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The (In)Stability of Linguistic Systems: Evidence from the Performance of Spanish
Monolinguals, Heritage Speakers, and Second Language Learners

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Abstract

The present paper examines (in)stability in the interpretation and production of clause-initial direct objects in the Spanish grammars of monolinguals, heritage speakers, and second language learners. Analysis of data obtained through two tasks indicates a developmental continuum: monolinguals most closely approximate grammatical targets in which generic DPs are fronted into a Topic position and specific DPs appear in Clitic Left Dislocation constructions; heritage speakers manifest more variable behavior characterized by contraction in the projections that are pertinent to the licensing of fronted objects; second language learners demonstrate a preference for passive and intransitive constructions that confirms a lack of command of the structures of the left periphery, although they display incipient sensitivity to the relationship between bare DPs and Topicalization.

The (In)Stability of Linguistic Systems: Evidence from the Performance of Spanish Monolinguals, Heritage Speakers, and Second Language Learners

In recent years, significant attention has been devoted to the interfaces between the core grammar and other peripheral systems, e.g., the perceptual/articulatory and the cognitive/interpretive components. One generalization that emerges from studies couched within this approach is that the narrow syntax, which is controlled by formal features such as Case and Agreement, demonstrates greater stability than the interface with cognitive/interpretive modules, which are regulated by lexico- and discourse-semantic considerations. The present paper pursues this line of inquiry by reference to the interpretation and production of generic and specific DP-fronting in Spanish among monolinguals, heritage speakers, and intermediate adult second language (L2) learners.

The presentation is organized as follows. The first section outlines the target of investigation, clause-initial direct objects in Spanish, whose interpretation and production is mediated by the articulation between the clause and the larger discourse. The next two sections present the findings of selected studies on variability in the linguistic performance of heritage speakers of Spanish and adult L2 learners of Spanish, foregrounding efforts devoted to the interface components of the grammatical system. The ensuing section describes the present investigation, its participants, materials, and protocols. The subsequent two sections delineate the results of the study and discuss its broader implications.

The object of investigation: Clause-initial direct objects

In Spanish, the ordering of constituents with bivalent predicates is determined by information structure, in particular, the distinction between new information—focus—and old information—topic (Contreras, 1976; Hernánz & Bruccart, 1987; Suñer, 1982; Zubizarreta, 1998). The canonical ordering in declaratives is SVO, as shown in (1a) and (2a), but structures encoding non-neutral alternate pragmatic values, dictated by the information structure of the sentence, may be derived by preposing internal arguments to clause-initial position. This is the case in the examples in (1b) and (2b), in which the direct object, thematized in the discourse, is fronted. Note that that in (2b), the fronted element is copied by a resumptive pronominal clitic, a property that will be addressed in the ensuing discussion.

- (1) a. Nydia pidió un café.
 Nydia requested-3SG a coffee
 ‘Nydia requested a cup of coffee.’
- b. Un café pidió Nydia
 a coffee requested-3SG Nydia
 ‘A cup of coffee Nydia requested.’
- (2) a. José y Yesica hicieron el pastel.
 José and Yesica made-3PL the cake
 ‘José and Yesica made the cake.’

- b. El pastel lo hicieron José y Yesica.
 the cake CL made-3PL José and Yesica
 ‘The cake José and Yesica made.’

In discussing sentential configurations, researchers such as Rizzi (1997), Poletto (2000), and Benincà (2001), among others, distinguish between the propositional content that is expressed in IP (termed Finiteness) and the ‘articulation of discourse’ (termed Force) expressed by the projection of functional structure, including Topic and Focus, in the area of the left periphery.¹ Of significance for the present discussion are the distinctions among three types of non-Focus object-preposing: Hanging Topics, Clitic Left Dislocation, and Topicalization. Hanging Topics are base-generated in the left periphery, i.e., they are not linked to elements in the IP, and, therefore, are not marked with the case of the resumptive element in the clause:

(3) Hanging Topic

- a. Tomás, lo vimos (a él) en la fiesta.
 Tomás, CL saw-1PL (ACC he) at the party
 ‘Tomás: we saw him at the party.’
- b. Los perros, les di (a ellos) de comer.
 the dogs, CL gave-1SG (DAT them) to eat-INF
 ‘The dogs: I gave them (something) to eat.’

In contrast, Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) structures include a clitic projection between IP and VP (see Sportiche, 1996), which attracts the definite direct object DP to

its Specifier; as a consequence, definite direct objects cannot be fronted without the accompanying clitic:

(4) Clitic Left Dislocation

- a. A la hermana de Silvina la eligieron presidente.
ACC the sister of Silvina CL elected-3PL president
'Silvina's sister they elected her president.'
- b. La orquídea la encontraron en la selva.
the orchid CL found-3PL in the jungle
'The orchid they found it in the jungle.'

However, generic thematized objects are preposed to the periphery without a resumptive element, as shown in (5).²

(5) Topicalization

- a. Lingüística enseña Barbara.
linguistics teach-3SG Barbara
'Linguistics Barbara teaches.'
- b. Ejercicio Lucía hace todos los días.
exercise Lucia do-3SG all the days
'Exercise Lucia does every day.'

Thus, the preposing of the direct object in CLLD and Topicalization is conditioned in most dialects of Spanish by definiteness and by properties of interpretation that surface in the formulation of utterances, i.e., in the interface of the syntax with information structure

(Camacho, 1999; Casielles Suarez, 2004; Contreras, 1976; Rivero, 1980; Zubizarreta, 1998).

To recapitulate, Spanish Topicalization and CLLD, of interest here, are similar operations in that they generally involve old information—the constituent about which the sentence is predicated—and are distinguished from focalization. However, they differ in the realization of a pronominal clitic. Another distinguishing property is revealed in the preceding examples: Topicalization, like the fronting of *wh*-arguments, requires that the verb appear preposed to the subject (Torrego, 1984); no such inversion is required in CLLD:

- (6) a. Un viaje a las Canarias hizo Juan. /*Un viaje a las Canarias Juan hizo.
 a trip to the Canaries made-3SG Juan/ a trip to the Canaries Juan made-3SG
 'A trip to the Canary Islands Juan took.'
- b. Ese libro de Chomsky lo leyó Marc./ Ese libro de Chomsky Marc lo leyó.
 that book of Chomsky CL read-3SG Marc/ that book of Chomsky Marc CL
 read-3SG
 'That book of Chomsky's Marc read.'

Spanish Topicalization and CLLD operations differ from their English counterparts in multiple respects, as noted in Casielles Suarez (2004). For example, as already remarked, Topicalization in Spanish is restricted to generic nominals (7a); CLLD structures require a definite DP. In contrast, English allows for definite DPs to be topicalized without an accompanying clitic (7b).

- (7) a. Café cosechó él mismo. / El café lo cosechó él mismo.
 coffee harvested-3SG he-NOM self / the coffee CL harvested-3SG he-NOM
 self
- b. ‘Coffee he harvested himself. / The coffee he harvested himself.’

In addition, while both Spanish and English allow for fronting of referential DPs, Spanish additionally allows for the fronting of a diversity of constituents, as illustrated by the adjectival in (8a). Furthermore, Spanish allows for the dislocation of multiple constituents (8b), whereas English allows for only one. Finally, dislocated elements can be fronted in subordinate clauses in Spanish, but not in English (8c).

- (8) a. Listo no lo es.
 ‘Intelligent he is not (*it).’
- b. Estos libros yo a Juan nunca se los dejaría.
 ?*‘These books I to Juan would never lend them.’
- c. La única persona que a Juan nunca le ha hecho un favor...
 *‘The only person who to John has never done a favor...’

Such distinctions lead Casielles Suarez to suggest that Spanish CLLD and English represent different structures. CLLD in Spanish appears to be more productive than its counterpart in English, allowing for thematization of multiple and varied sentential elements in matrix and embedded contexts. Indeed, she proposes to extend the scope of Spanish CLLD to include Topicalization, arguing that the absence of the clitic in the latter emerges from the absence of an indefinite clitic in Modern Spanish. That is, Topicalization is simply CLLD with a null pronominal clitic. Its English counterpart does

not involve a clitic, null or overt. The structural differences between thematization strategies in both languages make them ideal testing grounds for instability of linguistic structures that are at the syntax/pragmatics interface.

Selected studies on Topicalization and CLLD structures in contact and L2 Spanish

As has been repeatedly documented, non-target or compromised language performance may be ascribed to number of linguistic, social, and psychological factors, among these, a decline in the pattern or the frequency of use of a language, a lack of normative linguistic pressures, a lack of nurturing of a language or language variety—all common in bilingual settings (see Dorian, 1981; Silva-Corvalán, 1994/2000; Thomason, 2001; Winford, 2003). Particularly sensitive to variability are syntactic structures whose interpretation is dependent on discourse conditions. Numerous studies have focused on the variable production of overt and null subjects among heritage speakers of Spanish (Flores & Toro, 2000; Lipski, 1996; Satterfield, 2003). Likewise at the center of recent investigations of contact Spanish is the impoverishment in properties of meaning, such as Tense/Mood, Topic, and Focus (e.g., Montrul, 2002, 2004, in press; Sánchez, 1997; Silva-Corvalán, 1991, 1994/2000; Toribio, 2004).

Topicalization and focalization strategies have also been analyzed as areas that are unstable and permeable in contact Spanish. In a study on word order in the Spanish spoken by Quechua speakers, Camacho (1999) identifies two kinds of sentences that illustrate the difficulty of acquiring the distinction between Topicalization and CLLD in Spanish. The first type corresponds to sentences such as the bracketed expression in (9) that involve a fronted object:

- (9) Hay veces con las ropitas me ayudan, [*ropitas usadas* pa' mis hijitos me dan]
 sometimes give the clothes CL help, clothes used for-my children CL give
 ‘Sometimes they help me with clothes, used clothes for my children, they give
 me.’ (Camacho, p. 123)

In sentence (9), the DP *ropitas usadas* ‘used clothes’ is fronted and could be interpreted either as a focused or as a topicalized element in a monolingual variety of Spanish.

Camacho notes that this is not the interpretation that this fragment receives in the Spanish of Quechua speakers. Indeed, the fronted expression cannot be focused since it does not carry new information, as the first part of sentence (9) makes clear. It is not a fronted topic either, since it is not a generic expression and only generic expressions allow the omission of a clitic in monolingual varieties of Spanish (see examples 3 and 4 above).

According to Camacho, this fragment carries the canonical (S)OV word order associated with sentential focus (not topics) in Quechua, a language that marks topicalized and focalized DPs with overt morphology. Interestingly, the Spanish of Quechua speakers manifests phrases such as *nomás pue(s)* in (10) serve the same function as the overt morphological markers of Quechua.

- (10) ¿Quién cría esas vacas en las alturas?
 who rears these cows in the heights?
 ‘Who rears cows in the higher altitudes?’
 En alturas, los paisanos *nomás pue* crian pe
 in heights, the villagers FOC rear indeed
 ‘In the higher altitudes, the villagers rear (them)’ (Camacho, p. 128)

Camacho (1999) proposes that speakers of this contact variety of Spanish, at the stage in which they produce expressions such as the one in (9), have not yet reset the value of sentential focus associated to SOV word order in Quechua to the SVO word order required in Spanish and are insensitive to the subtle contrast between definite and indefinite DP-fronting in Spanish, namely, between Topicalization and CLLD. This is further confirmed in cases of non-definite DP-fronting in subordinate clauses:

- (11) a. ¿Y tú vuelves a Ayacucho para ayudar a tus padres en la chacra?
 ‘And you return to Ayacucho to help your parents in the farm?’
- b. Sí, claro... maíz para cultivarlo, para sembrar
 yes of course...corn to cultivate-CL, to plant
 ‘Yes of course to cultivate corn, to plant (corn)’ (Camacho, p. 124)

This sentence is ungrammatical in monolingual varieties of Spanish since it involves fronting of an indefinite DP out of a purpose clause. As Camacho points out, even if this fronting were interpreted as part of a CLLD structure, the generic nature of the DP makes the sentence not viable in Spanish.

In the discipline of second language acquisition, similar studies of L2 Spanish are interpreted in view of potential linguistic restructuring. For example, English is strictly SVO in declaratives, sharing with Spanish the head-initial parameter setting, whereas Spanish additionally allows OVS, OSV, and SOV, the later options achieved by raising of the verb through the functional projections that articulate INFL, as well as syntactic operations such Topicalization and CLLD. González (1997) presented Spanish learners of diverse levels with sentences exemplifying alternative orderings of major constituents, as in (12), and asked them to identify the subject and object of each.

- (12) a. El entusiasmo vence la dificultad.
the enthusiasm defeat-3SG the difficulty
‘Enthusiasm overcomes difficulties.’
- b. Unos libros compró Juan.
some books bought-3SG Juan
‘John bought some books.’
- c. Dicen que al dictador el pueblo lo repudia.
say-3PL that ACC-the dictator the people CL rejected-3SG
‘They say that the people rejected the dictator.’
- d. Don Fermín sus espuelas las sacó de la sala.
Don Fermín his spurs ACC took-out-3SG from the room
‘Don Fermín took his spurs from the room.’

Results are consistent with gradual re-specification of settings in the adult grammar: although SVO was the order most easily acquired by all learners, first- and second-year learners followed the same acquisitional order as children (SVO < SOV < OSV < OVS), and third- and fourth-year learners were more successful with non-English structures such as Topicalization and CLLD structures.

In another study of L2 Spanish, Licerias, Soloaga, and Carballo (1992) tested English- (and French-) speaking learners’ sensitivity to the distinction between fronted definite and generic DPs in Topicalization and CLLD structures. They also tested learners’ sensitivity to the fact that Topicalization, but not CLLD, requires verb-subject inversion. Example (13) represents a sample multiple-choice item with a fronted [+human] DP:

(13) Mira Juan, ‘Look Juan,’

a) a su novia Javier no necesita

ACC his girlfriend Javier NEG need-3SG

b) a su novia Javier no la necesita

ACC his girlfriend Javier NEG CL need-3SG

c) a su novia no necesita Javier

ACC his girlfriend NEG need-3SG Javier

d) a su novia no la necesita Javier

ACC his girlfriend NEG CL need-3SG Javier

‘His girlfriend Javier doesn’t need (her).’

The results from a control group of native speakers showed a high preference (81% of participants) for the CLLD option without inversion (sentence 13b), although 14% of the controls selected the clitic option with inversion (sentence 13d). The English-speaking Spanish L2 learner group showed results close to those of the control group—84% selected a clitic option—but divergent in that they had a stronger preference for the clitic option with inversion (67%); only 17% chose the clitic option without inversion. These findings show that while learners demonstrated some sensitivity to the need for a clitic in structures with a fronted definite DP, they had not yet acquired native-like knowledge of the properties associated with this structure.

In a similar study, Valenzuela (2002) examined the production of preverbal topic constructions in the Spanish of advanced English-speaking learners who had achieved near-native proficiency in Spanish. Of interest was whether the learners were constrained

to the features and valuations of the native language. In English, both generic and specific topics are expressed with a null operator, as illustrated in (14a); Spanish demonstrates a similar pattern for generic preposed topics, but, as noted above, specific preposed topics must appear in a Clitic Left Dislocation construction, as in (14b).³

- (14) a. Vitamins, I take everyday. / Your book, I bought.
 b. Vitaminas tomo todos los días. / Tu libro, *(lo) he comprado.
 ‘Vitamins I take every day.’ / ‘Your book *(CL) I have bought.’

Group results unveiled no statistical difference between learners and controls with specific preposed topics—learners accurately produced and accepted specific topics with a clitic. However, they differed significantly from the control group with generic preposed topics, for which they overgeneralized the CLLD construction. Importantly, however, individual results demonstrate that the latter construction was also problematic for one member of the control group.

Sánchez and Al-Kasey (1999) also consider learner production of direct object clitics. Drawing on analyses of direct object clitics as agreement markers that head the functional projection AgrOP (see Everett, 1996; Franco, 1993; Suñer, 1988), these authors propose that English lacks clitics because the functional features of AgrO are never spelled out; in Spanish, on the other hand, these features may be spelled out under specific conditions—in CLLD structures and when the direct object complement is a pronoun (and in some varieties of Spanish, AgrO may be spelled out when the direct object complement is [+ human, + definite, +specific]). In a task that tested for recognition of clitics as licensors in dislocated structures, a picture-sentence matching

activity included a drawing of a girl opening a door and a selection of three candidate descriptions:

- (15) a. La niña la abre la puerta.
 the girl CL open-3SG the door
- b. La puerta la niña la abre.
 the door the girl CL open-3SG
- c. La niña la puerta la abre.
 the girl the door CL open-3SG
 ‘The girl opens the door.’

Results showed that at initial and intermediate stages of acquisition, adult English-speaking learners of Spanish have a partial specification for AgrO, as indicated by their failure to produce CLLD and clitic-doubling constructions, as well as their failure to recognize the clitic as a licenser in the former structures, as evidenced by their strong preference for sentences such as (15a) and a lack of sensitivity to definiteness and specificity features.

In addition to the evidence from studies that have tested second language learners’ knowledge of the distinction between Topicalization and CLLD structures in Spanish, there have also been studies that have focused on the issue of its learnability in particular instructional settings. Using a pretest/posttest, control group design to investigate the effects of modeling and recasting in the L2 acquisition of Topicalization and adverb placement, Ortega and Long (1997) found no evidence of learning under either experimental treatment for direct object fronting involving a clitic (CLLD structures in this paper) in contrast with some positive evidence of learning found for adverb

placement. These results led Ortega and Long to conclude that the former structures might be more difficult to process than adverb placement structures. In a study based on Ortega and Long's design, Doughty, Izumi, Maciukate, and Zapata (1999) expanded the number of CLLD items tested and controlled for the participants' knowledge of vocabulary as well as for a contextualized presentation of the structures. As in Ortega and Long's study, they found evidence of learning of adverb placement but no evidence of significant learning of CLLD structures with any of the various treatments used (focus recasts, recasts, and modeling).

Having laid out research findings that point to non-target performance attributable to imperfect execution or incomplete development of properties responsible for the interpretation and production of discursively appropriate structures, the discussion now turns to the study at hand—DP-fronting in the grammars of Spanish monolinguals, heritage speakers, and L2 learners—with the aim of identifying the locus of target-variable performance.

The Present Study

Participants

Nineteen monolingual Spanish speakers in Peru and Argentina, nineteen Spanish-English bilingual, undergraduate students at three state universities in the United States, and nineteen intermediate L2 Spanish students at a private American university participated in this study. Eleven Peruvian and eight Argentinean speakers constituted the monolingual group. Thirteen of these participants were male and eleven female, and their mean age was 33 (range 15-58). Sixteen had a college degree or were university students, seven had high school degrees, and one was a high school student. One of the Argentines

had studied English a second language, having achieved low-intermediate proficiency. None of the remaining participants reported knowledge of a second language.

The bilingual students participating in the study were enrolled in intermediate Spanish-for-Heritage-Speakers classes, and they identified themselves as having been exposed to Spanish and English at a very young age. There were nine men and ten women in the group, ranging in age from 18 to 23. All the participants were born in the United States, Spanish was the first language, and it was used at home by all of them. All of them used English at work or in school, and one of the students had Spanish as her major and five minored in it. The participants self-rated their reading, speaking, writing, and oral comprehension ability on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 highest). Their ratings rendered the following averages: reading: 3.58; speaking: 3.84; writing: 3.47; and oral comprehension: 4.21.

The group of L2 Spanish learners consisted of nineteen native-speakers of English—10 female and 9 male—who were enrolled in an intermediate (fifth semester) L2 Spanish conversation class at a private southern university in the United States. They had all begun Spanish language instruction in high school. As with the heritage speakers, the participants were asked to self-rate their reading, speaking, writing, and oral comprehension ability on a scale from 1 to 5. Their overall rating averages (i.e., the mean of the four self-ratings) ranged from 2.5 to 4.5.

Instruments

The bilingual and L2 Spanish students in the study received a questionnaire on their biographical data and on their patterns of language use at home and in school and on the age at which they were exposed to Spanish and English. In addition, the participants

were asked to rank their proficiency level in Spanish. The monolingual speakers received a modified version of the questionnaire, in which they were asked to provide biographical information and to describe their patterns of language use at home and work.

Two written questionnaires (Task A and B) were developed to probe into the participants' knowledge of Topic and Clitic Left Dislocation structures. The three participating groups were asked to read the instructions for each questionnaire (in English for the heritage speakers and L2 learners and in Spanish for the monolinguals), and to complete the tasks with as many words as needed, always respecting the structure and meaning of each sentence.

Task A

The first instrument was a twenty-four-item fill-in-the-blank questionnaire with eight items containing fronted definite inanimate singular DPs and eight questions with plural counterparts. These items were expected to trigger Clitic Left Dislocation constructions. Three items consisted of bare singular inanimate DPs and one of a plural counterpart. These were expected to trigger Topicalization. In order to avoid problems with vocabulary, all the sentences were based on experiences that are common to university students, and they contained references to well-known mainstream places and objects. The monolingual speakers were provided with the same sentences, but names of businesses such as "Papa John's" were replaced by those of local businesses in Peru and Argentina. The examples in (16) illustrate the type of items used and the number of items per type.

- (16) a. Fronted inanimate definite singular DP (8 items)

La pizza _____ sólo en Papa John's.

'Pizza _____ only in Papa John's.'

Target response:

La pizza la como sólo en Papa John's.

the pizza CL eat-1sg.pres. only at Papa John's

'Pizza I eat only at Papa' John's.'

- b. Fronted inanimate definite plural DP (8 items)

Los libros _____ sólo en Amazon.com.

'Books _____ only on Amazon.com.'

Target response:

Los libros los compro sólo en Amazon.com

the books CL buy-1sg.pres. only at Amazon.com

'Books I buy only at Amazon.com.'

- c. Bare DP singular (3 items)

Música _____ sólo en la noche.

'Music _____ only in the evening.'

Target response:

Música escucho sólo en la noche.

music listen-1sg.pres. only at night

'Music I listen to only at night.'

d. Bare DP plural (1 item)

Espinacas _____ sólo cuando estoy enfermo.

‘Spinach _____ only when (I) am sick.’

Target response:

Espinacas cocino sólo cuando estoy enfermo.

spinach cook-1sg.pres. only when be-1sg.pres. sick

‘Spinach I cook only when I am sick.’

The four remaining items of the questionnaire consisted of preverbal animate elements, which more likely to be interpreted as agentive subjects and were used as distractors:

(17) Fronted animate DPs (4 items)

Mi mamá _____ sólo los domingos.

‘My mom _____ only on Sundays.’

Task B

The second instrument comprised twenty-four question-answer items with a fronted direct object DP as a prompt for the answer. The context for this questionnaire was a dialogue about the organization of a surprise birthday party between an imaginary friend and each participant. Based on the questions and direct object prompts provided, the participants were asked to clarify who would be in charge of what at the party. All the sentences contain authentic references to objects and tasks that the participating students and monolingual speakers would expect to find and do when organizing a party. As in the

previous task, fronted definite DPs were expected to trigger Clitic Left Dislocation structures and the bare DP, Topicalization:

(18) a. Fronted DP singular (9 items)

¿Quién trae el helado? Marcelo

‘Who is bringing the ice-cream? Marcelo’

El helado/‘The ice-cream’ _____.

Target response:

El helado lo trae Marcelo.

the ice cream CL bring-3sg.pres. Marcelo

‘The ice cream Marcelo is bringing.’

b. Fronted DP plural (7 items)

¿Quién prepara las ensaladas? Patricio

‘Who is preparing the salads? Patricio’

Las ensaladas /‘The salads’ _____.

Target response:

Las ensaladas las prepara Patricio.

the salads CL prepare-3sg.pres. Patrick

‘The salads Patricio is bringing.’

c. Bare DP singular (2 items)

¿Quién compra cerveza? Juan Carlos

‘Who is buying beer? Juan Carlos’

Cerveza/‘Beer’ _____.

Target response:

Cerveza compra Juan Carlos.

beer buys-1sg.pres. Juan Carlos

‘Beer Juan Carlos is buying.’

d. Bare DP plural (2 items)

¿Quién organiza juegos? Enrique

‘Who is organizing games? Enrique’

Juegos/‘Games’ _____.

Target response:

Juegos organiza Enrique.

games organize-3sg.pres. Enrique

‘Games Enrique is organizing.’

The four items containing a fronted subject in Task B served as distractors:

(19) Fronted subject

¿Quién conduce al supermercado? Natalia

‘Who is driving to the supermarket? Natalia’

‘Natalia _____.’

Mean percentages were determined for all the structures produced by the native and heritage speakers and L2 learners participating in this study. In addition, a 3x4 mixed ANOVA was performed on each of the data sets created from Tests A and B and the two DP types (definite vs. bare). This resulted in four different ANOVAs. Since much of the data was distributed non-normally, a rank-transformation procedure was applied. That is, the data were transformed into normalized ranks (Blom, 1958) across all groups and conditions for each of the four tests—Task A, definite DPs; Task A, bare DPs; Task B, definite DPs; and Task B, bare DPs—and then standard parametric procedures were employed (Conover & Iman, 1981; Zimmerman & Zumbo, 1993).

The results of the 3x4 mixed ANOVA (Subject Group by Response) on ranked transformations for Task A, Definite DPs, revealed no main effect for subject group, $F(2,54) = 1.39, p = 0.2576$. However, there was a main effect for response, $F(3,162) = 16.43, p < .0001$, and a significant interaction between subject group and response, $F(6,162) = 12.51, p < .0001$. Planned pairwise comparisons between subjects revealed significant differences between all subject-group pairings for CLLD. Also, there was a significant difference between native and heritage speakers for passive constructions and between native speakers and L2 learners and heritage speakers and L2 learners for Topicalization. Pairwise comparisons within groups showed significant differences between CLLD and passive constructions for native speakers and between CLLD and Topicalization for both native and heritage speakers. In the case of L2 learners, the results ascribed statistical significance to the difference between CLLD and Topicalization, CLLD and Passive, and CLLD and other structures.

With regards to mean percentages, Figure 1 (untransformed scores) shows monolinguals' preference (61%) for Clitic Left Dislocation, as in (19a). Heritage speakers, on the other hand, do not demonstrate such a preference; they produce Clitic Left Dislocations at a low rate (24%), preferring instead to employ passive predicates (*ser* passives and impersonal *se* passives, 40%), as in (20b,c) and other structures (33%), such as intransitive predicates, as in (20d). The intransitive predicates and alternative constructions favored by all the subjects in the study were grouped together under the label *Other* for statistical analysis.

- (20) a. El desayuno lo consumo sólo a las 10:00 de la mañana los sábados.
breakfast CL eat-1SG only at 10:00 in the morning on Saturdays
'Breakfast I eat only at 10:00 in the morning on Saturdays'
- b. El desayuno se come sólo a las 10:00 de la mañana los sábados.
breakfast CL-IMPERS eat-3SG only at 10:00 in the morning on Saturdays
'Breakfast is eaten only at 10:00 in the morning on Saturdays.'
- c. El reloj es usado sólo los días de clase.
'The watch is used only on class days.'
- d. La pizza sabe buena sólo en Papa John's.
'Pizza tastes good only at Papa John's.'

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

In the case of second language students, the mean percentages for Task A, Definite DPs, in (Figure 1) reveal a preference for passive (21a,b,c) and intransitive constructions (21d,e), which seems to indicate that they have not yet acquired the Clitic Left Dislocation constructions. In addition, the participants' preference for intransitive

constructions (49%) indicates that they may have interpreted the clause-initial definite DPs as subjects, and their production of passive constructions (28%) could be seen as evidence of cross-linguistic influence.

- (21) a. La pizza es hecho muy bien sólo en Papa John's. [*sic*]
 'Pizza is made very well only at Papa John's.'
- b. La cama es utilizada sólo cuando me visitan mis padres.
 'The bed is used only when my parents visit me.'
- c. Las camisetas son lavado sólo los fines de semana. [*sic*]
 'The T-shirts are washed only on the weekend.'
- d. Las papas fritas son mi cena sólo cuando no tengo dinero.
 'French fries are my dinner when I don't have money.'
- e. Las flores parecen bonitas sólo en ocasiones especiales.
 'Flowers seem pretty only on special occasions.'

The mixed ANOVA for Task A-Bare DPs revealed a main effect for subject group, $F(2,54) = 2.54, p < .04$, and for response, $F(3,162) = 6.58, p < .0003$, as well as a significant interaction between subject group and response, $F(6,162) = 7.78, p < .0001$. Planned pairwise comparisons between subjects showed significant differences between native and heritage speakers for Topicalization and passives; however, there was no significant difference for CLLD. In the case of native speakers and L2 learners, there were significant differences for CLLD and Topicalization, and a marginal difference for passive constructions. The differences between heritage speakers and L2 learners were only significant in the case of CLLD. Pairwise comparisons within groups showed a marginal difference between CLLD and Topicalization and a significant difference

between Topicalization and passives for native speakers. There were no significant differences for heritage speakers, and, for L2 learners, the differences were significant only between CLLD and Topicalization and Topicalization and other structures.

Figure 2 illustrates the mean percentages (untransformed scores) for the four items that tested fronting of generic DPs. These items should elicit a preference for Topicalization, and this was indeed the case among the monolingual participants, who produced Topicalization (53%) and to a lesser extent Clitic Left Dislocation (27%). In contrast, heritage speakers drew on Topicalization at a rate of only 14%, indicating a lack of sensitivity to the status of the fronted DP.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

As with the fronting of definite DPs, the heritage speakers exhibited a bias towards the use of passives (40%) and intransitive and alternative constructions (35%), e.g., there emerged sentences with psychological predicates and pseudo-clefts, samples of which appear in (22). Note that heritage speakers' preference for passive rivals monolingual speakers' preference for Topicalization (53% and 40%).

- (22) a. Leche hervida me gusta sólo en la mañana.
 milk boiled CL-DAT pleases only in the morning
 ‘Boiled milk I like only in the morning.’
- b. Leche con café es algo que yo tomo.
 ‘Milk with coffee is something that I drink.’

Figure 2 shows that, as with the definite DPs, the high percentage (60%) of intransitive constructions (23a,b) produced by the L2 learners with bare DPs suggests that they might have construed the sentence-initial DPs as subjects. In addition, their

production (23%) of passive constructions (23c,d) could, again, be an indication of cross-linguistic interference. Despite these preferences and the difficulty of Topicalization, the learners in this study appeared to be somehow sensitive to the relationship between bare DPs and Topicalization (17%), as in (23e).

- (23) a. Fútbol es divertido sólo durante la temporada.
 ‘Football is fun only during the season.’
- b. Música es en el radio sólo en la noche.
 ‘Music is on the radio only at night.’
- c. Leche es servido sólo en la mañana.
 ‘Milk is served only in the morning.’
- d. Música es tocada sólo en la noche.
 ‘Music is played only at night.’
- e. Espinacas me gustan sólo en la mañana.
 spinach CL-DAT pleases only in the morning
 ‘Spinach I like only in the morning.’

The data in Task B failed Mauchly’s Test of sphericity, and, therefore Huynh-Feldt corrections are reported. In this task, for Definite DPs, the results of the mixed ANOVA showed a main effect for subject group, $F(2,54) = 15.89, p < .0001$, and for response, $F(3,162) = 18.42, p < .0001$, and a significant interaction between subject group and response, $F(6,162) = 6.89, p < .0001$. Planned pairwise comparisons between subjects showed marginally significant differences between native and heritage speakers for CLLD and no significance for passives, but a significant difference for Topicalization. The differences between native speakers and L2 learners were only significant for CLLD.

In the case of heritage speakers and L2 learners, there was a significant difference for CLLD, a marginally significant difference for Topicalization, and no significant difference for passives. Pairwise comparisons within groups showed significant differences between CLLD and Topicalization and CLLD and passives for native speakers. In the case of heritage speakers, there was a significant difference between CLLD and Topicalization, but no significant difference between CLLD and passives. For L2 learners, the differences were significant only between CLLD and passives.

As shown by the mean percentages (untransformed scores, Figure 3), Clitic Left Dislocation predominates in the productions of monolingual speakers (76%) and is complemented by passives (22%), to the exclusion of other constructions. This trend is paralleled (however diminished) among the heritage speakers, who display a general increase in the use of Clitic Left Dislocation with fronted definite DPs (48%), such as in (24a), but continue to prefer passivization (31%) and Topicalization options (12%).

- (24) a. El pastel lo hace Cecilia.
 the cake CL make-3SG Cecilia.
 ‘Cecilia prepares the cake.’
- b. El pastel es hecho por Cecilia [sic]
 ‘The cake is made by Cecilia.’
- c. La piñata compra Ignacio.
 the piñata buy-3SG Ignacio.
 ‘Ignacio buys the piñata.’

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

In the case of clause initial bare DPs, the mixed ANOVA revealed a main effect for subject group, $F(2,54) = 15.79, p < .0001$, and for response, $F(3,162) = 4.01, p = .0104$ (H-F), as well as a significant interaction between subject group and response, $F(6,162) = 2.40, p < .0340$ (H-F). With bare DPs, the patterns of production for monolinguals and heritage speakers were similar. Contrary to what was expected, there was evident a preference for Clitic Left Dislocation over Topicalization. Planned pairwise comparisons between subjects showed no significant differences between native and heritage speakers. However, there were significant differences between native speakers and L2 learners for CLLD and Topicalization, but no significance for passives. The differences between heritage speakers and L2 learners were also significant for CLLD and Topicalization, but not for passives. Pairwise comparisons within groups revealed no significant differences within all subject groups for CLLD, and in the case of native and heritage speakers, also for Topicalization. For L2 learners, the differences were significant only between Topicalization and passives, and marginally significant between Topicalization and other structures.

The mean percentages (untransformed scores) in Figure 4 show that monolinguals and heritage speakers produced the clitic construction at rates of 41% and 42% respectively, and Topicalization at rates of 20% and 6%. Moreover, the groups performed similarly with respect to the production of passives: 22% for monolinguals and 26% for heritage speakers. However, as with previous conditions, various additional structures emerged in the productions of heritage speakers.

- (25) a. Cerveza la compra Juan Carlos.
 beer CL-ACC buys Juan Carlos
 ‘Beer Carlos buys it.’
- b. Verduras son compradas por María Teresa.
 ‘Vegetables are bought by Maria Teresa.’
- c. Vino compra Martina.
 wine buy-3SG Martina
 ‘Wine Martina buys.’

INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE

In the case of L2 learners, the more-complex, sentence reformulation format of Task B may have posed difficulties, which may have resulted in findings that reflect a test effect, as seems to be evidenced by the high number of errors in the participants’ production with definite (50%) and bare (53%) DPs (Figures 3 and 4 respectively). In spite of these errors, Task B also reflects the same preference for passive and intransitive constructions for definite DPs (38% and 5%), as in (26a,b), and for bare DPs (36% and 6%), as in (26c,d), as was observed in Task A.

- (26) a. La piñata fue comprada por Ignacio.
 ‘The piñata was bought by Ignacio.’
- b. El pastel es la responsabilidad de Cecilia.
 ‘The cake is Cecilia’s responsibility.’
- c. Verduras son de María Teresa.
 ‘Vegetables are Maria Teresa’s.’

- d. Vino lo compra Martina.
 wine CL buy-3SG Martina
 ‘Martina buys wine.’

The higher number of passive constructions in this test could also be the result of its complexity, as the sole presence of sentence-initial DPs and the absence of other sentential elements may have failed to provide learners with the required context to trigger the production of Clitic Left Dislocation or Topicalization structures, and it may have activated native-language transfer. As in Task A, the low percentage of Clitic Left Dislocation structures (6% with definite DPs and 5% with their bare counterparts), as in (26e,f), seems to confirm the difficulty of this structure for intermediate learners.

Discussion and Conclusion

To recapitulate the results, distinct patterns emerged in the interpretation and production of clause-initial DPs in the Spanish-language performance of monolingual speakers, heritage speakers of Spanish in sustained contact with English, and adult L2 learners of Spanish. Various group behaviors were attested: monolinguals and heritage speakers were found to differ from L2 learners in some experimental conditions, e.g., CLLD with definite DPs; on others, the patterns of performance for heritage speakers and L2 learners were noticeably distinct from those of monolinguals, e.g., with respect to Topicalization with indefinite DPs; and in numerous other respects, heritage speakers differed from monolinguals and L2 learners.

Among monolinguals, the sentence-initial DP was largely interpreted as a direct object across tasks (64% in Task A, first condition, and 80% in the second; 98% in Task B, first condition, and 61% in the second), and these fronted objects were correctly

inserted into Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) at rates of 61% and 76% for definite DPs and Topicalization structures at rates of 53% and 20% for bare DPs. For this group, the differences proved to be statistically significant in the comparison of CLLD versus Topicalization and between CLLD versus passives with definite DPs in both Tasks; for indefinite DPs, the comparison of structures proved of marginal significance in Task A and of no significance in Task B. These overall responses are non-target relative to anticipated norms, especially in the case of bare DPs, which should trigger Topicalization. Such patterns of performance with thematized direct objects suggest that while monolinguals may possess knowledge of semantic properties (e.g., definiteness) and the syntactic projections associated with CLLD and Topicalization, the deployment of this knowledge in the articulation of the syntax with the discourse-semantic component is irregular. However, it merits pointing out that the varieties of Argentinean and Peruvian Spanish (Lima) spoken by these native speakers are sensitive to definiteness in direct objects in clitic doubling constructions.⁴ Thus, monolingual speakers' indeterminate behavior on the operations at issue cannot be ascribed to a loss of abstract semantic features. A possible explanation rests in the proposal of Casielles Suarez (2004) that these constructions differ only in the overt realization of the clitic. On this view, native speakers may demonstrate a preference for the overt clitic in what would be one and the same underlying structure. Whatever its origin, it is to be expected that the variability that characterizes CLLD and Topicalization among the native speakers will be reflected in instability and convergence with a second language system among the other groups studied.

The findings in this study confirm this trend. Among the bilingual heritage speakers of Spanish, clause-initial DPs are interpreted as direct objects at reduced rates (27% in Task A, first condition, 25% in the second condition; 60% in Task B, first condition, and 48% in the second). Moreover, these direct objects were correctly inserted into CLLD and Topicalization structures at rates of only 24% and 48% for definite DPs and 14% and 6% for bare DPs. These participants interpreted clause-initial DPs largely as subjects, principally producing *ser* and *se* passive structures at a rate of 40% in the two conditions of Task A. Indeed, their production of passive constructions was higher than that for monolinguals on all measures. That is, unlike monolinguals—who failed to demonstrate consistently significant differences in their performance with CLLD and Topicalization but reliably discriminated these operations from passivization at statistically significant rates on all measures—heritage speakers appear to draw on CLLD and passivization interchangeably.

Heritage speakers' correspondence with monolingual native speakers in their linguistic performance likely owes to shared indeterminacy in the interpretive component; however, the general pattern of interpretations and productions is indicative of further compromised performance relative to their counterparts. Arguments to this effect are found in Montrul (2002) and Zapata, Sánchez, and Toribio (2005). Heritage speakers' difference from monolingual participants points to convergence with the English language system—all of the heritage speakers had been exposed to English at an early age. Unclear is whether these patterns reflect a *converged* grammar (incomplete acquisition of Spanish) or a *converging* grammar (attrition in contact with English) (cf., Bullock and Toribio 2005). Nevertheless, the syntactic well-formedness of constructions

in heritage speakers' productions is indicative of properties diagnostic of a complete core Spanish grammar.⁵

As for the L2 learners, they by and large interpreted clause-initial DPs as grammatical subjects, producing *ser* passives and intransitives; however, unlike the heritage speakers, these participants produced almost no impersonal *se* passives. The differential production of *ser* versus *se* passives may be attributed to similarity with and disparity from the L1 English: congruent 'be' passives in English facilitated the production of the former, while the absence and of a corresponding passive clitic in English render the latter difficult. When initial constituents were interpreted as direct objects—Task A, 23% and 17% in the first and second conditions, respectively; Task B, 7% and 5%, in the first and second conditions, respectively—they were inserted into correct structures at markedly reduced rates: learners produced CLLD constructions at rates of 5% and 6% for definite DPs and Topicalization structures at rates of 17% and 0% for bare DPs. Statistical comparisons in Task A-Definite DPs revealed a significant difference learners' production of CLLD versus Topicalization and passivization; in this respect, learners distinguish themselves from the other groups. And in Task B-Definite DPs, the difference between CLLD and other structures proved significant: learners failed to produce the construction. In Task A-Bare DPs, learners behaved like heritage speakers, demonstrating no statistically significant preferences for Topicalization versus passivization; this difference did emerge for learners in Task B-Bare DPs, where they preferred passives and other intransitives constructions.

Learners' behavior with CLLD confirms results from previous studies (e.g., Liceras et al., 1997; Sánchez & Al-Kasey, 1999) and could be evidence of the effect of

the complexity of this structure for learnability. For while the felicitous production of both Topicalization and CLLD requires knowledge of the semantic feature definiteness/specificity (itself not consistently exploited in heritage speakers), the latter additionally requires the attendant projection of Clitic Phrase. Both constituent movement and Clitic placement are operations that emerge late, according to Johnston's (1994) framework for development stages. Moreover, these structures are not usually explicitly taught in Spanish language classes, and thus, learners' exposure to them may be limited. Such findings are alternatively interpreted as lending credence to the proposal of Casielles Suarez (2004) that Topicalization and CLLD operations are one and the same, distinguished by the presence of the definite nominal and the accompanying clitic projection.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study speak to the dissociation of core properties of grammar—fully acquired by the monolinguals and the heritage speaker participants (although perhaps converged with English in the latter case) and under acquisition by L2 learners (evidenced by the emergence of the clitic projection)—as distinct from the interface with the information structure. The peripheral component of the grammar, which is regulated by the articulation of syntax with (lexico- and) discourse-semantic properties, is subject to variability, an indeterminacy that is further enhanced in the performance of heritage speakers who may have incompletely acquired Spanish and who are continually exposed to English. Of course, the deployment of the semantic features pertinent to the derivation of CLLD and Topicalization is to be distinguished from the acquisition of these discourse-semantic features and the structures

into which they are inserted, as evidenced by L2 learners emergent sensitivity to the semantic requirements of Topicalization.

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Figure 1

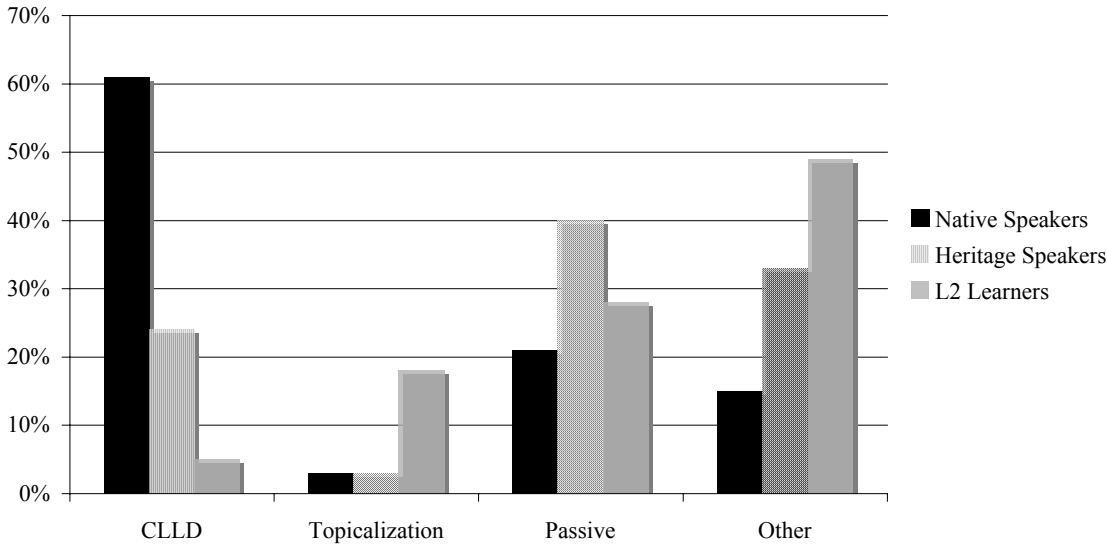


Figure 2

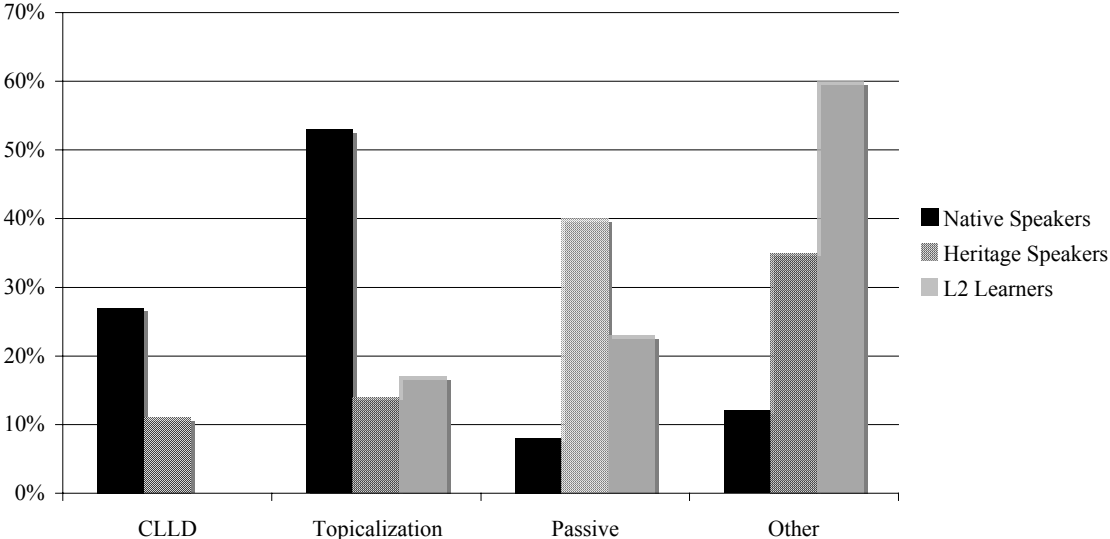


Figure 3

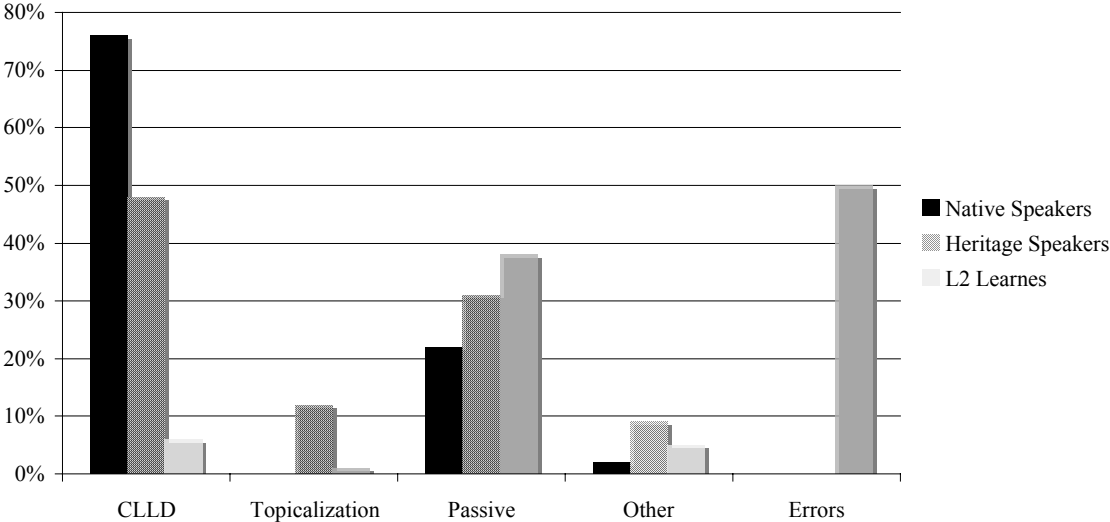


Figure 4

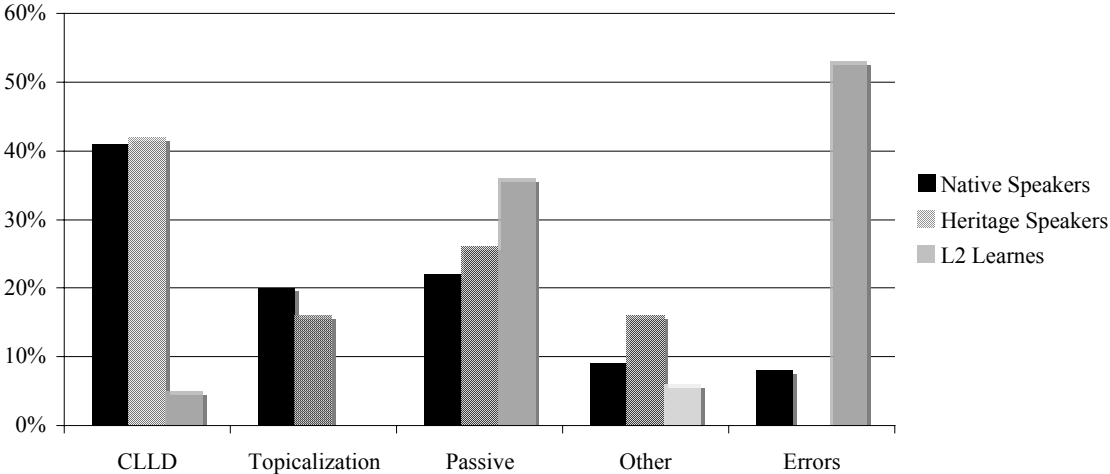


Figure Captions

Figure 1. Percentage of Structures Produced with Definite DPs (Task A)

Figure 2. Percentage of Structures Produced with Bare DPs (Task A)

Figure 3. Percentage of Structures Produced with Definite DPs (Task B)

Figure 4. Percentage of Structures Produced with Bare DPs (Task B)

Footnotes

¹Alternative formalizations of distinctions pertinent to the syntax-information structure articulation are offered in Casielles Suarez (2004).

²Note that both Clitic Left Dislocation and Topicalization structures differ from Focus fronting, in which there is contrast with the context or active presupposition (for discussion, see Benincà, 2001).

³Valenzuela interprets the results as suggesting that ultimate attainment is possible: the near-native speaker group behaved statistically similar to the native controls in evincing knowledge of the [recursive] feature, and a subset of the individual learners patterned with a native control in their variable behavior with respect to the specifications of [operator] feature.

⁴In particular, in these dialects, resumptive pronouns appear with in situ direct objects only when these are definite and animate:

- (i) a. La vi a Nuria /*una doctora.
 CL saw-1SG ACC Nuria /a doctor
 ‘I saw Nuria /a doctor.’
- b. *La via la/una película.
 CL saw-1SG the/a movie
 ‘I saw the/a movie.’

⁵In this respect, the distinction between I-language and E-language is relevant (Chomsky, 1993): heritage speakers possess an internal grammar that can generate target

derivations, but the forms actually produced by the grammar may be target-deviant and variable.