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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)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“stress-timed”</td>
<td>“syllable-timed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complex syllables</td>
<td>(up to 6 Cs in 1 syllable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<final lengthening> & <accentual lengthening>

Procedure

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

Materials

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

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

Results

Conclusion

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 were 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

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Rhythm & Markedness

Stress-timed is more marked than syllable-timed (e.g., Ordin & Polyanskaya, 2015; Payne, Post, Prieto, Vanrell & L. Astruc, 2012)

Lengthening effects of any kind imply that there is a lower baseline.

Dutch is more marked than Spanish, due to its complex syllable structure and lengthening effects.

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