The acquisition of the Determiner Phrase in Bilingual and Second Language French

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This study deals with the acquisition of Functional Categories in the French Determiner Phrase. The development of determiners and prenominal adjectives in three bilingual Swedish–French children is compared with that of four Swedish second language learners of French. It is argued that acquisition is crucially different in these two cases. The bilingual children initially have restrictions on phrase structure, resulting at one stage in a complementary distribution of determiners and adjectives. These results support a structure building view of L1 acquisition. For L2 acquisition of the same structure, there is no evidence for an initially reduced phrase structure. This finding is explained in terms of a transfer effect. A preliminary comparison with the acquisition of finiteness suggests that, whereas there is some correlation over time in the L1B subjects, no such correlation is found in the L2 learners.

Scholars studying first and second language acquisition from a generative perspective can be roughly divided into two schools of thought with respect to functional categories (FC). Proponents of the STRONG CONTINUITY HYPOTHESIS (SCH) argue that, as regards first language acquisition, the child's internal grammar is not different from the adult speaker's (cf. Poeppel and Wexler, 1993; Wexler, 1994). According to this view, the child possesses a full adult universal grammar (UG), and may only differ from the target system in terms of parameter setting or projection of specific FCs.

This "strong" view has been applied to second language acquisition (SLA) by Schwartz and Sprouse (1996) in their FULL TRANSFER/FULL ACCESS HYPOTHESIS (FT/FA). They claim that "the initial state of L2 acquisition is the final state of L1 acquisition" (Schwartz and Sprouse, 1996, 40f.). It follows from this line of reasoning that: (1) all L1 functional material transfers to the L2 (Full Transfer), (2) UG is accessible also in SLA (Full Access), and (3) inter-

language development is a process of restructuring the first language grammar.

Supporters of the WEAK CONTINUITY HYPOTHESIS (WCH), on the other hand, argue that the child's structural representation of linguistic material is crucially different from the adult's (Radford, 1990; 1996; Clahsen, Eisenbeiß and Vainikka, 1994), and that the functional parts are either completely absent or reduced in comparison with the adult representation. Proponents of this theory claim that the functional parts are either constrained by UG maturation (Radford, 1990; 1996) or acquired via the lexicon in combination with innate X-bar principles (Clahsen et al., 1994; Clahsen, Eisenbeiß and Penke, 1996).

In the same vein, another view of SLA is that it involves a new construction of syntactic structure. The MINIMAL TREES (MT) hypothesis (Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1996) claims that the learner initially only transfers lexical projections from the L1, and that all functional material must be learned again through exposure to language input.

The main objective of this study is to compare bilingual first language acquisition (L1B) and second language acquisition (L2). The paper addresses questions of phrase structure and phrase development. I will argue that, in terms of FC acquisition, L1B and L2 are crucially different.

Thus far, research on acquisition of FCs has largely focused on acquisition of clause structure (i.e., the IP-domain or "the middle field"), but has not given any conclusive answer to the question of the FC's initial status in first and second language systems. Recent syntactic theory has argued for a

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high degree of similarity between the internal structure of the clause and the noun phrase. The "DP-hypothesis" postulates that the noun phrase is a projection of a functional element labelled D (Szabolcsi, 1983–84; Abney, 1987). At least in part, the claimed similarities in clause and nominal structure make it interesting to see whether theories of acquisition, elaborated on clause structure data, generalise to the nominal domain. Recent studies on L1 and L2 have dealt with the acquisition of the DP and will serve as comparisons for the present study (cf. Bohnacker, 1997 on Swedish L1; Clahsen et al., 1994 on German L1; and Parodi, Schwartz and Clahsen, 1997 on German L2).

In this paper, I look at the acquisition of French determiners and prenominal adjectives in three Swedish–French bilingual children and four adult learners of French. I argue that the acquisitional processes in these two cases are different. My analysis of the L1B data shows that the children undergo an initial phase involving a high number of bare nouns, followed by a stage at which determiners and prenominal adjectives occur in nearly complementary distribution. I discuss this finding and interpret it as supporting a structure building model of first language acquisition.

By contrast, my analyses of the L2 data show a very low rate of determiner omission, even three months after onset. In the adult learners, there is no complementary distribution of determiners and prenominal adjectives at any stage. I interpret this result against an initial restriction on phrase structure, and argue that my DP data are not compatible with a generalisation of the structure building view like the one Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996) have proposed.

A second objective of this study is to compare DP acquisition with results from previous studies on acquisition of finiteness that are based on these corpora (Schlyter, 1993; 1994; 1997; 1998). I will relate my findings to these results, and argue that while there is some correlation over time between the acquisition of finiteness and the DP in the L1B children, there is no such correlation in the L2 learners.

The DP-hypothesis and general framework

Parallels between clause and nominal structures have led some scholars to suggest that the noun phrase should also be headed by a functional category. Szabolcsi (1983–84) and Abney (1987) argued that the noun phrase is a projection of a functional category labelled D for determiner. This is the

primary claim of the DP-hypothesis. Later research on the DP has not altered this basic view, but has led to the identification of several additional functional categories such as Gender (Ritter, 1991 on Hebrew), Degree (Delsing, 1993 on Scandinavian), Possessive (Delsing, 1998 on Germanic; Schoorlemmer, 1998 on several languages). At present, there seems to be no consensus on the internal structure of the DP.

However, the descriptive generalisation discernible in the literature yields the following structure, where FP represents one or more functional projection(s):

(1) $[_{DP}D [_{FP}F [_{NP}N]]]$

Platzack (1998) also argued for this type of "tripartition" of the syntactic tree and adds that each part has specific tasks in the syntax. He notes that the rightmost layer is the lexical part containing lexical projections and, after movement and chain creation, traces of the moved elements. The middle field is where grammatical relations such as agreement (subject–verb, noun–adjective) are expressed. Finally, the leftmost layer is responsible for connecting the proposition to the context (or the outside world). In this part of the syntax, relations such as finiteness and definiteness are expressed. If one adopts the DP-hypothesis, this is true of both nominal and clause structure. Thus, on a surface level, we can generalise syntactic representations and combine the DP and the CP into one basic representation, depicted in (2). For the sake of clarity, I only deal with the structure in (2), with some specification. The important distinctions to keep in mind at this stage are the difference between lexical and functional projections, on the one hand, and the perhaps more subtle difference between the FCs of the Middle field and the C-/D-domain(s), on the other.

(2)
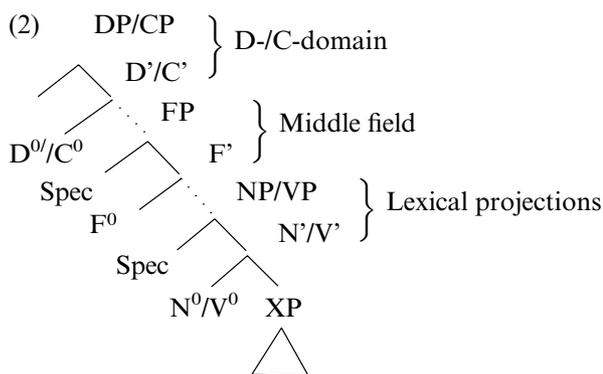
The general framework I use here is essentially that of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995). With respect to syntactic movement, I adopt the checking theory view, according to which lexical elements are bearers of (bundles of) features and move from their base positions to functional cate-

gories in order to check these features. Checking takes place in either Spec–Head or Head–Head configurations. These movements can occur before or after spell-out, depending on the strength of the corresponding functional category. Attraction to a functional projection before spell-out signals a strong feature.

D-elements and adjectives in French and Swedish

To label the determiners dealt with here as a group, I borrow the terminology-neutral term "D-elements" from a study by Parodi et al. (1997). The D-elements I consider are the following:

(3) Articles (equivalents of *a*/*an* and *the*)
Demonstratives (equivalents of *this*/*that*)
Possessive pronouns (equivalents of *my*/*yours* etc.)
Cardinal numerals (equivalents of *one*/*two* etc.)

D-elements in French

Determiners are obligatory in French when the noun they determine is in an argument position (cf. the argument rule of Stowell, 1991). Exceptions are nouns in a non-argument position and proper names. With respect to syntactic position, the noun is obligatorily determinerless when in the predicative position (4) and, occasionally, when occurring as a complement to the noun introduced by a preposition (5) and (6). Finally, proper names do not normally occur with a determiner (7):

(4) On l'a   nommé   général
one himhave 3.SG appointed general
"*they have appointed him for general*"
                (Riegel, Pellat and Rioul, 1997, 165)
(5) une   tasse à café
a.FEM cup for coffee
"*a coffee cup*"
(6) ils   sont   venu-s de   pays-Ø
they.MASC are3.PL came-PL from country
lointain-s   (Riegel et al. 1997, 166)
far away-m.PL
"*they came from countries far away*"
(7) Jean a   acheté un   cadeau á Marie
John has.3SG bought a.MASC gift   to Mary

All determiners in French are prenominal. They come in two genders, masculine (8) and feminine (9), but the realisation of demonstratives and possessives also varies with the phonetic context (before a vowel or a non-aspirated *h*, the masculine form of these determiners is used even with feminine nouns). Articles are either definite or indefinite. After the prepositions *de* and *à*, amalgamated forms of the masculine

definite article are used: *du* and *au* respectively. No plural form of any determiner is marked for a particular gender (10):

(8) un / le / ce / mon livre
a / the / this / my book
(9) une / la / cette / ma voiture
a   / the / this / my car
(10) des / les   / ces / mes   livres / voitures
some / the.PL / these / my.PL books / cars

Analyses of the French DP generally seem to agree on its head-initial status. Articles are usually taken to be generated in the DP layer, under the D^0-node (Valois, 1991; Bernstein, 1993). As for demonstratives and possessives, the question of generation site is still open. A number of recent studies have dealt with this issue (for possessives, see contributions in Alexiadou and Wilder, 1998, and Zribi-Hertz, 1999 for a different analysis; for the demonstratives, see Bernstein, 1997 and Giusti, 1994). From these studies, the generalisation seems to be that these elements are not initially associated with the DP layer, but moved to the D-head, possibly attracted by the [+ definite] feature.

For present purposes, I assume a minimal structure of the French DP. I follow Bernstein (1991; 1993) and Valois (1991) in assuming a number phrase (NumP) in which the nominal agreement feature [NUMBER] is located and cardinal numerals are generated. Finally, I assume a feature [± DEF] associated with the D head. To summarise, this means that all the D-elements listed in (3) above involve some FC in modern standard French. Some, e.g., articles, might be base-generated in the DP layer, others arguably end up there, i.e., are attracted to the DP layer as possessives and demonstratives. Cardinal numerals do not express definiteness in French and, therefore, according to this line of reasoning, never reach the DP layer.

(11)
```
              DP
            /    \
          D⁰      NumP
        [± DEF]  /    \
              Num⁰     NP
           [NUMBER]    |
                       N'
                       |
                       N⁰
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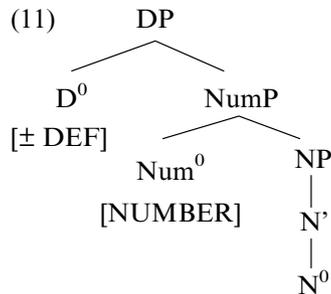
D-elements in Swedish

As in French, determiners are obligatory when the noun is in an argument position. Exceptions to this

rule are, on a surface level, proper names that only occur with a determiner in marked contexts and the lack of an overt form of the indefinite plural (12). Moreover, Swedish mass nouns typically occur bare in contexts where French would either have the partitive or the generic article (13):

(12) Man hade sett häst-ar i dalen
     one   had seen horse-s in valley-the
(13) Mjölk är bra   för dig
     milk   is good for you

Swedish determiners come in two grammatical genders (COMMON and NEUTER). Articles are either indefinite or definite, and their distribution displays two major differences in comparison with French. While the indefinite article (*en*) is a free preposed morpheme, the definite article (*-en*) is typically bound and suffixed on the noun:

(14) a. en lingvist
        a linguist
     b. lingvist-*en*
        linguist.COMM-the.COMM
        "*the linguist*"

Delsing (1993) assumed in a GB-framework that the Swedish DP is head-initial, despite what data such as (14b) might suggest. To account for the fact that Swedish determiners can both precede and follow the noun, Delsing argues for a raising analysis of the noun in the latter case. In his analysis, the definite article is generated in D^0 and the noun leaves the NP and incorporates into D as in (15).

(15)
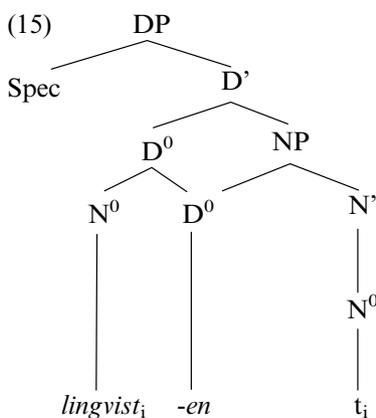
There is, however, also a free definite article that occurs before the noun in the context of an attributive adjective or a demonstrative. In these cases, the use of both the free preposed article and the suffixed one is obligatory, resulting in *double definiteness*:

(16) a. den   gaml-a   lingvist-en
        the.COMM old-weak linguist.COMM-
        the.COMM
        "*the old linguist*"

b. den   här lingvist-en
   the.COMM here linguist.COMM-the.COMM
   "*this linguist here*"

The issue of double definiteness is unresolved, although it has been addressed by several authors (Delsing, 1993; Giusti, 1994; Santelmann, 1994). Proposals have included a recursive DP (Kester, 1993; Santelmann, 1994) and a base generation of the suffix on the noun (Delsing, 1993). I do not go into the question here.

The second major difference between the Swedish and French determiner systems is the absence in Swedish of an overt article for indefinite plural. Recall that Swedish possesses an indefinite article for singular nouns, but has no equivalent for plural (cf. (14a) and (12) above). Examples such as (12) should be analysed as full DPs when in argument position. The claim is (Delsing, 1993; Platzack, 1998) that the noun raises first to Num^0 in order to check its number features and subsequently to D.

Adjectives in French and Swedish

Romance languages, like French, allow for postnominal adjectives (17a), an option not available in Germanic languages, which normally only allow the prenominal position (here exemplified with Swedish, (18a–b)). Furthermore, a number of highly frequent adjectives are prenominal in French (17b):

(17) a. le   livre rouge
        the.MASC book red.MASC
     b. le   petit   livre
        the.MASC small.MASC book
(18) a. den   röda boken
        the.COMM red   book-the.COMM
     b. *den   boken   röda
        the.COMM book-the.COMM red

Today, scholars generally seem to agree that the DP's equivalent to *Verb raising* (or V-to-I-Movement) is *Noun Movement*. The adjective is taken to be generated to the left of the noun, which in some cases subsequently moves to an FC to yield the typical N–A word order of Romance languages. This is schematised in (19), where the adjective is generated in different positions (Bernstein, 1991, 108 (her 11a)).

As is clear from (19), Bernstein argues for different generation sites for different adjectives. Some – like those modifying nominalisations and, thus, equal to arguments – are generated under the [Spec–NP] node, others adjoin to various FPs (see also Cinque, 1995).

If applied to Swedish, which generally does not allow nouns to move across adjectives, several ana-

(19)

```
                    DP
                 /      \
              Spec       D'
                       /    \
                      D      NumP
                          /       \
                       (AP)        NumP
                        |            |
                       A'          Num'
                        |         /     \
                       A       Num        NP
                             /     \     /    \
                          Xᵢ       AP    NP
                                   |      |
                                  A'      N'
                                   |      |
                                   A      N
                                          |
                                          tᵢ
```
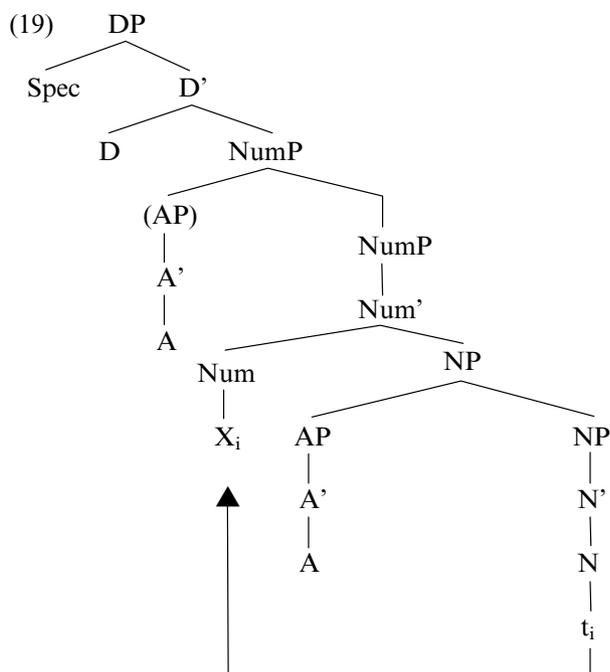
lyses are possible. Swedish attributive adjectives might be generated so far to the left, that the noun does not move past the adjective in order to check its number features. Another possibility is that the adjective generation site is the same, but that Noun Movement does not take place in Swedish, at least not in syntax (cf. Valois, 1991 on English). A third possibility might be that Noun Movement is, for some reason, "longer" in Romance than in Germanic languages (Cinque, 1995, 308). As the question of Noun Movement does not concern us presently, addressing the issue further is not necessary. Here, I only assume that the generation site of adjectives is the same in Swedish and French.[1]

Summary

The distribution of D-elements and adjectives in French and Swedish shows both similarities and differences. Both languages have overt preposed de-

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[1] How to account for adjective agreement is an unresolved issue. One problem with the adjunction analysis in (19) is that the requirements for Spec–Head configurations are not met. Bernstein (1993, 93 ff., 248 ff.) suggests as one possible solution that the adjective raises to adjectival inflectional heads in order to check agreement. Another possibility, of course, is to account for agreement within the adjunction analysis (see Valois, 1991, 171 ff. for such an attempt). Neither of these solutions seems to be able to account for both French and Swedish. The important thing to recall is that Swedish does not pattern with English with respect to adjective agreement. For Swedish, a language where virtually every element within the DP agrees, percolation of features has been suggested as a mechanism to account for agreement (Delsing, 1993).

terminers that are obligatory in the same contexts, i.e., in the argument position. Swedish allows, nevertheless, for postposition in the case of the definite article, realised as a suffix on the noun, and for a zero-article in the case of indefinite plural and mass nouns. With respect to adjectives, only French displays variation, allowing both pre- and postnominal placements. For syntax this results in the chart in (20).

(20)

DETERMINERS	French	Swedish
a. preposed	+	+/Ø
b. postposed	–	+
ADJECTIVE PLACEMENT		
c. prenominal	+	+
d. postnominal	+	–

Previous research on the acquisition of the Determiner Phrase

Radford (1990) looked at the monolingual L1 acquisition of English and found an initial phase with a large number of determiner omissions. Children under the age of 2;0 typically produced bare nouns as in (21) below:

(21) a. Wayne in garden
　　 b. Daddy got golf ball
　　　　　　　　(Radford, 1990, 84; Daniel 1;11)

Radford accounted for the "no DP" stage by suggesting that, initially, children have no access to functional categories at all. In this early stage, the child only projects lexical categories (N, A, and V).

A somewhat similar proposal has been made for German L1 by Clahsen et al. (1994). Starting from the LEXICAL LEARNING HYPOTHESIS (LLH), a version of the Weak Continuity Hypothesis, they argue that all UG principles are available to the child from the onset of language acquisition, but that the lexicon drives the syntactic development. Clahsen et al. found that, before acquisition of (i.e., the first occurrence of) the genitive -s, the German monolingual child they looked at (Simone) omitted the determiner in 65 per cent of the cases. After the acquisition of -s, the omission rate dropped to 41 per cent. Furthermore, before the acquisition of -s, the prenominal adjective and the determiner occurred in nearly complementary distribution. Out of 116 cases of prenominal adjectives, 113 occurred without a determiner. The figure for determiner omission in this context dropped, but not entirely, after the emergence of the -s genitive.

Clahsen et al. (1994, 101) argue that, before the acquisition of the genitive, the child's representation

of noun phrases is that depicted in (22), a structure with no FCs and only one prenominal position. This single position, which can host all kinds of adnominal modifiers, would explain the observed complementary distribution of determiners and adjectives (see (22)).

(22)
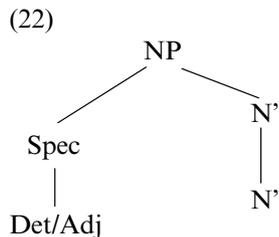
Thus far, bilingual children's acquisition of DP seems to have received much less attention. Müller, in a series of articles, looked at the acquisition of gender and number in the German–French bilingual children Caroline and Ivar (Müller, 1990; 1994; 1995). Müller (1990) was not focused on structure *per se*, but she mentions as one characteristic of the first developmental stage (her *phase A*) of French acquisition that "*the child expands the noun phrase, which so far has been represented by N or other bare lexical categories, to the sequence '(X) N' [. . .] the majority of nouns still appear without any X-element*" (Müller, 1990, 210). Later, in her phase B, the child "*appears to use the noun in combination with only one adult-like functor or modifier*" (Müller, 1990, 211). These observations are expanded upon in Müller (1994), where she notes that constructions with prenominal adjectives and numerals are not attested initially. This is explained by assuming a structure similar to (22) (Müller, 1994, 62f.).

Arguments against structure building are presented by Bohnacker (1997), who studied acquisition of D-elements in Swedish L1. She found that the monolingual child she was studying only omitted the determiner in 14.9 per cent of the cases during the period (1;8–1;10). With this low omission rate in mind, she argued against the "no-functional projections" hypothesis (i.e. WCH).

In a study on subject position in child French, Friedemann (1993/94) notes that the children he studied optionally left out the determiner, and he cites cases such as (23a) and (23b) below from Grégoire, a monolingual French child:

(23) a. Ai   caché lumière
        have hidden light
        (Friedemann, 1993/94, his 30a, Grégoire, 1;11)
     b. Je veux voiture comme ça
        I   want car   such
        (Friedemann, 1993/94, his 30b, Grégoire 2;3)

Seeking to explain postverbal subjects, Friedmann proposes as one possible explanation that the Case Filter is inoperative and, thus, allows nouns to be bare. He also notes that the optionality of the DP layer might be interpreted in line with the Truncation Hypothesis put forward by Rizzi (1994).

Parodi et al. (1997) looked at L2 acquisition of the morphosyntax of German nominals in learners with typologically different L1s. With respect to the use of determiners, they found substantial evidence for L1 influence. On the basis of oral production data, they found that learners of German with Romance languages (Italian and Spanish) as their L1 performed better than corresponding learners with an L1 that did not have overt determiners (Turkish and Korean) (Parodi et al., 1997, 20ff.). On the other hand, the Romance learners tended to more frequently allow a postnominal position of the attributive adjective than did the other learners. Both these observations point to an absolute influence on the syntactic level of the L1, and they were interpreted as supporting the FT/FA hypothesis.[2]

Predictions for the acquisition of the DP

The two major positions with respect to the status of FCs in L1 and L2 – briefly outlined in the introduction and exemplified by prior research – lead to different predictions for acquisition of the French DP. *A priori*, four cases, two for each type of acquisition (L1B or L2), are logically possible. These cases are outlined below, where A-predictions are applications of (or a version of) the Strong Continuity Hypothesis (SCH) and B-predictions of (or a version of) the Weak Continuity Hypothesis (WCH):

(A1) For the Swedish/French bilingual children, any version of the SCH will predict a small number of determinerless utterances, and possibly only in non-argument positions where the determiner is not obligatory. There should be no data suggesting that the children are unable to project DP–FP–NP structures, i.e., there should be no data revealing limitations on phrase structure since, under this view, the children, just like adults, are capable of projecting all the structure necessary to accommodate the linguistic material. This final prediction is important since it means that, at least from a structural point of view, a sequence of two prenominal elements (i.e., Det–Adj–N) is not harder for a child to acquire than is a simple sequence (Det–N).

(B1) A version of the WCH, such as the structure

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[2] The restriction to syntax is important, since Parodi et al. also found that (inflectional) morphology does not transfer (Parodi et al., 1997, 39).

Table 1. *Information on L1 bilingual (L1B) subjects*

Child	Age	MLU	Files	Language dominance (following Schlyter, 1994)	French speaker
Jean	1;10 – 3;9	1.3 – 4.3	12	French weaker language	Mother
Anne	2;3 – 4;0	1.4 – 4.5	11	French stronger language	Mother
Mimi	2;0 – 4;2	2.1 – 4.3	8	French stronger up to 2;6 Swedish stronger from 2;6 –	Mother

Based on Schlyter (1993; 1994)

building view, predicts a majority of omissions of D-elements in the children's earliest utterances. Possibly, there will also, at some stage, be data that reveal restrictions on phrase structure. This means that under this view we might find an alternation between prenominal adjectives and D-elements, since we would hypothesise that there is a stage at which there is not enough structure to accommodate the two types of elements simultaneously.

(A2) A generalisation of Schwartz and Sprouse's (1996) Full Transfer/Full Access (FT/FA) hypothesis, viewed here as an L2 version of the SCH, leads to the following predictions for the acquisition of the French DP in Swedish learners: Since Swedish has overt realisations of the D^0-position, the learner's French will reflect this property and the learner will use D-elements initially. Since Swedish has prenominal adjectives, this hypothesis also predicts no limitations on phrase structure in contexts where they should co-occur with D-elements.

(B2) For the Swedish second language learner of French, a generalisation of the Minimal Trees hypothesis (MT) (Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1996) to the DP leads to the opposite prediction: MT, viewed here as an L2 version of WCH, implies that the early stages of acquisition should reveal a lack of functional elements since, at this time, the learner will only have access to lexical projections. Also, as in the children's case, structural limitations can be predicted at transition points from the "no FCs – stage" (labelled VP-stage/level by Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1996, 14) to the "one/some FC(s)-stage" (labelled FP-stage/level by Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1996, 20).

Data

Production data from bilingual child and monolingual adult acquirers of French were used for the present study. The two corpora are (a) longitudinally collected L1B data from three bilingual children and (b) partially longitudinal data from four adult Swedes acquiring French naturalistically.

The L1B corpus: the "Swedish–French" corpus

The L1B longitudinal data were collected for a research project entitled "The weaker language in bilinguals" (Schlyter, 1993; 1994; 1995a; 1995b).[3] Recordings were made at the children's homes by a research assistant during spontaneous play and started at approximately 2 years of age.[4] Following previous research on the subject, Schlyter assumed that the stronger language would develop exactly as the L1 of monolingual children.

The L2 corpus

The L2 subjects included in this study were Swedish naturalistic acquirers of French. They were between 19 and 39 years, and had no or very little knowledge of French prior to their stay in France. All had a good prior knowledge of English. The purpose of their stay was work related (they were all artists in some form), and only some of them received sporadic hours of French instruction. The production data

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[3] I thank Suzanne Schlyter for the permission to use this corpus.

[4] As is shown in Table 1, the two languages in question here are unbalanced, French being either the weaker or the stronger. The development of the weaker language was the focus of Schlyter's project and she used (Schlyter, 1994, 69) the following criteria for deciding language strength:

(a) MLU
(b) qualitative criteria (appearance of certain elements, such as modals or subordinates)
(c) willingness to speak the language in question
(d) borrowing or "mixing" from the other language
(e) vocabulary size
(f) preferred language with siblings

She stresses that these criteria cannot be used independently. Rather they cluster such that the weaker language displays several negative properties (low MLU, unwillingness, small vocabulary, etc.) in comparison with the stronger one. It should be noted that Jean's French is not *very* weak but is in fact rather balanced at first (Schlyter p.c.). Especially the comparison with other bilingual children with a *clearly* weaker language (such as the Italian of the Italian–Swedish child Lukas, reported on in Schlyter and Bernardini, forthcoming) makes it necessary to modify the characterisation of Jean's French as weak.

Table 2. *Information on L2 subjects*

Learner	Occupation	Age	Months after onset (1st recording)	Other language
Sara	Mime artist	22	3	English
Petra	Musician	25	5	English
Martin	Musician	19	7	English
Johan	Artiste	39	8	English

Based on Schlyter (1997)

Table 3. *Finiteness in bilingual children: L1B*

Child	−FIN recordings (up to age)	+FIN recordings (from age)
Anne	1–2 (− 2;6)	3–11 (2;8 –)
Jean	1–5 (− 2;6)	6–12 (2;9 –)
Mimi	1 (− 2;0)	2–8 (2;2 –)

Based on Schlyter (1993; 1994)

were collected during informal interviews focusing on everyday life in the present, past, and future. Specific tasks were also included.

Studies on finiteness and COMP

In a series of articles, Schlyter (1986; 1993; 1994; 1997; 1998) has analysed some aspects of the verbal domain, finiteness and object clitic placement in these two corpora. One of the objectives of this paper is to compare acquisition of the DP and that of finiteness. It is, therefore, important to present at some length the previous research carried out on these two corpora.

L1B: Schlyter (1993; 1994) Schlyter analysed finiteness through verbal morphology (Schlyter, 1993) and added, in another study (1994), the occurrence of Subject Clitics (SCL) as a criteria, following Meisel (1989). If combined, the patterns in Table 3 become apparent for the children studied. The table suggests that Anne, who is a late developer (Schlyter, 1994, 84), acquired finiteness at 2;8 (MLU 2.7), and that Mimi had acquired finiteness in French already at her second recording at age 2;2 (MLU 3.2). They both have French as their stronger language. For Jean, whose weaker language is French, it is not as clear when finiteness in French was acquired. Schlyter points out, withy some difficulty, the sixth recording (at 2;9, MLU 3.5) as a good candidate.

L2: Schlyter (1997; 1998) Schlyter (1997) studied the acquisition of verbal morphology and the place-

Table 4. *Finiteness in L2 learners*

Learner	−FIN recordings (months)	+FIN recordings (months)
Martin	1 (7m)	2, 3 (14–16m)
Johan	1, 2, 3 (8–16m)	—
Petra	1 (5m)	—

Based on Schlyter (1997)

ment of Object Clitics (OCL), and Schlyter (1998) studied the relation between COMP and OCL in these learners. The results from these two studies are summarised in Table 4. This table shows that, among the learners included here, only Martin (from his second recording) reached the stage at which he began to master finiteness.[5]

Schlyter (1998) looked at the acquisition of COMP (i.e., C-domain) in relation to object clitics (i.e., Middle field) in these learners. For L1 acquisition, it has been argued that these two are acquired simultaneously (cf. Müller, Crysmann and Kaiser, 1996). Schlyter found that this was not the case in L2 acquisition, but that the learners studied "all have WH- questions and subordination clearly before OCL" (Schlyter, 1998).[6]

Method[7]

I scrutinised the transcribed recordings for all lexical instantiations of unambiguous determiners and pre-

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[5] The learner Sara was not included in Schlyter's (1997) study.

[6] Mossberg (1995) reports on multipropositional utterances in all recordings with Martin and in Petral. This confirms the picture of COMP as being acquired early by these learners.

[7] The methodological choice of comparing bilingual first language learners with second language learners is questioned by one reviewer who argues that especially the development of the weaker language is still not clear. Traditionally, comparisons between L1 and L2 acquisition are based on L1 monolingual children, which, according to this reviewer, might be more appropriate. Although I agree that bilingual first language acquisition is very much a research area of its own (cf. Meisel, 1990; 1994), and that the properties and development of the weaker language are debatable, I think that L1B can prove to be especially valuable for SLA, since in a comparison, not only the age factor can be addressed but also the influence of (an) other language(s) on the development. I agree with Meisel who says that: "First language development bilingual children (2L1) appears to be particularly suited for a comparison to L2 acquisition. In both cases there is 'another language present'; simply pointing to this fact will therefore not be sufficient when trying to account for possible differences" (Meisel, 1991, 240 f.). The development of the French DP with respect to language balance is not, however, an object of this study and will only be commented on in brief.

nominal adjectives.[8] In my count, I excluded occurrences of these categories in language-mixed utterances. Utterances such as (24) were, therefore, excluded (see Schlyter and Bernardini, forthcoming, for a discussion of intersentential code-mixing):

(24) där   bouch-en
     there.SW mouth.FR-the.SW

All other contexts for determiners have been included. This means that, in addition to the clear-cut obligatory contexts for determiners, I have included in both parts (L1B and L2 study) what I refer to as elliptic contexts. An elliptic context is not a complete utterance with a verb and arguments of its own. Rather it is an utterance, very common in the dialogue, that answers, completes, or builds on previous utterances in the conversation.

In these two types of contexts, I have defined a determiner omission as an instance of a noun occurring without a determiner. For the sake of clarity, I exemplify with omissions in the two types of contexts below. The data come from child and adult learner utterances in the two corpora:

(25) Examples of omissions of determiners in obligatory contexts in French (L1B and L2 production)
(25a, L1B) *ADULT: et alors elle regarde dans le
                   she looks   in   the
                   glace. tu vois?
                   mirror. you see
           *ANNE: (elle a   robe).[9]
                   she has Ø dress
           *ADULT: qu'est-ce qu'il y a?
                   "*what is it*"
           *ANNE: a   robe.
                   Ø has Ø dress
           *ADULT: elle a une robe de nuit?
                   "*she has a night dress*"
           *ANNE: oui
                   yes
                           (Anne, 2;8, MLU 2.7)
(25b, L2) *INT: et qu'est-ce que tu   fais ici?
                  and what   you do here
          *MAR: #je vais à cole,#
                  I   go to school
                  Conservatoire Supérieure
                  Nationale de Paris,
                           (Martin 1;7 months)

(26) Examples of omissions of determiners in elliptic contexts in French (L1B and L2 production)
(26a, L1B) *ADULT: qu'est-ce que c'est?
                   "*what is that?*"
           *JEAN: appareil.
                   machine
                           (Jean, 1;10, MLU 1.6)
(26b, L2) *INT: sur quel sujet tu   parles?
                  on what subject you talk
          *MAR: sais pas # football ou tennis
                  know not football or tennis
                  ou, musique ## politique #
                  or music   politics
                  pas beaucoup de ça.
                  not much   of that
                           (Martin 1;7 months)

Data on the acquisition of the French determiner phrase in first and second language acquisition

Results from the L1B study

Stage I: N A first look at Tables 5, 6, and 7 shows that the rates of determiner omission are most elevated in the first recordings. The child Jean seems at first to be an exception to this rule, as he leaves out the determiner only 55 per cent of the time in the first recording (J1 at 1;10, MLU 1.6; cf. Table 6). But in fact, his production of determiners displays a U-shaped pattern as the omission rate increases to 86–89 per cent in the subsequent two recordings.[10] In the first recording with Anne (2;3; cf. Table 5), there are 39 analysable contexts for the determiner, and in 30 of these the noun is produced bare (77 per cent of omissions). The omission rate drops radically to 27 per cent in the second recording (at 2;6). Mimi has only a few analysable contexts for the determiner (only 15 contexts and 5 omissions = 30 per cent) in her first recording (at 2;0; cf. Table 7), but this sharply contrasts with the subsequent recording where the omission rate is as low as 4 per cent. For all three children, then, there is a stage at which determiner omissions dominate

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[8] For present purposes, I have not attempted to include proto-articles in the sense of Bottari, Cipriani and Chilosi (1993) in my count. Since I am considering more properties of the DP than just the D-element, I believe this to be less important. If there is a restriction on phrase structure this will be crucial for the distribution of D-elements and prenominal adjectives.

[9] The parenthesis is a transcription convention used for utterances that are not as clearly distinguishable as others are.

[10] This U-shaped behaviour for the first of Jean's recordings is also confirmed in the studies by Schlyter on verbal morphology (Schlyter, 1994, 78). In J1 there were 18 cases of unmarked verbs (i.e., no ± finite distinction) and 7 correct subject clitics. The unmarked verbs increased to 23 in the second recording, and the number of subject clitics dropped to only 1 occurrence. This confirms the pictures of J1 as containing a substantial amount of unanalysed production. Schlyter (p.c.) suggests that Jean's two languages might be balanced at this early stage, and that his more erroneous production in later recordings is caused by regression in his weaker language (French) (cf. also fn. 4).

Table 5. *Omission of D-elements in the child Anne's French (stronger language)*

RecN–Age	MLU	Types/ Tokens	Total# of nouns	D missing		Total # of A–N contexts	D missing in A–N contexts
				#	%		
A1 (2;3)	1.4	54/88	39	30	77	—	—
A2 (2;6)	1.9	108/418	89	24	27	1	1
A3 (2;8)	2.7	64/214	21	8	38	1	0
A4 (2;10)	2.4	106/308	29	7	24	4	0
A5(2;11)	3.2	78/294	28	10	36	—	—
A6 (3;1)	2.9	127/473	32	5	16	1	0
A7(3;3)	2.9	144/469	49	8	16	3	1
A8 (3;5)	2.8	177/593	116	19	16	3	1
A9(3;7)	3.6	130/590	38	3	8	—	—
A10(3;9)	4.5	168/776	45	3	7	6	0
A11 (4;0)	4.0	162/652	46	0	0	6	0

Table 6. *Omission of D-elements in the child Jean's French (weaker language)*

RecN–Age	MLU	Types/ Tokens	Total# of nouns	D missing		Total # of A–N contexts	D missing in A–N contexts
				#	%		
J1 (1;10)	1.6	66/132	33	17	51	—	—
J2 (2;0)	1.3	87/214	83	71	86	—	—
J3 (2;2)	1.5	60/114	35	31	89	11	10
J4 (2;4)	1.3	105/244	46	35	76	3	3
J5(2;6)	2.0	54/159	24	10	42	4	3
J6 (2;9)	3.5	154/636	49	8	14	2	—
J7(2;11)	2.8	167/578	35	12	34	14	1
J8 (3;1)	3.0	142/411	49	10	20	20	4
J9(3;3)	3.0	162/515	38	12	32	7	2
J10(3;5)	3.5	179/625	54	7	13	9	2
J11 (3;7)	3.6	123/443	35	7	20	7	1
J12 (3;9)	4.3	189/882	70	4	5	6	1

Table 7. *Omission of D-elements in the child Mimi's French (stronger language to 2;6)*

RecN–Age	MLU	Types/ Tokens	Total# of nouns	D missing		Total # of A–N contexts	D missing in A–N contexts
				#	%		
M1 (2;0)	2.1	51/221	15	5	33	4	3
M2 (2;2)	3.2	100/565	26	1	4	7	0
M3 (2;6)	3.5	149/577	48	2	4	7	0
M4 (2;10)	3.5	126/676	14	3	21	3	0
M5(3;2)	3.4	164/740	40	3	19	2	1
M6 (3;7)	4.3	183/859	66	1	2	6	0
M7(3;10)	3.9	173/851	46	1	2	—	—
M8 (4;2)	3.7	144/536	29	2	7	—	—

in the relevant contexts.[11] In these contexts, all three children produce the bare nouns observed in previous research:

(27) *ADULT: Jean, et là? et là qui c'est Jean?
            Jean and there and there who it is Jean
   *JEAN: léopard.
            leopard
                    (Jean 1;10, MLU 1.6)

(28) *JEAN: chapeau, là,   chapeau là.
            hat,   there, hat   there
                   (Jean 2;0, MLU 1.3)

(29) *ADULT: c'est quoi là
            it is   what there
   *ANNE: nounours.
            teddybears
               (Anne 2;3, MLU 1.4)

(30) *MIMI: ça   c'est papillon.
            that it is butterfly
                (Mimi 2;0, MLU 2.1)

Thus, examples (27) to (30) illustrate a stage at which the child leaves out the functional element. The determiners that do occur at this stage are almost exclusively articles. Among these few occurrences, there are examples indicating that these determiners do not yet function as they do in adult language. Examples such as (31) to (33) below show that the feature [+definite], associated with the definite article in the adult language, is not acquired at this stage:

(31) *ADULT: c'est une giraffe.
            it's a   giraffe
   *ANNE: la giraffe.
            the giraffe
               (Anne 2;6, MLU 1.9)

(32) *ADULT: c'est pas du pain ça?
            it's not bread that
   *JEAN: non.
   *ADULT: c'est quoi?
            it's what
   *JEAN: l'oeuf.
            the egg
               (Jean 2;4, MLU 1.3)

(33) *ADULT: qu'est-ce que c'est?
            what is that
   *MIMI: la papillon.
            the butterfly
               (Mimi 2;0, MLU 2.1)

These observations suggest that the [±definite] feature associated with the D⁰-head is not necessarily

accessible for the child as from the very first occurrences of determiners. Rather, these early articles could be interpreted as precursors of real determiners, without their target language value.[12]

Note that examples like (31) to (33) above would be surprising if one adopted a Strong Continuity approach to language acquisition, according to which FCs like the DP are present from the beginning and not learned. Employing a structure building approach, however, these occurrences can easily be accounted for and are even predicted. Recall, for instance, that Clahsen et al. (1994) analysed early determiners as being generated in the Specifier of the NP (cf. (22) above), arguably the only prenominal position initially. The [Spec–NP] position is not associated with the relevant features, but can, at this stage, host linguistic material that does not occur there in adult language. Consequently, the ''articles'' that are generated in this position are not restricted by the target language function.

Stage II: X/Y + N Returning now to Tables 5, 6, and 7, these also indicate that the determiner omission rate starts to drop significantly around MLU 2.0. As we have already seen, Mimi has quite a low omission rate already from her first recording (cf. Table 7). When Jean and Anne reached the same MLU value (for both at 2;6), their omission rate had also dropped to 42 per cent (cf. J5 in Table 6) and 27 per cent (cf. A2 in Table 5), respectively. In this first production of determiners, the vast majority are articles:

(34) *ADULT: qu'est-ce que c'est?
            "*What is that?*"
   *JEAN: une   voiture.
            a.FEM car
               (Jean 2;2, MLU 1.5)

(35) *ADULT: où est-ce qu'il est?
            "*Where is he?*"
   *ANNE: le   clown est – (là)
            the.MASC clown is – there
               (Anne 2;6, MLU 1.9)

This does not mean, however, that bare nouns are not produced: rather, at some point, they begin to alternate more frequently with correct determiners. Interestingly enough, it seems as if the determiner omission rate first starts to drop in simple Det–N sequences, like in (34) and (35), and only later in

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[11] It might be that Mimi already in her first recording has developed to Stage II (see below). As she is a fast developer, it is possible that she, before the data collection period began, produced the same amount of bare nouns as the other two children.

[12] In her study of German–French bilingual children, Müller (1994) also found target-deviant determiners with respect to grammatical number and gender distinctions. She argues convincingly that ''if the relevance of the grammatical features has not yet been discovered, then it is plausible to assume that the nominal functional category DET is not available in the children's grammar either'' (Müller, 1994, 60).

complex Det–Adj–N sequences like in (36) and (37). In the beginning of the data collection period, adjectives are not produced (with the exception of Mimi; cf. Table 7). When they emerge, they alternate for some time with the determiner in the prenominal position. For example, in Jean 3 (at 2;2; cf. Table 6) to Jean 5 (2;6), there are 18 contexts for the determiner with a prenominal adjective and a noun. Seventeen of these were produced without a preceding determiner.

(36) *ADULT: et   toi, que-. eh tu   mets   un
           and you what   you put (on) a
           bonnet, toi?
           hat   you
    *JEAN: petit   bonnet.
             little.MASC hat
                           (Jean 2;2, MLU 1.5)

(37) %SIT: Mimi points at two cats
    *MIMI: (petit   chat encore).
              little.MASC cat   more
    *ADULT: encore oui.
           more   yes
                           (Mimi 2;0, MLU 2.1)

Mimi and especially Jean produce adjectives at this stage (cf. Jean 3–6 and Mimi 1 in Tables 6 and 7 above). For Jean, the determiners are almost in complementary distribution in recordings 3–5 (cf. Table 6). The very first recording with Mimi (at 2;1; cf. Table 7) includes four adjectives, three of which were produced without the preceding determiner. There is one exception to this in an interesting sequence where Mimi seems to be testing the structure:

(38) %SIT: Adult and child playing with domino
              bricks with animals on them
    *ADULT: cherche-moi le
           get   me the.MASC
           petit   chat.
           small.MASC cat
    *MIMI: ça   c'est papillon.
             that it's   butterfly
    *ADULT: oui c'est ça. XXXXX (=not audible)
           yes, it's   that

    *MIMI: ça   c'est la   p- petite.
             that it's   the.FEM small.FEM
    *MIMI: voilà la   petite   (chat).
             there the.FEM small.FEM cat
             (should be: voilà le petit chat)
    *ADULT: oui
           yes
    *MIMI: oui. un   chat
             yes. a.MASC cat
                           (Mimi 1, 2;0)

When Mimi finds the domino brick with the cat on it and shows it to the adult, she first produces something that looks like an abandoned utterance with the structure Det–Adj. She then rephrases, and includes the noun to produce a complete Det–Adj–N structure. Note that this cannot be a simple repetition of the adult's first utterance, since she has got the gender wrong at this point. As the last utterance in the sequence shows, Mimi has not assigned one unique gender to the noun for *chat* (cat) at this stage.

Also, when repeating the adult's utterance, the functional part of the DP is often left out in the context of a prenominal adjective:

(39) *ADULT: c'est une   petite   fille?
           it's a.FEM little.FEM girl
    *ANNE: petite   fille.
             little.FEM girl
    *ADULT: c'est une   petite   fille.
           it's a.FEM little.FEM girl
                           (Anne 2;6, MLU 1.9)

Again, it is important to point out that a theory of gradual building up of X-bar structures can easily account for a stage at which determiners alternate with adjectives in a prenominal position. If we assume a development in line with that suggested by Clahsen et al. (1994) – where nouns only project to the NP-level initially – the above examples of restrictions on phrase structure would follow if both the determiner and the adjective were generated in [Spec–NP] at this stage (cf. (22) above).

Stage III: X + Y + N The final stage is characterised by the free combination of determiners and prenominal adjectives, which, as we saw, was problematic for the children in the previous stage. At this stage, there is also productive use of different determiners. For Mimi this has started already at the second recording (at 2;2), but for Jean, who has French as his weaker language, the sequence Det–Adj–N is really productive at 2;11 (Jean 7).

(40) *MIMI: le   petit   bonhomme,
              the.MASC small.MASC 'oldman'
              on   peut pas*[13] manger.
              one can   not   eat
                           (Mimi 2;2, MLU 3.2)
(41) *JEAN: où   il   est le
              where it.MASC is   the.MASC
              gros   micro?
              big.MASC microphone
                           (Jean 2;11, MLU 2.8)

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[13] * = transcription convention for focal stress.

It is very difficult to draw conclusions about Anne's development in this respect, as the data are insufficient. Recall from Schlyter's studies on finiteness that Anne is something of a slow developer, even though French is her stronger language (cf. Schlyter, 1994 and above).

Comparison with the acquisition of finiteness

Recall from Schlyter's studies that finiteness was acquired at slightly different ages for the three children included in this study (cf. Table 3 above). Mimi, the fastest developer in Schlyter's study, had acquired finiteness already at 2;2. In this study, I argue that this is the age at which she reaches Stage III, that is, where the Det–Adj–N sequence is produced without determiner omissions. For Jean, who according to Schlyter had acquired finiteness at 2;9, Table 6 shows that there is quite a clear overall drop in determiner omission between the fifth (2;6) and sixth (2;9) recordings, and that from 2;6 onwards he makes very few omissions even in Det–Adj–N contexts. Again there is some correlation over time between the acquisition of the full DP and mastery of finiteness. Unfortunately, there is not enough data in Anne's production to confirm this. However, since she follows the other two children in: first, producing a majority of bare nouns, second, beginning gradually to use determiners, and, finally, producing the Det–Adj–N sequences (the endpoint of this development as defined here), it is hard to believe that she differs substantially from the other two children in this respect.

Discussion

The results from the L1B study have shown a gradually emerging use of determiners, from a first stage dominated by bare nouns to a final stage characterised by complex DPs. An intermediate stage was also identified, such that data for at least two of the three children pointed to restrictions on phrase structure. Thus, my current results on the acquisition of the French DP seem to suggest that, in these bilingual children, syntactic structure is built up gradually during acquisition, and in a manner that the WCH theory of first language acquisition would predict (cf. Radford, 1990; 1996; Clahsen et al., 1994; Müller, 1994). Finally, a preliminary comparison between the acquisition of the DP and the AGR system of the clause has suggested that the two structures are acquired almost simultaneously.

In the case of the distribution of prenominal adjectives and D-elements, however, the language balance might be a factor to keep in mind. Recall that Jean, who most clearly alternates between the prenominal adjective and D-elements at a certain stage, has French as his weaker language, even though his two languages are rather balanced from the beginning.[14] However, because we can argue for the same development in Mimi, whose stronger language is initially French, language strength might not explain this distribution, especially since the same distribution is reported elsewhere in the literature (Clahsen et al., 1994 on monolingual German L1; Müller, 1994 on balanced L1B French).[15]

Results from the L2 study

The result on the acquisition of D-elements in the adult learners, shown in Table 8 below, is quite clear. The determiner omission rate in the early recordings (above the highlighted line) is low. Sara, for instance, in her first recording after 3 months in France, produces 107 contexts for determiners and in only 7 of them (6.5 per cent) is the determiner omitted (cf. Table 8). This observation, which is confirmed for all adult learners included here, contrasts radically with what we saw for the early recordings of the bilingual children. Again, it is important to stress that these figures include both obligatory and elliptic contexts where nouns occur without determiners.

Furthermore, the longitudinal data demonstrate a developmental pattern for both Martin and Johan. In Martin's case, an omission rate of 31 per cent in the first recording, after 7 months in France, declines to as low as 3 per cent (or 4 out of 123 cases) after 16 months. I demonstrate below that the omissions that do occur can largely be related to some specific constructions, and that this does not alter the general impression of the data. From the beginning, the adults used all types of D-elements. This is also a difference compared to the children, for whom articles prevailed over other determiners in the two first stages. The adult learners have no such restriction, and all D-elements are used productively. For

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[14] Gisela Håkansson (p.c.) reminds me that some aspects of Jean's French have been thought to develop as an L2 (Schlyter and Håkansson, 1994). Furthermore, Schlyter & Bernardini (forthcoming) also show that the period during which the complementary distribution of the prenominal adjective and the D-elements occurs is also when he mixes Swedish and French the most. At present, I'm not sure what this means for his "pure" French utterances investigated here.

[15] This is also connected to the question of how to relate the bilingual data – especially the data from the weaker language – to the L1 monolingual data. This question is beyond the scope of this paper, and I don't wish to make any claim about the generality of my data with respect to French L1 acquisition. The L1B data are only used here in comparison with L2 data on the same structure.

Table 8. *Omission of D-elements in L2 adult's French*

Learner–RecN	Months in France	Types/Tokens	Total# of nouns	D missing		Total # of A–N contexts	D missing in A–N contexts
				#	%		
Sara 1	3	512/2392	107	7	6.5	12	—
Petra 1	5	375/1854	97	10	10	17	1
Martin 1	7	340/1422	112	35	31	5	—
Johan 1	8	389/1951	115	15	13	10	—
Martin 2	14	450/1764	127	18	14	11	1?
Martin 3	16	432/1654	123	4	3	8	1?
Johan 2	10	590/3072	155	13	8	10	—
Johan 3	12	588/4189	239	6	2.5	72	1?

example, demonstratives and possessives, which are not found until the last stage of the children's production, are used from the beginning of the data collection period:

(42) *SAR: eh oui mm ma *mon ma même ma eh*
             ma eh ma même carrière, parce que
             c'est pas de théàtre
             qui eh employer moi. c'est c'est trés
             petit *cette* profession.
             /eh yes mm my.FEM my:MASC
             my.FEM own my.FEM eh my.FEM
             own career because it is no theatre
             that employ.INF me. It is it is very
             small this.FEM profession/
                               (Sara 1;3 months)

(43) *PTR: et   maintenant *cette*   histoire
             /and now   this.FEM story
             est finie   aussi.
             is finished too/
                               (Petra 1;5 months)

The second major observation is that the presence of a prenominal adjective does not negatively affect the use of determiners. If anything, the context Det–Adj–N seems to favour the use of determiners as compared to the simple sequence Det–N. There is, in fact, in the entire corpus, only one clear case of an omitted determiner in the Det–Adj–N context. Again, this is clearly different from the children's data.

For the sake of clarity, it should be added that the production of prenominal adjectives is only target-like with respect to the filling out of the DP-internal positions in the D-domain and possibly the Middle field. Agreement between the noun and the adjective is not, however, acquired at this stage, even with very frequent nouns and adjectives:

(44) a. *PTR: parce que il elle il écoute eh
                /because he she he listens eh

         # la petit eh fille # et il eh
         the.FEM little.Masc eh girl and he
         pof!
         pof!/
    b. *PTR: et le le
              /and the.MASC the.MASC
              petit eh fille entrE # la
              little.MASC girl enter the.FEM
              petite fille.
              little.FEM girl/
    c. *PTR: avec une très grand maison
              /with a.FEM very big.MASC house
              he he he.
              [laughs] /
                               (Petra 1;5 months)

Examples such as these are well-known phenomena in L2 production (see, for example, Bartning, 1997, 1999 on advanced Swedish learners), and underline the important difference between syntax and morphology in interlanguage (cf. Parodi et al., 1997).

Finally, something should be said about D-element omissions in the adult learner's production. In the case of Martin and Johan, Table 8 indicates a developmental pattern in which determiner omissions are more frequent in the beginning than subsequently. As mentioned above, Martin develops from an initial omission rate of 31 per cent to 3 per cent in his last recording (Martin 3 and 16 months, respectively). The same pattern is arguably present for Johan as well (13 per cent of omissions after 7 months and 2.5 per cent after 12 months). This would not be expected if the learners had initially had access to sufficient phrase structure to accommodate sequences of two or more prenominal elements. I, however, argue that the omissions are restricted to basically two specific contexts in which French and Swedish differ in their use of determiners. These are discussed briefly below.

Specific target construction

(45) *MAR: [. . .] Château de Vincennes # je viens
un fois [. . .] Versailles et # oui # pour
jouer # trompette.
Target: *de la trompette* (cf. Swedish: spela trumpet)
play Ø trumpet
(Martin 1;7 months)

The French verb for *play* is construed with an obligatory determiner following the preposition *de*, whereas the Swedish equivalent (*spela*) does not involve a determiner or a preposition. In the above example, Martin seems to follow the Swedish construction and uses a null determiner and a null preposition. In the corpus, a number of cases such as (46) can be related to specific verb constructions that differ between the two languages.

Indefinite plural

(46) *PTR: j'ai en # j'ai eh amis eh français et
I've   I've friends French and
amis   allemands.
friends German
Target: *j'ai des amis . . . et des amis* (cf. Swedish:
jag har   franska vänner)
I   have Ø French Ø friends
(Petra 1;5 months)

Recall that Swedish does not have an overt determiner for an indefinite plural. French, on the other hand, has an indefinite plural article, *des*. This difference is the source of much confusion for the Swedish learners, and examples such as (47) above are frequent at least initially.

Along with the frequent use of bare mass nouns in contexts where French requires the "partitive" article, the generic article, and a specific drop of the determiner in elliptic contexts, I believe that these cases are responsible for Martin and Johan's developmental pattern, shown in Table 8.

Comparison with the acquisition of finiteness

According to the morphological criteria imposed by Schlyter (1997) in her study on verbal morphology and the placement of object clitics, only one of the learners included here developed to a stage characterised by some mastery of finiteness (Martin) (cf. Table 4).[16]

Now, if we compare my current results with those of Schlyter, we find clear differences. In the case of the learner Petra, I have argued that she, even at her first recording after five months in France, has access to enough FCs to accommodate Det–Adj–N sequences (cf. Table 8). In Schlyter's study on verbal morphology and object clitic placement, the same recording shows only evidence of emerging finiteness. For Johan, who never acquires mastery of finiteness within the data collection period, the same contrast with the FCs of the DP is evident. Finally, Martin, who has only developed limited mastery of finiteness at his last recording (Martin 3, 16 months), has a low determiner omission rate from the beginning of data collection (but see discussion above concerning some specific contexts) and almost never omits a determiner in the context of a preceding adjective.

Thus, again, we can observe a clear difference between L1 and L2 acquisition. For the bilingual children, the acquisition of finiteness and the full DP-structure seemed to occur at approximately the same time (cf. above), but for the L2 learners, there seems to be no such correlation. This result is reminiscent of Schlyter's (1998) observation that these learners had acquired the C-domain before object clitics. I return to this question in the discussion below.

Discussion

It should be quite clear from Table 8 that the use of determiners in French is not a major problem for Swedish adult learners. The gradually emerging use of determiners that we saw in the bilingual children is not observed, but instead, already in the early recordings, we see productive use of different determiners and very few omissions. More importantly, there is no evidence of restrictions on phrase structure at any point, since the determiner omission rate is not higher in simple Det–N contexts than in complex Det–Adj–N sequences.

There is, thus, no evidence that a Swedish adult learner starts over with only a lexical NP, as would follow if Vainikka and Young-Scholten's (1996) MT hypothesis were strictly generalised to the DP. The learners do have initial access to sufficient structure to produce sequences of functional elements, adjectives, and nouns. Thus, it would seem that my results should be interpreted as supporting a Strong Continuity view of SLA. In fact, the results on acquisition of the French DP by Swedish learners can be viewed as a confirmation of the study by Parodi et al. (1997) on the German DP (cf. above). Recall that their study on learners of different L1s showed strong syntactic transfer effects. With this in mind, it would seem plausible that the FCs accommodating my

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[16] I remind the reader that the learner Sara was not included in Schlyter's study on finiteness.

learners' French lexical material originate from their Swedish.[17]

My results might seem surprising in view of those from Schlyter's study on verbal morphology and object clitic placement in some of these learners. As I have shown above, the learners clearly use complex DPs (i.e., Det–Adj–N sequences) before they master finiteness. If finiteness is interpreted as evidence for FCs in the clause, the conclusion might be that these learners lacked the relevant IP-projections and produced full DPs at the same time. Superficially, this would suggest that the DP and the CP are acquired separately, despite the basic syntactic representation of (2).

One thing that must be kept in mind here, however, is the difference in criteria for establishing FCs and subsequently the type of FC involved. In a Minimalist view, the φ-features of the verb are checked in agreement projections in the Middle field and involve exchange of abstract information between two distinct syntactic positions, the specifier and its head. It is probably "unfair" to compare this with the filling out of the D^0-head. My few examples (that could have been more numerous) of adjective agreement confirm this. The fact that agreement within the DP is not at all acquired at the same time as the functional elements that head it (cf. Bartning, 1997; 1999) leads to the suggestion that there is an important distinction between the types of functional categories involved here.[18]

Schlyter's (1998) observation that these learners acquired COMP before object clitics becomes very relevant in this discussion, and points to the fact that there is an important distinction between the types of FCs. Recall that in the general phrase structure tree for DP and CP (cf. (2) reproduced below), the C-/D-domains occur as the leftmost projections.

Thus, the observed syntactic similarities between the DP and CP, and perhaps especially the specific status of the C- and D-domains, have been confirmed by acquisition data. If we now take the bilingual children into account, my results suggest that, whereas the children's phrase structure gradually emerges from right to left – starting with simple lexical Ns (bare nouns) and gradually adding func-

(2)   DP/CP } D-/C-domain
      D'/C'
      FP } Middle field
D^0/C^0 F'
      Spec   NP/VP } Lexical projections
      F^0 N'/V'
      Spec
      N^0/V^0 XP
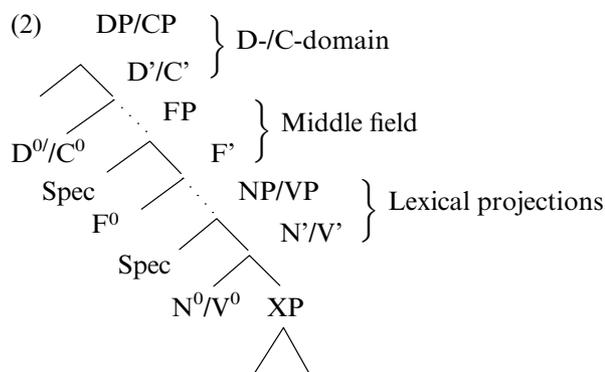
tional structure – the Swedish L2 learners very early find use for the D- (and C-) domain(s) in their French, possibly originating from their Swedish. The rare omissions of determiners in complex DPs indicate that at least one projection of the Middle field of the DP is accessible to these L2 learners, but some examples of agreement indicate that the properties of this projection differ from those of the target-language as agreement is not triggered.[19] A preliminary parallel is again found in the clause, with regard to which Schlyter's data on finiteness (i.e., verbal morphology) show that the adult learners have difficulties with Middle field projections.[20]

Summary

In this study, I have shown that the acquisition of DP in French is crucially different for bilingual first language and monolingual second language acquirers. For first language acquisition by Swedish–French bilinguals, I have argued for an initial absence of functional projections and a gradual building up of the syntactic tree. I have suggested that one and the same syntactic position can host diferent elements in early grammars, resulting – in the present case – in a nearly complementary distribution of adjectives and determiners at one stage. This result can be viewed as a confirmation of previous studies on the DP (Radford, 1990; Clahsen et al., 1994; Müller, 1994).

By comparing previous results on verbal morphology and the occurrence of subject clitics (indications of finiteness) (Schlyter, 1993; 1994), I have come to the preliminary conclusion that the DP is established approximately at the same time as finiteness in these children. Further research will be

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[17] For these specific learners, all of whom have a good prior knowledge of English, it has to be added that, since English and Swedish share virtually all the relevant properties of the DP, the influence might (also) come from this language.

[18] One should keep in mind that the Swedish learner of French is not at all unfamiliar with φ-feature morphology in the DP. In the Swedish DP, virtually every element agrees, but this property does not seem to ease the task for the Swedish learners when acquiring the agreement system of the French DP (cf. Parodi et al., 1997).

[19] As adjective–noun agreement is not studied in this paper, this is a preliminary conclusion.

[20] Again, this is a preliminary generalisation and will have to be studied in more detail. The details of the acquisition of finiteness in these learners remain to be clarified (cf. Schlyter, 1999).

needed to describe the relation between acquisition of the CP and the DP.

As for the L2 part, I have shown that for these Swedes acquiring French naturalistically, use of D-elements is not a problem. As soon as three months after onset, one learner's production shows only 6.5 per cent omissions. This contrasts sharply with the bilingual study. The results of the L2 study can be interpreted as supporting a strong influence of L1 DP syntactic properties on the L2. These results confirm studies on German (Parodi et al., 1997) in which the same transfer effect was found.

A preliminary comparison with the acquisition of finiteness in these learners (Schlyter, 1997) shows no correlation over time. When the learners use invariant verb forms at least with thematic verbs and use SVOCL order, they also produce D-elements consistently and master sequences of two prenominal elements. As a suggested explanation of this finding, I pointed at the differentiation between the FCs of the Middle field and those of the C-/D-domains. This differentiation was preliminarily supported by Schlyter's (1998) observation that, in these learners, COMP was acquired before object clitics, but further research will be needed in order to confirm this.

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