



Information

Discussion

Theoretical Implications of Object Clitic Omission in Early French : spontaneous vs. Elicited Production

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Abstract: This article examines the phenomenon of object clitic omission in French. Previous research contains contradictory results depending on the source of the data: it seems that in spontaneous production children prefer DPs while in elicited production they prefer omissions. It is proposed that a common methodology be used across different modalities in measuring the rate of omissions, and that the notion of «illicit object omission» be dispensed with. The analysis of the proposed «clitic-contexts» reveals that the strategy favoured by children is omission of all kinds of lexical material in both spontaneous and elicited production. Moreover, it is shown that child behaviour is quantitatively different from the adult one. These findings have consequences on the status of null objects in child grammar: child grammar allows optional object deletion without clitic recoverability, as opposed to adult grammar. Several theoretical approaches are evaluated in the light of the new findings.

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