

### Object Shift in L2 Norwegian

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This paper investigates L2 acquisition of Object Shift (OS) in Norwegian. In Norwegian, pronominal objects typically move across negation, while DP objects remain in situ (1a,b). In (1a) the pronoun *den* ‘it’ refers to *bilen* ‘the car’, and is thus labeled a *referential pronominal object*. However, when the pronoun *det* ‘it/that’ refers to a full clause, it typically remains in situ, (1c) (Bentzen et al. 2013). We label the latter *non-referential pronominal objects*.

- (1)a. *Bilen er skitten. Tor vasket den ikke/\*ikke den i går.*  
 car.the is dirty Tor cleaned it not/ not it yesterday  
 “The car is dirty. Tor didn’t clean it yesterday.”
- b. *Ellen vil se naturlig ut. Hun brukte \*sminke ikke/ikke sminke i går.*  
 Ellen wants look natural out she used makeup not/ not makeup yesterday  
 “Ellen wants to look natural. She didn’t wear makeup yesterday.”
- c. *Maria vil at de skal flytte. Magnus vil \*det ikke/ikke det akkurat nå.*  
 Maria wants that they shall move Magnus want that not/ not that right now  
 “Maria wants them to move. Magnus doesn’t want that right now.”

Previous L1 acquisition studies reveal that OS is not in place until school age (Anderssen et al. 2012). However, when children employ OS, it is always target-like; children never erroneously shift pronominal objects that do not shift in adult Norwegian. Anderssen et al. (2010, 2012) argue that OS is acquired late due to low input frequency of referential pronominal objects and complexity (some pronominal objects shift, others do not).

#### Method and predictions

Given the results from L1 acquisition of OS, we expect OS to be delayed also in L2 acquisition. Thus we investigate how L2 learners judge sentences with various objects preceding and following negation. 76 L2 learners of Norwegian and 51 native Norwegian controls completed a grammaticality judgement task involving variable object placement (Neg-Obj/Obj-Neg) in three conditions: DP-objects, referential pronominal objects and non-referential pronominal objects.

Our study aims to reveal whether L2 learners show any knowledge of OS, and, if they do, whether they distinguish referential and non-referential pronominal objects. Moreover, we explore the effect of proficiency level as well as potential transfer from L1. First of all, we predict that (i) L2 learners will not observe OS, especially at the lower proficiency levels. Furthermore, we predict that (ii) once learners start employing OS, they may not be aware of the distinction between referential and non-referential pronominal objects. Finally, we predict that (iii) learners with an L1 allowing OS-like phenomena (like scrambling and clitic climbing) may be more likely to accept shifted objects.

#### Results and discussion

The overall results reveal that predictions (i) and (ii) are largely borne out: In contrast to the native controls, L2 learners generally prefer *all* objects in situ (Table 1). Moreover, as Figure 1 shows, we see a significant correlation between target-like judgement of DP object placement and proficiency. Furthermore, for L2 learners there is no significant difference between referential and non-referential pronominal objects, indicating that this distinction is acquired late. Native controls, however, clearly distinguish these two types (Table 2) ( $p < 0.0001$ ). In addition, preliminary results

suggest that speakers with German/Dutch or Slavic languages as their L1s (languages allowing object scrambling) more readily accept shifted objects in general, thus supporting prediction (iii).

We discuss the L2 data in relation to both the L1 results from our survey and previous L1 acquisition studies. One possible analysis is that L2 judgements reflect Norwegian learner grammars. The infrequency and complexity of OS cause delays in L1 acquisition; frequency in particular may also affect L2 acquisition. Alternatively, cross-linguistic influence from the learners' L1s may cause inter-speaker variation within the L2 group.

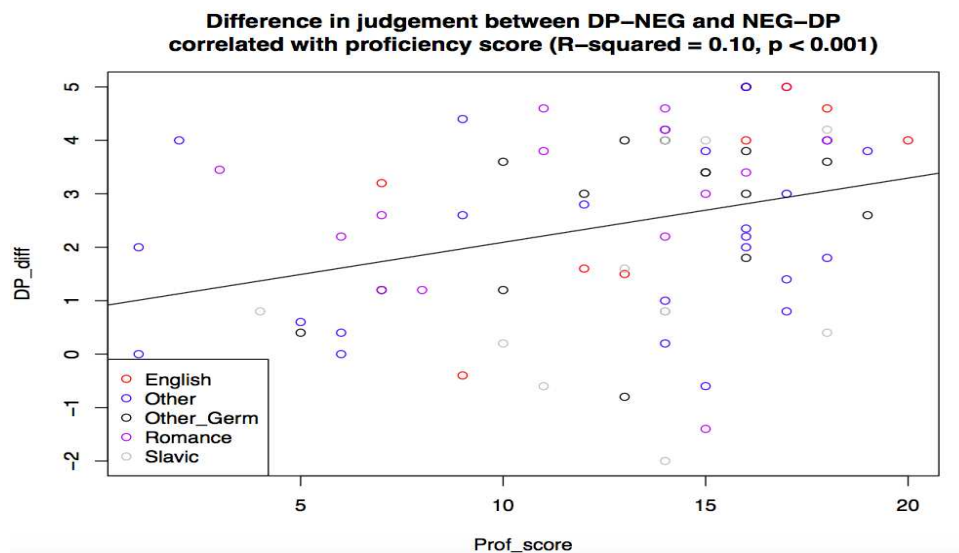
**Table 1:** Judgements from OS-survey L2 learners on a 1-6 scale.

	<i>Referential objects</i>				<i>Non-referential objects</i>	
	pro-neg	neg-pro	DP-neg	neg-DP	pro-neg	neg-pro
<b>Average</b>	<b>3,79</b>	<b>4,63</b>	<b>2,57</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3,69</b>	<b>4,34</b>

**Table 2:** Judgements from OS-survey L1 speakers on a 1-6 scale.

	<i>Referential objects</i>				<i>Non-referential objects</i>	
	pro-neg	neg-pro	DP-neg	neg-DP	pro-neg	neg-pro
<b>Average</b>	<b>5,24</b>	<b>3,85</b>	<b>1,36</b>	<b>5,65</b>	<b>2,87</b>	<b>5,17</b>

**Figure 1:** Difference in judgement between DP-Neg and Neg-DP.



## References

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