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L2 Acquisition of Wh-Features and Syntactic Constraints: Evidence for Full-Access Approaches

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48-59 ([complete paper](#) or [proceedings contents](#))

Abstract

This paper investigates the L2 acquisition of wh-features and relevant constraints (Superiority and Subjacency) by Sinhala-English bilinguals in Sri Lanka. Using results from a Truth Value Judgment Task (TVT) and a scalar Grammaticality Judgment Task (GT), it is argued that advanced adult L2 speakers of English successfully acquire the uninterpretable wh-Q feature and relevant constraints in the target language despite their non-instantiation in overt syntax in L1-Sinhala. The results are consistent with other recent studies which report the successful adult L2 acquisition of new functional features in different grammatical domains (e.g., Campos-Dintrans, Pires & Rothman 2014; Foucart & Frenck-Mestre 2012). The results also support Full Access to UG principles and constraints in adult L2 syntax (White 2003), contra predictions of Representational Deficit Accounts in adult L2 acquisition (e.g., Hawkins & Hattori 2006; Tsimpli & Dimitrakopoulou 2007).

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