

Investigating L2 fluency

Pekka Lintunen & Pauliina Peltonen

Second language (L2) fluency is a multifaceted concept that is commonly used as a learning objective and as a criterion for assessing L2 proficiency. In research, fluency has been approached from many perspectives and as a research topic interests both phoneticians and second language acquisition scholars. Fluency is often examined as one aspect of learner language, along with complexity and accuracy (Housen, Kuiken & Vedder, 2012). The most commonly used framework for fluency studies is Segalowitz' (2012) classification of fluency dimensions into utterance fluency (measurable aspects of spoken production as indicators of fluency), cognitive fluency (efficiency of underlying cognitive processing), and perceived fluency (listeners' interpretations of fluency based on spoken language features). When L2 spoken language is concerned, Lennon's (2000) distinction between higher-order and lower-order fluency is particularly relevant, the former referring to fluency as general oral proficiency and the latter involving a more narrow focus on temporal indicators of smooth and effortless speech.

The purpose of this workshop is to examine L2 speech fluency more closely and consider the methodological choices available for studying utterance, cognitive, or perceived fluency in spoken L2. The focus is on utterance fluency and the possibilities for measuring it quantitatively from monologue L2 samples, but we will also discuss how fluency can be measured in the contexts of L2 oral communication (dialogue) research and pronunciation research. Based on our experiences of analyzing L2 speech from the perspective of fluency, we present some suggestions for best practices in L2 fluency analysis. We will demonstrate the steps needed from collecting material to obtaining quantitative and qualitative information about fluency based on the sample, and look at example analyses of L2 speech.

Housen, A., Kuiken, F. and Vedder, I. (eds) (2012) *Dimensions of L2 Performance and Proficiency: Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency in SLA*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Lennon, P. (2000). The lexical element in spoken second language fluency. In H. Riggensbach (ed.) *Perspectives on Fluency* (pp. 25–42). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Segalowitz, N. (2010) *Cognitive Bases of Second Language Fluency*. New York: Routledge.