

## Introduction

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The present volume constitutes the proceedings of the Language Acquisition workshop at the 22nd Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics held in Aalborg, Denmark on June 20-21, 2006. At this workshop there were as many as 21 papers presented by altogether 36 speakers from the Netherlands, Germany, Canada and the USA in addition to the Scandinavian countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Eleven of the 12 papers in this volume were presented at the workshop – in addition we have included the paper by Paradowski, which was accepted for the workshop but unfortunately not presented in Aalborg. The papers represent a variety of current issues in both first and second language acquisition.

The first three contributions focus on different aspects of second language acquisition. In the paper ‘On verb second and the *så*-construction in two Mainland Scandinavian contact situations’, Hilde Sollid and Kristin M. Eide investigate Norwegian data from areas of long-term language contact between a V2 (verb second) and a non-V2 language in Northern Norway. The data display unstable use of V2, and there is also a notable presence of the particle *så*. These facts are discussed in light of data on the *så*-construction in Standard Norwegian and Finland Swedish, as well as the particle *ni* in Finnish. It is suggested that some aspects of *så* in the data may be explained as one characteristic of L1 transfer, where existing L2 elements are recruited and assigned new functions in the learner’s grammar.

In the next paper, ‘How to start a V2 declarative clause: Transfer of syntax vs. information structure in L2 German’, Ute Bohnacker and Christina Rosén discuss V2 word order and information structure in Swedish, German and non-native German. Concentrating on the clause-initial position of V2 declaratives, the ‘prefield’, they investigate the extent of L1 transfer in a closely related L2. The prefield anchors the clause in discourse, and although almost any type of element can occur in this position, naturalistic text corpora show distinct language-specific patterns. Certain types of elements are more common than others in clause-initial position, and their frequencies in Swedish differ substantially from German. Non-native cross-sectional production data from Swedish learners of German are compared with native control data, and it is found that the learners’ V2 syntax is largely targetlike, but the sentence-initial part is often unidio-

matic. The learners have problems with the language-specific linguistic means that have an impact on information structure, and overapply the Swedish principle “rheme later” in their L2 German. This indicates that there is L1 transfer at the interface of syntax and discourse pragmatics, especially for structures that are frequent in the L1.

The paper by Michał B. Paradowski, ‘How do general psychological processes inform FLL pedagogy? Presenting a new instructional framework’, focuses on the instructional aspect of second language acquisition. He argues that learning invariably proceeds by relating new facts to what is already familiar and present in the conceptual structure. In the context of foreign language study the familiar is the student’s mother tongue. For this reason it is argued that the target language should literally be taught in the framework of the learner’s  $L_1$ , and the paper then presents the Language Interface Model (LIM). In this model instruction proceeds from an *explication* of how relevant rules operate in the students’  $L_1$  through an *explanation* of corresponding  $L_2$  rules and subsequent *interface formation*, modifying the  $L_1$  rule to accommodate  $L_2$  data. Learners should first apply the foreign language rules to  $L_1$  examples before moving to more traditional exercises. The end result is *competence expansion* – which leads to the development of multicompetence and allows for the obliteration of the rules from the learner’s conscious mind.

The first paper on first language acquisition focuses on a classical issue in the field and takes ‘A fresh look at root infinitives from a cross-linguistic perspective’. In this paper Tanja Kupisch and Esther Rinke examine the intensity of the root-infinitive stage in child language in relation to the quantity and quality of the adult input. Child language data from English, French, German, Italian and Brazilian Portuguese are compared, and it is investigated whether children produce infinitives more extensively if the verbal morphology of the target language is ambiguous with respect to the distinction between finite and nonfinite forms, or whether the token-frequency of nonfinite verbs in the input is crucial. They conclude that the latter is not decisive. Rather, children seem to avoid the use of finite verb forms especially in languages whose verb paradigms are characterized by ambiguities. Root infinitives may thus be viewed as a temporary phenomenon occurring at a stage when children are learning the inflectional properties of their target language.

The paper ‘Mental State Talk by Danish Preschool Children’ by Ane Knüppel, Rikke Steensgaard and Kristine Jensen de López reports on a study where sixteen four- to six-year-old Danish children are video-recorded in spontaneous interaction with their family. The mental state talk of the children is identified and analyzed with respect to three mental

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domains: desire, feeling and cognition, and this is compared to data from a similar study carried out with Canadian families. The results suggest some cross-cultural differences in children's mental state talk. First, Danish children produce more variation of mental state talk words than Canadian children do, and second, the distribution of mental state talk across the three domains differs for the two language groups. Semantic variation between Danish and English is identified, and this may partly explain the findings. The authors also present a usage-based approach to the investigation of children's development of psychological categories.

In her contribution, 'A Perspective on Doubling Constructions in Dutch', Jacqueline van Kampen considers the acquisition of negation and wh-questions in L1 learners of Dutch, which she demonstrates is characterised by a developmental stage at which these elements are 'doubled'. These doubling stages are shown to be preceded by a stage at which these elements are not doubled, and doubling is argued to be an attempt on the part of the children to maintain an older grammar while simultaneously introducing new structure. The loss of both doubling constructions is demonstrated to coincide with the acquisition of V2 and the subsequent association of the surface V2 structure with the underlying V-final structure. Van Kampen proposes that the existence of these kinds of doubling in child language show that the association between surface and underlying structure, which is taken for granted within the generative paradigm, in fact has to be acquired.

In the paper 'On that *One* Poverty of the Stimulus Argument', Andrea Gualmini argues against the validity of results presented in Lidz, Waxman and Freedman (2003). Lidz et al carried out an experimental study in which 18-month-old children were first shown an image on a screen, such as a yellow bottle, while being told "*Look! A yellow bottle!*" Then, in the test phase, the children were shown two items, e.g. a yellow bottle and a blue bottle, and told "*Now look. Do you see another one?*". In the test phase, the children preferred to look at the yellow bottle rather than the blue bottle, and by Lidz et al this was taken as an indication that children interpreted *one* to refer to *yellow bottle*, and not *bottle*. This was subsequently argued to show that children already at the age of 18 months know that *one* cannot be anaphoric on the head noun, but must be anaphoric on the N'-level, even though this is not assumed to be learnable based on the input. Thus, Lidz et al claim to have reaffirmed the original Poverty of the Stimulus Argument (POSA). Gualmini argues against this conclusion on the grounds that in *yellow bottle*, both *bottle* and *yellow bottle* represent the N'-level, and hence we would expect there to be no preference for the latter, as both represent valid referents for *one*. However, Gualmini maintains the validity

of the POSA with respect to the interpretation of anaphoric *one*, and spends the remainder of his paper considering what might cause children to prefer the higher N'-level to the lower one in the experiment. Without committing to either explanation, he proposes that this might either be the result of a sentence processing mechanism or pragmatic factors.

In the next paper, Helen Stickney undertakes 'Investigations into Children's Acquisition of the Partitive Structure' in order to determine whether children recognise DP as a barrier to adjectival modification. In an experimental study, the contrast between the partitive and the pseudo-partitive is exploited to test this. An adjective preceding a pseudopartitive can modify its head, meaning that in *a moldy box of chocolates*, *moldy* can modify *chocolates*, while an adjective preceding a partitive is prevented from doing so, meaning that in *a moldy box of **the** chocolates*, *moldy* cannot modify *chocolates*. This is argued to be the result of the presence of a lower DP (containing *the*) acting as a barrier to modification. Pairs of partitive and pseudopartitive constructions that differ only with regard to the presence versus the absence of the low determiner were constructed and tested in three different kinds of tasks. The results show that children between the age of three and five, unlike six-year-olds and adults, do not distinguish between partitives and pseudopartitives with regard to whether they allow an adjective to modify its head. This is taken as support for the assumption that up until the age of six, children's DPs are un-adult-like, and lack the features that make DP a barrier to modification.

In 'Children's Ambiguous Understanding of Weak and Strong Quantifiers', Erik-Jan Smits, Tom Roeper and Bart Hollebrandse investigate children's comprehension of weak (*many*) versus strong (*many of*, *all*) quantifiers in English. It has been demonstrated in the acquisition literature that, unlike adults, children allow a so-called switched reading of strong quantifiers. This means that a sentence such as *every cowboy is riding a horse* can be interpreted as *every horse is ridden by a cowboy* by children, but not by adults. However, adult speakers do allow switched readings of weak quantifiers such as *many*, making *many Tour de France winners are French* a possible interpretation of *many French have won the Tour de France*. On the basis of results from an experimental Truth-Value Judgment Task, where the authors set out to test possible hypotheses with regard to the interpretation of quantifiers (and the switched reading of *many* in particular), they conclude that children have an ambiguous quantifier system for both weak and strong quantifiers. The cause of the non-target ambiguity with strong quantifiers in child English is argued to be related to the different types of quantifier raising. In adult language, weak quantifiers move by means of Q-raising, which means that the quantifier moves

without its argument, while strong quantifiers move by means of Quantifier Raising (QR), in which the quantifier moves together with its argument to the beginning of the sentence. Smits et al show that children, unlike adults, allow Q-raising and QR for both weak and strong quantifiers, thus giving rise to a larger choice of interpretations than in the target language.

In their paper ‘Determiner Use in Italian-Swedish and Italian-German Children: Do Swedish and German Represent the Same Parameter Setting?’, Tanja Kupisch and Petra Bernardini compare the acquisition of determiners in two bilingual children acquiring Italian simultaneously with German and Swedish, both with the Germanic language as their dominant language. This situation represents an interesting test case for the Nominal Mapping Parameter (NMP, Chierchia, 1998), which argues for a parametric approach to article use that treats Germanic and Romance languages as representative of two different parameter settings. Due to a lower predictability with regard to the mapping between syntax and semantics, it is argued to take longer to reach the target level of determiner inclusion in a Germanic language, which predicts that articles should be acquired at a similar pace in Swedish and German. However, this prediction is not borne out, as Swedish articles are acquired at a much faster rate than the German ones, suggesting that other factors than the syntax-semantics mapping need to be taken into account with regard to the acquisition of articles.

Yulia Rodina’s paper asks the question ‘What Do Asymmetries in Children’s Performance Tell Us about the Nature of Their Underlying Knowledge?’. The paper examines the course of acquisition of the semantic gender criterion in Russian by studying children’s overregularization rates with two subtypes of Russian nouns: male kinship terms and male names ending in *-a*. These nouns are semantically masculine, while their morphology indicates feminine gender. Twenty-five Russian children aged 2;6-4;0 participated in this empirical study. The asymmetry found in their agreement production for the individual male kinship terms is explained along the lines of the Words and Rules model (Pinker 1999). That is, the asymmetry is attributed to input frequencies of individual nouns. Yet, frequency is not the only factor which is responsible for the asymmetries in children’s production. In addition, differences in the semantic representation of proper names vs. common nouns are argued to play a role.

In the final paper, ‘The Acquisition of Compositional Definiteness in Norwegian’, Merete Anderssen considers the acquisition of so-called double definiteness in Norwegian. Double definiteness is a phenomenon found in a subset of the Scandinavian languages whereby definiteness is marked in two places in modified definite noun phrases (as in *det svarte hus-et*, the black house-the), while in simple, unmodified noun phrases it is

only marked once (*hus-et*, house-the). While all the Scandinavian varieties mark definiteness with a suffixal article in unmodified noun phrases, there is an interesting pattern of variation in modified definites; Norwegian and Swedish exhibit double definiteness and mark definites with a preadjectival free determiner and a suffixal postnominal article, while Danish has a preadjectival determiner only (*det sorte hus*, the black house) and Icelandic has a suffixal article only (*svarta hús-ið*, black house-the). In the acquisition of determiners in Norwegian, the suffixal article can be shown to be acquired at a very early stage, while the preadjectival determiner is attested considerably later and is optionally omitted for a very long period. Anderssen argues for a lexical insertion analysis of the adult Scandinavian languages which she claims explains the late acquisition of the preadjectival determiner. The modified definite noun phrases with no preadjectival determiner found in child language superficially resemble Icelandic modified definite noun phrases. Anderssen argues that this resemblance is not only superficial; according to her analysis of adult Scandinavian, the Icelandic lexicalisation of the functional structure is argued to be the 'simplest' one, and hence it is the first option explored by the children.

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