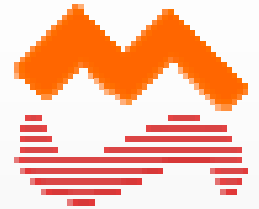




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Mehrsprachigkeit



Language Acquisition and Bilingualism: Consequences for a Multilingual Society
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The Development of the Weaker Language in Bilingual First Language Acquisition

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Simultaneous acquisition of bilingualism as multiple first language development



Differentiation of linguistic system from early on.

Uniformity: Course of acquisition proceeds through developmental sequences as in L1.

Success: Ultimately attained grammatical knowledge in each of the languages as in the respective L1.

Evidence for early differentiation in multiple first language development



Bilingual children

- 1) distinguish functionally between their languages at approximately age 1;10;
- 2) develop distinct grammatical properties in their grammars before age 2;0, MLU 2.0;
- 3) pattern with monolingual peers in developing grammatically distinct but superficially equivalent expressions differently in their languages;
- 4) use equivalent but grammatically distinct constructions differently in each language, thus exhibiting different patterns of usage.

Multiple first language development: Evidence for cross-linguistic interaction?



Possible effects of cross-linguistic interaction
(Paradis & Genesee, 1996):

Acceleration

delay

transfer

Such effects have been detected in

- only *some* children
- only *some* contexts in the speech of a given individual

Cross-linguistic interaction: Evidence against multiple first language development?



Interdependent development does not seem to result in qualitative differences in grammatical knowledge, as compared to monolinguals.

Qualitative differences, if

- the order of phases within developmental sequences is altered (*course of acquisition*)
- ultimately attained grammatical knowledge differs from that of the respective monolinguals (*success*)

Differences between (2)L1 and L2



- *Initial state.* L2 utterances are longer, possibly more complex, and contain functional elements.
- *Course of acquisition.* Invariant developmental sequences characterize both (2)L1 and L2, but they are not identical.
- *Rate of acquisition:* fast in L1, protracted in L2.
- *Uniformity:* significantly broader range of variation in L2, across individuals and within learners across time.
- *Ultimate attainment:* few or no learners reach native competence.

Differences between (2)L1 and L2 as qualitative differences



Fundamental Difference Hypothesis:

L2 learners do not have access to the full range of information offered by the LAD. Crucially, they do not have *direct* access to the options provided by parameterized UG principles.

L2 learners can, however, make use of previously acquired linguistic knowledge.

L2 learners have to resort to other cognitive resources in order to compensate for those not available anymore.

They have to rely on inductive learning where triggering of implicit knowledge has become impossible.

L2 linguistic knowledge is a *hybrid system*, containing task specific as well as general purpose representations and operations.

Basic Hypotheses



The human language faculty is an
endowment for multilingualism



Simultaneous Bilingualism:
multiple first language
development (2L1)

Successive Bilingualism:
substantial differences
between grammatical
knowledge in L1 and L2



Working Hypotheses

Age of onset of language acquisition is a primary cause for differences between 2L1 and L2.

L2 (child or adult): if first exposure to another language happens after (approximately) age four.

Onset of acquisition during the optimal period as a necessary but possibly not sufficient condition for successful L1 development.

Possible acquisition failure in L1



Late L1 acquisition

- Delayed acquisition of sign language by deaf children
- Delayed acquisition of an oral language by deaf children, after cochlear implants.

Reduced input in L1

- Severe cases of *otitis media* during the first year of life; deficits still identifiable at age 9 (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson 2003).

Possible acquisition failure in 2L1



Multiple first language development by mere exposure may not be successful in all settings, although exposure to another language happens during the first three years.

Settings which possibly result in *incomplete acquisition*:

- Successive acquisition of bilingualism in early childhood.
- The weaker language in simultaneous acquisition of bilingualism.

If this is the case - are all domains of grammar affected?
- can one identify causal factors?

The Weaker Language (WL): Commonly implied definitions



- The less frequently chosen language
- The less frequently used language
- The language with a slower rate of development.

These defining criteria are all quantitative in nature; they can equally plausibly be argued to be effects as well as causes of particular acquisition settings.

The Weaker Language (WL): Defining criteria suggested



- a) MLU
- b) Structures acquired: modals, subordinates, etc.
- c) Percentage of multi-morphemic utterances
- d) Longest utterance
- e) Number of word types in one language
- f) Vocabulary size
- g) Target-like performance
- h) Use of the language in inappropriate contexts
- i) Mixing in from the other language
- j) Willingness to speak spontaneously
- k) Preference of language use with other bilinguals

Terminological clarification: Dominance and balanced bilingualism



- 1) *Dominance*: Exposure, i.e. quantity and quality of input from the ambient languages.
- 2) *Preference*: Language choice, i.e. if bilinguals regularly prefer the use of one over the other language(s), notwithstanding specific contextual variables which guide code-switching and related phenomena.
- 3) *Weaker* language: If children develop partial or incomplete grammatical knowledge in one of the languages.

The weaker language



-
- “the stronger language exhibits all the characteristics of normal L1 development, as regards the central grammatical phenomena such as finiteness, word order, and placement of negation; whereas
 - the weaker language exhibits great variation in these respects, from complete non-existence of the grammatical phenomena mentioned to a lower occurrence of them in a corresponding sample of the stronger language.”

Schlyter (1993: 305).

The weaker language as a second language



Schlyter (1993), Schlyter & Håkansson (1994) :
The weaker language (WL) is acquired as an L2. This hypothesis implies:

- 1) WL as an instance of incomplete acquisition
- 2) WL resembles an L2

In search of the weaker language



-
- 1) Examine language use by children acquiring two or more languages since birth for signs of
 - delayed grammatical development or significantly limited production in one of the languages
 - constructions or developmental patterns not found in monolinguals or in balanced bilinguals
 - 2) Examine language development of bilinguals who
 - use "unusual" constructions in one language
 - which might qualify as the weaker one.

Vulnerable structures?



-
- 1) *Omission* of obligatory elements, more frequently and more persistently than in L1 or balanced 2L1:
 - subject position empty or insertion of lexical items from the stronger language
 - omission of objects
 - zero articles
 - 2) *Inflectional morphology*:
 - uninflected verb forms, overuse of 3rd sg. (copula, auxiliary)
 - gender markings incorrect or missing
 - 3) Deviant *word order* patterns:
 - XSV (*V3), failed V2 placement for finite verbs
 - VO instead of OV

Word order Schlyter & Håkansson (1994)



5 Swedish monolinguals

*V3 < 2%

SV/VS ratio 64/36%

5 Swedish L2 children (age of onset 4-5)

*V3 3% - 11.8%, average 7.5%

SV/VS ratio 92/8%

3 2L1 Swedish (SL)

*V3 < 2%

SV/VS ratio 67/34%

3 2L1 Swedish (WL)

*V3 highly variable

SV/VS ratio 90/10%

across & within individuals

Word order Schlyter & Håkansson (1994)



	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13
V2	.5	1.	/	.66	/	.66	1.	.75	.6	.33	0.	.22
*V3	.5	0.	/	.33	/	.33	0.	.25	.4	.66	1.	.7

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
V2	1.	.45	.66	.95	.8	1.	.9	1.
*V3	0.	.55	.33	.05	.2	0.	.1	0

	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
V2	1.	1.	.45	1.	1.	1.
*V3	0.	0.	.55	0.	0.	0.

WL as an L2?



Schlyter & Håkansson (1994) claim that the V2 parameter is set to the wrong value in WL Swedish.

- They include only those recordings in the analysis where Swedish is the WL – if weak/strong changes repeatedly over time, this cannot refer to the learners' knowledge.
- Patterns resembling L2 speech appear only temporarily.
- Correct order precedes deviant order, and then appears again, later on.

These developmental patterns speak against missetting of parameters; they support, instead, the view that they emerge when there is a “lack of control”.

Word order Döpke (1998, 2000)



The non-finite verb precedes the complement

*V_{inf}XP rather than standard XP V_{inf}

*ich möchte tragen dich

I want carry you

‘I want to carry you’

The finite verb follows the negator,

*NEG V_{fin} instead of German V_{fin} NEG.

*Hund nicht kommt rein

dog not come in

‘(the) dog doesn’t come in’

The non-finite verb appears in clause-second (V2) position.

*das arbeiten ich

that work_{inf} I

‘that I am working’

Word order Hulk & van der Linden (1996) and Hulk (2000)



OV order in the use of French by a bilingual child, Anouk, Dutch and French. Her first multi-word utterances exhibit variable order, including OV patterns.

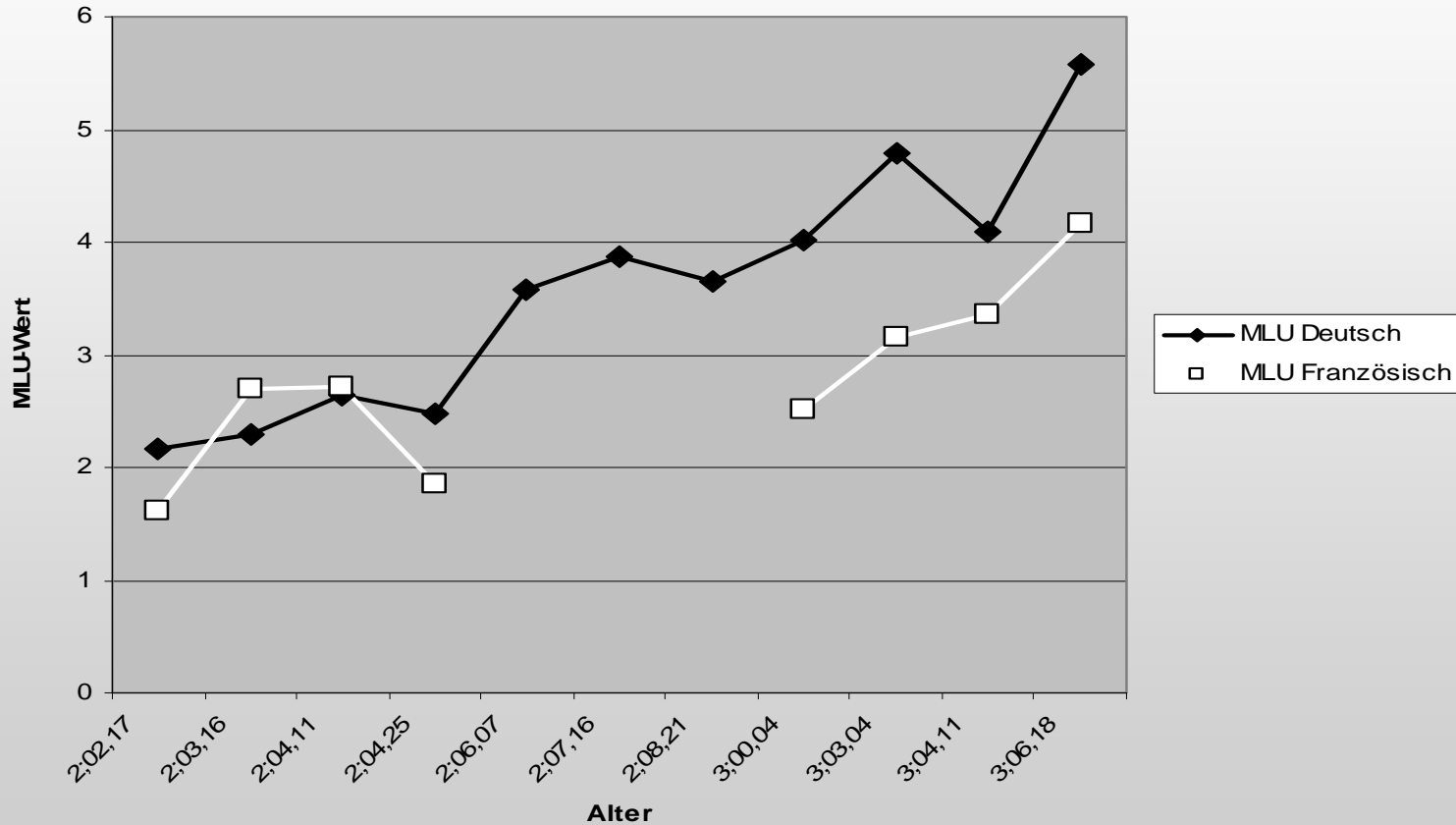
Hulk (2000, 74) argues “that the XP-V orders in bilingual French-Dutch children are not an example of transfer of basic Dutch OV-orders nor of missetting of a parametric value on the basis of the Dutch input”.

They are explained as resulting from processing mechanisms, i.e. “one language is activated while the other is inhibited. However, inhibition is never complete...” (Hulk: 2000, 75)

DuFDE children: Christophe



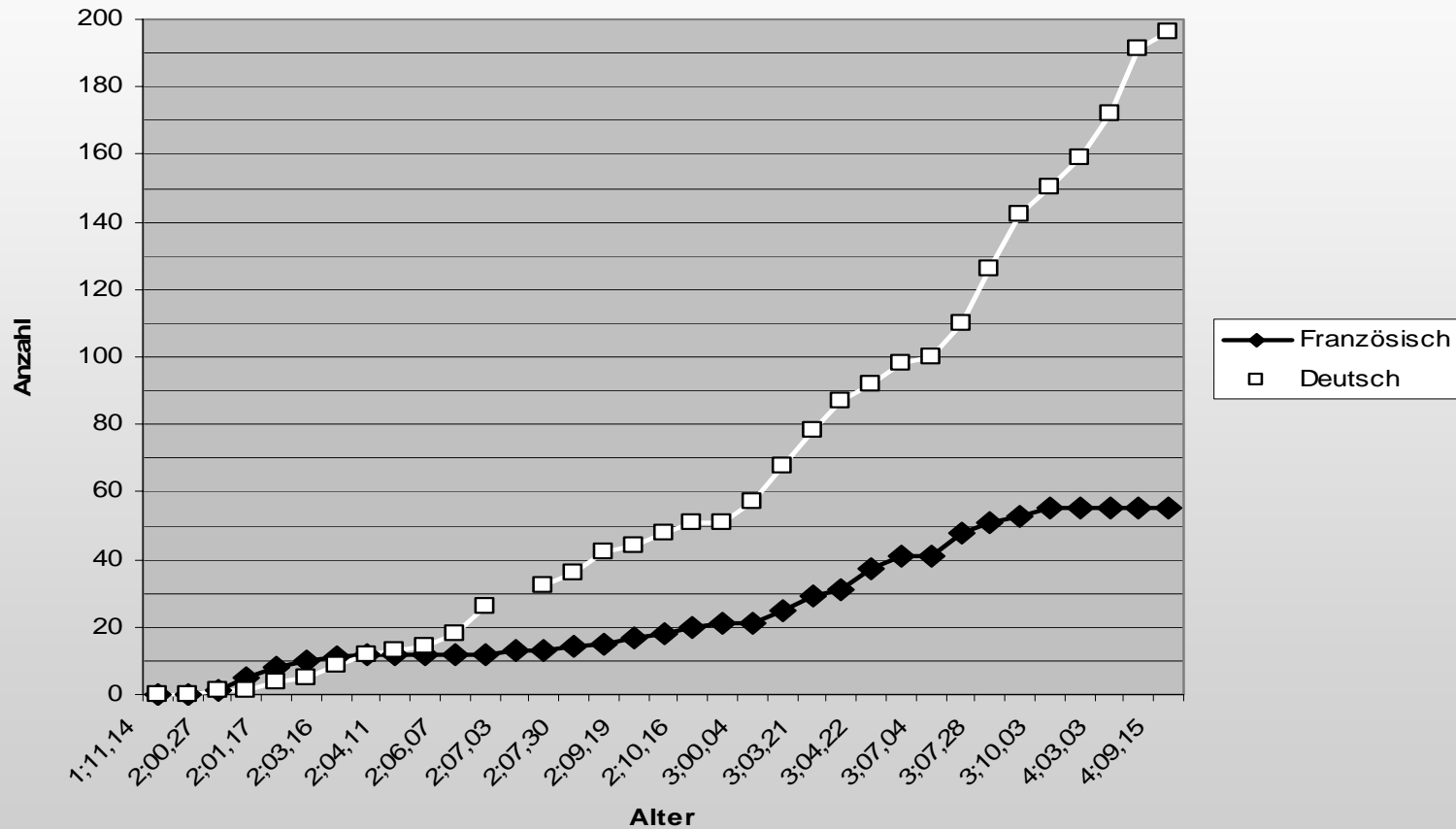
MLU Christophe



DuFDE children: Christophe



Verblexikon Christophe



DuFDE children: Christophe & François

Christophe & François

No target-deviant word order in French. As of 2;10, Christophe uses finite verbs and subject clitics. These forms are absent in two recordings after age 3;3. As of 3;4 increasing frequency of SCL – they disappear again as of 3;8. (Bonnesen, 2004)

Christophe

Developmental sequence for Tense and Aspect identical to monolingual and balanced bilinguals. Rate of acquisition delayed. (Rieckborn, 2005)

Summarizing some characteristics of the WL



-
- Problems with inflectional morphology and verb placement.
 - Delayed acquisition in several grammatical domains.
 - More persistent use of ‘unusual’ constructions.
 - No dissociation of morphology and syntax.
 - No transfer of parameterized word order options, e.g. V2.
 - Target-conforming forms and constructions emerge simultaneously with deviant ones, and sometimes even precede the latter.

Fundamental differences between the WL and balanced 2L1?



- Most of the phenomena allegedly characterizing the WL are also attested in the speech of L1 and balanced 2L1 children. If they appear more frequently and more persistently in the WL, this suggests that they indicate production problems, rather than incomplete acquisition.
- The WL should be characterized by phenomena which are *not* attested in (2)L1 - but possibly in L2.
- A principled account is needed, explaining why acquisition is only partially successful in some structural domains but fully successful in others.

Conclusions



The ‘weaker language’ of the 2L1 children reported on is characterized by a slower acquisition rate and by more frequent and more persistent occurrence of target-deviant forms and constructions.

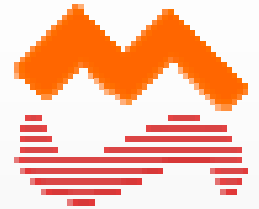
Grammatical knowledge of these children does not differ fundamentally from that of monolinguals or balanced bilinguals. No failure of acquisition, no incomplete acquisition, no different settings of parameters.

It remains to be seen whether in some cases, acquisition is not only delayed but permanently incomplete.



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Merci beaucoup!

Muito obrigado!

¡Muchas gracias!

Eskerrik asko!

Dank je wel!

Vielen Dank!