

Bidirectional cross-linguistic influence at the DOM among Romanian-Spanish bilinguals

Julio César López Otero
Rutgers University

The acquisition of differential object marking (DOM) has been examined in L2 Spanish (Nediger, Pires & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2015), heritage Spanish (Montrul & Sanchez-Walker, 2013) and L1 attrition (Montrul & Bateman, in press; Montrul, Bhatt & Girju, 2015). However, the acquisition of a DOM system by L2 speakers (L2ers) whose L1 has DOM ruled by the same interpretable features is still underexplored (Montrul, in press). Spanish and Romanian DOM systems obey similar lexico-semantic constraints (animacy and definiteness/referential stability) (Aissen, 2003; Farkas & von Heusinger, 2003; Mardale, 2008, 2010; Leonetti, 2004), but their distribution presents weak variation between them (Mardale, 2008) as a result of a different ranking in the hierarchy of the features involved in their DOM (Aissen, 2003). Specifically, animacy is ranked higher than definiteness in Spanish, but not in Romanian (Ticio & Avram, 2015), resulting in different DOM distribution with demonstrative pronouns: Spanish marks demonstrative pronouns as a function of their animacy features, while Romanian marks demonstrative pronouns categorically.

By adopting Lardiere's (2009) Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis and Sánchez's (2004) Functional Convergence Hypothesis, this study explores whether the acquisition of the Spanish DOM by highly proficient L2 speakers of Spanish leads to bidirectional cross-linguistic influence (BCLI) in the distribution of DOM with demonstrative pronouns (see Table 1). Eighteen Romanian-speaking advanced L2 speakers of Spanish (L2ers) (age range=21-49, M=30.89, SD=8.04), seventeen Spanish-speaking monolinguals (SMs) (age range=19-50, M=27.65, SD=8.72), and twenty-three Romanian-speaking monolinguals (RMs) (age range=19-31, M=21.67, SD=3.11) participated in the study. The L2ers and the SMs live in a monolingual region in Spain: the monolinguals were born in the region, whereas the L2ers were long-term residents (years of residence range= 7-14, M=9.61, SD=2.57) arrived after puberty (age of arrival range=15-35, M=20.72, SD=6.75). Fifteen L2ers come from Southeastern Romania, where the RMs reside. An elicited production task was implemented along with two screening proficiency tasks: the DELE (Cuza, Pérez-Leroux & Sánchez, 2013) and the MiNT (Gollan, Weissberger, Runnqvist, Montoya, & Cera, 2012). The SMs and the RMs completed the tasks in their languages, while the L2ers completed the tasks in both Spanish and Romanian.

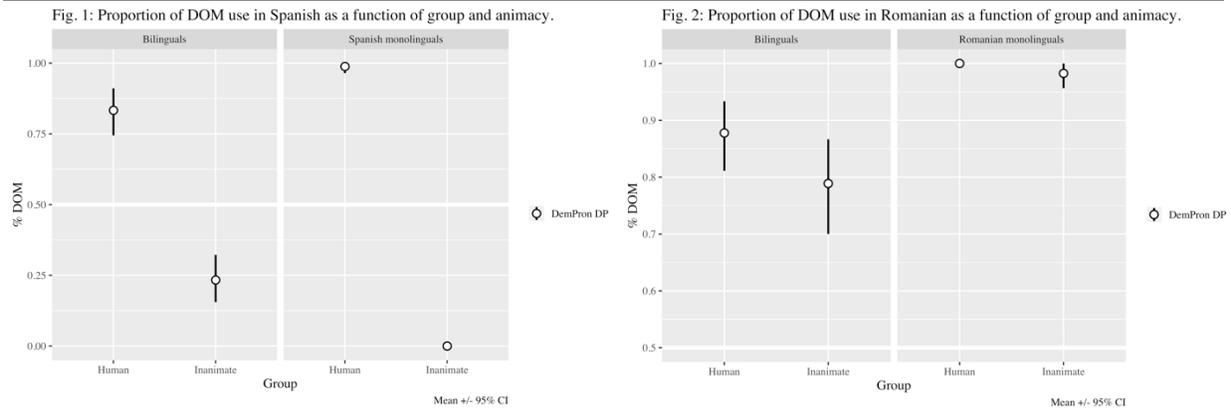
Results show that, in Spanish, the L2ers and the SMs present group differences in the distribution of DOM in both DemPron_{anim} DPs ($p=.014$) and DemPron_{inanim} DPs ($p<.001$) (see Fig. 1). In Romanian, L2ers and RMs present group differences in the distribution of DOM in DemPron_{inanim} DPs ($p=.015$), but not in DemPron_{anim} DPs ($p=.48$) (see Fig. 2). L2ers seem to be in the process of acquiring that animacy is the trigger for the distribution of DOM in Spanish with demonstrative pronouns. On the other hand, such trigger derived from animacy is impacting the distribution of the DOM with demonstrative pronouns in their L1, Romanian, resulting in BCLI (Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002; Sánchez, 2004).

Table 1. Structures under analysis in Spanish and Romanian: Demonstrative Pronoun DPs

Animacy	Spanish	Romanian	Convergence
+	<i>Esas presentadoras de televisión son difíciles de ver por las calles, pero hoy... Miguel ha visto a esta Miguel has seen DOM this one 'Miguel has seen this one'</i>	<i>Acele prezentatoare de televiziune sunt greu de văzut pe stradă, dar astăzi... Mihail a văzut -o pe aceasta Mihail has seen DOM this one-ACC 'Mihail has seen this one'</i>	Yes
-	<i>Esas películas extranjeras son muy raras de ver, pero... Miguel ha visto esta</i>	<i>Acele fotografii străine sunt foarte greu de văzut, dar... Mihail a văzut -o pe aceasta Mihail has seen DOM this one-ACC</i>	No

Miguel has seen \emptyset this one
 ‘Miguel has seen this one’

‘Mihail has seen this one’



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