

# MULTIPLE LANGUAGE LEARNING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SAME PARAMETER VALUES\*

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## Abstract

*In this paper, the theoretical consideration which constitutes the basics of the project NEWAP (A New Approach by simultaneously learning of languages) is presented. The aim of the project is to facilitate to learn Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish at the same time by comparative approach and to strengthen a dialog among different countries and cultures through a new method. It is claimed that in the acquisition of a certain structure of a language Ln, learner uses the structure of the language which is typologically closest to Ln in previously acquired languages in the second language acquisition (see Fuller, 1999; Leung, 2003a, 2003b). On the other hand, since three languages share considerable similarities in respect to the values of the parameters in the Universal Grammar, the learners can set only one parameter for three languages. The similarities in the typology and parametric values between three languages may facilitate and speed up the learning process for the L2 learner.*

**Key words:** multiple language learning, second language acquisition, Universal Grammar, principles and parameters, psychotypology.

## ÇOKLU DİL ÖĞRENİMİ VE AYNI DEĞİŞTİRGEN DEĞERLERİNİN ÖNEMİ

### Özet

*Bu yazıda NEWAP (A New Approach by simultaneously learning of languages) projesinin temellerini oluşturan düşüncenin kuramsal temelleri tanıtılmaktadır. Bu projenin amacı, karşılaştırmalı bir yöntemle eşzamanlı olarak Fince, Macarca ve Türkçenin öğrenilmesini kolaylaştırmak ve farklı ülke ve kültürler arasındaki diyalogun yeni bir yöntem aracılığıyla geliştirilmesini sağlamaktır. İkinci dil edinimi alanyazınında, Dn dilinin belirli bir yapısının ediniminde, öğrencinin daha önce edinmiş olduğu dillerden Dn'ye tipolojik olarak en yakın olan dilin yapısını kullandığı ileri sürülmektedir (bkz. Fuller, 1999; Leung, 2003a, 2003b). Diğer yandan, Evrensel Dilbilgisinin değiştirgen değerleri bakımından üç dil önemli bir benzerlik gösterdiğinden, öğrenci üç dil için sadece tek bir değiştirgen ayarlayacaktır. Üç dilin değiştirgen değerleri ve tipoloji bakımından benzerlikleri de öğrenim işlemi hem kolaylaştıracak hem de hızlandıracaktır.*

**Anahtar sözcükler:** çoklu dil öğrenimi, ikinci dil edinimi, Evrensel Dilbilgisi, ilkel ve değiştirgenler, ruh-tiplendirme

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to present a theoretical consideration of simultaneously learning of three languages, Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish. The idea of the approach by simultaneously learning of languages derives from the NEWAP project which is in the framework of Socrates Lingua 2 program<sup>1</sup>. The aim of the project is the improvement of language competences in three languages simultaneously and to strengthen a dialogue among different countries and cultures through a new method. The method stresses typological closeness and parametric similarities as vowel harmony, lack of gender, agglutinative typology, rich agreement system, head parameter etc., with correspondences within three languages, reconstructing common proto-forms, explaining the developments occurring from them. The basic module makes possible to learn three languages at the same time by comparative approach. In this project, the comparative approach based on Universal Grammar is used, in order to determine the structural similarities between three languages.

In order to present a theoretical consideration of simultaneously learning of three languages, Universal Grammar and language learning processing in general should be reviewed. In the following sections, I will first define principles and parameters in the theory, and introduce the type of parameters, then, I will describe some of the issues in applying in the UG model on second language acquisition (SLA). Since grammatical similarities are the main focus of the project, I will present some similarities between Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish. This paper concludes by drawing some implications for language teaching.

## 2. Principles and parameters

In the mid-twentieth century, Noam Chomsky's linguistic proposals triggered a revolution in linguistic theory. Chomsky (1957) proposed that a grammar of a language (i.e., GENERATIVE GRAMMAR) accounts for how sentences are generated. The primary goal of generative grammar has evolved to provide a description of what an ideal native speaker knows about his language. From its inception, generative grammar has been concerned with not only adult knowledge of language but also how first (L1) or second language (L2) is acquired. According to this framework, it is accepted that all human languages share a common underlying structure, called

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<sup>1</sup> NEWAP A New Approach by simultaneously learning of languages. Sponsors: DG EAC Lingua 2, Number: 224926-CP-1-2005-1-DE-LINGUA- L2. The project coordinator is ESTA-Bildungswerk gGmbH (ESTA-Education training provider, DE) and the partners of the project are AÜ TÖMER (Ankara University Turkish and Foreign Language Research and Application Center, TR), Adulta Oy (Adulta, Institute of Further Education, FI), Porin Aikuskoulutuskeskus (Pori Adult Education Centre, FI), Logon Informatikai és Nyelvészeti Betéti Társaság (Logon Information Technology and Linguistics Limited Partnership, HU), ESTA Danışmanlık (ESTA Consultancy, TR), UnternehmerHaus AG (DE), Europäische Projekt-Schulung GmbH (Environmental Protection Services, DE), Offener Kanal TV Münster (Open channel TV Münster, DE) and Bürgermedienzentrum Bennohaus (DE). see <http://www.newap.esta-bw.de/>

UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR (UG). UG is all humans' common possession, regardless of which language they speak.

Within the tradition of Chomsky's thinking since the 1950s, the current theory couches UG in terms of the specific proposals advanced in Chomsky's writings of 1950s, 1960s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s (e.g., Chomsky, 1957, 1965, 1981, 1995 and 1998/2000)<sup>2</sup>. However, PRINCIPLES AND PARAMETERS THEORY has become the dominant linguistic theory that language knowledge consists of principles universal to all languages and parameters that vary from one language to another. In the Principles and Parameters Theory, biologically based linguistic universals guide the course of L1 or L2 acquisition. Without an innate capacity, human beings would be unable to acquire and master a language.

PRINCIPLES are the images, represented in the minds of all human beings, of natural language. On the other hand, parameters distinguish one language from another. UG is presented as principles and parameters on a child's mind. No language can omit them and each language complies with these principles. A child obtains them automatically. With the help of the environmental language evidence, a child starts to set the parameters. PARAMETER SETTING is obtained according to the variations among languages. Children do not acquire principles but set parameters. Parameters on a child's mind can be thought of as "switches".

In the literature, there have been three types of parameters: the OPEN PARAMETER, the DEFAULT PARAMETER, and the subset parameter (Yates, 1990). The Open parameter has two values, which are mutually exclusive. Children have no preset value for this type of parameter. It is truly open to the choice of children. Children pick a value for an open parameter when they encounter positive evidence from their L1. HEAD PARAMETER is a good example for this type of parameter. There are two values in this parameter: HEAD-INITIAL and HEAD-FINAL. The phrases of all natural languages consist of heads and possible complements. For instance, although Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish are head-final languages, English is a head-initial language as shown by the examples below:

- (1) *Hungarian*  
a dolgozó **ember**  
the work-PART man
- (2) *Turkish*

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<sup>2</sup> The Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995, 1998/2000) represents the latest effort within the Principles and Parameters Theory. The goal of the Minimalist Program is to reduce the complexity of linguistic theory and enhance its explanatory power. The Minimalist Program completely eliminates the complex transformational rules of earlier versions of Generative Grammar in favor of a simpler, more elegant system of describing and explaining syntactic forms.

çalış-an **adam**  
work-PART man

(3) the **man** who is working

One other type of parameter is the default parameter. This parameter involves a situation where the two parameter values have a relationship in terms of markedness. Contrary to open parameter, in this type of parameter, children start out with an unmarked value of parameter (Yates, 1990). The pro-drop parameter is a good example for this. For instance, in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish, there is phenomenon known as PRO-DROP or NULL SUBJECT. That is, these three languages may have sentences without apparent subjects as in the following example:

(4) (Minä) ol-i-n väsynyt.  
I be-PAST-1SG tired  
'I was tired'

(5) (Én) fáradt volt-am  
I tired be.PAST-1SG  
'I was tired'

(6) (Ben) yorgun-du-m  
I tired-PAST-1SG  
'I was tired'

In Finnish (4), Hungarian (5) and Turkish (6), the above sentences are grammatical even without the overt subject. But in English as shown in (7), the overt subjectless counterpart is ungrammatical because English always requires lexical subjects in such sentences:

(7) \*(I) was tired

Yet another parameter is the subset parameter. The properties of the subset parameter stem from the SUBSET PRINCIPLE, versions of which have been proposed by Wexler and Manzini (1987). As defined by Wexler and Manzini (1987, p. 60), the sets of sentences permitted by any two values of a parameter must enter a subset relation with each other. The subset principle predicts that children's first choice is to assume a smaller grammar. The children's choice is conservative in that it stays as close as possible to the data they hear. They prefer a language that is a subset of a larger language rather than leaping immediately to the larger version.

### 3. Universal Grammar and learning languages

Chomsky (1957) argues that while language is acquired it is not the environment but the mind which has an important role. Indeed, if children are supposed to be acquiring language through making it a habit, namely by imitating it, they should also be hearing the ungrammatical sentences which they produce from their environment. Besides, when the language acquisition process is examined, even if they do not make use of them, it is seen that children know some grammatical rules although they haven't come across them. The fact that children know more than they can speak is obviously a sign that language is a product of the mind.

Another evidence that shows the importance of the mind rather than the environment is that although a child hears totally incorrect linguistic evidence, he can form his language correctly. Even if adults pause and create unfinished and even incorrect sentences while talking, the child can create infinite sentences even by depending on this limited data. Through language acquisition process, information on ungrammatical sentences is not given; only limited positive evidence is referred to. In spite of such poverty-of-the-stimulus, the child nevertheless acquires the language in a perfect way.

So, how can a child develop his language with such limited data? A possible answer to this would be that the limited input is shaped by UG which is considered to be on people's minds by birth. According to this, the process of language acquisition is seen as; the access of the limited input that a child hears, into "a black box" and through processing inside this black box, creative grammar is produced. "The black box" which was named as LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DEVICE was later on named as UG and that UG was formed by a series of principles and parameters. Accordingly, a new born baby's mind, by means of language acquisition, is at its first state, that is the INITIAL ZERO STATE ( $S_0$ ). Language acquisition continues until the steady state ( $S_s$ ) where language development is completed, is reached. Thus, the aim of the language theory should be to explain this process  $S_1, S_2, \text{ etc.}$

$$(8) S_0 \text{ --- } S_1 \text{ --- } S_2 \text{ .....} \rightarrow S_s$$

A child at the initial state will set the parameters on his mind depending on the input related to the language by activating the principles and parameters of UG. For instance, if we consider the pro-drop parameter, in order to set this parameter, the child should start with one of the possible values of this parameter (positive, negative, and neutral). Thus, for a child, who acquires English as L1, if we accept the initial state of the parameter in the positive state, in order to find the negative value he is going to need positive evidence. For instance, hearing structures containing expletive pronouns would be as a positive evidence for the child.

It can be said that similar processes are experienced where the child acquires L1 and an adult acquires L2. Just like in acquiring L1, it is thought that the problem of

poverty-of-the-stimulus is encountered in SLA. Although negative evidence besides positive evidence, corrections, explanations are given to L2 learners in class environment, it is questionable that this data is fully parallel to UG principles and parameters. Because it is difficult to say that UG applies fully into language teaching environment. For instance, although, the language teacher gives information on the categorical features of pronoun *himself* and how it is to be bound to what kind of NPs, he will not give parameters and principles related to the binding conditions of this pronoun to its antecedent. So, the process of language acquisition for L2 would be similar to the individual's learning process of L1.

In addition to this, while the child who acquires L1 is at initial state, the adult, learning L2, would be in a different position than the child because he would already be equipped with the knowledge of L1. Therefore, different than the initial state of SLA that is  $S_0$ , it is at the INITIAL STATE of the L2 and actually that is  $S_i = (S_0 + S_s)$ . And again other than in acquiring L1, instead of steady state in L2 a TERMINAL STATE ( $S_t$ ) which differs from one person to another is present:

$$(9) S_0 - S_1 - S_2 \dots \rightarrow S_s$$

However similar the learning processes seem, actually it is accepted that an adult never reaches the state  $S_s$  in acquiring L2; that is to say, the success in L2 is less indeed than in L1. One central reason for this is that the learning of L2 occurs after the CRITICAL PERIOD in which the mind is more capable and open to learn a language.

Another issue of the process of language acquisition is the cross-linguistic influence during third language or  $L_n$  acquisition. In the SLA literature, it is claimed that (psycho) typological<sup>3</sup> closeness between L2 and L3 facilitates language transfer (see Fuller, 1999; Leung, 2003a, 2003b). From the UG perspective, the  $L_n$  initial state is the steady state of a previously acquired language which is typologically closest to  $L_n$ . If we incorporate the idea of psychotypology in our project NEWAP, it can be thought that typological closeness between Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish can facilitate positive transfer. Since Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish have considerable similarities in respect of the values of the parameters in the UG, learners can use the same values of the parameters in three languages. For instance, if Turkish and Finnish are taken into consideration, L3 Turkish initial state will be the L2 Finnish steady state for a particular value of parameter and vice versa at the time of simultaneously learning of languages. It will be the same for Hungarian and Turkish or Hungarian and Finnish.

#### 4. Some similarities between three languages

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<sup>3</sup> While typology is a language-based variable, psychotypology is learner-based. Namely, psychotypology is perceived typology between the source language and the target language by the language learner.

As indicated above, typological closeness between Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish can facilitate positive transfer. Here, I will summarize some similarities and some values of the parameters, which are the same, among these three languages<sup>4</sup>. The sound system is one of the similarities between three languages. The Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish vowel inventory is shown in Table 1. The orthographic symbols are followed by their respective phonetic values in square brackets<sup>5</sup>. As it is shown in Table 1, the three languages are similar in the vowel system. However, contrary to Turkish, in the Finnish and Hungarian vowel system, there is no contrast in rounding back vowels. In the Finnish and Hungarian vowel system, there are four mid and high front vowels, [y], [ø] (front rounded) and [i], [e] (front unrounded). The two low vowels [æ],[A] are unrounded, and mid and high back vowels, [u],[o] are rounded. In Hungarian orthography the acute accent denotes length, the umlaut denotes rounding of front vowels, and the ‘long umlaut’ denotes front round long vowels. /i/ [i], /i:/ [i:]; /ø/ [ø], /ø:/ [ø:]; /ü/ [y:] /ü/ [y:], /u/ [u]; /ü/ [u:]; /o/ [o], /ó/ [o:]. There are two deviations from this regularity: The vowels /e/ and /é/ are different not only in length but also in height and the vowels /a/ and /á/ differ in rounding as shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish vowel inventory**

		[-back]		[+back]	
		[-round]	[+round]	[-round]	[+round]
<i>Fin.</i>	high	i [i]	ü [y]		u [u]
	mid	e [e]	ö [ø]		o [o]
	low	ä [ʏ]		a [A]	
<i>Hun.</i>	high	i [i]	ü [y]		u [u]
	mid	é [e:]	ö [ø]		o [o]
	low	e [E]		á [a:]	a [O]
<i>Tur.</i>	high	i [i]	ü [y]	ı [ɪ]	u [u]
	mid	e [E]	ö [ø]	a [a]	o [o]
	low				

Vowel

harmony is a phonological regularity where vowels in a word agree in one or more features. It is a widespread pattern attested in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish. In

<sup>4</sup> For the project, in order to determine the grammatical similarities between the three languages, first, the outlines of the grammars of the three languages were written (see Fábircz, 2006; Kyngäs, 2006; Uzun et.al., 2006). Then, the similarities and differences among these three languages are shown.

<sup>5</sup> The vowels of these languages presented here are phonemic representations. There are some allophones of the vowels in the actual realizations of speech. For instance, the allophones of /a/ are [a] and [A]; the allophones of /e/ are [e] and [e] in Turkish

vowel harmony systems of Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish, the vocalic features are the features related to the backness of the tongue body and the rounding of the lips. Agreement in the horizontal position of the tongue body, called [±back] or palatal harmony, is found in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish. Agreement in the position of the lips, called [±round] harmony, is found in Hungarian and Turkish:<sup>6</sup>

- (10) Finnish      [±back] harmony  
          Hungarian   [±back] and [±round] harmony  
          Turkish      [±back] and [±round] harmony

In Finnish vowel harmony, there are three front harmony vowels, [y], [ø] [æ], and three back harmony vowels [u], [o], [ɑ]. Front and back harmony vowels never occur together in the same word stem (internal harmony) or in the same non-composed word (suffix harmony) in Finnish (see Catherine & Heinämäki, 1999).

- (11) talossa ‘in the house’                      kylässä ‘in the village’  
       he puhuvat ‘they talk’                      he syövät ‘they eat’  
       oletko? ‘are you?’                          itketkö? ‘are you crying?’  
       olen puhunut ‘I have talked’              olen syönyt ‘I have eaten’  
       (Kynäs, 2006)

On the other hand, Hungarian has two types of vowel harmony, [±back] and [±round] harmony. Similar to Finnish, in the first type of vowel harmony, all the vowels of the word must agree in backness as shown by the examples (12) and (13).

- (12) kapu-ra ‘on a gate’  
       (13) ismer-ek ‘I know’  
           (Fábricz, 2006)

In Hungarian [±round] harmony, the rule is that front rounded vowels, /ü/ [y] and, /ö/ [ø] may not occur with front unrounded or back vowels. Therefore, vowel harmony of front vowels is further divided into [+round] and [-round] variations:

- (14) főz-ök ‘I cook’      [+round, -back] → [+round, -back]

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<sup>6</sup> In vowel harmony systems of some languages, the vocalic features are the features related to the retraction of the tongue root. Agreement in the position of the tongue root, called [±ATR] harmony, is found in Wolof, Akan, Granada Spanish, and other languages.



néz-ek ‘I watch’ [-round, -back] → [-round, -back]  
 lát-ok ‘I see’ [-round, +back] → [+round, -back]  
 (Fábricz, 2006)

Similar to Hungarian, Turkish exhibits [±back] and [±round] harmony. In Turkish [±back] harmony, all the vowels of the word must agree in backness as shown by the examples (15):

(15) araba-lar ‘cars’  
 ev-ler ‘houses’

[±round] harmony in Turkish only affects [+high] suffixes. High vowels are rounded after a rounded vowel, unrounded after an unrounded vowel (see 16). A following mid vowel must be unrounded, that is, mid-rounded vowels can occur in any syllable except the first syllable (see 17).

(16) yüz-ün ‘face-gen’	(17) göl-ün ‘lake-gen’
buz-un ‘ice-gen’	yol-un ‘road-gen’
iş-in ‘work-gen’	ev-in ‘house-gen’
kız-ın ‘girl-gen’	at-ın ‘horse-gen’

There are some exceptions to vowel harmony in these three languages. In some words, suffix may accompany word stems in respect of vowel harmony (e.g., in Finnish *Sörkka* < *Sörnäinen*, ‘a district of Helsinki’, in Turkish *koş-ar-ken* ‘when he runs’). Internal harmony is also violated in some recent multisyllabic loanwords such as *analyysi* ‘analysis’ and *symposium* ‘symposium’ in Finnish and *sempozyum* in Turkish. There are practically no exceptions in the suffix harmony, except in loanwords with disharmonic stems.

Another phonetic property of these three languages is that more than one consonant, namely consonant cluster cannot be present in the initial syllable of the word. Clusters of syllabification in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish are in that similar as shown by the examples in Table 2.

**Table 2. Clusters of syllabification in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish**

	<i>Fin.</i>	<i>Hun.</i>	<i>Tur.</i>
V	<b>a-pu-a</b>	<b>a-ki</b>	<b>a-ra-ba</b>
VC	<b>an-taa</b>	<b>al-ma</b>	<b>al-dı</b>
CV	<b>sa-na</b>	<b>ma-gyar</b>	<b>ma-sa</b>
CVC	<b>kol-me</b>	<b>hat-van</b>	<b>gel-di</b>
VCC	<b>ark-ki</b>	<b>ért-em</b>	<b>ört-tü</b>
CVCC	—	<b>tölt</b>	<b>sert</b>

There are some words in these three languages which include a consonant cluster in the internal syllable. But these are loan syllabifications in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish.

**Table 3. Clusters of loan syllabification in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish**

	<i>Fin.</i>	<i>Hun.</i>	<i>Tur</i>
CCV	<b>klu-sii-li</b>	<b>pro-blé-ma</b>	<b>kri-ter</b>
CCVC	<b>prin-ses-sa</b>	<b>stop</b>	<b>tren</b>
CCCVC	<b>stres-si</b>	stréber	stres
CCVCC	<b>prins-si</b>	<b>flört</b>	<b>flört</b>
CVCC	—	<b>pemzli</b>	<b>tekst</b>

Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish are agglutinative languages with word structures formed by productive affixations of derivational and inflectional morphemes to root words. As shown by the examples in (18)-(20), the order of the suffix in three languages is fairly similar:

(18) *Fin.* kuv-i-ssa-ni-kin  
 picture-PL-INESS-1SG -too  
 ‘in my pictures too’

(19) *Hun.* kép-e-i-ben  
 picture-PL-3SG-LOC  
 ‘in his pictures’

(20) *Tur.* resim-ler-i-nde  
 picture-PL-3SG-LOC  
 ‘in his pictures’

Although suffixation is used in inflection and word formation, prefixation is seen only in word formation to a slight degree in Finnish and Hungarian (see 2, *epä-* and

*leg-*). Correspondingly, there are a few very unproductive prefixes of foreign origin, such as *na-* ‘un-’ in Turkish:

- (21) *Fin.* epä+varma ‘uncertain’  
*Hun.* leg+szebb ‘nicest’  
*Tur.* na-münasib ‘unfitting, unsuitable’

A rich allomorphy most typically appears in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish in the case of vowel and consonant harmony. For instance, in Finnish, as a result of [±back] harmony, suffixes have two variants: *-lla* / *-llä* ‘on’; *-ko* / *-kö* (interrogative) *-nut* / *-nyt* (past participle) (see Kyngäs, 2006). In Hungarian, as a result of [±back] and [±round] harmony, suffixes can have two or three variants. For instance, *-hoz* / *-hez* / *-höz* ‘to’ have three variants. Roots taking an unrounded front vowel form *-hez*, but those containing a rounded vowel require the form *-höz*. In case of back vowels, there is only one form *-hoz* for both rounded and unrounded roots: *víz-hez* ‘water to’, *gyümölcs-höz* ‘fruit to’ and *ház-hoz* ‘house to’ (see Zsoldos, 2006). Nádasy and Siptár (as cited in Zsoldos, 2006) note that there can be as many as four alternative suffixes in Hungarian. To exemplify this they list the four alternative plural suffixes in Hungarian: *-ak*, *-ok*, *-ek*, and *-ök*. In Turkish, suffixes can have two or four variants: *-lar/-ler* (plural) and *-in /-in / -un /-ün*. These variations result from the vowel harmony; if we consider the consonant harmony, a suffix has got eight allomorphes. To exemplify this we can give the eight alternative past tense suffixes in Turkish: *-dı*, *di*, *-du*, *-dü*, *-tı*, *-ti*, *-tu*, *-tü*.

The rich agreement morphology is another similarity between Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish. Inflectional suffixes of the noun and the verb in three languages include number and person, but three languages have no grammatical gender. Distribution of the subject agreement suffixes in three languages is fairly similar<sup>7</sup>:

**Table 4. Verbal agreement suffixes in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish**

*Finnish*                      *Hungarian*                      *Turkish*

<sup>7</sup> It deserves mentioning that Hungarian has a morpho-syntactic phenomenon related to “definite object agreement (see, Enç, 1990; Szabolcsi, 1994).

- (i) Eltitkol -om a /ezen/valamennyi találkozás-t.  
keep-secret-DEF.1SG the/this/each meeting-ACC  
‘I keep[def] the/this/each meeting secret.’
- (ii) Eltitkol -ok minden/három találkozás-t.  
keep-secret-1SG every /three meeting-ACC  
‘I keep[not def] every/three meetings secret.’  
(Szabolcsi, 1994)

1SG	-n	-k/-m	-(I)m; -m
2SG	-t	-sz/-l/-d	-sIn,;-n
3SG	Ø	Ø/-jA	Ø
1PL	-mme	-nk/-jUk	-(I)z; -k
2PL	-tte	-tOk/jAtOk	-sInIz; -nIz
3PL	-vAt	-nAk/-jAk	-lAr; -lAr

**Table 5. Nominal agreement suffixes in Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish**

	<i>Finnish</i>	<i>Hungarian</i>	<i>Turkish</i>
1SG	-ni	-(i)m	-(I)m
2SG	-si	-(i)d	(I)n
3SG	-nsA, -Vn	-jA(i)	-(s)I
1PL	-mme	-(i)(U)nk	-(I)mIz
2PL	-nne	-(i)tOk	-(I)nIz
3PL	-nsA, -Vn	-Uk/ik	-lArI

While agreement markers assign Genitive to NPs in Turkish and Finnish, in Hungarian they assign Nominative. Furthermore, as shown by the examples below, there are articles in the NPs in Hungarian:

- (22) az én kapu-m                      benim kapı-m  
the I.NOM gate-1SG                  I.GEN door-1SG  
‘my gate’                                  ‘my gate’
- (23) minun kirja-ni                      benim kitab-ım  
I.GEN book-1SG                          I.GEN book-1SG  
‘my book’                                  ‘my book’  
sinun kirja-si                              senin kitab-ın  
you-GEN book-1SG                      you-GEN book-1SG  
‘your book’                                  ‘your book’

Plural agreement between determiner and noun is another characteristic property of Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish. In three languages, the NP is not marked as plural in the presence of a numeral:

- (24) a két fekete kalap-ot  
 the two black hat-ACC  
 ‘the two black hats (accusative)’  
 (Szabolcsi, 1994)
- (25) iki siyah şapka-yı  
 the two black hat-ACC  
 ‘the two black hats (accusative)’

Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish are described as head-final languages. Head parameter in Noun Phrases (see 26), Adjective Phrases (see 27) and relative clauses (see 28) are shown in the examples below (respectively, Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish).

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| (26) talo-n <b>ovi</b><br>house-GEN door-SG<br><b>ház ajtaja</b><br>house-GEN door-3SG<br>ev-in <b>kapısı</b><br>house-GEN door-3SG | (27) hyvin <b>vanha</b><br>‘very old’<br>egyre <b>drágább</b><br>increasingly expensive<br>daha <b>pahalı</b><br>more expensive | (28) kävele-vä <b>mies</b><br>walk-PART man<br>dolgozó <b>ember</b><br>work-PART man<br>gel-en <b>adam</b><br>come-PART man |
|---|---|---|

A restricted number of postpositions can also be used as prepositions in Finnish (see 29) and Hungarian (see 30) contrary to Turkish.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (29) tietä <b>pitkin</b><br>road along<br><b>pitkin</b> tietä<br>along road | (30) öt <b>után</b><br>five after<br><b>együtt</b> mentek<br>went.3PL together |
|---|--|

An important similarity between these three languages is that all of them have free word order. However, there are some differences in point of the canonical word order. Although the canonical word order of Hungarian and Turkish is SOV, Finnish is a SVO language, but all six permutations of these elements are grammatical in the appropriate contexts (Vilkuna, 1995:245). As shown by the examples in (31), there is a topic position which immediately precedes the finite verb, and a focus position to the left of the topic position in Finnish (see Wechsler, 1995):

- (31) Esa luk-i kirja-n  
 Esa-NOM read-PAST.3SG book-ACC  
 ‘Esa read a book.’  
 [Esa<sub>TOP</sub>] luki kirjan. ‘Esa read a book.’  
 [Kirjan<sub>TOP</sub>] luki Esa. ‘The book was read by Esa.’  
 [esa<sub>FOC</sub>] [kirjan<sub>TOP</sub>] luki. ‘It was ESA who read the book.’  
 [kirjan<sub>FOC</sub>] [Esa<sub>TOP</sub>] luki. ‘It was a BOOK that Esa read.’  
 [luki<sub>FOC</sub>] [Esa<sub>TOP</sub>] kirjan. ‘Esa DID read a book.’  
 (Wechsler, 1995)

Similarly, all six permutations of S, O and V are grammatical in the appropriate contexts in Turkish. However, contrary to Finnish, the topic is obligatorily sentence initial and focus is assigned to either the elements in the pre-verbal positions or to the verb in Turkish (see İşsever, 2003):

- (32) Esra kitab-ı oku-du  
 Esra-NOM book-ACC read-PAST.3SG  
 ‘Esra read a book.’  
 [Esra<sub>TOP</sub>] [kitabı<sub>FOC</sub>] okudu. ‘Esra read the BOOK.’  
 [Kitabı<sub>TOP</sub>] [esra<sub>FOC</sub>] okudu. ‘The book, ESRA read.’  
 [esra<sub>FOC</sub>] okudu kitabı. ‘ESRA read the book.’  
 [kitabı<sub>FOC</sub>] okudu Esra. ‘Esra read the BOOK.’  
 [okudu<sub>FOC</sub>] kitabı Esra. ‘Esa DID read a book.’  
 [okudu<sub>FOC</sub>] Esra kitabı. ‘Esa DID read a book.’

As we have stated earlier, the three languages possess similar values in terms of pro-drop parameter. Yet, it is possible to observe differences within the same parametric value. For example, while Turkish is a full null-subject language, Finnish is not a full null-subject language, since third person referential pronouns cannot be freely dropped. Consider the examples in (34); contrary to the examples in (33), here, the pronouns are obligatory for the third persons.

- (33) (Minä) ol-i-n väsynyt.  
 I be-PAST-1SG tired  
 ‘I was tired’  
 (Sinä) ol-i-t väsynyt.

thou be-PAST-2SG tired  
'You were tired'  
(Me) ol-i-mme väsyneitä.  
we be-PAST-1PL tired-PL  
'We were tired'  
(Te) ol-i-tte väsyneitä.  
you be-PAST-2PL tired-PL  
'You were tired'

- (34) \*(Hän) ol-i-Ø väsynyt.  
he/she be-PAST-3SG tired  
'(S)he was tired'  
\*(He) ol-i-vat väsyneitä.  
they be-PAST-3PL tired-PL  
'They were tired'

Contrary to Finnish, null subjects are permitted for the third persons in Hungarian as seen in (35) and (36). Similarly, null subjects are permitted in the third persons in Turkish, as shown by the example in (37). However, in the case of absence agreement marker, third person plural referential pronouns cannot be freely dropped as observed in (38).

- (35) (Ö) fãradt volt  
I tired be.PAST.3SG  
'(S)he was tired'
- (36) (Ök) fãradt-ak volt-ak  
they tired-PL be.PAST-1PL  
'They were tired'
- (37) (Onlar) yorgun-lar-dı  
they tired-PL-PAST  
'They were tired'

(38) \*(Onlar) yorgun-du  
they tired-PAST  
'They were tired'

### **5. A brief information about the project**

The comparisons above show that Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish have considerable similarities in respect of phonology, morphology and syntax. As indicated above, NEWAP is a project which focuses on these types of structural similarities between the three target languages. This project is concerned with simultaneous learning of these three languages based on a new digital language learning environment. For this reason, language-learning materials to be produced within the project cover Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish as foreign languages. The material consists of three separate modules for each language for the basic level A2 (common European framework) and the compilation of those three modules for the comparative approach.

The production of a digital language learning course consists of six components for each unit: The main learning component is divided into two parts: the text part and the picture part. In the text part, context based main learning texts and dialogues are presented and if the chosen chapter contains some pictures, they will be shown in the picture part. Besides, there is an area for additional visual presentation. The second component is the so called "teacher" feature. In this component, there is detailed information about the grammar, the vocabulary and the phrases which are used in the presentation texts. Moreover, this component includes the English translation of the text extract. The third component is the "cultural tips" in which the learner can get some interesting information about the cultural customs of the chosen country. The fourth component covers the similarities between these languages. Although the language-learning materials are prepared by taking into account the structural similarities, this component presents additional information about the presented and other possible similarities between the three languages. The fifth component consists of two parts: "reference grammar" and "general dictionary". In this component, an overview of the whole grammar and of the whole vocabulary of all presented chapters can be seen. Finally, the last component is "exercises" where the learners can practice their related skills and check their learning progress.

### **6. Conclusion**

Multiple language teaching should focus on the similarities between languages. They can be a powerful indicator of success in language pedagogy and they may



facilitate and speed up the learning process for the L2 learner. When the project is taken into consideration, it is clear that the similarities between Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish give some advantages for learners, since psychotypological closeness between L2 and L3 facilitates language transfer. In other words, since, for instance, L2 Turkish initial state is the steady state of a previously acquired language which is typologically closest to Turkish, namely Finnish or Hungarian, the learner can use the previous knowledge about language. In addition, it seems that the UG view also contributes to the approach of concurrently learning of three languages in NEWAP. Since Finnish, Hungarian and Turkish share considerable similarities in respect to the values of the parameters in the UG, the learners can set only one parameter for all three languages. Thus, it is obvious that a language-learning system based on UG view may facilitate the learning of three languages.

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