



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Second Language
Acquisition & Teaching

Graduate Interdisciplinary Program

SLAT COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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4:00 - 5:00 pm
(Arizona time)

The dynamics of usage-based L2 development

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Dr. Marjolijn Verspoor
University of Groningen, Netherlands
University of Pannonia, Hungary

Please register for this event at:

<https://arizona.zoom.us/j/91234567890>

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GIDP-SLAT@arizona.edu.

The field of Applied Linguistics was first introduced to Complex Dynamic Systems Theory by Larsen Freeman (1997), later followed by De Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor (2007). Today, CDST is known as a powerful framework to study the actual developmental processes in second language (L2) learners. A CDST approach holds that (second) language development is not pre-programmed in the mind but emerges as an individual interacts with other individuals in his or her environment and is in line with Usage Based linguistic theory. Because of several general dynamic usage based (DUB) principles, such as sensitive dependence on initial conditions, dependence on internal and external resources, iteration and emergence, complete interconnectedness, interacting variables, self-organization and variability and nonlinearity in development, L2 development is individually owned and non-linear. Therefore, we must study individual development to see when, why and how changes occur. In this talk, I will present various longitudinal studies to illustrate that development is a variable process, and that in different phases different parts of the learner's linguistic system change. In addition, I will argue that variability (trial and error over time), which is basically trying out new strategies or modes of behavior that are not always successful and may therefore alternate with old strategies or modes of behavior, is needed to progress. There is even some evidence that learners who show the most variability are the ones who progress the most!



Dr. Marjolijn Verspoor is a Professor Emerita of English Language and Second Language Acquisition at the University of Groningen, and Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Pannonia in Hungary. Her academic career started out as an ESL teacher in the U.S., and she wrote two textbooks for ESL students. After completing her PhD at Leiden University on a topic in theoretical syntax with a usage-based perspective, she moved to the Netherlands, where she first started teaching English for Academic Purposes at the University of Groningen and eventually moved more to the Linguistics courses in the program.

About 15 years ago, she helped set up a Masters in Applied Linguistics program in Groningen, where she worked closely with her colleagues on Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) and became very interested in studying L2 development from a Dynamic Usage Based (DUB) perspective. At the same time, she supervised several Masters and Doctoral theses in teaching English, French, Dutch, and German from a DUB perspective. In her work she has always combined the theoretical (Cognitive Linguistics, Usage Based Linguistics, and CDST) with the practical implications for L2 teaching and development.