1 Contradictory observations in SLA

Observation #1: near-nativeness in end-state grammars (i.e., advanced levels of proficiency): L2 learners show (residual) optionality (Parodi, 2001; Sorace, 2000), incomplete/divergent representations (Sorace, 1993) and persistent selective fossilisation (Franceschina, 2001; Hawkins, 2000, 2001).


2 Questions

Q1: Why do some constructions lead to near-native representations whereas others lead to native-like representations?

Q1: Why do some L2 learners show persistent fossilisation whereas other learners don’t? Is it due to their L1?

Some constructions cause persistent problems for L2 learners: FFFH (Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Hawkins, 2000) proposes this scenario for post-childhood L2 learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+F]</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

full representation

3 General predictions

In line with Hawkins & Chan (1997), Hawkins (2000):

1: Universal principles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>L2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[P]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

full representation

2: Language-specific features:

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<th>L2</th>
<th>L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>[P]</td>
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full representation
4 Distribution of overt/null pronouns in Spanish

  (1) a. Yo voy al cine (Spanish)
      b. pro voy al cine
  (2) a. Ego pao sto sinema (Greek)
      b. pro pao sto sinema
  BUT:
- [-pro-drop] languages
  (3) a. I go to the cinema (English)
      b. *pro go to the cinema

- Conclusion: overt and null pronouns seem to be in free alternation in Spanish and Greek languages...BUT is this really so??
- There are 2 constraints:
  (a) Universal principles: Overt Pronoun Constrain (OPC):
      - overt/null is determined by OPC. Since this is a universal principle, the computation and representation should be innate (i.e., common to all speakers).
  (b) Language-specific factors: Contrastive Focus Constraint (CFC):
      - overt/null is determined by discourse factors.

5 Overt Pronoun Constraint (OPC)

  - Context: The government has published a report about students’ financial situation. The report concludes that...

4.5 Examples:
- cada estudiante dice que \( *{\text{él}} + {\text{pro}} \) tiene poco dinero.
- each student says that \( *{\text{he}} + {\text{pro}} \) has little money

- Facts:
  (i) the feature specification [+masc]/[-masc] of pro is language-specific.

6 Contrastive Focus Constraint (CFC)

- Context: Mr López and Ms García work at the university and at a famous publishers. However...

4.5 Examples:
- cada estudiante dice que \( \text{él} + {\text{pro}} \) tiene poco dinero.
- each student says that \( \text{he} + {\text{pro}} \) has little money

- Facts:
  (i) OPC applies cross-linguistically and is claimed to be a universal invariant (see Kanno, 1997; Montalbetti, 1986).
  (ii) Poverty of stimulus: OPC constructions are about what cannot be said.
  (iii) L2 learners show sensitivity to OPC even though it is not instantiated in their L1s (e.g., Al-Kasey & Perez-Leroux, 1998; Perez-Leroux & Glass, 1997, 19999 for L1 Spanish; Kanno, 1997, 1998, Marsden, 1998, 2001 for L2 English)

- Prediction: L2/L3 learners will show sensitivity to OPC due to its universal nature, despite their L1s.
The Overt Pronoun Constraint in L2 and L3 acquisition

(ii) *pro* in Spanish (3rd sing) is either [+masc] or [-masc], but not [±masc] due to ambiguity.
(iii) L2 learners show PSS if a feature of the L2 is not instantiated in the L1 (Franceschina, 2001; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Hawkins, 2000; Liszka, 2000).

**Prediction:**
(i) if the category *pro* exists in the learners’ L1 and is also specified for [+masc]/[-masc], then they will be aware that *pro* cannot be [±masc] in their L2/L3 in CFC contexts.
(ii) if the category *pro* doesn’t exist in the learners’ L1, then they may specify it for [±masc], which will cause ambiguity in CFC contexts.

**7 Subjects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>English natives</th>
<th>Greek natives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(n=9) Spanish natives</td>
<td>(n=19) L1 English</td>
<td>(n=20) L1 Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 Spanish</td>
<td>L2 Spanish</td>
<td>L2 English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exp. 2 Greek natives</td>
<td>L3 Spanish</td>
<td>L3 Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Learners: all **advanced level**; two standardised placement tests: one in Spanish (University of Wisconsin, 1998), another in English (Allan, 1992) for the Greek natives.
- Their **proficiency level** was ≥80% in Spanish (and also ≥80% in English for the Greek natives).

**8 Specific predictions**

**1: Universal principles: OPC**

- UG L1 English L2 Spanish
  - [OPC] [ ] [OPC]
  - full representation

- UG L1 Greek L2 English L3 Spanish
  - [OPC] [OPC] [ ] [OPC]
  - full representation

- **IF** both groups behave similarly, then UG (and not L1) is the privileged source of transfer in L3.

**2: Language-specific features: CFC**

- L1 English L2 Spanish
  - pro [+masc] pro [+masc]
  - under-representation

- Learners who had a language configuration different from above were **discarded**.

Doc: Durham PG conference presentation June 2001
The Overt Pronoun Constraint in L2 and L3 acquisition

L1 Greek
pro \{ [+masc] \\ [-masc] \}

L2 English
pro \{ [+masc] \}

L3 Spanish
pro \{ [+masc] \}

9 Method

Acceptability judgment test, 4 conditions:
- TARGET STIMULI:
  - 6 OPC stimuli
  - 6 CFC stimuli
- DISTRACTOR STIMULI:
  - 6 other pronominal stimuli
  - 6 other pronominal stimuli

1 Overt Pronoun Constraint (OPC):
The government has published a report about students' financial situation.
The report concludes that...
(a) cada estudiante dice que él tiene poco dinero. \(-2 \ -1 \ 0 \ +1 \ +2\)
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2 Contrastive Focus constraint (CFC):
Mr López and Ms García work at the university and at a famous publishers.
However...
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Note: even though [+masc] or [-masc] features in English can be present in some categories, they are certainly not present in pro since English does not allow pro.

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The Overt Pronoun Constraint in L2 and L3 acquisition

1. OPC results: acceptance rates of overt/null pronouns

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<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>(2, 1)</td>
<td>(2, 0)</td>
<td>(2, -1)</td>
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- **Within group**: paired samples t-test: each pair (grammatical vs ungrammatical condition) is statistically significant for each group (p<0.05)
- **Between groups**: (1-way ANOVA, post-hoc comparison Tukey HSD)
  - **Grammatical** [QDPi ... NULLi] → no difference between groups (p>0.05)
  - **Ungrammatical** *[QDPi ... OVERTi] → no difference between groups:
    - English = Spanish (p=0.169)
    - Greek = Spanish (p=0.942)

2. CFC results: acceptance rates of overt/null pronouns

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- **Between groups**: (1-way ANOVA, post-hoc comparison Tukey HSD)
  - **Grammatical** [QDPi ... OVERTj] → no difference between groups (p>0.05)
  - **Ungrammatical** *[QDPi ... NULLj] → between groups:
    - English ≠ Spanish (p=0.025)
    - Greek = Spanish (p=1.000)
11 Conclusion

► Have the original questions been answered?
  ► Q1: How to explain PSS at end-states? It can be explained with a feature-based model of SLA.
  ► Q2: Why do some learners show PSS whereas others don’t? Due to L1, specifically: due to a mismatch of feature instantiation in L1 and L2/L3.
  ► Q3: Is PSS due to a computational or representational deficit? Results suggest a representational deficit: English natives specify pro for [±masc] simultaneously when it should be specified for [+masc]/[-masc]. In the OPC cases, the computational mechanism is similar for all groups.

► Overall: L1 seems to be the key to representational deficits.

► OPC conclusion: L2/L3 learners show knowledge of OPC, at least in end-states. The OPC universality does NOT cause PSS.

► CFC conclusion: L1 feature specification of pro causes PSS for English natives (not for Greek natives) due to its language-specificity.

► ***insert representation trees about here***

12 References
