

## (Re)thinking the Interface Hypothesis and its implications for language teaching<sup>1</sup>

Joana Teixeira

Universidade Nova de Lisboa / CLUNL

The interface between syntax and other domains has recently become a key area of interest in generative L2 acquisition. Much of the recent research on linguistic interfaces has been influenced by the Interface Hypothesis (IH) (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006), which claims that narrow syntactic properties are easy to acquire, whereas properties at the interface between syntax and other domains may not be fully acquirable. While some studies have supported the IH's predictions, others (though in a smaller number) have produced results which disconfirm them (e.g. Lozano & Mendikoetxea, 2010; Kraš, 2011). Despite their relevance, some of the latter studies have been overlooked in reviews of the IH-related literature (e.g. Sorace, 2011). To date, the studies on the IH have made no attempts to explore its potential pedagogical implications. For these reasons, this paper aims to (i) discuss the IH in the light of recent findings on the L2 acquisition at the interfaces, (ii) identify key problems and open questions regarding the IH's formulation, supporting evidence, scope and explanations for the L2 learners/speakers' difficulties, and (iii) explain why the examination of such issues may contribute to advance the current understanding of the process of L2 acquisition at the interfaces and to inform teachers' expectations of learners, selection of grammar contents and approaches to teaching interface properties.

**References:** Kraš, T. (2011). Acquiring the syntactic constraints on auxiliary change under restructuring in L2 Italian: Implications for the Interface Hypothesis. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism* 1, 413-438.// Lozano, C., & Mendikoetxea, A. (2010). Interface conditions on postverbal subjects: a corpus study of L2 English. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 13(4), 475-497.// Sorace, A., & Filiaci, F. (2006). Anaphora resolution in near-native speakers of Italian. *Second Language Research* 22, 339-368.// Sorace, A. (2011). Pinning down the concept of 'interface' in bilingualism. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism* 1, 1-33.

**Keywords:** applied generative second language acquisition; Interface Hypothesis; linguistic interfaces; second language teaching

---

<sup>1</sup> This research was funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (grant no. PD/ BD52263/2013).