

Manuela Julien

## The role of dummy auxiliaries in the acquisition of finiteness in Dutch

### A comparison between various groups of L1 and L2 learners

This study deals with the role of dummy auxiliaries in the acquisition of finiteness in L1 and L2 Dutch. It takes a broad perspective by including a wide range of language learner populations, namely, typically developing monolingual and bilingual children and monolingual and bilingual children with language impairment, as well as adult learners of Dutch as an additional language. The bilinguals were first language speakers of Turkish, Tarifiyt and Moroccan Arabic.

The study builds on previous research, extending it by investigating both the production and comprehension of dummy auxiliaries. It included younger bilingual children than was the case with other studies on this subject, because data on the earliest acquisition phases may provide essential information.

The systematic comparison between different learner populations sheds new light on commonly held assumptions and allows for a critical review of notions that are fundamental in the debate on the origin and function of dummy auxiliaries in language acquisition. Two dummy auxiliaries, *zijn* and *gaan*, are predecessors of movement of the lexical verb, in all types of language acquisition involved in this study. The outcomes also contribute to the ongoing debate as to whether SLI and difficulties in adult second language acquisition are caused by processing limitations or by linguistic-representational deficits. Evidence was found for the processing (input) limitations account.

This study is of relevance to researchers in the fields of child, adult, typical and atypical language acquisition as well as language teachers, clinical linguists, speech and language pathologists and therapists.

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