Left and right dislocations in French and English: A bilingual case study

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ELA, Université Lumière – Lyon 2

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Cross-linguistic influence in BFLA

- Interaction between two language systems
- Conditions for this phenomenon:
  - interface
  - overlap
  - language dominance
  - input
The routine processing of overt pronominal subjects as co-referential with a subject antecedent in English increases the likelihood that overt pronouns will be processed in the same way in Italian in what might be considered as an instance of cross-linguistic priming.

Serratrice (2007: 235)
Why Dislocation constructions?

- Interface phenomenon
- Partial overlap across French and English
- Functionally important discourse function
Dislocations and interface

(1) Le lion, il court.  
(2) Il court, le lion. 
The lion, it/he is running. It/he is running, the lion.

Syntactically:
- definite Noun Phrase
- resumptive pronoun within the sentence

Pragmatically:
- topic-announcing

-> Brand-new referents may not occur in them.

(Lambrecht 1994: 188)
Pragmatic functions for LDs

- Establish a referent
  (3) *Le hat, où est le hat?* (Anne 2;05.04)

- Maintain a referent
  (4) *Bébé, il pleure* (Anne 2;06.23)

- Switch/re-establish a referent
  (5) *The soup, mix it now.* (Anne 2;08.25)
Pragmatic functions for LDs

- Create a topical contrast
  (6) *That one*, Thomas do it (Anne 2;07.24)

- Make an emphasis on a referent
  (7) *You*, what *you* doing? (Anne 2;06.23)

- Add information about a referent
  (8) *Le hat, (i)*l est chaud (Anne 2;05.04)
Pragmatic functions for RDs

- In French: same pragmatic functions as for LDs except creating a topical contrast.

- Different in English:

  - Afterthought function
    (9) I was with Mummy and 0 come here, *Father Christmas* (Anne 2;08.25)

  - Pointer role
    (10) I like it, *that* (Anne 2;08.25)

(Notley et al 2007)
Frequency of dislocations

- Dislocations account for:
  - 25% of data in spoken French
    (De Cat 2007)
  - only 1% in spoken English
    (Snider and Zaenen 2006)
Research question

- Examine to what extent the regular use of two languages may lead to systematic cross-linguistic influence from French to English in the use of dislocation.

- Investigate the role of input the bilingual’s production of dislocation.
Data: the child

- Longitudinal corpus: Anne (2;4.0-2;8.24)
  - French-English bilingual
  - London
  - Exposure to English 0.65 (Krott et al. 2011)
  - 1hr/month in French and in English
  - First 6 months of recordings
Data: the child

Anne: dominant in English

- Number of French utterances
  - First sample: 74/143 French utterances
  - 6th sample: 43/223
  - Anne’s mlu in French and English sessions

![Bar chart showing comparison between French and English MLU (Mean Length of Utterance) across different ages: 2;04.00, 2;05.04, 2;06.01, 2;06.23, 2;07.24, 2;08.25].

The chart indicates a general trend where the MLU in French exceeds that in English, with notable peaks at 2;07.24 and 2;08.25 in French.
Anne’s use of her languages

- French sessions
- English sessions
Data: analysed sample

Anne’s data
- French sessions: 920 utterances
- English sessions: 799 utterances

Mother’s data
- Sample* of 200 utterances

Nanny’s data
- Sample* of 200 utterances

*Sample: first 2 files and last 2 files were separately merged. 100 utterances per merged file were randomly sample with replacement using the R software (http://www.R-project.org)
Coding scheme based on De Cat (2002)

Analysed and coded **all utterances** containing a **topic** but **excluded verbless** utterances and direct **repetition**

- Direction of dislocation (i.e. left or right)
- Dislocated element
  - Syntactic category (i.e. NP, pronoun...)
  - Old vs. new status
  - Pragmatic function (i.e. contrast, switch referent...)
- Resumptive element
  - Syntactic category (i.e. clitic, Ø ...)
  - Its syntactic role (subject, object ...)
Results: Dislocations in the Data

Anne produced 66 dislocations in 1719 sentences containing a topic (3.84%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anne's dis</th>
<th>Input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English sessions</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French sessions</td>
<td>4.02%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anne</th>
<th>French dis</th>
<th>English dis</th>
<th>Mixed dis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English sessions</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French sessions</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>2.62%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anne’s production of dislocations in the French vs. the English session

- Percentage of Anne’s production of dislocation in French vs. English session

[Bar chart showing the percentage of dislocations in French (Fra) and English (Eng) sessions over different time points]
Anne’s and her mother’s total production of dislocations across languages

- Anne’s production of LDs and RDs (%)
  - French
  - English
  - Mix

- Mother’s production of LDs and RDs (%)
  - LDs
  - RDs
Anne’s and her mother’s total production of dislocations

Anne’s total production of LDs and RDs (%)

Mother’s production of LDs and RDs (%)

[Graphs showing the production of LDs and RDs for Anne and her mother]
General trend in Anne’s dislocations

- Cross-linguistic influence from French to English for topichood for a whole construction
- Higher production of dislocation in French contexts
- Similar proportion of LDs and RDs in output and input
Pragmatic functions in LDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>contrast</th>
<th>establish</th>
<th>maintain</th>
<th>switch</th>
<th>pointer</th>
<th>explain</th>
<th>emphasis</th>
<th>clarify</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11,1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11,1</td>
<td>55,6</td>
<td>22,2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>31,6</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>10,5</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>36,8</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mix</td>
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<td>12,5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12,5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12,5</td>
<td>37,5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>2,8</td>
<td>22,2</td>
<td>2,8</td>
<td>8,3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11,1</td>
<td>27,8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>21,2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>15,2</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>33,3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*frequency %
## Pragmatic functions in RDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>contrast</th>
<th>establish</th>
<th>maintain</th>
<th>switch</th>
<th>pointer</th>
<th>explain</th>
<th>emphasis</th>
<th>clarify</th>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<td>21,05</td>
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<td>5,3</td>
<td>21,05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>60,0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14,3</td>
<td>3,6</td>
<td>17,8</td>
<td>39,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>40,9</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>13,6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*frequency %
General trend for pragmatics

- Mother and Child use LDs in similar pragmatic context with the exception of topical contrast
  - Few productions in French
  - In English, topical contrast marked with SV

- Similar for RDs with the exception of the afterthought function (clarifying the referent)
  - Not appropriately encoding the referent OR
  - Influence from English
Nature of dislocated element in LDs
Nature of dislocated element in RDs

- Anne
- Mother
General trend in resumptive Elt

- **Left-dislocation:**
  - Anne: locative, DP, demonstrative
    (11) *at my house, you eat*
  - Mother: demonstrative, DP
    (12) *Ca, les craies, ça va pas là-dedans*

- **Right-dislocation:**
  - Anne: DP, demonstrative
    (13) *Il est où, my dog?*
  - Mother: DP, demonstrative, proper name
    (14) *Il est là, Thomas.*
Input vs. output

- High number of similarities:
  - Syntactic level (nb of LDs and RDs, nature of dislocated element)
  - Pragmatic level

- Few differences can be explained by pragmatic differences between French and English in the use of dislocation.
Conclusion

- Cross-linguistic influence occur for topichood at the level of a whole construction and not only at the level of individual referential expressions (e.g. pronouns for topic shift) (Serratrice et al. 2011).

- Further evidence on strong relationship between input and output.


Merci
Thank you