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“LANGUAGE DYNAMICITY AND THE NOTION OF ‘NATIVE SPEAKER’”

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015 @ 5:30 PM



BU COM (640 COMMONWEALTH AVE.), ROOM 101

Research on bilingualism and language attrition has shown that second-language (L2) experience can lead to change in one’s native language (L1) at virtually all levels. I will present a series of longitudinal studies examining phonetic change in the L1 of adult L2 learners (native English speakers learning Korean) over a year in an L2 environment. Contrary to the assumption that L1 change is delayed until later stages of L2 learning, these studies show that L2 learning promptly affects L1 production at multiple levels of phonological structure. Furthermore, the magnitude of L2 influence is mediated by prior L2 experience in an inverse manner (beginning learners show more L2 influence), and this influence persists months after learners’ last L2 instruction, without extensive L2 use in daily life. I will discuss the implications of these findings for current conceptualizations of cross-linguistic similarity, for the notion of ‘native speaker’, and for language teaching and research practices.



*Sponsored by the BU Linguistics Program

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