

Grammatical illusions in bilingual processing

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Grammatical illusions characterize native language processing, denoting cases where speakers misperceive ill-formed sentences as if they were well-formed. For example, when hearing a sentence like “The key to the cabinets are...”, native speakers may overlook the subject-verb agreement violation due to the presence of the plural modifier “cabinets”. This talk asks: do grammatical illusions also occur in bilingual/L2 processing? And if so, do they display the same patterns as in native/L1 processing? Using data from reading and listening eye-tracking, we will look at illusions triggered by two phenomena: subject-verb agreement and possessive pronouns. We will also explore whether L2 speakers’ susceptibility to illusions depends on their native language, and what this may imply for the mental mechanisms responsible for encoding and retrieving L2 linguistic representations in memory.