# Table of contents

**Acknowledgements**  

**Chapter 1. Introduction**  
1.1 Background  
1.1.1 The effect of syntactic complexity on language acquisition  
1.1.2 The effect of phonological expression on written language production  
1.1.3 Digital grammar and spell checkers as a remedy?  
1.2 Central research questions and method  
1.3 Outline of this dissertation  

**Chapter 2. The syntax and processing of adjectives and past participles: structural complexity and cognitive load**  
2.1 Level ordering in syntactic complexity  
2.1.1 The size of the syntactic domain  
2.1.2 Constituent movement  
2.1.3 Complexity ordering: adjectives and past participles  
2.2 The syntax of agreement  
2.2.1 Agreement as a Probe-Goal relation  
2.2.2 The valuation vs. the interpretability of the gender feature  
2.2.3 Gender agreement in adjectives  
2.2.4 Gender agreement in past participles  
2.3 Syntactic level ordering of agreement constructions in French  
2.4 Summary  
2.5 The paradigm of gender agreement in French and Dutch  
2.5.1 The gender inflection in French  
2.5.2 The gender inflection in Dutch  

**Chapter 3. The L1 and L2 acquisition of inflections**  
3.1 The L1 acquisition of grammatical inflections  
3.1.1 The written production of grammatical inflections and the effect of phoneme-grapheme correspondence  
3.1.2 Syntactic complexity and inflections in L1 production  
3.1.3 Summary  
3.2 The L2 acquisition of grammatical inflections  
3.2.1 The written L2 production of grammatical inflections and the phonological effect
Chapter 4. Syntactic complexity and written inflections in L1 and L2 French

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Syntactic complexity and the L1 acquisition of inflections

4.3 Syntactic complexity and the L2 acquisition of inflections

4.4 Gender marking on adjectives and past participles in French and Dutch
   4.4.1 Gender marking in French
   4.4.2 Gender marking in Dutch

4.5 The research question and hypotheses

4.6 Experiment 1: written gender marking in L1 French
   4.6.1 Method
   4.6.2 Results
   4.6.3 Discussion

4.7 Experiment 2: written gender marking in L2 French
   4.7.1 Method
   4.7.2 Results
   4.7.3 Discussion

4.8 Conclusion

Chapter 5. Syntactic complexity and phonological expression in written L1 and L2 French

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Syntactic complexity and the L1 acquisition of inflections

5.3 Syntactic complexity and the L2 acquisition of inflections

5.4 Phonological expression and the L1 acquisition of inflections

5.5 Phonological expression and the L2 acquisition of inflections

5.6 Gender marking on adjectives and past participles in French and Dutch
   5.6.1 Gender marking in French
   5.6.2 Gender marking in Dutch

5.7 The research question and hypotheses

5.8 The experiment
   5.8.1 Method
   5.8.2 Results

5.9 Discussion

5.10 Conclusion

Chapter 6. The performance of digital grammar checkers for native and second language learners of French

6.1 Introduction
6.2 Main aim and research question 104
6.3 French grammar checkers: Antidote, BonPatron and Scribens 105
6.4 The performance of grammar checkers for French 105
6.5 Gender marking in French 106
6.6 The experiment 107
  6.6.1 Method 108
  6.6.2 Results 110
  6.6.3 Discussion 111
6.7 Conclusion 113

Chapter 7. Discussion and conclusions 115
  7.1 Summary of the findings 115
  7.2 Pedagogical implications 117
  7.3 Suggestions for future research 118

Bibliography 121

Summary of the dissertation 129