This study aims at investigating the acquisition of Persian (Farsi) (P/F) heritage language in the United States to examine its complexity and systematicity. According to Benmamoun E. Montrul S. & Polinsky M. (2010) it is expected that linguistic phenomena that require the interface of more than one grammatical component to be more complex to acquire or more vulnerable to attrite because the interface phenomena require access to two separate systems with overlapping but convergent primitives and principles and rule of combination. Therefore this study investigates the acquisition of light verb constructions plural formation and subject-verb agreement (SVA) in Persian (Farsi) heritage speakers (HSs) in the United States. The participants are 10 Persian heritage speakers in two main groups of children and adults. The purpose is to study the interaction of interfaces in the production and judgment of these linguistic structures and the constraints affecting them. In the process of acquisition Persian HSs need to choose the correct light verb among different light verbs due to optionality and semantic constraints. The plural making is also constrained by different factors including the type of the noun and formal/informal register. Moreover SVA in Persian is not purely syntactic or purely semantic and is constrained-based. The data were collected via different procedures including personal interviews questionnaires different data elicitation tasks (oral and written) and Grammaticality Judgement Test/Correction (GJT/C). The data were analyzed regarding the percentage of similarity of Has’ production and judgment with monolinguals. Besides the patterns of unique innovative productions and the systematicity in their production and judgment were investigated. Results indicated that HSs produce and judge light verb constructions plural formation and SVA similar to monolinguals and similar constraints affect their production. Moreover they showed unique features such as using some innovative light verb constructions (i.e. an English preverbal element with a Persian light verb) different light verbs new plural forms and different SVA rules compared with monolinguals. Since Persian HSs acquire Persian in a different context compared with monolinguals some other constraints including the cross-linguistic influence of the majority language (English) the absence of the diglossic context of monolinguals etc. affect their production. For example there is a different implicational hierarchy for HSs’ plural making. Interestingly the poverty-of-the-stimulus effect is evident in heritage speakers’ innovative plural forms. For example the new forms are not derived from input sources namely Colloquial Persian and Modern Standard Persian; however they are existing forms found in another language namely Balouchi a Northwestern Indo-Iranian language and they are systematic. Overall results demonstrated that not only does the heritage language system work as a fully functioning system with its unique features but it also revealed examples of the systematicity and the-poverty-of- stimulus effects in innovative patterns indicating that the heritage language system is a productive dynamic and an independent system which handles complex structures. These results contribute to a better understanding of
the linguistic system of heritage speakers in general and in the multilingual and diverse society of the United States in particular.