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Ultimate attainment in L2 English

The case of English articles



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the problem

- ❑ Second language (L2) learners of English experience difficulties in the use of English articles.

(Ionin, et.al, 2004;2008;2009, Goad and White, 2006;2009, Goad, 2011, Robertson, 2000; Trenkič, 2008, Snape and Kupish, 2010)

English assigns its articles on the basis of definiteness.

<p>specific</p> <p>definite <i>the</i></p> <p>Brad is going to lunch with <i>the dean</i> tomorrow.</p> <p>... I'm dreading it, he's such a boring man.</p>	<p>indefinite <i>a(n)</i></p> <p>Brad intends to marry <i>a top model</i>, even though he cannot get on well with her at all.</p>
<p>non-specific</p> <p>Brad is going to lunch with <i>the dean</i>, if the election takes place today.</p>	<p>Brad intends to marry <i>a top model</i>, even though he hasn't met one yet.</p> <p>(adapted from Lyons, 1999)</p>

two types of misuse

➤ omission

spontaneous speech

- Yeah, **little boy** is eating some ice cream.

And, **woman** wear **hat**.

(White, 2003)

referential communication task

- A: Yeah. Draw, er, without, draw, er, **double line** but without the, the bottom. **Triangle**, er (okay), meets at the bottom.

B: Okay.

A: But, er, the right, right + one, **right line** you should use **blue pen** and left, **left line** is red.

B: **Left line** is red?

(Robertson, 2000)

➤ substitution

storytelling

- EXP: how do you start?

CHI: # mm # * **the** elephant throw **the** ball. (Zdorenko and Paradis, 2008)

difficulty: omission and overstressing

L1 prosodic structure constrains the L2 phonetic representations.

- ✓ In the absence of L1 transfer, omission errors will be high.
- ✓ If articles are prosodified as numerals, articles will be overstressed.
- ✓ Error rate will be greater in art+adj+noun constructions when scrambling is involved.

[Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH), Goad and White, 2004; 2006]

difficulty: fluctuation

- ✓ In the absence of L1 transfer, L2 learners of English may choose to assign articles on the basis of specificity (eg. Samoan).
- ✓ Learners are expected to fluctuate in their use of articles in certain contexts.

[Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) Ionin, et al., 2004;2008]

aim

To explore the differences in the realization of **L2 English articles** between two **end-state speakers**- one coming from an articulated first language (**L1-Spanish**), one from a non-articled one (**L1-Turkish**).

*The end-state is a grammar which differed from that of target-language variety, characterized by its **permanent retention of deviant rules and forms**, despite adequate opportunity for improvement (Long, 2003).*

why Spanish and Turkish as L1?

- Spanish has a similar article system to English.

	DEFINITE		INDEFINITE	
	SING	PL	SING	PL
MASC	el	los	un	unos
FEM	la	las	una	unas

- Turkish does not have a definite article. '*Bir*' (one) is viewed both as a numeral and the indefinite article.



participants



Turkish-English Bilingual (TE)

➤ 36 years of exposure

➤ Onset age of bilingualism: 12

➤ Age of fluency: 19

➤ BA in Australia

➤ Standard Turkish

Spanish-English Bilingual (SE)

➤ 19 years of exposure

➤ Onset age of bilingualism: 17

➤ Age of fluency: 20

➤ PhD in the US

➤ Argentinean Spanish

predictions(1)

Turkish-English bilingual (TE) is predicted to have more deviant use of articles than Spanish-English (SE) bilingual.

- Duration of articles in *art+noun* and *art+adj+noun* constructions would be longer, if they are stressed.

TE would exhibit longer durations than SE.

- If omission errors are high, then there may be an effect of L1 prosodic structures.

TE would have more omission errors than SE.

predictions(2)

- TE bilingual is predicted to fluctuate more than the SE bilingual.
TE would have more substitutions than SE.
- Substitutions will mostly be restricted to contexts where definiteness and specificity are in conflict.

e.g *indefinite specific*

Brad wants to marry **a top model**, even though they cannot get along well at all.

definite non-specific

Brad is going to lunch with **the dean**, if the election takes place today.

procedure

- Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (**LEAP-Q** adapted to the Australian context)
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (**PPVT IV**)

Tasks

Task1

- sentence imitation

Task 2

- spontaneous speech
40-60 minutes interview

- in a sound attuned room
- Sony SRS-55 speakers
- Behringer C-2 microphone

tasks

- task 1-sentence imitation
- Recordings were done by a female Australian-English native speaker.
 - *Say what I say*
- Watch pictures on the monitor and repeat what they heard
- task 2-spontaneous speech
- Spontaneous speech was transcribed and coded on the basis of use . Some *set phrases* such as *a little bit*, *a bunch of*, *have a swim*, *by the way* were excluded from the counts.

task 1-stimuli

- 2 sets of stimuli in 4 conditions

- Definite object
- Indefinite subject
- Indefinite object
- Definite subject

Now I see the blue kite

A black cat ran today

I can help a sad pet

Only the bad duck jumped

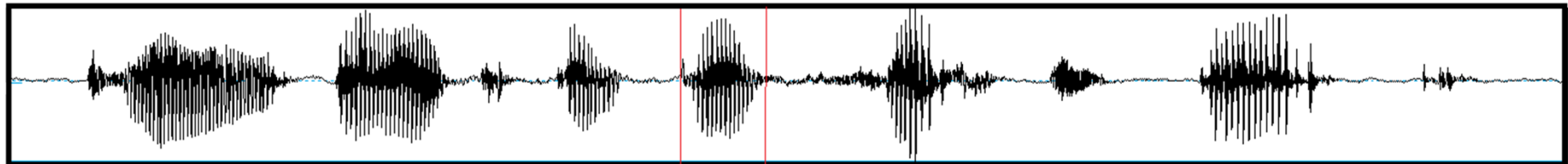


analysis

Tom ate up a fat duck [indefinite object]

TE: Turkish-English bilingual

101ms



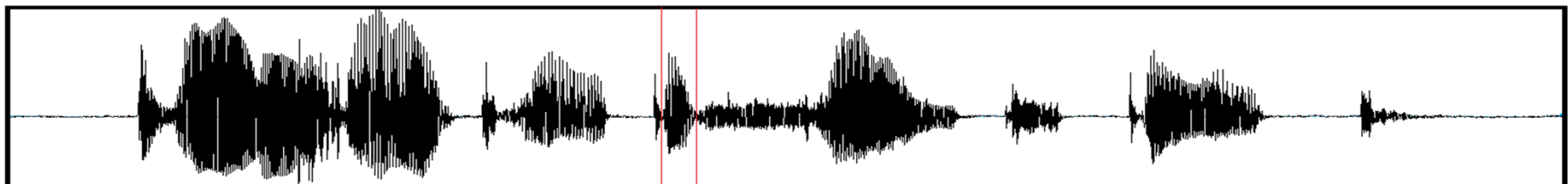
a

fat

duck

SE: Spanish-English bilingual

37 ms



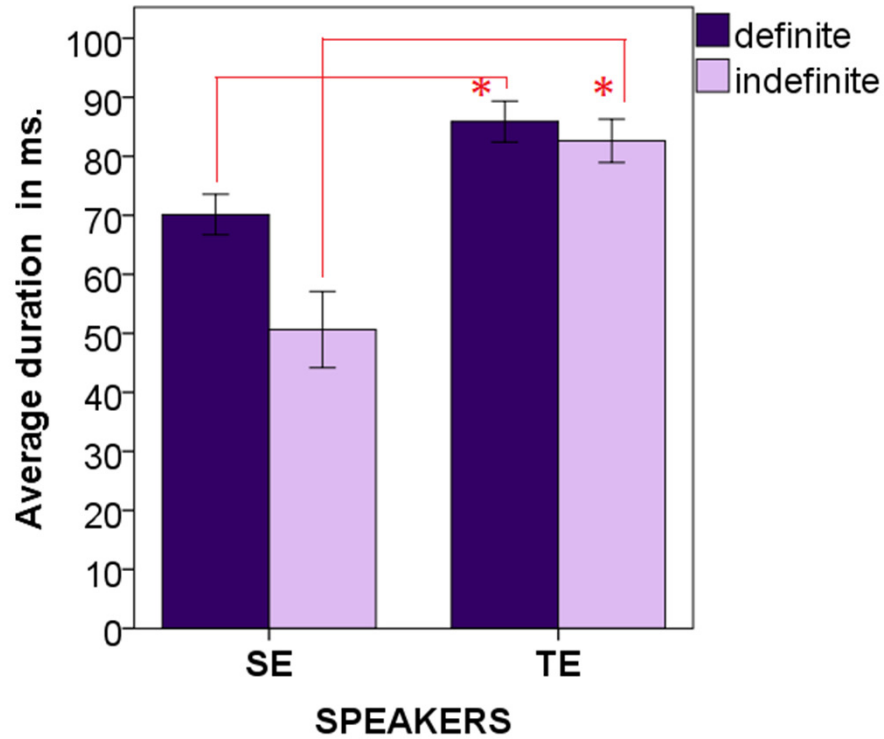
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duck

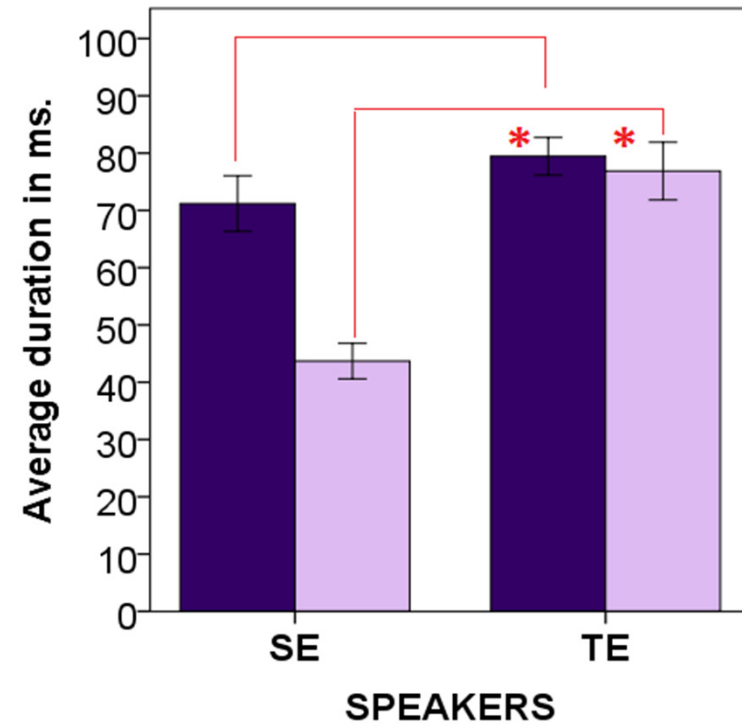
results: sentence imitation

ART+N



($t = 4.298$, $df = 30$, $p = 0.001$)

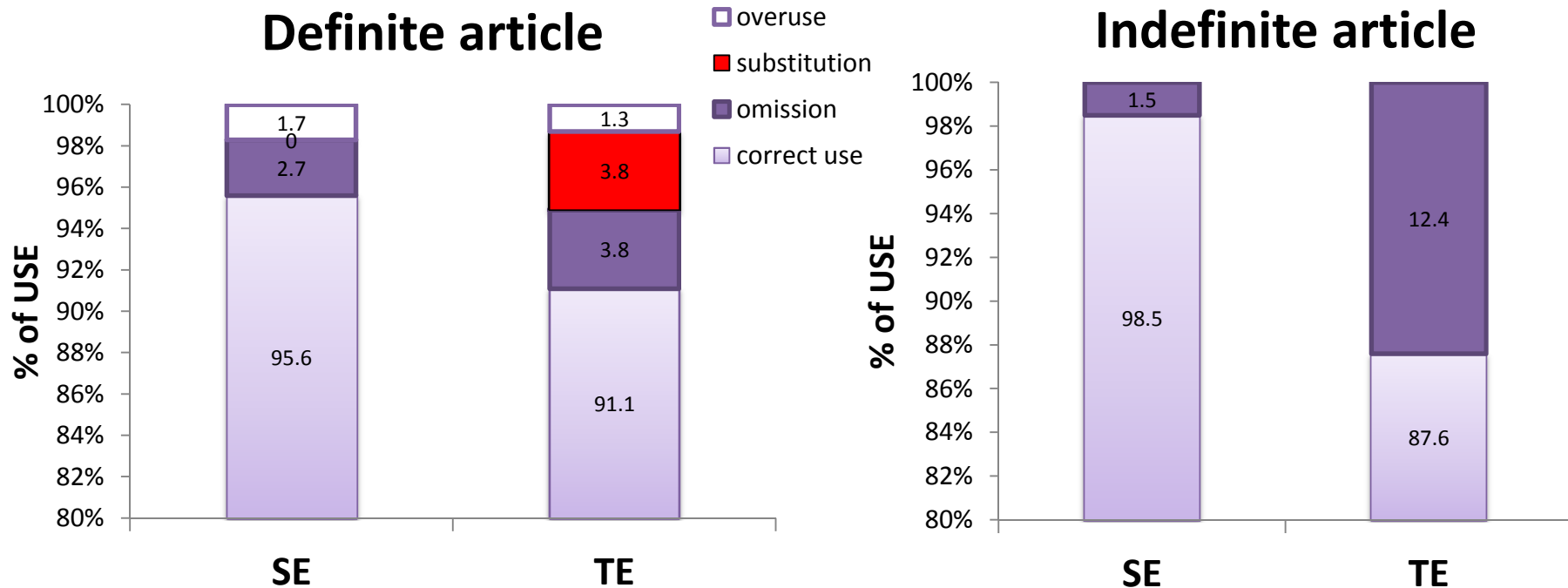
ART+Adj+N



($t = 5.604$, $df = 30$, $p = 0.001$)

Unlike the SE bilingual, TE bilingual treats both articles the same way.

results: spontaneous speech(1)




examples

- And he was working as *a* producer there # *as* studio person.
- She had photos and people use to just watch her # because she was *the* only woman who rode *the* horse around the place.



back to the predictions

- ✓ longer durations  possibly stressed like numerals or demonstratives.

In both tasks there is a significant difference in article durations.

TE>SE

TE>SE

- ✓ lack of L1 prosodic structures  high omission rates

TE>SE (12.5% vs 1.5%)

- ✓ influence of specificity  substitution

TE>SE (3.7% vs \emptyset)

- ✓ Only TE substituted *the* in place of *a* **ONLY** in indefinite specific contexts.

main findings

- L1 prosody has an effect on the realization of articles for both speakers.

* Unlike the SE, the realization of the articles of the TE bilingual is non target like, suggesting that this specific linguistic feature is **fossilized**.

- In the absence of L1 transfer, TE has access to both definiteness and specificity settings to assign the articles.

Thank you
Teşekkürler
Muchas gracias
谢谢

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