

INTERACTION BETWEEN COGNITIVE AND OTHER FACTORS IN THE ACQUISITION OF DANISH NOUN PLURAL INFLECTION

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On the basis of extensive literature studies Ambridge et al. (2015) present a strong argument for frequency effects on language acquisition. Studies show, however, that other factors play an important role and may in some cases overrule the role of frequency (Kjærbæk et al. 2015; Kjærbæk & Basbøll 2015; Kjærbæk & Basbøll 2016).

The acquisition of the Danish noun plural system is particularly interesting in this regard: whereas English is characterized by having one default inflectional marker for a grammatical category (e.g. the plural suffix -s) and a minor number of exceptions to this default rule, Danish has several competing inflectional markers. Furthermore, there are important interactions between phonology and morphology in the Danish system (Basbøll et al. 2011).

In this study we test the theses presented by Ambridge and colleagues in a phonological and morphological perspective. We study the relation between input (child directed speech) and output (child speech) in a naturalistic and spontaneous speech corpus consisting of data from children (0;10-3;11) acquiring Danish as their first language – and their parents.

We compare our results with results from previous studies based on *semi-naturalistic* data from structured interviews and *experimental data* from a picture based elicitation task (Kjærbæk et al. 2014, Kjærbæk & Basbøll 2015; Kjærbæk & Basbøll 2016), which indicate that transparency and productivity may overrule the effect of frequency and vice versa.

We investigate the principles followed by Danish children when they are to select a plural marker among several competing plural markers, focusing on input frequency, stem transparency, suffix predictability and productivity. The children's error forms are particularly relevant to tackle this issue. Earlier studies show that overgeneralization errors are characterized by going from less productive towards more productive plural markers (Laaha et al. 2006), and we expected the same pattern for Danish, but in the structured interviews 47 % of all error forms went from a FULLY PRODUCTIVE to a SEMI-PRODUCTIVE PL-marker. A picture based elicitation task showed similar results.

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