

One experiment – different languages: a challenge for the transfer of experimental designs between Slavic languages

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In empirical linguistic research it is common to translate an experimental design from one language to another. Especially for languages where psycholinguistic methods are not as popular for linguistic research as for English or for German, it can be very useful to adapt field-tested experimental items for rapid data acquisition. It is also common to investigate a linguistic phenomenon cross-linguistically. But difficulties may occur in adopting experimental items not only between more distant languages like Russian or German but also between closely related languages like Russian, Czech or Polish. The aim of our project is to compare aspect use and the processing of verbal aspect in Slavic Languages. We investigate the use of perfective and imperfective aspect in so called competitive situations, where either aspect can be used. In my talk I want to present some problems that we had in translating test items and experimental designs in Russian, Czech or Polish by means of two different experiments. The first example concerns a self paced reading experiment that investigates the use of verbal aspect in iteration context. The second example represents a forced choice experiment concerning the acceptability of the perfective aspect in performatives.