



10th Research Seminar

Friday, 22 January 2010
Room A (third floor), 11.30–13.30 pm
Facultade de Filoxía
University of Santiago de Compostela

the research network consisting of the research groups
based at the Universities of Santiago de Compostela and Vigo

Variation, Linguistic Change and Grammaticalization (USC)
Spoken English Research at the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC)
Language Variation and Textual Categorisation (UVigo)
Methods and Materials for the Teaching and Acquisition of Foreign Languages
(UVigo)

is pleased to announce the following talks:

1. **Scott Jarvis (Ohio University/University of Jyväskylä): “Explorations in conceptual transfer”.**
2. **María Luisa Roca-Varela (USC): “A corpus-based approach to the lexical collocates of highly problematic false friends in English and Spanish”.**

Abstract for Professor Jarvis:

Scholars have long understood the distinction between conceptual knowledge and linguistic knowledge, with a necessary interface between the two (e.g., Chomsky, 1979). Linguistic theory has traditionally focused only on the latter, but relatively recent developments in both theory and empirical research have advanced our understanding concerning the ways in which both the content and processing mechanisms underlying human conceptual systems guide language use (e.g., Langacker, 1987; Levelt, 1989), and also concerning how certain facets of conceptual systems are language-specific (e.g., Lakoff, 1987; Talmy, 1988; Slobin, 1991; von Stutterheim & Klein, 1987). These advances have led to research on crosslinguistic influence designed to explore the hypothesis that some of the crosslinguistic effects that can be found in the language use of language learners, bilinguals, and multilinguals owe to influences that occur at the conceptual level either independently of or in combination with interactions that occur between

their linguistic systems. This hypothesis is referred to as the Conceptual Transfer Hypothesis (Jarvis, 2007), and it intersects in various important respects with related hypotheses proposed by Levelt (1989), Kellerman (1995), Slobin (1991), and von Stutterheim and colleagues (e.g., von Stutterheim, 2003; von Stutterheim & Klein, 1987; von Stutterheim & Nüse, 2003). The purpose of this paper is to explore the Conceptual Transfer Hypothesis, first by clarifying the relationship between human conceptual systems and linguistic systems, then by discussing both clear cases and problematic cases of conceptual transfer and linguistic transfer, and finally by describing some of the most recent empirical work that has been done in this area.

Abstract for María Luisa Roca-Varela:

False friends are known to be problematic for Spanish students of English since they make assumptions on the foreign language that are very frequently inaccurate. This pilot study is based on a previous analysis of how language learners use these tricky words in their interlanguage. The results of that analysis showed that there are problems at the levels of meaning, syntax and phraseology. In this preliminary survey I look at 10 false friends, starting from the hypothesis that, if it is possible to identify in each language distinctive lexical collocates for false friends, then learners will be able to better understand their differences in meaning and usage. The aim is thus to find out phraseological differences between English and Spanish that might help students to use false friends correctly. The results from the study are expected to open new paths for further research on the topic.

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[Note: at the end of the seminar a light buffet lunch will be served at the Auditorio de Galicia.]