

Social networks, language practices and acquisition

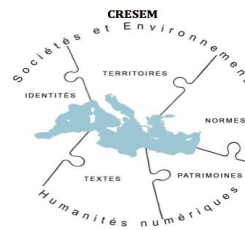
Working Group 3 meeting, 1 June 2017, Université de Perpignan Via Domitia

COST Action SAREP

Input is crucial in second language acquisition (SLA); without it, acquisition cannot take place. Input implies contact, i.e. how learner and language come together. Study of contact with the target language in the context of immersion can focus on quantity (e.g. time spent in immersion, number of interactions, etc.) just as it can focus on quality (e.g. type or importance of interactions, themes, activities, etc.). Research has shown that time spent in the target language community is basically beneficial for SLA. But just how far can we delve into the qualitative aspects? While network modelling programmes can be used to map how different actors relate to one another, and how this in turn can be correlated with mastery of particular features, understanding what different types of contact actually bring about in terms of acquisition requires further thought.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss qualitative issues pertaining to social interaction and network analysis for the study of second language acquisition. Looking to overcome the urge to stick to preconceived definitions, frameworks and methodologies, participants are invited to work collectively, looking at new ways of relating the development of second language mastery to activities, contexts and types of language use. An intended outcome of the meeting is the initiation of small-scale collaborative research focusing on particular areas and methods of investigation arising from the different discussion sessions.

Pre-meeting task: getting to know each other. Please provide a brief description of your research profile and state why you are interested in contributing to WG3. What do you hope to get out of your involvement in the WG and what will your contribution bring? [Click here to contribute](#). Please ensure you complete this before the meeting.



Recommended reading:

Mitchell, R., N. Tracy-Ventura & K. McManus, 2015, Social interaction, identity and language learning during residence abroad, Eurosla Monographs series 4 (in particular, chapters 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13)

The meeting should provide the opportunity for an online collaborative bibliography to arise: click here to contribute. An online folder will be created to enable sharing of PDF files.

Wednesday 31st May 2017

20.00. Meal at L'intermède restaurant, Pierre Rameil street (special price for WG3, each person pays). Please confirm your presence by email. Meet at the Grand café de la Poste (next to Castillet) from 19.30. I'll come and collect you to go to the restaurant at around 19.50.

Programme Thursday 1st June 2017

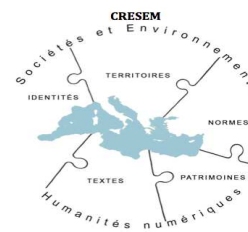
Building F2, service Platinium.

8.30 – 9.00. Arrival

9.00 – 9.10. Welcome by Xavier Py, Vice President for research.

9.10 – 9.30. Breaking the ice: who are we, where do we come from? Information for the day.

9.30 – 10.30. Session one "Getting started": define what social networks are and how we might study their impact on language use, mastery and SLA.



Intended outcomes: starting out from our pre-meeting ideas of what we think key notions are, at the end of this session, not only will we have been called upon to make our ideas clearer, but we will also come to engage with the group, accounting for variation (old hands, beginners, in-betweens...; people from different disciplinary backgrounds) and overlap.

10.30 – 11.00. Coffee

11.00 – 12.00. Session two "Existing research": what do specialists say or do, from a sociological/sociolinguistic point of view, from an SLA point of view, and from other points of view? How do the answers complement or differ from those to the previous question?

Intended outcomes: at the end of this session, we will have a better idea of different areas and/or disciplinary approaches and what links these (or what is different from one to the next).

12.00 – 14.00. Lunch (provided by organiser) with the following questions in our minds: what are the things we want (need?) to know, and how could we investigate these? How can we benefit from the multi-disciplinary richness inherent in SAREP?

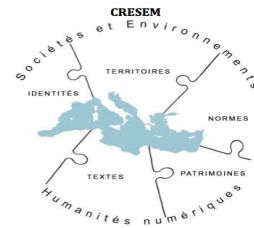
14.00 – 15.30. Session three "Getting stuck in": what are the things we want (need?) to know, and how could we investigate these? How can we benefit from the multi-disciplinary richness inherent in SAREP? Different considerations: point of view of the researcher; point of view of the language user; point of view of the programme designer or teacher.

Intended outcomes: at the end of this session, we will have a better idea of different methods and how these relate to the different actors involved in thinking about social interactions and networks. Importantly, the fact that groups are mixed in terms of disciplinary backgrounds means that the thought process takes us away from our comfort zones.

15.30 – 16.00. Coffee

16.00 – 17.30. Session four "Research": working with a group of learners, what can we use to assess the impact of social activity in terms of monitoring language mastery or development? How and why would certain types of activities and language use be more beneficial? And, more importantly, how might we study (and account for) these?

Intended outcomes: at the end of the session, we will have a particular idea of the types of things learners say about language learning experience in terms of interactions and the roles of social links and integration, and how these might enable us to better investigate the outcomes of language learning in given study or residence abroad situations.



17.30 – 18.30. Debriefing: what have we achieved and what is our next step as a working group?

The debriefing session is not just about going back over “what we talked about today”, but rather it is designed to allow us to envisage one of the general aims of the WG which is to initiate collaborative research (rather than just ploughing our existing furrows). So, what are we keen to start investigating and why? (and perhaps also how...?)

20.00. End of meeting festive meal at the Casa sansa restaurant (special price for WG3, each person pays).