Dictionary

Research Centre

DICTIONARY RESEARCH CENTRE SEMINAR

(Please note change from usual time and venue)

Date: Friday, 19 October

Time: 6 – 7.15pm

Location: W5C 221

Speaker: Professor Koenraad Kuiper, University of Canterbury

Topic: ***Slipping on superlemmas: phrasal lexical items in speech production.***

Abstract: Only relatively recently have theories of speech production concerned themselves with the part idioms and other phrasal lexical items (PLIs) playin the processes of speech production. Two theories of speech production which attempt to account for the accessing of idioms in speech production are those of (Cutting and Bock 1997) and superlemma theory (Sprenger 2003); (Sprenger, Levelt, and Kempen 2006). Much of the data supporting theories of speech production comes either from time course experiments or from slips of the tongue (Bock and Levelt 1994). The latter are of two kinds: experimentally induced (Baars 1992) or naturally observed (Fromkin 1980). Cutting and Bock use experimentally induced speech errors while Sprenger, Levelt & Kempen (2006) use time course experiments. The missing data type that has a bearing on speech production involving PLIs is that of naturally occurring slips. In this study the impact of data taken from naturally observed slips involving English and Dutch PLIs are brought to bear on these theories. The data are taken initially from a corpus of just over 1000 naturally observed English slips involving PLIs (the Tuggy corpus). Our argument proceeds as follows. First we show that slips occur independent of whether or not there are PLIs involved. In other words, speech production proceeds in certain of its aspects as though there were no PLI present. We illustrate these slips from the Tuggy data. Second we investigate the predictions of superlemma theory. Superlemma theory (Sprenger, Levelt, and Kempen 2006) accounts for the selection of PLIs and how their properties enter processes of speech production. It predicts certain activation patterns dependent on a PLI being selected. Each such pattern might give rise to slips of the tongue. This set of predictions is tested against the Tuggy data. Each of the predicted activation patterns yields a significant number of slips. These findings are therefore compatible with a view of PLIs as single units in so far as their activation by lexical concepts goes. These findings are further corroborated by reference a second smaller dataset of slips involving Dutch PLIs (the Kempen corpus).

All staff and students welcome.

References

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Cutting, J. , and Kay Bock. 1997. That's the way the cookie bounces: Syntactic and semantic components of experimentally controlled idiom blends. *Memory and cognition* 25 (1):57-71.

Fromkin, Victoria. 1980. *Errors in linguistic performance: Slips of the tongue, ear, pen, and hand*. New York: Academic Press.

Sprenger, Simone A. 2003. Fixed expressions and the production of idioms:. PhD, Social Sciences Faculty, Katholieke Universteit Nijmegen, Nijmegen.

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