



The contours of lexico-phonological dissociation in English-French interlanguage

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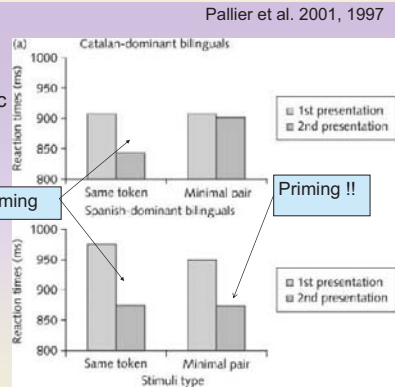


Background

Failure to encode a phonemic difference can result lexically in **spurious homophony**. But recent data by Weber & Cutler (2004) suggest that lexical contrast is possible in L2, even though categorization does not allow for a stable distinction at the phonetic form level.

Question

What is the relationship between category learning and lexical contrast in L2? Are both acquisition steps dissociated in L2 acquisition?



8 French listeners

38 AE learners of French

8 sem + Length of residence > 1 yrs = **advanced** (N=19)

4 sem + Length of residence : 0 yrs = **beginners** (N=19)

Participants

Stimuli

LEXICAL DECISION:

• 40 words + 40 nonwords

• 5 pairs for each contrast:

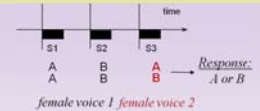
[i-y] [u-y] [ɔ-œ] [e-œ]

• 180 fillers

• 4 x 260 item lists

• Criterion: < 25% error

ABX:



Conditions:

control: sun vub / tid ted

high: tyd tud / myb mub

mid: tød tœd / møb mœb

Lexical Decision w. repetition priming

„real French word?“

2 pairing conditions:

SAME			
...word A... (female voice)	[8 to 20 items]	...word A... (female voice)	yes/no
MINIMAL PAIR			
...word A... (female voice)	[8 to 20 items]	...word B... (female voice)	yes/no

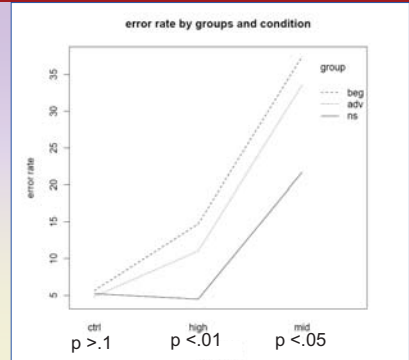
Measure: Reaction time on correct responses only

Results: Difference between 1st & 2nd member of each pair (priming?) on conditions „same“ vs. „minimal pair“

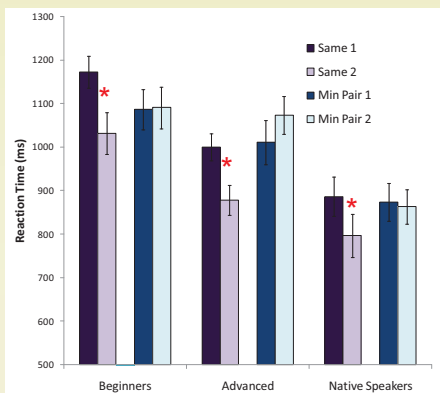
Beginners and Advanced are not different globally (no effect of group, no interaction with condition)

Both learner groups are different from the natives

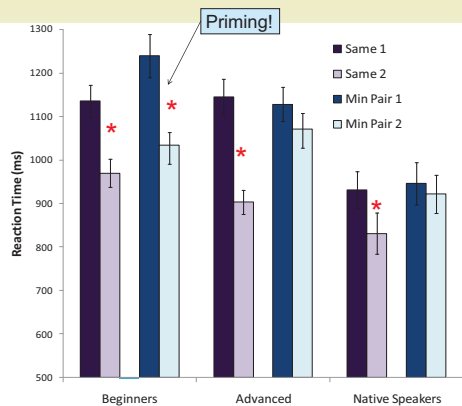
Phonological ABX



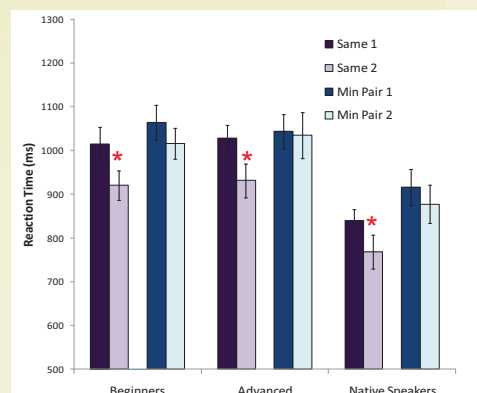
i-y control



u-y test



ɔ-œ test



Summary and Discussion

Beginners are *-targetlike* (even if relatively good) at categorizing French [u-y], and experience „spurious homophony“ for [u-y] minimal pairs in the lexicon. **Conversely**, their categorization of [ɔ-œ] is far from targetlike, but they nevertheless have established a lexical contrast for [ɔ-œ].

Advanced learners behave like native speakers on lexical decision tasks, but are not different from the beginners on phonological ABX.

Both learner groups are not targetlike on categorization task, but can encode lexical contrasts independently.

These results suggest that the mechanisms underlying phonemic categorization and lexical encoding may be **dissociated in L2 acquisition** with the establishment of lexical contrasts **preceding** targetlike phonemic categorization.

L2 acquisition, in this case, might proceed differently from L1

+ targetlike Category + Lexical Contrast	- targetlike Category + Lexical Contrast
Native speakers	Advanced [u-y] + [ɔ-œ] Beginners [ɔ-œ] (PRESENT DATA)
+ targetlike Category - Lexical Contrast	- targetlike Category - Lexical Contrast
L1 Acquisition Training studies	Beginners [u-y] (PRESENT DATA)

SELECTED REFERENCES

- Pallier, C., Bosch, L., & Sebastián-Gallés, N. (1997). A limit on behavioral plasticity in speech. *Cognition*, 64, B9–B17.
- Pallier, C., Colomé, A. and Sebastián-Gallés, N. (2001): The influence of native-language phonology on lexical access: exemplar-based vs. abstract lexical entries. *Psych. Science* 12, 445–449.
- Weber, A. and Cutler, A. (2004): Lexical competition in non-native spoken word recognition. *J. of Memory and Language* 50, 1–25.

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