

New Insights into Old Issues in L1 Acquisition and L2 and L3 Learning

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Edited by

Larisa Avram, Anca Sevcenco
and Veronica Tomescu

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INTRODUCTION

The volume includes ten papers on L1 acquisition and L2/L3 learning, presented at the 6th Bucharest Colloquium of Language Acquisition, held in Bucharest, in November 2019. The papers address current issues in the acquisition of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics in various learning situations: L1 acquisition (by typically developing children and by children with a cochlear implant), 2L1 acquisition, and L2/L3 learning in a formal setting. They present longitudinal and experimental data within current linguistic models and investigate both production and comprehension.

The studies offer new insights into some central issues in current literature, such as the acquisition of aspect, modality, and definiteness in L1 acquisition, syntactic complexity in typical and impaired language settings, vowel production in L2. Some of the papers address topics which have been relatively understudied or not studied at all for the language(s) which they investigate, such as the effect of bi-literacy on the learning of phonology and of reading with focus on Romanian-Italian bilingual children, or island effects in L2 English in an L1 Romanian context.

In the first chapter, *A usage-based perspective on the “Aspect Hypothesis” in French longitudinal data*, Alice Brunet and Aliyah Morgenstern investigate early past tense forms in child French on the basis of two longitudinal corpora, with an emphasis on the interaction between lexical and grammatical aspect. Whereas the *imparfait* was associated with atelic events predominantly in both child language and child directed speech, the children preferentially associated the *passé composé* with achievements in particular, unlike their caregivers who used this form in equal proportion with accomplishments. The children seemed to use the *passé composé* with achievements to comment on the present results of telic events located in the immediate past. Overall, the children tended to mirror the input. The findings partly confirm the Aspect Hypothesis, which claims that children associate telic forms with perfective morphology and atelic forms with imperfective morphology and tend to overuse this identified pattern.

Ioana Stoicescu, in *Is there an impostor stage in the early production of articles in child Romanian?*, charts the acquisition of articles in a longitudinal corpus of a monolingual Romanian boy. In the corpus under investigation, the definite and indefinite articles are acquired in parallel,

with the indefinite article shortly following the emergence of the definite one. The patterns are similar to what has already been reported in child Romanian (Avram, 2001). There is some evidence for a brief impostor stage for the definite article, as shown by the low number of noun types used and the restricted range of syntactic structures, followed by the beginning of truly productive use, with agreement errors and overuse. As for the definite article, the first recordings overlap with the onset of the analysis stage: with infrequent agreement errors, overuse and article stacking.

In *Remarks on quantifier spreading in child Romanian*, Adina Camelia Bleotu presents the results of an experimental study on quantifier spreading with five-year-old Romanian children. Quantifier spreading has been defined as the exhaustive pairing interpretation, where children would reject a sentence of the type *Every baby has a teddy bear* when shown a picture where there remain unpaired teddy bears, although the babies each have one. Aside from finding evidence for quantifier spreading in Romanian, the author additionally argues for the existence of a correlation between quantifier spreading and the salience of the unpaired object, more precisely its physical size. She also concludes that children have a different understanding of the domain of the quantifier *every*, as well as of the domain of the indefinite.

The chapter *On the comprehension of modal flavours by Romanian monolinguals*, by Ana-Maria Andreea Gaidargi, investigates whether five-year-old Romanian monolingual children access epistemic interpretations relying on relative force. The paper presents the results of an experiment designed by Noveck, Ho, & Sera (1996) and adapted for Romanian. Modal force does not seem to affect the accuracy of the responses, whereas negation seems to play a part in the case of conditional necessity modals.

Silvia D'Ortenzio and Francesca Volpato, in *That-relatives and Pied-piping relatives in Italian-speaking children with and without cochlear implants: Evidence from a production task and a repetition task*, investigate the use of subject, direct object and oblique relative clauses in Italian, with a group of children with cochlear implants and a control group of hearing children. The control group performed significantly better than the experimental group in the production of relatives, whereas in the repetition task the difference between the two groups was not significant. The delay in production might have been caused by delayed input, although the children were diagnosed and fitted with hearing aids within the first year of age. However, since oblique relatives are less frequent in child directed speech and exposure to them may have been equally late for both groups, the control group would not have had an advantage in this case. As regards the differences between the types of relative clauses, an asymmetry was

observed between subject and object relatives in the production task, which can be accounted for by the locality principle of Relativized Minimality (Rizzi, 1990). Pied-piping relatives exhibited a very low degree of accuracy, possibly due to the complexity of their structure (Kayne, 1994). As for oblique relatives, sentences with the relative pronoun *cui* preceded by a preposition were less problematic than relatives introduced by *quale* or genitive relatives, a difference which can be explained by the number of steps involved in the derivation (Jakubowicz, 2005, 2011; Cardinaletti, Piccoli, & Volpato, 2021).

In *Effects of bi-literacy on L2 phonological and reading skills: A case study on Romanian-Italian bilingual children*, Irina Stan shows that whereas L2 literacy is not enhanced by bilingualism per se, heritage language courses do prove beneficial on L2 literacy. Furthermore, it is illuminating to distinguish between bi-literate and mono-literate bilingualism, since L1 literacy may have an important contribution in L2 literacy. The study examined the effects of bi-literacy on Romanian and Italian phonological awareness as well as on Italian reading ability with Romanian-Italian bilingual children (heritage speakers of Romanian). Bi-literate bilinguals were found to have an advantage over mono-literate bilinguals in all L1 phonological awareness tasks and in some L2 phonological awareness tasks, reinforcing the positive effect of literacy acquisition on phonological awareness (Bentin & Leshem, 1993; Garton & Pratt, 1989). In addition, the bi-literate children were learning Romanian in a formal setting, and formal instruction is known to enhance language awareness in general and to highlight specific linguistic characteristics (Carter, 2003).

Raluca Constantin, in *S-Schwa production: A case study on Romanians*, investigates the L1-L2 merger of the Romanian schwa with a group of Romanian learners of English as a second language. Since the English schwa is too similar to the existing Romanian vowel, the learners formed a composite instead of setting up a new category.

Irina Stoica, in *Island effects in L2: The view from manner of speaking verbs*, presents the results of an experiment intended to bring additional evidence to island effects in L2. Extraction out of the post-verbal clause of manner of speaking verbs is vulnerable even with advanced learners of English, whereas with other types of islands the performance of learners is target-like. The difference can be explained in terms of the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace, 2011) which states that elements at the syntax-pragmatics interface may remain vulnerable even in advanced stages of L2 acquisition; and the acceptability of extraction with manner of speaking verbs has been found to be correlated with communicative use effects (Stoica, 2016).

Andreea Dogaru, in her paper *On the acquisition of the V2 parameter in L3 German in an L1 Romanian - L2 English setting*, investigates the acquisition of the V2 parameter in L3 German in a setting where neither of the other two languages has the V2 word order. She examines data from an elicited production task and a grammaticality judgement task. Whereas respondents were in general sensitive to V2 cues, not all such cues were recognized to an equally satisfactory extent. Adjuncts were easier than arguments to identify as V2 triggers in both experiments. The respondents tended to produce sentences with word order legitimate in both Romanian and English.

And finally, Paul Buzilă, in *A neurocognitive approach to overgeneralization in child Romanian*, attempts to apply the Relational Network Theory model to instances of overgeneralization in child Romanian in order to find an explanation for the production of erroneous forms.

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CHAPTER ONE

A USAGE-BASED PERSPECTIVE ON THE ASPECT HYPOTHESIS IN FRENCH LONGITUDINAL DATA

ALICE BRUNET AND ALIYAH MORGENSTERN

1. Introduction

This article studies the use of French verbal forms in early child language, with an emphasis on the interaction between lexical and grammatical aspect. Following a usage-based perspective, it investigates how French monolingual children learn to use the past tense forms available to them in the input. Important studies on the acquisition of such morphemes have highlighted the role of various factors such as frequency of the form in the input, functional complexity or discursive saliency (Goldberg, 2006; Tomasello, 2009; Parisse & Morgenstern, 2012). In particular, forms which serve different functions in CDS (i.e. for which form-to-function mapping is not unilateral) may be more difficult to acquire than forms which have a single, unambiguous function.

Close analysis of how children acquire tense-aspect morphology has revealed an uneven distribution of these morphemes across lexical aspect categories in the speech of young monolingual and bilingual children (Bloom, Lifter, & Hafitz, 1980; Brown, 1973; Bronckart & Sinclair, 1973; Shirai & Andersen, 1995; Clark, 1996; Brunet & Morgenstern, 2019). The Aspect Hypothesis (AH) used parental input to explain preferential associations between specific lexical aspect categories and past tense morphemes in children's productions (Shirai, 1992). Several studies have observed preferential associations in children's productions between perfective past tense forms and compatible lexical aspects of verbs (in Vendler's terminology, accomplishment and achievement verbs), and between imperfective past tense forms and compatible lexical aspects (activities and states). Such observations were first made based on the

productions of English monolingual children, before it was tested, although to a much lesser extent, against the production of children in other languages (Bloom, Lifter, & Hafitz, 1980; Brown, 1973). The interaction between grammatical and lexical aspects was studied once in French monolinguals aged 2;11 to 8;7 (Bronckart & Sinclair, 1973). The authors found that children under six-years-old used the *passé composé* (the French perfective past tense) mostly with non-durative, telic events (i.e. achievement verbs), and the present tense with durative events. They did not use imperfective past tense forms. These preferential associations between tense-aspect morphology and lexical aspect were sometimes described as an “undergeneralization” – children were considered to undergeneralize the use of tense-aspect morphemes to highly compatible lexical aspects, to mark aspectual rather than temporal distinctions (Bloom, Lifter, & Hafitz, 1980; Brown, 1973; Bronckart & Sinclair, 1973). The Aspect Hypothesis (AH) explained children’s use of tense-aspect morphology within the frame of usage-based theories, by analyzing parental input (Shirai, 1992). Shirai & Andersen (1995) identified a “distributional bias” in child-directed speech (CDS) – they noticed that telic predicates accounted for 60% of the past tense forms in CDS, and that the adults tended to use imperfective morphology predominantly with atelic predicates. They concluded that children build prototypical associations from the input they receive between perfective and imperfective morphology and lexical aspect categories. Only later do children generalize the use of tense-aspect morphology across lexical aspects.

This article proposes to test the predictions of the AH on French monolingual longitudinal data. Indeed, Bronckart & Sinclair (1973) conducted an experimental study on French data, which confirmed the first findings of the AH, but offered no insight as to whether the children could be said to draw statistical regularities from their input. Testing the Aspect Hypothesis and its predictions against French longitudinal data will allow us to reflect on how children learn to use past tenses in French, and to increase our knowledge of the role played by linguistic experience in the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology. This work is set within usage-based theories, which place input properties at the center of the acquisition process. We also borrow from enunciative theories as we analyze language in interaction, by focusing on verbal as well as extra-linguistic properties of the situation. We aim to weigh out factors identified as central to the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology by young French monolingual children. In particular, we question the role of the input and the role of situational factors, which have been shown to influence the acquisition of such morphology. For instance, studies have shown that monolingual

French children tend to start using specific past tense forms first to comment on the observable results of past events (Parijsse, De Pontonx, & Morgenstern, 2018). This could explain the preferential associations in the speech of young children between verb types (telic, punctual) and past perfective morphology. Indeed, if a child uses the perfective past tense first to comment on the present results of events, then it is likely that the verb inflected for the past tense will be telic¹.

Contrary to English, French marks grammatical aspect distinctions morphologically only in the past tense. In most discursive contexts, the French *imparfait* is associated with imperfectivity and the French *passé composé* to perfectivity (Trevisse, 1996). The AH would thus predict a clear-cut distribution of these tenses in CDS, leading the children to overuse such prototypical associations in their earliest productions. We aimed to test these predictions in order to further the discussion on the role of lexical aspect as the main trigger in the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology. The *passé composé* is a periphrastic tense formed with an auxiliary and a past participle, which is mostly used to build past, perfective reference. It was the most frequent past tense form used by the adults in our corpus to refer to the past, as well as the first past tense form used by the children. French children have been said to acquire the *passé composé* start by producing bare participles before they are able to produce full-fledged forms (Parijsse & Morgenstern, 2012), which was confirmed in our corpus. It should be noted that bare participles of verbs from the first conjugation group are homophonous with infinitive and *imparfait* forms. The forms *manger* (infinitive), *mangé* (past participle), *mangeait* (*imparfait*) are all pronounced / mɑ̃ʒe /. Coding of grammatical tense thus depended on the coder's grasp of the context in which the form is produced (Parijsse, De Pontonx, & Morgenstern, 2018). Indeed, the most reliable criterion used to identify which form was targeted by the child was adult interpretation. Incomplete *passé composé* forms produced by the children were often made explicit by the surrounding context as in example (1).

- (1) MOT: peut être assis tu veux qu'on le mette assis?
 'maybe sat down do you want him to be sat down?'
 CHI: assis!
 'sat down'

¹ Telic events have final endpoints and reach their completion when this endpoint is reached, denoting a change-of-state which corresponds to an observable result in the situation of utterance.

MOT: il est encore tombé!
'he fell again'
CHI: **tombé**!
'fell'

(Anaé, 1;09.04)

The form / tɔbe / is homophonous with the infinitive and *imparfait* forms of the verb, which makes its interpretation problematic. However, it is clear from the context that the child produced a past participle form, taken up from the *passé composé* (*est tombé*) in her mother's previous utterance. The child also produced the unambiguous past-participle (*assis*) in her previous utterance, guiding our interpretation that she is commenting on the situation by using past-participle forms.

The *imparfait* is the French imperfective past tense. It has been widely studied as a tense which allows speakers to build displaced reference, either temporally or modally (Parisse & Morgenstern, 2012; Parisse, De Pontonx, & Morgenstern, 2018; Morgenstern, Boutet, & Debras, 2018). Indeed, it may be used to locate predicates in the past or to build hypothetical reference. As such, it is a tense often found in situations of pretend play as in example (2) (Patard, 2010).

- (2) CHI: on **disait** que là c'**était** le papa et la maman et là y **avait**
l'enfant.
'let's say this was the daddy and the mommy and the child was
there'

(Antoine, 4;05.16)

Here, the first *imparfait* form (/dizɛ/) is used to displace the reference modally. It signals a break with reality in a situation of pretend play where the child is imagining a scenario, rather than building reference to the past. The *imparfait* in French is thus pluri-functional, which means that children cannot rely on unilateral form-function pairing to acquire it. This complexity in the form-function pairing may in part explain why *imparfait* forms are used later than *passé composé* forms by French monolingual children. We will not focus on the other past tense form in French, the *passé simple*, because it is almost never used in oral French anymore.

Lexical aspect or situation type (Smith, 2013) refers to the semantic content of verbal predicates. Lexical aspect categories differ with regards to the semantic features contained in a verbal predicate. The utterances used below to exemplify the semantic features which contribute to lexical aspect

are all drawn from the corpus used for this study (Parisse & Morgenstern, 2012).

The first feature is duration – whether a situation takes place over a period of time or instantly. This feature distinguishes the utterances *e@fs fini maman!* ‘I am done mummy’ and ‘*ε@fs fait a@fs galipette*’ ‘I did a somersault’, where the former depicts a punctual event and the latter an event with some duration. The second feature is telicity – whether the situation described by the verb constellation has inherent endpoints. The verb constellations ‘*ε@fs fait a@fs galipette*’ ‘I did a somersault’ and ‘*veux regarder chat*’ ‘want to look at cat’ differ with regards to telicity. The former is telic, it has an inherent endpoint (the moment when the somersault is completed), whereas the latter is atelic. The third feature is dynamicity – whether a situation requires an input of energy. Dynamicity distinguishes *e@fs belle!* ‘is beautiful’ (stative) from *ε@fs fait a@fs galipette* ‘I did a somersault’ (dynamic). Vendler (1957) identified four “time schemata” depending on the inherent temporal characteristics of the situations described. These would fall in one of four categories: states, activities, accomplishments and achievements, which are often illustrated as in Table 1.

Table 1. Vendler’s Time Schemata (1957)

States	_____
Activities	~~~~~
Accomplishments	~~~~~X
Achievements	X

The straight line used to depict the internal constituency of states shows that they include situations which are presented as homogeneous, with no successive stages or endpoints. Activities are depicted as encoding situations consisting of successive phases with no inherent endpoints. The tildes used indicate that activities, contrary to states, are [+ dynamic]. Accomplishments differ from activities in that they include an inherent endpoint, represented by the (X) – they are [+ telic]. Finally, achievements consist of no successive phases, but rather only of an endpoint. They encode situations which have no duration, and usually involve a change-of-state, which are [+ telic] and [- durative]. Table 2 offers a visual representation of the inherent temporal features of the four major lexical aspect categories.

Table 2. Temporal features of lexical aspect categories (Shirai & Andersen, 1995)

	Durative	Telic	Dynamic
States	+	-	-
Activities	+	-	+
Accomplishments	+	+	+
Achievements	-	+	+

Lexical aspects in English and French can be described using Vendler's time schemata, although a verb constellation and its direct translation will not necessarily fall into the same category. Moreover, lexical aspect is attributed to entire predicates, and a single verb can fall into different categories depending on its arguments.

The AH predicts that in French, telic situation types will be found mostly inflected for the *passé composé* in CDS, whereas the *imparfait* will be used predominantly with atelic situation types. The AH also predicts that children will overuse these frequent associations in the input, before generalizing perfective morphology to activities and to states, and generalizing imperfective morphology first to accomplishments then to achievements (Shirai & Andersen, 1995). Our research questions aim at testing the predictions of the AH against French longitudinal data – we tried to determine whether perfective and imperfective morphology were predominantly associated with specific situation types in CDS, and whether the children under study overused such frequent associations if they were found in their input. We also considered specific situational and enunciative factors to which children may tie the use of specific tense-aspect morphology.

2. Method

This study was based on longitudinal data from two French monolingual children, recorded as part of the ColaJE project funded by the French National Research Agency (Parisse & Morgenstern, 2012). The data consists of eleven sessions for Anaé and ten sessions for Antoine, during which the children were recorded in their homes, in interaction with members of their families. The children were between 1;06 and 4;05 years old at the time of the recordings. Table 3 details the proportion of past tense forms in the speech of the two children whose productions were analyzed in this study. Both children have a similar Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) over the period. The beginning of the period corresponds for both children to the time at which the number of verbs used in each session started to grow. From around 2;0 on, both children started to use a high number of

verbs consistently in each session. Both Anaé and Antoine had a tendency to use past participle forms more at the beginning than at the end of the period, although this tendency is more marked for Antoine than for Anaé. Indeed, Antoine appeared to take longer than Anaé to use full *passé composé* forms consistently. Like Anaé however, as the number of *passé composé* forms produced in each session increased, the number of past participles produced decreased. This indicates that both children were in the midst of acquiring the *passé composé* during the period. By the second half of the recordings, both children produced *passé composé* forms consistently in each session and more frequently than they did bare participles.

Table 3. MLU, Verb tokens and proportion of past tense forms for each child in each session

	Age	Verbs		Past Participle		Passé composé		Imparfait		MLU
		Tokens		Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	
Anaé	1;06.08	18			0.0	1	5.6		0.0	1.349
	1;09.04	93	3		3.2	15	16.1		0.0	1.715
	2;00.00	323	17		5.3	28	8.7	1	0.3	2.915
	2;03.30	169	5		3.0	7	4.1		0.0	2.388
	2;06.27	322	1		0.3	27	8.3		0.0	3.188
	2;09.23	203	9		4.4	12	5.9	1	0.5	2.765
	3;01.07	231	2		0.9	26	11.3	4	1.7	3.273
	3;04.27	408	2		0.5	18	4.4	9	2.2	3.629
	3;08.10	243	2		0.8	20	8.2	10	4.9	3.14
	4;00.13	545	1		0.2	42	7.7	71	13.0	5.087
	4;04.10	302	1		0.3	26	8.6	12	4.6	3.378
	Age	Verbs		Past participle		Passé composé		Imparfait		MLU
		Tokens		Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	
Antoine	1;06.22	4			0.0		0.0		0.0	1.225
	1;09.11	29	8		27.6		0.0		0.0	1.201
	1;11.18	41	22		53.7		0.0		0.0	1.336
	2;01.28	47	10		21.3	2	4.26		0.0	1.751
	2;03.15	128	23		18.0	13	10.16	2	1.6	2.168
	2;05.24	226	31		13.7	31	13.7	1	0.4	2.823
	2;07.22	226	16		7.1	23	10.9	1	0.4	2.875
	2;09.16	360	8		2.22	26	7.2	3	0.8	3.033
	2;11.16	301	1		0.3	28	9.3	3	1.0	2.892
	3;02.24	200	3		1.5	18	9.0		0.0	3.059
	3;09.22	401			0.0	45	11.2	16	4.2	4.0
	4;00.09	268	5		1.9	29	10.8	8	3.0	3.412
	4;05.16	292			0.0		8.9	25	8.6	3.453

As predicted by the literature, Anaé and Antoine started using *imparfait* forms later than they did the *passé composé*. It was not produced consistently and creatively by the children under study until the end of the period. Indeed, both Anaé and Antoine used the *imparfait* first with a very

low number of verbs, which were also the verbs most frequently inflected for the *imparfait* in CDS. Only at the end of the period (around 3;08 for Anaé and 3;09 for Antoine) did the children start generalizing the *imparfait* to a greater variety of verbs.

The videos were transcribed in the CHAT format using the CLAN software (MacWhinney, 2000), and later coded under Excel. All utterances containing a verb were coded for lexical aspect, grammatical tense and temporal reference. *Imparfait* forms were coded according to the value of the *imparfait* they instantiated, following Morgenstern, Boutet, & Debras (2018). We are particularly interested in the difference identified between *imparfait* forms used with a descriptive value to build past reference and *imparfait* forms used with atemporal or fictive values to build modal reference (Parisse, De Pontonx, & Morgenstern, 2018). Utterances were coded as referring either to the past, present or future, or as being atemporal. Coding for chronological time allowed us to distinguish forms that were used to build a temporal break from those used to displace the reference modally. Finally, past tense forms were coded with regards to whether they encoded a present result. This allowed us to identify instances when the children in the corpus used past tense forms to comment on the present result of an event located in the immediate past (Parisse, De Pontonx, & Morgenstern, 2018). As mentioned above, coding was decided by considering the productions in context, as part of an interaction.

3. Results and discussion

The first prediction of the AH is that perfective morphology will be predominantly associated with telic, punctual verbs (accomplishments and achievements) in CDS. This was verified in Antoine's as well as Anaé's input. In the latter, 78.5% of *passé composé* forms were achievements or accomplishments. In Antoine's input, this proportion raised to 80.8% of forms. Both Anaé and Antoine's caretakers thus tended to use the *passé composé* with accomplishments and achievements predominantly. The AH then predicts that children will build prototypical form-function pairings from these frequent associations in their input and overuse them in the first stages of development. We thus expected that the children would use the *passé composé* more predominantly with achievements and accomplishments than their parents did. This was not the case however: as shown in Table 4, there was no significant difference between adults' and children's rates of associations of telic predicates and perfective past tense.

Table 4. Percentage (token count) of perfective past used with accomplishments and achievements.

	Child data	Adult data
Anaé corpus	81.5 (181)	78.5 (500)
Antoine corpus	84.7 (204)	80.8 (861)

These results suggest that both children modeled their use of the *passé composé* on the productions of their parents, but they do not point towards a prototype effect. We then considered only telic, punctual predicates (achievements, in Vendler's terminology) to determine whether children tended to inflect them predominantly for the perfective past tense. We found that both children used the *passé composé* with achievements significantly more than their caretakers did (Anaé, $\chi^2 = 25.13$, $p < 0.00001$; Antoine, $\chi^2 = 25.31$, $p < 0.00001$), as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Percentage (token count) of perfective past used with achievements.

	Child data	Adult data
Anaé corpus	46.4 (103)	35.8 (228)
Antoine corpus	52.3 (126)	36 (384)

This is consistent with the findings of the AH, which suggest that children will overuse perfective morphology with achievements in the first stages of development. However, the results differ from the predictions of the AH in that the tendency for children to use the perfective past tense predominantly with telic, punctual events cannot be tied back to prototypical associations identified in the input, as all adults in the corpus tended to use the *passé composé* as frequently with achievements and accomplishments. We believe further analysis may help shed light on the way the children in the corpus tend to use the perfective past tense with telic, punctual predicates.

First, as predicted by the AH, the rates of associations between the perfective past tense and achievements decreased for both children over the period. Figure 1 displays the percentage of achievements among *passé composé* forms in child and adult data for each of Anaé's sessions. At the beginning of the period, 100% of the verb forms used in the *passé composé* by Anaé were achievements, and this rate dropped to 44% by the end of the period, approximating adult rates.

Figure 1. Percentage of achievements among *passé composé* forms during each session in Anaé's corpus

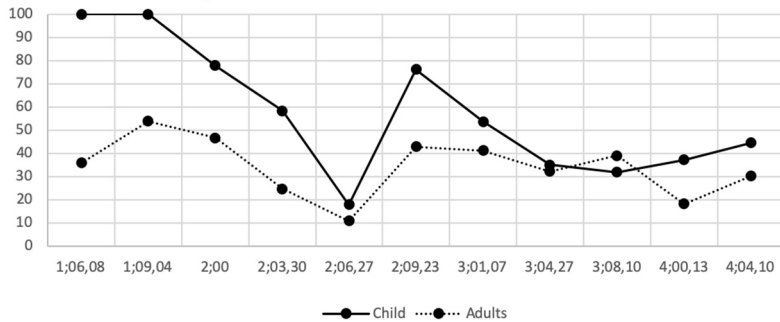
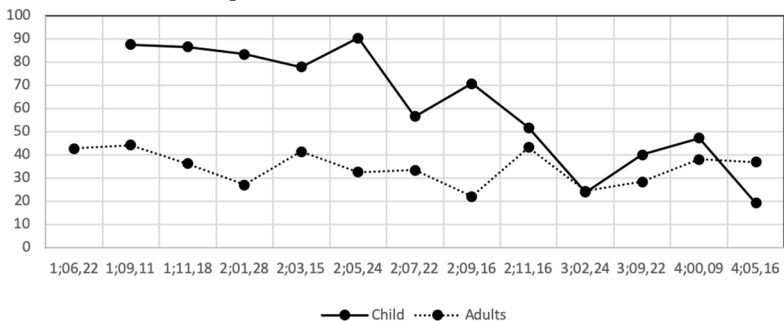


Figure 2 displays the percentage of *passé composé* forms that were achievement verbs for each of Antoine's sessions. The rate of association of the perfective past with achievement verbs were high in the first sessions but dropped significantly by the end of the period. Indeed, at the beginning of the period, 87.5% of the perfective past tense forms used by Antoine were achievement verbs, while they consistently dropped below 50% in the last four recordings. Globally, the trend in both graphs is clearly decreasing over the period and getting much closer to adult rates, as both children tended to generalize the use of the *passé composé* across lexical aspect categories.

Figure 2. Percentage of achievements among *passé composé* forms during each session in Antoine's corpus



The second observation we made is that the achievement verbs inflected for the perfective past tense by both children were often used to comment on the present, observable result of an event located in the immediate past, especially in the first half of the period. This is consistent with the results

from various studies which have shown that tense forms are first used by children in relation with the “here and now” (Bronckart & Sinclair, 1973; Parisse, De Pontonx, & Morgenstern, 2018) and could explain why the children under study overused the perfective past tense with achievement predicates. Indeed, whereas activities, states and accomplishments were inflected for the perfective past tense predominantly to build reference to the past, the inflection of achievement verbs for the *passé composé* served two functions in the speech of Anaé and Antoine. Example (3) illustrates how the perfective past tense was used by children to locate a punctual, telic situation as having occurred in the past.

- (3) CHI: c’est qui qui m’a **réveillé** c’est Papy.
 ‘who woke me up, it’s grandpa’

(Antoine, 3;09.22)

In this example, the child uses the *passé composé* to locate a telic, punctual event in the past. The *passé composé* allows the child to locate the event of him being woken up by his grandfather on the previous morning as fully disconnected from the situation of utterance. However, in other instances, the *passé composé* was used to comment on an observable result in the situation of utterance rather than to refer to a past event. This is illustrated in examples (4) and (5).

- (4) CHI: il coince les doigts
 ‘he is trapping his fingers’
 GDM: oh ben non là elle coince pas les doigts Titi
 ‘well no, she is not trapping her fingers Titi’
 CHI: @fs **fini** coincer doigts
 is done trap fingers

(Antoine, 2;09.16)

Here, Antoine participates in a book-reading activity with his grandmother. Before this interaction, they described a picture where the character has her fingers caught in a door. As the grandmother turns the pages, the child keeps repeating the statement in the present tense *il coince les doigts* apparently still commenting on the picture where the character’s fingers are caught in a door. When his grandmother reminds him that they are not looking at the picture anymore, the child uses an achievement verb *finir* ‘to finish’ inflected for the *passé composé*. This form does not only locate the event in the immediate past, but also focuses on its present result – the child is in fact commenting on the character’s fingers no longer being caught in a door in

the picture he is looking at. We considered this form as not fully disconnected from the situation of utterance and we did not consider that it served only to locate an event in the past. Similarly, Anaé's first past tense forms served to locate telic, punctual events in the immediate past with a special focus on their present results, which implies that they are strongly connected to the situation of utterance.

- (5) CHI: et ça ça va là
'and this goes there'
MOT: c'est bien
'well done'
CHI: se@fs **trouvé**
'found it'
MOT: tu l'as trouvé, oui
'you did, you found it'

(Anaé, 2 ;00.00)

In example 5, Anaé is playing a memory game with her mother. Picture cards have been set in front of them on the table, and Anaé matches each new card she draws with its identical pair by setting it physically on top of it on the table. Each time she found a new pairing, she used the past tense form *trouvé* 'found'. Because the result of the finding event was still visible in the situation of utterance at speech time (the cards were matched on the table), we analyzed this form as not fully disconnected from the situation of utterance. Examples 4 and 5 illustrate a common use of the *passé composé* by both children under study, to comment on the present result of a punctual, telic event located in the immediate past and whose results are observable in the situation of utterance. They contrast with uses fully disconnected from the situation of utterance, which locate events in the past with no focus on present results (example 3). The two functions served by the perfective past tense used with achievements in the speech of the children under study may explain why they used the *passé composé* with achievement verbs significantly more often than their caregivers. With achievements, the *passé composé* is used by children either to refer to the past with no focus on present results (64% of the *passé composé* forms produced by Anaé and 47% of the forms produced by Antoine) or to comment on the present result of an event located in the immediate past (27% for Anaé and 42% for Antoine). Thus, the strong associations we identified in the speech of the children between perfective morphology and achievement verb constellations cannot be explained by looking at parental input alone. Rather, a functional analysis of these forms in child language may help us

account for preferential associations between lexical and grammatical aspect in the early stages of acquisition.

The AH also predicts that children will start using imperfective morphology predominantly with atelic, durative situation types, mirroring the linguistic behavior of their caretakers. In the case of the *imparfait*, we expected to find it associated primarily with states and activities both in the children's input and output. It was indeed used predominantly with atelic predicates by children and adults alike.

Table 6. Percentage (token count) of imperfective past used with atelic predicates

	Child data	Adult data
Anaé corpus	92.6 (100)	88.1 (229)
Antoine corpus	84.7 (50)	82.3 (306)

No significant difference was found between adults' and children's rates of association between atelic predicates and the imperfective past tense – the children largely mirrored their input in terms of associating lexical aspect and the *imparfait*, as shown in Table 6. This is illustrated by example (6), which puts into perspective two extracts from the recordings of Anaé. On the left hand-side, the example is drawn from one of the first sessions of the period, when Anaé is 1;06. She does not at this stage produce any *imparfait* forms, although the verb *être* 'to be' is frequently found in the *imparfait* in her input, mostly in homophonous realizations such as *était* and *étais* in example 6. These are in turn the first *imparfait* forms produced by Anaé, as in the example on the right hand-side when Anaé is 3;08.

(6)	
Anaé (1;06.08)	Anaé (3;08.10)
MOT: ouh c'est dur 'oh it's hard'	MOT: Oh tiens regarde. Qu'est-ce que c'est ça ?
MOT: ça c'était quand tu étais tout petit bébé 'that was when you were a tiny little baby'	'oh look! What's that?' CHI: C'est quand quand j' étais dehors à... 'it's when when I was outside in...'
CHI: hu?	OBS: Où ça ? 'Where?'
MOT: C'était la musique 'it was the music'	OBS: Ça sent bon déjà la ratatouille. 'the ratatouille already smells good.'
	CHI: Ben oui. 'Well yes.'

OBS: Tu sens avec ton nez ?
'can you smell it with your nose?'
MOT: C'est où ça Anaé ?
'where is that Anaé?'
CHI: C'**était** chez nous.
'it **was** at home'

Both children under study generalized the *imparfait* to a greater number of verbs across lexical aspect categories only by the end of the period. We mentioned earlier that the *imparfait* is used by adult speakers of French either used to build reference to the past or atemporal, fictive reference. There is one session for both children when they started to generalize the *imparfait* from stative predicates to activities, accomplishments and achievements. In this session, 11% of the 71 verbs Anaé inflected for the *imparfait* and 24% of the 25 verbs used in the *imparfait* by Antoine were telic. This session was also a session where both children were engaged either in pretend-reading or pretend play activities and were thus likely to use the *imparfait* to build atemporal reference. We wondered first whether there was a correlation between the generalization of the *imparfait* across situation types and the fact that it was used to build atemporal rather than past reference. We also wondered whether this correlation, if established, would reflect the children's input. The results were striking in both Antoine and Anaé's corpus. Indeed, the adults had a strong tendency to use the *imparfait* with atelic verb constellations, but they also used telic predicates inflected for the imperfective past tense. They used the *imparfait* across lexical aspect categories both to locate a predicate in the past and to build atemporal reference. When Anaé and Antoine started using the *imparfait* with non-stative verbs however, they appeared to use telic and atelic predicates with different functions. Both children generalized the use of the *imparfait* beyond stative predicates first to locate atelic, dynamic predicates (activities) in the past, as in example (7).

- (7) MOT: et Caro elle faisait quoi
'and what was Caro doing?'
CHI: elle **dessinait** ou elle **attendait** que c'était à manger et ou elle était avec euh la recette.
'she was drawing or she was waiting for there to be food or she was with uh the recipe'

(Anaé, 4;00.13)

One of the justifications that may be put forth to explain this use of the *imparfait* with telic predicates to build atemporal reference predominantly has to do with form-function pairings established by children acquiring language. As mentioned earlier, studies have suggested that children first build form-function pairings unidirectionally, extracting from their input the most frequent form-function pairings and using this pairing exclusively in the first stages of development. It might then be hypothesized that the *passé composé* would have been learned by Antoine and Anaé as the past tense used most frequently to locate telic predicates in the past. In turn, they use the *imparfait* with telic predicates with another function: to build atemporal, fictive reference and to serve grounding purposes in narrative discourse, rather than to locate events in the past.

4. Conclusion

Our study has focused on the production of past tense forms by French monolingual children. We aimed to test the predictions of the AH, which claimed that perfective morphology is used predominantly with telic situation types in CDS. This would then lead the children to build prototypical associations from their input and to overuse such associations in their first productions. Reversely, the AH predicted that imperfective morphology would be used with atelic, durative situation types before it was extended to telic, punctual verb constellations.

We verified part of these predictions: over the period, both children associated the *passé composé* predominantly with telic predicates and the *imparfait* with atelic ones. Children also tended to associate the *passé composé* with achievements to a much greater extent than their caregivers, who used the perfective past tense with achievements and accomplishments in similar proportions. The prototype effect identified in the literature (Shirai & Andersen, 1995) could thus not account for the over-representation of achievements among the *passé composé* forms used by the children. These results support previous findings on Romance languages suggesting that factors other than telicity impact the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology (Bertinetto et al., 2015). However, our results are consistent with the AH with regards to the generalization of perfective morphology: by the end of the period, both children's rates of association of the *passé composé* with achievements had dropped significantly, reaching adult-like levels.

We tried to account for the strong associations made by the children between achievement verb constellations and the *passé composé* by analyzing the functions served by telic, punctual verbs when inflected for the *passé composé*. We found that children used the *passé composé* across situation

types to locate situations in the past, but that they used it with achievements either to refer to past events disconnected from the situation of utterance, or to comment on the present result of a past event. Recent studies have shown that the first verb forms produced by French monolingual children are closely tied to the “here and now”, which could explain why Anaé and Antoine used the *passé composé* to comment on the present results of telic events located in the immediate past more than their caregivers did (Parisse & Morgenstern, 2012). The *imparfait* was used by the adults and children alike mostly with atelic situation types, to locate predicates in the past and to build atemporal, fictive reference. Children started to generalize the *imparfait* across situation types at the very end of the period, both producing many *imparfait* forms during a session of pretend-reading and pretend-play. This is the session where children used the *imparfait* with telic predicates, which was quite rare over the period. Interestingly, when the children used the *imparfait* with telic situation types, they tended to do so to build fictive reference rather than to locate predicates in the past. This suggests once again that the associations found in the speech of young children between lexical aspect and imperfective morphology should be analyzed in relation to the input but also with regards to the functions served by these forms in discourse.

This study on the acquisition of the French past tense forms thus confirms that children tend to mirror the productions of their caregivers when acquiring tense-aspect morphology. It also confirmed to some extent findings of the AH, namely that the children tend to extract regularities in the ways lexical aspect and tense morphology are used in their input and tend to exaggerate these regularities in these productions. The children under study appeared to use first the most frequent form-function pairings in their input quite rigidly, before generalizing the use of tense-aspect morphology to express less salient functions.

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CHAPTER TWO

IS THERE AN IMPOSTOR STAGE IN THE EARLY PRODUCTION OF ARTICLES IN CHILD ROMANIAN?

IOANA STOICESCU

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the acquisition of articles by Romanian-speaking, typically developing children, more specifically the status of the early articles. The main question is whether there is an impostor stage in the production of definite and indefinite articles in early Romanian. The question is related to the wider debate in the literature on the availability of functional categories at the onset of language acquisition. The study aims at providing more empirical coverage and testing the conclusions of previous work on Romanian article acquisition (Avram, 2001; Coene & Avram, 2001; Avram & Coene, 2008). The data come from the longitudinal corpus of one boy, child Iosif (1;10- 2;6) (Stoicescu, 2013).

In work done in the Government and Binding (GB) framework, there are two approaches related to the acquisition of syntax, namely the Continuity and Maturation hypotheses. According to the Continuity Hypothesis (Penner & Weissenborn, 1996), the child has access to the full array of functional projections from the onset of acquisition, while the proponents of the Maturation Hypothesis (Radford, 1990; Guilfoyle & Noonan, 1992) argued for the emergence of functional projections in biologically determined stages of maturation. According to the Maturation Hypothesis, the child only builds lexical projections initially. For instance, Radford (1990) argued that English children initially assign nominals the structure of lexical NPs rather than DPs. This position was based on several findings about early child output. Around the age of 20-23 months, which Radford claimed is the lexical stage of categorial development, English-speaking children omit determiners such as *the*, *a*, *my*, *that* in the pre-nominal position, and produce