UCLouvain
Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

INSTITUT LANGAGE & COMMUNICATION

Invitation à la soutenance publique de thèse

Pour l'obtention du grade de Doctorat en Langues, lettres et traductologie

Madame Yating TAO

A Corpus-driven Approach to the Valency Patterns of TAKE and GIVE in Learner Englishes and New Englishes

Le jeudi 11 décembre 2025 à 15H00

Salle Polyvalente

Place Cardinal Mercier 31 - Louvain-la-Neuve



This dissertation re-evaluates the relationship between Learner Englishes (LEs) and New Englishes (NEs) by considering the role of language-internal factors (i.e., mode, lexical items, and linguistic levels) and statistical approaches. Relying on valency theory and comparable written and spoken corpora, it provides a multi-level analysis of valence, valency patterns, and senses of TAKE and GIVE across two LEs (Mainland Chinese English and Belgian French-speaking English) and two NEs (Singapore English and Hong Kong English). This is followed by a multifactorial analysis of light verb constructions with TAKE and GIVE (e.g., *take a walk*) to explore how grammatical contexts (e.g., voice) constrain their usage, employing both Hierarchical Cluster Analysis and Random Forests with Global Surrogate Model techniques. Qualitative analyses of non-standard features and their potential motivations further complement the quantitative results.

Across all analytical dimensions, the results show that LEs and NEs are neither two distinct categories nor a simple linear continuum, as reported in previous research. Instead, they constitute a dynamic spectrum, with varieties occupying dynamic positioning, depending on the language-internal factors investigated. This reconceptualization helps bridge the paradigm gap between Second Language Acquisition and World Englishes research and underscores the need for multidimensional analyses in future comparative English variety research.

Le jury est composé de Mesdames et Monsieur les Professeur·es :

Prof. Gaëtanelle Gilquin (UCLouvain), Promotrice et Secrétaire du jury
Prof. Sylvie De Cock (UCLouvain), Présidente et lectrice
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