Negation and (finite) verb placement in a Polish-German bilingual child

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Bilingual L1A

• Consensus:
  – bilingual children develop two separate linguistic systems from early on
  – if there are untypical structures, they are very infrequent (Döpke 2000)

• Debated:
  – the role of crosslinguistic influence?
Crosslinguistic influence in bilingual L1A?

Non-believers...

• „Bilingual first language acquisition does not differ in substantial ways from monolingual development“ (Meisel 1990)
• “For each of their languages respectively, bilingual children make the same types of errors as their monolingual peers and use similar structures at similar stages in development.” (DeHouwer 1995)
Crosslinguistic influence in bilingual L1A?

... and moderate believers...

- “The dual linguistic representations of a bilingual child are probably not hermetically sealed – a systematic interplay between them should be expected.” (Paradis 2000)
- “Most of the untypical developmental structures found in the speech of bilingual children also occur in monolingual data but are more frequent in the bilingual data.” (Döpke 2000)
L1A of German

- bilingual = monolingual acquisition?
- negation and verb placement:
  - correlation between syntax and inflectional morphology
  - acquisition of finiteness matters
Negation and Verb placement in the L1 acquisition of German

Julchen will nicht rein gehen
Julchen wants not inside go

Julchen geht nicht rein
Julchen goes not inside
Negation and Verb placement in the L1 acquisition of German
Negation and Verb placement in German and Polish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Julchen</th>
<th>will</th>
<th>nicht</th>
<th>rein gehen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julka</td>
<td>nie</td>
<td>chce</td>
<td>wejśćć</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julchen</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>wants</td>
<td>enter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julchen</td>
<td>geht</td>
<td>nicht</td>
<td>rein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julka</td>
<td>nie</td>
<td>wejdzie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julchen</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>enters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Predictions

if bilingual L1A = monolingual L1A

– same correlation between finiteness and position
– development:
  - neg V-nonfin
  - V-fin neg
  - V-nonfin neg
  - neg V-fin
Longitudinal case study

- Julchen/Julka 1;3 – 4;0
- input
  - one parent, one language
  - two brothers, two languages
  - Polish speaking au pair girl
  - different surrounding language (Dutch)
- weekly video recordings of increasing length, separate for both languages
- annotation in elan
- 32 German 1h recordings between 1;11 and 2;11 considered
2 negators in early multiword utterances

• 426 non-anaphoric clausal negations with *nee* and *nicht*
• 392 contain a verb
• four temporal units for analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>age</th>
<th>nr of 1h recordings</th>
<th>negation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1;11-2;0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>first occurrences of <em>nee</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2;1-2;4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>productive use of <em>nee</em>, first occurrences of <em>nicht</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2;5-2;8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>productive use of both negators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2;9-2;11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>disappearance of <em>nee</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

acquisition of auxiliaries
2 negators in early multiword utterances

nee and nicht over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nee</th>
<th>Nicht</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1;11-2;0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2;1-2;4</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2;5-2;8</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2;9-2;11</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples

- German nicht
- German nee
- Polish nie

no lexical mixing
nicht vs nee in verb containing utterances
nicht vs nee in verb containing utterances

ich nee sehe mama (2;5)
I not see mummy

julchen nicht findes (2;3)
julchen not find-it

ich mach nicht kuchen (2;8)
I make not cake
### nicht vs nee with lexical verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>V-neg</th>
<th>Neg-V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonfinite</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finite</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 48 nicht
- 115 nee
- 13 nicht
**nicht vs nee in verb containing utterances**

**with all verbs**

- julchen nich findes (2;3)
- ich mach nich kuchen (2;8)
- ich nee sehe mama (2;5)

**with light verbs only**

- ich nich habe gesagt (2;5)
- bär hat nich gut aufgepasst (2;8)
- ich nee habe gewonnen (2;5)
Very robust behavior

Example: toy pony in front of red stop light

Christine:
tell the pony that it should not go there
= da **darf** das pony **nicht** laufen

Julchen:
you must wait here
you should not go there
= da **nee** **darfst** du laufen
Summary

Pre-verbal negation: neg-V

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>verb morphology</th>
<th>light verbs</th>
<th>development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>nicht</strong></td>
<td>low</td>
<td>mainly non finite</td>
<td>nearly absent</td>
<td>early, gradual disappearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nee</strong></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>more and more finite</td>
<td>numerous</td>
<td>no change, sudden disappearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-verbal negation: V-neg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>verb morphology</th>
<th>light verbs</th>
<th>development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>nicht</strong></td>
<td>high</td>
<td>mainly finite</td>
<td>numerous</td>
<td>increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nee</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prediction

Finding

ne, (nicht) = Polish word order
Conclusions

• morphology - syntax dissociation
  – morphologically finite verbs do not raise over negation
  – different from monolingual L1 development
  – different from adult L2A (Verhagen & Schimke, to appear)

• highly frequent untypical developmental structures

• cross-linguistic influence?
Non believers’ explanation:

“...what might at first sight look like the application of the same rule to two languages by the bilingual child is in fact the result of general acquisition principles related to the acquisition of each language separately.” (DeHouwer, 1995)
Moderate believer’s explanation:

There is “cognitive permeability” between the two languages: children overuse structures in one language that overlap with the other (Hulk 2000)

– superficially overlapping word order: neg-V
– difference: finiteness

German: neg-Vnonfin
Polish: neg-Vfin
Bilingual bootstrapping?

- pooling resources to compensate for structures present in one but still missing in the other language (Gawlitzek-Maiwald & Tracy 1996)
- monolingual L1A of finiteness in Slavonic languages
  - early and rapid acquisition of finite morphology (Gagarina, to appear)
  - no special role for light verbs (Kirsch 2005)
- transfer of more developed “attention to finite morphology” from Polish to German before German syntax can cope – independently of light verbs?
...or simply...

transfer of Polish syntax (negation in pre-finite position) into German
– in a core area of sentence grammar
– in the absence of much similarity
– with an idiosyncratic form
– leading to target-deviant learner grammar of negation used during nine months
– partly in parallel with the upcoming target-like negation

...massive crosslinguistic influence?