

The acquisition of the order of postnominal adjectives in L2 French by English speakers.
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Apart from Stringer (2013) and Pettibone et al. (2021), little research has been conducted on L2 acquisition of adjacent adjective sequencing. Yet, research within the cartographic approach has shown that strict Adjective Ordering Rules (AOR) apply cross linguistically to sequences of ‘direct modification’ Adjectives (Cinque, 2010; Bortolotto, 2016; Laenzlinger, 2005, 2011; Scott, 2002). AOR accounts for the observation that in a sentence like: *Daniel likes nice small pink plastic flowers*, only one of the 24 possible orders of prenominal adjectives would be deemed idiomatic by native speakers of English.

For languages with postnominal adjectives, two distinct patterns emerge among languages of the world: either, as in Celtic languages, adjectives are sequenced following the same linear order as the AOR, or, as in Romance languages such as French, postnominal adjectives are placed in the reverse order of the AOR, such that the English order [A1 < A2 < N]: *delicious (A1) red (A2) fruit* becomes [N < A2 < A1]: *fruit rouge (A2) délicieux (A1)* in French. According to Laenzlinger (2005, 2011), each of these patterns corresponds to a choice between distinct types of noun phrase movement, respectively cyclic NP raising and roll-up NP movement, authorized by Universal Grammar (UG).

Building on previous SLA studies and using similar methodology, the present research aims to determine whether (advanced) native English-speaking learners of French L2 at university level, are implicitly aware of such constraints when exposed to postnominal adjectives (of different types) in French. It will focus on the acquisition of the order of Relational Adjectives (RA), as in *déchets industriels japonais* (Japanese industrial waste), and of RAs in relation to Qualifying adjectives as in *manifestation ouvrière violente* (violent labor demonstration): RAs are the ideal testing ground, as they have the properties of being obligatorily postnominal in French and of always realizing ‘direct modification’ (Bally 1965 [1944]; Bartning, 1981; Bortolotto, 2016; Bosque & Picallo, 1996; Fradin, 2017). By studying these combinations of modifiers, our aim is to discover which of the noun phrase movement options predicted by UG are adopted by advanced learners of L2 French, and whether adjective type is a significant factor. To achieve this aim, we will administer an Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) to 64 learners of L2 French in Australia, assessing their ability to judge the acceptability of sentences, and a Preference Task (PT), asking learners to compare two sentences and indicate which one they prefer.

Given that the order of two adjectives is never explicitly taught in foreign language classrooms, nor in any of the available methods, and, in fact, rarely encountered in normal written/oral communication, the interest of the research is to discover whether the partial or complete acquisition (or not) of this property by non-native learners is more likely to reflect the learners’ unconscious cognitive principles of acquisition, which cannot be accounted for by mere imitation or explicit instruction (Anderson, 2008), and therefore inform us about implicit constraints on the hypotheses that L2 learners make when producing or interpreting nominal phrases.

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