

Critical Review:
Acquisition of morphemes in typically developing Spanish-speaking children

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This

Methods

Search Strategy

Articles related to the topic of interest were found using the following computerized databases: PubMed, Scopus, and ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. Key terms used for the database search were as follows: [Morpheme acquisition] AND [Spanish], [Grammatical

socioeconomic status. The following morphemes were explored: plural, diminutive, augmentative, gerund, past tense imperfect, and preterite. Results showing the acquisition of morphemes by age are summarized in Appendix 1. Findings showed that some morphemes have not been mastered by 6 years of age. The degree of difficulty was lower for verbal morphemes in the verbs of the first person, compared to the second and third person. There was a notable increase in the development of grammatical morphemes between 3 and 4 years of age.

contributing to the difficulty in determining developmental norms for Spanish morphology.

Differences are also evident in the sample sizes and the ages of the subjects chosen to study. Another factor that contributes to the difficulty is whether researchers used MLU or age to determine when the morpheme was acquired. Preterite imperfect and regular present could not be compared since one article reports in MLUw and the other one in years of age.

According to Kvaal et al. (1988), MLU is a better indicator of language development than age is. Even though Baron et al. (2018) and Kvaal et al. (1988) reported their results in MLU, it is impossible to compare them since the former did it in MLU words and the latter did not specify the type of MLU employed in their analysis. This is true for singular articles and preposition /en/. Additionally, authors define mastered, emerging, and acquired with different criteria.

Despite all of these contributing factors, some inferences can be drawn from comparing the results from the reviewed literature. All authors concluded that plurals are acquired at an early age, most agree that this happens in children younger than 3 years of age. Contradictory results were reported for preterite, however, two of the articles concluded that it starts to emerge in children younger than 4 years of age. Agentive (-dor) starts to emerge in children aged 4. Authors differed in when diminutives, future tense, agentive (-ero), possessive /de/, and present progressive or gerund emerge according to age.

This review is indicative of the age at which gender inflections /-a/ and /-o/ are acquired as Olarte (1985) rer

Sala, M., & Posner, R. (2018, November 16). Spanish Language. Retrieved March 10, 2019, from

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Spanish-language>

Appendix 1.

	<i>Baron et al. 2018 (by MLUw)</i>	<i>Kernan & Blount 1966 (by age group)</i>	<i>Kvaal et al. 1988 (by age or MLU)</i>	<i>Olarte 1985 (by age)</i>	<i>Perez-Pereira 1989 (by age)</i>
Plural	5.00-5.99	<5;0-7;0	2;4-2;6, 3.2	-s 2;11, -es 3;2	<5;0
Singular article (él, la)	6.00-6.99		2;4, 2.6		
Preterite (-ió)	7.00-7.99	>11;0-12;0	2.8 - 4.2	3;6 (emerging)	4;0
Preterite imperfect (-aba)	7.00-7.99	>8;0-10;0			<3;0
Conjunction	7.00-7.99				
Preposition (en)	>9.00- 11.99 (70%)		4.2 4.5		
Direct object clitic (la, lo, los)	>9.00- 11.99 (70%)				
Subjunctive	>9.00- 11.99 (70%)				
Plural article	7.00-7.99				
Diminutive					5;0
Augmentative					5;0
Future (-ará)		>11;0-12;0		3;1 (emerging)	
Present perfect (-ado)		>8;0-10;0			
Place of business (-ería)		>8;0-10;0			