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Learning L2 Rhythm: Does the direction of acquisition matter?

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Research Question

Does the direction of learning affect the acquisition of final and accentual lengthening by Dutch learners of Spanish (DLS) and Spanish learners of Dutch (SLD)?

Background

Markedness Differential Hypothesis

[Edelman, 1977, 2008]

"the areas of the target language that differ from the L1 and are more marked than the L1 will be difficult for L2 learners."

Hypothesis

Rhythmic features of Dutch are more difficult to acquire for Spanish learners than the rhythmic feature of Spanish are for Dutch learners.

Focus on: accentual and final lengthening

Method

Participants

5 participants per language group:
L1 Dutch, DLS with varying proficiency: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2
L1 Spanish, SLD with varying proficiency: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1

Materials

15 sentences with comparable type and number of syllables and prosodic frases for both languages.


Procedure

Participants were asked to read the sentences aloud, repeating those that were not fluent.

Prosodic coding

(Prieto et al., 2012)

Statistical analysis

Generalized Linear Mixed Effects model

Fixed factors: speaker group, lengthening level (either accentual or final)
Random factor: speaker

Target variable: syllable duration, in percentage of baseline condition

Contribution

H: Rhythmic features of Dutch are more difficult to acquire for Spanish learners than Spanish is for Dutch learners.

Both groups approach native values quite well.

Statistically, there are no differences found that can determine whether DLS or SLD advance more towards their target.

The hypothesis cannot be rejected based on the results.

Discussion

- effect of syllable structure (CV, CVC, or mixed)
- rhythm metrics
- include item as a random factor

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Group</th>
<th>Lengthening in % of baseline condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLD A1</td>
<td>134 144 154 164 174 184 194 204 214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD A2</td>
<td>114 124 134 144 154 164 174 184 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD B1</td>
<td>110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD B2</td>
<td>100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD C1</td>
<td>90   100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL L1</td>
<td>80   90   100 110 120 130 140 150 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS A1</td>
<td>70   80   90   100 110 120 130 140 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS A2</td>
<td>60   70   80   90   100 110 120 130 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS B1</td>
<td>50   60   70   80   90   100 110 120 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS B2</td>
<td>40   50   60   70   80   90   100 110 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS C1</td>
<td>30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLS C2</td>
<td>20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 SP</td>
<td>10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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