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COPING WITH NON-FLUENT APHASIA: THE ROLE OF DOUBLED STRUCTURES AND OBJECT CLITIC SUBSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. The study aims to investigate one strategy used by individuals with non-fluent aphasia to overcome difficulties in direct object (accusative) clitic production: the non-target use of structures where a clitic coexists with the full DP it agrees with. We investigate the error pattern of 15 native speakers of Spanish and Catalan tested in 2 previous studies, focusing on their use of doubled constructions. We address their status as instances of clitic doubling, a phenomenon that is banned in both languages but allowed, among others, in River Plate Spanish, and/or instances of right dislocations. Theories on discourse-linking are invoked to account for their occurrence.

Keywords: clitic doubling, right dislocations, non-fluent aphasia, Spanish, Catalan

Introduction

In non-fluent aphasia, and especially in cases of agrammatism, object clitics are susceptible of impairment (Stavroulaki & Kouvava, 2003; Baauw & Cuetos, 2003; Rossi, 2007; Gavarró, 2008; Nerantzini, 2008; Martínez-Ferreiro, 2010; Sanchez-Alonso, Martínez-Ferreiro & Bastiaanse, 2011; Reyes and Bastiaanse, 2013). Direct object clitics critically rely on discourse linking, which causes a high processing load that individuals with aphasia may fail to overcome (Avrutin, 2006). Production results show that when difficulties implementing discourse linking operations arise, there is a preference for clitic omission or their substitution by full DPs. However, no further analyses of the strategies underlying other documented errors, such as substitutions or agreement mismatches (Nerantzini, 2008; Martínez-Ferreiro, 2010), are generally provided. This study targets the performance pattern underlying these non-target responses in Catalan and Castilian Spanish. To do so, we focus on the use of transitive sentences in which a clitic element coexists with the full DP it agrees with (1).

(1) La hace la cama.

(She) makes it the bed.

(Spanish)

The status of these constructions as instances of clitic doubling, a phenomenon that is banned in both languages in accusative contexts (but allowed, among others, in Rioplatense Spanish, as in the example above), and/or as instances of right dislocations, in which the object doubled by the pronoun is preceded by a pause (e.g. She makes it, the bed), is addressed in these lines.

Methods

Data sample

The error pattern of 15 native speakers of Spanish and Catalan was revisited in order to detect the presence of doubled structures in substitution for direct object (accusative) clitics. The first data set (Reyes & Bastiaanse, 2013) included the results of 5 Castilian Spanish speakers with agrammatic aphasia (mean age: 55.4, range: 34–68) tested through a sentences completion task (based on Bastiaanse, Edwards & Rispens, 2002) that included a set of 64 reversible transitive sentences in four conditions (declaratives with full DPs, declaratives with object clitics, topicalized object DPs, and imperatives). The second data set (Martínez-Ferreiro & Bastiaanse, 2013) included results from 7 Catalan and 3 Castilian Spanish speakers (mean age: 58.5, range: 24–76) diagnosed as Broca's, mixed transcortical, or global aphasic individuals.

Scoring

From the total pool of non-target responses recorded in these studies, we first selected all those including any instance of clitic doubling and right dislocation, either grammatical or not. Then, these responses were classified according to the nature of the clitic element into accusative and dative doubling constructions.

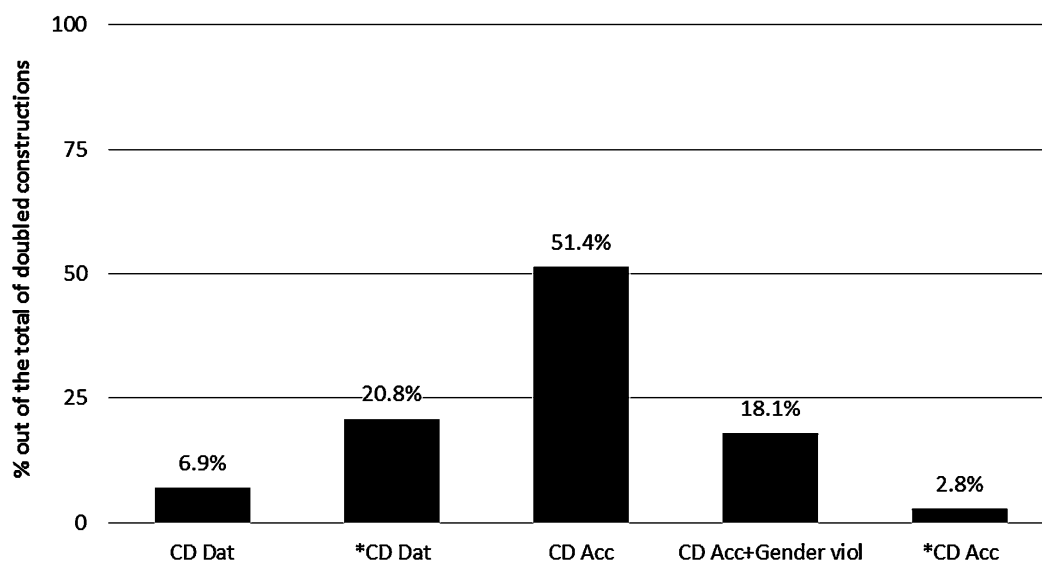
Results

Providing a total number of 558 responses Reyes & Bastiaanse (2013) reveal that, out of the 5 subjects included in the study 4 use the combination of clitic + full DP. A total of number of 43 non-target doubled structures were found (9 in conditions eliciting full DPs, and 34 in conditions eliciting clitics in pre-verbal and postverbal position). However, only two subjects frequently reverted to this strategy (S01, S02: $n = 1$; S04: $n = 32$; S05: $n = 10$), and these constructions tended to entail further syntactic violations.

In Martínez-Ferreiro & Bastiaanse (2013), even if clitic elements were not required to complete the task, four out of the ten individuals in the aphasia group were found to produce instances of doubled structures to a varying degree (6.9 % of non-target responses; 30/426); and for three of them, this strategy is repeatedly used (C03: $n = 8$; C05: $n = 6$; C06: $n = 16$; C07: $n = 1$). No instances of clitic doubling were found in the Spanish sample. Regarding the nature of the constructions, 26/29 responses were instances of direct object clitic doubling in otherwise grammatical structures. Three instances of agree-

ment violation between the clitic and the full DP were also attested. In all cases, singular masculine DPs coexisted with feminine singular object clitics.

The results across studies are summarized in graph 1.



Graph 1. Distribution of doubled constructions across studies. CD: Clitic doubling; CD Dat: CD with dative clitics; *CD Dat: CD with Dat clitics substituting for accusative clitics; CD Acc: CD with accusative clitics; CD Acc + Gender viol: CD with Acc clitics including a gender mismatch between the clitic and the DP; *CD Acc: CD with Acc clitics substituting for dative.

Discussion

The high rates of otherwise grammatical doubled constructions may be taken as indicators that these are actually instances of right dislocations. Microvariation emerges as for the productivity of this structure across languages. According to Villalba (2011), right dislocations are very frequent in Catalan, while Spanish makes very marginal use of it. This is mirrored in the results from Martínez-Ferreiro and Bastiaanse (2013). None of the Spanish-speaking subjects produced instances of this construction.

Lack of intonational break and presence of the preposition a ‘to’ are taken as arguments to set clitic doubling and right dislocations apart (Anagnostopoulou, 2006). The broken pattern of rhythm characteristic of non-fluent aphasia may be held responsible for the absence of an identifiable break between the verb and the DP. However, examples such as (1), produced in Spanish without any pause and in the absence of preposition, make it difficult to set apart both constructions with the scarce amount of data available up to date.

With independence of their nature, the use of these constructions, that we take to derive from a failure in discourse linking (in line with Avrutin, 2006), is taken as an indication of preserved sensitivity to contexts requiring the use of clitics. However, failure to delete the full DP indicates that the clitic fails to satisfy its requirements, being reduced to a mere filler susceptible of displaying gender, number, and case mismatches.

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Небеглая афазия: роль дублированных конструкций и замены дополнений-клитик

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Аннотация. Данное исследование направлено на изучение стратегии для преодоления трудностей при порождении прямых дополнений-клитик (акузативов) людьми с небеглой афазией. Стратегия заключается в использовании дополнений-клитиков наряду с полной именной группой. На основании двух проведённых экспериментов мы исследуем типы ошибок 15 людей, говорящих на испанском и каталанском языках, непосредственно изучая их использование дублированных конструкций. Данное явление не характерно ни для испанского, ни для каталанского, но встречается в риоплатском диалекте испанского. Мы объясняем результаты с точки зрения теории дискурсивного линкинга.

Ключевые слова: дублирование клитик, правое перемещение, небеглая афазия, испанский. каталанский