

Contents

List of abbreviations	5
Preface	9
1 Approaches to the study of child language acquisition	12
1.1 Formal and functional approaches in linguistics	12
1.2 Theoretical orientations in language acquisition research	14
1.3 Language acquisition in the formal framework	15
1.3.1 The logical problem	15
1.3.2 Functional categories in child language	16
1.3.3 How to maintain UG when children speak different from adults?	17
1.3.3.1 <i>Maturation</i>	18
1.3.3.2 <i>Continuity</i>	20
1.3.3.3 <i>Triggering</i>	21
1.3.3.4 <i>The Lexical Learning Hypothesis</i>	23
1.3.3.5 <i>Multiple grammars</i>	24
1.4 Statistical learning models and the role of frequency	25
1.4.1 <i>Connectionist models</i>	25
1.4.2 <i>Developmental compatibility in formal and statistical learning models</i>	26
1.4.3 <i>The Variational Model</i>	27
1.5 Language acquisition in the functional framework	29
1.6 Testing acquisition models with bilingual data	30
2 Language influence, language separation and language dominance	33
2.1 Language influence and language separation	33
2.2 Language influence despite separation	36
2.2.1 Language influence despite separation in mixed utterances	36
2.2.2 Language influence in monolingual utterances	37
2.2.3 The prediction of cross-linguistic influence in bilingual acquisition	40
2.2.4 Recent developments	41
2.3 The role of language dominance in bilingual acquisition	42
2.3.1 Treatments of language dominance in the literature	43
2.3.2 The weaker language	44
2.3.3 Criteria to measure language imbalance	45
2.3.4 Dominance, balance, and preference	46
3. The bilingual database	48
3.1 Description of the corpora	48
3.1.1 The German-Italian bilinguals	49
3.1.2 The German-French bilinguals	50
3.2 The bilingual children's language balance	51

4 The forms and the distribution of determiners in French, German and Italian	56
4.1 Determiner forms	57
4.1.1 French	57
4.1.2 German	58
4.1.3 Italian	59
4.1.4 Some statistical information on article forms	60
4.1.4.1 <i>Token frequency of determined nouns as compared to bare nouns</i>	60
4.1.4.2 <i>Type frequency of determiners across languages</i>	61
4.2 Contexts of determiner use in French, German, and Italian	62
4.2.1 The syntactic and semantic contexts of determination	63
4.2.2 The distribution of bare nouns from a quantitative perspective	67
4.2.2.1 <i>Bare nouns and their syntactic function</i>	67
4.2.2.2 <i>Bare nouns semantically</i>	69
4.2.2.3 <i>Summary of the corpus analysis</i>	73
4.3 The complexity of noun phrases	73
5. The syntactic representation of noun phrases	76
5.1 From NP to DP	76
5.1.1 The X-bar scheme	76
5.1.2 The DP-hypothesis	77
5.1.3 Uniformity vs. variability, reference and specificity	79
5.2 The uniformity hypothesis	81
5.2.1 Longobardi's treatment of bare nouns in Italian (The theory of N-raising)	81
5.2.2 Bare nouns in Germanic (The theory of N-raising)	85
5.2.3 Problems with the theory of N-raising	87
5.2.3.1 <i>Inconsistencies across languages</i>	87
5.2.3.2 <i>Bare nouns in lexically ungoverned positions</i>	88
5.2.3.3 <i>Bare nouns to which the existential interpretation does not apply</i>	88
5.2.3.4 <i>Bare singular nouns</i>	89
5.2.3.5 <i>Abstract nouns</i>	90
5.2.3.6 <i>Semantic inconsistencies</i>	91
5.3 The variability hypothesis	92
5.3.1 Specificity and the NP-DP distinction	93
5.3.2 Syntactic arguments in favor of the variability hypothesis	94
5.3.2.1 <i>Binding properties</i>	94
5.3.2.2 <i>Combination possibilities of definite and indefinite determiners</i>	97
5.3.3 The integration of semantic notions into DP-structure	98

6 Determiner omissions in children acquiring French, German, and Italian	100
6.1 Studies on monolingual acquisition: Theories and empirical facts	100
6.1.1 The Nominal Mapping Parameter	100
6.1.2 Determiner acquisition in monolingual French children	105
6.1.3 Determiner acquisition in monolingual German children	106
6.1.3.1 <i>Determiner acquisition and triggering hierarchies</i>	106
6.1.3.2 <i>Determiner acquisition and the Lexical Learning Hypothesis</i>	108
6.1.3.3 <i>Other studies on determiner acquisition in German</i>	110
6.1.4 Determiner acquisition in monolingual Italian children	110
6.1.4.1 <i>Morphological aspects</i>	110
6.1.4.2 <i>Proto-syntactic devices</i>	112
6.1.4.3 <i>Other studies on determiner acquisition in Italian</i>	113
6.1.5 Determiner omission in children with specific language impairment	114
6.1.5.1 <i>French</i>	115
6.1.5.2 <i>German</i>	115
6.1.5.3 <i>Italian</i>	115
6.1.6 Summary	117
6.2 Previous studies on determiner omission in bilingual children acquiring French, German, and Italian	118
6.2.1 Studies with French as one of the languages	118
6.2.2 Studies with Italian as one of the languages	120
6.2.3 Summary	122
7 Bare nouns in bilingual children acquiring French, German, and Italian	123
7.1 Monolingual control data	123
7.2 Methods: Coding and analysis	125
7.3 The rate of determiner omission in the two languages of each bilingual child: influence or separation?	126
7.4 The rate of determiner omission in each language compared to monolingual children: acceleration or delay?	131
7.4.1 French	131
7.4.2 Italian	133
7.4.3 German	135
7.4.4 Summary	138
7.5 Relevance of the results in the light of previous research	140
7.5.1 The coexistence of language influence and language separation	140
7.5.2 The direction of language influence	142
7.5.3 Language influence and dominance	143
7.5.4 Acquisition theories	144
8. Determiner functions in previous acquisition studies	146
8.1 The earliest functions: deixis and naming	146
8.2 The distinction between specific and non-specific reference	148
8.3 Identifying function, egocentricity, and anaphoric reference	152

9. Article functions in two bilingual children acquiring German and French/Italian	157
9.1 The corpora	157
9.2 A quantitative overview of article-types and bare nouns	159
9.3 Bare nouns, determiners and object reference during the early stage	162
9.3.1 Object reference with deictic elements and bare nouns	162
9.3.2 The first articles	164
9.3.3 The early stage in brief	168
9.4 Non-specific noun phrases	169
9.4.1 Namings	170
9.4.2 Non-specific indefinites	171
9.4.3 Incorporations	172
9.4.4 Non-specific definite noun phrases	172
9.4.5 Summary and overview	174
9.5 Specific noun phrases	178
9.5.1 Referents which are situationally identifiable	178
9.5.2 Unique entities	180
9.5.3 Possessed entities as part-whole relations	181
9.5.4 Indefinite specific noun phrases	182
9.5.5 Anaphoric uses/second mentions	185
9.5.6 Summary and overview	188
9.6 Semantically incorrect determiner forms	192
9.6.1 Semantically incorrect indefinite NPs	192
9.6.1.1 <i>Incoherence errors</i>	194
9.6.1.2 <i>The mass/count distinction</i>	194
9.6.1.3 <i>Indefinite articles in contexts of specific reference</i>	195
9.6.2 Semantically incorrect definite NPs	196
9.6.2.1 <i>Definite article with namings</i>	196
9.6.2.2 <i>Egocentric errors</i>	198
9.6.2.3 <i>Definite articles with non-specific reference</i>	199
9.7 Target-deviant bare nouns	200
9.8 Summary	204
10. Conclusions	206
10.1 Language influence and language dominance in bilingual acquisition	206
10.1.1 Influence and separation	206
10.1.2 Language influence and language dominance in bilingual acquisition	208
10.1.3 Complexity and the direction of language influence	210
10.2 Forms and functions	212
10.2.1 The empirical results in the light of previous research on article functions	212
10.2.2 Semantic and pragmatic features in the DP	213
10.2.3 Theories on forms and functions in acquisition	217
References	219
Appendix	235