Seminar Proposal

The Acquisition of complement clauses in Portuguese and its Broader Implications
Jason Rothman
University of Reading

This workshop endeavors to bring together research on the acquisition of complement clauses across a wide range of interrelated properties in Portuguese. Despite compelling reasons to the contrary, the acquisition of complement clauses is relatively using Portuguese as a means to investigate the their development. The results of the present studies clearly apply and will make explicit reference to the acquisition of complement clauses more generally, however, we submit that Portuguese is especially interesting to examine for a series of reasons. First, Portuguese is an understudied and underrepresented language used in acquisition sciences despite being the 5th most widely spoken language. Second, bringing together Brazilian and European Portuguese is especially illuminating, as this seminar does, considering the important relevant language-specific differences that delineate these two dialects. Third, Portuguese exemplifies typologically rare structures relating to embedded clauses, for example, the existence of inflected and personal infinitives.

As a combined unit the papers have motivated cross-over between their properties and argumentation. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the acquisition of complement clauses in a way that equals much more as a whole than the individual papers could individually. To ensure the relevance for a bigger picture understanding, treatments are complementary across the papers, yet vary in methodology, properties and even subject type and age. The papers cover the licensing of indicative/subjunctive in embedded clauses as well as developmental stages of infinitival and finite complementation using naturalistic production, elicited production and other empirical measures. Separately, each paper gives a reasonable account to explain the facts and together they highlight the complexity inherent to the acquisition of complementation.

Time is evenly divided across all papers, inclusive of a 10 minute introduction by the organizer to set the stage of the connections to be drawn and purpose of the seminar as described herein.

PAPER 1   **Mood selection in early complement clauses**
Alice Jesus
(Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa / CLUL)

This paper addresses the acquisition of the subjunctive and indicative moods by monolingual children acquiring European Portuguese. This study departs from the consideration of three hypotheses that have been made in the literature in order to explain the distribution of mood in different languages: (i) the selection of indicative/subjunctive is conditioned by the *realis/irrealis* opposition (cf., e.g., Grevisse 1969); (ii) the selection of one or another mood is dependent on whether the context is veridical or non veridical (cf. Giannakidou 1999); (iii) the selection of mood is dependent on the attitude expressed towards the relevant proposition (cf.Villalta, 2008). The first proposal seems to explain the data of Russian, the second one accounts for Greek and other Balkan languages, while the third accounts for the data of Portuguese and other Romance

languages. If these different accounts hold for different languages, we can assume that these are options of UG and that the child's task is to determine which one is relevant for the language he is acquiring.

An elicited production task was applied to four groups of children (ages ranging from 4 to 9).The results allow us to observe whether the subjunctive is preferably selected with verbs whose complement clause does not describe reality (as predicted by hypothesis (i)), whether the subjunctive is selected by non veridical verbs (as predicted by hypothesis (ii)), or whether the child has already reached the adult grammar and selects the subjunctive for the complement clauses of the verbs that do not express a positive epistemic attitude. The preliminary results show that, at earlier stages, children may be sensitive to the *realis/irrealis* opposition, since they produce some subjunctive forms with matrix fictional verbs, like *sonhar* (to dream), which is not a possibility in the target grammar.

References:

Giannakidou, Anastasia: 1999, "Affective dependencies", *Linguistics and Philosophy* 22.4, 367-421.

Guillaume, Gustave : 1929, *Temps et verbe: Théorie des aspects, des modes et des temps*; La Société de Linguistique de Paris – XXVII, Paris.

Villalta, E. 2008, Mood and gradability: an investigation of the subjunctive mood in Spanish. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 31:467–522

PAPER 2   Acquisition of mood in Heritage Portuguese

Cristina Flores*, Ana Lúcia Santos, Rui Marques**, Alice Jesus****

(*Universidade do Minho / CEHUM, **Universidade de Lisboa, CLUL)

The quantity and type of language input to which bilingual children are exposed appear to be a significant variable in the process of bilingual language acquisition (Unsworth, 2013). Actually, studies focusing on bilingual children who have reduced access to one of their languages argue that they develop a weaker language, which may present a different pattern of acquisition (Schlyter, 1993). One type of bilingual speakers who have unbalanced bilingual input are heritage speakers (HSs). HSs are second (or third) generation migrants who have reduced contact with their language of origin (their heritage language) and attain a high degree of fluency in their L2 (the socially-dominant language), which actually becomes their dominant language. It has been argued that HSs' language proficiency differs from native speakers' competence because of this limited input (Montrul, 2008; Polinsky, 2008; Rothman 2007), even though divergent explanations for this competence mismatch has been put forward (see discussion in Pascual y Cabo & Rothman, 2012).

The present study aims at analyzing the acquisition of verbal mood in heritage European Portuguese (EP). An elicited production task (based on Jesus, in prep.) was applied to a group of 20 heritage speakers of EP, living in Germany, in order to elicit the production of the indicative/subjunctive mood in complement clauses. The participants differ in age (7 to 14 years) and amount of exposure to EP (Portuguese vs. German as dominant home language). Preliminary results show that heritage EP children take longer to acquire the subjunctive mood than their monolingual counterparts (by the age of 7/8 they still do not master it). Older heritage children manage to produce subjunctives in complement clauses, a fact suggesting that they need more

exposure accumulated over time (i.e. a longer period of positive evidence) in order to reach ultimate attainment (as suggested by Unsworth, 2013).

References

Jesus, A. (*in prep.*) *Aquisição do modo em orações completivas do PE*. MA Dissertation. University of Lisbon.

Montrul, S. (2008). *Incomplete Acquisition in Bilingualism: Re-examining the Age Factor.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Pascual Y Cabo, D., & Rothman, J. (2012). The (Il)logical problem of heritage speaker bilingualism and incomplete acquisition. *Applied Linguistics,* 33, 450-455.

Polinsky, M. (2008). Russian gender under incomplete acquisition. *Heritage Language Journal,* 6 (1), 40-71.

Rothman, J. (2007). Heritage speaker competence differences, language change, and input type: Inflected infinitives in heritage Brazilian Portuguese. *The International Journal of Bilingualism,* 11, 359–389.

Schlyter, S. (1993). The weaker language in bilingual Swedish-French children. In K. Hyltenstam & Vilberg (eds.), *Progression and regression in language ,* pp. 289-308. Cambridge: CUP.

Unsworth, S. (2013). Assessing the role of current and *cumulative* exposure in simultaneous bilingual acquisition: The case of Dutch gender. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition,* 16 (1), 86-110

PAPER 3   Infinitival and finite complement clauses in Brazilian Portuguese
Ruth E. V. Lopes
(Unicamp/CNPq)

Children usually start out with infinitive embedded clauses. Explanations either argue that infinitive forms are structurally less complex than finite counterparts or liken it to limited cognitive capacity to interpret the embedded clauses wrt the main one. This paper summarizes available data from the literature to argue that initially the structure grows with the child, but that in the final stages of acquisition, the interpretation of semantically complex processes will also depend on the child's cognitive development as well (see Givón, 2001).

Although brief, there is a stage in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) with nominal forms of verb without the use of auxiliaries or modals (see Kato, 1994) [see (1) and (2)]. Then, the child grows into a second stage including auxiliaries. A natural expansion of such contexts to modals and "modal-like" verbs, such as 'want' (querer) or 'manage' (conseguir), is observe [see (3)]. Once auxiliaries are produced, it is clear that the T head is operational, if not totally specified. Why is it then that finite embedded clauses are not found at the same time? We will argue that it has to do with the C domain, since in the above stage, where (3) is found, children also produce ECM constructions with perception verbs, for instance (see Freire, 2007) [see (4)].

Considering ECM verbs do not select a C, then, this is the independent piece of evidence that a temporal C is problematic for the child. Rodrigues (2006) has shown that that is the case

with perception verbs in BP and Freire (2007) has shown that it is also the case with causative ones. Freire (2013), using a Truth Value Judgement Task testing sentences like (5), shows that children acquiring both English and BP perform rather poorly up to their 8th birthday, displaying only 5,9% of adult-like answers.

Examples:

(1) Babalu (= cavalo) papando (R., 1;9)
   horse   eating
  '(The) horse (is) eating'
(2) Abí (= abrir) berço (R., 1;9)
   Open_inf   crib
  '(I will/want) to open (the) crib' (= to push the crib rail down)
(3) [ ] consegui [tirar a unha   do   dedo ca (=com a) mão] (R., 2;08)
        managed [take_inf the nail of_the finger with_the hand
  'I managed to cut off my finger nail with my hand' (from Lopes, 2003)
(4) É, então a... a rainha vinha vê a B(r)anca de Neve lavando o chão. (H., 3;05)
  Is, then the the queen would-come see-inf the Snow White washing the floor
  'Yes, then the queen would come to see Snow White washing the floor'
(5) Você viu que o Pedro bebeu o suco?
  Did you see that Pete drank the juice?

PAPER 4   **Notes on the acquisition of infinitival constructions in European Portuguese**
Carla Soares-Jesel
(Université Paris-Diderot)

We examine the acquisition of different infinitival constructions by 3 monolingual children (1;2–4;6; 18884 utterances). The first infinitival constructions to emerge (and the most frequent) are those presenting semi-auxiliaries (from 1;5). Complement infinitival clauses, which emerge before finite complements, are attested from 1;10 but until 3;5 they correspond exclusively to complements selected by the control verb *querer* (to want'). Embedded complements selected by causative verbs, only attested from 3;5, are rare. Children start producing infinitives that are VP extended domains before producing embedded infinitives.

We argue that embedding entails dependence relations that involve a higher degree of structural complexity. Moreover, we will argue that the late emergence of infinitival complements introduced by complementizers suggests that subordinates that involve CP are more complex. Furthermore, embedded infinitival complements emerge earlier than purpose adjuncts and this does not confirm that non-selected subordinates are less complex. The first purpose clauses are not embedded clauses although embedded purpose clauses are frequent in the input. We will suggest that

children produce root-purpose clauses before being able to produce subordinate purpose clauses (from 2;7), which corroborates the idea that embedding is a source of complexity. The first embedded purpose clauses are IPs. Children only produce CP purpose clauses from 3;3 which suggests once more that the categorical nature of the embedded clause has to be taken into account to characterize syntactic complexity. Although frequency in the input contributes to explain the developmental path of infinitival constructions, it is not the only relevant aspect.

References

Gonçalves, A. (1999). *Predicados Complexos Verbais em Contextos de Infinitivo não Preposicionado*. Ph.D dissertation, University of Lisbon.

Jakubowicz, C. & L. Tuller (2008). Specific Language Impairment in French. In Ayoun, D. (ed.). *Studies in French Applied Linguistics*. John Benjamins.

Limber, J. (1973). The genesis of complex sentences. In T. Moore (ed.), *Cognitive development and the acquisition of language*, New York: Academic Press.

Magro, C. (2005). Introdutores de Orações Infinitivas: O que Diz a Sintaxe dos Clíticos. In I. Duarte & I. Leiria (eds.). *Actas do XX Encontro Nacional da APL*. Lisboa: APL.

Martins, A. M. (1995). A minimalist approach to clitic climbing. *Proceedings of CLS 31: Parassession on Clitics*. Stanford University, pp. 215-233.

Mateus, M. H., A. M. Brito, I. Duarte, I. Faria, S. Frota, G. Matos, F. Oliveira, M. Vigário & A. Villalva (2003). *Gramática da Língua Portuguesa*. Lisbon: Caminho.

Tuller L., C. Monjauze & H. Delage, H. (2007). (Un)successful subordination in French-speaking children and Adolescents with SLI. In H. Caunt-Nulton, S. Kulatilake & I. Woo (eds), Proceedings of the 31st annual Boston University Conference on Language Development, 1, 286-297. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.

Soares, C. (2006) *La syntaxe de la périphérie gauche en portugais européen et son acquisition*. PhD Diss. Univ. Paris 8.

Paper 5   Object control and ECM-type verbs in European Portuguese: elicited and spontaneous production
Ana Lúcia Santos*, Anabela Gonçalves* & Nina Hyams**
(*Universidade de Lisboa, **UCLA)

This paper explores the acquisition of object control (OC) and the different complement structures selected by ECM-type verbs, based on an analysis of spontaneous and elicited production data. The spontaneous production corpus includes data from 3 children (1;6-3;11, 1;6-3;10, 1;5-2;9, MLUw 1.2-3.8, 27586 utterances). In the elicited production experiment we tested 3- 6 year-olds (n= 58) in a sentence completion task in which the child listens to a story (context) also acted out with props, and is asked to help the puppet complete his descriptions of the story. We tested: perception verbs (*ver* 'see'), causatives (*mandar* 'make', *deixar* 'let'), subject control verbs (*querer* 'want', *conseguir* 'be able to'), and object control verbs (*ensinar a* 'teach', *proibir de* 'forbid'). In all cases, the lower subject is plural, making visible the contrast

between inflected and uninflected infinitives. These verbs were selected from the set of verbs occurring in the spontaneous corpus (both in child and child directed speech).

The results suggest that children's default analysis of OC verbs is that these verbs select a single internal argument, until they have sufficient evidence for multi-valent analysis. We call this hypothesis the "Single Argument Selection Hypothesis" (SASH). This default analysis results in ungrammatical production of bare inflected infinitival domains in this context.

Additionally, we explore children's production preferences among the non-finite complements of ECM-type verbs. Inflected infinitives are the most frequent answer in elicited production of complements of causative verbs; the prepositional infinitival construction (PIC, see Raposo 1989) and finite clauses taking indicative are the most frequent complements of perception verbs. Conversely, unambiguous ECM structures are rare. These facts are compatible with the hypothesis that children assume that all complements of ECM-type verbs are functionally complete before they disrupt them (see the analysis of the acquisition of *want* by Landau & Thornton, 2011).

References

Landau, I. & R. Thornton (2011). Early child Control. *Lingua* 121, 920-941.
Raposo, E. (1989). Prepositional infinitival constructions in European Portuguese". In Jaeggli, O. & K. Safir (eds.). *The Null Subject Parameter*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.