Abstracts

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Processing Relative clauses in L2 Spanish
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The research in this area leads to the formulation of consciousness-raising in the acquisition of grammatical structure (Pienneman, 1988, 1989, Rutherford and Sharwood Smith, 1988; Sharwood Smith, 1993, 1999), which predicts that the pedagogical strategies will draw the learner’s attention to the formal properties of the target language.

This paper on the acquisition of L2 Spanish aims to establish the intrinsic relation between the types of clauses and the two levels of the narrative, foreground, and background. The focus of this analyze is the development of the temporality and types of clauses: The coordinated with “y” [and], and the Relative Clause with “Que” [that]. In the case of the Relative Clause, I will examine the construction [S V [That O]]. In light of these analyses, the results show a strong correlation with certain types of complex structure and the development of verbal tenses.

The questions of this research are: i) How learners of Spanish as L2 create discourse from chronological events of the narrative and reach the complexity of the narrative structure? ii) Are there other cues to mark temporality besides the grammatical tense? iii) Where do the marking tense-aspect appear in the narrative? iv) What is the pattern between the marking tense-aspect emerging among clauses?

In this presentation, I will report the results of a cross-sectional study of learners Spanish in a tutored context and one group of native Spanish Speakers. The first findings of this research show referential movement linking the preceding and following utterances marking tense-aspect, and reflect processing components of language production.

PT and intercomprehension: on morphological case, processability, and meta-linguistic knowledge
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Intercomprehension (IC) designates a modality of communication in which interlocutors speak their own language and understand that of the others (Doyé 2005; Börestam 2015; Berthele 2016). IC has been mainly applied to L1 speakers of related languages (especially Romance and Germanic), and is usually concerned with receptive skills, while its potential for L3 production has been somewhat neglected.

In contrast to these tendencies, the present paper investigates Slavic IC among learners of L2 Russian, considered here as the basis for the development of language skills in L3 Polish. Indeed, Russian and Polish share a significant amount of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

While stages may not be skipped in Processability Theory (PT; Pienemann 1998), it is not clear whether this tenet also applies when learners with practical and meta-linguistic knowledge of an L2 approach a closely related L3. This paper therefore investigates whether or not L2 learners may exploit the similarity between the L2 and L3 as well as their meta-linguistic knowledge in order to skip stages in the L3.
10 L1 Italian learners of L2 Russian took part in a language game based on the “animal party” task (Bettoni & Di Biase 2011; Di Biase et al. 2015; Artoni & Magnani 2015) aimed to elicit SO and OS structures in L3 Polish. Students had never studied the L3 before, but took a course in comparative Slavic grammar which provided them with an introduction to Polish grammar and basic lexical items, including those which were used in the language game.

Learners indeed proved able to access their meta-linguistic knowledge in order to perform the test with relative success. The paper discusses whether or not the context of the experiment may be considered as a proper instance of acquisition, and consequently if its results are part of the scope of PT.

References
Börestam, Ulla. 2015. Excuse me, but can you tell me where the Nordic House is located? Linguistic strategies in inter-Nordic communication in Iceland illustrated through participant observation. Linguistics 53(2).

The Relationship between Spoken and Written L2 Production
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This study is a PhD project supervised by Prof. Pienemann. Spoken and written production are the productive skills in second language acquisition. While there have been studies comparing second language (L2) learners’ productive and receptive vocabulary (e.g. De La Fuente, 2002; Webb 2008), the relationship between spoken and written L2 production still remains unclear.

Speaking and writing involve different cognitive processes. Research has shown that speech production needs to incorporate the following stages: conceptual, syntactic, lexical, phonological and phonetic (Field, 2004). Writing, on the other hand, is governed by other processes. Hayes and Flowers (1980) point out that writing evokes the writer’s long-term memory followed by planning, translation and revising.

A comparison of the grammatical skills that learners utilise in written and spoken production could help us better understand the relationship between them. The crucial assumption of this research is that language production (performance) is related to grammatical knowledge (competence).

Research questions of this study will be:
1. Which grammatical knowledge do learners access in written and spoken production under different conditions and time constraints?
2. When does the situation arise when learners access the same grammatical knowledge in both kinds of production?
3. Does the L1 play a role in access to grammatical knowledge?

This study will begin with a pilot study including both written and spoken production by L2 English learners. The morpho-syntactic structures will then be compared to see if there are any similarities between the two kinds of production. The actual study will involve automatic language profiling (ALP). Tasks and interviews will be assigned to the informants, who are advanced English learners. They are supposed to elicit morpho-syntactic structures, including those marking developmental stages in Processability Theory.

This study aims to improve ALP, while shedding light on different L1 speakers’ difficulties in L2 acquisition.

Metalinguistic Awareness in Adult L3 Acquisition
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The study tries to examine if PT through DMTH can also account for acquisition of phonology and phonetics. An attempt has been made to look at the initial state of L3 acquisition and the role of existing linguistic systems in the process of acquisition of subsequent languages. Do existing language specific properties of L1 and/or L2 determine subsequent language development? In particular, the study through empirical research examines (a) the effects of previously learned languages such as already acquired meta-linguistic competence and the application of specific learner strategies gained in L1 & L2 acquisition to L3 learning, and (2) verifies whether multilingual speakers of typologically less related languages (for example, L1 Turkmen, L2 Russian and L3 English or L1 Gurunsi/Gur, L2 French and L3 English) tend to resort to L2 or L1 transfer in their L3 speech perception, and the role typological distance or psychotypology conditioning plays in cross-linguistic transfer in the acquisition of a third language.

The findings seem to suggest that adult L3 learners only transfer structures – from L1 or L2 – when they are developmentally ready, lending support to the Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis developed within the framework of PT (Pienemann 1998; Pienemann et al. 2005, 2013). The study shows that the initial L3 metalinguistic awareness of sub-syllabic units is neither determined by the L1 nor by the L2 and that it can be perhaps predicted on the basis of processability.

References


For all intents and purposes:

*The role of phonology in the processability of L2 Spanish prepositions 'por' and 'para'*

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In the present study, we investigated the potential role of phonology on the developmental constraints for transfer of L2 Spanish prepositions within the framework of Processability Theory (PT). Although Bonilla (2012) examined the stages of L2 Spanish syntax and morphology within PT, prior work has not considered a relationship between phonology and PT in the case of Spanish prepositions, which have been shown to be especially difficult to acquire for L2 learners (Lam, 2009). Specifically, the Spanish prepositions 'por' and 'para' challenge learners perhaps due to the pedagogical tendency in U.S. educational settings to present them in opposition (Pinto & Rex, 2006).

We hypothesized that if phonology affects processing principles, then second-semester L2 Spanish learners would produce 'por' as the default in contexts where the preposition “for” would be preferred in English due to phonological similarity. Participants were 15 beginning L2 Spanish learners with no prior explicit instruction on these prepositions. The three measures included a pre-and post-test of written responses in a cloze measure administered two weeks apart and a delayed post-test (five-minute oral interview) administered 14 weeks later. After 16 weeks including explicit instruction and multiple reading, writing, listening, and speaking tasks involving these prepositions, participants’ uses of 'por' and 'para' were analyzed.

Prior to explicit instruction, participants indeed incorrectly preferred 'por' for written items that would take “for” if translated into English, based on likelihood analyses. After explicit instruction and focused input, participants showed gains in accuracy and likelihood to choose
'para' for written and for spoken items that would take “for” in English, indicating that although developmental stages cannot be skipped, L1 phonology may play a role in altering the developmental constraints by delaying the transfer of structures with L1 phonological similarity in the initial stages. This research has implications for language teaching methods and PT.

Transfer and developmental stages in L2 acquisition
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While some second language research focus on the developmental stages in the acquisition process, other focus on the crosslinguistic influence from L1 to L2. These two perspectives give different versions of how the second language acquisition takes place. In Norwegian second language research studies on transfer and crosslinguistic influence has played a pivotal role, and data has been retrieved from the later phases of the learning process (Golden et al. 2017).

In this study, we examine the influence of L1 on the acquisition of adjectival agreement in L2 Norwegian. In Norwegian, adjectives agree with the noun in attributive and in predicative position. We analyze the learners’ oral production of attributive and predicative agreement (PT level 3 and 4), using an elicitation test (from Glahn et al., 2000). Sixteen learners with four different L1s (Albanian, Arabic, Kurdish and Somali) participated in the study. The L1s represent different patterns of adjectival agreement: Albanian and Arabic have the same patterns as Norwegian, Kurdish has not these patterns, while Somali has optional agreement between adjectives and nouns in both positions.

The results show larger differences within the groups than between the groups, and it seems as if the learners could not benefit of having the same grammatical pattern in their L1 when acquiring adjective agreement in L2 Norwegian. We also found larger differences between the participants’ results on the two structures attributive and predicative agreement than between the L1 groups. The differences between L2 learners processing adjectival agreement in attributive and predicative positions seem to depend more on the learner’s different proficiency levels than on grammatical structures in the learner’s L1.

References

Looking at the DMTH: Cross-linguistic influence in Chinese-English bilinguals
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This paper looks at how the Processability-based Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis (DMTH), might illuminate cross-linguistic influence (CLI) processing. Pienemann et al. (2005) hold that one can only transfer what can be processed thus offering a processing perspective on transfer. Transfer research has mostly looked at the L1-L2 direction, but the current investigation focuses on the opposite direction, i.e., the second language (L2) affecting the use of the first language (L1). It echoes Cook’s (2003) multi-competence theory which
claims a bilingual’s L1 is not the same as that of a monolingual due to possible changes induced by L2 learning. This study looks at the role of the DMTH by focusing on bilingual speakers’ realisation of Subject in their L1. Chinese and English exhibit substantial typological contrasts: Chinese allows both overt and null arguments, whereas subjects are obligatorily expressed in English (Huang, 1984). It is hypothesized that regularly using English L2 may induce convergence towards English and so increase the rate of overt subjects in Chinese L1. To test this hypothesis, twenty Chinese learners of English L2 (interpreting trainees) were divided according to their L2 proficiency into an advanced-level group (n=10) and an intermediate-level group (n=10). A control group of monolingual Chinese speakers (n=5) was also recruited. All participants performed online speech production tasks in Chinese. Statistical analyses show bilinguals produced a higher rate of overt subjects overall (61.24%) than that of the control group (50.35%), with the advanced group peaking at 65.95% and the intermediate group at 56.53%. Findings offer empirical evidence in support of the DMTH in so far as the more experienced group appear to have modified their processing mechanism for their L1. The mechanism seems to accommodate both languages: more advanced learners exhibit greater convergence between the two languages.

Dynamic variation and processability: A study of L2 English
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There is on-going debate about how individual learners vary within second language (L2) development. Proponents of Dynamic Systems Theory (Lowie & Verspoor 2015) claim that language development is a dynamic process in which free variation drives change. In contrast, proponents of Processability Theory (PT; Pienemann 1998, 2015; Lenzing 2015) contend that that language is a dynamic, bidimensional system in which learners follow a common developmental trajectory but vary in distinct, quite predictable paths. Since limited PT-based research on variation has been conducted, the presentation aims to examine PT’s proposal that learners vary systematically in processing. The presentation outlines two approaches to this aim. The first is the variational options hypothesis that individual learners vary systematically due to an interaction between their timing of syntactic and morphological emergence and choice of three options - omission, violation and avoidance (Pienemann 1998, 2015). The second is the developmental style hypothesis which predicts that individual learners vary systematically due to an interaction between their timing of syntactic emergence and timing of morphological emergence (Author in preparation). The presentation describes a one-year longitudinal study on adolescent L2 acquisition of English in Australia, which collected oral data from four learners via communicative tasks and analysed them in terms of the proportions of options and emergence. The results of the variational options hypothesis showed that learners engaged differently in their timing of syntax and morphology and choice of selected options, but that the patterns for the timing of syntax were the reverse of those for morphology. The results of the developmental style hypothesis help explain these patterns for timing by showing that the learners varied in whether they were more oriented towards syntactic or morphological development. I conclude that these PT-based hypotheses offer ways of pin-pointing the stable dynamics of variation within developmental trajectories.

References
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This paper engages with a project focusing on the cognitive processes underlying turn-taking in L2 learners in communicative interaction. Face-to-face communicative interaction is generally regarded as “the core use of language” (Holler et al. 2016: 2), characterised by a fine-tuned coordination between speaking and listening and a rapid exchange of turns between interlocutors in conversation (e.g., Riest et al. 2015). The ability to take turns on time poses a huge cognitive demand on the interactants in a conversation and seems to be based on universal principles (e.g., Stievers et al. 2009). Research findings further indicate that native speakers draw on predictive processes in communicative interactions which surfaces in relatively short gaps between turns (e.g., Levinson & Torreira 2016).

So how do L2 learners cope with the cognitive challenge of timing in turn-taking? This project attempts to expand the work on Processability Theory (PT) on L2 production (e.g., Pienemann 1998, Pienemann et al. 2005) and the relation between L2 production and comprehension (Lenzing 2017; in press) by engaging with the underlying processes in L2 production and comprehension at the level of communicative interaction. It investigates 1) at what stage of acquisition L2 learners’ predictive skills emerge, 2) if and how they relate to PTs processing procedures and 3) how these skills develop in the learners’ acquisition process.

In this paper, I present theoretical and methodological considerations on this issue as well as first results of a pilot study focusing on similarities and differences between native speakers and L2 learners in timing in turn-taking. This involves the analysis of video-data of eight L2 learners and six native speakers in communicative interactions. The focus of analysis is on the response latencies in turn-taking and the distribution of turn-transitions in L2 speakers as compared to native speakers.

References


**Why so late? Higher-stage yes/no questions in Japanese L2**

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This cross-sectional study investigates the acquisition of yes/no questions in Japanese L2 based on the Prominence Hypothesis (PH, Bettoni & Di Biase 2015) within Processability Theory (PT, Pienemann, et. al. 2005). Speech data was collected from 20 beginner to super-advanced levels university student in Australia. Naturalistic conversation and a “spot-the-differences task” were used to elicit production. Learners produced a total of 267 yes/no questions. Analysis indicates that the acquisition of yes/no questions in Japanese L2 followed the developmental stages defined by the PH. However, rather than ‘prosody only’, hypothesised as the first L2 question construction after the single word stage, learners added a default sentence-final question particle to indicate the interrogative mood. Unlike acquisition of yes/no questions in English L2, where the learners reached the highest stage, namely noncanonical word order, relatively quickly (Di Biase, Kawaguchi & Yamaguchi 2015), only one ‘super-advanced level’ learner used noncanonical constructions in this study. Two questions arise from these results: 1) why was the acquisition of noncanonical questions in Japanese so late? and; 2) what is the difference in non-canonical yes/no questions between English and Japanese? One stark difference is that English requires noncanonical word order structures to form grammatical yes/no questions. By contrast, Japanese has no structural requirement to use noncanonical word order to form grammatical yes/no questions. However, noncanonical word order is needed when special pragmatic reasons are involved, such as in questions focusing specific constituents or when topicalization is involved. Results indicate, then, that noncanonical word order is less frequent in Japanese L2 because it is pragmatically rather than structurally motivated. Additionally, these findings turn out to be important not only theoretically but also pedagogically for Japanese L2. Finally, this study provides empirical evidence from a head-last, SOV language, to further support the PH and PT’s typological plausibility.

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**Case marking by Dutch- and English-speaking learners of Hindi**

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This paper presents the first results of a longitudinal study on the acquisition of case in Hindi as a foreign language (HFL) by native speakers of Dutch and English. These results will be
interpreted within the framework of Processability Theory (PT)\(^1\), hereby testing its claim of typological plausibility\(^2\).

Previous studies on L2 German\(^3\), L2 Russian\(^4\) and L2 Serbian\(^5\) observed developmental stages within the acquisition of the case system, and examined the developing relationship between word order and grammatical functions (i.e., c-to-f mapping). Other studies have included semantic roles (i.e., a-to-f mapping) and semantic information (e.g., animacy) to explain subject case marking in L2 Icelandic\(^6\) and differential object marking in L2 Spanish\(^7\).

The present study on HFL continues to investigate the syntactic/semantic forces behind the development of ergative marking and differential object marking. Whereas ergative case marking of the subject/agent depends on transitivity/perfectivity of the verb, objective case marking of the direct object/patient depends on animacy/specificity. Previous studies on HFL show these factors raise difficulties for HFL learners\(^8\)\(^9\).

Through a qualitative longitudinal study with eight Dutch-speaking and eight English-speaking HFL learners, we aim to answer the following research questions: Which case markers are the first to emerge? Is this emergence guided by semantic or syntactic aspects or do both of them work in parallel? What are the implications of the findings on HFL on PT?

This paper discusses the results of the first two data collection points (of the six points that will be organized). Preliminary analyses emphasize the importance of syntax, given that early HFL data show a rigid use of SOV word order and a gradual use of postpositions expressing location, direction and possession. The indirect object marker is consistently the first case marker to emerge, while the subject and direct object marker, initially, remain largely absent.

References


The acquisition of null subjects in Russian as a second language

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In this paper I will propose to investigate as interrelated the development of two phenomena that are usually studied in isolation within PT, namely null subjects (NSs) and subordination. In the study of the so-called 'pro-drop languages', the point of emergence of NSs in the L2 is a controversial matter. On the one hand, a convincing body of research on a variety of pro-drop languages has shown that learners tend to go a long way in overextending overt pronominal subjects in the L2, even at exceptionally high levels of proficiency (cfr. Tsimpli & Sorace 2006 on Greek L2; Belletti, Bennati & Sorace on Italian L2). On the other hand, within PT, studies on Italian L2 have reported an abundant use of NSs quite early in interlanguage, already at the category procedure stage (cfr. Bettoni & Di Biase 2011; Di Biase & Bettoni 2015).

In this work I will look at the development of third person NSs in Russian L2, a ‘partial pro-drop language’ (Pearlmutter & Moore 2002; Madariaga 2018). Building up on Sorace’s (2006) idea for Italian, I assume that in Russian NSs are endowed with a [-topic shift] feature which is exchanged with the discourse topic, whereas overt pronominal subjects entail [+topic shift]. In particular, I will point out that, in order to recover the discourse topic, the speaker (and, naturally enough, the learner) needs to cross the sentence boundaries, because the topic is found either in the matrix clause, or in the previous sentence, or else in the wider discourse. Thus, I will argue that, in order to use NSs appropriately, learners need to compute information exchange interclausally, that is, at the S-bar procedure, the stage that in PT accounts for feature unification in subordination.

Results of a cross-sectional study of 10 learners of Russian L2 show that (i) learners who have acquired category and phrasal morphology use NSs randomly only in coordinate clauses, and (ii) learners who have reached the S-procedure stage keep using overt pronominal subjects tout court, despite showing evidence of functional assignment by means other than position. Notably, all learners fail to produce structures that require unification between the main and the subordinate clause. This in turn opens up the possibility of looking at the pragmatically appropriate use of NSs and the accurate use of subordinate clauses as structures that require an equally demanding processing cost in the PT hierarchy.

References


For twenty-five years, interlanguage researchers have accepted an early period of topic prominence in the interlanguage based on a native speaker of Hmong learning English (Huebner 1983). This is a counter-example to the claims of Processability Theory which predicts a Stage One of SVO (Pienmann 1998). Huebner’s finding of early Topic Prominence lead to a series of other studies which investigated an early topic prominence (Fuller, J. & Gundel, 1987; Jin, 1994).

Fellbaum Korpi (2006) argued that the learner’s early interlanguage showed evidence of subject and proposed an alternative analysis that the learner’s interlanguage must be re-classified as both subject and topic prominent.

This paper investigates the evidence of topic markers proposed by Huebner arguing these are due to the grammatical relations of subject. This raises the question of whether the interlanguage had other evidence of topics in a level of information structure at the syntax/semantic interface. The results support the predictions of Processability Theory with SOV as Stage I.

The paper closes with a brief discussion of the need to incorporate awareness of serial verbs and differences in their grammatical relations for the teaching of English and other languages which do not have serial verbs, and to native speakers of languages such as Hmong, Chinese and Thai. The verb structures are so different from English that Huebner abandoned his initial intention of examining the developing tense-aspect system of the interlanguage since it seemed to change less rapidly than other parts of the grammar. Instead he studied the shift “from topic-comment-like structures to more “subject-predicate-like structures” (p.53). The issues concerning verb serialization and their grammatical versus ‘cognitive’ packaging offered by Pawley (1980, 1987), Foley (1985), Givon (1991), Jarkey (2015) offer a new interpretation to the perception that Huebner gave regarding the shift from topic prominent to subject predicate.

References

Phrasal before lexical? Plural marking in EFL learners in Indonesian
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This classroom-based longitudinal study investigates the acquisition of English plural marking in an Indonesian kindergarten (in Bandung, West Java). Fourteen kindergarten children, aged 4 to 6 followed a PT-based developmentally moderated focus-on-form (DM FonF) program on the line of Di Biase, (2008) with pre-test, one semester instruction, post-test and delayed post-test design. Results were compared with Dao’s cross-sectional study (2007) involving 36 Vietnamese secondary school students aged 13-18, in Ho Chi Minh City. Our study found that the Indonesian children, in line with all other PT studies since Pienemann (1998), acquire lexical plural before plural agreement in phrasal constructions (e.g., Sakai 2008, Yamaguchi 2013). By contrast, Dao’s (2007) study concluded that Vietnamese learners acquired phrasal plural marking in contexts with definite quantifiers before acquiring lexical plural. Charters, et.al. (2011) claim that lexical plural is acquired later than phrasal in Vietnamese learners due to some transfer effect since Vietnamese is a classifier language where plural number of a NP can only be realised in constructions with a quantifier followed by a classifier attached to the noun. Yet, both Indonesian and Vietnamese are classifier languages (Dryer and Haspelmath, 2013). Why do these two studies differ in their acquisitional sequence? Crucially, such conflicting results may occur because Dao shows cross-sectional results while our study is longitudinal. However, looking at our delayed post-test cross-sectionally it would appear that some children did acquire phrasal but not lexical plural marking. Yet, this does not reflect their longitudinal developmental sequence. Thus looking at cross-sectional results one may get a skewed picture leading to misinterpretation of truly acquisitional patterns. Dao’s (2007) cross-sectional study may well reflect a particular moment in development rather than a developmental sequence. Results from this study would suggest that PT’s original developmental sequence can be profitably applied in L2 classrooms.

References
Applying Processability Theory to English Second Language Acquisition: A Study from Two Primary Schools in Norway

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In my study, Norwegian EFL learners are assessed with the use of analytical tools presented by PT (Pienemann, 1998), in order to investigate whether they follow developmental and predictable stages of L2 progress within the PT framework. Furthermore, the study seeks to investigate whether the L2 learners move from emergence (of a form) to its mastery in producing the L2 – from partial comprehension to full comprehension, that is, towards automatized language use (Glahn, E., Häkansson, G., Hammarberg, B., Holmen, A., Hvenekilde, A. & Lund, K., 2001). Linguistic structures would be useful in order to determine the highest level of stage 6 in the PT hierarchy (Maier, Neubauer, Ponto, Couve de Murville and Kersten, 2016). This suggestion is supported by Bettoni and Di Biase (2015), who direct attention to the necessity for testing complex structures, such as subordinate clauses, in order to determine the highest language level in PT.

The participants in the study were 6th and 7th grade learners, and the data was collected with the use of two language tests: the EI test and the ON test (Ellis, 2009). Four language structures have been elicited in order to assess L2 development through the stages as predicted by PT (Pienemann, 1998). The language structures are: plural-s and past-ed, 3rd sg-s, and cancel inversion, which represent stages 2, 5 and 6, respectively, in the PT hierarchy of language acquisition. Examples from the findings will be presented.

It could also be debated whether the learners in the present study should have been younger with regard to their levels of English L2 proficiency. Based on the experiences of the present study, further EFL research among the youngest primary school learners with a focus on acquisition of more complex language structures, would be of interest.

References
Verb movement in second language acquisition
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All Germanic languages, except English, have an active rule of verb movement, causing the personalised verb to always be in the second place in main clauses. It is therefore not surprising that it may take many students, who are learning Icelandic as a second language, some time to start using this structure correctly. In my career of teaching Danish to Icelandic students, which has spanned decades and many different levels, I have noticed that despite being used to this verb movement in their native language, they struggle with using it in the target language. In this paper I will use Processability Theory to analyse the data I have collected throughout the years, both from Icelandic students learning Danish as well as foreign students learning Icelandic. I will discuss when and how students acquire this verb movement and which difficulties they face. Furthermore, I will speculate whether and how their native language plays a part in the process.

PT stages and the CEFR levels in English L2 syntax
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In recent foreign language classrooms, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001) has been often used as a reference tool for learner language proficiency. However, more empirical research on the CEFR levels with L2 learner data is needed in order to analyze how learners at each level actually perform in communicative situations (e.g., Hulstijn, 2007; Wisniewski, 2017). In particular, few studies have examined how the learners’ CEFR levels are related to their developmental stages hypothesized in second language acquisition (SLA) theories (e.g., Granfeldt & Ågren, 2013; Hagenfeld, 2017). The aim of the current study is to investigate L2 learners’ performances in English using the CEFR as well as a theory of SLA, namely Processability Theory (PT; Pienemann, 1998, 2005; Bettoni & Di Biase, 2015). PT assumes the existence of a universal hierarchy of L2 development and has been tested in much recent SLA research (e.g., Bettoni & Di Biase, 2015; Keßler, Lenzing, & Liebner, 2016). This paper presents part of the results of a learner corpus study of English oral and written production by a large number of Japanese native speakers. Each participant was asked to perform two tasks, namely spoken and written narratives, using a picture book titled "Frog, where are you? "(Mayer, 1969) containing 24 wordless pictures. For the analyses in the current study, the data from 80 learners, focusing on audio-recorded and transcribed spoken narratives, was used. The acquisition of English syntactic structures found in Japanese
learners’ speaking was examined based on PT as well as on the CEFR. Results show that the Japanese learners at the same CEFR levels are not necessarily at the same PT stages for the acquisition of English syntax. However, there seems to be an interconnection between the CEFR levels and PT stages as found in previous studies (e.g., Granfeldt & Ågren, 2013; Hagenfeld, 2017).

References


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Learnability and Teachability in Sweden and Vietnam
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On the basis of the Teachability Hypothesis (Pienemann, 1984, 1987, 1989) this paper aims to demonstrate some constraints on the teachability of language when the learners are not ready focusing on the acquisition of subject-verb agreement in two populations of primary school children learning English L2 with quite different methodology in two different countries (Vietnam and Sweden) and with first languages of different typological distance from English (Son, 2018). The teachability hypothesis predicts that “stages of acquisition cannot be skipped through formal instruction” (Pienemann, 1998: 13) and that “instruction will be beneficial if it focuses on structures from the next stage” (Pienemann, 1998: 250). Results show that both groups of learners often confused plural ‘s’ and 3 Sg-s in their writing assessment, and some of them did not acquire 3Sg-s in their spoken performance even though there was a great amount of explicit teaching of this structure. Consider also the typological distance (Pienemann, Di Biase, Kawaguchi and Håkanson 2005) between the L1 of the learners: Vietnamese is an
isolating language with no inflectional morphology while Swedish is closer to English (both are Germanic languages and have some inflectional morphology). Implicational scaling reveals that learners who acquired 3sg subjectverb agreement (interphrasal stage) could also produce structures from the lower ones. My data shows the plausibility of Pienemann's Teachability Hypothesis regardless of whether explicit or implicit teaching methods are used, regardless of typological distance and, less crucially, regardless of geography. What is crucial in syllabus design is a proper consideration of learnability of the structure, i.e., the teacher should know where the learners are at in their development.

References


Teachable and learnable? Grammatical sequencing in a L2 Chinese textbook
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SLA theory based textbook evaluation is rather rare to date. However, it has a significant practical value because textbooks are among the main sources of linguistic and cultural input for learners, particularly those learners in the foreign language context (e.g., learning Chinese in Australia). A well-designed textbook, one that is based on SLA theories and empirical findings, would contribute to teaching efficiency and maximum learning outcome.

My work-in-progress study applies PT to the analysis of a popular Chinese language textbook titled The New Practical Chinese Reader (Liu, 2015). I will focus on the issue of teachability and learnability (Pienemann, 1984; 1998) by examining the teaching objectives of L2 Chinese grammar as they are sequenced in the book against the PT processability hierarchy to see whether they are compatible with each other and whether there are instances of incongruity that may render certain L2 Chinese sentence structures potentially unlearnable at a particular point. I will also interview the editor and his associates for the theoretical approach adopted and practical consideration they had during the compilation of the book. One or two assessments will be carried out to examine the learning outcome, particularly if learnability is found to be an issue in the grammatical sequencing.

In this presentation, I will report on the results of the grammatical sequencing analysis, which covers the ‘grammar section’ and the focal texts of each of the 12 units. I may also report on the interview with the editor and his associates, and / or the preliminary test results.

References