**Supplementary material S1 – narrow versus broad scope surface overlap**

Studies differ in how narrowly or broadly they have defined surface overlap. Some authors restricted their assessment of surface overlap to specific contexts, whereas if the contextual scope were broadened, a different assessment would have been made. In many cases, however, it was unclear how narrowly or broadly authors defined the scope of surface overlap. This meant that predictions about surface overlap were not consistent across studies, and in some cases a datapoint that was considered a situation of *no* surface overlap in one study, could have been considered a situation of partial surface overlap according to its definition in another study (see Bernardini & van de Weijer, 2017 for a discussion of their predictions based on both a narrow and broad scope).

We will illustrate the difference in defining surface overlap and its consequences by a study that used a more narrow scope (Argyri & Sorace, 2007) and a study that used a more broad scope (Bosch & Unsworth, 2020).

Argyri and Sorace (2007) have studied cross-linguistic influence in various morpho-syntactic properties in both Greek and English. One of these properties is the placement of subjects in *what*-embedded interrogatives in Greek. In Greek the subject in *what*-embedded interrogatives can only be placed in postverbal position (1, example taken from Argyri & Sorace, 2007; p. 89) and not in preverbal position (2). In contrast, in English the subject in *what*-embedded interrogatives can only be placed in preverbal position (3) and not in postverbal position (4). These differences in word order between Greek and English in the context of *what*-embedded interrogatives made the authors define the situation in Greek as a situation of *no* surface overlap. Hence, surface overlap in this study was narrowly defined.

1. I jaja den thimate ti efage **o Nikos**.

the grandmother not remember what ate the Nikos

“Grandmother doesn’t remember what Nikos ate.”

1. \*I jaja den thimate ti **o Nikos** efage.

the grandmother not remember what the Nikos ate

“Grandmother doesn’t remember what Nikos ate.”

1. The grandmother does not remember what **Nikos** ate.
2. \*The grandmother does not remember what ate **Nikos**.

However, surface overlap can also be more broadly defined in Argyri and Sorace’s study. This results in a different categorization of overlap. Although preverbal subjects are ungrammatical in *what*-embedded interrogatives, preverbal subjects are allowed in other sentence contexts in Greek (as illustrated by the preverbal position of “the grandmother” in 1). Hence, in a more broad sense Greek allows for both preverbal and postverbal subjects. Therefore, it could be argued that with respect to subject placement in *what*-embedded interrogatives in Greek there is a situation of *surface* overlap with English: Greek provides evidence for two options – preverbal and postverbal subjects – and English might reinforce the incorrect option – preverbal subject placement.

An example of a study with a more broad interpretation of surface overlap is Bosch and Unsworth (2020). They studied English-Dutch children’s production and judgements of verb placement in English. Dutch is a verb-second language meaning that in main clauses the verb occurs in second position (5 and 6). In contrast, English has SVO order, meaning that the subject should precede the verb (7). A sentence structure like in (6) would be ungrammatical. An exception to this rule are *Wh*-questions. In these questions, the auxiliary can appear in second position in front of the verb (8).

1. Zij **tekende** een auto.

she painted a car

“She painted a car.”

1. Gisteren **tekende** zij een auto.

yesterday painted she a car

“Yesterday she painted a car.”

1. Yesterday she **painted** a car.
2. Where **are** you?

Bosch and Unsworth asked children to produce and judge main clauses with a main verb only (like in 7) or with an auxiliary and a main verb (like in 9). In both type of clauses, the main verb and auxiliary should appear after the subject in third position. Hence, in this specific context there is no surface overlap between English (verb third) and Dutch (verb second). However, the authors apply a more broad definition of surface overlap. They argue that there is optionality in English in structures with an auxiliary, because auxiliaries sometimes appear in preverbal position in *Wh*-questions. Therefore, the authors consider the structures with an auxiliary in English a situation of *surface* overlap and they predict that Dutch might reinforce the incorrect verb second structure in this context.

1. Today she **is** painting a car.

What is crucial in the study by Argyri and Sorace (2007) and by Bosch and Unsworth (2020) is that evidence of cross-linguistic influence in Greek *what*-embedded interrogatives and in English main clauses with an auxiliary can be interpreted as evidence *for* or *against* the surface overlap hypothesis. This all depends on how narrow or broad surface overlap is defined. If the authors’ definitions are applied, cross-linguistic influence in Greek *what*-embedded interrogatives would offer support against the surface overlap hypothesis, whereas cross-linguistic influence in English main clauses with an auxiliary would offer support in favour of the surface overlap hypothesis. However, the situation would be reversed if Argyri and Sorace’s narrow definition of surface overlap would be applied on Bosch and Unsworth’s study or if Bosch and Unsworth’s broad definition of surface overlap would be applied on Argyri and Sorace’s study. This shows that how surface overlap is defined within a study can have a crucial impact on the interpretation of evidence of cross-linguistic influence.