

Interference of Second Language in the Acquisition of Tagalog Word Order in Children

Abstract: This paper discusses how the second language (L2) of a child could interfere with the full acquisition of word order and case marking in Tagalog first language (L1). Tagalog has a relatively free word order complemented by a comparatively rich case marking system on determiners (Rackowski 2002; Laughren 2002). When a child learns a second language like English however, interference could delay or prevent the complete acquisition of the child's first language grammar due to an uneven amount of input between the two languages (Polinsky 1995). In this study, a bilingual child (Tagalog L1; English L2) is asked to describe the action in an image using Tagalog sentences, and then match another set of images with a stimulus Tagalog sentence. The results show that the bilingual child's elicited sentences have a fixed word order and limited case marking, more similar to English than to Tagalog:

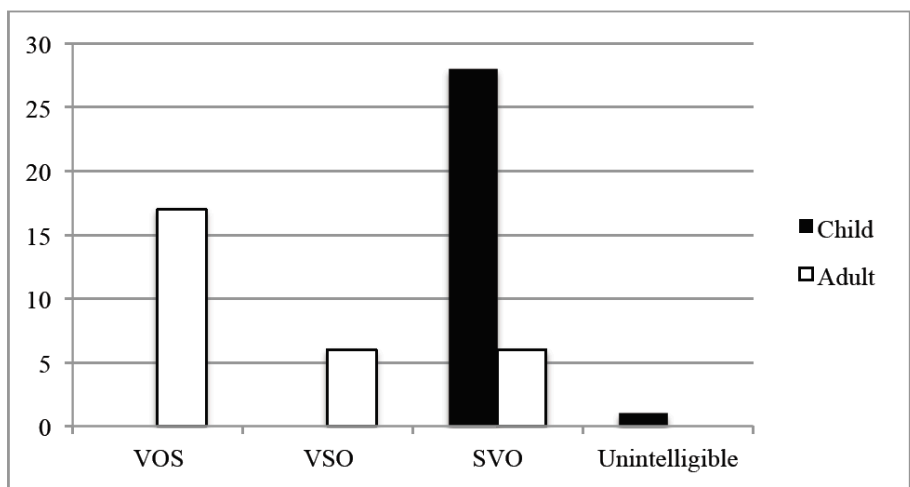


Table 1: Production task – Number of sentences uttered by subjects, categorized by the word order they used

This could explain his low performance in the picture-matching task. These results suggest that there is a possible interference in the bilingual child's complete acquisition of Tagalog syntactic word order because of the input he receives from English.

References

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