

**Clause Structure in the Development of Child L2 English of L1 Arabic, PhD Dissertation, PhD Dissertation.**

*Abdulaziz H. Najmi (2009)*

Using new longitudinal data, this thesis investigates the acquisition of clause structure from the earliest stages of language production of a child native speaker of Arabic learner of English. Specific attention is paid to the acquisition of the TP and CP systems and their related syntactic features.

The first major objective of this work is to investigate the initial and subsequent emerging grammars of this child. Another objective is to investigate the status of child L2 acquisition with regard to child L1 and adult L2 acquisition. The idea is to test whether child L2 resembles child L1/adult L2 in the domain of syntax and/or morphology. A third objective is to determine the extent to which L1 intervenes with the L2 acquisition, and to ascertain the nature of the intervention.

In this work I mainly study the TP and CP systems with their related features. This involves a variety of morphosyntactic constructions related to those features. I assume, following Hawkins (2005) and Lardiere (2008), among others, that language acquisition involves feature activation/assembly. A feature-based account of functional categories assumes that the language faculty provides a set of features and a computational tool that assembles these features into lexical items and expressions (Hawkins, 2005). In this system, formal features play a more important role as they determine agreement, case relations, and movement processes. Therefore, recent developments in minimalist syntax have shifted the acquisitionist's focus from the acquisition of functional categories to the availability and organization of formal features.

The data of this study suggest that the functional projections TP and CP are activated early on. Formal features associated with the TP and CP systems are present from the earliest data available from this child. Moreover, this thesis confirms previous findings (e.g., Haznedar 2001) that even very young L2 children are subject to the influence of the native language. Finally, this study shows that although child L2 resembles child L1 and adult L2 in certain morphosyntactic aspects, the differences among these three groups are much more salient than the similarities.