Workshop
“Cross-linguistic influence in bilingualism”

13 January, 2017
University of Amsterdam
Universiteitstheater - Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16

Organizers: Elma Blom, Leonie Cornips and Jeannette Schaeffer
Sponsors: Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication and Meertens Institute

9.45: Coffee & Opening

10.00 – 10.25: Elma Blom, Leonie Cornips, and Jeannette Schaeffer
Introduction to the workshop: Cross-linguistic influence in bilingualism

10.25 – 10.50: Aafke Hulk

10.50 – 11.15: Sharon Unsworth, Chantal van Dijk, and Ton Dijkstra
Re-examining cross-linguistic influence in bilingual acquisition: A retrospective, prospective and introspective review

11.15 – 11.30 Break

11.30 – 11.55: Leonie Cornips and Frans Gregersen
Comparative studies of variation in the use of grammatical gender in the Danish and Dutch DP in the spontaneous speech of youngsters: free versus bound morphemes.

11.55 – 12.20: Theodoros Marinis, Vasiliki Chondrogianni, Nada Vasic, Fred Weerman, and Elma Blom
Cross-linguistic differences in the production and processing of gender in bilingual children and children with SLI

12.20 – 12.55: Susanne Brouwer, Deniz Özkan, and Aylin C. Küntay
Semantic prediction in monolingual and bilingual children

12.55 – 14.10 Lunch
Complexity and production/comprehension asymmetries in the acquisition of *wh*-questions in French: Comparing second language acquisition and language impairment in children

The L2 acquisition of the French quantitative pronoun *en* by L1 learners of Dutch: Vulnerable domains and cross-linguistic influence

Cross-linguistic influence of Dutch on subject position in heritage Spanish

Cross-linguistic Influence in Scope Ambiguity: Evidence for Acceleration

L1 attrition and L2 acquisition: Exploring the connections

A language without articles in contact with a language with articles: Comparing the encoding of already mentioned referents in two generations of Mandarin Chinese speakers in the Netherlands

Subtle aspectual differences in the L2 acquisition of German: The case progressivity

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Abstracts

10.00 – 10.25: Elma Blom, Leonie Cornips, and Jeannette Schaeffer.
**Introduction to the workshop: Cross-linguistic influence in multilingual acquisition**

10.25 – 10.50: Aafke Hulk
More than 15 years ago, Mueller & Hulk (2000)(2001)[henceforth MULK] published two papers in which they made very precise predictions about when to expect Cross-linguistic Influence to occur in the languages of bilingual children. Since then, these papers have become some kind of “classic” in the field and have been cited numerous times. However, as is usual in such cases, many subsequent authors used only one or two elements from MULK as argument against or in favour of other proposals, and often in a (slightly) different way from the original (see e.g. Serratrice 2013 for an overview).

In this presentation, I will first go back to the original proposal to see what it was really about and what it was not. Second, I will briefly discuss some of my more recent work carried out with colleagues in relation to MULK’s proposals. Finally, I will argue that although the picture of bilingual acquisition has become increasingly complex, many internal and external factors being identified as crucially involved, there still is a role to play for linguistic conditions a la MULK.

10.50 – 11.15: Sharon Unsworth, Chantal van Dijk, and Ton Dijkstra
**Re-examining cross-linguistic influence in bilingual acquisition: A retrospective, prospective and introspective review**
The general consensus in the bilingual first language acquisition literature is that there is separate development of the child’s two languages. At the same time, however, there is clear evidence that under certain circumstances, one language may influence the other (Paradis & Genesee, 1996). This cross-linguistic influence (CLI) varies across linguistic domains, language combinations and children, and several language-level and individual-level factors have been invoked to explain this variation (see Serratrice, 2013 for review), including surface overlap and language dominance (e.g., Döpke, 1998; Hulk & Müller, 2000; Yip & Matthews, 2000). Which of these factors constitute necessary and/or sufficient conditions for CLI and the exact mechanisms by which CLI occurs remain unknown, however. In this talk, we take a brief critical look at some of the CLI research from the past 20 years, re-examining some basic assumptions and drawing on insights from the bilingual adult psycholinguistic literature (e.g., Hartsuiker et al., 2004) to consider how we might arrive at a better understanding of CLI in bilingual language development.

11.15 – 11.30 Break

11.30 – 11.55: Leonie Cornips and Frans Gregersen
**Comparative studies of variation in the use of grammatical gender in the Danish and Dutch DP in the spontaneous speech of youngsters: free versus bound morphemes.**
This talk reports on a cross-linguistic comparison of how grammatical gender of the (in)definite determiner is used in various versions of spontaneous speech data produced by monolingual and bilingual Dutch and Danish teenagers. Where Danish monolinguals hardly
have any variation, Danish bilinguals do so but only in some expressions of gender of the (in)definite determiner. Dutch monolinguals, in contrast, overuse common gender of the definite determiner compared to the standard until the age of thirteen, bilinguals until adulthood. Our prediction that both monolingual and bilingual Danish youngsters will have less and more restricted variation in grammatical gender due to more (and different) morphological input cues for gender in Danish than in Dutch is borne out.

11.55 – 12.20: Theodoros Marinis, Vasiliki Chondrogianni, Nada Vasic, Fred Weerman, and Elma Blom

**Cross-linguistic differences in the production and processing of gender in bilingual children and children with SLI**

In this talk we will present a cross-linguistic study that compared the production and on-line comprehension of Dutch vs. Greek grammatical gender in sequential bilingual (L2) children, monolingual (L1) children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI), and L1 typically developing (TD) control children. Dutch gender is opaque whereas Greek gender is transparent. 130 children participated in gender assignment elicitation tasks and self-paced listening tasks with gender violations in Greek/Dutch. The results showed overall higher accuracy in the production of Greek compared to Dutch gender. Greek-speaking children with SLI performed similarly to TD children and significantly better than L2 children. In contrast, Dutch-speaking children with SLI performed similarly to L2 children and significantly less well than TD children. All Greek-speaking groups showed sensitivity to gender violations in the self-paced listening task, but this was the case only in the TD Dutch-speaking group. Dutch-speaking L2 children and children with SLI were not sensitive to gender violations. Taken together the results indicate clear cross-linguistic differences between Dutch and Greek and highlight the importance of cross-task comparisons in research on child L2 acquisition and language impairment.

12.20 – 12.55: Susanne Brouwer, Deniz Özkan, and Aylin C. Küntay

**Semantic prediction in monolingual and bilingual children**

One of the mechanisms responsible for the fast recognition of spoken language is prediction (e.g. Mani & Huettig, 2012). The current study examined whether 4-5 year old monolingual children differ from bilingual children in predicting the upcoming noun on the basis of the lexical semantics of the verb. In an eye-tracking task, we presented visual displays with two objects (e.g. cake, tree) while presenting semantically constraining (e.g. The boy eats the big cake) or neutral sentences (e.g. The boy sees the big cake). Results showed that both groups are able to predict but that 4-year old bilinguals are faster than their monolingual peers. Moreover, sentence prediction ability in bilinguals is associated with performance on the forward digit recall task. These results extend views on bilingual sentence processing.

12.55 – 14.10 Lunch
14.10 – 14.35: Philippe Prévost, Laurice Tuller, Anne Galloux, and Marie Anne Barthez

Complexity and production/comprehension asymmetries in the acquisition of wh-questions in French: Comparing second language acquisition and language impairment in children

Adopting the assumption that production places a greater burden on processing than comprehension, this study explores the hypothesis that both the degree of linguistic computational complexity entailed in the derivation of a particular structure, as measured by the number of Merge operations, and the processing capacity of the speakers examined, together, determine if and when production/comprehension asymmetries will surface.

Elicited production and comprehension of French wh-questions were studied in two groups of 6- to 12-year-old learners of French, 29 English-speaking children acquiring French as a second language, after age 4, and 27 children with SLI. Results confirm the hypothesis under investigation and underline the fundamental role of complexity in language acquisition, with important implications on the effects of L1 transfer, age of onset and length of exposure in L2 acquisition, as well as differences between children with and without language pathology.

14.35 – 15.00: Petra Sleeman and Tabea Ihsane

The L2 acquisition of the French quantitative pronoun en by L1 learners of Dutch: Vulnerable domains and cross-linguistic influence

This talk investigates the L2 acquisition of the French quantitative pronoun en by native speakers of Dutch and focuses on three issues: whether the L2 acquisition of certain aspects of the use of en may be related to the type(s) of module of grammar involved, whether L2 learners are sensitive to semantic aspects of en like referentiality, and to which extent Dutch impacts the acquisition of en. On the basis of acquisition data elicited in a Grammaticality Judgment Task, we show that the L2 acquisition of en proceeds very slowly, depending on the module(s) of grammar involved, and that it may be facilitated but also hindered by the presence of a similar, but not completely equivalent pronoun in Dutch.

15.00 – 15.25: Brechje van Osch, Suzanne Aalberse, Aafke Hulk, and Petra Sleeman

Cross-linguistic influence of Dutch on subject position in heritage Spanish

While much is known about heritage Spanish in the US, relatively little research has been conducted on heritage Spanish in combination with language other than English (some exceptions being Irizarri van Suchtelen, 2016, and references there). Subject position with intransitive verbs, the phenomenon of interest in the present study, has only been studied in the US. Those studies often report an overgeneralization of preverbal subjects compared to monolingual baseline groups (e.g. Montrul, 2005; Zapata et al., 2005). While cross-linguistic influence from English is a plausible explanation, one cannot rule out simplification towards the default order in Spanish as an (additional) explanatory factor. The present study provides support for the role of cross-linguistic influence by showing that heritage speakers of Spanish in the Netherlands do not overgeneralize preverbal, but postverbal subjects. 17 heritage speakers and 18 monolinguals completed a contextualized acceptability judgment task about word order with intransitive verbs. The results show that heritage speakers have knowledge of some of the relevant factors that determine subject position (unaccusativity and focus) but not all (definiteness of the subject). Moreover, there was an overgeneralization of postverbal subjects across the board, different from previous findings.
in the US. We suggest that this discrepancy can be accounted for by the higher frequency of postverbal subjects in Dutch due to V2.


Cross-linguistic influence of interface-conditioned properties in bilingual language acquisition has been reported in a large number of studies and in various linguistic domains. While many of these studies have found that cross-linguistic influence can occur in the form of delay, few have shown evidence for acceleration (a.o., Kupisch, 2007; Meisel, 2007; Schwartz, Nir, Leikin, Leive and Ravid, 2014). In this paper we investigate the interpretation of indefinites in sentences containing negation by simultaneous bilingual (2L1) English-Dutch and Italian-Dutch children. Our results provide evidence for cross-linguistic influence from Italian to Dutch in the form of acceleration, only. We conclude that in cases of partial overlap between a bilingual child’s two languages, the direction of cross-linguistic influence can also depend on language-internal properties.

15.50 – 16.05 **Break**

16.05 – 16.30: Antonella Sorace

**L1 attrition and L2 acquisition: Exploring the connections**

Why do we see a convergence between L1 speakers undergoing attrition and proficient L2 speakers, especially at the interface between language and external domains? I first consider the strengths and weaknesses of linguistic accounts and cognitive accounts of these phenomena. I then explore the hypothesis that we may see the same attrition-acquisition convergence within individual speakers as a result of a reconfiguration of the cognitive system that allows speakers to become efficient bilinguals, but makes them unlike monolinguals in either the L1 or the L2.


**A language without articles in contact with a language with articles: Comparing the encoding of already mentioned referents in two generations of Mandarin Chinese speakers in the Netherlands**

This study investigates the encoding of already mentioned referents in two generations of Mandarin Chinese speakers in the Netherlands. Twelve families, each with one parent and one child participated in a video-elicitation study, representing the first generation (aged 43-55) and the second generation speakers (aged 15-27), i.e. a total of 24 subjects were compared to a baseline of 8 Mandarin native speaker controls from China. Previous literature suggests that languages without dedicated morphology to encode definiteness like Mandarin Chinese, might develop determiners when in contact with a language with determiners (cf. Backus, Doğruöz & Heine 2011). For example, demonstratives can be reinterpreted as articles. A first stage in this reinterpretation process from demonstrative to article is an increase in frequency of demonstratives. We expected that Mandarin Chinese speakers in the Netherlands might use more demonstratives under the influence of the obligatory presence of articles in Dutch. Indeed, we observe a higher instance of demonstratives of speakers of Mandarin Chinese than in China, both in first and second generation speakers. In second generation speakers we find that especially the distal demonstrative nage is frequently used.
Subtle aspectual differences in the L2 acquisition of German: The case progressivity

We use the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis (FRH; Lardiere, 2009) as a theoretical backdrop to examine the acquisition of progressivity in the L2 German of English natives at an advanced level of proficiency. Although both languages grammatically encode progressivity, the relevant feature assembly in the German present tense and related pseudo-gerundials (am+INFinitive (am) and beim+INFinitive (beim)) is distinct. 25 native speakers of German and 20 advanced L1 English learners of L2 German were tested for knowledge of (1) distinct meanings of the present tense; (2) the semantic differences between am and beim; (3) the syntactic differences between the am+INF and the apparent copula+gerund equivalent in English.

In Task 1, all learners performed at ceiling. Task 2 showed significant differences between the native and L2 group in conditions of low dynamic verbs and only with the beim construction (p < .001. In task 3, both groups find sentences in German with a post-verbal DP in the am construction to be significantly degraded compared to when there is none (p < .001).

The data suggest both that adult L2 acquisition is not limited to a superficial re-distribution of properties available from the L1, and that the timing and ultimate attainment of L2 acquisition can be illuminated by the FRH view of the complexities of the L2 learning task.