

Abstract

Title: Input processing in the early stages of L2 acquisition of Arabic by adult francophone learners

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This doctoral dissertation aims to investigate the processing of input in the context of the acquisition of Standard Arabic as a second language (L2) among native French-speaking adult learners. The study is situated within the research paradigm of "first exposure" studies, which focus on the initial encounters with the target language. The methodological approach employed in this research constitutes a partial replication of the VILLA project (Varieties of Initial Learners in Language Acquisition), which examined the initial acquisition of Polish during an intensive language course among several cohorts of learners, including a group of native French speakers. The protocol utilized in VILLA has been adapted to align with the resources available for the current study. The participants in this research undertook a 6.5-hour introductory course in Standard Arabic, which served as the experimental framework, enabling rigorous control over their exposure to input. Throughout the experimental process, the participants were subjected to a battery of psycholinguistic assessments, encompassing tasks such as lexical recognition, grammaticality judgment, comprehension, and production, in consonance with the assessments administered in the VILLA project. The variables of frequency of occurrence and semantic transparency of lexical items, which were identified as exerting a substantial influence in the VILLA study, were manipulated within the controlled input to scrutinize their respective roles during the processing of Arabic. The objectives of this research are twofold. The primary aim is to analyze the impact of this controlled oral input on the acquisition of Arabic among the aforementioned population. The secondary aim is to ascertain whether the effects elucidated in the VILLA project are replicated in our findings among learners with the same profile. The results of this study will contribute to refining our understanding of the acquisition mechanisms of a typologically distant L2 and the role of controlled input in the initial stages of L2 acquisition.