Estudios de

lingüística inglesa aplicada

elia

GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION AND THE ACQUISITION OF GUSTAR-TYPE VERBS BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING LEARNERS OF SPANISH

María Dolores López Jiménez
Universidad de Sevilla

Spanish gustar-type verbs form part of a group called psych verbs (Belletti and Rizzi 1988). These verbs pose potential learnability problems for English-speaking learners of college-level Spanish since the most frequent and unmarked word order with gustar-constructions is OVS in contrast to the obligatory SVO pattern in English. This study addresses two questions: a) Does instruction promote the acquisition of gustar-type verbs? b) If so, are there task effects[1]? A total of 24 upper-level beginners (first year, second semester) of Spanish as an FL participated in this study: 12 formed part of the treatment group and 12 were included in the control group. Two three-part tests were administered in a 3-week period. The pre- and post-teaching tests consisted of a multiple-choice task, a scrambled sentences task and a free production task, and were distributed during the first and third week, respectively. Teaching which consisted of grammar explanation and practice took place the third day of class of the first week. A total of six days of class elapsed between both tests. Results indicated that the treatment group outperformed the control group in the scrambled sentences and the multiple-choice tasks, but not in the free production task in the post-teaching test. A

---

[1] This term is used to refer to the variability in language use evident when learners are asked to perform different tasks.

task effect was found: production of target-like forms by both the experimental and control groups decreased as production became less controlled.

Key words: Psych verb, focus on form vs. focus on formS instruction, task effect, cyclical syllabus.

1. Introduction

The incentive for this study is twofold: first, *gustar*-type verbs present a recurrent problem to English-speaking learners of Spanish; second, not much research has been done on the acquisition of this type of verb (cf. Montrul 1997).

The Spanish *gustar*-type verbs form part of a group of verbs called psych verbs. Apparently, they show arbitrary mappings between their semantics (thematic roles) and syntax (syntactic positions) (Montrul 1997). These verbs contain a theme and an experiencer. The syntactic position of subject may be occupied by an experiencer or a theme. According to Belletti and Rizzi (1988), there are three classes of psych verbs in Italian: 1) the *temere* ("fear") class: *Gianni teme questo,* "Gianni fears this"; 2) the *preoccupare* ("worry") class: *Questo preoccupa Gianni*, "This worries Gianni"; 3) the *piacere* ("like") class: *A Gianni piace questo,* "To Gianni pleases this".

Class I psych verbs ("fear" in English) are transitive: the experiencer appears in the subject position, whereas the theme takes the object position. Class II ("frighten") presents the opposite mapping; in this case the subject and the object are performed by a theme and an experiencer, respectively. Class III are, according to Belletti and Rizzi (1988), unaccusatives. The experiencer appears in subject position but takes the case marking of an indirect object. The verb requires agreement with the theme, which remains in an object position. Either the experiencer or the theme may appear in

preverbal or postverbal position, a unique characteristic of this third class of psych verbs. English lacks this third class.

In Spanish, dative experiencers are used with *gustar*-type verbs (Italian *piacere* "to like"), that is, *fascinar* "to fascinate", *importar* "to be important, to matter", *alegrar* "to make someone happy", *convencer* "to convince", *disgustar* "to displease", *molestar* "to bother", just to name a few. According to Montrul (1997: 192) there are arguments in favor of experiencers being treated either as objects (indirect object) or subjects of the verb: "arguments in favor of experiencers as objects rest almost exclusively on the oblique case marking. By contrast, arguments for subjecthood are supported by their behavior with binding and control". In this study, *gustar*-type verbs are treated as follows:

1)   *(A mí)*   <u>*me*</u>   *gustan*   <u>*las manzanas*</u>

indirect object (experiencer)   subject (theme)

        "I   like   apples"

As indicated by the parenthesis, the prepositional phrase is optional. Its presence indicates an emphatic or clarifying function. However, the presence of the indirect object is always required; otherwise, the *gustar*-type construction becomes ungrammatical. Spanish *gustar*-type verbs always take the third person (singular/plural) and allow the theme to be either in preverbal or postverbal position, whereas the indirect object is always preverbal:

2) a. *(A mí) me gustan las manzanas;* b. *Las manzanas me gustan (a mí);* c. **Las manzanas gustan me.*

2. Goals

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of instruction on the acquisition of Spanish *gustar*-type verbs by native speakers of English at the college level. These verbs pose potential learnability problems because the most frequent and unmarked word order for this type is OVS. This order

differs from the typical subject-verb-object order in Spanish or from the obligatory subject-verb-object (SVO) pattern in English. VanPatten's (1984) study of 59 English learners of Spanish showed that noun-verb-noun (NVN) is interpreted as agent-action-object. Thus, when students are given scrambled sentences like *a mí/gustar/las buenas notas* "To me to-like good grades", they tend to convert them into *Yo gusto las buenas notas* "I like good grades", a non-acceptable construction in Spanish.

This study explores the following questions:

a)   Does instruction promote the acquisition of *gustar*-type verbs?

b)   Are there task effects?

A number of studies have been carried out in order to investigate the efficacy of instruction, comparing instructed learners who were under an experimental treatment with those who were not. Cadierno's (1995) study investigated the efficacy of traditional form-focused instruction as opposed to processing instruction. A total of 80 subjects, enrolled in second-year university-level Spanish classes at the University of Illinois, participated in this experiment. Traditional instruction consisted in presenting the learners with explanations about the form and position of direct object pronouns within the sentence and giving practice on how to create sentences with these pronouns. Processing instruction involved teaching the learners how to interpret OVS strings and having the participants respond to the content of OV strings. The pretest and the three posttests contained both interpretation tasks and written production tasks. The results revealed that subjects who received processing instruction showed gains in comprehension and production, whereas those who experienced traditional instruction improved production only.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

A total of 24 upper-level beginners (first year, second semester) of Spanish as an FL participated in this study: 12 formed part of the treatment group (subjects #1 to #12) and 12 were included in the control group (subjects #13 to #24). The subjects chose their own nickname to identify themselves in the different parts of the testing instruments.

3.2. Instrument

The material consisted of two three-part tests: a pre-teaching and a post-teaching test. The three parts of each test consisted of a scrambled sentences task, a multiple-choice task, and a free written production task.

The scrambled sentences task contained fourteen sentences to be done in ten minutes. Each indirect object pronoun (*me* "me"(1sg.), *te* "you" (2sg.), *le* "him/her" (3sg.), *nos* "us" (1pl), *les* "them"(3pl)) occurred twice, except for the third person singular and plural indirect object pronouns, which presented four occurrences each (eight total). Instances of the third person indirect object pronoun were doubled because teachers observing students' homework suggested that *le* and *les* tend to be more problematic from an acquisitional point of view. They are superficially quite similar compared to the opposition *me* (1sg.) versus *nos* (1pl.). The second person plural indirect object pronoun, *os,* was not included since this form is not taught in S150 (first year, second semester of Spanish, that is, upper-level beginners).

The only clue that the students had to produce the indirect object pronoun was a prepositional phrase (e.g. *a mí* "to me", *a mis amigos* "to my friends"): *Preocupar/ a mí/ las emisiones de los coches viejos* "Worry/to me /the emissions of old cars". The presence of this prepositional phrase is optional in *gustar*-type constructions, though that is not the case for the

dative pronoun. The combination of all the indirect object pronouns was distributed in such a way that instances of the same pronoun did not appear in two consecutive sentences.

The multiple-choice task contained ten sentences that provided the context for the multiple-choice answers. The sentences were constructed such that neither an indirect object pronoun nor a *gustar*-type verb was present (e.g: *Los profesores de historia tienen mucho interés en las pirámides de Egipto*, "Professors of History are very interested in Egyptian pyramids").

Underneath each sentence there were four possible answers with this structure: indirect object pronoun (singular/plural) plus a *gustar*-type verb (singular/plural). When the third person indirect object pronoun (singular/plural) and a *gustar*-type verb (singular /plural) were tested at the same time, all four choices contained a third person form. Each pronoun (*me, te, nos*) appeared in two of the four choices, whereas in the other two options a third person (singular/plural) indirect object pronoun was used. The verb of each option was the same, varying in number (singular/plural) only, e.g.:

Yo estoy nerviosa por mi examen ("I am nervous because of my exam")

a. *Les preocupa* ("It worries them")   c. *Le preocupa* ("It worries him/her")

b. *Me preocupan* ("They worry me")   d. *Me preocupa* ("It worries me")

The verb number of each *le/les* combination was decided upon the verb number of the correct answer.

The free production task consisted of three passages. For each of the three passages the students had to report the author's belief about ecology using a *gustar*-type verb (three sentences total). There were also two lists of *gustar-type* verbs and a glossary provided at the end of the three readings.

The reason for presenting the three tasks in this order, scrambled sentences, multiple-choice, free production, was to avoid monitor use in the

scrambled sentences task, since the second task contained the target structure. The multiple-choice task could not have increased the monitor use on the free production task since it was given on a different day.

3.3. Procedure

The two three-part tests were administered in a 3-week period. The pre-and the post-teaching tests were distributed on the first two days of class of the first and the third week, respectively. The instructional treatment for the experimental group took place on the third day of class of the first week. Six days of class elapsed between the pretest and the posttest.

The scrambled sentences and the multiple-choice tasks were distributed on the same day (the first day of class of the first and the third week for the pre- and post-teaching tests, respectively), whereas the free production task was administered on the following day of class (the second day of class of the first and the third week for the pre- and post-teaching tests, respectively). Each test had to be distributed on two different days due to Department policy.

The teaching of this grammar point was presented in a fifty-minute class under the topic *¿Somos una sociedad consumidora?* "Are we a consumer society?" taken from the textbook *¿Qué te parece?* (Lee, Young, Wolf, and Chandler 2000a). This textbook follows the tenets of the Communicative Approach to Spanish language teaching (cf. Lee and VanPatten 1995). The teaching plan consisted of a five-minute introduction of the topic based on the question *¿Qué te gusta comprar? "*What do you like to buy?", followed by a fifteen-minute focus on form grammar explanation under the heading "*Gustar* and Similar Verbs". Doughty and Williams (1998: 3) make a distinction between two types of grammar teaching, that is, a focus on form type and a forms-in-isolation type: "a focus on form entails a prerequisite engagement in meaning before attention to linguistic features can be expected to be effective…[whereas] the traditional notion of formS always entails isolation or extraction of linguistic features from the context or from communicative activity". Following this

differentiation, the approach to grammar in this study was based on a traditional notion of formS.

Grammar instruction was also accompanied by twenty-eight minutes of grammar exercises from both the workbook and the textbook titled *¿Qué te parece?*. Three different tasks were practiced in class: a five-minute multiple-choice activity (structured input activity), an eight-minute scrambled sentences activity (structured output activity), and a fifteen-minute free production exercise (structured output activity), which contained four reading passages based on the opinion of four different Spaniards about ecology and environmental issues. The last two minutes of class were spent on a summary of the main points treated in class that day.

According to Lee and VanPatten (1995), structured input activities should precede structured output activities. This approach to grammar instruction differs from traditional approaches based on "an almost exclusive focus on production […], when grammar is presented, every textbook has hundreds of manipulative and controlled practices that have the learner "creating" output with particular forms or structures. We questioned the utility of these practices for getting linguistic information into the developing system" (Lee and VanPatten 1995: 118-119).

The control group did not receive specialized instruction on *gustar*-type verbs. Apart from not receiving specialized instruction on *gustar*-type verbs, the control group followed the same syllabus as the other students from S150.

4. Analysis and results

The three elicitation tasks were analyzed separately. In this section a total of six summary tables, one for each task of each group, is presented:

Group scores

Comparing the total scores on the pretest and posttest for both groups, the following could be argued:

1)   In the scrambled sentences task, instruction had positive effects on the awareness of the presence of a pronoun, the suppliance of target-like indirect object pronouns, and subject-verb number agreement in the *gustar*-type verbs. In the pretest, the control group scored higher than the treatment group; however, in the posttest the treatment group outperformed the control group in the production of a pronoun, target-like indirect object pronouns (number and person) and target-like number assignment to *gustar*-type verbs. The control group achieved a higher score on subject-verb person agreement in the posttest. Nonetheless, the treatment group showed a higher rate of improvement (25.3%) compared to the gains achieved by the control group (2.3%).

2)   In the multiple-choice task, instruction had an effect on the recognition of target-like indirect object pronouns (person and number) and subject-verb number agreement. The treatment group, although it scored lower than the control group in choosing appropriate indirect object pronouns in the pretest, surpassed the control group in the posttest. The experimental learners scored higher than the comparison group in the pretest and the posttest in the recognition of subject-verb number agreement. At the same time, the experimental group presented higher rates of improvement in the posttest compared to the control group (9.9% and 6.7%, respectively).

3)   Instruction does not seem to have a clear effect on the free production task. Both groups showed improvement on the posttest. With respect to the presence of a pronoun and subject-verb number agreement, the control group obtained higher rates of improvement in the posttest, whereas the treatment group achieved higher rates of improvement in the number of the indirect object pronoun and person of a *gustar*-type verb.

4)   Instruction seemed to have a positive effect on reducing the number of non-target-like auxiliary-*gustar*-type verb combinations in the posttest. In

the scrambled sentences task, the treatment group reduced the use of these combinations, whereas the control group increased it. In the free production, both groups decreased their use, although its decrease is considerably greater in the treatment group. Some learners also presented a correlation between these combinations and pure *gustar*-type verbs. In other words, when the number of these combinations was reduced, the production of target-like pure *gustar*-type verbs increased. In their study of the acquisition of the simple and the conditional past, Doughty and Varela (1998) also found that those learners under a focus-on-form treatment showed a significant decrease in the use of non-target-like forms in the posttest.

5)   After instruction, the greatest improvement could be seen in the production of *gustar*-type constructions (indirect object pronoun plus a *gustar*-type verb) by the treatment group in the scrambled sentences task. In contrast, the multiple-choice and the free production tasks presented the lowest rates of improvement. In the recognition task (multiple-choice answers), both groups showed high percentages of accuracy in the pretest. There was a ceiling effect caused by the high level of proficiency of these learners, upper-level beginners (first year, second semester). Thus, not much improvement was achieved after instruction. In the case of free production, the freer nature of this task prevented the learners from obtaining greater gains in the posttest also. In addition, there were only three chances available (there were only three reading passages with the student being required to write one sentence for each passage).

6)   Retreats[2] occurred in both groups, although the most significant cases took place in the comparison group. In the treatment group, learners who retreated in the posttest were those who presented a low number of uses in the scrambled sentences of the pretest. Such retreats are not unknown in acquisition (see Pienemann 1989; Bardovi-Harlig 2000).

---

[2] The term "retreat" is used not only when the learner stops producing the targeted item, but also when he/she reduces its number.

5. Discussion

As it was also shown by the studies reviewed in the introduction (Cadierno 1995; Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1993, reported in Bardovi-Harlig 1995), the comparison group made some gains in the posttest; however, learners under explicit instructional treatment, in this case, learners who received instruction on *gustar*-constructions, were superior to the students in the control group in the first two tasks, that is, the scrambled sentences and the multiple-choice tasks.

The nature of the task together with contextual factors (when, where, and how language is assessed) are also important variables when obtaining data. In this study, learners from both groups, the experimental and the comparison groups, scored higher in the multiple-choice task, the most controlled of all the elicitation tasks, than in any other tasks, though the scrambled sentences task produced higher rates of improvement (but with overall lower rates). The proficiency level of the students (upper-level beginners) and the controlled nature of the multiple-choice answers did not leave much room for improvement in the posttest. The open nature of the free production and the design of the task (there were only three reading passages with the student being required to write one sentence for each passage) made the effects of instruction less evident than in the case of the scrambled sentences.

Although the students under the experimental treatment showed higher rates of improvement in the scrambled sentences and the multiple-choice tasks, it seems that instruction did not affect all the students equally. There was considerable individual variation not only in the students´ language learning outcomes but also in their own language strategies. Ellis (1996) points out three different sets of factors for investigating individual learner differences: individual learner differences (beliefs about language learning, affective states, general factors), learner strategies, and language learning outcomes (on proficiency, on achievement, and on rate of acquisition). From the type of tests distributed to both groups of learners, it

is not possible to determine which of the above factors (beliefs about learning, affective states, general factors) were more influential.

With respect to the students´ learning outcomes, some learners (for example subjects #4 and #5 from the treatment group) did not improve, but presented the same scores before and after instruction in the free production task. Explicit instruction did not help these students to be aware of the *gustar*-type verb construction. Some possible reasons could be found in Pienemann´s (1989, 1998) teachability hypothesis, the appropriateness of this type of instruction, or the nature of the task itself. Pienemann states that a linguistic feature targeted by instruction is more likely to be integrated by a learner if the completion of a previous acquisitional stage has taken place, or instruction centers on the next stage of acquisition. In the case of subject #4, we know that this learner produced the targeted structure in the scrambled sentences task in the pretest; however, the instructional treatment made higher rates of accuracy take place. Thus, this structure was already part of this learner´s interlanguage. In the same way, the possibility of considering explicit instruction inappropriate for subject #4 is discarded as this learner´s production of target-like forms increased after instruction in the scrambled sentences task. The other variable, the free nature of the third task, seems to be the most plausible explanation to justify the results obtained. On the other hand, since there are no data about subject #5´s performance from the pretest (scrambled sentences and multiple-choice answers), there is no way to know his/her outcomes before instruction.

With regard to the students´ language strategies, there is variation across the members of the two groups and in each individual´s data. Learners have been found to vary in the overall frequency with which they employ strategies and in the type of strategy they use (O´Malley et al. 1985; Chamot et al. 1987 and 1988; Ehrman 1990). There is a whole range of factors that may influence the strategy choice, such as individual learner differences (attitudes, affective states, and general factors), the learner´s personal background and situational factors (Ellis 1996); however, from the tests designed for this study, there is no way to know which of these factors may have exerted more influence on the students´ production.

The occurrence of non-target-like forms could be justified by means of a series of learner strategies: for example, L1 transfer, avoidance, L2 overgeneralization, and simplification. In terms of transfer, the cases discussed below belong to one of the three categories into which Lott (1983) classifies transfer, that is, transfer of structure (an L1 feature is used in the place of a target language feature). The introduction of *ser* and *estar* in front of a *gustar*-type verb (in the form of an infinitive, a conjugated form, or a derived adjective) (for example, *es importar, es importante, es importa, son importan, están importan*) is probably due to the learner´s L1 influence. The students who inserted forms of *to be* might have been plugging in translations of English words such as *are important*, *is important* rather than using the appropriate construction (*gustar*-type verbs). Indeed, in Spanish the sentence *Los libros me importan* should be translated into "The books are important to me".

In addition, some students tend to assign number and person to the verb on the basis of the indirect object pronoun that precedes the *gustar*-type verb. The most frequent and unmarked word order for this construction is object-verb-subject (OVS) (*Me gustan mis libros*, "I like my books"). This order differs from the obligatory subject-verb-object (SVO) pattern (I like my books) in English. Thus, the students transferred their L1 pattern to Spanish.

In terms of avoidance, I will follow Seliger´s (1989) position: in other words, avoidance only takes place if the learner has shown knowledge of the targeted form/structure. Thus, subjects #1 and #8, for example, avoided the use of a pronoun in eleven out of the fourteen obligatory contexts in the pretest. However, subject #2´s and subject #4´s performances in the pretest could not be considered a case of avoidance since they did not produce any pronoun at all in the fourteen obligatory contexts.

Another strategy is overgeneralization: L1 and L2 learners make errors like *goed* (instead of *went*) and *cabo* (instead of *quepo* "I fit"), which are considered extensions of some general rule to items not covered by that rule in the L1 or the L2 . In this study some students (for example, subject

#11) produced the reflexive pronoun *se* "self" instead of the indirect object pronouns *le* "him/her" and *les* "them". The pronoun *se* "self" is highly frequent in Spanish since it may function as a reflexive pronoun, as a marker of impersonality (impersonal *se*), and may replace *le* and *les* when they precede *lo, la* (third person singular direct object pronouns)*, los, las* (third person plural direct object pronouns). The pronoun *se* is also morphologically closer to *le* and *les* than any other pronoun. There were other students (for example, subject #1) who resorted to the singular form to mark the verb. Subject #1 chose to mark the third person of *gustar*-type verbs with the singular form in nine of the ten obligatory contexts in which number had to be indicated. Nevertheless, the third person singular was required only in five out of the ten obligatory contexts. The rest required a plural marking for the verb.

The last strategy, structural simplification (see Ellis´ (1982) differentiation), could be found in those cases where the students used the base form (an infinitive) of a *gustar*-type verb instead of a conjugated form (subject #2 and subject #9)

6. Concluding remarks

Instruction promotes the acquisition of *gustar*-type verbs. The treatment group, although it scored lower and/or equal to the comparison group in the pretest, outperformed the control group in the scrambled sentences and the multiple-choice tasks in the posttest. The type of instructional treatment, explicit grammar teaching, the students received did not help them to be aware of the targeted structure in freer contexts. Instruction is just one variable among many, and does not seem to be a privileged variable at all. Instruction does not have the power of altering acquisition orders, although it very likely increases its rate. There are other factors (such as the type of task, individual learner differences, language learning strategies, etc.) that together with the instructional treatment are responsible for the final outcome.

In the event of further studies, there are desirable changes to be taken into account: first, it would be necessary to resort to lower-level

learners in order to avoid a ceiling effect in the multiple-choice task of the pretest; second, the number of obligatory contexts for the free production task would have to be expanded in order to make the data from this type of task more robust, and the results more reliable; third, it would be interesting to distribute a second posttest to investigate whether the instructional effects are long lasting or not.

From a pedagogical perspective, there are several teaching implications that would also have to be considered in further studies In this study, the grammar point was introduced and explained in Spanish following one of the Department´s rules: all Spanish classes have to be conducted in Spanish and no translation into English is allowed in class. Perhaps a presentation and explanation of the same grammar in both languages, Spanish and English, would help the students to obtain better results in the posttest.

It would also be wise to expand the twenty-eight minutes spent in class practicing each of the three tasks. In this way, one could avoid having the presentation and practice of *gustar*-type verbs comprise the fifty-minute class. In addition to this, the practice of each of the three tasks would take place on three different days. With these changes, it would be possible to study the effect(s), if any, that spending more time on the practical part of the instructional treatment could have on the acquisition of *gustar*-type verb constructions.

Finally, it would be advisable to incorporate a complex construction like this in a cyclical syllabus as opposed to a linear one. A cyclical syllabus offers two advantages: the recurrence of the item (in this case, the grammar point) throughout the syllabus allows 1) a continual review of the item studied, and 2) an expansion of the item a step further.

References

Bardovi-Harlig, K. 2000. *Tense and Aspect in Second Language Acquisition: Form, Meaning, and Use*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Belletti, A. and Rizzi L. 1988. "Psych verbs and theta theory". *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 6: 291-352.

Cadierno, T. 1995. "Formal instruction from a processing perspective: An investigation into the Spanish past tense". *Modern Language Journal* 79: 179-193.

Doughty, C. and Varela E. 1998. "Communicative focus on form" in C. Doughty and J. Williams (eds.). *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Doughty, C. and Varela, E. 1998. "Communicative focus on form" in C. Doughty and J. Williams (eds.). *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Doughty, C. and Williams J. 1998. "Issues and Terminology".in C. Doughty and J. Williams (eds.). *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ehrman, M. 1990. "The role of personality type in adult language learning: an ongoing investigation" in T. Parry and C. Stansfield (eds.). *Language Aptitude Reconsidered*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Ellis, R. 1982. "The origins of interlanguage". *Applied Linguistics* 3: 207-223.

Ellis, R. 1996. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lee, J. and VanPatten. B. 1995. *Making Communicative Language Happen*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Lee, J., Young, D., Wolf, D., and Chandler, P. 2000a. *¿Qué te parece? Intermediate Spanish*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lee, J., Young, D., Wolf, D., and Chandler, P. 2000b. *Manual que acompaña ¿Qué te parece? Intermediate Spanish*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lott, D. 1983. "Analyzing and counteracting interference errors". *English Language Teaching Journal* 37: 256-261.

Montrul, A. 1997. "Spanish gustar psych verbs and the unaccusative se construction: the case of dative experiencers in SLA" in A. Pérez-Leroux and W. Glass (eds.). *Contemporary Perspectives on the Acquisition of Spanish: Developing Grammars*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

Pienemann, M. 1989. "Is language teachable? Psycholinguistic experiments and Hypotheses". *Applied Linguistics* 10: 52-79.

Pienemann, M. 1998. *Language Processing and Second Language Development: Processability Theory*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Seliger, H. 1989."Semantic transfer constraints in foreign language speakers´ reactions to acceptability" in H. Dechert and M. Raupach (eds.). *Transfer in Language Production*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex