



Tanya IVANOVA-SULLIVAN (Albuquerque, New Mexico)

**ACQUISITION OF CLITICS IN HERITAGE BULGARIAN IN THE USA:
INITIAL VARIABILITY AND REDUCTION OF OPTIONALITY**

Abstract: The study investigates the acquisition of direct object clitics by a bilingual Bulgarian-English child in the USA. The data are based on weekly audio and video recordings of the child's production as well as a detailed diary for the period between 2;0 and 4;0 years. Monolingual Bulgarian children start producing adult-like proclitics (the default in Bulgarian) and enclitics at the age of 2;2 (Radeva-Bork 2012). Conversely, the subject of the present study showed variability in clitic placement, with non-target production of enclitics instead of proclitics. Such overgeneralization of enclisis is argued to be operational primarily in the early stages of the development of child's heritage grammar as a strategy to reduce optionality in the situation of language acquisition under unbalanced bilingualism.

Keywords: Heritage Bulgarian in the US, longitudinal study, enclisis, proclisis, prosodic constraints in clitic placement

Associate Prof. PhD Tanya Ivanova-Sullivan

University of New Mexico

Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

e-mail: tivanova@unm

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