A revision of Spanish stress first language acquisition
Nuria Polo (1), Iggy Roca (2)
(1)Departamento de Lengua Española y Lingüística General, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)
(2)Department of Language and Linguistics, University of Essex.

(1) nuriapolo@flog.uned.es, (2) rocai@essex.ac.uk

This paper presents an OT analysis of a longitudinal investigation of the L1 acquisition of Spanish nominal stress by two monolingual children during their first months of language development.

Adult Spanish noun word stress has been well described in the literature (Harris 1983, Roca 1988, Harris 1995, Oltra-Massuet and Arregi 2005, Roca 2005, 2006, among many others), but research on also Spanish child stress acquisition is scarce (Montes Giraldo 1971, Hochberg 1988a, 1988b, Lleó and Arias 2006).

The general literature in essence contemplates two hypotheses: 1. trochaic infant bias (Allen and Hawkins 1980); 2. determination by the target language (Klein 1984). Both frameworks have been applied to Spanish, the former in Lleó and Arias (2006) and the latter in Hochberg (1988a, 1988b).

In an attempt to resolve the issue, a longitudinal study was carried out for an in-depth investigation of the facts. The data was taken from spontaneous utterances by two Spanish-speaking children aged from 1;7 to 2;3 years. The transcription was carried out with the Phon program, and the analysis couched in OT.

The following two facts are systematically observable from the onset of the children’s productions: 1. the stress locus of the adult input persists in the child's output; 2. the child’s output word is disyllabic, again irrespective of the input. Correspondingly: 1. the input stressed syllable invariably shows up as such in the child; 2. the input word is reshaped into a 2-syllable output where necessary to meet the child’s fixed 2-syllable template, i.e. by segment deletion in input words in excess or two syllables, in line with Gerken’s (1991, 1994) syllable omission template, and by segment epenthesis in monosyllables, in line with Demuth’s (1995) universal binary word.

Two additional issues to be dealt with concern: 1. the developmental priority order between the foot and the prosodic word; 2. the ranking relationships respectively responsible for the trochaic and iambic footings present in the data.

All the facts enumerated will be accounted for with two small sets of markedness and correspondence constraints stratified in an also small set of rankings.

References


