DPs Syntax in acquisition

A case study on Italian L2 by Czech ad Slovak learners

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Czech and Slovak are languages which don't exhibit a manifest position for the Articles in the Determiner Phrase. The aim of this paper is to show how this structure is accessed during the learning of Italian, a language which presents the articles as for the standard behavior for nouns.

Keywords: Determiner Phrase, Italian L2, Second Language Acquisition, Syntax

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1 Introduction

Czech (`ces`) and Slovak (`slk`) are languages of the Slavic branch in the Indo-european family. Alongside a certain morphological complexity in noun declension systems, these languages –except for Bulgarian (**??**) and Macedonian (**?**)– don't show an overt realization of the Determiner position inside the noun phrase (**??**) (**?**). Conversly, Italian (`ita`) and the other romance languages explicit that position as a default behaviour, usually with a free morpheme preceding the noun (**??**) or by cliticization of the definite article (**??**):

(1) Articleless

    a. `ces` (**?**, 14)
       Chlapec/Marie/Ona/každý miluje ryby/ {své rodiče}.
       Boy/Marie/She/Everyone Love.3sg Fish/ {POSS parent}
       "SUBJ loves [the] fish/ his parents"

    b. `slk` (**?**, 113)
       Večer čítam   knihy, píšem   referaty...
       Evening Read.1SG Book.PL Write.1SG Paper.PL
       "In the evening I read [the] books, I write (school) papers …"

(2) Proclitic

    a. `ita` (**?**, 60)
       Il   terremoto ha   distrutto   la   città.
       ART.DEF Earthquake AUX.3sg Destroy.PTCP.PST ART.DEF City
       "The earthquake destroyed the city"

    b. `fro` (**?**, 3261)
       La   dame estoit devant la   sale.
       ART.DEF Girl Be.3sg ADV   ART.DEF Room
       "The *dame* was in front to the room"

(3) Enclitic

    a. `ron` (**?**, 45)
       Prieten=ul   meu este   aici.
       Friend=ART.DEF POSS Be.PRES.3sg Here
       "My friend is here"

    b. `bul` (**?**, 37)
       Къде е   книга=та   ми?
       Where Be.3SG Book=ART.DEF POSS.1SG
       "Where is my book?"

The general idea of this paper is to address the question of how linguistic structures which are not overtly marked in L1 can be accessed during the acquisition of a target language that show them. While doing this can be either both purely speculative as grounded on actual data, I will show how the usage of a target collection of linguistic corpora can be useful to test the main hypotheses into narrower facts. The language under observation are indeed a few: on one

side `ces` and `slk` as native languages–with no overt position for the articles–on the other `ita` as target language.

The section **??** provides a theoretical discussion on the top of different theories inside the Generative framework (**?**) on the status of DP and NP. The section **??** is twofold: firstly I present the methods used into the current analysis in terms of *reproducibility* of the research, the policies of data-collection and an analysis of the expected results; while the second subsection is built upon a case study made off to test some hypotheses about the categorial differences of DPs during the acquisition of `ita` by `ces` and `slk` native speakers involved in the test. A summary conclusion (Section **??**) closes the paper.

2 Theoretical background

By a generative-oriented point of view, the human language is a computational procedure which relies on a hierarchical organization of structures, and language variations are reconducted to a parametrizing of choice among them (**??????**):

> We are concerned, then, with states of the language faculty, which we understand to be some array of cognitive traits and capacities, a particular component of the human mind/brain. The language faculty has an initial state, genetically determined; in the normal course of development it passes through a series of states in early childhood, reaching a relatively stable steady state that undergoes little subsequent change, apart from the lexicon. To a good first approximation, the initial state appears to be uniform for the species. (**?**)

In this perspective, the possibility of comparison is offered either by different languages than among different states of language acquisition: structures can be compared and analized into a coherent grid in order to perform analyses and reveal the similarity and the differences in the parametrizing of syntax.

2.1 The role and the study on interlanguage

Amongst many scholar the role of the native language (L1) has been raised as a factor of possible conditionation in the way which the target language (L2) is acquired during the learning path: an emblematic case is the *transfer* of the knowledge about the structures of the L1 to the target, revealing the intermediate steps of the acquisitional path defined with the term *interlanguage* (**?**), that we can refer as to **Interlanguage Hypothesis** (IlH). One of the main area of