A CROSS LANGUAGE STUDY OF L2 ACQUISITION OF CHINESE AND ENGLISH REFLEXIVES BY ENGLISH AND CHINESE SPEAKERS

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A Cross Language Study of L2 Acquisition of Chinese and English Reflexives by English and Chinese Speakers
英語人士和漢語人士習得第二語言中漢語和英語反身代詞的雙向研究

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Abstract

This study investigates the acquisition of Chinese and English reflexives by English and Chinese speakers respectively. Within the theoretical framework of Government and Binding, and adopting Progovac's (1992, 1993) Relativized SUBJECT analysis, it examines whether English and Chinese speakers can successfully acquire binding domains of Chinese and English reflexives in accordance with the Binding Principle A, and whether they can select proper antecedents of Chinese and English reflexives on the basis of their respective morphological status. It also investigates the role of the L1 and the application of the Subset Principle in the acquisition of Chinese and English reflexives by English and Chinese speakers.

Participants included English speakers learning Chinese, Chinese speakers learning English, native Chinese speakers, and native English speakers. A Chinese and an English proficiency tests were employed to assess English and Chinese speakers' L2 proficiency of Chinese and English respectively. Two types of tasks - the grammaticality judgment task and the context-based sentence judgment task - were used to test the acquisition of binding properties of Chinese and English reflexives.

It is found that English and Chinese speakers are successful in binding L2 reflexives in the domains sanctioned by the Binding Principle A, and in selecting proper antecedents for L2 reflexives on the basis of their respective morphological status. It is further revealed that the L2 acquisition of Chinese and English reflexives recapitulates the corresponding L1 development. The results suggest that L2 learners have access to the Binding Principles of UG and to UG at the morphology/syntax interface. Besides, the results indicate that binding properties of the L1 reflexives may not transfer to IL grammars of reflexives, which supports Eubank's proposal of partial L1 transfer whereby morphology/ lexicon driven syntactic properties do not carry over from L1 to L2. In addition, the results reveal that the Subset Principle cannot fully predict or explain the acquisition of Chinese and English reflexives by English and Chinese speakers.

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Abbreviations

φ	*Phi*-features (Person, Number, Gender)
Agr, AGR	Agreement
CA	Contrastive analysis
CAUS	Causer
CJT	Context-based judgment task
CL	Classifier
DE	Possessive marker of Chinese
ECP	Empty Category Principle
f-feature	Feature (functional head)
FP	Functional Projection
FT/FA	Full Transfer Full Access(model)
GCP	Governing Category Parameter
GJT	Grammaticality judgment task
I(NFL),Infl	Inflection
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LC	Local
LD	Long-distance
LF	Logical Form
L-mark	Lexical-mark
NEG,Neg	Negation
NL	Native language
NPAH	Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy
OPC	Overt Pronoun Constraint
PAP	Proper Antecedent Parameter
PF	Phonetic Form
R-	Referential-
RCP	Relative Clause Parameter
SLA	Second language Acquisition
Spec	Specifier
S-structure	Surface Structure
T	Tense
t	Trace
T/SM	Target/Subject Matter of Emotion
UG	Universal Grammar
VP	Verb phrase
X^0	Bare reflexives
X^{max}	Compound reflexives