

L1 attrition in subject interpretation in Spanish L2 learners of English

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Recent research on L1 attrition has shown attrition to be selective (Gürel 2004) and to be restricted to structures at the interfaces between syntax and semantics and syntax and pragmatics, but not to occur with uninterpretable features (Sorace 2000; Tsimpli et al. 2004). The present study intends to contribute to these findings by exploring the effects of L2 English in the L1 of a group of Spanish speakers in their interpretation of three structures at the syntax-semantics/pragmatics interface, comparing them to a context-independent structure. Using offline and online tasks, the study will explore the prediction that attriters undergo a first stage in which effects of attrition take place at the processing level for structures at the interface, but not for context-independent structures. Furthermore, when presented with items that integrate different kinds of information which are in conflict, attriters are expected to find more difficulties than ‘monolinguals’ to process them, and to focus on different kinds of information when interpreting these structures in offline versus online processing.

References

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