

**Language Pedagogy and Language Education.**

Audio Visual Means of Teaching.

Minin University, Russia

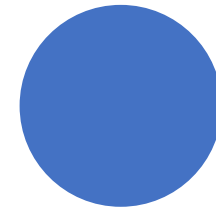
February 25

2019

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# Acquisition of Non-Native Syntax

## Why would a teacher care?



# You cannot get a man with a gun!

(from the musical  
“Annie Get Your Gun”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie\\_Get\\_Your\\_Gun\\_\(musical\)\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Get_Your_Gun_(musical)))

## Match the sentences to the pictures:

- You cannot get a man  
with a gun  
Нельзя получить мужчину при помощи пистолета

- You cannot get  
a man with a gun  
Нельзя получить мужчину, у которого пистолет

- The man will escape anyway.....



# You cannot get a man with a gun!

from the musical  
“Annie Get Your Gun”  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie\\_Get\\_Your\\_Gun\\_\(musical\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Get_Your_Gun_(musical))

- What does the sentence mean?
  - You cannot have a man, who has a gun
  - You cannot kill a man, who has a gun
  - You cannot obtain a man if you are using a gun
  - You cannot kill a man using a gun
- When do you slow down to possibly rethink the meaning? Why?
  - man; - with; - gun
- What linguistic information do you need to get all the interpretations?
  - parts of speech; *with* – for the use of an instrument
  - more than one meaning of *get*
- **Try to say the sentence in a different language.**
- **Are all the meanings preserved?**
  - **Are the examples identical or equivalent?:**
    - поймать **руками**
      - (Russian: Instrumental case marked on the noun)
    - catch **with** hands
      - (Is it Instrumental case? What about case marking?)

# We know that... (morphology)

## Morphology matters:

- at the level of the word (lexicon) = derivational morphology:
  - *\*Our relationship is at the begin.*
    - Error: *begin(ing)* is used as a noun; start (noun) – start (verb)
    - Ex.: adjectives like *interesting* and *interested* get confused
- at the level of sentence (syntax) = functional morphology:
  - *\*I studying in Nizhny. I am study in Nizhny. I was worked a lot yesterday.*
    - Error: *-ing, be*
      - Typical for Russian learners of English. Why?

# Order of Morpheme Acquisition: L2 children and adults

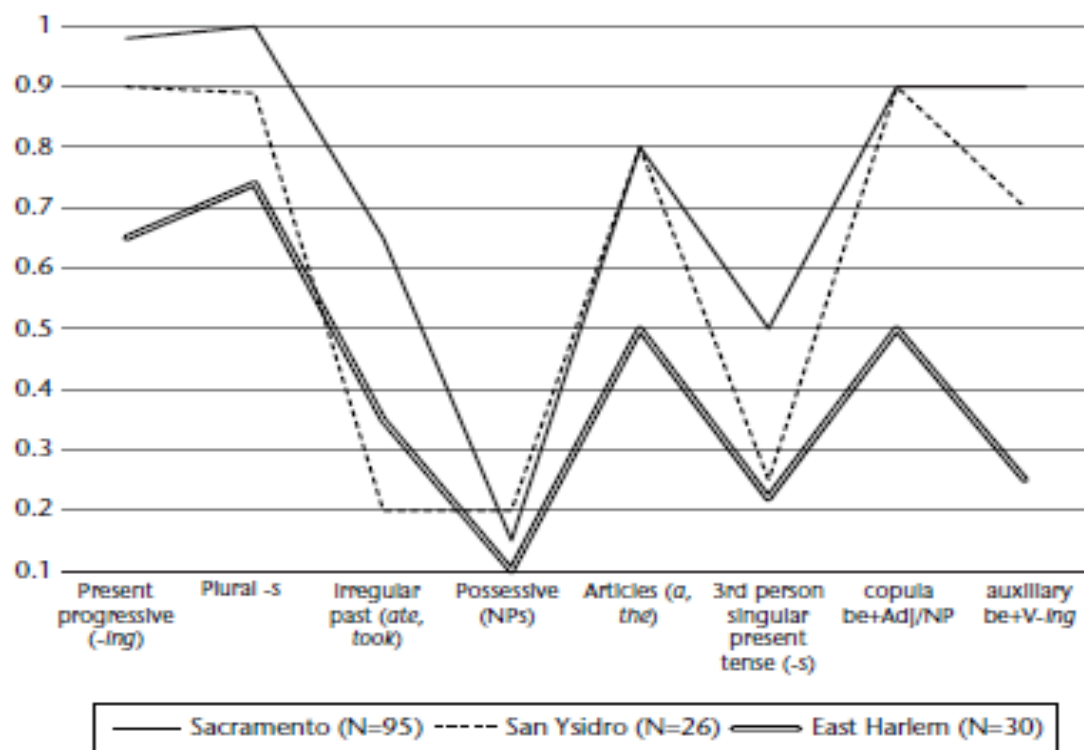


Figure 7.1 Comparison of BSM scores on English L2 functors by three groups of Spanish-speaking children, from Dulay and Burt (1973)

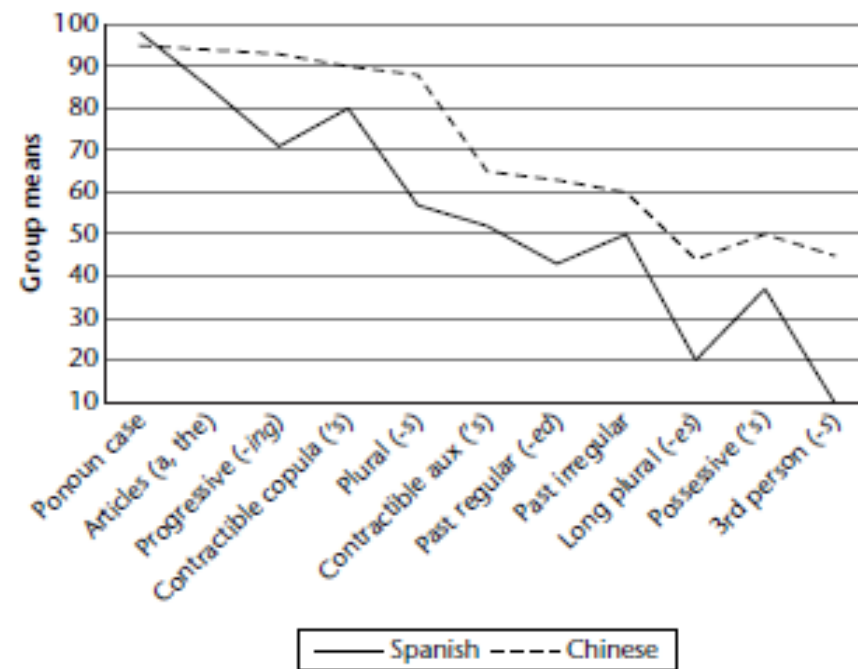


Figure 7.2 Comparison of group means on English L2 functor acquisition by Spanish-speaking and Chinese-speaking children, from Dulay and Burt (1974)

# Why morphology?

- There is a certain order of morpheme acquisition in English (Dulay & Burt 1973, 1974)
  - **-ing** (in *studying*) --- **be** before adjectives---plural **-S** (*dogS*)---articles (**a, the**)---contractible auxiliary –’**S** (*he’s studying*)---past irregular (**ate, drank**)--- **-S** in 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (**talks, sleeps**)---’**S** in possessives (*Mary’s*).
- Morphology may be missing in production, but it does not mean the underlying knowledge of syntax is **IMPAIRED** (Missing Surface Inflectional Hypothesis, MSIH, Prevost & White, 2000)
- Morphology is the bottleneck for language acquisition: morphology is where differences between languages hide (Bottleneck Hypothesis, Slabakova, 2008, 2009)
  - “have done” in English vs. “habben getan” in German (Feature Reassembly Hypothesis, FRH, Lardiere, 2009)

# Take-home message

- To a great extent, acquisition of L2 syntax means acquisition of functional morphology
  - The existing set of morphological features gets re-assembled to fit in with the norms of a new language (Lardiere 2009)
  - Functional morphology is a bottleneck of L2 acquisition (Slabakova 2008, 2009)
- L2 parser is sensitive to linguistic prompts of the new language
  - Target-like processing emerges alongside L2 acquisition (Sokolova & Slabakova, 2019, 2020, 2021; see also Felser 2019)

# What's next?

- Co-activation but no confusion  
(Marian & Spivey, 2003; see also Genesee, 2017)
- Code-switching does not violate either of the grammars  
(Poplack, 1980)