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century, a fascination with things African in the realm of art and with things African-American in the realm of music set in motion a different dynamic that intersected in various ways with stereotyped representations. In relation to these themes, prior research on the evolving representation of African identities usually focuses on visuals and on behavioral attributes. In this presentation, however, the focus will be on linguistic representations of dialect in comics and graphic novels in Belgium and France. While visual representations were easily transferable across cultures, dialectal representations, both stereotyped and authentic, had to find different modes of expression that corresponded to different linguistic traditions and perceptions operating in the Francophone world. Examples of dialect in French-language comics depicting Africans, African Antilleans, African Americans and African Louisianans will be included in this presentation and will be extracted from a variety of sources of graphic narrative including excerpts from Alain Saint-Ogan, Hergé [Georges Remi], Jigé [Joseph Gillain], René Goscinny & Albert Uderzo, Laurent Verron & Yann [Yannick le Pennetier], Pearce [Didier Conrad and Yannick le Pennetier] & Jean Léturgie, and François Bourgeon.

Investigating the effects of second language learning context and proficiency on lexical access

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The Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM) posits an organization of the bilingual lexicon based on conceptual and lexical links between the first (L1) and second (L2) language words (Kroll & Stewart, 1994; Sholl et al., 1995). This model predicts that L2→L1 translation (lexically mediated in word translation tasks) tends to be faster and more accurate than L1→L2 translation (conceptually mediated, as in picture naming tasks). It also predicts that increasing L2 proficiency would lead to the strengthening of conceptual links between L1 and L2 words—as reflected in shorter reaction times (Cheng & Leung, 1989; Dong et al., 2005, Francis et al., 2014). The question arises, however, whether proficiency is the only predictor of conceptual link strengthening. Some studies suggest that L2 word processing may be different in heritage speakers and adult L2 learners who have similar L2 proficiency but differ in age and context of initial exposure to the L2 (Cheng & Leung, 1989; Montrul & Foote, 2014). The purpose of this study was to examine word processing in bilinguals who varied in their L2 proficiency and in context of L2 learning. We expected to find differences between heritage speakers and adult L2 learners.

Thirty English-Spanish bilinguals were recruited based on a thorough assessment of Spanish language proficiency (a written exam, an oral interview, and a questionnaire), and were divided into three groups: high proficiency heritage speakers, high proficiency late bilinguals, and low proficiency late bilinguals. All of them performed a Spanish→English word translation task and a picture naming task. For both, tasks accuracy and reaction time (RTs) in milliseconds from the onset of stimulus to the moment when the articulation of a response began were measured. Analyses of variance confirmed that the groups were significantly different in picture naming accuracy [F(2,27) = 77.05, p < .001], picture naming RTs [F(2,27) = 15.51, p < .001], translation accuracy [F(2,27) = 102.39, p < .001] and translation RTs [F(2,27) = 8.73, p = .001]. Post-hoc Tukey tests showed that in translation RTs the low proficiency late bilingual group differed only from the high proficiency late bilinguals. In the remaining measures, the low proficiency late bilinguals differed from both high proficiency groups.
In sum, the results showed that the low proficiency late bilinguals had significantly lower accuracy and higher RTs in the picture naming task than the two high proficiency groups. This is consistent with previous studies, suggesting that bilingual performance in lexical retrieval tasks that require conceptual access is affected by L2 proficiency level (Cheng & Leung, 1989; Dong et al., 2005, Francis et al., 2014). However, we did not find differences between the high proficiency heritage speakers and late bilinguals in any task performance. This suggests that proficiency has a greater effect on word processing than combined age and context of acquisition in lexical access.

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**Monophthongization of /ay/ as a marker of local identity**

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Monophthongization of /ay/ is perhaps one of the best known features of Southern American English (SAE) and Appalachian English (AE). Feagin (2000) called it the ‘most notable unchanging element of Southern speech’ (342). In most of the South, monophthongization occurs only before voiced segments or in open syllables. However, this phenomenon is not uniform across the entire South, as certain sub-regions, such as Appalachia, extend the process to pre-voiceless environments (Hall 1942, Wolfram and Christian 1976, Thomas 2001). Monophthongization seems to have strong associations with Appalachian culture and may be a marker of local Appalachian identity. Two recent studies (Greene 2010, Reed 2014) noted that a speaker’s use of /ay/ monophthongization, particularly in pre-voiceless contexts, might reflect a local orientation. Greene (2010) observed almost categorical monophthongization in Eastern Kentucky, and hypothesized that speakers utilize monophthongal /ay/ as a reaction against standard language ideologies. Reed (2014), investigating 2 generations of a single family in East Tennessee, suggested that a speaker’s orientation toward the local area is predictive of the rate of monophthongal productions.

This paper analyzes the rates and realization of /ay/ monophthongization, testing for correlations with local identity (i.e. rootedness). 24 speakers (12 male, 12 female) from northeast Tennessee participated in sociolinguistic/oral history interviews, which included conversation, reading passages, and word lists. In the aggregate, speakers were highly monophthongal across interview tasks (conversation, reading passage, and word lists); however, individual speakers were highly variable. Results suggest that this feature is in fact a marker of local orientation and local identity, as those speakers who have stronger local attachment (rootedness) tend to have more monophthongal productions of /ay/. Those speakers whose identities and lives are more firmly rooted in Appalachia have different realizations and greater occurrence of monophthongization. A researcher approaching this community solely using categories formed a priori would be unable to account for this variation. This study helps to better understand how speakers negotiate identity and use the linguistic resources at their disposal to reflect a local orientation.