

Title: When empirical data met formal linguistics: variation in Spanish noun phrase

Abstract: Prior debates on L2 parameter re-setting (e.g., White, 2003) has led to recent proposals such as the *Interpretability Hypothesis* (Hawkins and Hattori, 2006, Tsimpli & Dimitrakopoulou, 2007) excluding L2A of non-L1 uninterpretable features, and more recently *Feature Reassembly Hypothesis* (Hwang & Lardiere, 2013; Lardiere, 2009) supporting that L2 readjustment is an arduous acquisition task for [+/-] interpretable features. In this presentation, I will explore L1 transfer and L2A of uninterpretable and interpretable features by studying the development of certain Spanish features within the DP (following Bernstein (2001), Cinque (1994; 2010), Demonte (2008), Picallo (1991) amongst others). In particular, I will centre on the development of both uninterpretable (i.e., gender/number determiner-noun concord) and interpretable (i.e., semantic collocation of adjectives) features.

This presentation assesses the predictions of the aforementioned L2 acquisition hypotheses in light of 3 experimental tasks (namely, a Grammaticality Judgment task (80 items); a Semantic Interpretation task (20 items) and a Semantic Collocation task (20 items)) design to test different features within the Spanish noun phrase. The results of the linguistic tasks from the different L2 learners of Spanish (i.e., similar L1-L2 language pairing (French and Spanish) and different one (Chinese-Spanish)) suggest that regardless of the language pairing the Advanced L2 groups have attained the syntactic and semantic properties of the Spanish DP. However, the intermediate L2 groups show, regardless of their L1, a deficit in knowledge: some knowledge of the 'pure' syntactic uninterpretable features of the Spanish DP, but delays in their accurate interpretation and production of the semantic interpretations, that falls out from the syntax, are observed. I will argue that parametrically (dis-)similar adjective semantic collocations are not totally available to adult L2 learners, but that proficiency group and individual differences figure largely in the implementation of the semantic of certain adjective classes, causing semantic collocation competence target deviant patterns. Looking at what these data tell us in reference to current SLA debates, I will confirm that the acquisition of uninterpretable and interpretable features, and feature re-assembly in L2 Spanish is not totally trouble-free as simple current features and transfer accounts would support and an opposing combined parametric and feature reassembly account for L2 acquisition would be offered.