

Table of Contents

1 Introduction	1
1.1 Motivation for the study	2
1.2 Aims of the study	3
1.3 Theoretical framework and outline of the study	4
2 Functional features in language acquisition: The state of the art	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Theory development in language acquisition	11
2.2.1 Where language acquisition starts	13
2.2.2 How language acquisition develops	15
2.2.3 Types of language acquisition	17
2.2.4 Functional features in L2 acquisition: morphological variability in L2 grammar	18
2.2.5 Second language acquisition: variables and contexts	30
2.3 Articles in first and second language acquisition	47
2.3.1 Articles in German and English: a contrastive analysis	48
2.3.2 First language acquisition of the nominal system in German and English	65
2.3.3 Second language acquisition of the German nominal system	72
2.4 Summary	76
3 Empirical evidence	81
3.1 Introduction	81
3.2 Research questions and hypotheses	82
3.2.1 The development of nominal accuracy in child L2 German	83
3.2.2 The role of transfer	88
3.2.3 Task effects	92
3.3 Methodology	94
3.3.1 Immersion education	94
3.3.2 Data collection	95
3.3.3 Data analysis	111
3.4 Summary	120

4 Findings.....	123
4.1 Introduction	123
4.2 Results.....	123
4.2.1 Measuring proficiency: SOPA results.....	124
4.2.2 Describing development: analyzing spontaneous production data	129
4.2.3 Investigating the development of nominal accuracy in child L2 German.....	133
4.2.4 Investigating the role of L1 transfer in the acquisition of L2 grammar	164
4.2.5 Investigating task effects in L2 production	167
4.3 Revisiting the research questions and hypotheses	172
4.4 Summary	174
5 Discussion.....	177
5.1 Introduction	177
5.2 Contributing to theory development in L2A research	177
5.3 The German determiner system in second language acquisition	181
5.3.1 Explaining morphological variability in L2A	183
5.4 Quality management in language learning.....	190
5.4.1 Input modifications	194
5.4.2 Task design, attention to speech and focus on form.....	197
5.5 Outlook and research desiderates	200
5.6 Summary	202
6 Conclusion.....	205
7 References.....	209
8 Appendix	229
8.1 German gender paradigms.....	229
8.2 Experiments and testing materials	230
8.3 Results and statistics.....	244