de Mallorca

COURSE F: **Learning vocabulary in a second language: Proficiency, acquisition, and assessment**

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The course will focus on three central themes in L2 vocabulary research: the nature of lexical proficiency, acquisition of single words and multiword units, and lexical assessment methods. In the 'proficiency' part of the course, we will focus on different dimensions of lexical proficiency and their development. In the 'acquisition' part, we will examine two main sources of learning new vocabulary, language input and form-focused instruction. Finally, we will discuss several tests of lexical proficiency and the research they have generated.

**Lexical proficiency**

We will distinguish between word knowledge and vocabulary size, between receptive and productive vocabulary, between productive knowledge and vocabulary use, between knowledge and speed of word retrieval. We will also address the issues of lexical thresholds (the minimal vocabulary needed for functioning in a language), and the developmental patterns of the different dimensions of lexical proficiency.

(90 minutes, lecture 1 + 45 minutes, lecture 2)

**Lexical acquisition**

Learning a foreign language vocabulary is determined by two major factors: how many times learners encounter the new words and what they do with these words. The former is related to the language input learners receive and the latter to word-focused instruction.

With regard to input, we will examine the optimal number of encounters with words, spacing between them, and the optimal quantity of reading materials. Then we will consider the value of word-focused instruction for incidental and intentional learning.

(45 minutes, lecture 2 + 90 minutes lecture 3)

**Assessment**

In this part of the course, we will focus on assessing global vocabulary, i.e. how many words people know, how well they know them, and how they use them. We will look at different test formats in relation to the specific dimensions of proficiency they are testing and analyze their strengths and weaknesses.

(90 minutes, lecture 4 + 45 minutes, lecture 5)

Summary and directions for future research

(45 minutes, lecture 5)