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SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 29

Series Editor: David Singleton, *Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland*

Morphosyntactic Issues in Second Language Acquisition

Edited by

Danuta Gabryś-Barker

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Contributors

Esra Altunkol is a reader and PhD candidate at the ELT Department of Cukurova University, Turkey. Her research interests include adult SLA from the generative perspective and ELT methodology.

Marcus Callies is an assistant professor in English Linguistics at the University of Marburg, Germany. His research interests are second language research with a focus on discourse-functional and pragmatic aspects of learner language, contrastive linguistics, corpus linguistics and learner corpus research.

Cem Can is an assistant professor at the ELT Department of Cukurova University, Turkey. His research interests include adult SLA from a generative perspective, corpus linguistics and ELT.

Anna Ewert is an assistant professor in the School of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland. Her current research interests include bilingualism, multicompetence development and SLA. She has published on morphosyntax and pragmatic aspects of L2 users' L1 and on L2 acquisition in childhood.

Danuta Gabryś-Barker works as an associate professor at the Institute of English, University of Silesia, Poland. Her major academic interests lie in lexical multilinguality, psycholinguistics and language processing. She has published a book on the multilingual mental lexicon and papers on various aspects of SLA and EFL teacher training.

Irini Kassotaki, PhD teaches Modern Greek to L2 students of the University of Crete (Iraklio) and of IDEKE (Institute for Continuing Adult Education). She is a teaching fellow at the TEI (Technological Education Institute) of Crete. Her research areas are second language acquisition, learning and teaching, sentence comprehension and morphosyntax.

Abdurrahman Kilimci is an assistant professor at the ELT Department of Cukurova University, Turkey. His research interests include corpus linguistics, ELT and educational technology.

Agnieszka Król-Markefka works as a teaching assistant in the Institute of English Philology at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

Currently, her research focuses on the teaching of grammar and in particular on the applications of cognitive linguistics to ELT methodology.

Andrzej Łyda is an associate professor at the Institute of English, University of Silesia, Poland. His research interests include interactional linguistics, spoken discourse analysis and translation and interpreting. His recent publications include a book on *Concessive Relation in Spoken Discourse: A Study into Academic Discourse Spoken English*.

Anna Mystkowska-Wiertelak is a teacher and teacher trainer working at the English Department of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Her main interests comprise teacher education and foreign language instruction.

Terence Odlin teaches linguistics at Ohio State University. He is the author of a book and several papers about crosslinguistic influence and a book about pedagogical grammar.

Michał B. Paradowski received his PhD in linguistics from the Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw, where he defended his dissertation on the language interface model of pedagogical grammar, and is currently a Reader at the UW Institute of Applied Linguistics. His interests include issues relating to SLA research, the availability of UG, the effects of formal instruction and ELT pedagogy in general; his second concentration is syntax, especially the relations between Chomsky's Minimalist Program, linguistic development and language contact phenomena.

Mirosław Pawlak holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. He is currently an associate professor at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań and a professor in Higher Vocational College, Konin, Poland. His research interests include form-focused instruction, classroom interaction, learner autonomy, communication strategies, pronunciation instruction and pedagogic tasks.

Barbara Sadowsnik works as a professor in the Institute of German Philology of and director of the Applied Linguistics Section of the Institute at Marie Curie University in Lublin, Poland. Her main research interests comprise psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic aspects of second language acquisition and foreign language learning.

Mike Sharwood-Smith is Professor of Languages at Harriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland and Editor of the journal, *Second Language Research*. His research interests centre around conscious and subconscious processes in second language acquisition and performance and he is developing a new explanatory framework called MOGUL together with his current co-author John Truscott.

Konrad Szcześniak is an assistant professor at the Institute of English, University of Silesia, Poland. His research focuses on the syntax–semantics interface and he is the author of a Portuguese language coursebook.

John Truscott is Associate Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. His primary research interest is in developing a processing-based framework for understanding language development and use, a joint project with Mike Sharwood-Smith. His other major line of research involves the effectiveness of grammar instruction and correction for second language learning.

Rüdiger Zimmermann works at the University of Marburg, Germany as a Professor and Chair of English Linguistics. He is renowned as a scholar for his projects in the area of lexical strategies and one of the first to use introspective method in SLA research. His major academic research is within oral and written text production in L2, interlanguage word order and also intercultural pragmatics and metaphors.

Preface

Many recent publications have focused on problems operating at the lexical level in second language acquisition (SLA), which itself was the consequence of an overwhelming emphasis on grammar research in the past and a corresponding neglect of vocabulary. It seems however that the whole movement of language awareness in the area of applied linguistics and language pedagogy has revived an interest in grammatical issues in language acquisition and learning. Also, SLA research has shown that lexical development does not occur on its own but interacts and overlaps with the morphosyntactic development of a learner. This has entailed a growing need for more research in this area of language acquisition.

The present volume aims to make a serious contribution to this developing field. It consists of chapters on various issues relating to the morphosyntactic development of foreign language learners from different L1 backgrounds, in many cases involving languages which are typologically distant from English, such as Polish, Greek and Turkish. In addition, it highlights areas which one might expect to be especially transfer-prone not only at the level of interlingual transfer but also at the intralingual level.

The chapters in the first part of the volume 'Studies on ESL/EFL Morphosyntactic Development' report on empirical studies on word morphology and sentence patterns, and also look at the interface of lexis and grammar in the discourse and syntactic processing of foreign language learners. Odlin's chapter is an overview of theories and research on focus constructions in L2 acquisition from a pragmatic and psycholinguistic perspective. It also discusses the crosslinguistic influences observed in focus constructions, as produced in written texts. A corpus-based study presented by Callies also looks at the written production of a bilingual and compares it with native speakers' written discourse in terms of clause syntactic operations and, more precisely, *tough-* constructions (*to-* constructions with such words as *difficult*, *easy*, *hard* and *impossible*). He observes that these constructions are under-used in non-native productions of advanced L2 users as they are typologically marked and functionally and semantically complex. Another chapter that investigates language transfer is Ewert's empirical study of the influence of intensive L2 classroom

instruction on the development of L1, which the data demonstrates is facilitative as it contributes visibly to the development of language awareness. The data show different syntactic preferences in the case of bilingual and monolingual learners as the result of developmental change and language transfer. Two chapters discuss language (syntactic) performance from a process-oriented perspective, Sharwood-Smith and Truscott's, and Gabryś-Barker's. Sharwood-Smith and Truscott present MOGUL (The Modular Growth and Use of Language) framework and analyse crosslinguistic influences in the acquisition of the past tense in English. Gabryś-Barker's case study of a multilingual language user also looks at crosslinguistic influences between the L1 (Polish), L2 (English) and L3 (Italian) of the learner, but focuses mostly on the translation strategies used at different stages of on-line text processing, demonstrating the interface between lexical and syntactic processing in a think-aloud translation task.

Kassotaki's chapter reports on the off-line experiment carried out in a group of German and Russian learners of Greek as their L2 to observe the influence or otherwise of L1 on L2 comprehension in relation to reflexive verbs. These are represented morphologically either as a suffix (*-sia* in Russian) or as a free standing morpheme (*sich* in German). Another presentation that looks at morphology as an important aspect of L2 grammatical development is Szcześniak's study of the reflexive particle in Slavic languages in the case of unaccusative verbs, together with his examination of MDH (Markedness Differential Hypothesis) and its insufficiency in explaining learning difficulties in this very area of grammar. The study conducted by Can, Kilimci and Altunkol seeks to investigate L2 acquisition of syntactic movement in English noun clauses by a group of Turkish adult L2 learners. The tests performed by non-native speakers and the language corpora of native speakers demonstrate that preference for the use of nouns in object position is not characteristic of L2 learners but also of native speakers of English.

A different context of L2 English use is discussed by Łyda in his chapters on concession, where he looks at areas of language difficulty as evinced in the performance of simultaneous and consecutive conference interpreters and the ways those highly skilled language users encounter problems in on-line processing from L2 into L1. He observes that not only language competence (semantic and syntactic complexity) but also topic-specific knowledge (semantic complexity) contribute to the effectiveness of translation of concession clauses, when interpreters often resort to under-translating or using under-specified connectives. Finally in this section, Zimmermann reports on the problems associated with pragmatic competence in writing in English and looks at the ways English as a Foreign Language (EFL) advanced learners cope with being polite (or rather, as his findings show, impolite) and comments on the

relation between politeness and the knowledge of text schemata and Gricean maxims.

The second part of the book 'Pedagogical Grammar in Promoting the Acquisition of L2 Morphosyntax' elaborates on the role of input, form-focused instruction and the role of context in promoting the acquisition of difficult grammatical features such as the English article system or the -s ending in the third person singular. It also comments more generally on the way empirical findings in the area of morphosyntax can inform the pedagogic grammar to be applied in the formal instruction context of a foreign language classroom. All of the chapters in this part of the volume feed into the ongoing discussion on the need for form-focused instruction as facilitative for L2 grammatical development. Król-Markefka looks at one of the hardest-to-learn linguistic phenomenon, the English article system. She examines the need for explicit teaching, clearly highlighting the conditions under which it can be facilitative (i.e. a certain degree of automatised syntactic structures and metacognitive awareness accompanied by practice). Pawlak also focuses on one of the most pertinent areas of difficulty in EFL acquisition, that of the third person singular -s ending and points to the need for form-focused instruction. However, he argues for a more implicit instructional technique: a combination of output enhancement and recasting as corrective feedback in meaning-focused tasks, which seem to facilitate correct -s ending production in spontaneous communicative tasks.

A slightly different position is taken by Sadownik, who discusses issues associated with the acquisition of selected areas of German grammar by Polish learners, namely negation and word order in verb placement in main and subordinate clauses. In her concluding section, Sadownik states that the pace of L2 acquisition is different in L1 (formal instruction) and L2 settings (naturalistic conditions) whereas in terms of route it is not significantly different. Classroom instruction per se cannot effect it, as it is more determined by the learner's developmental readiness to acquire it. Paradowski, in his search for the answer to the question how important grammar instruction is for the development of grammatical competence in an EFL learner, works within the framework of the Cognitive Language Interface Method (coined by Paradowski and based on Gozdawa-Golebiowski's 2003 pedagogical grammar), which assumes the importance of L1 awareness and metalinguistic reflection in learners. In her discussion of 'grammaring' in the classroom and its role in grammar acquisition, Wiertelak-Mystkowska offers a different perspective and focuses on the affective dimension of grammar learning. Specifically, she discusses the roles of learners' beliefs and expectations as valid variables in grammar development. In her view they are the variables which should contribute to more effective classroom instructional practices used by teachers. The survey study carried out showed a growing interest in what

the author calls 'non-transmissive teaching styles', and the need for 'grammaring' (uncovering grammar) in the Foreign Language (FL) classroom.

The volume therefore presents various contexts for L2/Ln acquisition/learning/use. It references language users/learners with different language backgrounds. It describes different aspects of morphosyntax investigated empirically but is also firmly grounded in theoretical analyses. Moreover, the chapters included in this volume demonstrate the variety of research methods currently being used in SLA research – from more traditional experimental designs and corpus-based studies to fairly new introspective ones describing on-line processing of language by multilingual language users.

This volume is intended to reach both linguists – mainly in its discussion of morphosyntactic issues – and applied linguists insofar as it discusses the empirical data relevant to the morphosyntactic development of FL learners/users. It also aims to assist practising foreign language instructors by emphasising, as it does, the role of pedagogical grammar in FL learning, with special focus on language input both in terms of content (from a cognitive perspective) and form (form-focused instruction). The book should also be of interest to those studying second language acquisition processes at the postgraduate level as it reviews more generally the relevant theoretical issues, providing background to the empirical studies conducted by the contributing authors. I trust that the variety in subject focus, types of studies and language configurations discussed will make the material presented in this volume challenging and valuable.

Danuta Gabryś-Barker

Part 1

***Studies on ESL/EFL Morphosyntactic
Development***