

ON SUBJECT USE IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The present article addresses the issue of syntactic transfer in child L2 acquisition, by presenting a two-part study in which Romanian monolinguals are compared to Romanian-Hebrew balanced bilinguals in two spontaneous production tasks. The main research question concerns the influence of Hebrew as a second L1 on the (re)setting of the Null Subject Parameter in English-L2, as Hebrew exhibits the same subject and verb morphology pattern as English for certain persons and tenses. The collected data provide evidence in favour of both access to UG and syntactic transfer, supporting the Full Access Full Transfer Hypothesis.

Keywords: null subject parameter, agreement, full access full transfer hypothesis, L2 English, L1/2L1 Romanian, 2L1 Hebrew

1. Introduction

Until very recently and with very few exceptions, linguists working within the generative framework regarded the process of second language acquisition as encompassing any acquisition of a non-native language, be it L2, L3 or Ln. It was only after 2004, when generativists began turning their attention to L3 acquisition as a way of gaining insight into the questions that have been the object of debate in L2 acquisition studies (Angelis 2007, Leung 2007, Rothman et al. 2010). One of the main arguments in favour of three-language acquisition studies concerns the issue of syntactic transfer, which has been at the core of the studies and analyses so far (Leung 2007: 107). Generativists studying L2 acquisition have been interested in the accessibility of Universal Grammar (UG) and in the influences of L1 on L2 (transfer). With respect to the latter, acquisition studies looking into simultaneous bilingualism might be more efficient, as previous linguistic knowledge is richer (more systems are available for transfer), and could thus shed light on the ongoing controversy in multilingual acquisition.

Given the very low number of studies on bilinguals' acquisition of English as L2 and the complete absence of Romanian in these studies, I undertook to investigate the acquisition of the null subject parameter in English by Hebrew-Romanian bilinguals. The main research question is in what way, if any, Hebrew as an L1/L2 might influence the (re)setting of the Null Subject Parameter in English-L2.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides the syntactic background by describing the three languages involved in the study with respect to the null subject parameter, and the theoretical framework adopted in the present paper, Platzack's (2004) Person Phrase Hypothesis. Section 3 presents the predictions for the study, driven by the Full Transfer Full Access hypothesis (Schwartz and Sprouse 1994, 1996). Sections 4 and 5 include the two studies and the discussion of the results with reference to the predictions made by the model proposed in Section 3. The main conclusions of the study are summarized in Section 6.

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2. The null subject parameter

2.1 In a nutshell

The difference between languages which have an available null subject position (*pro*-drop languages) and those which do not has been addressed by generativists since the 1970s (Giorgi 2009: 1). Chomsky (1981) provided the first consistent account of the difference between the two types of languages, postulating a cluster of properties associated with the possibility of null subjects in *pro*-drop languages. Apart from missing subjects, he argued, post-verbal subjects, long *wh*-movement of subjects, empty pronouns in embedded clauses, and apparent violations of the *that*-trace filter are also possible in these languages. He linked this set of properties to the inflectional morphology of the languages in question, starting from the intuitive idea that Italian-like languages, which are allowed to drop their subjects, have rich inflection (strong agreement on the verb). Consequently, agreement has been proposed as the governor for null subjects. Conversely, null subjects are barred in languages like English, because the weak Agreement on the verb cannot properly govern them and the Empty Category Principle would thus be violated (Chomsky 1982 in Giorgi 2009: 3).

Whether it is indeed richness of inflectional morphology that influences the parameter has been the object of a long-standing debate over the last decades. The existence of languages like Chinese, which lack morphology but allow null subjects, or like Icelandic, which have ϕ -features marked on the verb but do not drop their subjects, further complicates the issue. However, typological analyses point out that “the majority of languages do show a correlation between strong agreement and *pro*-drop” (Giorgi 2009: 21). This point will be of interest in the following sections, where the main subject properties of the three languages relevant to our study (Romanian, Hebrew, and English) are presented.

2.2 Romanian

Romanian is a *pro*-drop VSO language, with the subject in post-verbal position, with the verb raising to Inflection (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Motapanyane 1995, Cornilescu 2000, a.m.o) and with rich inflectional morphology. The bundle of features associated to the parameter (Chomsky 1981) is also found in the syntax of Romanian subjects:

(i) missing subjects

- (1) Am găsit cartea.
 have find-PERF book-DEF
 ‘I found the book.’

(ii) free inversion in simple sentences (i.e. post-verbal subjects)

- (2) A mâncat Ion.
has eat-PERF Ion
'John ate.'

(iii) long *wh*-movement of subjects

- (3) Fata care cred că a plecat.
girl-DEF that believe that has leave-PERF
'The girl that I believe to have left.'

(iv) empty pronouns in embedded clauses

- (4) Aceasta este fata care crede că nu pleci.
this is girl-DEF who think that not leave
'This is the girl who thinks that you don't leave.'

(v) apparent violations of the *that*-trace filter¹

- (5) Cine crezi că pleacă?
who believe that leave
'Who do you think that will leave?'

(vi) no expletive with weather verbs, impersonal and raising constructions (Pagurschi 2010:7)

- (6) a. Plouă.
rain
'It is raining.'
b. E adevărat că Vlad a obținut o bursă.
is true that Vlad has get-PERF a scholarship
'It is true that Vlad got a scholarship.'

Overt pre-verbal subjects are assumed to move to an A-bar position in the C-domain (in TopicP, or FocusP, for instance), while post-verbal subjects occupy the specifier position of the VP, MoodP, or AgrP (see e.g. Cornilescu 2000).

2.3 Hebrew

Hebrew, "an SVO language where the finite verb normally raises to INFL" (Vainikka and Levy 1999: 640), exhibits a mixed subject omission pattern, thus being neither a fully *pro*-drop nor a fully non-*pro*-drop language. Hebrew may drop its subjects for 1st and 2nd persons in past and future tenses, but disallows null subjects for 3rd person

¹ More recent studies claim, however, that the *that*-trace effect is not a property of the Null Subject Parameter (Pesetsky and Torrego 2001).

in these tenses, as can be noticed in examples (7)-(10), taken from Vainikka and Levy (1999: 615,641):

- (7) Aliti al ha-rakevet.
step-PAST-1SG on the train
'I boarded on the train.'
- (8) *Ala al ha-rakevet.
step-PAST-3M.SG on the train
'(He) boarded on the train.'
- (9) Elex itxa.
go-FUT-1SG with-you
'I will go with you.'
- (10) *Yelex itxa.
go-FUT-3SG with-you
'(He) will go with you.'

However, omitting the 3rd person subject is possible in past and future embedded clauses, "if there is an NP in the matrix clause that is coreferential with the omitted subject in the embedded clause" (Vainikka and Levy 1999: 618):

- (11) a. Hivtaxti lo she-yedaber
promise-PAST-1SG him that-speak-FUT-3SG.M
kama she-yrce.
as-much that-want-FUT-3SG.M
'(I) promised him that (he) would speak as much as (he) wants.'
- b. *Siparti la she-diber kama
tell-PAST-1SG her that-speak-PAST-3SG.M as-much
she-raca.
that-want-PAST-3SG.M
'(I) told her that (he) spoke as much as (he) wanted.'

Hebrew verbs do not carry person distinction for the present tense, and null subjects are not possible, regardless of the person:

- (12) *Zoxer et ha-tshuva.
remember-PRESENT-SG.M ACC the-answer
'(I/you/he) remember(s) the answer.' (Vainikka and Levy 1999: 646)

There are thus two types of contrasts with respect to the null subject parameter in Hebrew: the distinction between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person for the past/future tense, on the one hand, and the distinction between these two tenses and the present tense, on the other. Table 1 (taken from Vainikka and Levy 2000: 366) provides an overview of the morphological paradigm of Hebrew verbs.

Table 1
Hebrew Pronouns and Verb Inflections in the Past, Future and Present Tense
 ('to go')²

Pronoun	Past	Future	Present
Singular			
ani 'I'	halaxti	elex	holex-holext
ata 'you-M'	halaxta	telex	holex
at 'you-F'	halaxt	telxi	holext
hu 'he'	halax	yelex	holex
hi 'she'	halxa	telex	holext
Plural			
anaxnu 'we'	halaxnu	nelex	holxim-holxot
atem 'you-M'	halaxtem	telxu	holxim
aten 'you-F'	halaxten	telxu	holxot
hem	halxu	yelxu	holxim
hen	halxu	yelxu	holxot

The information in Table 1 shows that, in Hebrew, phonological resemblance exists only for those persons and tenses with which subjects may be dropped. The remaining endings (3rd person past and future, and the present tense entirely) do not exhibit the same morphological richness. On these grounds, it seems fair to conclude that the mixed null subject parameter of Hebrew is closely related to subject-verb agreement.

2.4 English

English is an SVO language with finite lexical verbs remaining inside the VP and poor inflectional morphology, which disallows null referential/expletive and post-verbal subjects in finite root and embedded clauses³. Under certain conditions, the subject remains inside the VP (i.e. post-verbal subjects) and an expletive pronoun is introduced to satisfy the EPP, as in (13b). Finally, none of the constructions allowed across the board in *pro*-drop languages are possible in English:

- (13) a. *Ø/John likes Mary.
 b. *Ø/There is a book on the table.
 c. The girl who believes I/*Ø have left.
 d. *Ø/It rains.

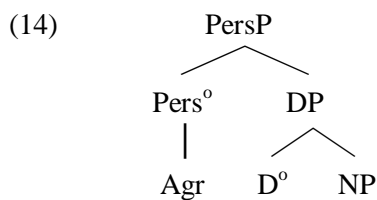
² Emphasis belongs to the authors and indicates shared phonological resemblance between pronoun and verb inflection.

³ The existence of non-canonical subjects (locative inversions and pronoun ellipsis for dropped subjects) is undisputed, but it is unlikely that such sentences are received in the input by the young participants in our study.

2.5 The theoretical framework

The theoretical model which we adopt for the present study has been put forth by Platzack (2004). It nicely accounts for the distinction between the three types of languages in the study: *pro*-drop, partial *pro*-drop, and non-*pro*-drop.

Seeking to offer a harmonious answer to questions concerning languages like Hebrew (which allows null subjects only with some persons and tenses) or the contrast between Italian-like and Icelandic-like languages (rich morphology, but different values for the null subject parameter), Platzack hypothesises a Person Phrase (PersP), which is an extension of the DP, as in (14):

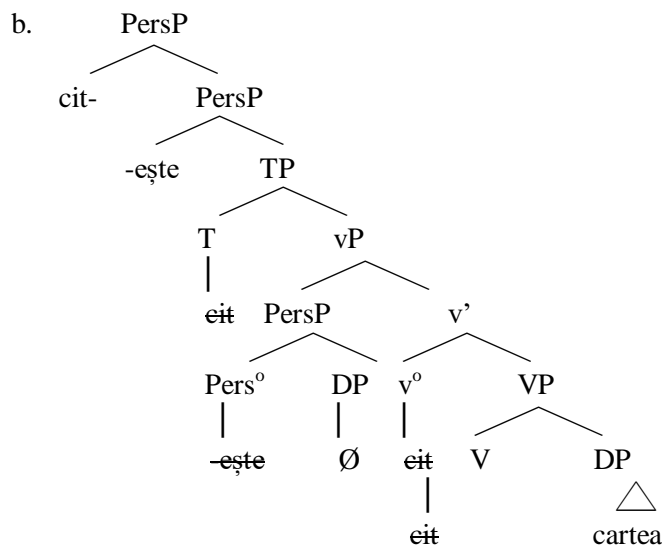


Assuming that pronouns and agreement do not differ with respect to their category, but to their syntactic role and to the contrast bound versus free morphemes, Platzack takes “agreement [to originate] as the head of a Person Phrase, taking a DP as its complement” (Platzack 2004: 85). According to his hypothesis, several possibilities arise as to the realisation of the DP: (i) Pers° has no phonological features and a bare lexical DP will project abstract grammatical features (number, gender, and person) in Pers° – overt lexical subjects; (ii) Pers° has phonological features and hosts a free morpheme – pronouns in non *pro*-drop languages; (iii) Pers° has phonological features and hosts a bound morpheme – agreement in *pro*-drop languages.

Platzack argues that agreement, like pronouns, is of two types: pronominal, which fills the subject position, and anaphoric, which requires a binder. It is the agreement feature which establishes the value of the null subject parameter.

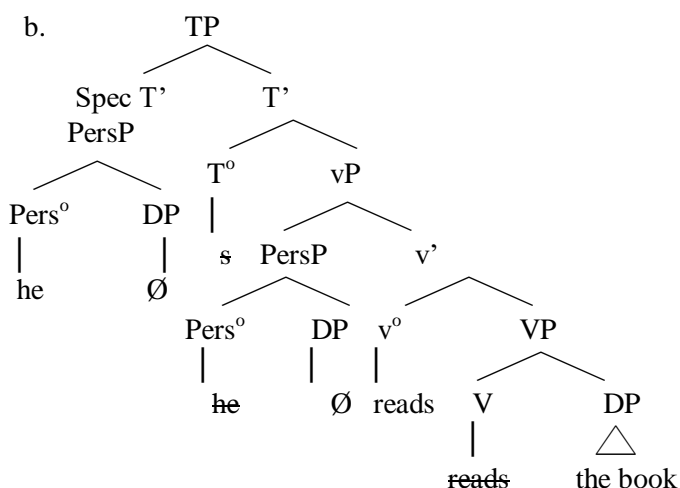
Thus a typical Romanian sentence (pronominal agreement) will have the following syntactic representation:

- (15) a. Citește cartea.
 reads book-DEF
 ‘S/he reads the book.’



Whereas a typical English sentence (anaphoric agreement) will be derived as in (16b):

(16) a. He reads the book.



Hebrew sentences, which exhibit both types of agreement, have two possible representations, depending on tense and person: (i) 1st and 2nd person dropped subjects with verbs in the past or future tense (pronominal agreement) will have the same derivation as the Romanian sentence; (ii) all other sentences, which require an overt subject due to anaphoric agreement, have a phonologically realised element (lexical DP or pronoun) within the PersP, which then moves to an A-position, yielding a representation similar to that of typical English sentences.

We now turn to the predictions we made for the (re)setting of the null subject parameter in children's learning of English-L2.

3. Predictions

We undertook the task of finding out whether there is any difference as to the acquisition of English subjects between Romanian-Hebrew bilingual children and Romanian monolingual children. Following Platzack (2004), we assume that the acquisition of subjects is strongly connected to acquiring the appropriate agreement features, which have different values in the three languages spoken by the participants in our study: Romanian and English have one type of agreement only, pronominal and anaphoric, respectively, while Hebrew lies somewhere in-between, switching between the two, depending on tense and person. In more precise terms, since Hebrew has a mixed subject system and both types of agreement (pronominal, which is the subject for 1st and 2nd person, past and future tense, and anaphoric for the present tense and for the 3rd person across the board), will this constitute an advantage for the Romanian-Hebrew bilingual group in dealing with the English input?

According to The Full Access Full Transfer Hypothesis (FTFA) (Schwartz and Sprouse 1994, 1996) the initial state in non-native language acquisition is constituted by the L1 grammar (Full Transfer – grammatical properties of the native language will form the basis of L2 acquisition), but that the process of learning is constrained by UG (Full Access – rebuilding the grammar in accordance with the different parameters/features of the target language). It is these two strong predictions that we can and will test in the present study, especially as the two groups of participants have different L1-backgrounds.

If this hypothesis is on the right track, we should expect the following observations to hold true in our two groups: (i) a grammar constrained by the principles of UG (i.e. the structures produced by the two groups which are disallowed in English are found in other natural languages); (ii) a lower number of dropped subjects in the bilingual group; (iii) a lower number of post-verbal subjects in the bilingual group; (iv) a lower number of subject-verb agreement errors in the bilingual group. If these differences were to be found between the two groups, then evidence for syntactic transfer would be obtained and we would be justified to conclude that Hebrew (as a second L1) indeed plays a role in the acquisition of L2-English.

4. The studies

4.1 Study 1

4.1.1 Participants

The first study was carried out in April 2013, in a Romanian-Hebrew Kindergarten in Bucharest. The data we have collected come from ten 5-to-6-year old children: 5

Romanian-Hebrew bilinguals and 5 Romanian monolinguals (Table 2), who learn English in an immersion context.

Table 2
The participants in Study 1

Bilinguals	Age	Age of onset ⁴	Monolinguals	Age	Age of onset
Noa	5;6	2;11	Anais	5;10	3;2
May	5;10	3;2	Andrei	6;2	2;7
Daniel 1	6;0	3;3	Maria	6;3	2;7
Adrian	6;0	3;3	Vladi	6;5	2;9
Daniel 2	6;8	3;0	Sara	6;7	2;11
Mean age	6;0		6;1		

Unfortunately, it is impossible to obtain information about the exact number of hours these children have been exposed to English for the last three years, but we were told that English is used by their instructors for at least 6 hours each day during the week. Four out of five children in the first group are “balanced bilinguals”, in that they speak Romanian with one of their parents and Hebrew with the other, while Noa has learned Romanian when moving to Romania (around age 1) and speaks it on a daily basis with her nurse. She is reported to have native-like proficiency in both languages. For the monolingual group, the language spoken at home is Romanian.

4.1.2 Methodology

In order to carry out the study, we have resorted to a production task, using the well-known children’s picture story, “Frog Goes to Dinner”, for the elicitation of oral spontaneous production data. During a one-time session, the children were asked to narrate the events they saw in the pictures, as the story unfolded (they were not accompanied by other children in the separate room the recordings were taken in). Since Hebrew past and present tense differ as to the possibility of null subjects (depending on the person), it would have been ideal to have the children tell the story from both a 1st-person and a 3rd-person point of view, employing both tenses, but this was not possible, either because they were immediately switching to the present tense (suggesting non-contrastive use of tenses), or because they grew tired of sitting in the classroom. All recordings have been subsequently transcribed in a format taken over from Buja (2008). The narratives provided by the children were then transcribed and coded, taking into consideration the variables related to the null subject parameter (valued 0 or 1): Agreement, Tense, overt subjects, preverbal subjects, double subjects, and nominative case. Double subjects were counted as Nominative 0. Although they contain a pronoun marked for case (he/she), we argue that these pronouns are employed to fill in the

⁴ The age of onset (Meisel 2008, 2010) refers to the age the children had when they were first exposed to English. As Table 2 shows, it is clear that all of the children in the study were first exposed to English within the critical period (Lenneberg 1967).

agreement morpheme lacking in English, thus playing a different role than subject pronouns.

As already said, the children did not retell the story in the past tense, but they did produce past tense sentences. However, 23 out of the total of 34 past tense sentences which they used contained the form “said”, which may not even be analysed as a past tense form, but as a rote-learned chunk. On top of that, 33 out of 34 verbs inflected for the past tense were irregular (except for the incorrect *brokened*) and “could have been acquired as lexical pieces” (Zobl 1998 in García Mayo et al. 2005: 470). Consequently, we decided to set the past tense sentences aside when counting and analysing the data. We have thus restricted the analysis to 3rd person singular subjects, as it is the only person overtly marking agreement on the verb, and as there is a clear-cut contrast between 3rd person singular subjects in Romanian (where it can be dropped) and Hebrew (where it cannot, regardless of the tense). Nonetheless, the overall results will also be presented (Table 6).

As to the verbs, we have chosen to take into account only the use of lexical verbs and to leave the auxiliary/copula *be* out, mainly because we would not expect *be* to appear uninflected (the infinitive is inexistent in the input), thus rendering a contrastive analysis impossible. The use of copula *be* is scarce in both groups (8.02% for the bilingual group and 8.21% for the monolingual one).

4.1.3 Results

First of all, there was little to no difference between the two groups as to the percentage of overt subjects (95% vs. 97.8%), and although we find individual variation, the omission rate is very low with all children (lower than 10% of the uttered sentences; for details, see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). Likewise, there is a very low number of post-verbal subjects (2 out of 269 – 0.74%), one of which, (16), can be found in the adult grammar, as well:

(17) And here come a rabbit. (Noa)

When a pronoun is used, it is always marked for nominative case. However, there is one type of error, encountered in both groups and consisting of the adjunction of a nominative 3rd person pronoun to a lexical subject:

- (18) a. And then, this woman he do like this. (Noa)
 b. The boy she do this. (Daniel 1)
 c. And the grandmother he eat (Adrian)
 d. And the man he see the frog in his glass. (Andrei)
 e. And the mom she laughing. (Maria)
 f. And the frog he go to his face. (Sara)

It is with respect to this variable that we find a quantitative difference between the two groups: 14.10% of the utterances produced by the bilinguals make use of such constructions, whereas a higher percentage of 24.60% is found in the monolingual group.

It is also worth noting that in sentences where there is a double subject, the verb lacks agreement in more than 90% of the cases (Table 3).

Table 3
Study 1: Double subjects and Agreement

Group	Double subject	Agr
Bilinguals	20	0
Monolinguals	34	3
Total	54	5.55%

A control count of all sentences (including past tense sentences, 1st and 2nd person subjects, plural subjects and copula/auxiliary *be*) was conducted (see Appendix 3). By and large, the overall numbers are equal to those in the analysis restricted to 3rd person singular verbs: an extreme low number of null and post-verbal subjects, the same percentages for double subjects, and the same 10% difference with respect to this error between the two groups.

4.2 Study 2

4.2.1 The participants

In an attempt to get a deeper understanding of the developmental route the two groups take in their L2 acquisition of English, all children from the first study (and two more, one in each group: Luca 1 – 5 years and 9 months old; and Luca 2 – 6 years old) were recorded again 7 months after the first data collection (November 2013).

4.2.2 Methodology

In the second study we sought to elicit oral spontaneous production data and asked the participants to narrate a 6-minute “Tom and Jerry” YouTube episode⁵. The recordings were transcribed and coded exactly as in the first study.

4.2.3 Results

As the numerical data show, the results of the first study have been replicated in the second study (see also Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). There is virtually no difference between the two groups as to the number of overt subjects (<1%). In spite of small variation, no participant has an omission rate higher than 5%. Overt subjects are correctly used in pre-verbal position more than 98% of the time. The most frequent error is, again, represented by the doubling of the lexical subject (15.10% versus 28.30%). Finally, agreement is rarely used in sentences with double subjects (Table 4).

⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=8J4TTsYy47g.

Table 4
Study 2: Double subjects and Agreement

	Double subjects	Agr
Bilinguals	30	1
Monolinguals	57	6
Total	87	8%

With most of the children, moreover, agreement and double subjects are in complementary distribution:

- (19) a. And Tom flies to yellow kitchen to catch it and Jerry scares.
b. And Jerry she come and Tom she fall. (Adrian)
- (20) a. And the mouse wants to play.
b. And the pepper he flying. (Daniel 2)

Finally, the aggregate proportions of double subjects in lexical DP-sentences indicate that monolinguals use these constructions in almost half of their produced structures (46.4%), almost twice as likely as their bilingual counterparts (25.25%).

5. Discussion

5.1 Overt, dropped and post-verbal subjects

The low rates of subject omission and post-verbal subjects (under 5%, in the first study, under 2% in the second one) are consistent with the results reported in other studies on child L2-English, with a *pro*-drop L1-background (García Mayo et al. 2005, Geçkin and Haznedar 2008) and indicate that children either (i) have gone past the initial state and reset the subject parameter to the target-like value, or (ii) it is not the subject as such (null/dropped/post-verbal) that they choose to transfer from their L1(s), or (iii) there is no transfer from L1 in child L2 learning. Since it is usually considered that the emergence of expletives is associated with the successful (re)setting of the subject parameter⁶ (keeping in mind that both Romanian and Hebrew allow null subjects where English requires an overt expletive subject), let us note that there is only one instance of expletive *there*, which might not even be analysed as one, since it is used in a formulaic construction, suggesting that the consistent use of overt subject does not necessarily imply (i):

- (21) There was a boy that she play with a dog. (Maria)

Another reason for the absence of expletive pronouns may be related to the production task itself, as there is no evidence of sentences which require an expletive, but

⁶ English children exhibit a target-like subject pattern after they start using expletive subjects (Yang 2002).

lacking it. However, a recent study by Vrabie (2013) reports that 10-year-old Romanian children deal in a more accurate way with null and post-verbal subjects in English as L2 than with the expletive “there” and “it” with weather verbs in a grammaticality judgment task. They reject sentences with null and post-verbal subjects at a rate higher than in the case of sentences without expletives. In addition, Phinney (1987) found results similar to ours: Spanish adults learning English as L2 have a low rate of omitted subjects, but fail to use expletives.

An alternative explanation for the low number of omitted subjects builds on Platzack’s (2004) account, where the rich agreement functions as a subject in *pro*-drop languages. Thus learners of English-L2 with a *pro*-drop L1 background may be urged to use overt subjects, precisely because there is no agreement morpheme in English which they can use to express the subject.

5.2 The double subjects

As for the double subject constructions, our data is consistent with results reported in the study by García Mayo et al. (2005), who have found the same type of construction in the English interlanguage of Spanish-Basque bilingual children. They argue that “the placeholder *he*” is an instance of transfer of a functional category from their L1s, so as to make up for the lack of overt agreement features in English. Several reasons prompt us to adopt the same analysis here.

First of all, although double subject constructions resemble the left dislocation structures which can be found in adult L1-English, it seems hardly unlikely that the two are equivalent. Left-dislocation structures are analysed as “[avoiding] having a discourse-new element in subject position, which favours discourse-old elements” (Ward et al. 2012: 1410):

- (22) Her parents, they seem pretty uncaring.
 (23) The landlady, she went up. (Ward et al. 2012: 1410)

With the sentences used by the subjects in our study, the lexical DPs are neither emphasised nor followed by a pause, and it is indeed improbable that they receive such sentences in the input.

Neither can the double subject constructions be viewed as an instance of transfer from Romanian which has a different type of double subjects, where the pronoun precedes the lexical DP in post-verbal position:

- (24) Vine ea mama.
 comes she mother-DEF
 ‘Mother, she comes.’ (Cornilescu 2000)

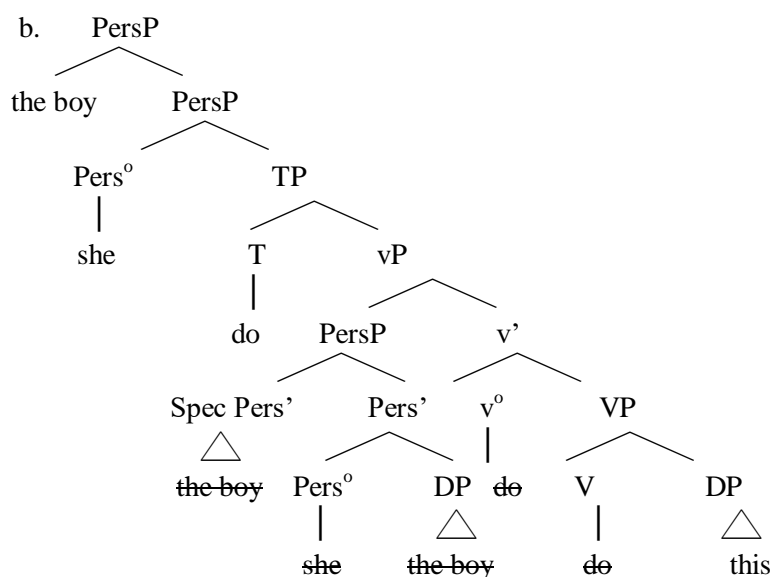
Coming back to García Mayo et al.’s (2005: 471) analysis, the authors claim that the occurrence of double subjects can be explained as follows: “[pronominal] agreement

morphemes are the subjects in the participants' L1s, and what they transfer, then, is the agreement features and the structural position (linked to the verb) of those morphemes. The learners look for substitutes in their English lexicon (*is, he*) and the result is the placeholder construction". Their argument is strongly supported by the low percentage (5.55% and 8%) of sentences in which double subjects and inflected verbs co-occur:

The hypothesis argued for by García Mayo et al. can also account for the difference in the percentage of double subjects between the two groups (25.25% for the bilinguals; 46.40% for the monolinguals). The L1-Romanian children transfer the pronominal feature of agreement, because their L1 lacks the anaphoric agreement of the target language, as opposed to the bilingual children, whose L1-Hebrew shares both agreement types.

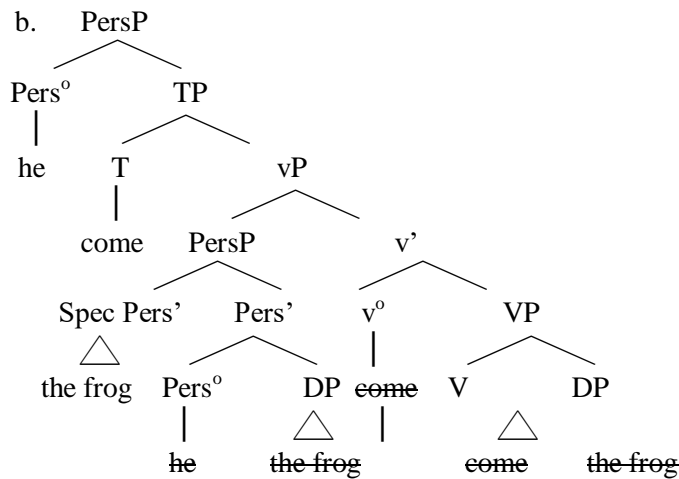
Consequently, a sentence such as the one in (18b) has the following representation:

(25) a. The boy she do this.



It is possible that transferring the pronominal agreement features of Romanian also leads to the raising of V-to-T (which also happens in Hebrew syntax). The lack of sentence adverbials does not allow us to draw a firm conclusion, but structures such as the one in (26) suggest that the verb moves to a position outside the VP, while the lexical DP remains in the PersP, in a post-verbal position:

(26) a. He come the frog. (Andrei)



One also has to observe that there is ample variation among the participants as to the use of double subjects (ranging from 0% to 68%). This result is also consistent with the study by García Mayo et al. (2005), who have also found large variation among their subjects. As there is no evidence in our data supporting any intra-subject correlation between the use of double subjects and the other variables we have tested (May and Daniel, for instance, 1 have both 0% agreement, but May has no double subjects, whereas Daniel doubles the subject in 68.1% of the utterances), further research is required to establish what exactly conditions the use of double subjects and the way in which the children get rid of such structures and shift to a target-like representation. Tentatively, we suggest that the emergence of expletive pronouns does not indicate the (re)setting of the Null Subject Parameter, but that expletive pronouns may be taken as a sign that the learners correctly analyse the agreement in English as anaphoric, with the expletive pronoun as a binder.

6. Conclusions

Coming back to the main research question (the influence of Hebrew as a second L1 on the process of L2-English acquisition), let us summarise the results in view of the Full Access Full Transfer hypothesis.

The use of double subject constructions in the analysis adopted here emerges from the participants' need to make up for the lack of overt agreement in English. They thus take a lexical element from the input (personal pronouns *he* and *she*) and reanalyse them as functional ones. This is strikingly similar to a grammaticalization process found in non-standard French, where "*il* has come to be an agreement marker. It does not fill a NP slot; instead it is bound to the verb and does not signal gender" (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 15):

- (27) Ma femme il est venu.
 my wife AGR has come-PERF
 'My wife has come.' (Lambrecht 1981: 40 in Hopper and Traugott 2003: 15)

This mechanism of strengthening agreement is found not only in French and is part of UG. The fact that we find the same phenomenon in the English interlanguage of children with a *pro*-drop L1-background provides strong evidence in favour of Full Access to UG in non-native language acquisition.

There is little difference between the two groups as to overt and dropped subjects, a result which is consistent with those reported both in child and in adult non-native English learning. This indicates that it is not the null subject parameter in itself (null vs. overt subjects) that poses problems, but the new type of agreement the participants have to deal with, hence the double subject constructions.

These are analysed as an instance of transfer from L1-Romanian (and maybe partially Hebrew), where the personal pronouns *he* and *she* undergo grammaticalization, becoming functional items equivalent to Romanian agreement morphemes (initially projected in Pers^o and then merging with the TP). The lower use of such constructions in the bilingual group (25.25% vs. 46.40%, almost double) leads to the conclusion that there is indeed (L2-)transfer in third language acquisition: the bilingual participants are already acquainted with an English agreement type in their Hebrew-L1 (at least in the present tense).

Though future research investigating Hebrew-L1 monolinguals acquiring English as L2 (for which we predict little to no use of double subject constructions) is required for obtaining a more elaborate picture on the issue of syntactic transfer in child L2 acquisition, we claim that the Full Access Full Transfer hypothesis is on the right track: its predictions have been fully verified by the collected data.

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Appendix 1. Study 1. The Bilingual Group – Results (3rd person singular, present tense lexical verbs)

Child	Utterances	Agr	Tense	Overt	Pre-V	Simple	Double	Nom
M.	17	0	0	16	16	16	0	1
%		0	0	94.1	94.1	94.1	0	5.5
N.	52	7	11	48	47	45	3	27
%		13.5	21.1	92.3	90.3	86.5	5.7	51.9
D1.	22	0	0	22	22	7	15	4
%		0	0	100	100	31.80	68.10	18.1
A.	17	1	1	16	16	14	2	8
%		5.9	5.9	94.1	94.1	82.35	11.7	46.5
D2	33	0	4	32	31	32	0	1
%		0	10.8	96.9	93.9	93.9	0	3.03
Total	141	8	16	134	132	114	20	41
%		5.6	11.3	95	93.6	80.8	14.1	29.26

Appendix 2. Study 1. The Monolingual Group – Results (3rd person singular, present tense lexical verbs)

Child	Utterances	Agr	Tense	Overt subject	Preverbal subject	Simple	Double	Nom
A.	21	10	10	21	21	18	3	8
%		47.6	47.60	100	100	85.70	14.2	38
V.	21	3	4	19	19	19	0	5
%		14.2	19.04	90.40	90.40	90.40	0	23.80
S.	18	1	1	17	17	11	6	11
%		5.55	5.55	94.44	94.44	61.10	33.33	54.
M.	57	6	9	57	57	32	25	31
%		10.52	15.78	100	100	57.1	43.80	54.30
A.	21	0	3	21	21	21	0	4
%		0	14.2	100	100	100	0	19
Total	138	20	27	135	135	101	34	59
%		14.49	19.5	97.8	97.8	73.18	24.60	42.70

Appendix 3. Study 1 – Overall results

	Utterances	Agr	Tense	Overt subject	Preverbal subject	Simple	Double	Nom
Bilinguals	221	78	86	212	209	178	34	98
%		35.2	38.9	95.9	94.5	80.5	15.38	44.34
Monolinguals	243	110	117	237	234	175	62	155
%		45.2	48.1	97.5	96.2	72	25.51	63.78

Appendix 4. Study 2 . The Bilingual Group – Results (3rd person singular, present tense lexical verbs)

Child	Utterances	Agr	Tense	Overt subject	Preverbal subject	Simple	Double	Nom
M.	53	7	9	53	52	53	0	35
%		13.20	16.90	100	98.11	100	0	66
N.	33	0	0	33	33	33	0	8
%		0	0	100	100	100	0	24.24
D. 1	21	4	5	21	21	9	12	9
%		19.04	23.80	100	100	42.80	57.40	42.80
A.	28	18	18	28	28	21	7	7
%		64.2	64.2	100	100	75	25	25
D.2	43	4	10	43	43	32	11	21
%		9.3	23	100	100	74	26.6	48.8
L. 1	20	2	3	20	20	20	0	20
%		10	15	100	100	100	0	100
Total	198	35	45	198	197	168	30	100
%		17.67	22.7	100	99.4	84.9	15.1	50.5

Appendix 5. Study 2. The Monolingual Group – Results (3rd person singular, present tense lexical verbs)

Child	Utterances	Agr	Tense	Overt subject	Preverbal subject	Simple	Double	Nom
A.	43	5	7	43	43	38	5	21
%		11.6	16.2	100	100	88.3	11.6	48.8
E.	24	12	12	24	23	24	0	11
%		50	50	100	95.8	100	0	45.84
S.	41	1	2	41	41	17	24	9
%		2.43	4.87	100	100	41.4	58.6	21.9
M.	61	11	14	61	59	40	21	36
%		18	22.9	100	96.7	66	34	59
A.	10	3	5	10	10	9	1	4
%		30	50	100	100	90	10	40
L2	22	9	11	21	21	15	6	3
%		40.2	50	95.4	95.4	68.1	27.2	13.6
Total	201	41	51	200	197	143	57	84
%		20.39	25.3	99.5	98	71	28.3	41.7

