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IOANA STOICESCU. *The Acquisition of Tense and Aspect in Romanian*.
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This volume is an exploration of the acquisition of tense and aspect in Romanian, reliant on both longitudinal corpora and experimental data. It is based on Ioana Stoicescu's dissertation, and it provides information on the production of tense/aspect verbal forms in child Romanian, while also looking at associations between grammatical and lexical aspect in child and parental speech. Additionally, it looks into children's comprehension of some of the main tenses of Romanian: the *present*, *imperfect*, and *future*.

The book is divided into five chapters. After an introduction which summarizes the previous research on child Romanian, the author proceeds with a theoretical chapter in which she discusses the notions of tense, grammatical and lexical aspect. The second chapter also includes a substantial analysis of lexical aspect in Romanian, and the *perfect compus* as an aspectually sensitive tense. It is argued that the *perfect compus* is a perfective past with residual perfect readings.

The third and fourth chapters deal with the development of tense and aspect. The main findings of the acquisition study are the following: Romanian children are sensitive to the lexical aspect of the verb phrase in their production of temporal-aspectual verb forms. In two longitudinal corpora of child language (one collected by Larisa Avram – Avram 2001 –, and another by the author) (Chapter 3), telic verb phrases are mainly

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found in the *perfect compus*, which is a perfective form, while atelic predicates are systematically associated with the *present* and the *imperfect*, which have imperfective readings. The author thus maintains that there is a correlation between grammatical aspect and lexical aspect in child Romanian. The same associations were found in a smaller sample of adult Romanian, in both child-addressed speech and adult-addressed speech.

The explanation is that the distributional pattern occurs because of a natural tendency of both children and adults to carry out computations in an optimal manner, avoiding coercion. This hypothesis is called the Optimal Computation Hypothesis. On the one hand, telicity and perfectivity are connected because in such sentences there is no need for an aspectual shift. The *perfect compus* is an aspectually sensitive tense that requires telic verb phrases as input. On the other hand, if the verb phrase it occurs with is atelic, aspectual coercion is triggered. Similarly, the *present* and *imperfect* are also aspectually sensitive, and they require atelic verb phrases. If the verb phrases they attach to are telic, the mismatch is also solved through aspectual coercion (De Swart 1998, Crăiniceanu 2002). Coercion is a costly operation which both children and adults tend to avoid, hence an asymmetrical distributional pattern emerges.

Another finding is that Romanian-speaking children produce tense inflections contrastively from an early age (between the ages of two and three). This observation is also based on an exploration of the longitudinal corpora mentioned above, carried out in Chapter 4. The children frequently produced *prezent*, *perfect compus* and *future* forms for the same verb, and, in some cases, they did so during the same recording session. In the child data, the *prezent* had the same readings it has in adult grammar. The author also found that children were able to produce *perfect compus* predicates with both past tense and perfect readings. Children produced the *perfect compus* to describe events in a narrative sequence and anchored them with definite time adverbials. The future was also produced, despite the fact that it was less frequently employed than the *present* and the *perfect compus*.

In an experiment presented in Chapter 4, the author addressed the question whether Romanian-speaking children aged 3-to-6 comprehend and produce the *prezent*, *imperfect*, and *colloquial future* in an adult-like manner. The experimental design was developed by Bart Hollebrandse

within the COST A33 group (Hollebrandse et al. 2011, Arosio et al. 2011, Hollebrandse et al. 2010, Hollebrandse 2010, Hollebrandse et al. in prep.). The Romanian adaptation was made by Larisa Avram within the COST A33 research project. The results showed that, at three years of age, the children performed at the chance level in the comprehension and production of the *imperfect* and the *future*. At all ages, children performed really well with respect to the comprehension and production of the *prezent* tense. The scores of the four-year-olds were significantly higher than the chance level in the comprehension of the *imperfect* and the *future*, but they were at the chance level for the production of these tenses. The results of the five-year-old children were adult-like in all conditions, except in the condition that tested the production of the *imperfect*. The author argues that this is evidence that Romanian-speaking children develop a simple deictic temporal system by the age of six, a system which differentiates between two temporal intervals, namely the time of the utterance and the time of the event.

The analysis of both the longitudinal and experimental data is thorough and the conclusions are confirmed by statistical tests. The book is a useful first step in the investigation of the child tense-aspect system in Romanian.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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