

Optionality in L2 grammars: the acquisition of the SV/VS contrast in Spanish
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Optional constructions are often incorrectly allowed in L2 developing grammars and this is generally assumed to be the result of either learners failing to access syntactic features not represented in their L1, or of deficits in the syntax-pragmatics interface. In this study we examine the acquisition of word order in Spanish arguing that certain errors found in advanced non-native grammars cannot be sufficiently accounted for as simple pragmatic-related deficiencies. Instead, we propose that the availability of optional forms is the result of an overgeneralisation of one of the options in the target language to contexts where neither syntactic nor pragmatic rules would allow them. Under this analysis, the availability of optional forms in the advanced group can be accounted for by a purely syntactic deficit, independent of learners' knowledge of pragmatic rules, signaling the existence of an intermediate stage where grammar restructuring, on the basis of apparently ambiguous input, is observed.