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## فراگیری ساختار منفی انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی توسط

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### چکیده

در این مقاله استفاده از ساختار منفی در زبان انگلیسی به عنوان زبان خارجی از دو دیدگاه مورد بررسی قرار می‌گیرد. بر اساس دیدگاه دسترسی کامل/انتقال کامل، فراگیران زبان دوم در مرحله اول فراگیری به طور بالقوه تمام ساختارهای واژگان و کارکردی را از زبان اول به زبان دوم انتقال می‌دهند. دیدگاه دوم به نام ساختارهای درختی کوچک ادعا می‌کند که در مرحله ابتدایی تنها ساختارهای واژگانی از زبان اول منتقل می‌شود ولی ساختارهای کارکردی از زبان اول منتقل نمی‌شود. در این تحقیق داده‌هایی به صورت فلش کارد، قضایت دستوری و مصاحبه شفاهی از سه سطح بسندگی زبانی جمع آوری شد. نتایج این داده‌ها به طور معنی داری ساختارهای درختی کوچک را رد کرد و دیدگاه دسترسی کامل/انتقال کامل را مورد تأیید قرار داد.

کلیدواژه‌ها: فراگیران زبان دوم، ساختار منفی انگلیسی، دسترسی کامل/انتقال کامل، ساختارهای درختی کوچک

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## The Acquisition of English Negation as a Foreign Language by Persian Speakers

### 1. Introduction

The acquisition of negation is probably one of the best-studied syntactic phenomena in early interlanguage research, and many of these studies concluded that L1 and L2 development had much more in common than it was supposed before (Dulay and Burt, 1974 among others).

It is generally assumed that certain aspects of L1 transfer to the interlanguage grammar of language learners. Within the domain of functional categories, it is highly debated as to whether language acquisition is constrained by the L1 (i.e., Full Transfer and Universal Grammar (UG) resources, i.e., Full Access or Universal Grammar (UG) resources without L1 constraints, i.e., Minimal Trees. The former is supported by Schwartz and Sprouse (1994,1996), Epstein et al. (1996), Grodin and white (1996) while the latter is supported by Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994, 1996a, 1996b). However, as far as I know no research has been carried out to study the role of L1 transfer of negation in the acquisition of English negation as a foreign language.

This paper attempts to empirically substantiate which of the two hypotheses cause to develop interlanguage of the acquisition of English negation. In this respect the role of the language background possessed by Persian speaking learners of English is investigated through a comparative study in light of the most recent syntactically-based generative models of *Full Access/Full Transfer* (FA/FT) theory and the Minimal Trees Hypothesis (MTH).

### 2. The Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study tries to test the most recent generative model of L2 acquisition on the issue of language transfer. The L2 acquisition task is similar to that of L1 task: the learners must acquire a mental representation on the basis of *deficient* input (White, 1985). But the means, the process, and the end result may be different from the L1 acquisition. The questions are that What does the L2 learner start from?, What mechanisms do the L2 learners use?, and whether the interlanguages are subject to the constraints of UG? We have focused on the nature of the linguistic knowledge available at the commencement of L2 acquisition, including consideration of the

extent to which the L2 learner is influenced by the L1 grammar, and whether the L1 grammar is adopted as the L2 learner's initial theory of the L2. In this regard, two very important recent linguistic theories have been discussed here in this study.

### 2.1 Full access/Full transfer Hypothesis

This model proposed by Schwartz and Sprouse (1994, 1996), hypothesizes that the initial state of L2 acquisition is actually the final state of L1 transfer or (Full Transfer), and that failure to assign a representation to input data will force subsequent representations, drawn from options of Universal Grammar (Full Access). This model considers a crucial role for transfer and assumes that L2 acquisition has access to or is constrained by UG. This view stands in opposition to the Minimal Trees Hypothesis of Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994). Based on this viewpoint the whole L1 grammar excluding the phonetic matrices of lexical/morphological items is transferred to the L2 initial state. In other words, the starting point of L2 acquisition is quite different and distinct from that of L1 acquisition. It assumes that all the principles and parameter values as instantiated in the L1 grammar immediately carry over at the initial state of a new grammatical system on first exposure to the target language input.

Based on this model, we expect our Persian speakers transfer Persian negative structures into L2 situations. In other words, they must transfer "no + Verb" in their productions at the initial stage. Besides, they are expected to produce the grammatical English negative constructions, which are acquired at IP stage through receiving enough input.

### 2.2 Minimal Trees Hypothesis

Vainikka and Young Scholten (1994; 1996a; 1996b) propose that at the initial state of learning L2 what is transferred from L1 grammar to L2 acquisition is limited to the lexical categories (Noun, Verb, Adjective and preposition) and their linear orientation. At this state there are no functional categories (Inflections, complementizers or determiners). They believe that functional categories develop in succession. The formulation of this hypothesis was based on the acquisition of German as an L2 by speakers of various background L1s. They came to this conclusion that only lexical categories like headedness that the speakers of a head-first language will transfer this property to the second language situation, though the second language may be a head-last one. Just due to the exposure to the enough

language data this lexical property will be replaced in favor of the target language pattern. Regarding functional categories, no transfer happens, and this is a matter of some developmental succession that due to the enough exposure to the target language it will be instantiated.

Therefore, the learners transfer only their L1 VP. IP at first emerges in an unanalyzed way and then they add complex specifications to the functional constructions. Therefore, Neg, which is a functional category, being located between VP and IP, will not be produced at the initial state.

According to this hypothesis, Persian speakers are not expected to transfer their L1 negative constructions “no + V”, because Neg is a functional category, which emerges later.

To check whether the initial acquisition of English negation is a transfer of the Iranian L1 transfer of negation into English negation or not, we introduce the syntax of category of Negation in English and Persian.

### 3. Linguistic Analysis of Persian & English Negation

Persian has a form of sentential negator “ne/na” which is a bound morpheme preceding the verbs or auxiliaries regardless of any tense or agreement. In Persian when the Verb is negated, it just moves from VP to NegP. There is no need to have a second movement to IP. That is, tense and agreement are not checked when the verb is negated. For instance, just adding the negation marker “ne/na” to the verb can negate any verb of any kind. Never do you need to check tense or agreement this one-step movement. In English to negate a verb, unlike Persian, the verb must move to IP to check Tense and Agreement. This happens in a two-step movement, the first movement from VP level to Neg and then from Neg to IP. But due to the fact that the Persian Neg is a functional category, which is above VP, the use of Neg in different negative constructions regardless of the kind of verb (thematic, copula, modal or auxiliary), time or tense, proves that the learner has moved from VP level and acquired NegP. This can be illustrated in 1a-c:

- (1) a      Ali    nar:ahat    ni-st    (copula)  
              Ali    sad          neg-is  
              'Ali is not sad.'

b Ali na-mitavan-ad be Tehran beravad (modal)

Ali neg – can he to Tehran to go

'Ali can not go to Tehran.'

c Ali ghaza na-pokh-t (Thematic)

Ali food neg cook ed

'Ali did not cook food.'

The Persian progressive marker “da:shtan”, in terms of negation, is not negated like other verbs. The point is that this progressive marker is an auxiliary while “mi-” as a bound morpheme, is an aspectual imperfective marker. Since in Persian the negator ne/na is attached to the verb and also aspectual marker is attached to the verb. Therefore, the both have the same quality, i.e. they are both base-generated under NegP and aspectual projection respectively. However, the progressive auxiliary marker da:shtan is instantiated under IP. This is actually the reason that the Persian negative marker ne/na is not attached to the auxiliary da:shtan. See the examples given below:

(2) Ali darad be Tehran mi-rava-d

\*Ali na-da:rad be Tehran m-irava-d

Ali is to Tehran going he

'Ali is going to Tehran.'

To negate this present continuous construction, the main verb “miravam” rises to Neg to get the negative marker ne/na.

(3) Ali be Tehran na\_\_ mi\_\_ rav\_\_ ad

Ali to Tehran Neg-present-go-he

'Ali is not going to Tehran.'

The same story happens to the past continuous tense.

Unlike Persian, the position of English sentential negator is determined in terms of the kind of the verb. “n’t /not” is followed by copula “be”, auxiliary “be”, and “modal”. In terms of “thematic”

verbs, the negator comes before the verb, and it has to be supported by the introduction of the meaningless “do” support:

- (4) a. Ann was not sad. (Copula be)
- b. Ann was not eating lunch. (Auxiliary)
- c. Ann cannot go to London. (Modal)
- d. Ann did not cook food. (Thematic)

As it is clear now, if we compare English and Persian languages in terms of negation, they do not have the same structural pattern. Since negation in these two languages is structurally different, one expects the Persian learners transfer their L1 negation structure into L2. Therefore, no help can be given to the Persian learners through the L1, as far as negation is concerned. This actually makes this study so significant. Now let us describe the hypotheses used to test the data in this study.

#### 4. The Study

This study investigated whether UG is accessible in the acquisition of English as a foreign language, and if so, which one of the two null hypotheses proposed below can be accounted for.

##### 4.1 Research Questions

In order to investigate the issues discussed above and based on the theoretical framework presented in section two and the parameters of Persian and English negation, the present study addresses the following questions:

- 1. There is no relationship between the Minimal Trees hypothesis and the initial state of the acquisition of English as a foreign language with regard to negative constructions.
- 2. There is no relationship between Full Access/Full Transfer hypothesis and the initial state of the acquisition of English as a foreign language with regard to negative constructions.

#### 5. Method

##### 5.1 Subjects

This study was done in Iran, and 90 subjects out of 150 at three different levels of English language proficiency were selected. In order to tap the subjects' proficiency level, they were asked to complete the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) (2001) which is a

timed test and should be completed in 30 minutes. The test consists of 60 items of vocabulary, grammar and cloze test. Each level included 30 members.

## 5.2 Instruments and Procedures

To select the participants in three different levels of language proficiency, the researchers applied two criteria: one was their experience period with English, and the other was using some standardized proficiency test based on a textbook, the New Headway ready-made questions, which is classified from beginner stage to the advanced one. The total number of the questions was 45 ones. The criterion mark for elementary level was less than 15, the intermediate level was 15 to 30, and above 30 was that of advanced level.

### 5.2.1 Flash Card Task

In order to collect some comprehensive data, three different individual tasks were used. These tasks were: (1) flash card task, (2) grammatical judgment task, and (3) oral interview task. These tasks are valid\* because they make the subject to provide negation construction. The first two tasks are tasks of comprehension while the last one is a task of production. The tasks are also reliable because different tasks provided almost the same results (see the results below).

One of the techniques to collect data was using flash cards to make sentences. The sentences varied in number of words from 5 words to 10 ones (the sample Flash Card sentences are given in the raw data appendix I) the total number was 16 sentences dividing them into three general categories. The first category was related to the usage of copula “be” which included 3 sentences, two negative and

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\* The simplified Chapelle (1999) questions ‘What does our test measure?’ or ‘Does this test measure what it is supposed to measure?’ could be a good starting point. Messick (1989) notes that validity is not a characteristic of a test, but a feature of inferences made on the basis of test scores and the uses to which a test is put. Cronbach & Davies (1955) hold it is not a test that is validated but ‘a principle for making inferences’. In order to establish what is being tested, testers need to consider what is known about language knowledge and ability, and the ability to use language i.e. not design a test arbitrarily.

one question form. The second category included auxiliary and modal one, which was composed of 8 sentences in different forms and tenses. The last group was related to the thematic verbs to determine the analyzed or unanalyzed do/does. The researchers believed that using 16 sentences would suffice and using more than that made the subjects somehow bored and consequently putting the data validity and reliability in danger. Of course, not all the 16 sentences were in negative forms, but about 6 of them were declarative or question forms, just in order not to make the subjects conscious of the negation that we were looking for.

#### 5.2.2 Grammatical Judgment Task

The second task, grammatical judgment task, was composed of 45 sentences in different forms like declarative, question, and negative. (The sample is given in Appendix I). These sentences were also classified into two general categories: target and transfer structural forms. Each category included three sub-classes of copula, modal/auxiliary, and thematic verbs. So there were actually 6 groups of sentences: (1) target copula, (2) target modal/auxiliary, (3) target thematic, (4) transfer copula, (5) transfer modal/auxiliary, and (6) transfer thematic.

The reason to determine different classes of sentences and to classify the detailed structural forms was just to make sure whether the subjects in different stages, especially in elementary one, resort to the mother language structures, so depicting some transfer of any kind, so far as sentential negation was concerned. Therefore the researchers did their best to use tangible clear vocabularies not to mislead the subjects. Otherwise if they made any mistake, it was not clear whether it was due to the learners' mental grammar or due to their lack of knowledge of vocabulary. All these 45 sentences were ranked into 5 categories: from 1 showing completely correct to 5 showing completely incorrect.

#### 5.2.3 Oral Interview Task

The last task used to collect valid data to support all the two previous ones was controlled oral production. This was a really important one because its focus was on the subjects' spontaneous responses, not giving them time enough to think deeply to use their conscious grammatical knowledge learned deductively in formal school or university language classes.

The procedure was actually based on showing individual subjects different color photos in turn, and producing one or more declarative sentences. Then asking them to confirm or reject the produced sentences based on the photos with exactly the same structure in positive or negative forms. Therefore, if the subjects were introduced a sentence that did not go with the photo, they had no choice but producing a negative form of the same sentence. In this way the specific valid data, which is sentential negation, was elicited so properly without letting them be conscious of.

Of course, not all subjects produced the same intended structures, though they were sure that the sentence did not go with the photo, they avoid producing the challenging intended structures (so-called avoidance technique). The researchers did their best to use the same structures and vocabularies. And the pool of sentence corpus was semantically a mixture of both correct and incorrect sentences, in terms of the given photos. The researchers did their best to include different structures, copula, auxiliary/modal, and thematic verbs in different tenses. The average total sentence for each subject to be negated was 12.

In order to come to a comprehensive data analysis different possible and plausible techniques were used and all their oral production was recorded on eight cassettes. The point is that all the instructions for different tasks were given in subjects L1 in order to make sure that no ambiguity was left.

## 6. Data analysis and Results

In this section the data derived from three various tasks regarding the functional category of Negation is to be analyzed. Data were collected from the performance of the subjects through three different tasks namely, (1) oral interview task, (2) flash card task, and (3) grammatical judgment task. In order to compare the overall mean difference between the three levels of proficiency, the obtained scores were carried out by ANOVA\*. To determine the level of differences between all the three levels in pairs, Scheffe Test was conducted to have a clear picture of all levels of significance.

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\* The One-Way ANOVA procedure produces a one-way analysis of variance for a quantitative dependent variable by a single factor (independent) variable. Analysis of variance is used to test the hypothesis that several means are equal. This technique is an extension of the two-sample t test.

### 6.1 Grammatical Negative Constructions

To see whether the subjects of different levels of proficiency observe IP and the functional category of Neg in all three tasks of Oral Interview, Flash Card, and Grammatical Judgment, the frequency of their grammatical negative constructions were computed. Table two shows the percentage of the correct utterances produced by the subjects of the three levels of proficiency in all three tasks.

Table 1: The Relative Frequency of Grammatical Negative Constructions

Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	561	17.86
Intermediate	1180	37.56
Advanced	1400	44.57
Total	3141	100

ANOVA Test was conducted to show the mean differences at the level of .05 among all these three levels of proficiency. The test showed that the difference between the subjects at three levels of proficiency was highly significant ( $F=3273035$ ;  $P < .000$ ). Scheffe Test Multiple comparisons showed the mean difference comparing the groups in pair. The level of the difference for all the pairs was also significant (0.000).

### 6.2 Non-Grammatical Negative Constructions

The non-grammatical negative constructions were those ones that had grammatically some problems. The researchers tried to analyze the data first totally and then categorized them into three groups of 1) “No + Verb” construction which is a kind of transfer, 2) “Unidentified IP” constructions that are those ungrammatical sentences that prove the

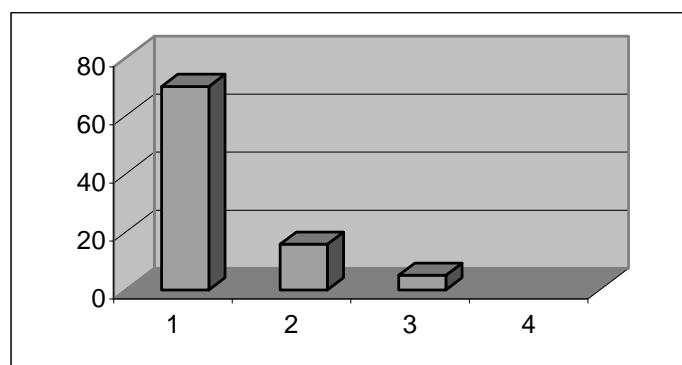
learner has moved from VP level but has not yet acquired IP level. The learners have some problems with tense and/or agreement. Producing sentences like (\*He do not speak English) shows that the learner is not in VP level any more, but he is not in IP level either. The third group of ungrammatical constructions is those that do not follow any special pattern. We ignored this group, because they prepare us with no key regarding to their structural pattern.

With regard to the constructions produced by all the subjects of the three levels, the frequency of all the non-grammatical negated constructions uttered by subjects of the three stages of proficiency and their percentage was conducted. Table 2 and graph 1 make it clear:

Table 2: The Relative Frequency of Non-Grammatical Negative Constructions

Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	951	70.02
Intermediate	308	15.73
Advanced	99	5.05
Total	1358	100

Graph 1: Non-Grammatical Negative Constructions



The Elementary subjects made the highest number of non-grammatical negative constructions (951), i.e. 70.02% percent, while the intermediate and the advanced subjects had 308 and 99 non-grammatical negative constructions making only 15.73% and 5.05% respectively.

ANOVA analysis, showed that the three levels of proficiency were significantly different from each other ( $F=435.584$ ;  $P< 0.000$ ). Then all the three levels of proficiency performed significantly different from each other. All the three pairs of the Elementary/Intermediate the Elementary/Advanced and the Intermediate/Advanced were also significantly different from each other (0.000)

To have a better picture of different stages of acquisition of English Negation, the researchers tried to analyze all different non-grammatical constructions in all three different tasks individually.

#### 6.2.1 No + Verb Transfer

To determine the effect of L1 on L2 situation, as far as Negative constructions are concerned the frequency of No + Verb construction was taken into consideration (see section 3). The Elementary subjects produced 106 such constructions making 64.02% of the total number (162). The Intermediate and Advanced also had 42 and 17 such constructions making 25.60% and 10.35% respectively.

The ANOVA test showed that the mean difference between the groups of proficiency was significant ( $F=25.261$ ;  $P< 0.000$ ). This proves that the different levels did significantly differ from each other. Scheffe Test was carried out to determine which of the pairs was significant. The intermediate and the advanced subjects did not perform significantly different from each other. The performances of the other two pairs were highly significant at the level of 0.000.

Here all the Transfer constructions (No+Verbs) in all the three tasks will be clarified individually to check whether the difference between the levels in each task is significant or not.

#### 6.2.2 No + Verb Transfer in Grammatical Judgment Task

Considering grammatical judgment task, the frequency of the No+Verb constructions produced by all the subjects is illustrated in table 10. The Elementary individuals produced 79 non-grammatical negative constructions, i.e., only 57.25% of the total number (138).

The Intermediate subjects selected 42 such contractions (15.81%). The Advanced individuals had only 17 ones (12.38%).

The difference between the subjects of the three levels of proficiency is highly significant ( $F= 21.452$ ;  $P 0.000$ ). The pairs of the Elementary/Intermediate and the Elementary/Advanced did significantly different from each other. But the difference in the pair of the Intermediate/Advanced was not highly significant like the other pairs (.036).

#### 6.2.3 No + Verb Transfer in Flash Card Task

With regard to the flash card task, the researchers took the frequency of the No+Verb negative constructions by all the subjects. The total number of such constructions was 10, produced by the Elementary subjects only (See Appendix II).

The mean difference between the groups of proficiency acted significantly below the level of .05 ( $F=4.677$ ;  $P<.012$ ). As it is clear, the level of significance of the two pairs of the Elementary/Intermediate and the Elementary/Advanced is significant at the level of 0.034.

#### 6.2.4 No + Verb Transfer in Oral Interview Task

With regard to the Oral Interview task, the frequency of all No + Verb constructions produced the Elementary subjects only was 16 (See Appendix II). The level of significance between the groups is at the level of .001, which is highly significant. The first two pairs of Elementary/Intermediate and Elementary/Advanced are significantly different from each other. The level of significance of these groups is at .004.

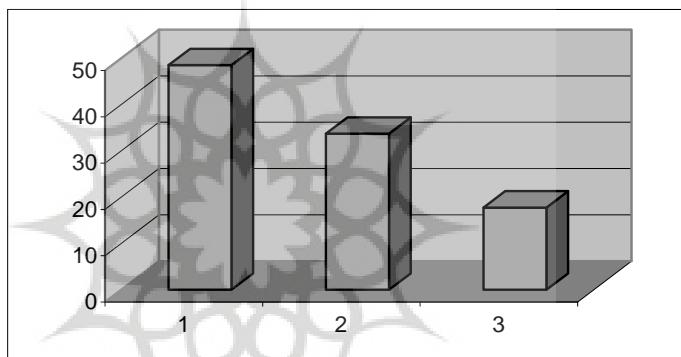
#### 6.2.5 Underspecified IP

The fact is that not all the non-grammatical constructions were “No + Verb” transfer constructions. The subjects of the three different levels produced structures that showed they had risen out of VP, but they had not acquired IP because they had not acquired tense or agreement projections yet. They produced sentences like: (He do not work.). So we included all these structures into another category called underspecified IP. Table 3 shows the percentage of the correct utterances produced by the subjects of the three levels of proficiency.

Table 3: The Relative Frequency of Underspecified IP Constructions

Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	146	52.89
Intermediate	91	32.97
Advanced	39	14.13
Total	276	100

Graph 2: Underspecified IP



Using ANONA, we found out that the three levels of proficiency are significantly different from each other ( $F=26.299$ ;  $P<.000$ ). The mean difference of the Elementary/Intermediate is significant at the level of .002. The Elementary/Advanced, as well as the Intermediate/Advanced pair are significant at the level of .002.

We believe that if the underspecified IP constructions in all the three tasks are separately analyzed, we can have a better picture for our final conclusion. Furthermore, ANONA showed that the three levels of proficiency are significantly different from each other for all tasks.

## 7. Discussions

The analysis of the data implies that the initial acquisition of English negative constructions is consistent with the Full Access/Full Transfer point of view. As it was mentioned in section four, at first the

grammatical negative constructions and then the non-grammatical constructions produced by the three levels of proficiency in three different tasks of Grammatical Judgment, Flash Card, and Oral Interview will be discussed.

### 7.1. Grammatical Negative Constructions

There are actually high levels of differences between the three levels of proficiency. It was indicated that the Elementary subjects had the least number of grammatical negative constructions (17.86%), while the advanced ones had the highest number (44.56%). The mean difference between the three levels and also the mean difference between the whole groups in pair were significant at the level of (0.000) illustrated in tables two and three. This proves that the Elementary subjects are not at IP stage yet. However, the Intermediate and the advanced subjects produced the highest number of negative constructions. Due to the fact that Negation is functional both in English and Persian Intermediate and Advanced are at the IP stage. On the other hand based on ANOVA and Scheffe test the mean differences between the three groups were significant. This indicates that the Elementary subjects are not at IP stage yet. Whereas the Intermediate and advanced subjects have acquired IP. The point is that we are looking for the subjects transfer from their first language into a foreign language-learning situation to test the two hypothesis mentioned before. Therefore, we need to analyze the non-grammatical constructions i.e. negation constructions produced by different levels of proficiency to see whether they have transferred L1 negation constructions into L2 setting or not. So the heart of our project is the subject's initial state of learning a foreign language, and the categories that they have transferred from their L1 to the foreign language setting. Consequently, subjects' non-grammatical constructions need to be analyzed so carefully.

### 7.2. Non-Grammatical Negative Constructions

Regarding non-grammatical negative constructions, the results show that there are high levels of differences between all the three levels. The Elementary subjects had the highest number of non-grammatical constructions (70.02%), while the Advanced and the intermediate produced the least number (5.05% and 15.73% respectively). The mean difference between the three levels and between all the levels in pair was significant. The point is that all the non-negative constructions produced by the Elementary subjects were not of the

same kind. They were based on different non-grammatical patterns, partly of “No + Verb” pattern, partly of Underspecified, and partly of the no clear pattern:

- (5) They no play football. (No + Verb)  
(6) He don't watch TV. (Unidentified IP)  
(7) He is go no homes. (No clear pattern)

In order to analyze the data and have a clear picture of that, the researchers divided these three patterns, the third category, (no clear pattern) was eliminated because we were going to have some systematic pattern to go through in order to have some outcome which is applicable and generalized to other cases. The first category, “No + Verb” was discussed to be a kind of L1 transfer in EFL (see section 2.5). The second class i.e., “Underspecified IP”, based on Vainikka and Young-Scholten’s (1996) that the Elementary L2 learners at the initial state after VP acquisition, they move upward but before acquiring IP, they go through a stage called underspecified IP, as a functional projection, at which they produce IP constituents and unspecified constructions.

- (8) Mary do not eat.  
(9) They do not play last night.  
(10) We didn't played ping-pong.

At this stage the L2 learners have some problem with TP and /or AgrP or in general IP. But having these problems does not justify that they have not raised from lower level of constructions to IP.

Therefore, these two classes, first totally in all tasks, and then individually in each task are analyzed to see whether the two hypotheses are rejected, and if so, which one.

### 7.2.1. No + Verb Transfer

The three levels performed significantly different from each other with regard to the production of transfer. The Elementary subjects had the highest number (64.02%), while the Intermediate and the Advanced had the least (25.60% and 10.35% respectively) shown in table 4. The mean differences between the three levels and that of levels in pair were significant at the level of (0.000). Only the Intermediate and the advanced subjects were different at the level of

(0.0153). A continuum can be imagined, having the Elementary subjects at one end and the Advanced at the other, while the Intermediate ones somewhere between. Here the Persian Speakers have transferred NegP from their L1 into L2 situation. This is a kind of evidence in favor of the Full Access/Full Transfer. This is due to the fact that Full Transfer/Full Access viewpoint claims that the learners transfer their L1 lexical along with the functional categories into L2 situation. In this study the functional category Neg is accounted up to NegP rather than IP level. The researchers have analyzed different tasks with regard to "No + Verb" transfer.

In Grammatical Judgment task, all the three groups of proficiency performed significantly different. The Elementary selected the highest number (57.25%), the Intermediate and Advanced selected the least (30.45% and 12.31% respectively). Their performances were significantly at the level of 0.000. The Elementary subjects significantly produced this kind of transfer from their L1.

Considering the same construction in Flash Card task, the difference between the subjects of the three levels of proficiency was absolutely significant. The Elementary subjects selected 10 out 10. The other two levels did not have such constructions at all. The mean difference between the three levels was (0.012). And the mean difference of the Elementary/Intermediate and the Elementary/Advanced pairs were (0.034).

With regard to the last task i.e., Oral Interview, again the only level of proficiency that produced such transfer was the Elementary one. They had 16 such constructions (100%). The other two levels did not produce such constructions at all. Consequently the mean difference between the three levels is (0.001).

Therefore, it is obvious that the Elementary subjects have not acquired IP level in the target language, so they try to resort to transferring NegP from their own language. But the Intermediate and Advanced learners have not had such constructions at all, in other words they have observed IP level. The individual analysis of the data from all the three tasks are all consistent with the Full Access/Full Transfer hypothesis that claims Elementary learners at the initial state transfer all their lexical and functional categories from their L1 to L2 situation. On the other hand, the Minimal Trees hypothesis is rejected, due to the reason that claims only lexical categories are accessible at the initial state of second language learning. The Persian speakers in a

foreign language setting did transfer their L1 NegP, which is a functional category.

### 7.2.2. Underspecified IP Constructions

Not all the non-grammatical sentences produced by the three levels of proficiency were of “No + Verb or transfer”. Some of them were underspecified IP. It was mentioned that the Elementary level had the highest number of such underspecified IP constructions (52.89%). While the Intermediate and Advanced subjects produced 32.97% and 14.13% respectively. The mean difference between the three levels is highly significant at the level of (0.000). All the levels in pairs were significantly different. Again the Elementary ones proved that they have not acquired IP, therefore transferred any functional category can be a support in favor of the Full Access/Full Transfer hypothesis. To have a clear picture of the production of such underspecified constructions, the researchers analyzed this kind of constructions from all the three tasks individually.

Considering such constructions in Grammatical Judgment task, we can find out that the Elementary subjects selected the highest number of underspecified IP constructions (48.52%), while the Intermediate and Advanced ones had 33.72% and 17.75% respectively. The mean difference between all the three levels is significant at the level of 0.000. The mean differences of the groups in pair were significant as well.

In Flash Card task the advanced subjects did not have any underspecified constructions at all. The intermediate subjects made 21.95% of the total, and the advanced ones had the highest proportion 78.04% of the total number, as it is illustrated in table 25. The mean difference between the three levels is significant at the level of (0.000). The groups in pair performed differently as well.

Regarding Oral Interview task, we see in table 28 that the Elementary subjects had the highest proportion of such constructions (47.14%). The Intermediate produced 40.00%, and the advanced group had the least proportion (12.85%). The mean difference between the three levels was not significant (0.024) The pair of Elementary/Intermediate did not perform significantly different at the level of (0.859). The lack of significance between the Elementary/Intermediate might be due to the EFL setting in which the learners are not given chance to use the target language in speech. Though they have acquired IP, just due to the lack of use, they have

not performed well in oral Interview. The Elementary/advance pair performed significantly different at the level of 0.034. And the significance of the last pair of Intermediate/Advanced was at the level of 0.117. The oral production in EFL is the most challenging task for the learners of all groups. Therefore, the learners, though competent regarding the knowledge of language, are not able to express themselves or their knowledge clearly.

The performance of the three levels of proficiency in all three tasks proves that the Elementary subjects produced the highest proportion of Underspecified IP constructions, proving the fact that they have not acquired IP level. Unlike the low level, the Intermediate and Advanced levels have the least number of such constructions. Therefore these two levels have acquired IP level. The point is that the Underspecified IP stage is above VP level. Therefore the Elementary subjects have produced constructions, which are functional. This is opposite to the claims made by the Minimal Trees hypothesis. On the other hand, the Full Access/Full Transfer is confirmed.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study can briefly be reinterpreted in terms of two important points and within the predictions of the generative model of L2 acquisition, namely, FA/FT and MTH. Regarding the initial attainment, the findings went against MTH and were in line with the predictions of FA/FT model. The negation features were selected from L1 indicating that especially low level learners had not already acquired tense projection whereas the higher level groups erred less grammatical negation because of the acquisition of tense. Having a language background which is typologically distant or close to the target language, one would greatly make more or less ungrammatical constructions. Here in the case of English-Persian, the typological distance in terms of the lack of congruent negation structure affects more lower groups than higher ones. Potential L1 effects have been addressed from these two hypotheses. The present study suggests L1 influence. As it was mentioned in Persian when the Verb is negated, it just moves from VP to NegP while in English the verb must move to IP to check tense and agreement. It means that although lower level learners transfer the Persian functional project into English, they still need to acquire the projection of negation projection movement to TP.

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## Appendix I

### Flash Card Task

I have to speak in class.  
Mina has been washing the dishes.  
He will not be a dentist any more.  
They were not happy this morning.  
They were not practicing Arabic last night.  
He did not help me with Farsi.  
She is not Ali's sister.  
You could not watch TV last night.  
My father does not drive the car slowly.  
I saw the new teacher this morning.  
Are those men good doctors?  
Do we go shopping on Thursday?  
You do not stop smoking at all.  
they could not have been in his office.  
We had not been cleaning the room before 8.  
Mina has not studied hard today

### Grammatical Judgment Task

Please select one of the numbers for each sentence.

1= (Completely correct)

2= (Correct)

3= (I do not know)

4= (Wrong)

5= (Completely wrong)

Who is the richest person in your country?

1            2            3            4            5

I'm sure that's no right at all.

1            2            3            4            5

There no is a big supermarket.

1            2            3            4            5

You bought a very nice and beautiful car.

1            2            3            4            5

They have a not fish in their hands.

1            2            3            4            5

The teachers no teach in schools on Fridays.

1	2	3	4	5
What did she do last Monday evening?				
1	2	3	4	5
Every body catches no the fish.				
1	2	3	4	5
Is there a bank near here?				
1	2	3	4	5
She could to speak two languages when she was 12.				
1	2	3	4	5
You no wanted to ask him any questions.				
1	2	3	4	5
As a matter of fact you not happy.				
1	2	3	4	5
I arrived at Yazd airport late last night.				
1	2	3	4	5
Is that area a cold one?      No cold.				
1	2	3	4	5
Will she study her book in a good way?				
1	2	3	4	5
He listened to no the music.				
1	2	3	4	5
I don't play football last week.				
1	2	3	4	5
He has got a little pencil.				
1	2	3	4	5
No she explained the problem in a good way.				
1	2	3	4	5
Amin can no have it for himself.				
1	2	3	4	5

#### AppendixΠ

A Sample of unanalyzed Data of the three levels  
(Flash Card)

A. ( An Elementary Subject)

Subject no.13.

I have to speak English in class.

Mina has the been dishes washing.

He will any not be more a dentist.

They were not this happy morning.

They were not last Arabic night practicing.

**B. (An Intermediate Subject)****Subject no.15.**

I have to speak in class.

Mina has been washing the dishes.

He will not be.... .

They were not happy this morning.

They were not practicing Arabic last night.

**C.(An Advanced Subject)****Subject no.10.**

1. I have to speak in class.

2. Mina has been washing the dishes.

3. He will not be a dentist any more.

4. They were not happy this morning.

5. He did not help me with Farsi.

2. A Sample of Oral Interview unanalyzed Data of the three levels

**A. (An Elementary Subject)****Subject no.7.**

1. This is a picture of a park.

No this isn't. This is not a picture of a park.

2. There are two boys in the picture.

No they aren't. They are a girl and a boy.

3. They had two sandwiches.

No they had not. They had \_.

4. She can speak Farsi.

No she can not. She can speak English.

**B. (An Intermediate Subject)****Subject no.12.**

1. There were few people in this restaurant.

No there aren't. There are people in the restaurant today.

2. This lady can speak Farsi very well.

No she can not speak Farsi.

3. I see a boy in this picture.

No, she is not a boy. She is a girl.

4. He can play baseball very well.

He can not play baseball, because he is very old.

(An Advanced subject)

**Subject no.3.**

1.Lots of children are sitting in the restaurant.

Actually they're not children.

2. I see a man who has a book in his hand.  
No he doesn't. He doesn't have a book in his hand.
3. She can speak Farsi so well.  
No, she can't speak Farsi so well.
4. He will be playing golf tomorrow.  
I have no idea.

