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

Contents

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 (3b) and Macedonian (Dryer, 2013)– don't show an overt realization of the Determiner position inside the noun phrase (1) (Harkins, 1953). Conversely, Italian (`ita`) and the other romance languages explicit that position as a default behaviour, usually with a free morpheme preceding the noun (2) or by cliticization of the definite article (3a):

(1) Articleless

    a. `ces` (Veselovská, 2014, 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` (Kamenárová, 2007, 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` (Bianco, 2017, 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` (Dufournet and Lecoy, 2008, 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` (Cojocaru, 2003, 45)
        Prieten=ul meu este aici.
        Friend=ART.DEF POSS Be.PRES.3sg Here
        "My friend is here"

    b. `bul` (Leafgren, 2011, 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 2 provides a theoretical discussion on the top of different theories inside the Generative framework on the status of DP and NP. The section 3 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 4) closes the paper.

2 Theoretical background

One of the main areas of research in Generative studies on Second Language Acquisition (`GenSLA`) regards the investigation about how the linguistic structures can be accessed in L2 and how the transitional stages of acquisition work into the learning continuum (Rothman and Slabakova, 2017).
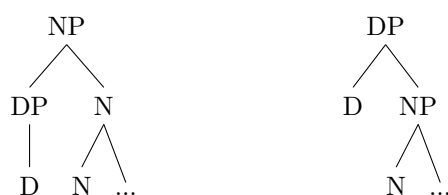

Figure 1: Structural comparison between NP-over-DP and DP-over-NP Hypotheses

Two hypothesis: DP as Spec or Phrase.

2.1 Implications for the DP-Hypothesis in Italian

2.2 Implications for the DP-Hypothesis in Czech

3 Case Study

3.1 Retrieve the linguistic data

```
ggplot(df, aes(fill=df$L1, y=abs(rnorm(nrow(df))), x=df$Corpus)) +
    geom_bar( stat="identity") + labs(x="Corpora", y="Number of texts", color="Nativ
```
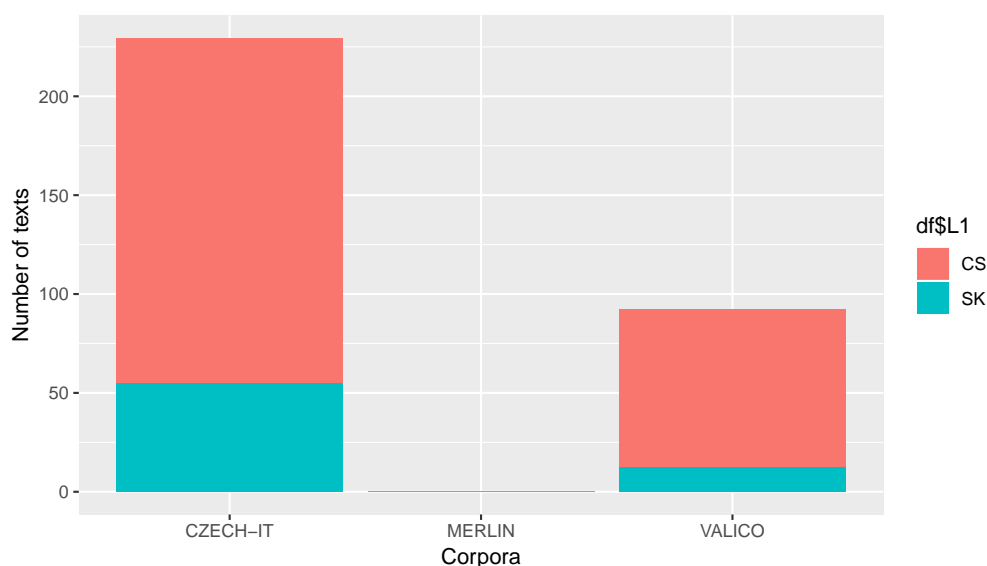

Figure 2: Number of texts by different Corpora

3.2 Perform a test

Provide 10 noun phrases with different referential structure in terms of animateness with a neutralized article. The students are invited to write full sentences for each one.

Goals:

- Test the syntactic distribution of phrases (SUBJ vs OBJ)
- Test the distribution of DETs ([+def], [-def], Ø)

4 Conclusion

Financial coverage

Abbreviations

Languages are indicated by the abbreviations provided in the ISO 639-3 format (SIL International, 2009). Morphological glosses styles adher to the widespreadly recognized *Leipzig Glossing Rules* (Comrie et al., 2008), while other abbreviations respect (Boeckx, 2012).

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