



Is L1 Transfer Operative at the Syntax-Discourse Interface? The Acquisition of Null and Overt Subjects in L2 Turkish

D1 Aktarımı Sözdizim-Söylem Ara Kesitinde İşlemsel Mi? Boş ve Dolu Öznelerin D2 Türkçede Edinimi

Oktay ÇINAR*

Abstract

Recent studies on L2 acquisition focus on how interface-related properties are acquired at the end state grammars. Proposed as part of this theme, the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006; Sorace, 2011) claims that the syntax-discourse interface is particularly challenging to acquire, irrespective of the L1 and L2 of the speakers. On the other hand, the Full Transfer / Full Access Hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996) predicts that L2 acquisition is L1-constrained and UG is directly accessed. This study tests these assumptions on the acquisition of null and overt subjects in L2 Turkish to understand whether L1 transfer operates in the domain that needs the mapping of syntax on the discursive knowledge. This was tested in a study on advanced Korean and Japanese L2 Turkish speakers (n=27) by employing contextualized grammaticality judgment task (CGJT). In this task, participants were asked to judge whether the contextualized sentences they read were pragmatically odd or not (for each condition n=4). The discursive constraints (topic continuity and topic shift) on the use of null and overt subjects were not violated in the first two conditions. However, the latter two conditions violated the discursive constraints, rendering unacceptable null and overt subject constructions. The results of the CGJT revealed that the L2 participants were insensitive to the discourse of null and overt subject distribution. Since the very same constraints that regulate the null and overt subject distribution hold both in the L1 and L2 of the speakers, this finding suggests that L1 transfer is not operative at the syntax-discourse interface, which is in line with the claim that the properties at this interface cannot be fully acquired as postulated by the Interface Hypothesis.

Keywords: Null and overt subjects, discursive constraints, L1 transfer, L2 Turkish, Korean and Japanese speakers, Interface Hypothesis.

Öz

Son yıllarda D2 edinimi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, son aşamadaki dilbilgisinde arakesitle ilgili özelliklerin nasıl edinildiğine odaklanmaktadır. Bu temanın bir parçası olarak ortaya atılan Arakesit Varsayımı (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006; Sorace, 2011) D1 ve D2'lere bakmaksızın, sözdizim-söylem arakesitinin edinilmesinin özellikle zor olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Diğer taraftan, Tam Aktarım / Tam Erişim Varsayımı (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996) ise D2 ediniminin D1 tarafından sınırlandırıldığını ve ED'nin doğrudan erişilebileceğini tahmin etmektedir. Bu çalışma, sözdizimin söylemsel bilgiyle eşlendiği bir alanda D1 aktarımının işlemsel olup olmadığını anlamak için, bu varsayımları D2 Türkçedeki boş ve dolu öznelerin edinimi üzerinden test etmektedir. Bu da, bağlamsal dilbilgisellik yargı testi kullanılarak, ileri düzeyde Türkçe edinen ana dili Korece ve Japonca konuşurlar (n=27) üzerine yapılan bir çalışmayla test edilmiştir. Bu testte, katılımcılardan okumuş oldukları bağlamlı tümcelerın söylemsel açıdan uygun olup

* Asst. Prof. Dr., İstanbul Medeniyet University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Department of Linguistics, E-mail: oktaycinarr@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-9822-7574

olmadığına karar vermeleri istenmiştir (her bir koşul için n=4). İlk iki koşulda boş ve dolu özne kullanımına yönelik söylemsel sınırlılıklar (konu devamı ve konu değişimi) ihlal edilmemişken, söylemsel açıdan uygun olmayan boş ve dolu özne yapıları yaratan son iki koşul ise bu sınırlılıkları ihlal etmiştir. Testin sonuçları D2 konuşurlarının boş ve dolu özne dağılımının söylemsel özelliklerini edinemediklerini ortaya koymuştur. Boş ve dolu özne dağılımını yöneten aynı sınırlılıklar hem D1 hem de D2'de bulunduğu için, bu bulgu sözdizim-söylem arakesitinde D1 aktarımının işlemsel olmadığını ileri sürmektedir; bu da bu Arkesit Varsayımın ileri sürdüğü gibi arakesitteki özelliklerin edinilemeyeceği iddiasıyla örtüşmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Boş ve dolu özneler, söylemsel sınırlılıklar, D1 aktarımı, D2 Türkçe, Korece ve Japonca konuşurları, Arakesit Varsayımı.

Introduction

Languages employ different tools for the realization of subjects. In non-null subject languages (e.g., *English, German, and French*) the subject position must be phonetically overt irrespective of the information state of the sentence. On the other hand, null subject languages (e.g., *Turkish, Spanish, Korean, and Japanese*) allow both null and overt subjects in finite clauses. The choice to use null vs. overt subject is not selective in these languages; rather, the realization of subjects is governed by the information structure of that language and such discursive properties as topic continuity and topic shift constrain the use of subjects (e.g., Belletti et al., 2007). Therefore, null and overt subject distribution has been claimed to be the locus of the syntax-discourse interface in null subject languages (e.g., Sorace & Filiaci, 2006).

The influence of Universal Grammar (UG) and first language (L1) on the target grammar concerning the acquisition of subjects has become an important area of study in studies on the second language (L2) acquisition (e.g., White, 1985; Liceras, 1988, 1989; Tsimplici & Roussou, 1991). More recently, this focus of interest has shifted to understanding how interface-related properties govern the interlanguage of the L2 speakers in language pairs with different and same parametric values. Hence, it has become particularly important to understand how L2 learners encode and comprehend the basic units of information structure (e.g., topic shift and topic continuity) through the use of null and overt subjects in the target grammar (Slabakova, 2013).

The question as to whether ultimate attainment of the null and overt subject distribution at the syntax-discourse interface is possible in L2 has stimulated considerable discussions in the field, with some studies arguing that the syntax-discourse interface is problematic to acquire; others claiming that the target structures residing at this interface can be acquired. Those who argue for the vulnerability of the syntax-discourse interface posit that grammatical properties that interface within linguistic modules (e.g., syntax-semantics, syntax-morphology) are not likely to be problematic to acquire; on the other hand, grammatical properties that interface with discursive or pragmatic properties seem quite problematic for L2 learners to acquire. This has come to be known as the Interface Hypothesis (IH, Sorace, 2011; Sorace & Filiaci, 2006), which intrinsically predicts that null and overt subject distribution is problematic to acquire. This hypothesis claims that the syntax-discourse interface is vulnerable irrespective of the L1 and L2 pairs, meaning that the syntax-discourse interface is not affected by L1 transfer (Montrul, 2011). However, some studies postulate that the interlanguage of L2 speakers converges with the native grammar; hence, the discursive principles governing the use of null and overt subjects can be attained. This account is in line with the Full Transfer / Full Access Hypothesis (FTFA, Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996) where L2 speakers have access to UG to reset the L2 parameter and the initial state of the interlanguage is L1-constrained.

Considering the opposing views, the acquisition of the syntax-discourse interface needs to be tested in the L2 Turkish context with different language pairs. Drawing on this, this study aims to understand whether null vs. overt subject distribution can be acquired in L2 Turkish by the advanced Korean and Japanese speakers – where the L1 and L2 of the speakers have the same parameter – to discuss transfer effects on the target grammar at the syntax-discourse interface.

In line with the aims of the study, the research questions of the study are:

- i. Do the Korean and Japanese L2 Turkish learners acquire the discursive constraints on the use of null and overt subject distribution at the end state grammar? Do the performances of the L2 speakers support the IH or the FTFA?
- ii. What are the possible influences of L1 transfer on Korean and Japanese L2 Turkish learners concerning the discursive constraints on null and overt subject distribution?

From what follows, theoretical concepts in L2 acquisition and relevant studies considering the null and overt subjects at the syntax-discourse interface are given.

L2 Acquisition

Starting with the 1980s, the studies on L2 acquisition have developed in methodology and L2 acquisition has become an interdisciplinary field incorporating the knowledge and research from such disciplines as psychology, education, and teaching (Ortega, 2011). With theoretically different positions, on the one side, studies on L2 acquisition followed the Principles and Parameters framework (Chomsky, 1981) and considered the acquisition process somewhat UG-governed in which L2 learners might have access to UG to acquire the structures available in their L2 (e.g., White, 1989). Further, as L2 speakers have already acquired a language before, they might transfer the categories, features and values present in their L1 to the target grammar. Hence, the extent to which UG is accessed and whether L1 transfer is possible in initial and later grammar development have always been at the center of L2 studies. Moreover, the question of whether interlanguage grammar will converge with the native grammar or if there are learnability problems at the end state has been widely discussed among the studies that focus on the issues of access to UG and L1 transfer.

The followers of the full access position posit that UG also governs the L2 acquisition along with the L1 acquisition. Regarding this, Rothman and Slabakova (2018) claimed that L2 acquisition ‘is powered by the logical problem of L1 acquisition and how it relates to L2 acquisition’ (Schwartz, 1998; White, 1989). The problem is that the input that L2 speakers acquire cannot justify the abstract rules which shape their interlanguage. In other words, L2 speakers attain a grammar that cannot be merely accounted for with the linguistic input they are exposed to. Since the rules are so abstract, these cannot be taught explicitly in classrooms and cannot be consciously deduced from the input alone, which White (2003: 22) characterized as ‘input and output mismatch’.

Yet, whether L1 transfer is possible or not depends on the present features and values (White, 2003). For example, The Minimal Trees Hypothesis (Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1994; 1996) predicts that lexical categories are transferred earlier during the interlanguage grammar development; however, functional categories are acquired with full access to UG. In other words, parameters involving functional categories are reset by full access to UG whereas parameters are set based on L1 for lexical categories. On the other hand, the FTFA (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996) claims that the early interlanguage grammar development is fully based on L1 grammar. That is, L2 learners start with their L1 grammar to acquire the L2 constructions. Later grammar development involves full access to UG when L2 speakers are exposed to a sufficient amount of L2 input.

Null and Overt Subjects in Turkish

Overt subjects are grammatically encoded in Turkish with a pronoun or a lexical NP. The subject position both in the matrix and embedded clauses can be left empty as well. Therefore, the referent of the

subject can be understood from the morphological agreement suffixes on the verb. In other words, null subjects both in the matrix and embedded clauses are recovered by the verbal agreement endings:¹

(1)	1SG	gid-iyor- um	‘I am going’
	2SG	gid-iyor- sun	‘You are going’
	3SG	gid-iyor- Ø	‘S/he is going’
	1PL	gid-iyor- uz	‘We are going’
	2PL	gid-iyor- sunuz	‘You are going’
	3PL	gid-iyor- lar	‘They are going’

As stated before, the choice to use either null or overt subject is not selective in Turkish. When subjects are considered as non-contrastive topical elements, null subjects need to be employed, referring to topic continuity in the sentence. Therefore, unless a new referent is present in the discourse, the use of overt subject is pragmatically anomalous:

(2)	Ali	sinava	çok	çalıştı	ama	*o / *Ali / <i>pro</i>	başarısız oldu
	Ali	exam-DAT	hard	study-PAST	but	*he / *Ali / <i>pro</i>	fail-PAST
	‘Ali studied hard for the exam but he failed.’						

In (2), considering that the subjects of the two independent clauses refer to the same person, the subject of the second clause should not be pronounced due to topic continuity. Otherwise, the use of the overt pronoun, *o* (*he*), or the lexical subject, *Ali*, would render the use of subject semantically redundant or inappropriate. However, when the subject is interpreted in a topic shift context, an overt subject needs to be employed:

(3)	Ben	voleybol	oynamayı	seviyorum	
	I	volleyball	play-NOM-ACC	like-PROG-AOR-1SG	
	ancak	o / Ali / * <i>pro</i>	futbol	oynamayı	seviyor
	but	he / Ali / * <i>pro</i>	football	play-NOM-ACC	like-PROG-AOR-1SG
	‘I like playing volleyball but he / Ali / * <i>pro</i> likes playing football.’				

In (3) since a new referent (*o/he or Ali*) is introduced into the discourse in the second clause, which is contrasted with the referent of the first sentence, *ben/I*, overt pronominal subject (*o/he*) or lexical subject (*Ali*) needs to be employed to signal a topic shift. Otherwise, the use of a null subject would become inappropriate considering the discursive constraints.

These discussions lead us to argue that when there is a topic shift or the subject is used contrastively, overt subjects need to be employed for the information packaging of the sentence. Therefore, if new information is not present, a null subject needs to be used. This is governed by a discursive universal known as the ‘Avoid Pronoun Principle’ (APP, Chomsky, 1981). It states that subjects are not to be used in null subject languages unless it is required to employ them. In other words, if the use of a null subject is impossible, an overt subject must be used, which applies to Turkish as well (Kornfilt, 2018).

Overall, one can argue that null and overt subjects in Turkish are discourse dependent (Enç, 1986; Erguvanlı-Taylan, 1986) and their distribution is regulated by the APP. Topic continuity is signaled by the use of null subject whereas topic shift and contrastive use of pronoun or lexical subject are marked by overt

¹ Turkish has four types of agreement markers on the verb: *k-paradigm* and *z-paradigm* affixes (see Good & Yu (2005) for the full agreement markers) and *imperative and optative (subjunctive) mood* markers (see Lewis (1967 for the full agreement markers).

subject. Therefore, L2 Turkish learners need to be aware of these constraints to use the subjects appropriately.

Null and Overt Subjects at the Syntax-Discourse Interface

The approach to generative grammar consists of different modules which are linked together. This combination of different linguistic modules – syntax-semantics, syntax-morphology, syntax-phonology, etc. – is known as the interface processes (Slabakova, 2013). Non-linguistic structures (e.g., contextual information) can also be mapped onto the linguistic systems (Jackendoff, 2002). In this regard, the syntax-discourse interface can be considered as the mapping of context onto the syntax (White, 2009).

Regulated by discursive constraints, the syntactic distribution of null and overt subjects in Turkish can be claimed to be at the center of the syntax-discourse interface. This interface questions whether the use of null and overt subjects is appropriately used depending on certain pragmatic or discursive constraints. Since the choice to use either null or overt subject is not selective in null subject languages, the distribution of subjects can be claimed to be governed by such pragmatic or discursive requirements as topic continuity and topic shift.

As discussed before, the studies on the null and overt subject distribution at the syntax-discourse interface have two folds. Asserting the vulnerability of the syntax-discourse interface, the IH posits that the interlanguage of L2 speakers will diverge from the native grammars considering the discursive principles on the use of null and overt subjects since the interface between a linguistic module (such as syntax, morphology, and semantics) and an external module (such as discourse and pragmatics) is problematic to acquire unlike the interface among pure linguistic modules such as syntax-semantics or syntax-morphology (e.g., Margaza & Bel, 2006; Belletti et al., 2007). Therefore, the IH predicts that the syntax-discourse interface is potentially a vulnerable field for L2 speakers to acquire (e.g., Tsimpli & Sorace, 2006; Sorace & Filiaci, 2006) and the effect of L1 transfer cannot be found accordingly (e.g., Sorace & Serratrice, 2009; Montrul, 2011).

In line with the assertions of the IH, Margaza and Bel (2006) found that L1 transfer is not possible at the syntax-discourse interface. In their study, the advanced Greek speakers acquiring L2 Spanish did not reach a native-like performance over the pragmatic distribution of null and overt subjects in cloze test and written production task. Although the L1 of the participants had the same discursive rules (topic continuity and topic shift), the L2 speakers did not transfer the properties of their L1 into the target grammar.

Parallel to this finding, Belletti et al. (2007) also claimed that the pragmatics of overt subjects causes challenges to near-native L2 Italian speakers of English. By employing a picture verification task, they found that the participants were not sensitive to the pragmatic distribution of null and overt subject pronouns, particularly, in the use of overt subjects, where the L2 speakers interpreted overt subjects in topic shift contexts as bound to matrix subject inappropriately. Thus, they concluded that the properties at the syntax-discourse interface are problematic.

In a more recent study, Lozano (2018) studied the same phenomena across the intermediate, lower advanced, and high advanced Greek speakers of L2 Spanish. Participants were given contextualized complex sentences which questioned the resolution of the pronominal null and overt subject with the possible antecedents in the context according to the given pragmatic constraints. The findings of the study demonstrated that the L2 speakers overused overt subjects even at the advanced level. Accordingly, he concluded that the similarities in L1 and L2 pairs in terms of employing the same discursive constraints do not operate at the syntax-discourse interface.

However, the FTFA claims that the L2 participants rely on L1 transfer and have direct access to UG to reset the null subject parameter. The direct consequence of this perspective is that L2 speakers can attain the syntax-discourse interface which regulates the null and overt subject distribution. Unlike the main assertions of the IH, there are no residual problems for L2 learners to acquire the pragmatic principles of subject distribution.

For example, Gürel (2006) found that native-like L2 Turkish learners of English speakers mastered the pragmatic features of null and overt subject pronouns. Drawing on the ‘picture selection task’ where the

participants were asked to select which answer in the picture containing either null or overt subject pronoun is correct out of two options, she questioned whether the L2 speakers can use null and overt subject distribution appropriately in answers to questions represented in the pictures. The findings of the study invoked the FTFA in contrast to the predictions made by the IH on the grounds that the L2 speakers fully attained the target grammar.

In another study, Rothman (2009) investigated the learnability of null vs. overt subject distribution in L2 Spanish by the intermediate and advanced English speakers. The tasks were ‘pragmatic context-matching felicitousness judgment task’ where the participants were asked to determine whether the contextualized sentences they read were pragmatically anomalous or not, and ‘pragmatic context translation task’, where the speakers were asked to translate the English sentences into Spanish after reading contextualized stories. In both tasks, participants were expected to accept and use either null or overt subject appropriately depending on the context. However, the findings of the given tasks suggested that the syntax-discourse interface is not a particularly vulnerable field since the advanced speakers displayed native-like competence concerning the discursive properties of null and overt subject distribution.

In a more recent study, Margaza and Gavarro (2020) studied null and overt subject distribution across different pragmatic constraints with L2 Spanish learners of Greek and L2 Greek learners of Spanish, both of which were at the intermediate and advanced levels. They employed multiple-choice tasks, both in L2 Spanish and L2 Greek, where they asked the participants to select the appropriate subject for the contextualized target sentences. Interestingly, they found asymmetry in the results. It seemed that L2 Spanish speakers were not fully sensitive to the discursive distribution of subjects – yet they had a certain success. On the other hand, L2 Greek speakers fully attained the use of null and overt subjects in contexts rendering them acceptable, which certainly refutes the possible detriments at the syntax-discourse interface.

The syntax-discourse interface has been represented by studies on discursive constraints on the use of null and overt subject distribution. Those who favor the IH posit that the L2 acquisition of discursive constraints such as topic continuity and topic shift is a vulnerable field, which cannot be fully acquired and L1 transfer is not possible (e.g., Sorace & Filiaci, 2006; Tsimpli & Sorace, 2006; Belletti et al., 2007, cited in White, 2011: 580). Despite the claims that the interface between syntax and discourse presents difficulties in L2 acquisition, the followers of the FTFA claim that the interlanguage of L2 speakers is fully sensitive to the discursive constraints, which will be attained in end-state grammars (e.g., Montrul & Louro, 2006; Gürel, 2006; Rothman, 2009).

The Study

This section elaborates on the methodology of the study. First, the participants of the study are introduced. Then, it is followed by the data collection tool and data analysis sections.

Participants

There were two groups of participants in the study: The control group and the learner group. The control group of the study was native speakers of Turkish who were first-grade students of the Department of English Linguistics at Hacettepe University (n=26). Their ages ranged from 18 to 41. The participants were not formally taught the discursive constraints on the use of null and overt subject distribution when the task was carried out. The learner group of the study was advanced Korean and Japanese L2 Turkish speakers (n=27).² Their ages ranged from 22 to 59. As in the case of the learner group, they were not exposed to the formal teaching of null and overt subject distribution which was set as a criterion to prevent them from finding out what was tested in the study. All participants attended or were attending Turkish language courses and had a certificate of Turkish at the advanced proficiency level – corresponding to the C1 level

² The reason for grouping these languages is that both languages behave similarly in terms of the discursive constraints questioned in the study. Moreover, it has been further argued that L1 pairs with the same constraints are not selective considering the null and overt subject distribution (e.g., Sorace & Filiaci, 2006).

according to European Language Portfolio (2004). When the study was conducted, most of the participants had been in Turkey for different reasons. Some participants were exchange students in Turkey from Basun Foreign Studies University in South Korea and the University of Foreign Studies in Tokyo and the School of Foreign Studies in Osaka, Japan. These L2 speakers had been attending Turkish language courses at the time of the study. Another group of participants consisted of graduate and undergraduate students of several universities in Ankara and Kayseri who were studying Turkish for different reasons. Some participants were working for the Center of Korean Culture in Ankara and the Turkish-Japanese Foundation Culture Center, based in Ankara. Apart from this, when the study was conducted, a limited number of participants were in South Korea and Japan who study Turkish.³ The final group comprised participants who had settled in Turkey, working for certain institutions.

Both Korean and Japanese are null subject languages, in which subjects can be left unpronounced (Huang, 1984). The same discursive constraints of topic continuity and topic shift which determine the realization of null vs. overt subject distribution also apply to L1 of the participants – Korean and Japanese. Yano (1983: 97, cited in Yamada, 2009:60) states that null subjects are used in non-contrastive constructions to convey topic continuity in Japanese. On the other hand, reflexive pronominal subject, personal pronouns, and lexical subjects are used in focused and contrastive settings to signal a topic shift. The same constraints apply to Korean as well, in which the information state of the sentence governs the subject distribution (Kim, 2007). Therefore, one can claim that the grammar of these languages is sensitive to some discursive constraints as in the case of Turkish.⁴

Data Collection Tool

To fetch data, the Contextualized Grammaticality Judgement Task (CGJT), which has been adapted from Rothman (2007; 2009), was employed. This task, centered around the syntax-discourse interface, focuses on how topic continuity-topic shift realization is acquired by the Turkish L2 speakers. Accordingly, the results of this task will reveal whether the IH or the FTFA in L2 Turkish, revealing possible L1 effects.

In the task, the participants were asked to read the target sentence and judge whether the sentence was pragmatically acceptable or not by selecting either of the two options: Acceptable or Not acceptable. Some of the sentences that the participants read violated the discursive constraints on the use of null and overt subjects. In order to understand the reason why they found a sentence unacceptable, they were further asked to correct the sentence. Overall, the CGJT is framed by 4 conditions which are given in Table 1. The task includes 12 questions with 3 questions for each condition.

Table 1. The contextualized grammaticality judgment task

Conditions	Contexts	Subject types in the sentences	Target Answers
Con1	Context supports null subject	Null	Acceptable
Con2	Context supports overt subject	Overt	Acceptable
Con3	Context does not support null subject	Null	Unacceptable
Con4	Context does not support overt subject	Overt	Unacceptable

³ Participants who were acquiring Turkish outside Turkey via formal teaching were incorporated into the study based on the findings from Rothman and Iverson (2007). They conducted a study on two groups of L2 Spanish speakers at the same proficiency level. One group was exposed to natural input; that is, they learned the target language within a setting where the language is spoken. The other group was not exposed to natural input and only received formal instruction in a setting where the target language was not spoken. As the findings of their study indicated, natural input did not prove to be a required setting. Therefore, in the light of this study, participants living abroad were included in the study as well.

⁴ Another feature of these languages is that they employ morphological particles as well to signal pragmatic information of topichood (Vallduvi, 2003).

The test items of the CGJT are illustrated below.⁵ For each task, the test items were given as translated into the L1 of the speakers except for the target sentences so that the vocabulary would not hinder their interpretation.

Condition 1 (Con1)

In Con1, the topic of the sentence is already established in the target sentence. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use a null subject, which is not pragmatically odd. Test items 1, 8, and 11 are designed to test this. Test item 1 is illustrated below.

Bağlam (The context): Geçen sene kız kardeşim dilbilimde doktora yapmak için yurtdışına gitti. Ben ve ailem onun için çok mutlu olduk ama onunla çok az konuşabiliyoruz. Çünkü sürekli ders çalışıyor. (*Last year my sister went abroad to do a PhD in linguistics. My family and I were very happy for her but we can barely talk to her. Because she is always studying.*)

Tümce (Target sentence): Kız kardeşim bir süredir yurtdışında ve sürekli ders çalışıyor. (*My sister is abroad for a while and she is always studying.*)

- a) Uygun (*Acceptable*)
- b) Uygun Değil (*Not acceptable*)

The topic of the sentence is the sister of the narrator as the subject of the target sentence, who is talked about in the second clause as well. Therefore, the subject position should be left empty; otherwise, it would be pragmatically odd to use an overt subject. Considering this, participants were expected to mark the option a) *Uygun (Acceptable)*.

Condition 2 (Con2)

Con2 is characterized by a referent change in the target sentence in a topic shift context, rendering the use of an overt subject required. Test items 3, 5, and 9 fall into this category. Test item 3 is described below.

Bağlam (The context): Dün arkadaşlarımla sinemaya gittik. Ben aksiyon filmlerinden hoşlandığım için arkadaşlarıma aksiyon filmine gidelim mi diye sordum. Ama onlar komedi filmine gitmeyi tercih ettiler. (*Yesterday, my friends and I went to the cinema. As I like action movies I asked my friends to watch an action movie. However, they preferred to watch a movie based on comics.*)

Tümce (Target sentence): Ben aksiyon filmine gidelim mi diye sordum ama onlar komedi filmine gitmeyi tercih ettiler. (*I asked my friends to watch an action movie but they preferred to watch a movie based on comics.*)

- a) Uygun (*Acceptable*)
- b) Uygun Değil (*Not acceptable*)

The topic of the first independent sentence is *ben (I)*. However, the topic of the second sentence changes as *onlar (they)*, which is appropriately marked overtly. Therefore, participants were expected to select the option a) *Uygun (Acceptable)*.

⁵ See the Appendix for the whole questionnaire.

Condition 3 (Con3)

Con3 represents a context in which the topic shifts. Therefore, this change in the topic has to be marked with an overt subject in the target sentence. However, the target sentence inappropriately includes a null subject in place of an overt subject, representing the underuse of overt subject or overuse of null subject. Considering this, the participants were first expected to choose the unacceptable option and then correct it by inserting an overt subject within a place where a null subject is present. Test items 4, 6, and 10 are grouped in this type. Test item 4 is illustrated below.

Bağlam (The context): Ahmet ile ben her zaman Ali'nin ödevlerini yapmasına yardımcı oluruz. Dün Ali yine bizden yardım istedi ancak Ahmet Ali'ye çok işi olduğunu söyledi. Bu yüzden de Ahmet benden yardım istedi. (*Ahmet and I always help Ali to do his homework. Yesterday, Ali asked us for help again but Ahmet told Ali that he had lots of things to do. Therefore, Ahmet asked for my help.*)

Tümce (Target sentence): Ahmet'in işi olduğu için yapmamı istiyor. (Ahmet wants (me) to do it since he is busy).

- a) Uygun (*Acceptable*)
- b) Uygun Değil (*Not acceptable*)

The target sentence is pragmatically odd since new information in the sentence is not marked overtly. The topic is established with the referential DP, *Ahmet*. However, *Ahmet* wants *the narrator (ben/I)* – the subject of the embedded clause – to help *Ali*. Therefore, this shift in topic needs to be marked overtly and the correct answer should be *b) Uygun Değil (Unacceptable)*. Regarding this, the participants were expected to correct the sentence by inserting an overt subject to the embedded clause, which might be *benim (I-GEN)* in this case:

Ahmet'in işi olduğu için *benim* yapmamı istiyor.

Condition 4 (Con4)

In Con4, the use of a redundant overt subject renders the sentence pragmatically anomalous. Since the topic of the sentence does not alter, marking the same referent overt makes the sentence pragmatically unacceptable. Therefore, the Con4 represents the unacceptable topic construction, representing the underuse of null subject or overuse of overt subject. Test items 2, 7, and 12 are employed to evaluate this constraint. Test item 2 is given as an example.

Bağlam (The context): Yurtdışı gezisi için arkadaşlarımla havaalanında saat 2'de buluşmaya karar verdik. Onlar tam 2'de gelmişti. Ancak ben trafikten dolayı havaalanına 2.30'da gidebildim ve uçağı son anda yakaladım. (*For an overseas trip my friends and I decided to meet at the airport at 2 o'clock. They arrived at 2 o'clock sharp. However, because of the traffic congestion I was able to get to the airport at 2.30 and I barely caught the flight.*)

Tümce (Target sentence): Ben havaalanına çok geç gitmeme rağmen ben uçağı yakalamayı başardım. (*Although I get to the airport too late, I barely caught the flight.*)

- a) Uygun (*Acceptable*)
- b) Uygun Değil (*Not acceptable*)

The topic of the target sentence is *the narrator (ben/I)*. Even though s/he is late to the airport, s/he barely catches the flight. Since the same referent, *ben/I* is referred again in the matrix clause, there is no need to mark it overtly again. Therefore, the answer should be *b) Uygun Değil (Unacceptable)*. Given this, participants were expected to correct the sentence by omitting the second overt subject, *ben (I)*. Alternatively, the first use of the overt subject, (*ben/I*), can be omitted as well on the grounds that the topic is already established in the context:

Ben havaalanına çok geç gitmeme rağmen ~~ben~~ uçağı yakalamayı başardım.
~~Ben~~ havaalanına çok geç gitmeme rağmen ~~ben~~ uçağı yakalamayı başardım.

Data Collection Procedure

The test was given to the control group in a classroom and then each participant completed the test provided to them. First, written consent and some personal information concerning their age, gender, mother tongue, etc. were taken from all the participants who wanted to take part in the study.⁶ As for the learner group, the test was not handed in a classroom environment on the grounds that the L2 participants were not in the same learning environment. All the participants were accessed by personal contact and those who met the criteria of being participants in the study were asked to complete it. Some participants completed the written version and others answered the online version of the questionnaire. The instructions were also given orally to make sure that they would understand how they were going to answer the test.

Data Analysis

For the analysis of the data obtained from the CGJT, both descriptive and statistical analyses were implemented. Descriptive analysis was carried out to fully grasp the significance of the quantitative data and it involves comparing the mean score performances of the learner group against that of the control group for each condition (i.e., 100 % success corresponds to 24 points for the task). Concerning the statistical analysis implemented in the study, the mean score performances of the learner group were compared against the means of the control group. Accordingly, three statistical analyses were carried out on the data to which t-tests were applied:

- (i) intergroup comparison for each condition – it involves comparing the means of the two groups against each other across single conditions. This analysis aims to find out whether the comparison of the means for two groups yields statistically significant differences across single contexts or not.
- (ii) intragroup comparison between different paired conditions – it involves comparing the differences each group made across different paired contexts. This analysis aims to indicate whether there are statistically significant differences that each group makes across paired conditions.
- (iii) intergroup comparison between different paired conditions – it involves comparing the two groups against each other across different paired conditions. This analysis intends to fathom how the statistically significant differences, if any, across different paired conditions for a single group give rise to differences when compared with the two groups.

⁶ Permission to conduct this study was taken from Hacettepe University Ethics Commission, dated March 22, 2016, and following the requirements of the Commission, a voluntary participation form, which states the general overview of the study, was given before the study and regarding this, written consent was taken from all learners who wanted to participate in the study.

Considering this, for intergroup comparisons – corresponding to the first and the third statistical analyses – a two-sample t-test, a type of t-test for comparing the group means of two independent groups, was applied to compare two groups for single or two conditions. For intragroup comparison – corresponding to the second statistical analysis – paired sample t-test, a type of t-test for comparing two dependent groups or variables, was carried out to understand whether the comparison of two-conditions results in statistically significant results for each of the groups in the study. As standard, the alpha value (p) is taken to be 0.05. Additionally, *Levene's test for homogeneity of variances* was observed.⁷

Findings and Discussion

In this part, the data taken from the CGJT are analyzed and discussed. First, the results of the descriptive and statistical analyses are given, which is followed by a discussion of the results.

Descriptive Analysis

Each condition in the task is scored for 6 points – corresponding to 24 in total. Given this, the descriptive results of the CGJT can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive results of the CGJT

Groups	Conditions			
	Null/A	Overt/A	Null/Un	Overt/Un
CG	6	5.96	5.76	5.11
LG	5.63	5.96	3.96	1.56

Null/A= acceptable null subject is used (Con1); Overt/A= acceptable overt subject is used (Con2); Null/Un= unacceptable null subject is used (Con3); Overt/Un =unacceptable overt subject is used (Con4); CG (Control Group); LG (Learner Group)

As can be seen from the descriptive results, the data indicated the mean score performances for each condition concerning the discursive distribution of null and overt subjects. The results from the comparison of the performances of the control group (CG) with that of the learner group (LG) indicated roughly the same scores concerning the context in which acceptable null and overt subjects are used; corresponding to Con1 and Con2 respectively (for Con1, CG= 6; LG= 5.63 out of 6 times). This means that the LG found the permitted null and overt subject constructions as acceptable and did not correct these structures either by omitting or adding subjects. On the other hand, the performances considerably differed for Con3 and Con4, which forced the participants to correct unacceptable null and overt subject constructions (for Con3, CG= 5.76, LG= 3.96 out of 6 times) and (for Con4, CG= 5.11 LG = 1.56 out of 6 times). This means that the LG was not sensitive to the null and overt subject distribution when the context required them to correct unacceptable constructions.

Statistical Analysis

This part is divided into three sections in which the statistical analyses conducted on group comparisons across conditions are given.

⁷ To avoid Type 1 error, if the result for homogeneity of variance was > 0.05 the relevant data was interpreted as homogenous and the analysis was conducted based on equal variances assumed. However, if the result for homogeneity of variance was < 0.05 or equal to 0.05, the data was interpreted as not homogenous.

Intergroup Comparison of Each Condition

As for the first statistical analysis, two groups were compared against each other across single conditions. The results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Intergroup comparison of each condition

Groups	CG vs. LG	two-sample t-test		
		<i>t(f)</i>	d.f.	<i>p</i>
Conditions	CON1	1.87	4	0.124
	CON2	0.28	51	0.98
	CON3	5.79	36	0.0001
	CON4	8.20	51	0.0001

Considering the Con1, it can be argued that the L2 speakers performed native-like in the contexts involving acceptable use of null subject constructions ($t=1.87$; $p=0.124$). In other words, when the null subject is required by the discourse, the L2 speakers interpreted this as acceptable.⁸ As for the Con2, the results indicated no statistically significant difference as well ($t=0.28$, $p=0.98$). This result suggests that the LG attained the discursive constraints represented in Con2, meaning that L2 speakers interpreted permissible topic shift constructions as acceptable and did not try to omit the overt subject from the sentence. Con3 involves a pragmatically anomalous context in which the target sentence does not permit the use of a null subject because of the topic shift. Regarding this, participants were expected to correct the sentence by inserting an overt subject into the subject position. However, the results indicated a statistically significant difference ($t=5.79$, $p=0.0001$). In Con4, the use of an overt subject in the target sentence renders the sentence pragmatically anomalous since the topic of the sentence did not alter. Therefore, the participants were expected to correct the sentence by omitting the overt subject. Yet, the comparison between the LG and the CG yielded a dramatic difference ($t=8.20$, $p=0.0001$).

Based on the results, one can argue that the L2 speakers were successful when the target sentences were given acceptable (Con1 and Con2). However, they did not attain the constraints represented in Con3 and Con4, which involved correcting unacceptable null and overt subject constructions. This means that the L2 speakers were not sensitive to the distribution of null and overt subject use in topic continuity and the topic shift contexts.

Intragroup Comparison between Different Paired Conditions

The second analysis was carried out to understand how the score performance of each group differed across the paired two conditions. The selected paired contexts are Con2 vs. Con3, Con2 vs. Con4, Con1 vs. Con4, and Con1 vs. Con3. The pairs were selected to compare the interpretation of acceptable overt subjects in the context of their overuse and underuse. The relevant pairs are Con2 (acceptable overt subject) vs. Con3 (underuse of overt subject) and Con2 (acceptable overt subject) vs. Con4. (overuse of overt subject). Other pairs were designed to compare the acceptability of null subjects in the context of their overuse and underuse. The relevant pairs are Con1 (acceptable null subject) vs. Con4 (underuse of null subject) and Con1 (acceptable null subject) vs. Con3 (overuse of null subject). The intragroup comparison between different paired conditions is given in Table 4 below.

⁸ Some participants corrected a linguistic unit other than the use of subjects. For example, some of them corrected the use of conjunctions or tense of the sentence. For others, some of them corrected the sentence either by adding or deleting information, which did not influence the grammaticality of the sentence. Those answers were considered to be acceptable since they did not involve the use of subjects.

Table 4. Intragroup comparison between different paired conditions

Conditions	Groups	paired sample t-test		
		<i>t(f)</i>	d.f.	<i>p</i>
CON2 vs. CON3	CG	1.41	25	0.17
	LG	7.08	26	0.0001
CON2 vs. CON4	CG	3.35	25	0.03
	LG	13	26	0.001
CON1 vs. CON4	CG	3.23	25	0.003
	LG	10.80	26	0.0001
CON1 vs. CON3	CG	1.80	25	0.083
	LG	5.44	26	0.0001

Con2 vs. Con3 questions whether the sensitivity to acceptable overt subject vs. its underuse differs across the groups. In other words, it compares the acceptable and unacceptable topic shift constructions. Considering this, no statistically significant difference was found in the CG data ($t=1.41$, $p=0.17$). Contrary to this, the mean difference of the LG yielded a statistically significant difference ($t=7.08$, $p=0.0001$). The pair Con2 vs. Con4 involves the acceptable overt subject use in the context of overuse of overt subject. Considering this, it compares the acceptable topic shift and unacceptable topic continuity constructions. As for the results, the mean score performances of both groups yielded statistically significant differences (CG, $t=3.35$, $p=0.03$; LG, $t=13$, $p=0.001$). As for the next pair, Con1 vs. Con4 represents null subject constructions. However, the target sentences in which they are questioned are given acceptable in Con1 and unacceptable in Con4 where an overt subject is employed instead of a null subject (underuse of null subject). As for the CG, the results surprisingly yielded a statistically significant difference ($t=3.23$, $p=0.003$). In the same way, the data indicated a statistically significant difference for the CG data ($t=10.80$, $p=0.0001$). Finally, the pair Con1 vs. Con3 represents the contexts in which an acceptable null subject is used and a null subject is overused respectively. Therefore, Con1 requires a null subject in the answer; on the other hand, Con3 requires an overt subject but an unacceptable null subject is employed in place of an overt one. Considering this, no statistical difference was observed in the CG data ($t=1.80$, $p=0.83$). However, there was a statistically significant difference for the LG data ($t=5.44$, $p=0.0001$).

Overall, based on the analysis, one can argue that the interpretation of the L2 speakers on the acceptability of null subjects in the context of their underuse and overuse in unacceptable target sentences was not been attained by the L2 speakers (Con2 vs. Con3; Con2 vs. Con4). Likewise, the interpretation of acceptable overt subject use in the context of their underuse and overuse was not fully acquired as well (Con1 vs. Con4; Con1 vs. Con3). Therefore, it can be argued that the L2 speakers were not sensitive to the pragmatically regulated null and overt subject distribution. As the data revealed, the findings from the CG surprisingly yielded statistically significant differences in contexts that involved Con4. The reason for this difference can be explained by the fact that the native speakers were less successful in Con4 compared to other conditions. Therefore, this suggests that the redundant use of overt subjects in the discourse might be tolerable, which needs further analysis. The data from the L2 speakers also supports this finding. Considering this, some native speakers might simply have regarded redundant overt subject constructions as acceptable. This explains why some CG data yielded statistically significant differences in contexts that involved Con4 (Con2 vs. Con4; Con1 vs. Con4).

Intergroup Comparison between Different Paired Conditions

This part compares the groups among each other across the paired conditions and questions whether the differences explored in the intragroup comparison yielded a statistically significant difference when the groups were compared against each other. The intergroup comparison between different paired conditions is given in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Intergroup comparison between different paired conditions

Conditions	Groups	two-sample t-test		
		<i>t(f)</i>	d.f.	<i>p</i>
CON2 vs. CON3	CG vs. LG	5.64	36	0.0001
CON2 vs. CON4	CG vs. LG	7.91	51	0.0001
CON1 vs. CON4	CG vs. LG	8.17	46	0.0001
CON1 vs. CON3	CG vs. LG	5.45	32	0.01

When the mean score performances between the L2 groups and the native speakers were compared, the results from the pair Con2 vs. Con3 yielded a statistically significant difference ($t=5.64, p=0.0001$). Likewise, as for the Con2 vs. Con4 data, the comparison resulted in a statistically significant difference ($t=7.91, p=0.0001$). Regarding the comparison of the pair Con1 vs. Con4, the mean score performances of the L2 speakers as compared to native speakers yielded a statistically significant difference as well ($t=8.17, p=0.0001$). By the same token, the pair Con1 vs. Con3 also resulted in a statistically significant difference when the groups were compared with each other ($t=5.45, p=0.01$).

Overall, as in the case intragroup comparison, the intergroup comparison between different paired conditions also supports the insensitivity to the discursive constraints in terms of null vs. overt subject distribution by the L2 speakers. These findings necessarily indicate that the L2 speakers had deficits in interpreting underuse of overt subject and overuse of overt subject as pragmatically anomalous in the context of acceptable overt subject use (Con2 vs. Con3; Con 2 vs. Con4). In the same way, the L2 speakers also failed to interpret the underuse of null subject and overuse of null subject as violating discursive constraints in the context of acceptable null subject use (Con1 vs. Con4; Con1 vs. Con3).

Overall Discussion

The descriptive and statistical analyses revealed that the advanced Korean and Japanese L2 Turkish speakers had deficiencies in acquiring the null and overt subject distribution. Therefore, the present study posits that the findings are completely in line with the assertions of the Interface Hypothesis (IH), which states that the external linguistic properties that interface with discursive properties are vulnerable for L2 learners to acquire. As part of the syntax-discourse interface, the marking of topic continuity and topic shift on the realization of subjects presented learnability challenges to the L2 Turkish speakers as well.

An interesting result to discuss is that although Korean and Japanese have similar discursive constraints that regulate the distribution of subjects, the L2 participants were insensitive to the pragmatics of null vs. overt subject distribution in Turkish. This finding suggests that L1 transfer is not operative at the syntax-discourse interface since no evidence for L1 transfer has been found. If L1 transfer played a role, the Korean and Japanese speakers would display sensitivity to the discursive constraints in the target grammar, which necessarily refutes the claims made by the Full Transfer / Full Access Hypothesis (FTFA) on the grounds that the target structures were not attained by the L2 speakers and L1 influence was not confirmed. This finding is in line with several studies in the field which favor the IH as discussed before (e.g., Margaza & Bel, 2006; Lozano, 2018; Margaza & Gavarró, 2020). Taking this finding into account, it can be claimed that the syntax-discourse interface ‘is not selective depending on L1/L2 pairs’ (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006; cited in Rothman, 2009: 953). This means that the syntax-discourse interface is vulnerable irrespective of the L1 and L2 pairs. Therefore, as Montrul (2011) claimed, the syntax-discourse interface is not affected by L1 transfer. The present study strongly supports this assertion in that the L2 speakers did not transfer the discursive constraints present in their languages to L2 Turkish.

As the L2 learners either overused or underused null and overt subjects, this finding is not consistent with what the Avoid Pronoun Principle (APP) asserts. As Rothman (2009) posits, APP is a universal which applies to null subject languages in which using null subjects unless required otherwise is more economical. However, the non-target behavior of L2 speakers might suggest that despite being a universal, APP is not instantiated in L2 grammars. This might be related to the fact that APP is a discursive universal - rather than

being a purely grammatical constraint - and there might be general learnability problems instantiated in L2 discourse when it is mapped onto the syntax.

This vulnerability in L2 grammar is also known as the Interface Vulnerability Hypothesis (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006; Sorace & Serratrice, 2009). According to it, if ‘divergence’ occurs in L2 grammar, it is more likely to result from the ‘syntax-discourse interface than at other interfaces’. (Sorace & Filiaci, 2006: 500). This predicts that the components in the syntax-discourse interface cannot be fully acquired. However, the reason why the syntax-discourse interface is problematic to acquire and why L1 transfer is not possible has to be brought into question. Regarding this, researches displayed that there is an inherent difference between internal and external interfaces. For instance, Rothman and Slabakova (2018) claimed that interfaces between linguistic modules are less limited compared to non-linguistic domains. To illustrate, the syntax-semantics interface is only governed by linguistic principles whereas the syntax-discourse interface is additionally conditioned by the nature of the context. Therefore, processing information in this interface becomes more complex as framed by Sorace & Serratrice (2009) who argued that the interface between external and internal domains requires more ‘processing cost’ compared to the interfaces consisting of only internal domains. Therefore, the syntax-discourse interface becomes inherently more complex for L2 learners than the interfaces with internal domains such as syntax-semantics or syntax-morphology.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of the study, the results revealed target-deviant performance by the L2 speakers with respect to the interface properties governing the use of null and overt subjects. In that way, the findings were found to be compatible with the studies supporting the IH. Accordingly, the interface between syntactic knowledge and conceptual/discursive knowledge leads to problems for L2 speakers to process the principles which take place at this interface. Although the study did not particularly focus on the possible processing difficulties of this interface, future work on online processing at the very same interface will indicate how L2 speakers process the information that determines the choice to employ null or overt subject and will answer the question why this interface is considered to be problematic.

Drawing on the languages with the same constraints, the study discussed the L1 transfer effects at the syntax-discourse interface. Bearing this in mind, since Korean and Japanese have the same discursive rules as in Turkish, this similarity between languages brings forth valuable findings on the issue of L1 transfer. Accordingly, the findings hinted that no difference was observed in the behavior of L2 speakers on acquiring the discourse of null and overt subject distribution. Therefore, L1 transfer cannot account for the acquisition of null and overt subject distribution in L2 Turkish, necessarily refuting the claims made by the Full Transfer Models. Considering this, it can be justifiably argued that the syntax-discourse interface presents learnability challenges or difficulties for any L1 pairs. Obviously, the future study on different language pairs will enhance the debates as to why L1 transfer does not hold at this interface.

Abbreviations

ACC	: Accusative
APP	: Avoid Pronoun Principle
AOR	: Aorist
CG	: Control group
CGJT	: Contextualized grammaticality judgment task
Con1	: Condition 1
Con2	: Condition 2
Con3	: Condition 3
Con4	: Condition 4
DAT	: Dative
FTFA	: Full Transfer / Full Access Hypothesis
IH	: Interface Hypothesis
LG	: Learner group

L1	: First language
L2	: Second language
NOM	: Nominalization
PAST	: Past tense
PROG	: Progressive
UG	: Universal Grammar
1SG	: First-person singular
2SG	: Second-person singular
3SG	: Third-person singular
1PL	: First-person plural
2PL	: Second-person plural
3PL	: Third-person plural

References

- Belletti, A., Bennati, E., & Sorace, A. (2007). Theoretical and developmental issues in the syntax of subjects: Evidence from near-native Italian. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 25, 657–689. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11049-007-9026-9>
- Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on government and binding: The Pisa lectures*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.
- Enç, M. (1986). Topic switching and pronominal subjects in Turkish. In D. I. Slobin & K. Zimmer (Eds.), *Studies in Turkish linguistics* (pp. 209-231). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Erguvanli-Taylan, E. (1986). Pronominal versus zero representation of anaphora in Turkish. In D. I. Slobin & K. Zimmer (Eds.), *Studies in Turkish linguistics* (pp. 209-231). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Good, J., & Yu, C. L. (2005). Morphosyntax of two Turkish subject pronominal paradigms. In L. Heggie & F. Ordonez (Eds.), *Clitic and affix combinations, theoretical perspectives* (pp. 315-374). John Benjamins.
- Gürel, A. (2006). L2 acquisition of pragmatic and syntactic constraints in the use of overt and null subject pronouns. In R. Slabakova, S. Montrul, & P. Prévost (Eds.), *Inquiries in linguistic development: In honor of Lydia White* (pp. 259–282). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Huang, C. T-J. (1984). On the distribution and reference of empty pronouns. *Linguistic inquiry*, 15, 531-574.
- Jackendoff, R., (2002). *Foundations of language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kim, S. Y. (2007). Topics and null arguments in Korean: The syntax and discourse. *Proceedings of workshop in general linguistics* (pp. 63-76).
- Kornfilt, J. (2018). NP versus DP: Which one fits Turkish nominal phrases better? *Turkic Languages*, 22(2), 155-166.
- Lewis, G. (1967). *Turkish grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Liceras, J. M. (1988). Syntax and stylistics: more on the pro-drop parameter. In J. Pankhurst, M. Sharwood Smith & P. Van Buren (Eds.), *Learnability and second languages: A book of readings* (pp. 71–93). Dordrecht: Foris.
- Liceras J. M. (1989). On some properties of the pro-drop parameter: Looking for missing subjects in non-native Spanish. In S. Gass & J. Schachter (Eds.), *Linguistic perspectives in second language acquisition* (pp. 109-133). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lozano, C. (2018). The development of anaphora resolution at the syntax-discourse interface: Pronominal subjects in Greek learners of Spanish. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 47(2), 411-430. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-017-9541-8>
- Margaza, P., & Bel, A. (2006). Null subjects at the syntax-pragmatics interface: Evidence from Spanish interlanguage of Greek speakers. In M. Grantham O'Brien, C. Shea, & J. Archibald (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 8th generative approaches to second language acquisition conference* (pp. 88–97). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Margaza, P., & Gavarró, A. (2020). Null/overt subject alternations in L2 Spanish and L2 Greek. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics*, 5(1), 55, 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.969>
- Montrul, S. (2011). Multiple interfaces and incomplete acquisition. *Lingua*, 121 (4), 591-604. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2010.05.006>
- Montrul, S., & Louro, C.R. (2006). Beyond the syntax of the null subject parameter: A look at the discourse-pragmatic distribution of null and overt subjects by L2 learners of Spanish. In V. Torrens, & L. Escobar (Eds.), *The acquisition of syntax in romance languages* (pp. 401–418). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ortega, L. (2011). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Routledge.

- Rothman, J. (2007) Pragmatic solutions for syntactic problems: Understanding some L2 syntactic errors in terms of discourse-pragmatic deficits. In S. Baauw, F. Dirjkoningen & M. Pinto (Eds.), *Romance languages and linguistic theory* (pp. 299-320). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Rothman, J. (2009). Pragmatic deficits with syntactic consequences? L2 pronominal subjects and the syntax-pragmatics interface. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41, 951–973. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.07.007>
- Rothman, J., & Iverson, M. (2007). Input type and parameter resetting: Is naturalistic input necessary? *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 45(4), 285-319. <https://doi.org/10.1515/IRAL.2007.013>
- Rothman, J., & Slabakova, R. (2018). The state of the science in generative SLA and its place in modern second language studies. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 40(2), 417– 442. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263117000134>
- Schwartz, B. D. (1998). On two hypotheses of ‘Transfer’ in L2A: Minimal trees and absolute L1 influence. In S. Flynn, G. Martohardjono & W. O’Neil (Eds.), *The generative study of second language acquisition* (pp. 35–59). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Schwartz, B., & Sprouse, R. (1996). L2 cognitive states and the Full Transfer/Full Access Model. *Second Language Research*, 12, 40–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026765839601200103>
- Slabakova, R. (2013). Discourse and pragmatics. In J. Herschensohn, & M. Young-Scholten (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 482-504). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sorace, A. (2011). Pinning down the concept of “interface” in bilingualism. *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism*, 1(1), 1-33. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lab.1.1.01sor>
- Sorace, A., & Filiaci, F. (2006). Anaphora resolution in near-native speakers of Italian. *Second Language Research*, 22, 339–368. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0267658306sr271oa>
- Sorace, A., & Serratrice, L. (2009). Internal and external interfaces in bilingual language development: Revisiting the processing vs. representation distinction. *The International Journal of Bilingualism*, 13(2), 195–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006909339810>
- Tsimplici, I.M., & Roussou, A. (1991). Parameter-resetting in L2? *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics*, 3, 149–70.
- Tsimplici, I.M., & Sorace, A. (2006). Differentiating interfaces: L2 performance in syntax-semantics and syntax-discourse phenomena. In D. Bamman, T. Magnitskaia & C. Zaller (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 30th annual BUCLD* (pp. 653 – 664). Cascadilla.
- Vainikka, A., & Young-Scholten, M. (1994). Direct Access to X'-Theory--Evidence from Turkish and Korean adults learning German. In B. Schwartz & T. Hoekstra (Eds.), *Language acquisition studies in generative grammar* (pp. 265-316). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Vainikka, A., & Young-Scholten, M. (1996). Gradual development of L2 phrase structure. *Second Language Research*, 12(1), 7-39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026765839601200102>
- Vallduví, E. (2003). A theory of informatics. In J. Gutiérrez-Rexach (Ed.), *Semantics: Critical concepts in linguistics* (pp. 359-384). London: Routledge.
- White, L. (1985). The “pro-drop” parameter in adult second language learning. *Language Learning*, 35, 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1985.tb01014.x>
- White, L. (1989). *Universal grammar and second language acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- White, L. (2003). *Second language acquisition and universal grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- White, L. (2009). Grammatical theory: Interfaces and L2 knowledge. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *The new handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 49–68). UK: Bingley.
- White, L. (2011). Second language acquisition at the interfaces. *Lingua*, 121, 577-590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2010.05.005>
- Yamada, K. (2009). Acquisition of zero pronouns in discourse by Korean and English learners of L2 Japanese. In M. Bowles et al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 10th generative approaches to second language acquisition conference* (pp. 60-68). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Yano, Y. (1983). Bun o koeru bunpou [Grammar over sentences]. *Nihongogaku* 2, Tokyo: Meiji Shoin.

Appendix: The Contextualized Grammaticality Judgement Task

Aşağıda *italik*le yazılmış durumları dikkatlice okuyunuz ve her bir durumun altında duruma ilişkin verilmiş tümcelerde, tümce yapısında bozukluk olup olmadığını **Uygun** ya da **Uygun Değil** seçeneklerinden birini işaretleyerek belirleyiniz. **Uygun değil** seçeneğini işaretlediğinizde, ‘**Tümce**’ ibaresinin yanındaki her bir tümceyi düzeltiniz.

Read each of the contexts written in *italics* carefully and determine whether the sentences following each context are anomalous or not, by marking either of the two options, **Felicitous** or **Not Felicitous**. If you mark **the latter option**, correct each sentence next to the expression ‘**Tümce**’.

1. *Geçen sene kız kardeşim dilbilimde doktora yapmak için yurtdışına gitti. Ben ve ailem onun için çok mutlu olduk ama onunla çok az konuşabiliyoruz. Çünkü sürekli ders çalışıyor.*

Last year my sister went abroad to do a Ph.D. in linguistics. My family and I were very happy for her but we can barely talk to her. Because she is always studying.

Tümce: Kız kardeşim bir süredir yurtdışında ve sürekli ders çalışıyor.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

2. *Yurtdışı gezisi için arkadaşlarımla havaalanında saat 2’de buluşmaya karar verdik. Onlar tam 2’de gelmişti. Ancak ben trafikten dolayı havaalanına 2.30’da gidebildim ve uçağı son anda yakaladım.*

For an overseas trip, my friends and I decided to meet at the airport at 2 o’clock. They arrived at 2 o’clock sharp. However, because of the traffic congestion, I was able to get to the airport at 2.30 and I barely caught the flight.

Tümce: Ben havaalanına çok geç gitmeme rağmen ben uçağı yakalamayı başardım.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

3. *Diün arkadaşlarımla sinemaya gittik. Ben aksiyon filmlerinden hoşlandığım için arkadaşlarıma aksiyon filmine gidelim mi diye sordum. Ancak onlar komedi filmine gitmeyi tercih ettiler.*

Yesterday, my friends and I went to the cinema. As I like action movies I asked my friends to watch an action movie. However, they preferred to watch a movie based on comics.

Tümce: Ben aksiyon filmine gidelim mi diye sordum ama onlar komedi filmine gitmeyi tercih ettiler.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

4. *Ahmet ile ben her zaman Ali’nin ödevlerini yapmasına yardımcı oluruz. Diün Ali yine bizden yardım istedi ancak Ahmet Ali’ye çok işi olduğunu söyledi. Bu yüzden de Ahmet benden yardım istedi.*

Ahmet and I always help Ali to do his homework. Yesterday, Ali asked us for help again but Ahmet told Ali that he had lots of things to do. Therefore, Ahmet asked for my help.

Tümce: Ahmet’in işi olduğu için yapmamı istiyor.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

5. *Bu yaz arkadaşlarımla birlikte Antalya’daki yaz kampına gitmeyi çok istediğimi aileme söyledim. Ailem de yurtdışı tatiline benimle birlikte gitmek istediklerini söyledi. Sonunda onları ikna etmeyi başardım.*

I told my parents that I was longing to go to a summer camp in Antalya with my friends. But my family told me that they wanted to go on holiday abroad with me. At last, I was able to convince them.

Tümce: Onlar tatile yurtdışına gidecekler ben de arkadaşlarımla Antalya’daki yaz kampına gideceğim.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

6. *Sınavlara çok çalışmama rağmen ben hep düşük not alıyorum. Geçen hafta, Ebru, Kayhan ve ben Tarih sınavına kütüphanede beraber çalıştık. Ancak ben yine onlardan çok düşük not aldım.*

I always get low marks even though I study a lot for the exams. Last week, Ebru, Kayhan, and I studied for the History exam together in the library. Still, I got much lower marks than them.

Tümce: Ben sınavdan çok düşük not aldım ama daha yüksek not aldılar.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

7. *En iyi arkadaşım Kayhan bu sene İstanbul'a taşındı. Geçen gün beni arayıp onu ziyaret etmemi istedi ancak ben de şu sıralar çok yoğunum. Onu arayıp yazın gelebileceğimi söyledim.*

My best friend Kayhan moved to İstanbul this year. He called me the other day and asked me to visit him but I'm quite busy nowadays. I called him and say that I would be able to get there in the summer.

Tümce: Benim şu an gelemeyeceğimi ve benim onu yazın ziyaret edebileceğimi söyledim.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

8. *Yarınki mezuniyet balosu şehrin dışındaki otelde yapılacak. Özge, Ali'nin arabasının bozulduğunu bilmediği için, Ali'nin onu yol üzerinden almasını istedi. Ali ise durumu açıklayıp taksiye bineceğini söyledi.*

Tomorrow's graduation ball is going to be held in the hotel, out of town. Since Özge did not know that Ali's car broke down she asked Ali to pick her up on his way to the hotel. Ali, on the other hand, explained the situation and said he would get in a taxi.

Tümce: Ali arabasının bozulduğunu ve bu yüzden de taksiye bineceğini söyledi.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

9. *Geçen hafta Ebru ile akşam yemeği yemek için restorana gittim. Ebru peynirli pizza sipariş etti ve benim de denememi önerdi ama ben her zamanki gibi salata yemeye karar verdim.*

Last week, Ebru and I went to a restaurant for dinner. Ebru ordered a cheese pizza and recommended I try it but I decided to eat salad as usual.

Tümce: O pizza yedi ancak ben salata yedim.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

10. *Bu yaz Cem ile Elif İngiltere'ye gitmeye karar verdi. Cem'in aksine Elif daha önce İngiltere'ye hiç gitmediği için çok heyecanlı ve Cem'e sürekli yanında ne götürmesi gerektiğini soruyor.*

Cem and Elif have decided to go to the UK this summer. Unlike Cem, as she has never been to the UK before Elif is very excited and she keeps asking Cem what to bring with her.

Tümce: Cem daha önce İngiltere'ye gitti ama oraya hiç gitmedi.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

11. *Dün en iyi arkadaşlarım Mert ile Yiğit'i akşam yemeği için eve davet ettim. Daha sonra hazırlık yapmak için alışverişe çıktım. Ben alışverişteyken Mert aradı ve yorgun olduğu için gelemeyeceğini söyledi.*

Yesterday, I invited my best friends Mert and Yiğit to my house for dinner. Afterward, I went shopping for preparation. While I was out shopping Mert called me and told me that he wouldn't be able to come here since he was tired.

Tümce: Mert yorgun olduğunu ve gelemeyeceğini söyledi.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil

12. *Kemal yeni girdiği işte çok uzun saatlere kadar çalıştığı için mutsuz ve çok az para kazanıyor. Arkadaşları her Cuma onu dışarıya davet ediyor ancak o gitmek istemiyor.*

Because he works long hours at his new job, Kemal is unhappy and does not earn much money. His friends invite him out every Friday but he does not want to go out.

Tümce: Kemal çok para kazanmıyor ve o arkadaşlarıyla dışarı çıkmak istemiyor.

- a) Uygun b) Uygun Değil