STRESS IN MORPHOLOGY-DEPENDENT SYSTEMS WHEN MORPHOSYNTAX IS ABSENT: A CASE STUDY FROM L2 GREEK

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1. BACKGROUND

GREEK AND RUSSIAN: Systems with morphology-determined stress. Stress is lexically-encoded and is assigned on the basis of a grammar-specific principle (e.g. headedness, edgemostness, etc.)


1.1. Greek

(a) Greek: feminine nouns in –ο (Nom.SG), –ά (Nom.PL)
   a. θάλασσα /θαλασα/- (sea)
   b. θάλασσα /θαλασ-/- (sea)

2. Previous Experimental Studies


2.2. Default stress in unpredictable stress languages: Evidence from Russian and Hebrew.

2.3. Dupoux, Jahrestagung, March 2002, Mannheim, Germany.


2.7. Altman and Vogel 2002; Altmann 2006

3. Hypotheses on L2 Acquisition

HYPOTHESIS 1 - THE VALUE PLACED HYPOTHESIS
Van de Pauw and Zommedevel (2004)

The L2 speaker (over)appliess the most unmarked pattern, i.e. the phonological default.

HYPOTHESIS 2 - THE PHONOLOGICAL ACUTENESS HYPOTHESIS
Based on Kjik 2004, and building on Dupoux & Peperkamp 2002; Dupoux et al. 2008; Vogel 2000; Altman & Vogel 2002; Altman 2006

L2 speakers of a lexical stress language internalize the abstract representation of stress in their Mental Lexicon, hence they are more accurate in the perception and production of stress in other languages, esp. when the target-system in L2 is typologically similar.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

Experiment 1: 21 native speakers of Greek; Mean age: 18.73 years old
Experiment 2: 20 Russian speakers of Greek; Mean age: 29.55 years old; Residence: 52.50 months; Proficiency: 3.62, 3.79

4.2. Procedure

Elicitation task: Read out 140 sentences containing an acronym or a pseudoword (filler)

4.3. Items

Factors controlled: (a) The type of final segment (C, V). (b) The size of the word (2 vs. 30 words). (c) The effect of syllable structure on stress.

5. Results

5.1. Stress Results in C-Final Acronyms (%)

- U stress is preferred in both groups
- Higher percentage of PU stress by the Russian speakers

5.2. Stress Results in V-Final Acronyms (%)

- Russian speakers show a significant preference for PU stress

5.3. Stress Results in C-Final Acronyms (%)

- C-final words exhibit predominantly U (stem-final) stress
- PU stress is less favored by both groups

5.4. Stress Results in V-Final Acronyms (%)

6. Discussion

6.1. C-Final Words

The two groups converge to stem-final/U stress

6.2. V-Final Words

Russian learners show elevated percentages of PU stress. The difference is mainly noticeable in 3rd acronyms with the Greeks showing a distinct preference for U stress and the Russians opting for PU stress.

It is not clear whether the preference for PU stress is due to an L1 effect because experimental studies in L1 Russian yielded conflicting results (see L2(2011b) vs. Fainleib 2008)

The Russian L2ers had no difficulty to produce the same stress patterns as the Greek speakers and, impressively, in comparative percentages

Hypothesis 2 is confirmed

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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