

Reading proficiency in second language: new evidence from eye-tracking corpora

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Research into second language (L2) reading has a relatively short supply of comparable data from a variety of first languages (L1). This talk addresses this need and asks: what factors determine L2 reading comprehension and fluency? I present a new data resource called MECO-L2 (Multilingual Eye Movements Corpus), an eye-tracking record of text reading in English as L2 among 485 university student speakers of 11 different L1s. It is coupled with a test battery of component skills of reading and L1 eye-tracking data from the same participants. Ie quantified the contributions to L2 reading fluency and comprehension stemming from L1 reading behavior, L2 component skills of reading, and the L1 of the readers. We found a fundamental contrast between the determinants of L2 reading fluency versus comprehension, and a highly consistent within-participant strategy of reading in L1 and L2. We review implications of these findings for theories of L2 acquisition.