"The acquisition of intensifying constructions in L2 Dutch and L2 English by French-speaking learners: a collostructional analysis"

Hendrikx, Isa ; Van Goethem, Kristel ; Meunier, Fanny

ABSTRACT

Intensification can be expressed cross-linguistically by several morphological and syntactic constructions (among others, Kirschbaum 2002; Hoeksema 2011, 2012; Zeschel 2012; Rainer 2015). The language-specific preferences for particular types of intensification, and the competition between the learners’ L1 and L2 constructions (Ellis & Cadierno 2009), complicate the acquisition of intensifying constructions for second language learners. This study focuses on one specific case of such constructional competition, namely the expression of intensification in the interlanguage of French-speaking learners of Dutch or English. More specifically, we will address three research questions: (i) To what extent can we observe variation in the use of intensifying constructions between the native and learner language? (ii) Does more input provided through a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach lead to a more native-like acquisition of intensifying constructions? (iii) Does CLIL have a similar impact on the acquisition of each of these two languages? The data for this study come from a corpus of written productions of 5th graders (aged 16-17) in French-speaking Belgium, in CLIL and non-CLIL settings learning Dutch (CLIL n=132; non-CLIL n=100) or English (CLIL n=90; non-CLIL n=90) as a foreign language, and control groups of 63 native speakers of Dutch and 68 native speakers of English of about the same age. All instances of adjectival intensification observed in this corpus are subjected to a collostructional analysis, more particularly covarying collexeme analysis...

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1. Project
Assessing Content and Language Integrated Learning: Linguistic, Cognitive and Educational Perspectives* (Hilgmann et al. in preparation)

1.1 Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dutch CLIL</th>
<th>Dutch non-CLIL</th>
<th>English CLIL</th>
<th>English non-CLIL</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
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<td>18760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>431</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covarying Collexeme Analysis "aims to identify pairs of words that occur with each other more or less frequently than expected in two slots of the same construction" (Stefanowitsch 2013: 223; Gries 2007)

2. RESULTS

2.1 Variation and potential productivity

**L1 Dutch**
- Percentage intensified adjectives: 23.98%
- Extreme adjectives (without intensifier): 9.78%
- Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009): 0.194
- Hapax Legomena Ratio: 0.039

**CLIL Dutch**
- Percentage intensified adjectives: 30.21%
- Extreme adjectives (without intensifier): 5.19%
- Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009): 0.070
- Hapax Legomena Ratio: 0.025

**NON-CLIL Dutch**
- Percentage intensified adjectives: 28.54%
- Extreme adjectives (without intensifier): 3.34%
- Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009): 0.060
- Hapax Legomena Ratio: 0.011

**L1 English**
- Percentage intensified adjectives: 17.51%
- Extreme adjectives (without intensifier): 9.56%
- Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009): 0.146
- Hapax Legomena Ratio: 0.067

**CLIL English**
- Percentage intensified adjectives: 23.79%
- Extreme adjectives (without intensifier): 14.11%
- Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009): 0.120
- Hapax Legomena Ratio: 0.020

**NON-CLIL English**
- Percentage intensified adjectives: 14.22%
- Extreme adjectives (without intensifier): 14.22%
- Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009): 0.050
- Hapax Legomena Ratio: 0.009

**L1 French**
- Percentage intensified adjectives: 26.85%
- Extreme adjectives (without intensifier): 8.02%
- Type-Token Ratio (Baayen 2009): 0.056
- Hapax Legomena Ratio: 0.020

2.2 Syntactic vs. morphological intensifying constructions

2.3 Covarying Collexeme Analysis

### L1 DUTCH

#### Intensifying constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Intensifying construction</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTAX</td>
<td>(Adj + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>best, very 'very if'</td>
<td>bad 'bad if'</td>
<td>'very if'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adv + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>cool, cool 'cool if'</td>
<td>not cool 'not cool if'</td>
<td>not cool 'not cool if'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### L1 ENGLISH

#### Intensifying constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Intensifying construction</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTAX</td>
<td>(Adj + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>bad, bad 'bad if'</td>
<td>very 'very if'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adv + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>cool, cool 'cool if'</td>
<td>not cool 'not cool if'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### L1 FRENCH

#### Intensifying constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Intensifying construction</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTAX</td>
<td>(Adj + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>très bien 'very if'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adv + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>bien 'well if'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### L2 Dutch

#### Intensifying constructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Intensifying construction</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTAX</td>
<td>(Adj + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>best, very 'very if'</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adv + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>cool, cool 'cool if'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### L2 English

#### Intensifying constructions

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Intensifying construction</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTAX</td>
<td>(Adj + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>bad, bad 'bad if'</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adv + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>cool, cool 'cool if'</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### L2 French

#### Intensifying constructions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Language Domain</th>
<th>Intensifying construction</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYNTAX</td>
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<td>(Adv + Adv)&lt;sub&gt;int&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Misuse

- **Spelling mistakes / direct lexical transfer from French (or English)**
  - "The boat is huge and so luxuous." (CLIL)
  - "The member of personnel are very sympathique and food is delicious!" (non-CLIL)

- **Grammatical mistakes**
  - "I didn’t remember that Paris was such beautifull." (non-CLIL)
  - "It was such nice holidays." (CLIL)

- **Semantic/collocalational mistakes**
  - "The BBQ was too great we had some fun with my parents." (CLIL)
  - "The food was amazingly delicious." (CLIL)

3. Conclusions

- CLIL education has a positive impact on the development of a more native-like use of intensifying constructions:
  - Non-CLIL learners overuse intensifying adverbs due to an overuse of all-round intensifiers (very and so)
  - Compared to CLIL-learners, non-CLIL learners show a lower productivity and variety of intensifying constructions (lowest TTR and Hapax legomena ratio)
  - However CLIL learners produce more misuse (cf. Josse 2015)

- Benefits of a collostructional analysis applied to learner data:
  - It reveals language specific collostructions in the native corpora
  - It reveals over- and underuse in the interlanguages
  - It allows us to detect different types of misuse
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References


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