

Clitic Climbing in L2 Portuguese

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1. Introduction

Clitic climbing (henceforth, CC), or the raising of a clitic pronoun to a position adjacent to a higher non-selecting verb, is one of the properties which characterise restructuring constructions in languages such as Italian, Spanish and European Portuguese (EP). In many cases, CC is optional, as illustrated in (1), and it has no semantic or pragmatic consequences.

- (1) a. Quero telefonar- te (no CC)
want-1SG phone-INF youCL
'I want to phone you'
b. Quero- te telefonar (CC)
want-1SG youCL phone-INF

Restructuring, as has been well known since Rizzi's (1978) seminal work on Italian, is a phenomenon which characterises certain verbs, such as auxiliaries, causatives and perception verbs in the *faire*-infinitive construction, raising verbs, and some control verbs, not only in Romance languages, but also in many other languages such as German, Dutch and Japanese. There is little consensus in the literature regarding either the status of this phenomenon in the grammar or the structural configurations involved. Hence, it has been proposed that restructuring effects are derived from lexical (categorical/semantic selection) properties of the verb, either allowing reanalysis of the structure (Rizzi, 1978) or determining a functionally defective infinitival domain (Wurmbrand, 2001; Gonçalves, 1999), or, alternatively, that they may be attributed to the functional status of the restructuring verb (Cinque, 2004). On the other hand, restructuring configurations have been argued by some authors to constitute monoclausal domains (Rizzi, 1978; Cinque, 2004), whereas others regard them as biclausal domains (Kayne, 1989) or as structures which may exhibit different degrees of structural complexity and be either mono- or biclausal, depending on the selecting verb (Gonçalves, 1999; Wurmbrand, 2001).

We assume, following Gonçalves (1999) and Wurmbrand (2001), that the option of restructuring is lexically determined – this allows us to explain both the different behaviour exhibited by apparently similar verbs (see the contrast between the two subject control verbs in (1) above and (2) below) and the variation observed, regarding the inventory of restructuring verbs, both across languages and among speakers of the same language. Furthermore, while all restructuring complements are functionally defective, not all restructuring configurations exhibit the same degree of defectiveness. Hence, those that are associated with perfective auxiliaries, for example, which require obligatory CC, are taken to be highly defective (being realised as VP/vP), whereas those that are selected by control verbs, which allow CC optionally, are assumed to be less defective. Nevertheless, restructuring structures are

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assumed to be always smaller than their non-restructuring counterparts, lacking one or more functional projections.

- (2) a. Prometo telefonar- te (no CC)
 promise-1SG phone-INF you_{CL}
 ‘I promise to phone you’
 b. *?Prometo- te telefonar (CC)
 promise-1SG you_{CL} phone-INF

The acquisition of restructuring implies developing different types of knowledge. On the one hand, learners need to find out which verbs allow restructuring and what the structural configuration associated with each individual verb is. Moreover, for languages which display CC in restructuring constructions, learners also need to develop knowledge of the properties of clitics as functional elements.

Studies on the acquisition of CC in L1 Spanish have revealed that it emerges early – between 2;0 and 3;10, in data from spontaneous production (Rodríguez-Mondoñedo, Snyder & Sugisaki, 2006). Furthermore, according to an elicited imitation study on children between 3 and 6 years (Eisenclas, 2003), in the early stages, children actually show preference for CC over non-CC.

As for L2 acquisition, it has been shown that clitics develop early in interlanguage grammars, with learners following a similar developmental path independently of their L1; however, in the initial stages, learners may often resort to omission and other avoidance strategies and, at least in some languages, have difficulties with placement patterns (e.g. Duffield & White, 1999; Duffield et al. 2002; Leonini & Belletti, 2004; Madeira & Xavier, 2009).

Regarding CC, in a study by Montrul, Dias & Santos (2009), beginner and intermediate Spanish- and English-speaking learners of Brazilian Portuguese (which does not have CC with 3rd person clitics) showed a preference for CC over non-CC in an acceptability judgement task. This preference was argued to reflect L1 influence, in the case of the L1 Spanish speakers, and L2 influence, in the case of the L1 English speakers (for most of whom Brazilian Portuguese was an L3, having previously learnt either Spanish or Italian). On the other hand, a group of near-native speakers of Italian, also L1 speakers of Spanish and English, exhibited significant differences in an elicited production task, when compared to native speakers, in their preference for non-CC with verbs which trigger optional CC (motion verbs and modals), but not with verbs triggering obligatory CC (auxiliary + past participle contexts and causatives) (Bennati, 2007). Hence, in this particular study, no evidence of L1 influence was found. This is corroborated by the findings of a study by Kraš (2011), which show that the presence of CC in the L1 (Croatian) does not necessarily facilitate the acquisition of other properties of restructuring constructions in the L2 (namely, auxiliary change in Italian).

The present study investigates how knowledge of CC develops in L2 EP, focussing on the following questions:

- 1) Does CC develop early in the acquisition of L2 EP?
- 2) Does knowledge of the verbs which trigger obligatory and optional CC develop early, as well as knowledge of those which disallow or disfavour it?
- 3) Does the L1 play a role in the acquisition of CC?

The paper is structured in the following way: in section 2 we describe the methodology adopted in the study; in section 3 we present the results; the paper ends with a discussion of the research findings and final conclusions in section 4.

2. The study

We conducted a study based on an acceptability judgement task testing for knowledge of CC with different types of verbs. Below, the methodology adopted in the study is described, starting with the participants (2.1), then the pre-test designed to test for knowledge of clitics (2.2) and the experimental task (2.3), and finally the hypotheses which guide the study (2.4).

2.1. Participants

The study was conducted with 40 Spanish- and German-speaking university students on mobility programs in Portugal. All students had been in Portugal between 3 months to 1 year at the time of testing. All participants had learnt (European) Portuguese through formal instruction and were still attending Portuguese classes. Both L1 groups comprised elementary and intermediate learners; the proficiency level was determined on the basis of a placement test. The two learner groups are characterised in table 1 below.

Table 1: Participants in the study (learner groups)

L1	Proficiency level	Age	Length of exposure
German	elementary (n=10) (GERe)	range: 21-29 age: 24.3	3 m. to 2 y. (mean 9 m.)
	intermediate (n=10) (GERi)	range: 22-29 mean: 23.4	6 m. to 5 y. (mean 2;6 y.)
Spanish	elementary (n=10) (SPe)	range: 20-37 mean: 25.9	3 m. to 3 y. (mean 9 m.)
	intermediate (n=10) (SPi)	range: 20-42 mean: 25.1	6 m. to 6 y. (mean 1;7 y.)

Six of the learners in the GERe group stated having knowledge of other Romance languages (3 of Spanish, 2 of Italian and 1 of Spanish and French), as well as eight in the GERi group (1 of Spanish, 5 of French and 2 of Spanish and French).

A control group consisting of 10 monolingual native speakers (NSs) of EP also participated in the study (ages ranged from 18 to 45, with a mean of 30.3).

2.2. Pre-test

Given that knowledge of CC necessarily presupposes knowledge of clitics and their specific licensing conditions, all the learners participating in the study were first administered an acceptability judgement task (containing 30 test items and 10 fillers)¹, intended to test their knowledge of certain syntactic restrictions on the distribution of clitics – namely, that they cannot occur as complements to prepositions (3) and, in the case of postverbal clitics, they must surface in strict adjacency to the verb (4).

(3) *O Rui comprou um presente para a
the Rui bought-3SG a present for her_{CL}
'Rui bought a present for her'

(4) *O presidente demitiu ontem o
the president sacked-3SG yesterday him_{CL}
'The president sacked him yesterday'

This task also tested knowledge of two of the placement patterns found in EP: enclisis (5) and proclisis (6).

(5) O Pedro viu-a ontem
the Pedro saw-3SG her_{CL} yesterday
'Pedro saw her yesterday'

¹ For reasons of convenience, some participants performed the task using pen and paper, while others completed it on a computer. The same applies to the main experimental task.

- (6) O menino não a comeu
 the boy not it-FEM_{CL} ate-3SG
 ‘The boy didn’t eat it’

Unlike in languages like Spanish and Italian, where the alternation between proclisis and enclisis is determined by finiteness, in EP enclisis occurs both in finite and non-finite contexts in the absence of certain elements in preverbal position (e.g. negation, some quantifiers and some classes of adverbs, complementisers, *wh*-constituents)². It has been shown that, in the acquisition of clitics in EP, there is an initial overgeneralisation of enclisis, with knowledge of contexts for proclisis developing gradually, starting with negative sentences (cf. Costa, Fiéis & Lobo, 2012, for L1, and Madeira & Xavier, 2009, for L2). For this reason, the only proclisis trigger used in the pre-test (and also in the experimental task) was negation.

Participants were presented with two almost identical sentences, which differed only in the realisation of a nominal expression in complement (in the case of the test items) or subject position (for the fillers): as a full DP in the first sentence and as a pronoun in the second one. Participants were asked to judge whether the second sentence was acceptable or not (by ticking one of two options: ‘yes’ or ‘no’). There was a balanced number of grammatical and ungrammatical items in the test.

2.3. Task

The main task was also an acceptability judgement task (inspired by Bennati’s 2007 elicited production task), which tested CC with the following types of verbs: (i) verbs triggering obligatory CC (perfective auxiliary *ter* ‘have’), illustrated in (7); (ii) verbs triggering optional CC (raising verb *ir* ‘go’, and control verbs *querer* ‘want’ and *conseguir* ‘manage’), in (8); and (iii) verbs disfavouring CC (control verbs *decidir* ‘decide’ and *concordar* ‘agree’), in (9).

- (7) a. *O João não tinha ainda lido- lhe um jornal
 the João not had-3SG yet read-PP her_{CL} a newspaper
 ‘João hadn’t read her the newspaper yet’
 b. O João não lhe tinha ainda lido um jornal
 the João not her_{CL} had-3SG yet read-PP a newspaper
- (8) a. O Luís não vai atirar- lhe também a bola
 the Luís not goes throw-INF her_{CL} also the ball
 ‘Luís isn’t also going to throw her the ball’
 b. O Luís não lhe vai atirar também a bola
 the Luís not her_{CL} goes throw-INF also the ball
- (9) a. O João ainda não decidiu oferecer- lhe chocolates
 the João yet not decided-3SG offer-INF her_{CL} chocolates
 ‘João hasn’t decided to offer her chocolates yet’
 b. ??O João ainda não lhe decidiu oferecer chocolates
 the João yet not her_{CL} decided-3SG offer-INF chocolates

The task consisted of 24 test items (and 30 fillers). Variables which are known to affect the acceptability of CC were controlled for, such as the type of clitic and the presence of proclisis triggers in the matrix domain. Only 3rd singular dative clitics were used, given that previous research has shown that native speakers of EP exhibit higher rates of acceptance of CC with these than with accusative clitics (Fiéis & Madeira, 2012). On the other hand, the presence of a proclisis trigger such as

² In order to derive the particular placement properties of clitics in EP, some authors have argued for the presence in the clause structure of functional heads not realized in other Romance languages (e.g. Rouveret 1992), whereas others have claimed that the functional categories targeted by clitic movement in EP are characterised by specific features (e.g. Martins 1994).

negation (the trigger used in this task) in the matrix domain has also been shown to favour CC, according to native speakers' judgements (*idem*).

As for the fillers, 12 of them contained the same contexts as the test items, although lacking the proclisis trigger in the higher domain (the obligatory climbing context is illustrated in (10)). The remaining 18 items displayed nominative, accusative and dative pronouns in finite sentences with a simple verb form.

- (10) A Maria tinha- lhe oferecido antes um cão
 the Maria had-3SG her_{CL} offered-PP before a dog
 'Maria had offered her a dog before'

Each item consisted of an initial sentence followed by a question (A), to which two possible answers were provided (B1 and B2). In the case of the test items, the two answers differed only in the presence vs. absence of CC. Participants were asked to tick the sentence or sentences which they judged to be acceptable. They were explicitly told that they could tick one sentence, both (if they thought both answers were acceptable) or none (if they thought that neither of the sentences was acceptable). An example of an item is shown in (11).

- (11) O João já tinha lido um livro à filha.
 'João had already read his daughter a book'
 A: O que é que o João não tinha ainda lido à filha?
 'What hadn't João read his daughter yet?'



- B1:** O João não tinha ainda lido-lhe um jornal.
 'João hadn't read her the paper yet' [no CC]
B2: O João não lhe tinha ainda lido um jornal.
 'João hadn't read her the paper yet' [CC]

2.4. Hypotheses

It was indicated above (section 1) that knowledge of CC presupposes the acquisition of different types of knowledge: knowledge of the specific functional properties of clitics (syntactic knowledge), as well as knowledge of which verbs allow restructuring and what the structural configuration associated with each individual verb is (lexical/syntactic knowledge). In the present study, we will depart from the following theoretical positions regarding L2 acquisition: (i) assuming access to Universal Grammar (UG), all functional categories (although not necessarily features or feature values) are available from the early stages of the acquisition process; and (ii) interface properties, i.e. those properties which require the integration of syntactic knowledge with knowledge from other domains of the grammar, may be subject to developmental delays and residual optionality at the very advanced stages, following the Interface Hypothesis (e.g. Sorace & Filiaci, 2006).

Taking into account these positions, as well as the findings from previous studies on the L2 acquisition of CC, we formulate the following hypotheses:

(1) Given that clitics are known to develop early in interlanguage grammars, which indicates that the knowledge that clitics are subject to specific licensing conditions develops in the initial stages of acquisition, we expect that CC, as a syntactic option, will emerge early. If the full clause structure is available from the early stages through access to UG, then no differences will be found, in each elementary group, between the overall rates of acceptance of non-CC and those of CC; furthermore, no differences will be found between the two elementary learner groups in their preference for one option over the other.

(2) If understanding of which verbs (may) trigger CC depends on lexical knowledge, and if properties which require the integration of syntactic knowledge with knowledge from other domains is subject to developmental delays, there will be differences in the rates of acceptance of CC in the three contexts between the elementary and the intermediate learners³.

(3) If the L1 plays a role in how knowledge of the verbs which trigger CC develops (i.e. if there is transfer of lexical knowledge), with acquisition being facilitated if CC is available in the learner's L1, as has been suggested by Montrul, Dias & Santos (2009), there will be differences between the two intermediate groups in the rates of acceptance of CC in the different contexts: it is predicted that SPi will show higher rates of acceptance of CC than GERi in obligatory and optional contexts, and lower rates of acceptance in contexts which disfavour CC.

3. Results

3.1. Pre-test

Figures 1 and 2 show the percentages of acceptance ('yes' answers) of clitics in positions from which they are banned and of the two order patterns, respectively.

Figure 1: Mean percentages of acceptance of clitics in impossible positions (not adjacent to the verb and in the complement position of a preposition)

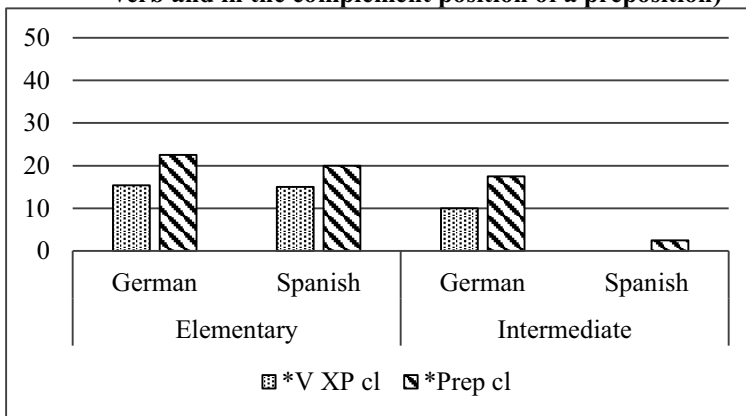
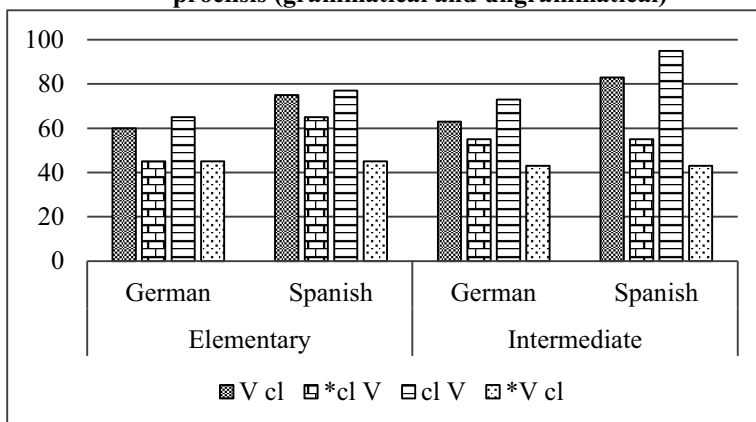


Figure 2: Mean percentages of acceptance of enclisis (grammatical and ungrammatical) and proclisis (grammatical and ungrammatical)



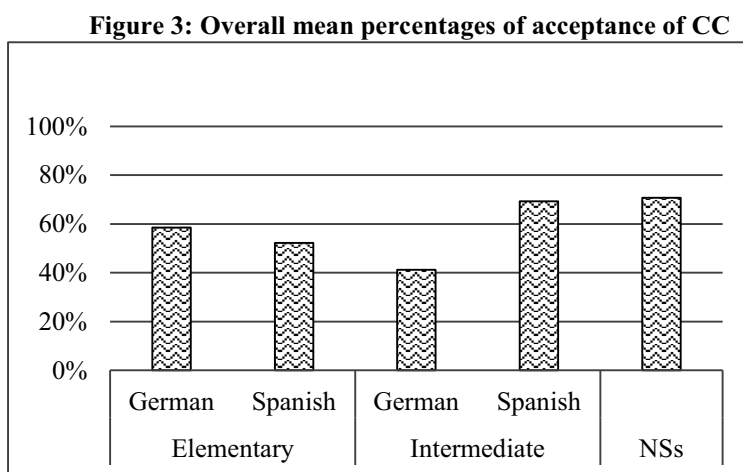
³ Although the Interface Hypothesis is explicitly claimed to apply only to "very advanced stages of adult second language (...) acquisition" (Sorace, 2011:1), it can be assumed to make predictions for earlier stages of interlanguage development. As White (2011:109) argues, "[i]t would be strange if interface problems experienced by endstate L2 speakers emerged out of the blue; near-native speakers of an L2 were, after all, once L2 speakers".

Intergroup comparisons were performed by means of a series of independent-samples t-tests. The analysis, conducted on the basis of mean numerical scores, revealed statistically significant differences between the two German groups in the cl-V condition ($t(18)=-2.288$, $p<0.034$) and between the GERe and the SPi groups in the following conditions: V-cl ($t(18)=-2.415$, $p<0.027$); cl-V ($t(18)=-2.426$, $p<0.026$); *V XP cl ($t(18)=2.714$, $p<0.014$); *Prep cl ($t(18)=2.717$, $p<0.014$). A paired-samples t-test revealed significant differences between the following conditions in the SPi group (but no differences in any of the other groups): cl V vs. *cl V ($t(9)=3.873$, $p<0.004$) and V cl vs. *cl V ($t(9)=4.311$, $p<0.002$).

3.2. Task

In reporting the results of the experimental task⁴, we conflated the answers which selected only the CC option and those which selected both answers, as these two types of answers correspond to acceptance of CC. The two answer types were separated only when this was considered relevant, namely when comparing obligatory and optional contexts.

Figure 3 shows the overall percentage rates of acceptance of CC, obtained by putting all three contexts together.

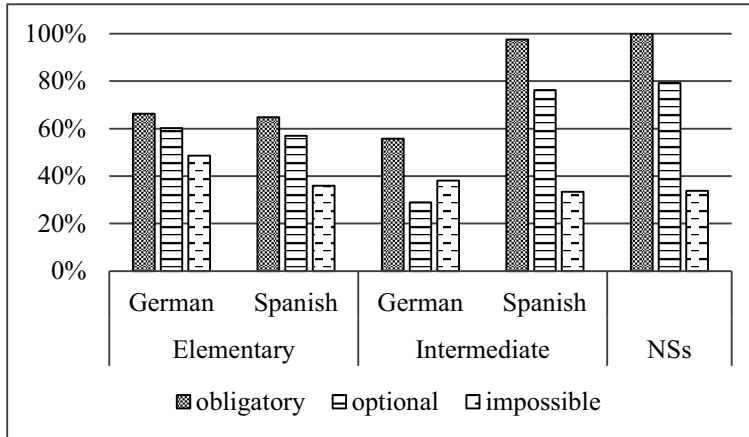


Intergroup comparisons showed statistically significant differences between NSs and two of the learner groups: SPe ($t(18)=2.183$, $p<0.043$) and GERi ($t(18)=3.539$, $p<0.002$). The performances of the two intermediate groups were also found to differ significantly ($t(18)=-3.154$, $p<0.005$). Notably, the performances of the two elementary groups did not differ significantly.

We also compared the mean numerical scores of answers which selected CC and those which selected the non-CC option only. The results of the inferential tests indicate that only the NSs and the SPi group significantly prefer CC to non-CC (NSs: $t(9)=7.869$, $p<0.01$; SPi: $t(9)=5.103$, $p<0.001$). There was no evidence of preference for one option over the other in the elementary groups or in the GERi group.

The percentage rates of acceptance of CC in each of the three contexts are shown in figure 4.

⁴ As indicated for the pre-test, although the statistical analysis on the results of the experimental task was conducted on the basis of mean numerical scores, the results presented in the graphs are given in percentages.

Figure 4: Mean percentages of acceptance of CC in each of the three contexts

It is interesting to note that NSs exhibit categorical judgements only in obligatory climbing contexts⁵. As for the constructions selected by verbs *decidir* ('decide') and *concordar* ('agree'), NSs accept CC in these contexts, although it is not their preferred option (33.8% of acceptance)⁶.

No statistically significant differences were found among groups in contexts disfavouring CC. As for the other contexts, both the NSs and the SPi group significantly outperform the other groups. Hence, differences were found between NSs and (i) SPe, in obligatory ($t(18)=3.781$, $p<0.001$) and optional contexts ($t(18)=2.209$, $p<0.04$); (ii) GERe, in obligatory contexts only ($t(18)=2.615$, $p<0.018$); and (iii) GERi, both in obligatory ($t(18)=3.638$, $p<0.002$) and in optional contexts ($t(18)=3.691$, $p<0.002$). In the same way, the SPi group significantly differed from (i) SPe, in obligatory contexts ($t(18)=3.638$, $p<0.002$); (ii) GERe, also in obligatory contexts ($t(18)=-2.504$, $p<0.022$); and (iii) GERi, both in obligatory ($t(18)=-3.519$, $p<0.002$) and in optional contexts ($t(18)=-3.268$, $p<0.004$). No differences were found between the two elementary groups, the SPe and the GERi groups, and the NS and the SPi groups.

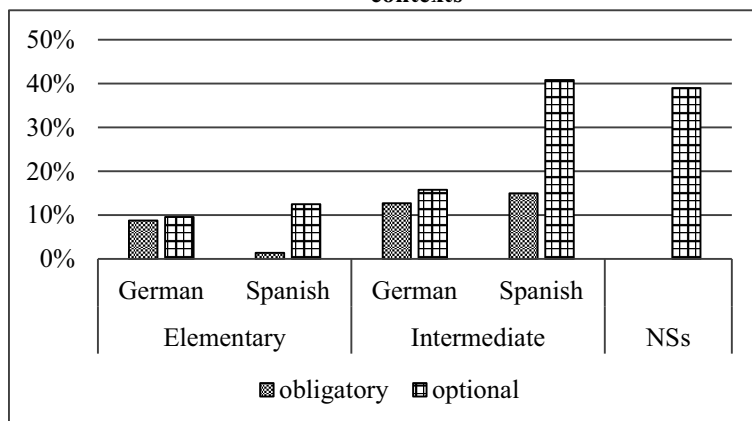
Intragroup comparisons revealed no differences between the three contexts for all groups, with the exception of the NS group and the SPi group. If we compare the acceptance of CC in obligatory and impossible contexts, on the one hand, and in optional and obligatory contexts, we find that the differences between the two pairs of contexts are significant both in the NS group (obligatory vs. impossible contexts ($t(9)=20.846$, $p<0.01$); optional vs. impossible contexts ($t(9)=6.815$, $p<0.01$)) and in the SPi group (obligatory vs. impossible contexts ($t(9)=7.471$, $p<0.01$); optional vs. impossible contexts ($t(9)=3.639$, $p<0.005$).

As for obligatory and optional contexts, what distinguishes them is the fact that only in the latter are both options (climbing and no climbing) possible. Therefore, we compared, in each group, the number of answers in which both options were selected in these contexts. The results are presented in figure 5.

⁵ In the case of optional climbing contexts, the percentage of 20.8% of answers which select only the option displaying absence of climbing may be a consequence of a normative bias towards non-CC in these contexts.

⁶ Although these contexts are labelled 'impossible climbing contexts' in the graphs (following the norm for standard EP), NSs (who are all speakers of the standard variety) clearly do not exclude CC here – all the NSs selected either the climbing option or both options in at least 2 out of the 8 items for this context. It might be more accurate, therefore, to refer to these contexts as 'contexts which disfavour CC'. Both labels are used in the text.

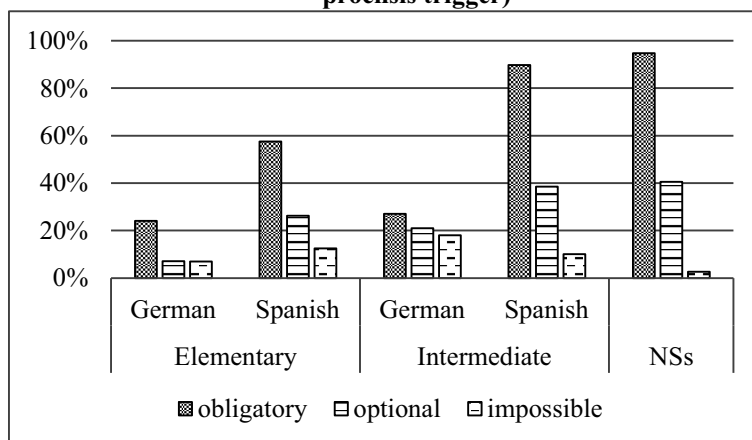
Figure 5: Mean percentages of acceptance of both options in obligatory and optional climbing contexts



Again, statistically significant differences between these two contexts were found only in the NS group ($t(9)=-4.108$, $p<0.003$) and in the SPi ($t(9)=-2.890$, $p<0.018$).

Given the asymmetries observed among the learner groups, it is interesting to note that, nevertheless, all groups display identical sensibility to factors such as the presence of proclisis triggers in the matrix domain. A comparison was performed between the results of the test items (figure 4 above) and those of the subset of fillers displaying CC and non-CC in the same contexts, but lacking a proclisis trigger (negation) in the higher domain (figure 6 below). From this comparison, it is very clear that, similarly to the NS group, all learner groups display higher rates of acceptance in all contexts in the presence of a proclisis trigger – including the two intermediate groups and the GERe, whose performance otherwise consistently differs from that of the NSs (and from SPi), according to the findings reported above.

Figure 6: Mean percentages of acceptance of CC in each of the three contexts (without a proclisis trigger)



4. Discussion and conclusions

It was observed that the four learner groups in our study present similar performances in the pre-test, regardless of proficiency level and L1. The results showed that, overall, these learners have developed knowledge of the specific licensing conditions governing the distribution of clitics: they display low rates of acceptance of sentences containing a clitic in a position not adjacent to the verb or as a complement to a preposition (rates of acceptance below 16% and 23%, respectively). However, the GERe group performed significantly worse than the SPi group on these two conditions, which would indicate an L1 effect in the development of the knowledge of clitic properties.

This effect is also visible in the results of two of the conditions relating to clitic order – grammatical enclisis and grammatical proclisis. However, with the exception of the SPi group, none of the groups appears to show acquisition of the conditions governing enclisis and proclisis in EP, as no statistically significant differences were found in the acceptance rates between the grammatical and the ungrammatical conditions, indicating that these learners have not yet acquired the syntactic conditions which determine the occurrence of enclisis and proclisis. However, they are sensitive to the distinction between these two placement patterns and appear to be aware of the status of negation as a proclisis trigger – this is clearly evidenced by the asymmetries found, regarding their preference for CC, between sentences with and without negation in the matrix domain, which are similar to the asymmetries found in the performance of NSs.

Given the evidence that the knowledge of the specific clitic properties develops early, it is predicted that CC will also emerge early. This hypothesis is supported by the findings for the elementary groups in our study – the GERe and the SPe groups exhibit overall mean percentages of acceptance of CC of 58.5% and 52.2%, respectively. A comparison between the mean scores of preference for CC and for non-CC showed no statistically significant differences in each of these two groups (unlike what was observed for the NSs and SPi). Moreover, no differences were found between the two elementary groups in their overall preference for CC or for non-CC. Hence, these results confirm our predictions and show that CC emerges early, independently of the learners' L1, supporting the theoretical position that the full functional structure is available from the early stages of acquisition through access to UG.

The asymmetries observed between the two elementary groups and the GERi group, on the one hand, and the NS and SPi groups, on the other, suggest that there might be both proficiency and L1 effects in the development of CC in the contexts under consideration. This was confirmed by the analyses of the performances of the groups in the three contexts considered. Hence, only the SPi group showed evidence of having acquired the distinction between obligatory, optional and impossible contexts, displaying patently different behaviours in the three contexts. The performance of SPe consistently differed from that of SPi, showing a clear proficiency effect for this L1 group. On the other hand, the fact that no differences were found between GERe and GERi, coupled with the observation that the two intermediate groups consistently exhibit different behaviours, clearly suggest that the L1 does indeed play a role in the development of the knowledge of the verbs which trigger CC.

Hence, the prediction regarding the effect of the L1 on the development of lexical knowledge, with the L1 having a facilitating role in the acquisition of the knowledge of which verbs trigger CC, was confirmed, but only as far as obligatory and optional contexts are concerned. Only in these contexts did SPi show higher rates of acceptance of CC than GERi, as predicted. The prediction that the Spanish group would also display lower rates of acceptance in contexts disfavouring CC, however, was not confirmed. In fact, the intergroup comparisons revealed no differences regarding this context. One possible explanation for this fact may be that, generally, the GERi group has lower rates of acceptance of CC than the other groups. Thus, it is not surprising that, in this particular context, it did not behave in a significantly different manner from the SPi group, as this was the context in which the lowest rates of acceptance of CC were registered in all groups (including, naturally, SPi).

The conclusions suggested by the findings of the present study raise a number of interesting questions. Regarding the role of the L1, for example, the availability of clitic climbing in Spanish, but not in German, may explain why knowledge of this grammatical option, as well as knowledge of the specific lexical selection properties of individual verbs, develop earlier in the interlanguage grammars of Spanish learners than in those of German learners. Clearly, the presence of restructuring in the L1 grammar of German learners is somehow not sufficient to trigger this faster development. The question, then, is: what are the L1 properties which facilitate the L2 acquisition of CC?

On the other hand, the observation that the SPi learners exhibit a similar behaviour to the NSs, suggesting that, at least for some L1 groups, the development of interface properties (syntax/lexicon) is not delayed, raises questions regarding the Interface Hypothesis – or, at least, regarding the relevance of this hypothesis to the properties investigated here.

Other questions which should be addressed concern individual variation and the role played by other L2s (specifically, those which have CC) in the acquisition of CC. We will leave these questions for future investigation.

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