

## **THE ACCESS TYPE OF UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR IN CHILD SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

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### **ÖZET**

“Evrensel Dilbilgisi” (Chomsky, 1981)’ne erişim çerçevesinde ikinci dil ediniminde yapılan çalışmaların birçoğu yetişkinlerin evrensel dilbilgisine erişim savlarının sınaması üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır. Ancak, bu konu çocukların ergenlik çağı öncesi dönemi ile ilgili olarak pek irdelenmemiştir. Yapılan çalışmalar, (Lakshmanan, 1989; Schachter,1990; White, 1998;2000) bu çalışmanın da araştırma soruları olan birtakım konuları ortaya koymuştur:

- Evrensel Dilbilgisi ilke ve değiştirgenlerine erişim, çocukların ikinci dil edinimlerinde olası mıdır? Eğer olası ise, bu erişim ikinci dil edinim sürecinin en başından mı yoksa gelişim süreci içerisinde mi kendini göstermektedir?
- Evrensel Dilbilgisi ilke ve değiştirgenlerine erişim, çocukların ikinci dil edinimlerinde doğrudan mı yoksa anadilleri aracılığıyla mı gerçekleşmektedir?

Bu çalışmanın amacı, alanda ortaya atılmış bu sorunlara ikinci dil olarak İngilizce’yi edinen Türk çocuklarında Bağlama Kuramı çerçevesinde A İlkesi’nin Edinimini çalışmaktır. Çalışma 11-12 yaşları arasındaki ergenlik çağı öncesi 21 deneye kapsamaktadır. Veriler, deneklere uygulanan üç ölçek ile elde edilmiştir: dilbilgisel yargılama ölçeği, dilbilgisel seçim ölçeği ve tümce-resim eşlem ölçeğidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evrensel Dilbilgisi, Bağlama Kuramı A İlkesi, Dilbilgel Yargılama, Anadil ve İkinci Dil (erek dil) Değiştirgenleri

### **ABSTRACT**

Recent studies conducted to examine the extend to which a theory of Universal Grammar (UG) could be useful in explaining the child L2 acquisition process have proposed some major questions regarding the availability of UG in this respect (Lakshmanan, 1989; Schachter,1990; White, 1998;2000). Some of these questions that this study is directly concerned are:

- Are the properties of UG really available in child L2 acquisition? If they are available, are they available in their entirety from the start, or do they unfold in a developmental sequence?
  - Are UG principles and parameters directly available to child L2 learners as in their L1 acquisition, or are they available only through the mediation of their L1?
- The purpose of this study is to give some answers to these questions by investigating the acquisition of Binding Principle A by child Turkish learners of English as a second language. The study is conducted on 21 subjects, whose age range is between 11-12

years. The data are based on the performance of the subjects on three different tasks aimed to elicit the subjects' competence on L2 as far as the binding principle concerned.

**Key Words:** Universal Grammar, Binding Principle A, grammaticality judgment, L1 and L2 parameters

### 1. Introduction

With the development of the theory of Universal Grammar (UG) came a renewed interest in the application of generative theory to second language acquisition (SLA) (White, 1987) within the generative theory of Government and Binding (Chomsky, 1981). This interest was in part strengthened by the formulation of specific principles and parameters that could be tested empirically, and this in turn accounted for cross-linguistic variation, an important issue in L2 acquisition

The theoretical explanations for many of the principles and parameters that have been revised by Chomsky (1986, 1995) have modified the directions of the questioned posed on L2 research. As White (2000) points out, keeping abreast of the changes in a developing theory is advantageous in one hand and problematic in the other. While a changing theory offers new perspective on language-acquisition data, it also presents practical challenges to the researcher in formulating and testing hypotheses.

Most studies conducted within access to UG has focused on testing different access hypotheses to UG (Cook, 1990; Bulut, 1996; Can, 2000; White, 2000). However, this specific topic has not been much concern for children under puberty. The present study aims at finding answers to the accessibility problem of UG in Turkish children's L2 Acquisition of Binding Principle A.

Lakshmanan (1989) presents three logical possibilities as far as the accessibility of UG in child SLA is concerned. The first possibility claims *direct access* to UG principles and parameters; in other words, the L2 is acquired the same way as the L1 is acquired (see Figure 1).

#### Principles of UG

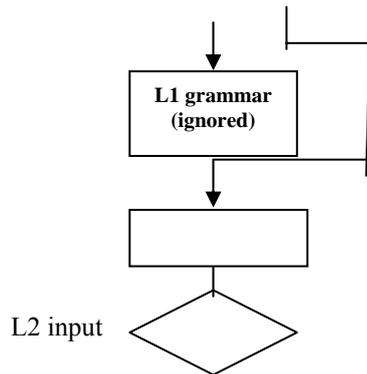


Figure 1. Direct Access to UG

According to this model, child SLA process begins with the parameters set at the default values in exactly the same way as in L1 within the constraints of UG. Due to the *recreative* nature of this process, L2 learner recreates the L2 grammar as in L1 (Sharwood Smith, 1995).

The second model claims an *indirect access* to UG in child L2 acquisition (see Figure 2).

Principles of UG (*interacting with input*)

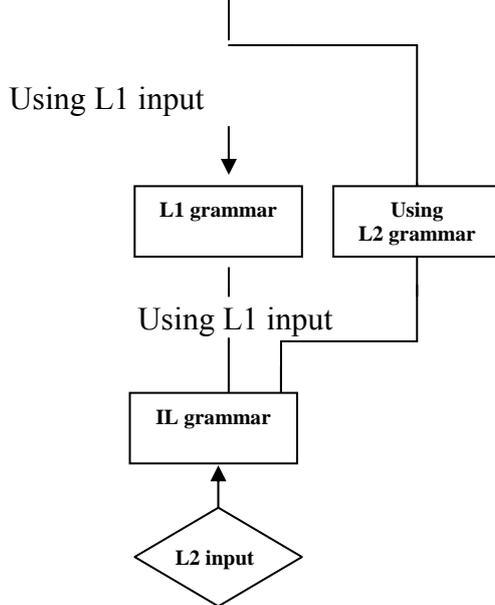


Figure 2. Indirect Access to UG

According to this logical possibility, child L2 acquisition is constrained by UG as in the direct access view with one fundamental difference. Many or all of the principles of UG might no longer be *open* but instantiated in L1 terms. If the L1 setting does not match with the one of the L2 setting, then resetting becomes obligatory.

The third possibility claims *no access* to UG (see Figure 3.).

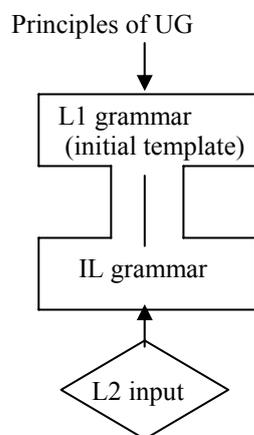


Figure 3. No Access to UG

As inferred from Figure 3, L1 functions as an initial template in the *no access* possibility. The L1 settings are transferred directly to the L2, which is called *parasitic development* (Sharwood Smith, 1988). According to this view, UG is not available although it may appear to be active in the cases where L1 and L2 share the same settings. When the setting differs from that of L2, *resetting* cannot occur since UG is no longer operative. In the absence of UG, the L2 learner will have to build the IL grammar by resorting to some general learning principles so that the IL output gradually approximates to the target language.

These three logical possibilities of *direct access*, *indirect access*, and *no access* in child L2 acquisition are valid only on the assumption that posited parameter or principle is indeed part of UG. This conclusion is relevant in the context of our framework since it implies that UG is accessible to the child SLA learner as well as child L1 learner. In other words, we would expect either the *direct access* or the indirect access situation to apply in the context of child SLA. However, another alternative, which does not support a universal status of a specific principle of UG in child SLA would lead to expect an evidence for the *no access* explanation to be manifested in the IL of the child L2 learners. In the present study, we aim at testing the above-mentioned logical possibilities by investigating the L2 acquisition of the Binding Principle A by Turkish children between the ages of 11 and 12 years.

## 2. Review of Literature

### Turkish vs. English within the Concept of Binding theory

Chomsky (1982) proposes the *theory of binding* as the sub theory of Government and Binding Theory, which deals with indexing relationships between

nominal expressions. The sub-theory of binding puts forward three principles (Chomsky, 1986a, p. 166):

- A: an anaphor must be bound in a local domain.
- B: a pronominal must be free in a local domain.
- C: a referring expression is free.

Since anaphors lack their own reference, they depend on antecedents for their reference. This phenomenon is handled by Principle A of the Binding Theory, which requires that an anaphor must have an antecedent within a certain range of syntactic domain of sentence which is governing category. For a language such as English, for example, Principle A states that an anaphor is bound in a local domain as can be observed in the following example.

- 1) a. Lori<sub>h</sub> said that Mary<sub>i</sub> pinched herself<sub>i\*<sub>h</sub></sub>.
- b. Louise<sub>h</sub> said that Lori<sub>i</sub> said that Mary<sub>j</sub> pinched herself<sub>j\*<sub>h</sub>\*<sub>i</sub></sub>.

In 1a, *herself* takes *Mary* as its antecedent since *Mary* is in the governing category. However, *herself* cannot take *Lori* as its antecedent, since *Lori* is not in the same clause with the reflexive. In 1b, neither *Lori* nor *Louise* can serve as an antecedent for the same reason. The binding condition explains why *Lori* and *Louise* cannot serve as antecedent for the reflexive in English. In spite of strict observance of binding condition of local domain in English, this is not necessary the case for all languages. For example in a language like Turkish, the main clause is the governing category for the reflexive *kend* and its variants (*kendi kendi*). This means that in the equivalence the sentence 1a in Turkish either *Lori* or *Mary* can serve as the antecedent of the reflexive, and in 1b *Lori*, *Louise*, or *Mary* can serve as antecedent of the reflexive. The difference between the behavior of the English reflexive and that of the Turkish reflexive suggests that the choice of governing category is subject to parametric variation (see 2 a).

- 2 a. Lori<sub>i</sub> Mary<sub>j</sub>'nin kendini<sub>i/j</sub> çimdiklediğini söyledi.
- 2b. Louise Lori'ye Mary'nin kendisini<sub>j/hi</sub> çimdiklediğini söyledi.

The accessibility question related to the binding theory has focused on the change from the binding domain of the L1 to the binding domain of the L2. In other words, do L2 learners still have access to the principles constraining binding, and can they reset the governing category? Work by *Finer and Broselow (1986)* examines the binding domains of Korean learners of English and in 1987 *Wexler and Manzini* depicts such binding relationship in a five-point continuum ranging from the most restrictive binding domain as in English to the least restrictive domain as evidenced in Korean (like Turkish) (see Figure 4). While Korean allows for long distance binding, Korean learners of English do not maintain the least restrictive domain of their L1, nor do they rapidly adopt the more restrictive binding domain of English; instead, they adopt two different binding domains. They allow for long distance binding of reflexives in clauses with infinitivals (see 3 a) but prefer local binding in tensed clauses (see 3 b).

- 3 a. Nesrin<sub>i</sub> asked Derya<sub>j</sub> to paint herself<sub>j\*<sub>i</sub></sub>.
- 3b. Nesrin<sub>i</sub> believes that Derya<sub>j</sub> will paint herself<sub>j\*<sub>i</sub></sub>.

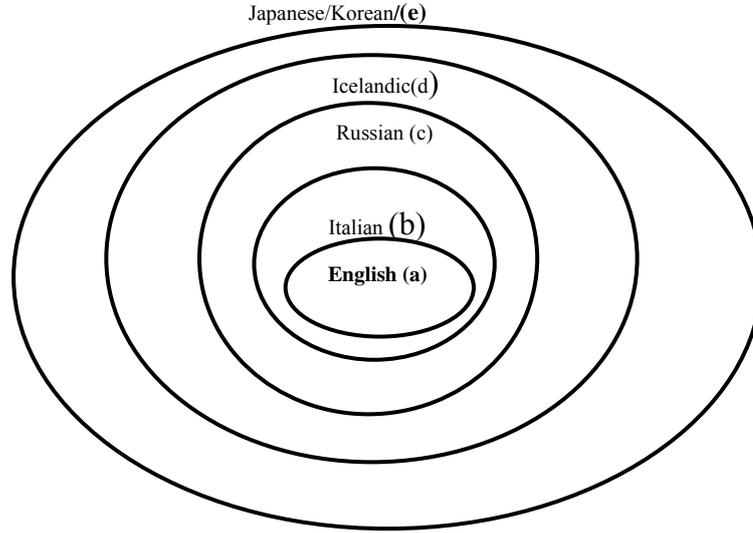


Figure 4. The Governing Category Parameter (Wexler and Manzini, 1987)

As demonstrated by Wexler and Manzini (1987), the language resulting from having the GCP set at the smallest circle in Figure (4) is a subset of language resulting from having the parameter set at larger circle, which is a subset of the language resulting from having the parameter set at larger circle. From the learnability standpoint, Wexler and Manzini (1987) argued that the narrowest circle, which defines the smallest language with respect to Binding Principle A, is the unmarked or default value. The subsequent circle, which defines a larger language, is more marked. The biggest circle on the other hand, which defines the largest language, is the most marked GCP value.

English → the least marked setting of the GCP

Turkish differs from English in this respect. Özsoy (1991, p.54) points out that when the reflexive pronoun is the subject of the clause containing a potential antecedent, it is not possible to coreferentiality relationship between them as shown in example (1); thus it violates Principle A:

(1) \*Kendisi<sub>i</sub> O<sub>i</sub> çocuğun annesini çok seviyor.

Since the reflexive pronoun does not precede the antecedent, there is no ambiguity, as well:

(2) Çocuk<sub>i</sub> kendi<sub>i</sub> annesini çok seviyor. (Bulut, 1996)

As illustrated above, the behavior of Turkish reflexives is different from that of English reflexives in binding domain where English allows only local antecedent for reflexives but Turkish allows both local and nonlocal antecedent for reflexives. Apart from binding domain, Turkish reflexive *kendi* can serve as subjects in Turkish whereas in English, such a case -reflexives being subject- is not possible (see ex:3).

(3) Hasan kendisinin tembel olduğunu düşünüyor.

\*Hasan thinks that himself is lazy.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

For the purpose of the study, 21 children have been randomly chosen from Başkent and İncirlik Schools. The experimental group of this study includes 21 in the Başkent Üniversitesi Gönen Okulları learning English as a second language (ESL) in Turkey, and the control group comprises the rest 21 native American English speakers from İncirlik School. They are all aged between 11-12 years. Since the age is a crucial consideration, the subjects chosen are all below the critical age period (Lenneberg, 1964). The following precautions have been taken to eliminate the extraneous variables:

-none of the Turkish participants have lived in a country where English is spoken as a native language;

-subjects speaking an L1 (such as Arabic and Kurdish) other than Turkish have been excluded from the study to avoid any interference which might stem from parametric similarity or clash between that language and English;

-the teachers of Turkish subjects are native speakers of Turkish;

-since gender is not taken as a variable in this study, subjects have been randomly chosen regardless of their sexes.

Table 1 gives an overview of the backgrounds of all participating subjects.

Table 1. Subjects' Background Information

Group	N	Age-range	Ave. age	Ave. length of Eng learning
Exp	21	11-13	12	11 hours a week
Cont	21	11-13	12	native

#### 3.2. Instrumentation and administration

Three tasks namely Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT), Preference Task (PT), and Sentence-Picture Matching Task (S-PMT) were utilized. Each task comprised four types of sentences, namely two-clause tensed, two-clause infinitival, three-clause tensed, and three-clause infinitival.

In the Grammaticality Judgment Task, 16 multiple choice questions were used eight of which served as dummy items. Questions were designed to elicit answers regarding subjects' ability to choose the right value of the GCP for English.

Preference Task consisted of 16 items eight of which served as dummy items. In this test subjects were not asked to decide about grammaticality of a sentence. They were asked to express their preference between two given sentences.

In the last task -sentence picture matching task- participants heard a sentence read by their class teacher twice and decide on a choice out of three which they believe best correctly describes each sentence. Nine sets of pictures are included in this test where one of them served as a dummy. Dummy items were inserted in the tasks in order to prevent subjects from recognizing the grammatical focus of the test (Birdsong, 1989).

Table 2 displays the distribution of the sentence types of the three tasks.

Table 2. The Distribution of the Types of Sentences Included in Tasks

Sentence Type	GJT	PT	S-PMT
Two-cl finite	2	2	2
Two-cl nonfinite	2	2	2
Three-cl fiinte	2	2	2
Three-cl nonfinite	2	2	2
Dummy	8	8	1
Total	16	16	9

Just a week before the administration, the subjects of the experimental group have been provided with the meanings of all unknown lexical items in the three tasks in a two-hour training session to prevent any failure in their judgments originating from misconception. Moreover, the instructions in English for the tasks have been orally translated to Turkish in order to clear any ambiguity regarding the performance of the task. For the control group, Turkish names used in the tasks have been replaced with the American ones in order to avoid any difficulty in this respect.

The subjects have been allotted approximately 15-sec. /per sentence to make their decision on a task item. The time restriction has been applied to make them refer to their language intuition rather than monitoring the grammatical knowledge.

A step by step flow of the administration of the tasks is as follows:

- vocabulary items were taught a week before the administration
- the tests were handled a part of their original lesson. All the three tasks were given to the subjects by their class teacher n order to motivate students better and to eliminate the adaptation factor to the researcher.
- In the last task (sentence-picture matching) instruction was read twice by class teacher.
- all the students were tested on the same day and the three tasks have been administered in one class hour (approximately 60 minutes).

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The data collected from the three tasks have been entered into SPSS and t-test has been applied. All these data analyses have focused on whether Turkish L2 learners transfer the binding domain of their L1s or arrive at UG (un)constrained IL grammars. For this very reason, performance of the experimental group has been compared to the control group's. Table 3 displays the compared results for each item.

Table 3. Frequency, Percentage and t-test Analyses

Instrument type/item no	1. Exp 2. Cont <i>f correct answer</i>	1Exp 2Con %	SD Standard deviation	t	p
<u>Two-clause finite</u>					
GJT / 2	(exp)12 (con) 7	57.1 81.0	.14	- 1,6 85	.00 3*
GJT / 4	9 16	42.9 76.2	.15	- 2,2 83	.02 0*
PT / 1	15 20	71.4 95.2	.11	- 2,1 32	.00 0*
PT / 15	15 20	71.4 95.2	.11	- 2,1 32	.00 0*
S-PMT / 1	4 20	19.0 95.9	9,99	- 7,6 28	.00 3*
S-PMT/ 6	6 19	28.6 90.5	12	- 5,1 39	.00 1*
<u>Three-clause finite</u>					
GJT / 11	9 19	42.9 90.5	.13	- 3,7 01	.00 0*
PT / 3	2 8	9.5 38.1	.13	- 2,2 52	.00 0*
PT / 6	9 9	42.9 42.9	.16	.00 0	1,0 00

S-PMT / 3	2 14	9.5 66.7	12	- 4,6 02	.00 0*
S-PMT / 5	7 19	33.3 90.5	12	- 4,6 02	.00 0*
<u>Two-clause nonfinite</u>					
GJT 7	8 8	38.1 38.1	15	.00 0	1,0 00
PT / 8	10 21	47.6 100.0	11	- 4,6 90	.00 0*
PT / 10	10 19	47.6 90.5	13	- 3,3 08	.00 0*
S-PMT / 2	19 21	90.5 100.0	6,56	- 2,2 36	1,0 00
S-PMT/ 8	4 20	19.0 95.2	9,99	- 7,6 28	.00 3*
<u>Three- clause nonfinite</u>					
GJT / 15	5 19	23.8 90.5	12	- 5,7 64	.01 3*
PT / 5	7 10	33.3 47.6	15	- 2,2 30	1,0 00
PT / 13	9 18	42.9 85.7	14	- 3,1 62	.00 0*
S-PMT / 4	2 14	9.5 66.7	12	- 4,6 02	.00 0*
S-PMT/ 7	7 17	33.3 81.0	14	- 3,4 71	.04 2*

df= 1, n= 42, \*Significant ( $p \leq .05$ )

Exp: Turkish participants

Cont: Native speakers

GJT= Grammaticality Judgment Task

PT= Preference Task

S-PMT= Sentence Picture Matching Task

When the results related with the two-clause tensed type of sentences across the tasks examined, it is observed that although GJT/2 and GJT/4 display similar grammatical characteristics, experimental group subjects display poor performance on the judgment of the correct reference of the antecedent. On the first sentence, however, the results have proved a significant difference (item 2 t value: 1,685; item 4 t value: 2,283 ).

GJT/2 David<sub>i</sub> says that Jack<sub>j</sub> will shoot himself<sub>j\*</sub>.

GJT/4 The girls<sub>i</sub> think that the boys<sub>j</sub> talked about themselves<sub>j\*</sub>.

The inconsistency in the judgments of these two English sentences by Turkish L2 learners might be due to parasitic effect of Turkish. They are probably at a transition stage of adapting the restrictive binding domain of English and testing their hypotheses in this respect.

In spite of the fact that Turkish reflexives can serve as a subject within the sentence while English reflexives cannot, the data obtained from the same type of sentences in PT reveals that subjects in the experimental group had almost no problem on their preference in PT/1. On item PT/15, however, subjects in both experimental and control groups displayed poor performance. They had problem in determining the antecedents of the reflexives.

PT/1 a. \*Carol thinks that herself will win the game.

b. Carol thinks that she will win the game.

PT/15 a. I think that the children's<sub>i</sub> behavior<sub>j</sub> was bad in itself<sub>j</sub>.

b. \*I think that the children's behavior was bad in themselves.

When the two-clause tensed type of sentences were asked to match with the corresponding pictures in S-PMT, a significant difference has been observed between the performances of the subjects in the experimental and control group (S-PMT/1= t value: 7,628; S-PMT/6= 5,139).

S-PMT/1 John<sub>h</sub> said that Tom<sub>i</sub> shot himself<sub>i\*</sub>.

S-PMT/6 My daughter<sub>h</sub> said that her friend<sub>i</sub> pinched herself<sub>i\*</sub>.

The poor performance of Turkish subjects on this particular task might stem from their insufficient listening comprehension skills as well as the incomplete parameter setting process. As for the analysis of the three-clause tensed type of sentences across the three tasks from the point of reflexives, there is a statistically significant difference between Turkish L2 learners and the native speakers of American English. In the analysis of GJT/9 and GJT/11, we observe the following statistical difference: (GJT/9 = t value: 3,069; GJT/11= 3.701).

GJT/9 Brad<sub>f</sub> says that Vincent<sub>h</sub> thinks that the teacher<sub>i</sub> hates himself<sub>i\*f\*</sub>.

GJT/11 Lucy<sub>f</sub> remembered that my aunt<sub>h</sub> said that her sister<sub>i</sub> kissed herself<sub>i\*f\*</sub>.

Due to the sentence processing difficulty of these items comprising three clauses as compared to the two-clause ones, both Turkish and native speakers are

expected to fail in providing correct judgment because in both L1 and L2 acquisition development, the evidences of correct parameter setting are first observable in relatively less complex sentences.

When this type of sentences has been presented in PT, both groups performed poorly on PT/3 and PT/6. While there is a statistically significant difference between the groups in PT/3 (t value: 2,252), Turkish and American subjects demonstrated equal performance on PT/6.

PT/3 a \*I remembered that Jack said that himself was at the party.

b I remembered that Jack said that he was at the party.

PT/6 a I believe that Mike thinks himself to be hardworking.

b \* I believe that Mike thinks himself is hardworking.

It seems that even the native speakers of American English have problems with their preferences on in this respect at this age as well as Turkish L2 learners. This, again, might lead us to claim that the complete acquisition of the properties of this particular syntactic domain requires a gradually unfolding process along with the maturity of UG principles and parameters in both L1 and L2 development.

The performances of the Turkish L2 learners on S-PMT with three-clause sentences are again statistically lower than the control group subjects (S-PMT/3= t value. 4,602, S-PMT/5= 4,602).

S-PMT/3 Tom says that Mr. Turner thinks that John<sub>i</sub> may kill himself<sub>i</sub>.

S-PMT/5 They say that the manager does not know Brad<sub>i</sub> will vote for himself<sub>i</sub>.

In the case of two-clause infinitival sentences, in GJT, although both groups subjects performed equally poor in GJT/7, control group performed significantly better on GJT/3 (GJT/3 = t-value: 2,989).

GJT/3 Mary<sub>h</sub> asked Susan<sub>i</sub> to paint herself<sub>i\*h</sub>.

GJT/7 Henry<sub>h</sub> wanted his father<sub>i</sub> to watch himself<sub>i\*h</sub>.

The inconsistency in this respect might be an evidence of incomplete acquisition process of Binding Principle at this age for control group and L1 transfer for experimental group.

There is again a significant difference in the performance between the groups on GJT regarding two-clause infinitival sentences in PT/8 (t-value: 4,690) and PT/10 (t:3,308) between the groups. However, experimental group subjects performed relatively better in comparison to their success level on the other items of the task.

PT/8 a \*Dr. Turner wants the nurse to help himself.

b Dr. Turner wants the nurse to help him

PT/10 a \*William asked the girl to go to the cinema with himself.

b William asked the girl to go the cinema with him.

This might support our view that Turkish subjects are still in their on-going process of setting the correct L2 value. The data obtained from S-PMT on these type of sentences might be another confirmation to this probability.

As the statistical results reveal, in S-PMT/2, Turkish learners performed successfully a rate of at 90.5 % with two-clause infinitival sentences but could not display a similar success on, S-PMT/8, yielding a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group (t-value: 7,628).

S-PMT/2 John<sub>i</sub> thinks himself<sub>i</sub> to be taller than Fred.

S-PMT/8 Mary asked her friend<sub>i</sub> to dress herself<sub>i</sub>.

In all the three tasks related to three-clause infinitival sentences, the performances of the Turkish L2 learners seem to decrease at a significant rate.

For instance, there is statistical difference between the groups on their performances on GJT/13 (t-value: 2.346) and GJT/15 (t-value: 5.764).

GJT/13 Karl<sub>f</sub> remembered that David<sub>h</sub> wanted Jack<sub>i</sub> to paint himself<sub>i/\*h</sub>.

GJT/15 He watched that the doctor<sub>h</sub> asked the patient<sub>i</sub> to dress himself<sub>i/\*h</sub>.

The performances of the groups in PT as well reveal a statistical difference on PT/13 (t-value: 3,162). The preferences of Turkish L2 learners for PT/15, although not satisfactory, is not different from the ones of the control group in a statistically significant manner.

PT/13 a \*Philips says that everybody wants the government to support himself.

b Philips says that everybody wants the government to support him.

PT/5 a \* I think that Harry thinks Sally to like himself.

b I think that Harry thinks Sally to like him.

Results relevant with the S-PMT in the three-clause infinitival sentences are not different, either. Performances of the experimental group on the two items are statistically lower than the ones of the control group (S-PMT/4= t-value: 4,602, S-PMT/7= t-value: 3,471).

S-PMT/4 I heard that the doctor<sub>h</sub> asked the patient<sub>i</sub> to talk to himself<sub>i/\*h</sub> about the dream.

S-PMT/7 My brother remembered that the teacher<sub>h</sub> wanted Mike<sub>i</sub> to hit himself<sub>i/\*h</sub>.

As seen in Table 1, Turkish children have no problem in assigning the NP as an antecedent to the reflexives with two-clause finite structures. However, they seem to have a difficulty in performing consistently among the tasks. While GJT and PT do not cause Turkish children any problem, S-PMT seems problematic. This may be due to the fact that the listening ability is not proficient enough to comprehend and analyze the given structures. In the parallel structure of the items in S-MPT, most of Turkish children performed very well; thus, we cannot believe the fact that they have difficulty in two-clause structure type. When we consider the three-clause nonfinite structures in Table 1, it is observed that the native speakers performed lower than the other structures. This might be due to processing difficulty of this structure type and due to the infrequent use of such structures; in other words, due to being less exposed to such structures in their native setting.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Although limited to a single principle, the purpose of this study was to test the accessibility hypotheses those an investigation of L2 acquisition process of the strict observance of binding condition of local domain in English by Turkish children at the age of 11-12, which is prior to the sensitive period. Assuming that the child L2 learner's ability does not match the child native speaker's (NS) ability and that the linguistic behavior elicited from each learner with each task maps the territory between the territory lying between the target language grammar and the learner's IL, evaluation of the variance in the learner's behavior has allowed us to measure the

development with respect to the NS's model. Thus in this particular based SLA research, it is assumed that the L2 learner's grammar and the NS's grammar are based on the same underlying competence for language, that is on principles of UG.

The direct access hypothesis, which claims that adult L2 acquisition, is the result of a direct interaction between UG and the L2 data. Thus, this hypothesis predicts Turkish child learners to start out with the correct L2 (in this case English) value and not accept any interference from L1 (Turkish). In other words, L2 acquisition process takes place automatically and the subjects' native language does not play any role. The data of our study has revealed that surface structural errors reflecting the adoption of the L1 head-complement parameter setting in the child L2 acquisition process provide evidence against this hypothesis. If the subjects had some sort of a direct access to UG, they would approximate the performance of the control group (native speakers of American English). That is, learners would have picked up binding condition of local domain in English when they were exposed to the minimal triggering linguistic input comprising the appropriate value. In this case, the Turkish child learners would start out with the correct L2 parameter value and not accept any interference from their L1.

As we stated earlier no-access hypothesis claims that in areas where the structures of two languages differ, learners should encounter difficulties due to interference and negative transfer from their L1. The results obtained from the study do not support this hypothesis because logical problem of language acquisition seems to apply in the child L2 acquisition process in this study as well. As inferred from the findings, subjects in the experimental group do not completely transfer their L1 value to the L2 setting. Moreover, we do not see any wild grammar errors. For this reason, like most of the researchers in the field, such as White (1989), we reject this hypothesis because we believe that UG provides an answer to the poverty-of-stimulus argument in L2 as well as in L1 acquisition.

The indirect hypothesis claims that initially learners transfer their L1 properties into L2. However, as their learning proceeds, they achieve the resetting process. Our study seems to support this logical possibility because when we evaluate the data obtained from our control group, we see that the learners do not seem to exhibit a structure that are not sanctioned by UG. It is inferred that UG plays an active role in L2 acquisition in conjunction with the L1 grammar and does not function in the same way as in L1 acquisition. Under the light of this discussion we can conclude that child L2 learner's IL is still constrained by UG and in this transition stage might be under the influence of some sort of IL instantiated principles and parameters. For this very reason, further research needs to be conducted on the occurrence of IL instantiated grammars in child and adult L2 acquisition.

## **5. Implications for ELT Methodology**

In the domain of English Language Teaching methodology, UG'S role has been largely neglected. Most of the methodological approaches available today do not utilize the findings of the studies of SLA from the generative framework. However,

what these studies put forward regarding the SLA process might be very helpful in classroom applications as well.

Moreover, this particular study might constitute a basis for further studies with its findings revealing the gradual steps of Turkish L2 learners of English in the acquisition of appropriate English GCP value which is different from their L1s.

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