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Observing the foreign language effect at Model United Nations

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TITLE

Observing the foreign language effect at Model United Nations

RELEVANT SIG

College and University Educators (CUE)

FORMAT

Research-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation (25 minutes, including Q&A)

Short English description

KEYWORDS

Model United Nations, Foreign Language Effect, decision-making

ABSTRACT

Psycholinguistic research into how The Foreign Language Effect (FLE) influences speaker agency has proven remarkably robust in laboratory settings. Studies such as Keysar, et. al (2012) and Costa, et. al (2014) have demonstrated that there are statistically significant discrepancies in decision-making by users of L1 and L2 in domains such as loss aversion and moral reasoning. However, it is unclear how much the FLE affects real world social interaction. The objective of this qualitative exploratory study is to discover what other factors are involved in participants' decision-making in an ecological setting. 11 university students participating in an English-language Model United Nations were interviewed in a semi-structured form and their responses were thematically analyzed. The presented results reveal that students were cognizant of a number of factors which may have inhibited participants in their decision-making such as deference to seniority, cross-cultural considerations, task difficulty, and L2 anxiety. However, some responses suggested that the FLE may also have facilitated speakers. The findings show that the FLE may be obscured by a number of factors, but nonetheless have an effect even in dynamic settings.

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