

GRAMMATICAL THEORY, INTERFACES AND L2 KNOWLEDGE

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I. EXTERNAL INTERFACES

(1)

Articulatory- perceptual system	PF	Lexicon & Computational system	LF	Conceptual- intentional system
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I.1. Conceptual-intentional

Problems on the external side (discourse/pragmatics/information structure)

Topic = old/presupposed information

Focus = new information (presentational or contrastive)

Example 1: Null and overt subjects in null subject languages (Sorace and colleagues)

Table 1. Subject distribution and discourse requirements

	Topic (old information)	Focus (new information)
Overt subjects	no	yes
Null subjects	yes	no

- (2)
- a. Perchè Lucia non ha preso le chiavi?
Why Lucia not has taken the keys
'Why didn't Lucia take her keys?'
 - b. Perchè *lei/∅ pensava di trovarti a casa
Because (she) thought of find-you at home
'Because she thought she would find you at home.'

Findings: L2ers whose L1 is [—prodrop] overuse overt pronouns in contexts where a null pronoun would be felicitous (i.e. where the pronoun refers to a topic already in the discourse).

Example 2: Word order alternations relating to focus (Belletti and colleagues; Lozano)

Table 2. Word order alternations

	Neutral	Focus
Unergatives	SV	VS
Unaccusatives	VS	VS

- (3) a. Una mujer gritó (Unergative SV)
A woman shouted
- b. Vino un vecino (Unaccusative VS)
Arrived a neighbour
'A neighbour arrived'
- (4) a. ¿Quién gritó anoche en la calle?
Who shouted last-night in the street?
- b. Gritó una mujer (unergative VS; focused subject)
Shouted a woman
'A WOMAN shouted'

Findings: L2ers whose L1 is [—prodrop] acquire the word order distinction between unaccusatives and unergatives in neutral contexts but fail to recognize that VS order is required for all verbs (including unergatives) when the subject is focused.

Problems on the grammar side (C-domain)

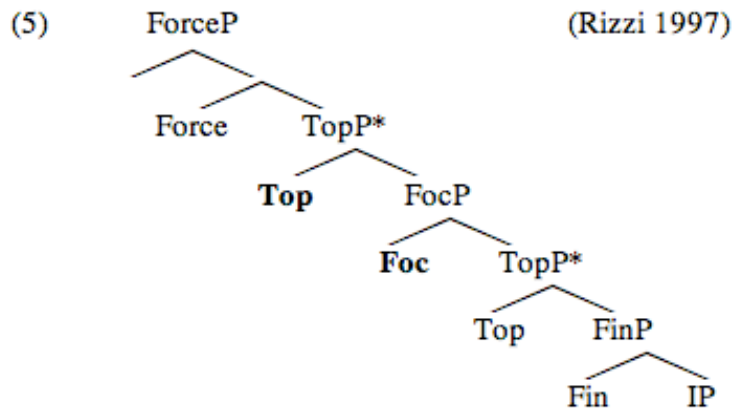


Table 3. Clitics and specificity in Spanish (Valenzuela 2006)

	+specific topic	-specific topic
CLLD	yes	no
CLD	no	yes

- (6) a. El libro, lo leí
the book, CL (I) read-1S
- b. *Un libro, lo leí
a book, CL (I) read-1S
- c. *El libro, leí
the book, (I) read-1S
- d. Un libro, leí
a book, (I) read-1S

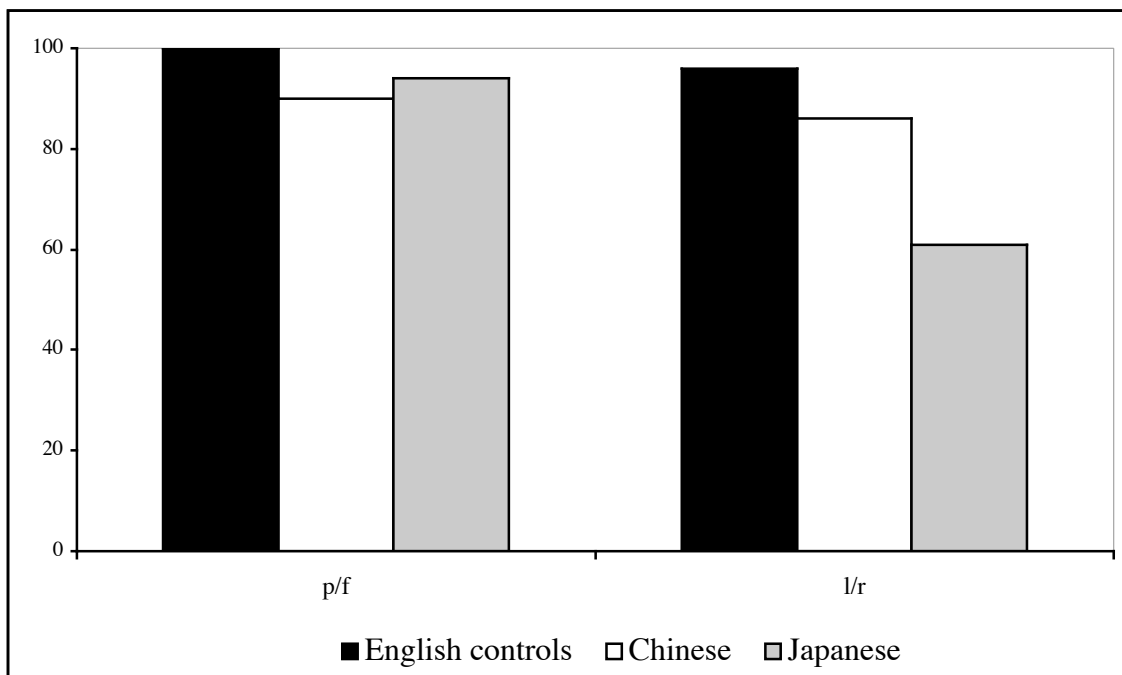
Findings: L2 learners of Spanish (including near native speakers) whose L1 is English inappropriately allow CLLD when the topic is nonspecific.

I.2. Articulatory-perceptual (Brown 2000)

Table 3. Predictions for L2 acquisition of English contrasts

Eng	Jap	Chin	Contrast	Jap	Chin	Acquirable in L2 English?
/p/, /f/	/p/, /f/	/p/, /f/	±continuant	Yes	Yes	Japanese: yes Chinese: yes
/l/, /r/	/r/	/l/	±coronal	No	Yes	Japanese: no Chinese: yes

Fig 1. Accuracy on picture selection task (in %)



Findings: if a feature is not contrastive in the L1, L2ers fail to perceive phonemic differences which depend on this contrast.

I.3. Parsing

- (i) Appropriate L2 grammar - problems specific to L2 parsing (e.g. Dussias; Fernández; Juffs & Harrington)
- (ii) Defective L2 grammar, with consequences for L2 parsing (Clahsen & Felser)

Ambiguity resolution:

- (7) a. Someone shot the maid of the actress who was on the balcony.
- b. Alguien disparó contra la criada de la actriz que estaba en el balcon.

Findings: bilinguals parse such sentences differently from monolinguals (e.g., in accordance with their L1 or with their stronger language).

Filler-gap dependencies:

- (8) a. Who_i does Jane expect e_i to win? (subject gap)
- b. Who_i does Bill think e_i Jane will fire e_i ? (object gap)
- c. *Who_i does Bill wonder whether Jane will fire e_i ? (Subjacency violation)

Findings: difficulties with intermediate gaps, suggesting that these are missing from the representation, according to Clahsen & Felser. (But L2ers can judge Subjacency violations appropriately - see White & Juffs 1998.)

II. INTERNAL INTERFACES

II.1. Syntax/semantics (Dekydtspotter and colleagues)

- (9) a. Combien de livres est-ce que les étudiants achètent tous?
How many of books is it that the students buy all?
'How many books are the students all buying?'
- b. Combien est-ce que les étudiants achètent tous de livres?

Findings: L2ers acquire the relevant interpretive contrast (i.e. no problems at this interface).

II.2. Morphosyntax/lexicon (Lardiere; White and colleagues)

- (10) a. He call me last night.
- b. We spoke English to her.
- c. I'm expecting telephone call.
- d. And she cleans the house.
- (11) a. möchten ma du ein Kaffee?
want-INF then you a coffee
'Would you like a coffee?'

- b. la barba rojo
 the-F beard-F red-M
 'the red beard'

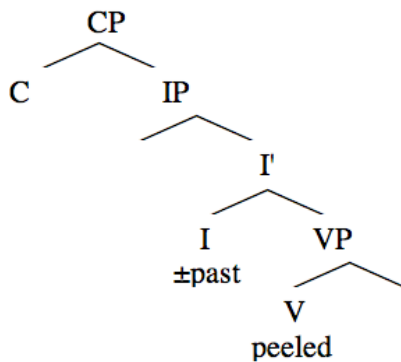
- (12) a. yo habla (underspecification) (McCarthy 2007)
 I speak-3s
 b. yo hablas (feature clash)
 I speak-2s

Findings: L2ers show a dissociation between their syntactic competence (which reveals appropriate L2 properties) and morphological performance, often using underspecified (default) forms when a more fully specified form is appropriate (underspecification rather than feature clash).

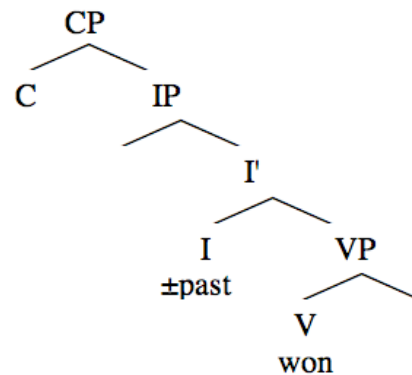
II.3. Morphosyntax/phonology (Goad and White)

- (13) Regular vs. irregular inflection: syntactic representation

a. Regular inflection

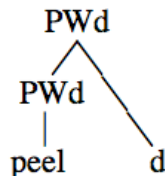


b. Irregular inflection



- (14) Regular vs. irregular inflection: prosodic representation

a. PWd adjunction



b. PWd internal



Findings: L2ers have difficulties in realizing inflection when a prosodic representation is not available in the L1. In consequence, they either delete morphology or resort to alternative strategies to allow them to represent it prosodically.

III CONCLUSION

i. Interface difficulties in other acquisition domains:

- Monolingual L1 acquisition (Schaeffer 2000)
- Simultaneous bilingual L1 acquisition (Haznedar 2006; Hulk & Müller 2000; Paradis & Navarro 2003; Serratrice et al. 2004)
- Heritage language acquisition (Montrul 2006)
- L1 attrition (Gürel 2006; Tsimpli et al. 2004)

ii. Are all interfaces equal?

- External versus internal.
- Syntax/semantics versus morphosyntax/lexicon and morphosyntax/phonology.
- What about within each interface domain?

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