Introduction

The papers selected for this volume deal with several topics of both L1 and L2 acquisition of Portuguese. The research reported on each of the papers relies on empirically robust sets of data and covers different aspects of the acquisition of the European and the Brazilian varieties of Portuguese. The authors use different theoretical frameworks and formal tools to evaluate evidence from the perception and the production modules. Their main goal is however the same: they all seek to a better understanding of the path of language development as means to access the architecture behind grammatical processing.

Giovana F. G. Bonilha and Carmen Lúcia B. Matzenauer (*'Optimality Theory and Hierarchy Construction'*) report research on L1 acquisition of Phonology. The authors use segmental properties of production data from the acquisition of Brasilian Portuguese to discuss the notion of *stratum* within the Optimality Theory framework and to build on the relation between variation in acquisition and variation in the adult system.

Letícia S. M. Corrêa and Maria Cristina L. Name (*The Processing of Determiner – Noun Agreement and the Identification of the Gender of Nouns in the early acquisition of Portuguese*) work on L1 acquisition of Syntax and explore the interface between syntactic and morpho-phonological properties in the processing of gender agreement in the acquisition of the DP system in Brasilian Portuguese. The authors provide empirical evidence for children's early ability to process gender agreement (based on experiments implementing recognition tasks) and evaluate their findings under a theoretical account that reconciles a signal processing treatment of acquisition and a generative model of language (in this case, the Minimalist Program).

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira (*'Two Prosodies, Two Languages: Infant Bilingual Strategies in Portuguese and Swedish'*) discusses the prosodic properties of longitudinal production data from bilingual children acquiring two prosodically distant languages: European Portuguese and Swedish. The author finds evidence for the early discrimination of the prosodies of the two target systems at the pre-word stage and during the one-word stage.

Ana Lúcia Santos (*'The Acquisition of Answers to Yes-No Questions in European Portuguese: Syntactic, Discourse and Pragmatic Factors*) reports research on L1 acquisition of Syntax. She uses spontaneous production data to discuss the acquisition of patterns of answers to yes-no questions in the acquisition of European Portuguese. The children's data observed confirms the presence of non structurally equivalent patterns of yes-no questions in the system and reveals an hierarchy in the acquisition of the structures under evaluation; furthermore, the data argues for the modularity of syntax,

discourse and pragmatics, and for modularity within the computational system.

Raquel S. Santos (*Bootstrapping in the Acquisition of Word Stress in Brazilian Portuguese*) deals with the mastering of prosody in the acquisition of Brazilian Portuguese and elaborates on the prominent role of the intonational contour *versus* word stress in early stages of production. The author describes longitudinal production data and lists segmental and syllabic repair strategies that favour an analysis where early stages of phonological development are driven by intonational categories and not by word stress; based on the observation of those production strategies, the proposal put forward is that the intonational contour works as a support for the acquisition of word stress.

Selene Vicente, São Luís Castro and Amanda Walley ('*A Developmental Analysis of Similarity neighborhoods in European Portuguese*') explore the structural organization of children's and adults' lexicons in European Portuguese, based on the observation of the effects of segmental word length, under the approach of the similarity neighborhoods paradigm, and compare their findings with those reported for English. In this paper, their emphasis goes to the properties of the developing lexicon. The authors' description contributes for the discussion on the structural phonemic relations among words in the mental lexicon and on the nature of lexical representations in the path of language development.

I wish to thank the editors of the *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* for inviting me as guest editor of this volume on the acquisition of Portuguese. I am sincerely indebted to the several reviewers from Portuguese and international institutions for their invaluable help in the process of paper selection and to the authors of the papers submitted for exemplarily following the established deadlines. My final words are to thank Anabela Gonçalves and Sónia Frota for their additional effort and constant support in the process of preparing this volume.

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