

NOM Prénom : DELRUE LAURENCE

Nature de la mission (séjour de recherche, participation à un colloque...):

Participation à un colloque international sous la forme d'une communication: "International Conference ICT for Language learning" (6ème édition)

Lieu et date : Florence (Italie) les 14 et 15 novembre 2013

Frais de mission attribués par le laboratoire : 700 euros

Description de la mission (par ex. résumé de l'intervention proposée/activités de recherche réalisées au cours de la mission...):

Introducing a voice analysis software into the classroom:

How can Praat help French students improve their relationship to English prosody?

In former experiments, we had shown how integrating a computer-assisted phonetic transcription marker, associated with a filing system, within the classroom, helped French students of English as a Second Language improve not only their phonetic transcription skills, but helped them build a phonological competence by linking theory to practice and by making learning explicit. In a later development of the tool, we have demonstrated how adding an auditory to a visual modality had significantly increased the stability of acquisition even though the students may have experienced a higher cognitive cost in an initial learning phase. We wanted to address not only the issue of how French students deal with individual phonemes at word-level or with word stress in English but to improve their oral skills in English rhythm and intonation, which has been proved to be a major hindrance in communication with English speakers for L2 learners. We have therefore integrated the use of a voice analysis software, namely "Praat: doing phonetics by computer", into the teaching/learning practice of prosody. The aim of the present study is to target the type of errors students make in their understanding and interpretation of English prosody, our hope being to help them overcome these obstacles through explicit learning. The software enables the student to synchronize his listening to a sound file and his visualizing the oscillogram of that selected sound. It also enables the annotation of the sound by creating parallel textgrids below the spectrogram and pitch windows. The sentences chosen for the experiment were excerpts from BBC News programs with no particular lexical difficulties. We required from the students that they represent four levels of segmentation by creating four different tiers; the task included the segmentation of the continuous flow of speech into Intonational Phrases (IPs), and the identification of the structure of these IPs, including the indication of the place and type of tone used by the speaker as nucleus or tonic syllable. They were also asked to give a representation of the rhythmic units of the speech, which addressed the issue of how to bridge the gap between a syllable-timed language (French) and a rhythmic-timed language (English). The basic idea behind the lay-out of the experiment was not only data-collection but mainly to use errors to develop their cognitive approach to the learning of English prosody.

Bénéfice de la mission (pour le chercheur/l'enseignant-chercheur, pour le laboratoire) :

Les rencontres avec des enseignants et chercheurs d'autres pays permettent la mise en perspective du travail de recherche appliquée au domaine enseignement /apprentissage des langues et donnent une vue plus générale sur les difficultés ressenties en fonction des conditions d'enseignements et des situations particulières (nombre d'étudiants, langues de départ, multi-ethnicité des apprenants, etc). Un retour critique permet d'orienter le travail en cours vers d'autres axes.