April 23, 2023

Dear Editorial Board,

It is my pleasure to submit the manuscript entitled “On the Acquisition of Differential Object Marking in Child Heritage Spanish: Bilingual Education and Age Effects.” This manuscript has not been published before and is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere. There are no conflicts of interest associated with this manuscript, and there has been no financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

In this article, I compare English-Spanish bilingual children’s acquisition of differential object marking morphology in a dual-language education school and a monolingual school. All children were heritage speakers of Spanish in two age groups: fifth grade children (ages 10-11) and seventh and eighth grade children (ages 12-14). The fifth graders in the bilingual school did not show any differences in differential object marking production or selection on a multiple choice task, arguing against the purported advantage of bilingual schooling. However, the seventh and eighth graders who had graduated from the same immersion program showed rates of DOM production and selection that converged on a group of Spanish-dominant adults, while the monolingually-educated children in this age group were not different from the fifth graders.

These findings make timely theoretical contributions to the field of heritage language acquisition. Specifically, they have implications for Putnam and Sánchez’s (2013) theory of heritage language acquisition and maintenance because they do not support the notion of reassembly of features due to decreases in exposure: on one hand, those bilinguals who produced and selected the differential object marker most had experienced a decrease in exposure to Spanish at school, and on the other, there was no difference between children in monolingual and bilingual schools, even though one group had cumulatively more exposure to Spanish. These findings also have implications for teaching Spanish to heritage language learners in dual-language education schools.

I believe that *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* is an ideal forum for my research article given its long history of high-quality scholarship in Spanish as a heritage language, including previous work on differential object marking (Montrul, 2004; Montrul & Bowles, 2009) and on bilingual education (Fernández-Dobao & Herschensohn, 2021). Sharing my research with this journal is an opportunity to disseminate findings to like-minded researchers in a respected and well-cited journal, and I look forward to your feedback and hope to collaborate with you in the publication of this manuscript.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my manuscript and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Sincerely,



Patrick D. Thane, Ph.D.