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The mental lexicon: The learning and teaching of semantics

The workshop focuses on the study of lexical semantics from the perspective of cognitive sciences (part. cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics) both theoretically and practically. Participants will first learn how the brain/mind stores the information and how and why we forget it, and—particularly—how the human brain/mind stores words and concepts. Several ways of word learning and teaching will be reviewed and the participants will have ample hands-on experience on using various mnemonics to learn more vocabulary in a faster and more fun way. Part of the workshop will review how words are acquired by infants and pre-school children and how this process may differ in adults. The last part of the workshop will focus on the learning and teaching of vocabulary in EFL/ESL classes, particularly by proposing some ways of making both processes easier and more effective.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Dominik Rus is a doctoral student in Linguistics, Psychology and Neuroscience at Georgetown University in Washington DC. Broadly, he is interested in the connection between formal linguistic theories and language learnability. His main projects in graduate school have been in theoretical syntax and the child language acquisition of syntax, particularly the acquisition of verb morphology (specifically, tense, aspect and agreement). In the Brain & Language Lab, Dominik has studied the acquisition and use of morphosyntax in children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI), by bridging linguistic and neurocognitive perspectives.

Dominik is currently working on his doctoral dissertation which seeks to explore the interaction between genetic linguistic mechanisms, general human cognition, and environmental input in the learning of tense and agreement in child English, child Spanish and child Slovenian.