

Long-distance asymmetries in native and L3 Dutch.

We report on a speeded grammaticality judgment task with German learners of Dutch as an L3 (and L2 English) and a native Dutch control group. We focus on long-distance (LD) subject and object extractions from *dat* ('that')-clauses vis-à-vis partial wh-movement (PM) subject and object questions. German and Dutch show different patterns of acceptability for these constructions: in standard German, LD constructions are borderline acceptable, showing a subject/object asymmetry (subject < object), whereas PM is fully acceptable. In Dutch, conversely, PM is restricted to "colloquial" Dutch, but LD movement is fully acceptable. Furthermore, Dutch has been reported to lack an LD subject/object asymmetry, for which there is no satisfactory explanation. In English (the L2 of our experimental group), PM is impossible, and LD constructions show a strong subject/object asymmetry (COMP-trace effect). Our research questions were whether L3 Dutch learners transfer L1 or L2 knowledge to the L3 w.r.t to the type of wh-questions and subject/object asymmetries. The results showed that the German group rated PM more acceptable than LD constructions, suggesting transfer from the L1 but not the L2, whereas the Dutch speakers rated LD constructions more acceptable than PM constructions. A surprising outcome for Dutch was that in contrast to earlier experiments, a significant LD subject/object asymmetry was attested, which appears to be task-dependent and only shows up with sensitive enough measures. The fact that the asymmetry in Dutch is relatively weak is in favor on processing-based explanations for the LD subject/object asymmetries. Another surprising result for the Dutch group is their relatively high acceptance of PM constructions. We hypothesize that this is due to an ongoing change in Dutch, where PM constructions are becoming more and more common. We are currently collecting data from English L3 learners of Dutch, which we also hope to include in our talk.