

Attention, Awareness and the Acquisition of L2 German Word Order

1 Introduction

Target structure: Subject-Verb Inversion / V2

- Ich_{subj} **gehe**_{verb} ins Kino am Montag.
'I go to the movies on Monday'
- Am Montag **gehe**_{verb} ich_{subj} ins Kino.
'On Monday, I go to the movies'

Research Questions

How does the acquisition of a structure with low communicative value relate to

1. the attention paid to the structure, and
2. the explicit knowledge of it?

Hypothesis

Processing and acquisition $\Rightarrow$ related to attention; less to awareness

V2/Subject-Verb Inversion $\rightarrow$ No direct form-meaning connection

$\Rightarrow$ Not an ideal situation!

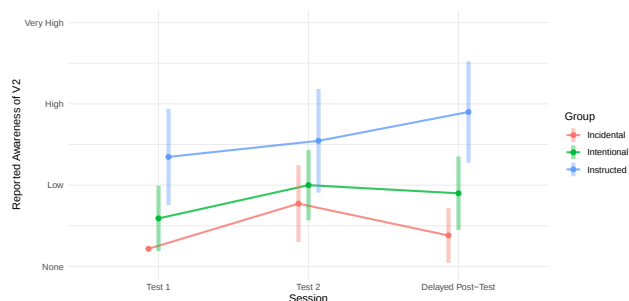


Figure 2: Reported awareness

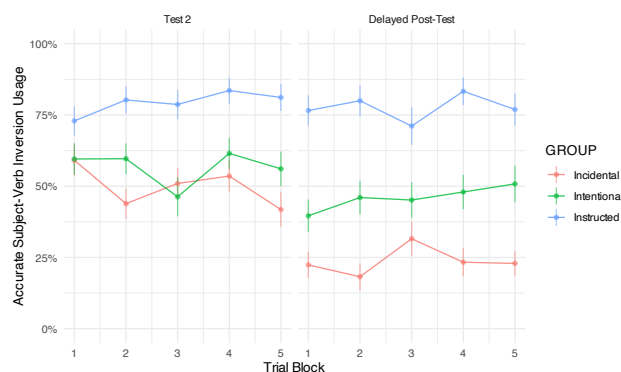


Figure 3: Accurate subject-verb inversion usage

2 Methods

- Eye-tracking priming training, three testing times
- 3 L1 English groups
 1. Incidental: only understand
 2. Intentional: understand + pattern search
 3. Instructed: understand + instruction

3 Findings

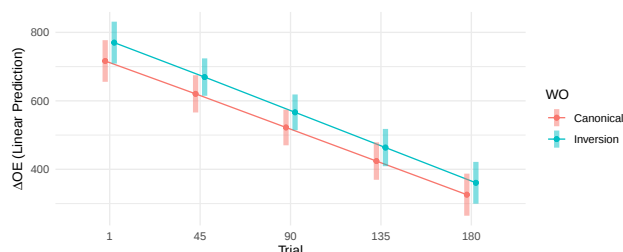


Figure 1: Attention during training, no group differences.

Conclusion

When dealing with structures of low communicative value...

- Learners pay more attention than expected to the verb when encountering subject-verb inversion, regardless of whether they know about the structure or not.
- No attention $\times$ awareness relationship
- Priming supports learning even without instruction, but...
- ...Instruction leads to more durability of gains in time.

4 Acknowledgements

