The Acquisition of Passive Voice by Jordanian Children

By

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Abstract

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This study aims at investigating children's production and comprehension of passive voice in Jordanian Arabic. It sheds light on the factors that may influence the acquisition of some passive forms in Jordanian Arabic and the order in which these forms are acquired. The sample of the study consists of thirty Jordanian children who belong to five age groups aged from 3;0-7;11 years. Each of these groups includes six children with equal number of males and females chosen randomly from an elementary school and a kindergarten in Irbid in the north of Jordan.

Two tests, production and comprehension, were given to the children using six pairs of pictures that illustrate the contrast
Two tests, production and comprehension, were given to the children using six pairs of pictures that illustrate the contrast between the active and passive sentences. The findings indicate that age is an important factor that influences the acquisition of passive voice. That is, the increase in age is usually accompanied by improvement in the child’s linguistic abilities necessary for the acquisition of passive voice. In contrast, the sex variable is found to have no significant effect on the acquisition of passive voice.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the children acquire the forms of passive voice under investigation in this study in the following order: mfa99al, maf9uu1, infa9al, maf9i, iffa99al, and mfa99a. This order is explained within the framework of the theory of markedness.

In fact, this study may lead to a better understanding of what goes into Jordanian children’s early production of passive voice and it may provide new insights into Jordanian children’s capacity for learning passive voice structure.