Developmental Perspectives on Transfer

Susan Sayehli, Humanities Lab, Lund University, Sweden
susan.sayehli@ling.lu.se

Research Questions

- How do learner-general developmental stages interact with a language-specific factor, transfer, in L3 acquisition?
- What is the preferred source language of transfer in an L3 acquisition scenario; L1 or L2?
- How does spontaneous speech data relate to elicited imitation data?

Conclusion

- L1 or L2 transfer did not modify the developmental stages for German L3 word order acquisition in neither spontaneous nor imitated production
- Evidence that SXV > Tp and *XSV > XVS
- Elicited imitation data underestimated the learner’s proficiency as related to spontaneous data: Learners imitate structures that they cannot yet produce but are on the verge of acquiring

Method

Participants

Task 1: Elicited Imitation

Participants listened to a professional recorded sentence.

1. SVX: Canonical word order
   - Lena kann treffen Mama morgen
   - Lena can meet mom tomorrow

2. *XSV: Topicalized position (T⁰)
   - *Morgen Lena kann treffen Mama
   - Tomorrow Lena can meet mom

3. XVS: Subject-verb inversion
   - Morgen kann Lena treffen Mama.
   - Tomorrow can meet mom Lena.

Elicited Imitation Rationale

- Sentences beyond certain lengths cannot be parroted from short-term memory and are reconstructed
- Reconstruction reflects speaker’s syntactic preferences and is shaped by previously acquired knowledge
- Analysis: Comparison of success with which different sentence types are repeated

Task 2: Picture-based story telling

Task 3: Unstructured Interview

What is your favorite book? What is it about?

References

- L2 transfer

Predictions

1. If initial L1 transfer then learners should correctly imitate and produce more SXV and XSV sentences, because L1 displays SXV word order
2. If initial L2 transfer then beginners should imitate and produce SXV and XVS equally well, because both structures are common in their L2

Results

Elicited Imitation Results (EI)

L1 Transfer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L2 Transfer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spontaneous Speech Results (SS)

Storytelling and Interview in German L3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>UtI</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>XVS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Storytelling in English L2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>UtI</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>Tp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications of Scalp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>SVX</th>
<th>XSV</th>
<th>XVS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Structure is the right of the selected line were produced by the learner in the spontaneous speech tasks. Numbers indicate the percentage of correct repetition in the 30 trials. Notes: Structure is the right of the selected line were produced by the learner in the spontaneous speech tasks. Numbers indicate the percentage of correct repetition in the 30 trials.

Languages

- Swedish L1, English L2 and German L3

Similarities and Differences

- 1: SVX 2: XSV 3: XVS

Swedish + - +

English + + -

German + - +