

Dutch compound constructions in additional language acquisition: a diasystematic-constructionist approach

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Abstract

Several studies have demonstrated that Dutch has a stronger tendency towards compounding than French (e.g. Du. *badkamer* vs Fr. *salle de bains* ‘bathroom’) (Van Goethem 2009; Van Goethem & Amiot 2019), especially when adopting a restrictive approach of compounding in which the presence of prepositions and/or internal inflection in multi-word expressions is considered evidence for their syntactic formation (Fradin 2009). The example above illustrates that Dutch compounding differs from French in another important aspect: while Germanic compounding is by definition right-headed, French has a general tendency towards left-hand headed compounds and phrases.

In this study, we investigate the impact of these typological differences on the acquisition of Dutch nominal compounds by French-speaking learners in the context of multilingual Belgium. We provide an in-depth corpus analysis, based on the MULTINCo database (Meunier et al. 2020), of the acquisition of Dutch compound constructions at the schematic and substantive levels of abstraction. Moreover, we explore the impact of additional target-language input through CLIL programs (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*) on the acquisition of Dutch compounds by French-speaking learners of Dutch.

The results are described and interpreted from the theoretical perspective of *Diasystematic Construction Grammar* (DCxG) (among others Höder et al. 2021), which conceptualizes the linguistic competence of multilingual speakers as one integrated network of constructions, containing language-specific *idioconstructions* and shared *diaconstructions*.

References

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