

A fresh look at how young children encode new referents

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Abstract

This paper examines the evidence used to support the claim that children initially do not encode new referents like adults do (e.g. Maratsos 1974; Warden 1976; Emslie and Stevenson 1981; Hickmann et al. 1996). It argues that a better understanding of the information structure of the target language forces a reinterpretation of previous experimental results in the sense that children comply with the adult requirements more than has been assumed. The discussion is based on a detailed examination of how new information is encoded in spoken French.

1 Introduction

Natural languages resort to two means of indicating the newness of DP referents: structural position and the use of DP-internal markings (e.g. definiteness distinctions on the determiner). A number of experimental studies in first language acquisition (e.g. Maratsos 1974; Warden 1976; Emslie and Stevenson 1981) have investigated the latter type of marking, coming to the conclusion that children initially differ from adults in their encoding of new referents. Until the age of 4 (according to Maratsos 1974) or 9 (according to Warden 1976), children have been found to use predominantly definites to introduce new referents, which was assumed to be ruled out in the target language. However, as emphasised by Emslie and Stevenson (1981), definites are in some cases licensed in the adult grammar when the referent is new, and an adequate study of the acquisition of newness markings should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the possibilities offered by the adult grammar.

The present paper concentrates on the results discussed in Hickmann et al. (1996) and Hickmann and Hendriks (1999), two reports on a study focussing on both definiteness distinctions and structural position. I argue that when the full picture of how new referents are encoded in the adult language is taken into account, children's behaviour turns out to be much more target-like than has been assumed in the literature. The discussion here is centered on spoken French for the high transparency of its syntax to the information structure of utterances (as shown in De Cat 2002). Supporting evidence is provided from a longitudinal study of the spontaneous production of four children acquiring French as their mother tongue.

2 New information in adult spoken French

2.1 Definiteness distinctions as a mark of newness

In spoken French, DP-internal markings of newness consist of definiteness distinctions on the determiner. New referents are typically encoded as indefinites, as illustrated in (1). In a context in which no particular nut has been mentioned, (1-a) is felicitous but not (1-b).

- (1) a. J'ai trouvé **une** noix.
I-have found a nut
'I've found a nut.'

- b. J'ai trouvé **la** noix.
 I-have found the nut
 'I've found the nut.'

Not all new referents can be expressed by indefinites, however. There is no absolute correlation between (in)definiteness marking and the information status of discourse referents (see e.g. Lambrecht 1994 for discussion). DPs with a unique reference, for instance, are always definite, even when they are new in the discourse. Typical examples include referents with a unique instantiation in the universe within which the discourse is situated, like the sun in (2).¹

- (2) [**Le/*un**] soleil sèche ses habits.
 the/a sun dries his clothes
 'The sun dries his clothes.'

Uniqueness can also be defined from a given point of view, like that of the person of whom the proposition is predicated. Hence in (3), the referent of the house can be derived straightforwardly from world knowledge: we expect the person in question to have a (single) home.

- (3) Il rentre à [**la/*une**] maison.
 he returns to the/a house
 'He goes back home.'

The reference of 'unique' definites can be defined in relation to the topic of the sentence, by virtue of the fact that topics provide the frame within which the predication is evaluated (as argued in De Cat 2002, in the tradition of Strawson 1964; Reinhart 1981; Erteschik-Shir 1997). In (3), we understand the main topic of the sentence to be the person referred to by the *il* 'he' and the house is assumed to be that of this person. Alternatively, given that reference to speaker and hearer is always available in discourse even in the absence of explicit mention (as argued by Gundel 1975), the reference of *la maison* 'the house' could be defined in relation to one of them. In the mini discourse in (4), the house in question can be understood to be that of person B, if person A knows that Ibrahim is supposed to be staying at B's house.

- (4) A: Où il est, Ibrahim?
 where he is Ibrahim
 'Where's Ibrahim?'
 B: Il est rentré à **la** maison.
 he is returned to the house
 'He's gone back to mine.'

Definites can also be used to encode new referents in the case of associative anaphora (e.g. Charolles 1999; Kleiber 1999). In such cases, a definite DP can be used to introduce a new entity by virtue of the fact that the reference of this "new definite" is recovered from e.g. a part-whole relation with a DP in preceding discourse. In (5), the reference of the definite *les clés* 'the keys' is derived from the reference to the car introduced earlier in the sentence.

- (5) J'ai acheté une nouvelle voiture mais j'ai déjà perdu **les** clés.
 I-have bought a new car but I-have already lost the keys
 'I've bought a new car but I've already lost the keys.'

The notion of associative anaphora can be extended to referents such as *la rivière* 'the river' in a sentence like (6), which can be identified by inference from the context (here: fishing). A similar proposal has been made by Charolles (1990).

- (6) Il pêchait bien tranquillement puis tout à coup il est tombé dans **la** rivière.
 he was-fishing well peacefully then all of a sudden he is fallen in the river

‘He was fishing peacefully and then suddenly he fell in the river.’

The definite indicates to the hearer that the DP referent should be identifiable and induces him/her to make the relevant inferences from the context and his/her knowledge of the world.

From the remarks above, we can conclude that, in spite of a strong correlation between indefiniteness and information newness, the latter does not entail the former automatically. In section 2.2, I argue that there is also no such entailment relation between the postverbal position of discourse referents and information newness (or vice versa).

2.2 Structural position as a mark of newness

Structurally, new referents have to appear in a position allowing a focus interpretation (focus being by definition the new information of the sentence — cf. e.g. Zubizarreta 1998). By default, the focus is on the most embedded element of the VP (Cinque 1993; Reinhart 1996). In right-branching languages like French, VP-internal new referents appear postverbally, as in (7).

- (7) J’aimerais bien [_F une tasse de thé].
I-would-like well a cup of tea
‘I’d like a cup of tea.’

Note however that in French, postverbal DPs are not automatically in focus: right-dislocated elements, for instance, are by definition postfocal. They correspond to the topic of the sentence (cf. Lambrecht 1981; De Cat 2002). In (8), uttered with stress prominence on *thé* ‘tea’, the focus spans either over the object only or over the whole IP (as indicated by the bracketing) depending on the context, but the dislocated element *la patronne* ‘the boss’ is excluded from the focus in all cases.

- (8) [Elle_i voudrait [une tasse de thé]], la patronne_i.
she would-like a cup of tea the boss
‘The boss would like a cup of tea.’

New referents can appear in preverbal positions too, as long as they are in focus. Two types of information structure allow this: *thetic* sentences and sentences with a narrow focus on the subject. Thetic sentences express a state of affairs and are typically uttered out-of-the-blue or after a question like *What happened?*. In such sentences, the focus spans over the whole clause.² The subject position can thus host a new referent, as in (9-a), uttered in a context where the children in question have not yet been mentioned. In this case, the main stress falls on *bain* ‘bath’. Who these children are is determined by the context. It could be the speaker or the hearer’s own children, or for instance the youngest children in a group looked after by the speaker and/or hearer. In (9-b), the reference to the speaker’s brother can be new in the discourse given that there is a narrow focus on the subject (indicated by the adverb *aussi* ‘too’).

- (9) a. Les petits ont déjà pris leur bain.
the little-ones have already taken their bath
‘The little ones have already had their bath.’
b. Mon frère aussi joue du piano.
my brother too plays of-the piano
‘My brother plays the piano too.’

In spoken French, new, non-contrastive referents strongly tend to appear in a presentational construction rather than in the canonical subject position (cf. Côté 1999).

- (10) a. Un gars sonne à la porte. (Written/Standard French)
a guy rings at the door
‘A guy’s ringing the doorbell.’

- b. Il y a un gars qui sonne à la porte. (Spoken French)
 it there has a guy who rings at the door
 ‘There’s a guy ringing the doorbell.’

This is true of definites as well:

- (11) a. #Madame, Gladys dort. (Spoken French)
 Mrs Gladys sleeps
 b. Madame, il y a Gladys qui dort. (Spoken French)
 Mrs it there has Gladys who sleeps
 ‘Miss, Gladys is asleep.’

There is one case in which a new referent can appear outside of a focus position: when the speaker judges that the referent in question is salient enough in the context, it can be encoded directly as a topic — which implies that it will be dislocated in spoken French (De Cat 2002).³ Saliency can be gained from presence in the physical context, as in (12) (i.e. the referent can be pointed at, or is being looked at) or from shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. (13), for instance, can be uttered out-of-the-blue if speaker and hearer share the knowledge that an alligator came into the hearer’s garden earlier in the week.

- (12) Elle_i déborde, cette poubelle_i.
 she overflows this dustbin
 ‘This dustbin is too full.’
 (13) Il_i est revenu, l’alligator_i?
 he is returned the-alligator
 ‘Did the alligator come back?’

Definiteness is obligatory in this case because the DP (which has a specific reference) must be interpreted as the topic of the sentence, and specific topics must point to referents identifiable in the context (i.e. existential indefinites cannot be topics — cf. e.g. Côté 1999).⁴ Whether one analyses such referents as new or not will depend on one’s definition of the relevant context. If newness of a referent is evaluated with respect to the *discourse* context exclusively, then the dislocated elements in (12) and (13) are new. If newness of a referent is evaluated with respect to the context in general (including the situational context), then the dislocated elements in (12) and (13) are arguably not entirely new, hence the special status they are sometimes endowed with in the literature (*anchored* (Prince 1981) or *accessible* (Lambrecht 1994: 109-110)). I assume that there is no principled reason to distinguish referents available from the discourse context and referents available from the situational context: both have in common that they are treated as recoverable and this has a uniform effect on how the speaker encodes such referents (at least in languages like French). A referent that has not yet been introduced in the discourse but which is clearly identifiable in the physical context will therefore have the same status as a referent identifiable in the previous discourse (but not *activated* at the moment of speech (cf. Lambrecht 1994: 93ff) — in the sense that a mere pronoun is not sufficient to identify it).

2.3 The two types of marking are not independent

We have seen that structurally, new referents have to appear inside a focused constituent (in the unmarked case, the most embedded XP inside the VP) except if they are salient enough to be encoded directly as a topic. Both definites and indefinites can in principle appear in a focus position in a context where their referent has not yet been mentioned. Indeed, new referents are not always obligatorily encoded as indefinites. New but unique referents and associative anaphora are encoded as definites, and this can also be true of salient new referents corresponding to the topic of the sentence.

Referent newness can therefore not be evaluated on the basis of definiteness alone, without considering the structural position occupied by the DP under scrutiny. In other words, definiteness distinctions and structural position are not redundant means of encoding the newness of a discourse referent. Speakers are not given the choice of one or the other. Rather, the appropriateness of newness encoding depends on the adequate combination of the two devices.⁵

3 Do children have the relevant competence?

The preceding discussion has shown that several factors influence how new discourse referents are encoded, and that these factors do interact. Testing children's competence in this area cannot be done without taking these factors into account. In this section, I outline the form target-deviance might take, which, if attested, would indicate that a particular rule (or set of rules) might not be mastered yet by the child.

3.1 Types of errors one might expect

I take it as uncontroversial that children can distinguish new from old information appropriately from the onset of language production, a point argued by Baker and Greenfield (1988) among others.

If children do not associate newness with either indefiniteness or focus, their language production should lead to communication breakdown in most of the cases where they introduce a new referent, because they would use both types of markings in an entirely random fashion.

If children do not associate new information with indefiniteness, they can be expected to encode new, non-unique referents as definites. If they know at that point that new referents appear as a general rule in a focus position, this gives us a Type I error. Special care would be required when evaluating examples like (14-a), given that the use of a definite could be appropriate if the reference to the key in question can be derived from the context (i.e. if the appearance of a key is expected for some reason). This can be controlled for in an experimental design (as done by Emslie and Stevenson 1981). In (14-b), the DP can only receive an existential reading (irrespectively of the context), hence in this case, a definite is impossible.⁶

- (14) a. #Il voit la clé. (where key = new, non-unique)
 he sees the key
 b. *Il y a la clé dans la cuisine.
 it there has the key in the kitchen

If new information and indefiniteness are not inextricably linked in the mind of the children, they can also be expected to use indefinites randomly in the dislocated position in contexts where this is impossible in the adult language (Type II error), as in (15). The systematic occurrence of this type of error would indicate that children do not know that specific topics must be definite.

- (15) *Un clown_i, il_i arrive.
 a clown he arrives

One might postulate as an alternative explanation to utterances like (15) that children do not yet know that new information must be in focus and consequently that they attempt to encode new information in another position (here the dislocated position). However, this alternative must be discarded on the grounds that the dislocated position is (correctly) associated with a topic interpretation in child French from the earliest attested stages of spontaneous production, as argued in De Cat (2002, 2003).

If children do not know that in order to be encoded directly as topics, new referents have to be salient enough to be identifiable by the hearer, they are expected to produce sentences like (16) in contexts where the referent of *le clown* cannot be identified by the hearer. This would constitute a

the child (Hickmann et al. 1996: 615). They therefore predict that such marking should emerge later than morphological encoding of newness (which should be acquired first because they are obligatory).⁸

The aim of the present paper is quite different from that of Hickmann et al. (1996). Rather than seeking to determine the relative functional complexity of each type of newness marker, I am looking for manifestations of the competence (or lack thereof) necessary to encode new referents in a target-like fashion. In what follows, I will therefore propose a reinterpretation of the results reported by Hickmann et al. (1996) in the light of this question. The results discussed in Hickmann et al. (1996) can indeed give us some indication of the extent to which children's production is target-deviant. I address in turn each of the predicted 'error' types (from section 3.1) and discuss the relevant evidence from Hickmann et al.'s study. In section 3.3, I provide evidence from spontaneous production corroborating my interpretation of Hickmann et al.'s results.

As a first indication that definiteness distinctions are (at least partly) mapped adequately onto newness distinctions even by the youngest children in the Hickmann et al. study, it should be noted that in their second and subsequent mentions of referents, the children used definite DPs almost exclusively (in 98-99% of cases, according to Hickmann and Hendriks (1999)). From 4 years of age at the latest, children thus appear to know that definites entail existential presupposition. Their use of definiteness distinctions is therefore not random.

Consider now errors of Type I, in which children might use new, non-unique definites in typical referent-establishing constructions like (14), repeated below as (18).

- (18) a. #Il voit la clé. (where key = new, non-unique)
 he sees the key
 b. #Il y a la clé dans la cuisine.
 it there has the key in the kitchen

Hickmann et al. (1996) report that definites are used postverbally to introduce new referents in 9% of cases only, all age-groups collapsed (including adults). There is no indication as to the exact number of cases or their acceptability in adult French (e.g. some of these cases might be licit if the referent is encoded by a complex NP, as in (19)).

- (19) Il voit les oiseaux qui sont sur la barrière.
 he sees the birds who are on the fence
 'He sees the birds that are on the fence.'

The evidence for errors of Type I is therefore slim, at best.

Type II errors would consist in using indefinites existentially in a dislocated position. Hickmann et al. (1996: 612) report that 90% (i.e. all but 3) of the French subject NPs in SsV(O) structures (i.e. a sequence containing a dislocated subject, a resumptive pronoun, a verb, and possibly an object) are definite. However, no indication is given of whether the dislocated indefinites were licit (i.e. not existential) or not. The only deviance reported with respect to dislocated elements is that children initially use them in a *less specialised* fashion (Hickmann and Hendriks 1999: 445), though it is not entirely clear how *specialised* should be understood here. Other studies report that children do not appear to use indefinites existentially in dislocated positions (Karmiloff-Smith 1979: 117, De Cat 2003).

The French speaking children in this experiment appear to have produced target-compliant utterances in most cases, as suggested by the following two indications. Hickmann et al. report that new referents are predominantly introduced in the presentational construction, even by the youngest children (around 4;10 years of age), and that children use this construction to the same extent as adults (i.e. in around 60% of conditions). They also report a strong correlation, across age groups, between indefiniteness of the DP and postverbal position (i.e. essentially the object position of presentatives).

The only type of deviance appears to be of Type III: children (especially before 10 years of

age) use dislocated definites to introduce new referents much more often than adults do. The 4 year olds in Hickmann et al.'s study do so in 28% of cases (which I estimate to be 17 out of 62 cases). Dislocated elements are reported to be definite in most cases (i.e. all but 3 cases across age groups, out of which 2 only in the 4 year olds, as reported by Hendriks 2000: 382).

Recall that new referents can only be encoded as topics if they are easily identifiable in the context. In the experimental settings, it should have been clear to the children that their blindfolded addressee could not see the pictures and hence had no means of identifying the new referent in question. This suggests that children violate the saliency requirement on dislocated topics. Such a statement needs qualifying, though. Firstly, it seems that only main characters were introduced by means of a dislocated definite, which partly justifies topic encoding, following Karmiloff-Smith (1981), who argues that young children tend to treat main characters as the thematic subject of the whole story. Secondly, it is important to bear in mind that the children were looking at pictures prompting their story telling, and that these pictures fulfilled the saliency requirement from the perspective of the child. This led Power and Dal Martello (1986) to conclude that young children rely on a different saliency requirement to that of adults: one centered on themselves rather than the addressee. These (partial) violations of the saliency requirement might be due to the child's inability to take the listener's perspective fully into account. This is however not to say that children are entirely unable to take their listener's perspective into account when encoding new referents. For instance, Karmiloff-Smith (1979) has shown that small children attempt to give extra information for identification of referents by their addressee (such as the use of redundant modifiers, spatial locations etc). Yet, it is also true that young children have difficulties realising that others do not see what they see (typical examples of this can be found in telephone conversations with young children).

What I am suggesting is that experimental techniques might not be suitable to test whether children know the saliency requirement on topics (and hence know when new referents can be introduced as (definite) topics) because the necessity of prompting the child to mention a particular referent requires that such a referent somehow be salient in the context, hence (at least partly) meeting the saliency condition on topics. Unless the awareness of the listener's perspective can be fully controlled for (i.e. unless we can have clear indications that the child is aware that the listener's perspective is different), experimental evidence should be treated with caution. In the longitudinal study of spontaneous production reported in De Cat (2002), I have found no clear evidence that children violated the saliency requirement in a systematic fashion. This suggests to me that this effect was exacerbated by the experimental conditions.

3.3 Evidence from spontaneous production

Corroborating evidence for the above interpretation of Hickmann et al.'s results can be found in the study of children's spontaneous production. I have used two corpora to that effect: the York corpus, containing data from three children from Belgium, Canada and France and the Cat corpus, containing data from two Belgian children.⁹ The children were recorded fortnightly (York corpus) or monthly (Cat corpus) in a familiar environment and for a period of 18 months on average. Ages range from 1;10 to 3;6, i.e. the children throughout the study were younger than even the youngest participants in Hickmann et al.'s elicitation experiment.

A search of all definite DPs in the speech of these five children did not reveal any clear instance of Type I error, whereby the child would use a new, non-unique definite in cases where an indefinite would be required in the adult language. Furthermore, definiteness distinctions were used in a target-like fashion in the presentational construction from the earliest attested cases, even before the expletive and the impersonal clitic *y* were realised consistently. The numerous instances of existential constructions found in the two corpora (and of which examples are given in (20)) are a clear indication that children younger than those taking part in the Hickmann et al. (1996) study master the structural marking of referent newness — which contradicts Hickmann et al.'s claim that their results indicate a later emergence of structural newness markings. Such examples also contribute to showing that children do use definiteness distinctions adequately to

encode newness.¹⁰

- (20) a. (il) (y) a un poisson derrière. (Tom 2;5.24)
 it there has a fish behind
 ‘There’s a fish behind.’
 b. il y a quelqu’un qui va arriver. (Chloé 2;11.24)
 it there has some one who will arrive
 ‘Somebody’s going to arrive.’
 c. mais il y a un petit bouton qui va [?] le faire rouler. (Max 3;1.25)
 but it there has a little button who will it make roll
 ‘But there’s a little button that will make it roll.’
 d. il y a un méchant nain qui veut l’ at& +//. (Chloé 3;2.9)
 it there has a nasty dwarf who wants her
 ‘A nasty dwarf wants to at(tack) her.’
 e. il y a quelque chose qui ne recolle plus là. (Léa 3;3.25)
 it there has some thing who NEG re-sticks no-more there
 ‘There’s a thing there that doesn’t stick anymore.’
 f. il y a un moustique qui m’ a piqué, qu’ il a dit. (Léa 3;7.1)
 it there has a mosquito who me has stung that he has said
 ‘A mosquito stung me’, he said.’

As reported in De Cat (2003), the children of the York and Cat corpora do not appear to make Type II errors in their spontaneous production: whenever indefinites are dislocated in the speech of these children, it is with a clear generic (21-a) or D-linked (21-b) interpretation.

- (21) a. ça fait du bruit, un marteau,, hein? (Max 2;9.27)
 it makes some noise a hammer eh
 ‘Hammers are noisy, aren’t they?’
 b. tous mes enfants, ils sont où? (Anne 3;3.16)
 all my children they are where
 ‘Where are all my children?’

Type III errors, where a new, non-salient referent is encoded directly as a topic, were not noticed in the present corpora. This does not imply that such ‘errors’ did not occur (i.e. their absence might be due to a sampling effect) but shows that they were at best infrequent. It should be noted that adult speakers do sometime fail to meet the saliency requirement on topics, as illustrated by the following exchange in which an unidentifiable topic prompts a clarification question allowing repair:

- (22) A: Où tu l’as mise, ma clé?
 ‘Where did you put my key?’
 B: Quelle clé?
 ‘Which key?’
 A: Celle de la cabane.
 ‘The one for the shed.’
 B: Ah, elle est dans ma poche.
 ‘Ah, it’s in my pocket.’

The intrinsically uncontrolled nature of spontaneous data, coupled with the risk of sampling effects, require that the evidence discussed in this section be regarded as indicative rather than definitive. However, because the encoding of information is at the very heart of all verbal communication, I believe that the absence from these corpora of systematic misuse of definiteness distinctions to encode newness is significant. Also, difficulties in eliciting utterances without preempting the saliency requirement (at least from the child’s point of view) still add to the im-

portance of the study of spontaneous production, in spite of the inherent lack of control over the intended interpretation of utterances.

4 Conclusion

We have seen clear indications that very young children possess the required competence to encode new referents appropriately and that they know the conditions of topic licensing.

If my interpretation of the results of the Hickmann et al. (1996) study is correct, children's difficulties with the encoding of referent newness are limited to a subset of cases in which a non-salient referent is considered to be salient and therefore encoded as a (definite) topic. This suggests that children's "errors" are not due to the initial unavailability of certain markers of newness: both the existential use of indefinites and the use of focal positions seem to be available from around 2 years of age (i.e. possibly from the onset of word combination).

I would like to suggest that the source of the observed target-deviance is extra-linguistic: the violation of the saliency requirement does not appear to be due to an ignorance of that requirement, but rather to difficulties for the children in evaluating the difference between their addressee's perception from their own in certain situations. This seems to me to be due to non-language-specific, cognitive factors. Further research will be necessary to confirm this intuition.

Notes

⁰This research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, grant #041R00433, which is gratefully acknowledged. For comments and suggestions, I would like to thank Bernadette Plunkett, Irene Krämer, the audience at the Amsterdam Workshop on Modular Interaction in Acquisition (October 2003), as well as two anonymous reviewers.

¹An exception to this can be found in cases where the referent is qualified:

- (i) J'ai retourné le potager sous **un** soleil de plomb.
I-have turned-over the allotment under a sun of lead
'I dug the allotment over under a scorching sun.'

²Stage topics are the only elements that can appear outside the focus inthetic sentences. Such topics (like the dislocated temporal PP in 1) do not express what the sentence is about, but they provide the spatio-temporal frame within which the predication is evaluated (Erteschik-Shir 1997).

- (i) De nos jours, les vrais socialistes se font rares.
of our days the true socialists REFL make rare
'True socialists are rare nowadays.'

³In such cases, right-dislocation is preferred, but not obligatory (i.e. a left-dislocation would also be possible).

⁴Non-existential indefinites can be topics. Hence indefinites can be dislocated in spoken French if they are interpreted generically or if they correspond to a D-linked set (Côté 1999, 2001; De Cat 2002).

⁵It is important to note that definiteness distinction and structural position are only indirectly related, however. Newness is associated on the one hand with indefiniteness and on the other hand with focus, and it is only by virtue of this common association with newness that focus and indefiniteness are related.

⁶The corresponding sentences with an indefinite are target-like in both cases:

- (i) a. Il voit une clé.
he sees a key
'He sees a key.'
- b. Il y a une clé dans la cuisine.
it there has a key in the kitchen
'There's a key in the kitchen.'

⁷The age is given in years;months. These ages are for the French children, as I will only consider here the French part of the experiment, leaving aside the data from English, German and Chinese. There were 10 children per group.

⁸The assumptions underlying Hickmann et al.'s methodology are controversial, given that structural position and definiteness distinctions are not independent of each other. Such assumptions are also based on an incomplete picture of what is allowed in the target language: (i) The postverbal position is not the only one allowing new referents (as illustrated in (9)); (ii) Postverbal elements are not automatically in focus, as illustrated in (9-b) (where the focus is solely on the *preverbal* subject) and (8) (where the postverbal DP is in fact right-dislocated and therefore not in focus).

⁹The York corpus was collected under the direction of Bernadette Plunkett, who has kindly allowed me to use it. The Cat corpus was collected for my doctoral research, which was funded by ESRC grant R00429834373. Details on transcription and coding procedures can be found in De Cat (2002) and De Cat and Plunkett (2002).

¹⁰In these examples, elements in parenthesis were not pronounced by the child; [?] indicates uncertainty as to the transcription of the preceding element; & indicates truncation and +//. a self-interruption.

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