Modality effects in phonological, lexical and spatial development in L2/M2 learners of German Sign Language in the first semester: A corpus-based investigation

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AG 2

As Woll (2013), Chen Pichler & Koulidobrova (2015), Fenlon (2019) among others pointed out, the research on acquisition of signed languages as L2 has been emerging in the past ten years. The L2 research covers various linguistic domains including phonetic-phonological studies (see e.g. McIntire & Reilly 1988, Mirus et al 2001, Rosen 2004, Bochner et al. 2011, Hilger 2015 or Williams & Newman 2016), lexical/iconicity studies (see e.g. Ortega 2017), morphosyntactic studies (see e.g. Kubus and Rathmann 2013) and discourse studies. In line with Schönström 2014, there, however, is an urgent need for corpus-based longitudinal studies which document patterns of L2 sign language learning in various stages. This allows a systematic study of how a learner acquires the new language at various linguistic domains and how it is influenced by her or his native language in either same or other modality (M1/M2). This in turn will lead to a better understanding of L2/M2 acquisition and application to teaching/learning strategies (see e.g. McKee et al. 2014, Rosen 2019) and L2 assessment. This talk has two primary goals. First, it investigates potential issues in the design of L2 sign language learner corpora (data collection and stimuli). Such corpora play a role in L2 research and in the application to teaching/learning and assessment. Second, it discusses preliminary and first insights on modality and language experience of L2 learners of German Sign Language (DGS) in the first semester in phonological, lexical and spatial development.

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