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Dialogic and pragmatic aspects of early object realization: a cross-linguistic comparison of three Romance languages

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory research aimed to assess the impact of pragmatic and dialogic factors on the choice of referring expressions at the onset of transitive constructions in three romance languages. This study was conducted on a corpus of three adult-child dialogues with three 2;6 y.o. children acquiring Brazilian Portuguese (BP), Spanish (Sp), and French (Fr). After analyzing the distribution of forms for accusative and dative objects, we assessed the impact of the input (through two levels of influence) and of the attentional and discursive status of the referents (through four degrees of accessibility). Overall, the results showed the children's sensitivity to the pragmatic factors, but we also found different uses for null objects in each language: the use of more over-explicit forms by the Brazilian child when nulls would be accepted, and the use of null objects in Fr when pronouns were expected. The Sp-speaking child presented little disparity from the adult's uses. The three children took up linguistic forms from adults' wordings, and this strategy seems to contribute to the children's assessment of referent accessibility and the acquisition of challenging weak forms.

RESUMO

Este estudo exploratório teve como objetivo analisar o impacto dos fatores pragmáticos e dialógicos na escolha das expressões referenciais durante a emergência das construções transitivas em três línguas românicas. Esta análise foi realizada em um corpus de três interações adulto-criança com três crianças de 2 anos e 6 meses, adquirindo o português brasileiro (BP), o espanhol (Sp) e o francês (Fr). Após analisar a distribuição das formas para os objetos acusativos e dativos, avaliamos o impacto do input (através de dois níveis de influência), bem como o do status atencional e discursivo dos referentes (através de quatro níveis de acessibilidade). De modo geral, os resultados mostraram a sensibilidade das crianças aos fatores pragmáticos. Em cada língua, identificamos diferentes usos dos objetos nulos: o uso de formas fortes (lexicais) pela criança lusófona brasileira, enquanto os objetos nulos teriam sido aceitos, e o uso dos objetos nulos pela criança francófona quando os clíticos eram esperados. Os resultados da criança hispanófona não apresentaram diferença significativa em relação aos usos dos adultos. As três crianças retomaram formas linguísticas previamente empregadas pelos adultos. Essas retomadas parecem facilitar a avaliação da acessibilidade do referente pelas crianças, ao mesmo tempo que contribuem para a aquisição das formas linguísticas fracas.

KEYWORDS

Object Acquisition. Romance Languages. Dialogism. Pragmatic.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Aquisição de Objeto. Línguas Românicas. Dialogismo. Pragmática.

Introduction

The present study addressed the intertwinement of functional and dialogic factors in toddlers' early object expression. To further explore how the dialogic and pragmatic features impact the acquisition of different syntactic systems, our analysis focused on a cross-linguistic comparison with the data of three toddlers, each one acquiring a different Romance language: Brazilian Portuguese (BP), Spanish (Sp) and French (Fr).

According to the functionalist and dialogic perspective we adopt, syntactic acquisition stems from children's experience in dialogue with adults and older children in their natural/familiar environment. The notion of experience is understood in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Quantitatively, children progressively build their syntax by taking up the most frequent constructions they hear in adults' discourse (CAMERON-FAULKNER; LIEVEN; TOMASELLO, 2003; CLARK, 1998; LIEVEN, 2010; MORGENSTERN; PARISSÉ, 2012a; TOMASELLO, 2003). Qualitatively, this process takes place in frequent and repetitive interactive contexts (e.g. formats in BRUNER, 1982, 1983) where the (frequent) use of forms is pragmatically meaningful (NELSON, 2007; SALAZAR ORVIG, 2017).

The framework guiding this analysis was based on a view of children's syntactic productions as the materialization of the functional needs of communication. Hence, the mainly exploratory research presented in this paper intended to investigate an already well-debated structural topic, the acquisition of objects (BELLO; PIRVULESCU, 2022; CASTILLA; PÉREZ-LEROUX, 2010; COSTA; LOBO, 2007; GRAF et al., 2015; GRÜTER, 2009; JAKUBOWICZ et al., 1996; PÉREZ-LEROUX; PIRVULESCU; ROBERGE, 2008) from a functional and dialogic perspective (SALAZAR ORVIG et al., 2021). Thus, our aim here was not to describe how any of those languages functions but rather to analyze how toddlers acquiring these systems adjust their use to the formal and pragmatic factors entangled in dialogical scaffolding contexts.

1. The acquisition of objects in three Romance languages

The acquisition of objects (accusative and dative) is usually considered under two complementary perspectives: on the one hand, the emergence and development of transitive constructions, and on the other, the progressive mastering of the pronominal paradigms, in relation with the syntactic functions. Both issues have been tackled by extensive literature, which ranges from functionalist and usage-based studies, mostly centered on transitive constructions, to generative studies –the more numerous interested in the alternation of clitic and null forms produced for the object expression (see below).

In the acquisition of both transitive constructions and pronominal paradigms, formal aspects are interwoven with functional ones. For instance, mastering the pronominal paradigm involves

syntactic, morphological, and referential skills (DA SILVA-GENEST et al., 2021; HAMANN, 2002; JAKUBOWICZ et al., 1996; MAGALHÃES, 2006; MONTRUL, 2004; SALAZAR ORVIG; MORGENSTERN, 2015; VARLOKOSTA et al., 2016; YAMAGUCHI et al., 2021), and argument structure is mostly determined by the information structure and the referential status of the entities (DU BOIS, 2003; GOLDBERG, 2006). The choice of the type of expression (whether a noun or a pronoun ...) for object arguments depends on the referential dimension.

1.1 Transitive constructions and the expression of objects

The acquisition of transitive constructions has been mainly studied in the framework of usage-based and functionalist perspectives. According to usage-based approaches, the first occurrences of (proto) V+O patterns are “island constructions”, where arguments are specific to each verb (TOMASELLO, 2003). In the first stages, arguments do not possess abstract semantic meanings (such as patient or theme); their values depend on the meaning of the verb. First constructions are limited in combinatory possibilities. Semantic meanings, and therefore transitivity in its various facets, grow from a verb-by-verb basis to generalizations through analogic mechanisms (*ibid.*).

Frequency in the input is one of the main factors accounting for this process (CAMERON-FAULKNER; LIEVEN; TOMASELLO, 2003; LIEVEN, 2010; MORGENSTERN; PARISSÉ, 2012a; TOMASELLO, 2003). Goldberg, Casenhiser and Sethuraman (2004) showed that for each type of construction, individual verbs dominate the occurrences and facilitate their further abstraction. On the other hand, frames including pronouns, such as ‘I VERBed it’ for English, offer a transparent overlap between various verb constructions and facilitate generalization (CHILDERS; TOMASELLO, 2001, *inter alia*).

According to Preferred Argument Structure (DU BOIS, 2003) or other functional perspectives, there is a clear preference for lexical objects to encode low accessible referents. However, mastering transitive constructions is also subordinated to the development of pronominal paradigms in clitic languages, such as Romance languages. Whether the object is expressed through a clitic pronoun, a strong pronoun, or a null form is also intrinsically related to the preferred constructions of the language spoken by the child. Various studies highlight that languages pertain to three categories that represent the main formal possibilities for object expression: preference for pronouns, for clitics, or for null objects (GRÜTER, 2009; PÉREZ-LEROUX; PIRVULESCU; ROBERGE, 2008; VARLOKOSTA et al., 2016). The three Romance languages that we bring to comparison present clitic paradigms to express the object. However, while clitics are the preferred form in Fr and Sp, in BP null forms prevail, and strong personal pronouns are also allowed. Likewise, in European Portuguese (EP) clitics are the preferred form for object expression, but nulls also have their share of specific null-allowing contexts (NUNES, 1993).

Besides, the choice of object expression depends on the referential dimension. The choice of the linguistic form is aligned with the assessment of accessibility and givenness (ARIEL, 1990; GUNDEL; HEDBERG; ZACHARSKI, 1993): stronger and explicit linguistic forms (such as nouns, dislocations, and strong stressed pronouns) ensure the interlocutor retrieves the referent; and weaker and more elliptic linguistic forms (such as clitics and nulls) express the high accessibility of the referent (see e.g. ALLEN;

HUGHES; SKARABELA, 2015). Otherwise, strong forms can be used by children when there is a need to disambiguate competing referents. For instance, Graf, Theakstone, Lieven and Tomasello (2015) showed that at 3;5, the children's choice to express or not the referent depends, at least in part, on this factor.

Children acquiring those languages must master the weak and strong pronominal paradigms (clitics and personal), assess the referent status and, in cases of high accessibility, assess which type of weak form is adequate or allowed by the context: clitics or nulls. When children replace an expected pronominal object for a not-adult-like null object, various explanations arise: they might not produce the pronoun due to a lack of mastery of the clitic paradigm, or because they underestimated the need for a more explicit form, or, perhaps, as they accurately assessed the high accessibility of the referent¹.

Either way, children's choice of referring expressions in the object function is a source for the investigation of how functional and formal aspects interact in language acquisition.

We turn now to a brief presentation of the acquisition of objects in the three languages under scope.

1.2 The acquisition of objects in Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, and French

This study concerned the acquisition of three romance languages, which involved clitic pronoun paradigms and, at different degrees, the mastering of null objects. Whereas Brazilian Portuguese is considered, more than European Portuguese, as a null object language (where null forms alternate with clitics), Sp and Fr are considered clitic object languages, where null forms are less frequent, though not absent. In this section, we summarize the main results of previous research on the acquisition of objects in these languages.

- The case of Portuguese language acquisition

When it comes to the acquisition of Portuguese varieties, we found that in EP (a clitic-object-prefering language), children's object expression develops from null object generalization towards an increased clitic production (COSTA; LOBO, 2007; COSTA; LOBO; SILVA, 2009). Even though nulls persist longer and at higher rates than in other clitic-object Romance languages (VARLOKOSTA et al., 2016), authors observe the decrease of omissions by the age of 4, as clitic production starts to stabilize. Children's tendency to generalize null forms is usually explained by EP's complexity, providing two weak variables in a tradeoff relation: they cannot be interchangeable, and their use depends on the contexts allowing the preference for one over the other (COSTA; LOBO, 2007).

BP's object acquisition differs from EP's. Nulls compete with lexical objects, as toddlers tend to use over-explicit linguistic forms (nouns) when a weak form would be privileged in BP's extended null-accepting contexts (CASAGRANDE, 2007; MAGALHÃES, 2006). To explain this non-adult-like

¹ Other factors such as the cognitive load of the pronominal realization in working memory have been discussed as potentially impactful over children's choice of null forms.

production, experimental and naturalistic generative studies have analyzed the influence of different factors, including semantic features and *deixis*: children's initial null-objects are interpreted as deictics, and once children start to grasp the semantic traits of the antecedents, nulls would gain anaphoric value when referring to [+animated] or [-animated +specific] antecedents, while strong pronouns would emerge for children's deictic uses. For antecedents with other semantic features such as [-animated] and [+generic], children would prefer nouns (CASAGRANDE, 2007; CYRINO; LOPES, 2005).

In sum, while in EP children need to delimit the contexts where nulls are not allowed and clitics are expected, BP's nulls would go from generalized uses to a subordination to children's assessment of the antecedent's semantic features. Once BP-speaking toddlers start grasping the animacy and specificity of the object's antecedents, they would assess the sufficiency or a null form of the need for a lexical object according to semantic traits (CYRINO; LOPES, 2005; MAGALHÃES, 2006).

- The case of Spanish language acquisition

Research on Sp-speaking children concerns mainly the omission of the clitic in object function, accusative, and dative (CASTILLA; PÉREZ-LEROUX, 2010; DOMÍNGUEZ, 2003; LÓPEZ ORNAT, 1990; LÓPEZ ORNAT et al., 1994; MONTRUL, 2004; VARLOKOSTA et al., 2016; WEXLER; GAVARRÓ; TORRENS, 2004). However methodological approaches differ, the results converged on a clear decrease in the number of omissions at about 4 years. As most studies were conducted in a generative framework, the omissions or other children's "errors" were considered to be due to computational or representational limitations at the earliest stages of language development. (CASTILLA; PÉREZ-LEROUX, 2010). Eisenclas (2003) focused on another aspect of the child's knowledge of object clitics: their preverbal or postverbal position. In Sp, clitics attach preverbally to finite verbs. The study showed that even when they were asked to imitate a "wrong" model, young children (3 to 6 years old) tended to "misimitate" (that is to "correct" the model). This would evidence the continuity between child and adult grammar. However, Aguado-Orea et al. (2019) showed that the tendency to correct weird order is observed more often frequent than for less frequent verbs.

- The case of French language acquisition

Studies on Fr underscore a dissociation between subjects and objects in syntactic development before age 3. Subject omission is frequent (DA SILVA-GENEST et al., 2021; HAMANN, 2002; JAKUBOWICZ et al., 1996; JAKUBOWICZ; RIGAUT, 2000), and can be found even when children present complex syntactic constructions (HUDELOT; SALAZAR ORVIG, 2004); the omission seems to be less frequent for objects which are often expressed through lexical forms (HAMANN, 2002; JAKUBOWICZ et al., 1996; JAKUBOWICZ; RIGAUT, 2000). However, Fr children were found to omit objects more often than children learning other languages. Even though there is not a clear consensus through studies, the frequency of object omission even in older children might reflect adult uses (MATTHEWS et al., 2007; VARLOKOSTA et al., 2016).

Otherwise, the paradigm of clitic pronouns develops asymmetrically, with subject clitic pronouns appearing earlier than object ones and among the latter, accusative clitic pronouns before dative ones (BELLO; PIRVULESCU, 2022). Fr-speaking children tend to prefer lexical forms for datives. For instance, Hamann (2002) reported that in the Augustin corpus subject clitics were present, and object clitics were scarce before 2;4 and only became frequent at 2;9. Bello et Pirvulescu (2022) reported the first occurrence of indirect objects clitics in the Anne corpus at 2.5.

1.3 Research questions

The aim of the present cross-linguistic study was to assess the impact of pragmatic and dialogic factors on the choice of referring expressions in object functions (accusative, and to a lesser extent, dative) at the onset of transitive constructions in three romance languages.

The first research question was whether there are differences in the distribution of clitic, null, and lexical objects according to the language. According to the literature, in a continuum from the most frequent to the less frequent null-object occurrences, we can hypothesize that the BP-speaking child is situated at one end and that the Sp-speaking child is at the other end.

The second research question concerned the influence of the input. This influence was assessed at two levels:

a) a global one, that correspond to children's appropriation of the forms of object expression in the language they hear and to which they respond. The similarities between the adults' and child's distributions of these frequencies would indicate that the children have already assimilated the forms in use in their language.

b) A local influence, in which the forms produced by the children in the dialogue are preceded by a similar form produced by adults. In this case, the adult's antecedent could have a priming effect (PICKERING; GARROD, 2004) on the child's V+O construction. In this sense, these sequences would be (?) part of the adult's contribution to the acquisition. As studies on input suggest, we can expect an influence of verb constructions in the production of objects.

We expected children's uses of different expressions to be influenced by adult input at both levels of analysis.

The third research question concerned the discourse-pragmatic dimension. Whatever the language, we expected to find null forms and clitic pronouns preferentially used for given referents and lexical forms for New or distant referents.

Overall, we will discuss if the patterns found in the acquisition of the three languages differ from or align with one another, and what interpretations could be proposed for the possible divergences.

2. Methods

In this section, we present the methods of investigation, the selection of the corpus, and the analysis axis.

2.1 Corpus

In order to tackle our research questions, we studied the productions of objects in a cross-linguistic corpus of naturally occurring dialogues between three boys (Gustavo², a BP-speaking boy from the São Paulo region; Magín³, a Sp-speaking boy from the Madrid region; and Antoine⁴, a Fr-speaking boy from the Paris region) and their familiar interlocutors, including the observers. For this exploratory study, we limited the corpus to one session per child at around the age of 2;6. We decided to work only with boys in order to avoid possible differences due to gender (BATES; DALE; THAL, 1995). The age was chosen so we could observe an early stage of the production of different types of objects (accusative and dative). However, as the Sp-speaking boy expressed more objects than the two other children we selected a session at 2;5 for him.

The analysis (described in section 2.2) was conducted on all the participants' utterances, summarized in Table 1.

	Nb. Of child's utterances	Nb. Of Child's transitive verbs	Total Nb. Of Child's objects (accusative and dative)	Nb. Of Adults' utterances	Adult interlocutors ⁵
Brazilian Portuguese Gustavo	260	102	115	528	FAT, MOT, GMO, OBS
Spanish Magín	296	113	168	431	MOT
French Antoine	254	61	61	801	GMO, OBS

Table 1 - Speakers' total number of utterances and verb + object constructions in each language

Source: elaborated by the authors

Despite the equivalent number of child's utterances coded in each corpus (250-300 utterances), we noticed an important disparity concerning the number of objects in Fr with respect to the other two languages. A closer inspection showed that this difference was essentially due to the frequency of transitive (vs. intransitive) verbs employed in the interactions, rather than to the child's capacity to fill the object position. We also observed a higher proportion of adults' utterances in the Fr corpus than in the other two languages.

2.2 Analyses

² Gustavo's data belongs to the NALíngua corpus (DEL RÉ; HILÁRIO ;RODRIGUES, 2016)

³ Magín's data belong to the Aguirre corpus (AGUIRRE, 2003) available in the CHILDES database (MACWHINNEY, 2000)

⁴ Antoine's data belong to The Paris Corpus (MORGENSTERN ;PARISSE, 2012b) also in CHILDES (*op. cit.*)

⁵ The adult interlocutors are indicated according to how they are related to the child (CHI): father (FAT), mother (MOT), grandmother (GDM), observer (OBS).

The corpus which was retrieved from the CHILDES (MACWHINNEY, 2000) and NALíngua (DEL RÉ; HILÁRIO; RODRIGUES, 2016) databases, was previously fully transcribed under CLAN (MACWHINNEY, *ibid.*). The transcription was transferred to Excel, on an utterance-by-utterance basis, in order to proceed to the analyses and computation, according to the following steps: the identification and categorization of objects (section 2.2.1), the relation of the child's wording to the input (2.2.2), the assessment of the objects' referential status (2.2.3), and when referential, the attentional and discursive status of their referent (2.2.4). The analyses were conducted on all the verbal clauses, including imperatives and non-finite forms (infinitives or participles). The same methods were applied to the children's and to the adult's utterances.

2.2.1 Identification and categorization of objects

For each utterance, we identified all the objects, accusative - whether direct or indirect - and dative. In this first overview, non-referential expressions (mostly frozen phrases) were included. Reflexive pronouns were only included when they had an accusative or dative value. This first method of identification concerned the overt arguments. The identification of null objects proved to be trickier, as in the three languages transitive verbs may have non-transitive uses. We considered that there was a null object when a specific referent - candidate to an accusative or dative value - could be identified or inferable through the context (CUMMINS; ROBERGE, 2004). Generic, indefinite, or phatic values were therefore excluded.

The objects were classified according to the main grammatical categories. We distinguished:

a) **Nouns** (including common nouns, proper names, and adjectives in a nominal function);

(1) Accusative

BP - CHI:	é:que eu dou comida para Luna eu !	'(the thing) is that I give food to Luna, I'
Sp - CHI:	se da la leche	'(one) gives milk '
Fr - CHI:	cassé la voiture Antoine	'broke the car Antoine'

(2) Dative

BP - FAT:	mostra para vovó !	'show grandma '
Sp - CHI:	la ha da(d)o a papait@c	'(he) gave it to daddy '
Fr - GMO:	montre à Christophe comme tu sais bien reculer avec la voiture	'show Christophe how well you manage to move back with the car'

b) **Dislocations** which combine a strong, stressed form (a lexical or a strong pronoun) and a weak form, usually a clitic pronoun.

(3) Accusative⁶

Sp - CHI: se **lo** voy a quitar **el sombrero** 'I'm going to take **it** off, **his hat**'
 Fr - GMO: tu viens **la** ranger un peu au garage **la voiture** 'you come and store **it** a bit in the garage, **the car**'

(4) Dative

Sp - CHI: qué **le** pasa **al piloto** ? 'what happens **to him to the pilot**'?
 Fr - OBS: et est-c(e) que **moi** tu **me** dis au_revoir ? 'do you tell **me** bye bye **to me**'?

- c) **Clitic pronouns** In BP accusative *me, te*; dative *me, te*; in Sp: accusative *me, te, nos, os lo, la, los, las*; dative *me, te, nos, os le, les*; reflexive *me, te, se*; in Fr: accusative: *me, te, nous, vous le, la, les*; dative: *me, te, nous, vous lui, leur*; reflexive *me, te, se*

(5) Accusative

BP - CHI: **te** peguei ! '(I) caught you' or 'gotcha'
 Sp - CHI: no me **lo** compras 'don't buy **it** to me'
 Fr - GMO: tu l'as ouverte? 'did you open **it**'?

(6) Dative

BP - CHI: vou **te** mostrar 'I am going to show **you**'
 Sp - CHI: **me** lo das? '(do/can you) give it to **me**'
 Fr - GMO: faut que tu **me** dises ! 'you have to tell **me**'

(7) Reflexive

Sp - CHI: no **se** la comen 'they don't eat it (for the)'
 Fr - OBS: Antoine toi tu sais **te** déshabiller tout seul ? 'Antoine do you know how to undress (yourself) by yourself?'

- d) **Null forms.** In this group we gathered both null objects corresponding to an implicit object and possible omissions, without distinction.

(8) Accusative

⁶ There are no dislocations in the BP's data

BP - GMO: deixa eu ver ☹	<i>'let me see (the car)'</i>
Sp - CHI: yo no toco ☹	<i>'I don't play (the cello)'</i>
Fr - CHI: oui c'est ça il répare ☹	<i>'yes that's it he repairs (the car)'</i>

- e) **Other pronouns.** Demonstrative, relative, indefinite, possessive pronouns as well as strong personal pronouns) were gathered under the label “**other pronouns**”.

(9) Accusative

BP - GMO: ela come tu:do !	<i>'she eats everything'</i>
Sp - CHI: qué se ha poni(d)o	<i>'what did (she) put?'</i>
Fr - CHI: ferme pas ça	<i>'don't close that'</i>

(10) Dative

BP - MOT: mostra pra ela que o olho mexe	<i>'show to her that the eye moves'</i>
Fr - OBS: oui montre moi !	<i>'yes show me'</i>

Not all categories presented above were illustrated by examples from the corpus. This is because not all categories are present in our data, as it was the case for dislocations, absent in BP.

2.2.3 Global and local influence of the input

As mentioned above, the linguistic input was considered from two perspectives. First, the global distribution of the accusative and dative objects in the three children's discourse was compared to that in their adult interlocutors' discourse. Second, in order to better understand how the children grasped and took up the forms of realization of objects, we assessed the local influence of the interlocutors' utterances. That is, for each occurrence of an object (accusative or dative) in the children's discourse, we determined whether it had been possibly influenced or not by a previous form (not necessarily co-referential) in the adults' discourse. We considered four types of relationships:

- **Independent:** When an object (accusative or dative) produced by the child did not present any common formal features with an accusative or dative in an adult's previous utterances in the session.
- **Influenced:** The child's verb+object construction could be analyzed as either one of the two uptake types presented below:

Uptake 1: this category regroups three possibilities. The child only took up the object expression (accusative and/or dative) and changed the verb; the child took up a “verb + overt object” construction; or the child integrally took up an adult’s “verb+ null object” construction.

(11) Example of Uptake 1 in Sp

MOT: se **lo vas a quitar** tú? ‘will you **take it off**’
 CHI: se **lo voy a quitar el sombrero** ‘(I) will **take it off** the hat’

(12) Example of Uptake 1 in BP

FAT: mostra **o McQueen pra Luna!** ‘show **Luna McQueen**’
 MOT: mostra o ‘show the...’
 CHI: olha Luna **o McQueen!** ‘Look Luna (at) **McQueen!**’

Uptake 2: the child took up only the adult’s verb and combined it with a different object expression:

(13) Example of Uptake 2 in BP

MOT: **Pega** ele lá! ‘(go) get **it** there!’
 CHI: **te peguei!** ‘got **you!** (or gotcha)’

- **Omission:** The child’s object construction took up the verb but omitted the object that was originally present in the adults’ verb + object construction (21) without adding a new object

(14) Example of Omission in Fr

OBS: c’est comme ça qu’il **la répare** Antoine ? ‘is that how he fixes **it**, Antoine?’
 GMO: 0 [=! laughs].
 CHI: oui c’est ça i(l) Ø [**kepar**] ‘yes, that’s it he fixes (i)’

- **Hybrid uptake:** The child repeated a previous object construction of his own, which was originally taken up from an adults’ utterance. This type of children’s self-repetition pertains to the influence of the adults’ input as children incorporate the object construction in their subsequent production.

2.2.4 Referential Status

All the occurrences of accusative and dative objects were categorized according to their referential status, following the methodology developed by Salazar Orvig et al. (2021). Were considered as **referential** (CHAROLLES, 2002), the expressions referring as well to a specific individual (whether entities or the participants in the interaction) as to indefinite or generic entities. **Not referential**,

corresponded, to attributive and naming uses, as well as elements of complex predicates, actions or processes.

Referential expressions were then categorized according to the attentional and discursive status of the referent. The categories were the following:

- **NEW**, when the referent was brought to the attention of the interlocutors for the first time in the interaction; nothing in the situation nor in the discursive context allowed its existence to be inferred.
- **ACTIVATED**, when the referent had not been previously mentioned in the interlocutors discourse but was present to their attention or their knowledge, because the entity was actually present in the situation or because it was inferable from the discursive context.
- **GIVEN**, when the referent had been previously mentioned in the interlocutors' discourse within a topical sequence.

(15) Given referent in the Sp corpus (accusative)

MOT:	esto es helicoptero y esto es avioneta.	<i>'this is an helicopter and this a small plane;</i>
	cómo te gusta más?	<i>how do you like it better'</i>
CHI:	eso no quiero	<i>'(I) don't want that'</i>

- **REINTRODUCED**, when the referent was mentioned again after at least one topical sequence in which it was not mentioned. In cases of reintroduction, the referent often remained Activated, despite the change of topical sequence.

3. Results

The results of our inquiry start with an overview, where we examined all forms produced by children in each language and discussed the patterns of object expression emerging from the distribution of accusatives and datives. Next, we exposed the results for the two main factors considered: the influence of adults' input and the influence of the attentional and discursive status of the referents over children's productions. These results were discussed both quantitatively and qualitatively, statistics being held aside because of the limited extent of the corpus.

3.1 Global distribution of the forms for adults and for children

Table 2 presents children's forms, separately for accusative and dative objects. We could notice that the proportion of dative objects was generally lower than the proportion of accusatives. In BP it corresponded to 10% of the total of objects, whereas in Sp datives amount was up to 27%. In Fr, the child did not use constructions involving a dative argument.

Object Type	Null Forms	Clitic Pr.	Nouns	Dislocations	Other Pr	Subtotal	TOTAL number
BP							
ACC	29 (24.5%)	2 (1.6%)	67 (56.7%)	0	10 (8.4%)	108 (91.5%)	118
DAT	25 (1.6%)	3 (2.5%)	5 (4.2%)	0	0	10 (8.4%)	
SP							
ACC	23 (13.7)	36 (21.5%)	32 (19.1%)	2 (1.2%)	28 (16.7%)	121 (72.4%)	167
DAT	2 (1.2%)	40 (23.9%)	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.7%)	0	46 (27.5%)	
FR							
ACC	27 (47.3%)	8 (14%)	21 (36.8%)	0	1(1.7%)	57 (100%)	57
DAT	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Table 2 - Global distribution of children's forms for dative and accusative objects in each language ⁷

Source: elaborated by the authors

In spite of the equivalence between the number of children's utterances analyzed in each language, the different number of objects between the Fr-speaking child and the other two languages was once again remarkable, with 57 Fr objects against 118 (accusatives and datives) in BP and 167 (accusatives and datives) in Sp.

Our last and most important observation for these data involved the preferential forms produced by each child. We observed a clear opposition between BP and the other two languages. In BP we found 31 nulls and 72 lexical objects whereas clitics were very scarce (5 occurrences, representing less than 5% of the total), On the contrary, clitics appeared as the dominant form for Sp, counting 76 occurrences out of 167 objects. Although in Fr we noticed the modest presence of 8 clitics, this result represented around 14% of the child's objects, a higher proportion than for BP's clitics. Besides the clitics, we observed in Fr a rather large number of 27 null forms, to be discussed in the following sections.

This overview of the children's global productions gives a first glance at the cross-linguistic differences in formal distribution. We will now present the results of the first factor of influence: the influence of adults' input over children's objects.

3.2 Influence of the input over children's formal choices

This section is divided into two main topics: the degree of similarity between children's productions and adults' formal patterns, and the local role of verb+object uptakes from adults' utterances to children's.

3.2.1. Global distribution

Our first analysis (Figure 1) concerned children's and adults' global distributions of forms for each language, in order to investigate the extent to which children's productions follow the adult model.

⁷ Ten objects were excluded from the presentations on account of the uncertainty of the analysis (6 in BP, 1 in Spanish, and 4 in French, all undecidable).

Similarities between the children's and the adults' distributions would suggest a global influence of adults' input over children's object expression.

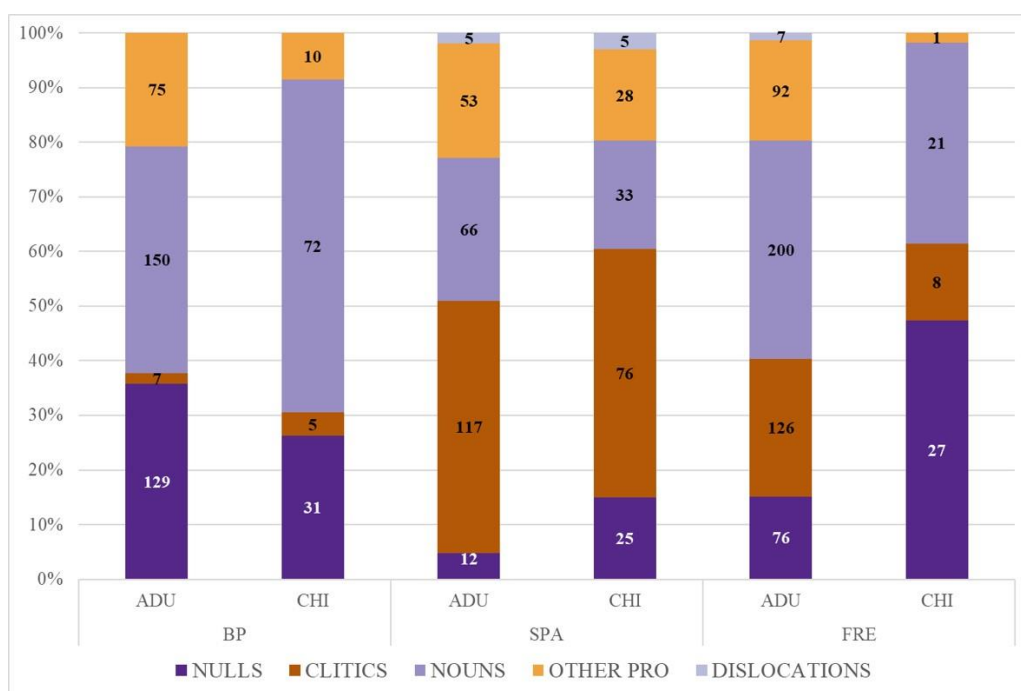


Figure 1 - Global distribution of adults' and children's objects in each language⁸
 Source: elaborated by the authors

First, Figure 1 verified the formal contrast between BP and the other two languages: the scarcity of clitics in the BP-speaking child, was not specific to the child but mirrored the structural distribution observed in adults. As a whole, figures were quite similar between adult's and child's distributions in each language. However, we noticed that, for Sp and for Fr, nulls were more frequent in children than in adults, which could be attributed to the children's level of linguistic development. This difference was more marked in Fr, and more generally it was in this corpus that we observed more differences between the child and his adult interlocutors.

⁸ From now on, and due to the reduced number (or lack) of datives, we decided to merge both categories (accusative and dative) for the presentation of the results.

3.2.2. Local Influence

What happened at the level of the local influence in each language? The results for the four types of local influence (independent, influenced, omission, and hybrid) are presented in Figures 2 to 4. We deemed it relevant to explicit two main types of influence, presented in the purple bars of the graphics: the child’s uptakes of the forms occupying the object position, with or without a verbal uptake (uptakes of type 1) represented by textured purple bars), and the child’s uptakes of the verb construction only (cases of uptake 2, represented by solid purple bars).

This distinction aimed to highlight both the indirect influence of the verb uptake over the child’s verb + object construction and the more specific input influence over the form the child chose to fill the object position, with or without a verbal uptake.

- For Brazilian Portuguese:

Figure 1 showed BP-speaking child and adults’, except regarding the higher frequency of nulls for the adults and of nouns for the child. Figure 2 informed about the degree of local influence over the child’s productions:

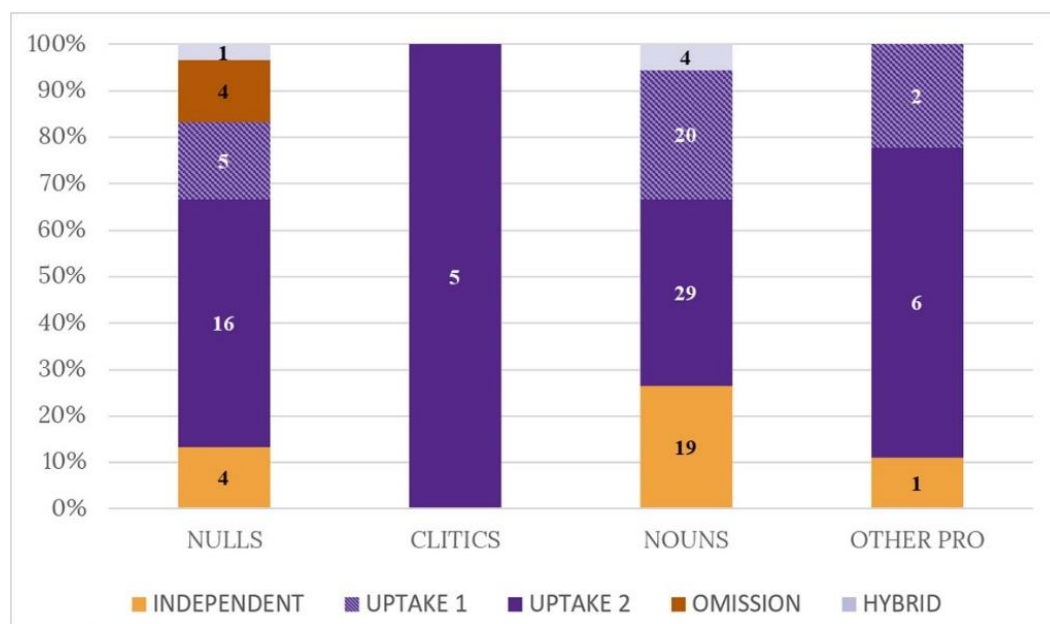


Figure 2 - Child’s uptakes of adults’ verb + object constructions in BP
Source: elaborated by the authors

Most of the child’s forms were influenced by the adults’ previous wordings. For all forms but clitics, both types of influence were found: uptakes of the overt object or of the entire Verb+object construction (uptake type 1), and uptakes of the verb only, (uptake type 2).

For clitics, all five occurrences were produced alongside uptakes of two verbs: “pegar” (to get) and “mostrar” (to show). With both verbs, the child produced a 2nd-person clitic in coreference with the adult’s previous 3rd-person strong form (noun or strong pronoun), as we can see in examples 13, and 16:

(16) Uptake in the BP corpus

MOT: mostra os outros carrinhos **para tia Alê** [...]! ‘show **Tia Alê** the other little cars < talks to the child about the OBS>
 CHI: não vou **te** mostrar xx que trocou o pneu. ‘(I) won’t show **you** ... that (it) changed the tire’

The child’s null objects were produced under all levels of influence/independence: often part of a verb + null object construction uptake, but also these uses could correspond to cases of omission of the adults’ previous overt object expression. Among null objects, there was also one case of hybrid production, where the child reintroduced a verb + null object construction previously taken up from a previous adult’s construction as in example 17: “ele mexe” (he moves \emptyset [his eyes]).

(17) Hybrid occurrences in the BP corpus

FAT: vê se ele mexe ‘check if he moves \emptyset ’ (his eyes)
 CHI: mexe ‘ \emptyset moves \emptyset ’ (he; his eyes)
 (...)
 CHI: ele mexe ‘he moves \emptyset ’ (his eyes)

In the case of nouns, hybrid occurrences corresponded to either verb or noun uptakes, usually for referents that were often mentioned during specific activities, as for example the act of showing someone the toy in “olha o McQueen” (‘look at McQueen’), taken up from a previous occurrence (see example 12).

The child’s uses of other pronouns, as opposed to what could be expected based on the literature regarding strong pronouns for anaphoric objects (MAGALHÃES, 2006), were mainly cases of deictic demonstratives, most of them produced with the uptake of the verb, or the uptake of the verb+object construction from adults’ previous utterances, as in ex 18:

(18) Deictic object uptake in the PB corpus

MOT: de onde você tirou **isso**? ‘where did you take **that** from?’
 CHI: \emptyset tirou **isso** do McQueen ‘(I) took **that** from McQueen’

To summarize, the child’s object expression in BP was influenced in various ways. Although taking up the object’s formal expression was frequent, the uptakes of the verb alone appeared as the most influential among the child’s verb+object constructions.

- For Spanish:

In Sp results in Figure 1, the child's and the adult's distributions were quite alike, the most frequent forms being clitic pronouns, followed by nouns for both speakers. The main difference between the distributions of adult and child was a slightly higher proportion of null objects in the child's productions. As for the degree of local influence, we found a relatively homogeneous rate of uptake across forms:

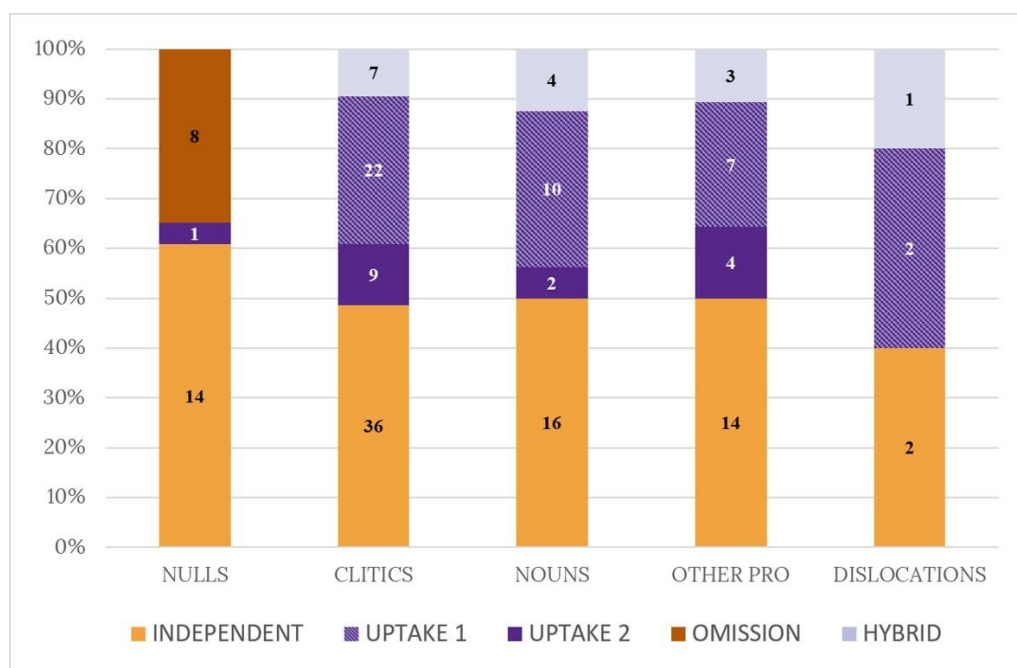


Figure 3 - Child's uptakes of adult's verb+object constructions in Spanish
 Source: elaborated by the authors

At least half of the Sp-speaking child's objects were independent of the adult's previous wordings whereas influence rates ranged from 42% for clitics to 37% for nouns. Nulls were chiefly produced in independent utterances, and presented an omission rate of 35%, which suggests the non-conformity of this type of object construction to the adult model. Let's recall however that the Sp-speaking child presents less null forms than the two other children (Figure 1). Independent and influenced uses of clitics presented similar rates. The proportion of independent uses suggests a relative mastery of clitic objects mainly because these independently produced objects follow the adult's global input (Figure 1). At the same time most of the influence cases in Sp corresponded to the strongest levels of influence in our grid, that is type 1 uptakes, which included the uptake of the object expression and, sometimes, the uptake of the whole construction. This suggests that the child still leans on the adult forms to build his own discourse, which, at the same time, structured his active participation in the dialogue, as it can be seen in example 19.

(19) Uptakes in the Sp Corpus

MOT: no lo quieres?	'don't (you) want it ?'
CHI: No	'no'
MOT: por qué no?	'why not?'
CHI: no me lo compras	'(you) don't buy it to me'
MOT: que te lo ha puesto mama y no lo querías	'mommy gave it to you and (you) didn't want it '
CHI: no quiero ∅	'(I) don't want'
MOT: qué?	'what?'
CHI: yo no lo quiero	'(I) don't want it <different referent>

Hybrid productions were found in all forms except nulls, but at low rates.

These results indicate that the Sp-speaking child has an advanced level of acquisition, given the adult-like distribution and the stable levels of influence over all forms. Even though rates of influence for clitics were high, these preferential object expressions in Sp were also the most frequently produced in independent utterances. This result, associated with the low rate of hybrid clitics suggest that weak pronouns were already part of the child's independent verb+object constructions.

• For French:

Based on the global distribution presented in Figure 1, we know that the Fr-speaking child's most frequent forms were null objects (summing up to 47% of the total) followed by nouns and clitics whereas adults preferred nouns followed by clitic pronouns. We observed however also an intriguing proportion of 16% of null objects.

When it comes to the local influence level, Figure 4 shows that that even if the Fr-speaking child had the most divergent distribution from adults' forms, he also presented quite high rates of influence:

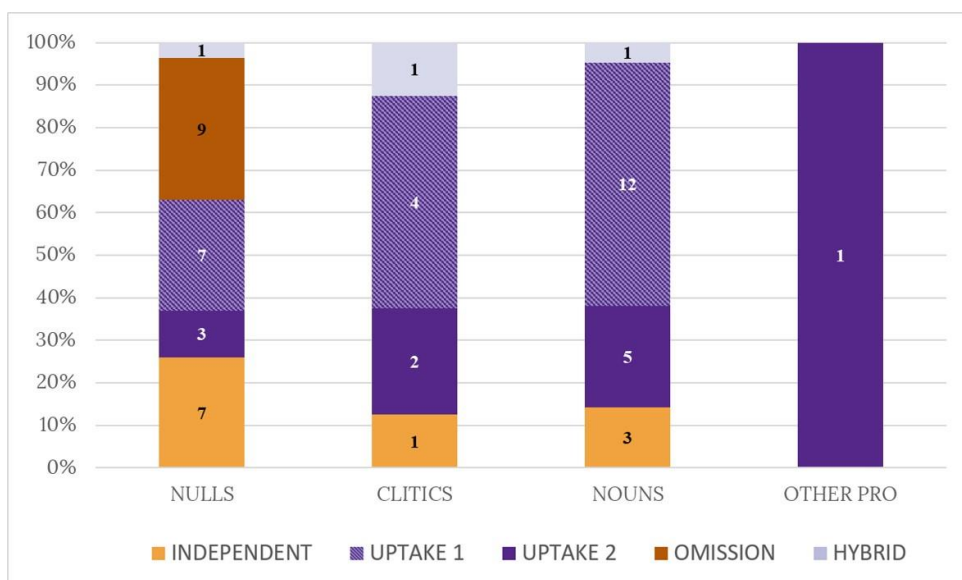


Figure 4 - Child's uptakes of adults' verb + object constructions in French
Source: elaborated by the authors

Although the relation between the local influence from adult's wordings and the disparity in the adult-child distributions might seem self-contradictory, this paradox can be accounted for by the fact that the child still relied on verb and object uptakes from the adults' previous productions in order to structure his own utterances. Not only did the child barely produce over 10% of Clitics and Nouns independently, but Other Pronouns were exclusively produced when the child took up the verb from adults' discourse. If we observe the different types of influence, we can see that most of the child's clitics and nouns were directly taken up from the adult's previous utterances (textured purple bars in Figure 4), showing how the dialogical proximity to the adults' productions supports the child's object expression.

Regarding the child's preferred form, null objects, the influence pattern differed from the other languages: child's null objects were either a complete uptake of an adult' verb+null object construction (uptake1), or an omission, that is a partial uptake where the adult verb+lexical object construction was not entirely integrated by the child. This suggests that the child still relied on verb+object construction uptakes to build a great proportion of his own utterances, but it also shows that he could not always produce the overt object present in the adult's construction he was taking up.

The adults' input, other than being an influence factor over children's formal choices, was also constitutive of the referential status of children's objects in dialogue. The forthcoming section brings the results regarding how adults and children deal with the formal-functional relation intertwined in object realization in dialogue.

3.3 Influence of the attentional and discursive status of the objects on the choice of referring expressions (adults and children)

The results for each language are presented separately, so we can observe more clearly the adult-child similarities and differences for all referent statuses analyzed.

- For Brazilian Portuguese Results are presented in Figure 5.

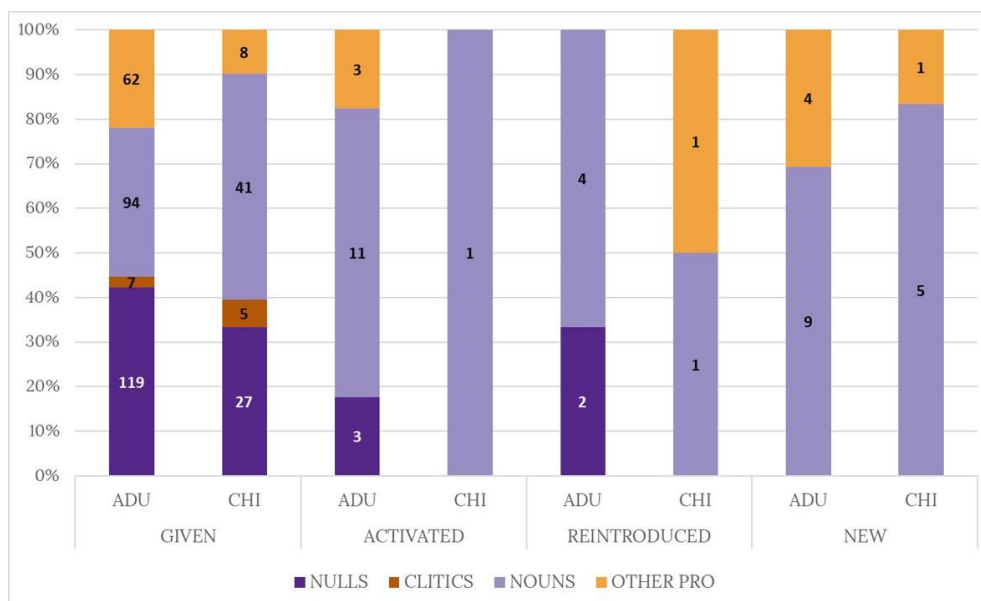


Figure 5 - Distribution of forms for each referential status in BP-speaking adults and child
Source: elaborated by the authors

First of all, we can see in Figure 5 that BP’s results for all speakers are in line with the pragmatic expectations regarding the use of weak forms for accessible referents and of stronger forms for less accessible ones. The main gap pattern between the child’s and the adults’ results revolved around the production of null forms: apart from the introduction of New referents, adults used null objects for referents of various degrees of accessibility: Given, Activated or even Reintroduced referents. The child, on the other hand, only produced null objects for discursively Given referents, for which the probability of misinterpretation is low.

That means that strong forms (mostly nouns) were preferentially used by the child in contexts where null forms would be accepted. Those pragmatic contexts where nulls are acceptable can be observed throughout adults’ productions of null forms for not Given referents, as we can see below:

(20) Occurrences of null forms for non-discursively Given referents in the BP. Corpus

- a) FAT: pega Ø aqui olha ‘take (it) here, look!’
- b) OBS: você tá colando Ø aí? ‘are you pasting (it) there?’
- c) MOT: põe Ø no chão pra você pôr comida pra Luna ‘put (it) on the floor so you can feed Luna’

In example 20a, the father’s first mention of the referent relied on the multimodal context, where he gesturally brought the referent to the child’s attention by giving it to him. Likewise, examples 20b and c show null forms for referents that had not yet been mentioned, but were Activated in the interlocutors’ attention: in both cases, the adults commented about the objects the child was manipulating.

For less accessible referents, adults preferred nouns, or strong pronouns such as the mother’s demonstrative in 21a (first mention accompanied by a deictic gesture) or as the observer’s possessive in 21b (new referent inferable through context):

(21) Reference to less accessible referents in the BP corpus

- a) MOT: como é que chama **esse aqui?** 'how do (you) call **this one here?**'
 b) OBS: eu posso te emprestar temporariamente o **meu** 'I can lend you **mine** for now'
 c) MOT: levanta **a perna** 'lift **the leg**' <asks the child to change his position>
 d) FAT: vai lá Gustavo, eu vou jogar **o** 'go there Gustavo, I'll throw **(it)**' <holds the referent of the object>

Examples 21c and d pertain to other accessibility degrees. In 21c, the mother's very first mention of a present referent (**a perna; the leg**) needed a noun as there were other potential referents in the context whereas in 21d, the father's reintroduction of the toy with a null form signaled to the child that she was proposing to return to the activity of throwing the toy she holds with her hands, and therefore that the referent (and the activity) was part of their shared knowledge (FOX, 1987).

The child's high rates of noun objects could be considered as a sort of "play safe" strategy which allowed his interlocutors to identify the child's referents. This strategy corresponded to the adult's preference for the same strong forms for less accessible referents.

As for the adults' uses, and considering BP's limited clitic paradigm, the child's scarce clitic pronouns were exclusively employed for Given referents and more precisely, 1st or 2nd-person objects. These were often discursively Given, as in the child's "**te** peguei!" (*caught you/gotcha!*, ex. 13).

These observations suggest that the mastery at stake in BP's acquisition process concerns the absence rather than the production of a form. The BP-speaking child's nouns suffice to explicit referents that are not discursively Given, but he still needs to grasp the diversity of high and medium accessibility contexts (activation and reintroduction) that allow the use of BP's prevailing weak-form, null objects.

- For Spanish: Results are presented in Figure 6.

- For French:

When it comes to Fr results (Figure 7), we could see more differences between adults' and child's distributions. This first observation upholds our interpretation of a less advanced object acquisition of the Fr-speaking child compared to what we found in the other languages.

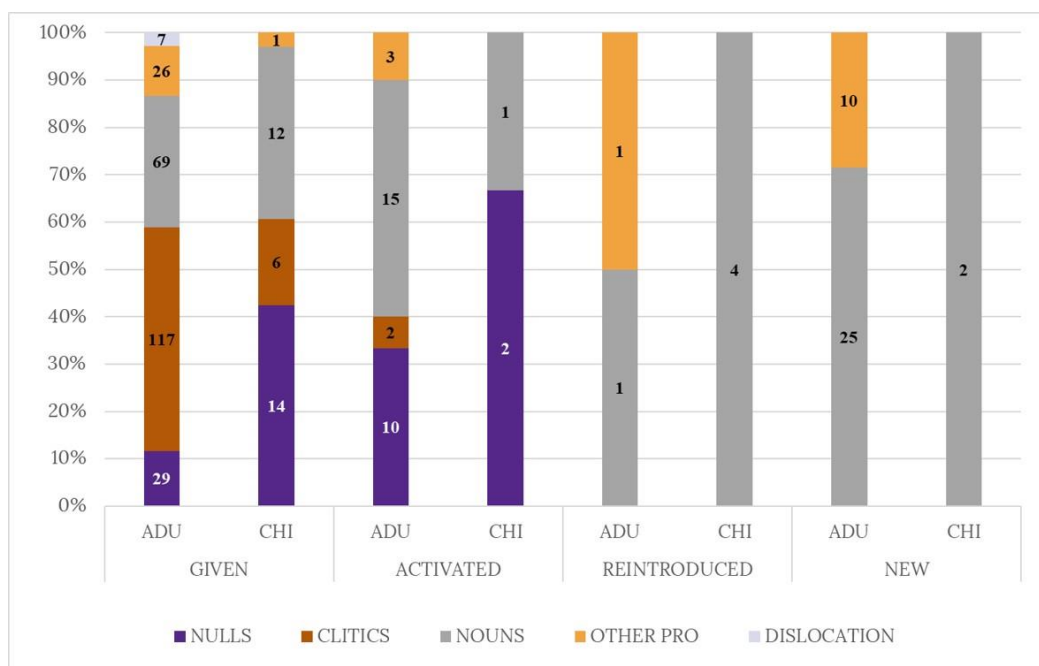


Figure 7: Distribution of forms for each referential status in French-speaking adults and child
Source: elaborated by the author

For adults, almost half of expressions for Given objects were clitics. At the same time, adults presented a small but still significant proportion of 11% of null objects for Given referents. As for the child, this proportion was inverted: nulls exceeded 40% of the child's Given objects, and clitics production did not reach the rate of 20%. The child preference for nulls appeared also for Activated referents, but in this case, these uses did not differ from the adults' constructions: Fr-speaking adults expressed up to 14% of Activated referents through a verb+null object construction. For lesser accessible referents (Reintroduced and New), all speakers presented a reduced diversity of forms: nouns and other pronouns were preferred by the adults in both cases, while nouns were the only form produced by the child.

The Fr-speaking child showed a relatively adult-like assessment of the formal adequacy for less accessible referents, betting on the use of stronger forms (nouns), that guarantees the retrieval of the referent by his interlocutor. The distribution for Given and Activated referents suggests that the process of acquisition is still ongoing.

The pragmatic assessment behind the use of weak forms for Given referents did not seem to be a problem for this child, given his null-object global preference, but the formal mastery of the clitic paradigm is the facet of object expression that appears as a challenge. However, even if Fr object expression generally predicts clitics as a weak form, results show adults' uses of null forms at unexpected rates for Given and even Activated referents, indicating the possibility to produce null objects in the adult model of the language. Those adult occurrences of nulls mention essentially referents that were previously Activated in interlocutors' attention and/or knowledge, as we can see in examples 24, a, b and c:

(23) Reference to Activated referents in the Fr Corpus

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| a) | OBS: tu \emptyset allumes | 'you turn (it) on <asks the child to turn on the light while entering a dark room> |
| b) | OBS: allez on \emptyset ouvre! | 'let's go open (it)' <asks child to open the door in front> |
| c) | OBS: tu \emptyset ouvres? | 'you open (it)' <asks child to open the door in front> |

The issue at stake in Fr object acquisition appears to be the handling of pronouns, given that the child's binary productions oscillated between nouns and nulls, while globally respecting the communication requirement for a strong form. Other pronouns were also scarce, which suggests that the pronominal paradigm (for clitics or other pronouns) is still being refined.

3.4 Discussion

This exploratory study aimed to investigate the realization of objects by three young children (ages 2;6 and 2;5) acquiring Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish and French and by their adult interlocutors. After analyzing the distribution of pronouns (clitic and strong), null forms and lexical objects, the impact of the input and of the attentional and discursive status of the referents was assessed.

Null objects, nouns, clitics and strong pronouns were present in all three languages, for both children and adult speakers, but each language showed a specific pattern. As expected for a Null Object Language, the Brazilian Portuguese corpus showed a high proportion of null forms and of nouns, and, correlatively, a scarce number of clitics, except for first and second person, in both in the adults' and the child's discourse. On the contrary, the French corpus revealed a number of null forms unexpected for a non-null object language. Whereas their proportion in children can be accounted for by their developing paradigm, adults also showed a significant number of null objects. Besides, adults' results revealed their preference for noun objects over clitic ones. These results recall the observation by Chenu and Jisa (2005) that in child-directed speech, French speaking adults could tend to avoid the pronominalization of preverbal clitics in transitive constructions. In contrast, the Spanish corpus showed a rather clear dominance of clitic objects in both adult's and child's speech. Nouns and strong pronouns appeared in second and third place among the preferred forms, and dislocations were scarce. However, null objects appeared in a significantly reduced proportion compared to the two

other corpus, and mostly by the child. The child's distribution of pronominal and lexical objects mirrored the adult's. The child's higher number of nulls appeared as the only less adult-like use, which, as for the French-speaking child, can also be accounted for by his developing paradigm. The children's distributions of forms were also impacted by the local level of influence of the input and by the attentional and discursive status of the referent.

In Brazilian Portuguese, nulls were the preferred weak form for Given referents. Clitics were associated to 1st and 2nd-person objects, whose referents are, by definition, accessible but whose forms were not taken up because of their deictic nature. This clitic paradigm limitation can also explain the binary choice between nulls vs. nouns for less accessible referents. New referents were encoded with nouns or strong pronouns whereas, nulls were the only weak form available to express the different degrees of referent accessibility, that is Given, Activated and Reintroduced (which, let's recall, remain Activated while not mentioned). The fact that null forms appear as the only weak option to refer to not-Given but still-Accessible referents is a consequence of the disappearance of 3rd-person accusative clitics in Brazilian Portuguese (KATO et al., 2006). However, the child also presents a significant proportion of nouns for Given referents. Even though, the use of nouns for Given referents may reflect the need to contrast concurrent referents (ALLEN; HUGHES; SKARABELA, 2015), it also suggests that what is at stake for the Brazilian Portuguese speaking child is mastering the opposition between overt forms (nouns or strong pronouns) and null forms, rather than the production of clitics.

In this process, the role of the input in dialogue is particularly important. In dialogue, children experience the uses of verb constructions in contexts that provide a pragmatically meaningful model of the adults' language. In fact, the Brazilian Portuguese speaking child presents a low proportion of fully independent uses of referring expressions. His frequent verb uptakes in null-object constructions suggest that they work as a tool to help the child assess the functional adequacy of null forms in the dialogue, scaffolding his formal choices.

In Spanish, clitic pronouns are preferred for Given referents, and the child's distribution is very close to an adult production. Even though the child presents higher levels of clitics for Activated but not-Given referents where a stronger form could be more effective, the adult's patterns for Reintroduced, still Activated, referents show that clitics are an option in those cases. The results for the influence of the input also showed the child's high autonomy in his production of object constructions. Results regarding the hybrid level of influence show that the child incorporated previously taken up strong forms, for less accessible referents, but that clitic uptakes were frequent as they were immediate, for recently mentioned referents. This confirmed the child's early sensitivity to the discourse-pragmatic factors in dialogue.

In French, we found a wider gap between adults' and child's distributions, which could be explained by a less advanced acquisition of pronominal objects by the child (clitics or others). We also observed the impact of formal uptakes over the child's productions, including the child's null objects, often taken up from adults' verb+null object constructions. The acceptability of nulls observed in the adults' model could partially explain the child's persistent preference for nulls. The child's clitics and nouns were also frequently part of a verb+object uptake, and other pronouns only appeared after an taken up verb,

suggesting that the child relied on the adults' adjacent model of formal uses provided by the dialogic structure.

The French-speaking child showed a relatively advanced assessment of referent statuses mainly by producing strong forms for less accessible referents and nulls for more accessible ones. It seems that the challenge laid rather on the formal acquisition of the pronominal paradigm(s).

In sum, for the most part, children's results that differ from adults' patterns are related to the management of weak forms: either the use of weak forms when a strong form is expected (Spanish and mainly French), or their substitution by a strong form when it is not necessary (Brazilian Portuguese). The subtle relationship between the referential status and the linguistic explicitness challenges the children acquiring all three languages, but differently: in Brazilian Portuguese, due to the narrow set of available forms, adjustment to Givenness is the main developmental difficulty. In French instead, the pronominal paradigm challenges the child's object expression. Moreover, the lateness in the French pronominal acquisition for object expression, often explained in terms of morpho-phonological difficulties, could also be related to the fact that French-speaking children have to deal with the cognitive charge of the clitic realization of subjects, while Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese-speaking children are free to produce null subjects. In contrast, the Spanish-speaking child produced some misplaced nulls and clitics but they did not differ from the adult's uses. The management of the expression of the object seems to be already acquired by this child and therefore it is difficult to grasp what could be the respective influence of the input and of the level of pragmatic skills in Spanish object acquisition.

4. Conclusion

This exploratory research aimed to assess the impact of pragmatic and dialogic factors on the choice of referring expressions at the onset of transitive constructions in three languages: Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish and French. Our results showed the joint influence of grammatical development, global and local influence of the input and referential skills of the children. The children manifested clear sensitivity to the referent accessibility in their choice of referring expressions. Global and local influences of the input appear to play a key role in the children's acquisition of the object constructions: children relied on formal uptakes from adult's input to assimilate the various formal possibilities for the object expression. More specifically, verb uptakes support the usage-based argument for the strong implication of the adult's verb constructions in children's early syntactic uses. In addition, dialogue provides a scaffolding structure where the adults' model of the language is made available, allowing children to seize it during the interactions. In the dialogical structure, children can grasp not only the forms from adult's utterances but also the adequacy of those forms to the different discursive contexts. Children's experience of syntactic uses is anchored in dialogic and pragmatically meaningful contexts.

Additional information

Evaluation and author's answer

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EVALUATOR 1

O artigo é de extrema relevância para a área de aquisição da linguagem. Os dados analisados são consistentes e as considerações são academicamente significativas. A junção das línguas Francês, Português e Espanhol é pouco encontrada na bibliografia da área e traz resultados muito interessantes.

EVALUATOR 2

O título "Aspectos Dialógicos e Pragmáticos da Realização Precoce de Objetos: Uma Comparação Interlinguística de Três Línguas Românicas" está apropriado e explicita claramente o foco do trabalho, o objetivo e corpus que analisa. É informativo e dá uma ideia geral do escopo da pesquisa.

O resumo aborda de maneira apropriada o objetivo, a relevância do tema, a metodologia e sugere possíveis resultados finais. Apresenta questões específicas relacionadas à escolha de expressões referenciais em funções de objeto nas línguas em estudo. A clareza e concisão do resumo facilitam a compreensão do foco da pesquisa e alinha-se adequadamente com o objetivo estabelecido na introdução do artigo.

A introdução apresenta uma visão detalhada e clara do escopo e dos objetivos da pesquisa. A perspectiva funcionalista e dialógica é fundamentada, fornecendo uma estrutura clara para a análise proposta. A introdução apresenta como a experiência quantitativa e qualitativa é compreendida considerando contextos interativos frequentes e repetitivos. Além disso, declara propósito exploratório do estudo, ressaltando que o objetivo não é descrever como as línguas funcionam, mas sim analisar como as crianças as gerenciam em contextos de suporte dialógico, considerando fatores formais e pragmáticos. A referência a estudos anteriores fortalece a base teórica e mostra a conexão do trabalho com a literatura existente.

Observa-se a adequação dos métodos em relação aos objetivos do estudo e demonstra sua validade para a investigação do problema proposto. A descrição do percurso escolhido para chegar aos resultados estão claros e podem contribuir, pedagogicamente, para compreender o desenvolvimento da metodologia aplicada devido a clareza do texto.

A seleção de amostragem é adequada, alinhando-se com os parâmetros propostos no delineamento da pesquisa. O caráter exploratório da investigação, conforme delineado na proposta inicial, demonstra coerência e congruência com os objetivos estabelecidos.

Embora os resultados tenham sido discutidos tanto quantitativa quanto qualitativamente, não houve enfoque nas estatísticas devido à extensão limitada do corpus, sendo essa escolha explicitada no texto. As análises apresentadas nas figuras são suficientes para compreender os resultados, assim como o texto subsequente.

Eis algumas sugestões com o intuito de esclarecer alguns pontos específicos, contribuindo para a precisão e compreensão das informações:

No quadro 1 (Table 1: Speakers' total number of utterances and V+O constructions in each language), p. 10, sugiro escrever, pode ser em nota de rodapé, quem são os interlocutores da criança, pois no quadro aparece apenas os acrônimos - FAT, MOT, GMO, OBS.

Ainda em relação ao quadro 1, houve uma pequena incongruência com o número de produção dos objetos pela criança em espanhol, no quadro (167) e no texto (168), sugiro a verificação e correção.

Quanto à sequência das informações na metodologia, a análise indica que estão integralmente claras, bem definidas e muito bem subdivididas. O alinhamento entre a proposta e a execução metodológica demonstra consistência na condução da pesquisa, fortalecendo a integridade do estudo.

Os resultados apresentados neste estudo revelam-se consistentes e satisfatórios à luz das análises realizadas. As tabelas e figuras são bem descritas, facilitando comparações e interpretações. O texto complementa efetivamente os dados sem discrepâncias significativas entre o texto e as tabelas. Entretanto, deixamos algumas sugestões para melhorar a leitura e compreensão da figura 1 (Figure 1: Global distribution of Adults' and children's Objects in each language), nos comentários do texto original anexo a esse parecer.

As discussões são fundamentadas e críticas, reforçando a credibilidade do estudo.

O artigo apresenta conformidade com os requisitos e normas do periódico para o qual foi submetido. A estrutura do manuscrito, incluindo títulos, subtítulos e referências, normas da ABNT, está alinhada com as diretrizes editoriais do periódico. A linguagem utilizada é consistente com o tom acadêmico esperado pela publicação. A formatação atende aos padrões estabelecidos, garantindo uma apresentação clara e organizada do conteúdo. A adesão às normas do periódico não apenas evidencia o profissionalismo dos autores, mas também reforça a qualidade do trabalho e sua adequação ao contexto editorial específico.

Feitas essas considerações, destaco a originalidade de analisar o mesmo processo em três línguas românicas, o que possibilitou observar aspectos comuns e diferentes na aquisição dos objetos, com um relevante potencial de contribuição para a área. Sendo assim, as sugestões são bem pontuais (ver comentários no texto) apenas para torná-lo mais claro em alguns pontos, como citado anteriormente, sem alterar o conteúdo.

Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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