

The Acquisition of Raising Constructions in L2 English by Turkish Native Speakers

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This paper explores the acquisition of raising constructions in L2 English by Turkish native speakers. Raising constructions are the constructions when a subject/object of a subordinate clause is moved to the subject/object position of a so-called “higher” clause thus categorized as “raised” (Callies, 2008). There are three types of raising constructions.

1. Subject-To-Subject Raising (SSR)

a. Jeffree seems to be happy.

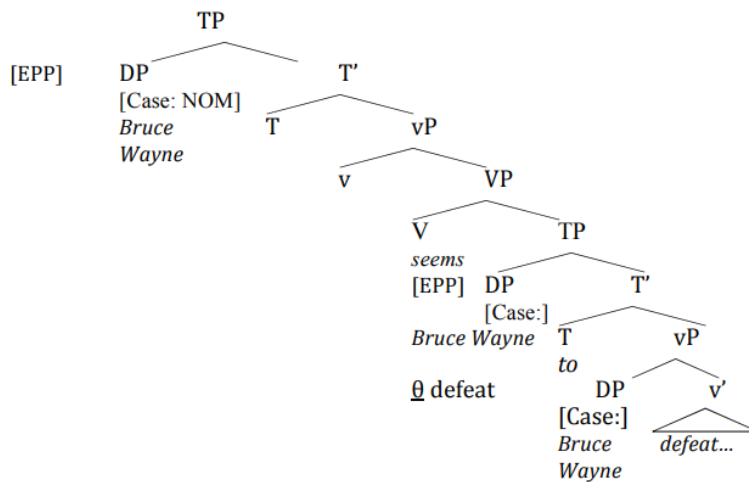
2. Subject-To-Object Raising (SOR)

a. We believe her to be leaving.

3. Tough Movement – Object-To-Subject Raising (TM)

a. They are difficult to please.

As Turkish only allows SOR (Callies, 2008), we focus on the acquisition of SSR, which seems to be typologically rare as it involves what is called A-movement over an experiencer that occupies a place structurally lower compared to the subject. Therefore, based on the prediction that its acquisition is to be problematic compared to SOR raising, we hypothesize that Turkish learners of English have wrong interpretation and theta role assignment.



(Polinsky, 2013)

To test this, based on the Cambridge English Placement Test we conduct an experiment on two different proficiency groups (A2 and B2) of L2 English learners. All of the participants (aged 18-30) are students. A questionnaire consisting of 50 items including 20 experimental items including SSR and SOR constructions is used and the answers are analyzed on SPSS. The participants were expected to have problems misinterpreting the SSR sentences while having no problems with SOR. Our results showed us that the value of p is <.00001 for comparison between SSR and SOR in Level A, and for Level B the value of p is <.00038 (The result is significant at <.05 and also at <.01).

Key words: L2 Acquisition, L2 English, Raising Constructions, SSR Raising

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