Acquiring native-like intonation in Dutch and Spanish
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Document version:
Early version, also known as pre-print

Publication date:
2013

Citation for published version (APA):
**Acquiring native-like intonation in Dutch and Spanish**

Comparing the L1 and L2 of native speakers and second language learners

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**Introduction**

**Goal of our study**
To learn more about the acquisition of intonation in a second language.

**Research Questions**

**RQ1** Do Spanish and Dutch differ in the way they use intonation to mark information status?

**RQ2** If so, does this lead to prosodic transfer from the L1 to the L2 (in both languages)? (Rasier & Hiligsmann, 2009)

**RQ3** If so, is the extent of the prosodic transfer influenced by the proficiency level of the L2 learner? (Swerts & Zerbian, 2010)

**RQ4** If so, is prosodic transfer bi-directional? Does the L2 also influence the L1? (Mennen, 2004)

**Method**

**Participants (N=124)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSD</th>
<th>NSS</th>
<th>Less proficient DLS</th>
<th>Proficient DLS</th>
<th>Less proficient SLD</th>
<th>Proficient SLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=26</td>
<td>n=19</td>
<td>n=21</td>
<td>n=19</td>
<td>n=19</td>
<td>n=20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Speech election task**
Describe the objects and their color (n=4).

**Information status types (n=4)**

- **NN**: Both the first and the second word of the NP are new in the list.

- **GN**: The second word of the NP is new in the list, but the first one is the same as the first word in the preceding NP.

- **NG**: The first word is new in that list, but the second word is identical to the second word of the preceding NP.

- **GG**: Both the first and the second word are used in the preceding NP, but not in the description of any other picture in the list.

**Measure**
Difference score in Hertz (F0 word 2 - F0 word 1).

**Results**

**Spanish**

- 'green GLOVE' in GN and NG

**Dutch**

- 'green BROOM' in GN and NG

**Discussion & Conclusion**

**Answers to Research Questions**

**RQ1** Yes, Dutch and Spanish differ in the way they use intonation to mark information status (see pitch tracks).

**RQ2** This leads to prosodic transfer: both learner groups copy pitch accent and boundary tone patterns of their L1 to their L2.

**RQ3** The extent of the prosodic transfer is clearly influenced by the proficiency level of the second language learner.

**RQ4** But there is no evidence that suggests that the L2 also influences the L1, so the transfer is not bidirectional.

- Bidirectional transfer possibly only takes place when intonation does not have a functional meaning or at the highest proficiency level.

- Future work might focus on the effect of non-native intonation on the intelligibility/comprehensibility of L2 speech by means of perception studies.