**VARIABILITY AND GRA迪NCENCE OF OBJECT CLITICS IN YOUNG SPANISH HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

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**BACKGROUND**

Competent Gradience model (Duffield 2003)

**STUDY HYPOTHESES**

Competent Gradience model (Cate et al 2005; Cuza and Schwartz 2004; Marin 2006; & Sano 2002; Domínguez 2003, 2009; Ivanov 2008; & Marín 2006; L2 object clitic acquisition continue to be contradictory to previous findings on L1 and L2 object clitic acquisition continue to be contradictory


Empirical challenge. Invariant properties of UG; innate, categorical knowledge of UG; innate, categorical knowledge of Spanish clitics. SC indirectly constrained by UG principles stemming from lexical and/or syntactic contingencies.

**METHODS**

Participants. 50 child Spanish-heritage speakers (SHS) living in suburbs of a major US Midwesten city

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

SHS at all proficiency levels produced clitics to some degree:

Hypothesis (1): 61.1% grammatical occurrence of Spanish object clitics in simple predicates, including affirmative and nonnegative command forms. Zero violations: relative order of simple clitics or clitic clusters. Zero word order violations: obligatory proclitic with indicative finite verbs, negative imperative forms, obligatory enclitic with affirmative imperative verbs.

Hypothesis (2): 36.8% ungrammatical clitic omission in obligatory contexts. (Omissions not constrained by syntactic discourse rules, and similar structures not attested in steady-state native grammars.) Participants produced overt encler active clitics (2.1%) and default lo (4.2%).

Hypothesis (3): Nearly 21% grammatical clitic omission. Distributions of enclision (13.4%) and proclision (17.9%). 100% enclitic and proclitic output is grammatical. 2.8% clicit doubling: “Yo tengo un lápiz” (1 don’t have it, a pencil) (103310:16A-6) [Suñer’s (1988) clicit doubling in absence of DO]

**REFERENCES**

This research is currently “to appear” in: East and West of the Pentacle: Linguistic Studies in Honor of Paula Kempchinsky. Timothy Gupton & Elizabeth Giela, eds.

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