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Transfer in the contact between French and Italian?
Evidence from the acquisition of object clitics in cL2 and 2L1

This study concerns the ability of cL2 learners (4-6 years olds) to produce object clitics in different contexts. The cL2 learners in this study all acquired Italian as L2 and all had French as an L1 and no other language was present. This combination of languages and age permits us to shed light on some key questions of the acquisition of L2, i.e. transfer and the age factor. In the case of object clitics: are non target like productions due to the knowledge of other languages which do not have object clitics and/or are they due to the age of onset? Since transfer has been claimed to occur in previous studies, mainly in aL2 learners with non-romance languages as L1, we will also report on an age matched control group of Italian L1 children's production of object clitics in the same contexts as the cL2 learners. The same elicitation task procedure was used in both cL2 and L1. A small population of 18 children with Italian as L1, L2 (French L1) and Italian/French 2L1 children was exposed to a test in order to elicit object clitics in Italian (and French). The results are similar to previous studies in that all individuals produced full NPs instead of clitics in some constructions, some omitted clitics, but only the cL2 individuals produced object clitics in the wrong position.