

# Crosslinguistic Influence in Turkish-English Bilingual First Language Acquisition: The Overuse of Subjects in Turkish

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## 1. Introduction

Research on bilingual first language acquisition over the last decade has dealt with the question of whether bilingual children have one or two linguistic systems during the early stages of linguistic development (e.g. Meisel, 1989; de Houwer, 1990; Genesee, Nicoladis and Paradis, 1995; Köppe, 1996). It has now been established that bilingual children differentiate between the grammatical systems they are exposed to from very early on. This does not necessarily entail no contact between the two systems in bilingual acquisition. In recent work a number of studies have explored potential interactions between the two developing languages. Indeed, it has been shown that some degree of cross-linguistic influence is prevalent in early bilingual speech (e.g. Döpke, 1998, 2000; Gawlitzek-Maiwald and Tracy, 1996; Hulk and van der Linden, 1998; Hulk and Müller, 2000; Müller and Hulk, 2001; Yip and Matthews, 2000). In more specific terms, the focus of interest has been placed on the appearance of systematic influence from one language to another during the course of bilingual development in syntactic, phonological, morphological domains, as well as in language contact situations (e.g. Döpke, 1998, 2000; Müller, 1998; Yip and Matthews, 2000; Paradis, 2001; Nicoladis, 2002; Herkenrath et.al, 2003).

In their recent work, Hulk and Müller (2000) (henceforth, H&M) have suggested that crosslinguistic influence in bilingual children occurs under particular conditions. According to H&M's proposal, crosslinguistic influence is likely to occur at the pragmatics/syntax interface of the linguistic system, where the pragmatic context has an effect on the choice of the syntactic structure in production. More specifically, H&M claim that the interface between syntax and pragmatics is vulnerable to crosslinguistic interference and can be acquired late in bilingual acquisition.<sup>1</sup>

Our aim in this study is to test this hypothesis in terms of the realization of subjects in the Turkish speech of a Turkish/English bilingual boy, Ali-John and that of a monolingual boy, Murat. On H&M's model, the realization of subjects in Turkish-English bilingual acquisition is a potential candidate for

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<sup>1</sup> This proposal is based on Platzack (2001) who argues that a group of language speakers including very early L1 learners, children with Specific Language Impairment, adult L2 learners, and patients with Broca's aphasia exhibit difficulties with the C-domain, which links the information present at IP and VP to discourse. For Platzack, speakers in this group, called the C-group, display non-target-like production of the syntax at the highest structural level, the C-domain, but produce the syntax of lower structural levels such as IP and VP in a target-like way.

the investigation of cross-linguistic influence precisely because (i) while Turkish is a pro-drop language, overt subjects are realized in both Turkish and English, and (ii) the realization of overt and null subjects are constrained by pragmatic rules and conditions. To this end, we first examine the production of pragmatically inappropriate overt subjects by a bilingual child, relative to the monolingual Turkish-speaking child, then investigate the pragmatic contexts of overt subject utterances to see whether discourse pragmatics constrain the bilingual child's production. Comparing spontaneous speech samples of the bilingual child to the monolingual child, the data reported in this study show that the bilingual child produces pragmatically inappropriate overt subjects at a rate more than 10 times higher than that of the monolingual child.

The organization of this paper is as follows: we first present H&M's proposal of crosslinguistic influence in more detailed terms, together with an overview of previous research examining subject realization in the bilingual first language acquisition literature. In Section 3, we review the discourse pragmatics of subject realization in Turkish. Section 4 presents methodology and the participants in the study. This is followed by Section 5, where we present the results of the study. In the last section, we draw conclusions with regard to crosslinguistic interference and the syntax-pragmatics interface in bilingual first language acquisition.

## 2. Previous work on cross-linguistic influence in bilingual acquisition

Hulk and Müller (2000) and Müller and Hulk (2001) propose that it is possible to predict what type of phenomena may be subject to crosslinguistic influence. In their account, two conditions must be met in order for crosslinguistic influence to occur:

(i) Crosslinguistic interference is likely to occur at the pragmatics/syntax interface of the linguistic system, specifically the C-domain, where syntax and pragmatics interact, is particularly vulnerable and therefore is likely to be target deviant.

(ii) There needs to be an overlap at the surface level between the two languages for a certain structure, while the underlying syntactic analyses for this overlap structure are in fact different in each language.

Under these conditions, then, the bilingual child is exposed to competing evidence for more than one structural analysis, and hence, due to the influence of the other language, the child makes use of a particular analysis more frequently in one of the languages. Müller, Hulk and Jakubowicz (1998) have shown that a higher degree of early object drop in the two bilingual children in comparison to monolingual children provides evidence for the influence of the Germanic topic-drop language (Dutch/German) on the Romance non-topic-drop language (French/Italian). For H&M (2000), the phenomenon of object omission constitutes an example of a default discourse-based strategy interacting with a language-specific mechanism that involves the C-domain. In monolingual acquisition of Dutch and German, young children are found to omit objects frequently, not only in contexts allowed in the adult language (in sentence-initial position) but also in target-deviant position, such as sentence-internal position. Monolingual French and Italian children, on the other hand, omit objects much less frequently (Jakubowicz et al, 1997). In regard to object omissions in the speech of two bilingual children *Anouk* (Dutch/French) and *Carlotta* (German/Italian), H&M (2000) argue that the target-deviant discourse licensing of empty objects in French/Italian is reinforced by the input of the topic-drop Germanic languages (H&M, 2000: 231), resulting in persistent errors in object suppliance. Under this account, the decrease in object omission is attributed to the emergence of the C-system.

Müller and Hulk (2001) also discuss crosslinguistic influence in bilingual language acquisition, with a focus on longitudinal data from Dutch-French, German-French and German-Italian bilingual children. Results show that the bilingual children behave like monolingual children in terms of the type of object omissions in Romance languages. However, they differ from monolingual children regarding the extent of object drop. First, all three bilingual children studied use object omissions to a much higher degree in their Romance languages as opposed to monolinguals with a similar MLU/age. Second, two of the bilingual children continue to use object omission to a high degree at a time when there is gradual development of the C-system. For Müller and Hulk (2001), despite the fact that the bilingual children differentiate the two grammatical systems they use, their Germanic languages

influence the Romance languages under discussion. They also suggest that some bilingual children appear to go through a long transitional stage before converging with the target-grammar.

A related linguistic phenomenon that is predicted to be subject to crosslinguistic influence under these conditions is the realization of subject arguments in the speech of bilingual children acquiring a pro-drop language and a non pro-drop language simultaneously. Indeed, this phenomenon has received considerable interest in recent work on bilingual first language acquisition, in particular from the perspective of crosslinguistic influence. The next section therefore presents a brief overview of previous research that investigates crosslinguistic interference in recent bilingual acquisition research (e.g. Paradis and Navarro, 2003; Serratrice and Sorace, 2003; Serratrice, Sorace and Paoli, 2004).

Paradis and Navarro (2003) examined spontaneous speech samples from one Spanish/English bilingual child between the ages 1;9-2;6, as well as production from two monolingual Spanish controls, ages 1;8-1;11 and 1;8-2;7. Following H&M, the authors predicted that the bilingual child's English would quantitatively influence the distribution of overt subjects in Spanish. The rationale for this is as follows: English, being a non pro-drop language, provides the child with much evidence in favor of overt, rather than null, subjects. In contrast, Spanish provides evidence for both overt and null subjects, as is characteristic for pro-drop languages. Given that the decision between using overt or null subjects involves the syntax/pragmatic interface, i.e. the C-domain, it follows that a Spanish/English bilingual child is predicted to produce more overt subjects in Spanish than her/his monolingual peers. The data collected by Paradis and Navarro (2003) show that the bilingual child produces more than twice as many overt subjects as the two monolingual Spanish speakers. It should be noted at this point that unlike Müller and Hulk (2001), Paradis and Navarro (2003) also examined the discourse/pragmatic context of overt subject use,<sup>2</sup> as well as the potential effects of parental input. Their aim is to find out not only whether crosslinguistic influence takes place, but also whether the influence is associated with the discourse/pragmatics contexts. Overall, they found that the rate of overt subjects in the speech of the bilingual child, M, was higher than in that of the corresponding monolingual children. With respect to the discourse/pragmatic contexts of overt subject realization, the bilingual child had more than twice the proportion of pragmatically inappropriate overt subjects in her Spanish, which is a null subject language.

Similar results were obtained in recent work by Serratrice and Sorace (2003) and Serratrice, Sorace and Paoli (2004), where they examine spontaneous data from one Italian/English bilingual boy, Carlo, between the ages 1;10-4;6, as well as six monolingual Italian controls between the ages 1;7-3;3. In an attempt to test H&M's crosslinguistic influence hypothesis, they predict that the obligatoriness of subjects in finite clauses in English might lead the bilingual child to use an overt form in Italian, even though the adult language would require a null subject. Similar to the Paradis and Navarro study, Serratrice and Sorace (2003) and Serratrice, Sorace and Paoli (2004) also investigate whether monolingual and bilingual children are sensitive to the pragmatic constraints that regulate the distribution of null and overt subjects in Italian, with special reference to the issue of crosslinguistic influence. Following Clancy's (1993) and Allen's (2000) approach to argument realization, Serratrice and Sorace (2003) and Serratrice, Sorace and Paoli (2004) coded subjects in terms of their informativeness features such as absence, activation, contrast, differentiation in discourse, newness, query and person. First, they note that the bilingual child, Carlo is sensitive to the discourse/pragmatic status of subjects and that overall he uses null and overt subjects appropriately. However, when the frequency of overt subjects in his speech was compared to that of monolingual children, it is found that he uses fewer null subjects than the monolingual children in his Italian. In other words, Carlo's use of inappropriate overt subjects is significantly higher than that of the Italian monolinguals.

In another recent, study Hacoheh and Schaeffer (2004) also investigated the realization of subjects in the speech of a Hebrew-English bilingual child, EK. Given that subject-verb agreement is a purely syntactic phenomenon and is therefore not predicted to be vulnerable in the context of bilingual

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<sup>2</sup> Paradis and Navarro (2003) note that although H&M propose that crosslinguistic influence is likely to occur at the pragmatic/syntax interface, they have only examined the realization of object omission errors, not the contexts where these errors are found. In line with Allen (2001), Paradis and Navarro (2003) argue that in order to build a convincing argument for crosslinguistic influence at the pragmatic/syntax interface, it is crucial to examine the discourse/pragmatic contexts.

acquisition, Hacoen and Schaeffer (2004) also examined subject-verb agreement. Following H&M, Hacoen and Schaeffer (2004) predict that the bilingual child's English would quantitatively influence the distribution of overt subjects in Hebrew, resulting in the overuse of overt subjects in Hebrew. Comparing spontaneous speech samples of the bilingual child, EK, to a control group of five monolingual Hebrew-speaking children, Hacoen and Schaeffer (2004) found that EK produces pragmatically inappropriate overt subjects in Hebrew at a rate more than 3 times higher than that of the monolingual controls. In more specific terms, while the monolingual children hardly use any pragmatically inappropriate overt subjects (7%), EK uses them 23% of the time. On the other hand, the rate of subject-verb agreement errors in EK's Hebrew is rather low and virtually identical to that of the monolingual children.

To the best of our knowledge, no work to date has dealt with the use of subjects in bilingual Turkish-English. As this study specifically investigates the realization of subjects in monolingual and bilingual Turkish, we hope to contribute to both monolingual and bilingual acquisition research. Before the analysis of the data, however, we first focus on the realization of subjects in adult Turkish.

### 3. Subjects in Turkish

As in most null subject languages, the subject in Turkish can be left unexpressed in finite clauses and possessive noun phrases (Kornfilt, 1988). On the assumption that the choice of a lexical subject in pro-drop languages relies greatly on pragmatic considerations, such as emphasis, contrast, and/or old vs. new information (e.g. Davidson, 1996), the appearance of overt pronominal and lexical subjects is grammatically optional and determined largely by the discourse-pragmatic context in Turkish (Erguvanlı, 1984; Enç, 1986, Kornfilt, 1984; Özsoy, 1987). When the intended referent can be recovered from the discourse, the speaker may use a pronoun or leave out the NP completely.

- (1) a. ----- okul-a gid-iyor-um  
           school-DAT go-future-1SG  
           'I'm going to school'
- b. Ben okul-a gid-iyor-um  
           I school-DAT go-PROG-1SG  
           'I'm going to school'

The example (1a) shows that the empty pronominal is the counterpart of the overt pronouns and its reference is determined by the agreement morphology in Turkish. It should be noted that the examples in (1) are equivalent with respect to their truth conditions. That is, the existence of the pronominal subject in (1b) does not affect the truth value of the sentence. It should be noted, however, that when the referent of the pronoun is contrasted with the referent of another NP, an overt pronominal subject is required, as shown in (2a-b).

- (2) a. Ev-i Deniz temizle-me-di  
           House-ACC Deniz clean-NEG-PAST- Ø
- b. Ben temizle-di-m  
           I clean-PAST-1SG  
           'Deniz didn't clean the house, I cleaned (it).

As the overt subject in (2b) is stressed, for Enç (1986), it would not be possible to show contrast without pronouns, as the only indicator of person is the suffix *-m* on the verb, which cannot be stressed.

Overt subject realization in English is a syntactic requirement, rather than a pragmatic one. In principle, the subject argument must be realized overtly,<sup>3</sup> and its underlying formal position is taken to be that of the specifier of IP.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that in certain restricted pragmatic contexts, null subjects are permitted in English. For example, diary drop (Haegeman, 1990; 1997).

## 4. The present study

The present study investigates the subject realization in one Turkish monolingual child and one English-Turkish bilingual child. We examined the frequency of overt and null subjects, as well as the discourse-pragmatic context of overt subject use, with the objective of addressing not only the issue of whether crosslinguistic influence occurs, but also whether the interference includes the pragmatics end of the pragmatics/syntax interface.

### 4.1. Method

#### *Participants*

The data analyzed in this study come from two child learners, consisting of transcribed naturalistic language production samples. Of the two children, the monolingual child, Murat, is the only child of an academic couple. The Turkish-English bilingual child, Ali-John, has a Turkish-speaking father and a native British English-speaking mother. Both parents and an elder brother spoke English to each other and to Ali-John at home, and due to the family's concerns regarding the amount of input, Ali-John receives the Turkish input mainly from teachers, caretakers and peers in the nursery on the campus. According to his parents, Ali-John's Turkish-English input is more or less similar in terms of the approximate time he uses each language, while at times his Turkish input exceeds his English, as he spends nearly 7-8 hours in the nursery from 9-17 on a daily basis. Both children go to the same nursery on the campus, know each other, and are exposed to the same standard variety of Turkish. For the English data, the recordings were made at the child's home. It should be noted that for each language, the context was kept as monolingual as possible to reflect the language separation consistent with Ali-John's daily experience. In order to achieve this, in each recording session, Ali-John mainly interacted with his English-speaking mother, occasionally with his English-speaking brother. In sum, the author, a native speaker of Turkish with advanced level of English, and the two English-speaking interlocutors were involved in the English sessions. Each recording lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and the activities Ali-John and the others engaged in ranged from reading books to drawing, playing with various types of toys, doing jigsaws, talking about his daily experiences, making toys and other activities. Ali-John started attending a Turkish speaking day-care center at around the age of 1;6, and throughout the whole study, he was attending the same kindergarten for 7-8 hours a day where all the staff and the children, except for one or two children in the whole school, are monolingual Turkish speakers. The Turkish data were collected at the child's nursery school on the university campus, where the author has a teaching position.

The monolingual data were collected longitudinally from a monolingual Turkish-speaking, boy, Murat, who is the son of an academic couple at the same university. The data are spontaneous production samples of a large data base, covering a period of 4 years. The recordings were made at the child's home, at regular intervals, sometimes everyday, sometimes three-four days a week. The sessions were similar to those of Ali-John's, in that they involved the investigator and the parents, who interacted with the child. The audio recordings and very detailed field notes were transcribed by the investigator according to the CHILDES guidelines (MacWhinney and Snow, 1990).

The children's ages and MLU's are given in Table 1:

Ali-John (bilingual)		Murat (monolingual)	
Age	MLU	Age	MLU
2;4-2;10	2	2	4;57
2;11-3;10	4;41	3;10	6;68

Bilingual data comprise 37 samples between May 2004-Oct 2005, ages (2;4-4;3). Monolingual data (from age 1;7-3;10, Nov 2001-June 2004). We specifically examined the presence of overt subjects and the types of overt subjects, as well as the discourse-pragmatic functions of the overt subjects used.

#### 4.2. Three categories of subjects

In coding the data in both sets, we examined the following: (i) the presence of overt subjects, (ii) the types of overt subjects, and (iii) the discourse-pragmatic function of the overt subject used. It should be noted that imperative forms, repetitions and imitations are excluded. The discourse-pragmatic functions coded were based on previous studies reported by Allen (2000),<sup>4</sup> Paradis and Navarro (2003) and Serratice *et al.* (2004). Following Paradis and Navarro (2003), three categories of subjects are identified: (i) new information, (ii) given information, but the overt subject serves a discourse-pragmatic purpose, and (iii) given information, but no discourse-pragmatic purpose. In Category 1, new information refers to an overt subject (referent) that introduces a new referent (new information), as shown in (3).

- (3) Context: A girl brings a little turtle to the class. Ali-John shows it to the investigator.  
 Ali-John: Bak, **Ece** getir-di  
 look Ece bring-PAST  
 ‘look, Ece brought (it)’ (18 Feb, 2005)

In Category 2, we analyzed given information under four subheadings; (i) Contrast, (ii) Query, (iii) Absence, and (iv) Emphasis. Contrast refers to a referent (an overt subject) that the speaker explicitly contrasts with other referents in the discourse (i.e. in cases where the child refers to two third person referents in the discourse). This is shown in (4).

- (4) Context: Ali-John is showing pictures in a recent kids’ magazine.  
 Ali-John: **O** Mickey Mouse diil, **o** böcek  
 it MM not, it bug  
 ‘It is not MM, it is (a) bug’ (18 Feb 2005)

Query refers to an overt subject that is the subject of a question or a response to a question.

- (5) Context: Children are rehearsing for a school play. Each child has a role to perform.  
 Teacher: Şimdi kim gelsin? (Who will come here now)  
 Ali-John: **Begüm** geli-yor  
 Begüm come-PROG  
 ‘Begüm is coming’ (9 May 2005)

Emphasis was used to code overt subjects that the speaker intends to highlight. Emphasis subjects were usually pronouns.

- (6) Context: The teacher wants to make children speak about their daily plans, after breakfast. But Ali-John got angry with a boy during the breakfast.  
 Teacher: Kahvaltısını bitiren, yanıma gelsin ve bana bugünkü planını anlatsın.  
 Those who had their breakfast, please come forward and let me know your plans today.  
 Ali-John: **Ben** gel-mi-yor-um  
 I come-NEG-PROG-1SG  
 ‘I’m not coming’

<sup>4</sup> Allen (2000) follows Greenfield and Smith’s (1976) principle of informativeness, according to which children tend to show sensitivity to those aspects of events that are most informative, such as objects rather than subjects, subjects being less informative (cf. Hyams and Wexler, 1993).

Absence refers to a subject when the referent was not present in the physical context of the discourse.

- (7) Context: The teacher looks at a ripped paper and asks why it was ripped. Ali-John talks about a girl who was not present in the class that day.

Ali-John: **Zeynep** yırt-tı, öğretmenim  
 Zeynep rip-PAST teacher  
 ‘Zeynep ripped it, teacher’

Following Paradis and Navarro (2003), we also identified another category of subjects, named as the low informativeness category (LOW INFO). This is the category where the overt use of subjects does not serve any pragmatic purpose, such as contrast, topic shift, etc. They are pragmatically inappropriate overt subjects, since the context does not in fact need them to be overt in Turkish. This is shown in (8).

- (8) a. Investigator: Dün ben gittikten sonra, bahçede Gözde’yle oynadın mı?  
 ‘Did you play with Gözde after I left yesterday?’

Ali-John: ben oyna-dı-m  
 I play-PAST-1SG (Sample 29, 24 May 2005)

- b. Context: Children are having breakfast at school. The investigator arrives just before they finish breakfast.

Investigator: ekmek ye-di-n mi?  
 ‘Did you have some bread?’

Ali-John: ben ekmek ye-di-m  
 ‘I bread eat-PAST-1SG  
 ‘I ate bread’ (S 29, 24 May 2005)

## 5. Results

For each child, we computed the percentage of overt and null subjects, out of all utterances where a context for a subject was found. We also examined the discourse-pragmatics contexts of the subjects. We calculated the percent use of overt subjects in each of the following categories, namely, new information, contrast, query, contrast, absence and low informativeness. Table 2 presents the distribution of overt and null subjects.

Table 2. Overt vs. Null subjects

	Ali-John (bilingual)	Murat (monolingual)
<b>Overt</b>	<b>62.69%</b> (946/1509)	<b>33.26%</b> (2137/6426)
<b>Null</b>	37.31% (563/1509)	66.74% (4289/6426)

As can be seen in Table 2, the monolingual child, Murat, realized subjects around 33%. The bilingual child, Ali-John, on the other hand, has a rather high rate of subject realization, over 60%, suggesting that the majority of his sentences have overt subjects. Overall, the monolingual child omitted the subjects for the majority of the time. His use of subjects concurs with the discourse-pragmatic properties of Turkish in that he mainly dropped overt subjects with 1SG and 2SG subjects, which are predicted to have low informativeness features.

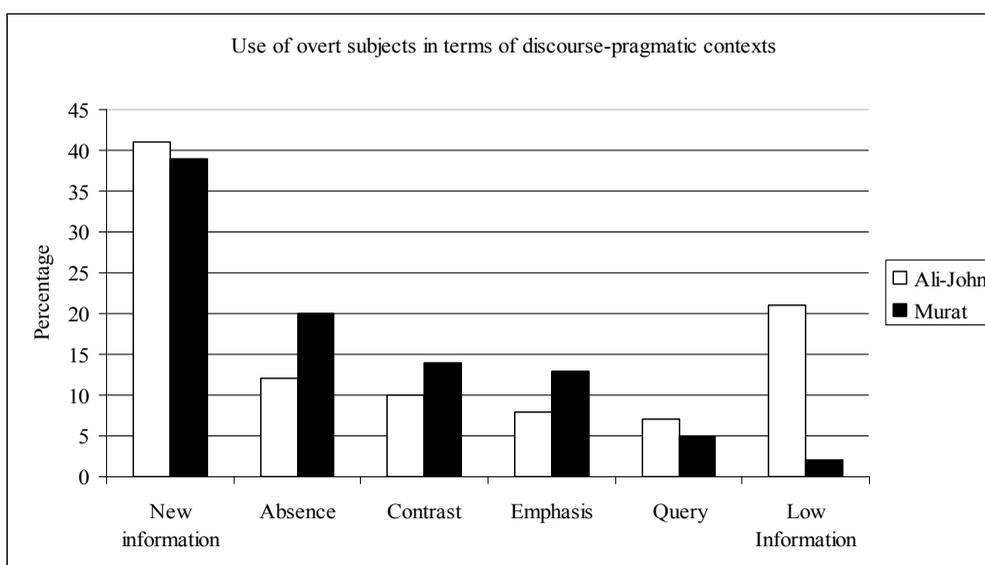
It should be noted that over 40% of Ali-John’s overt subjects are pronouns. Pronominal subjects first appear in the sixth sample and consistently increase afterwards. The majority of pragmatically inappropriate subjects begin to appear following the consistent use of pronominal subjects.

Table 3. Ali-John's overt subjects (Lexical vs. Pronominal subjects)

Overt subjects in Ali-John's Turkish (Lexical vs. Pronominal)	
Pronominal	Lexical
48.83% (462/946)	51.16% (484/946)

Overall, we have found that although the monolingual Turkish child, Murat, also makes use of overt subjects, the realization of subjects is far more frequent in the context of Turkish acquired simultaneously with English. One could argue that the bilingual child's acquisition of Turkish is influenced by English in that the overt use of subjects in English underlies the high rates of subject suppliance in Ali-John's Turkish. However, it could be that Ali-John used these overt subjects appropriately in given discourse contexts. In other words, the high proportion of overt subjects can simply be what is required by the context. If this is the case, we will be in no position to argue for the crosslinguistic influence of the English input over Turkish (see also Serratrice, Sorace and Paoli, 2004). We need to show that in contexts where a null subject is the appropriate option, the learner incorrectly used an overt subject. In order to achieve this goal, we analyzed all overt subjects in terms of their discourse pragmatic contexts: new information, contrast, query, emphasis, absence and low informativeness (pragmatically inappropriate).

Figure 1. Overt subjects in discourse pragmatic contexts



As can be seen in Figure 1, both children provide overt subjects in the five discourse pragmatic contexts identified. They use overt subjects in the new information category most, then comes emphasis, contrast and query. In Murat's data, null subjects are generally in the 1st and 2nd persons. Overall, he provides 1st person subjects only 18% of the time. However, Ali-John's use of overt subjects in the LOW INFO category is around ten times higher (21 % vs. 2%) in comparison to the monolingual child. That is, there are many instances of overt subjects that are inappropriately supplied. These inappropriate subjects are mostly in the form of 1st person subject, 'I' *ben*. The examples (9a-c) present pragmatically inappropriate overt subjects in the bilingual data.

- (9) a. Context: Ali-John cleans his nose and puts the tissue in the bin.  
 Investigator: peçeteyi nereye koydun?  
 'Where did you put the tissue?'

- Ali-John: Ben çöpe at-tı-m  
I bin-ACC throw-PAST-1SG  
'I put (it) in the bin' (Sample 20, 2 Mar 2005)
- b. Context: The nurse comes into the class to do her weekly checks. Ali-John has a bandage on his hand.  
Nurse: Ne oldu eline?  
'What happened to your hand?'
- Ali-John: Ben düş-tü-m  
I fall-PAST-1SG  
'I fell down at home'
- c. Context: After measuring his height, the nurse says.  
Nurse: oh, büyü-müş-sün  
oh, grow-reported PAST-2SG  
'(It seems) that you grew up'  
Ali-John: Evet, ben büyü-dü-m  
Yes, I grow-past-1SG  
'Yes, I grew up' (Sample 18, 18 April 2005)

## 6. Discussion

This study has focused on the question of whether crosslinguistic interference occurs in the domain of subject realization in Turkish in a bilingual acquisition context. We specifically examined the proportions of overt versus null subjects as well as the discourse-pragmatic contexts of overt subject use by monolingual and bilingual children in order to find out bilingual/monolingual differences in the distributional properties of subject realization. We have found that the bilingual child showed patterns in his subject realizations in Turkish that could be interpreted as due to crosslinguistic effects from English. These results provide further evidence for Müller and Hulk's crosslinguistic influence hypothesis, the influence occurring in the null-subject language of the bilingual child. These results are compatible with recent work on bilingual first language acquisition in the combination of Spanish-English (Paradis and Navarro, 2003), Italian-English (Serratrice, Sorace and Paoli, 2004); Hebrew-English Hacoheh and Schaeffer, 2004). In line with Serratrice, Sorace and Paoli (2004), a grammatical as well as a pragmatic discourse account appears to better explain these findings.

To this end, we have examined bilingual language acquisition from the perspective of the syntax-discourse interface, which has received considerable interest in recent work (e.g. Sorace, 2005). As noted in Avrutin (1999), traditionally language acquisition research has focused on the development of one of the linguistic modules, e.g. acquisition of syntax, morphology or phonology. While this approach can be fruitful in some respects, there is a number of linguistic phenomena whose explanation depends on the interaction of different modules and, therefore, different domains of linguistic knowledge. A typical example is the use of pronominal subjects that has been the focus of this paper. As we have seen, the correct use of pronominal subjects requires knowledge of both syntax and pragmatics, which interact with each other. In regard to language acquisition process, such phenomena suggest a somewhat different approach to the language acquisition research. Indeed, if some experimental studies show that children make errors in the construction under discussion, it will be necessary to consider these results from the perspective of the interaction of the different domains of linguistic knowledge involved in their interpretation.

On similar grounds, in her recent work, Sorace (2005) has also argued that interface domains present a problem for acquisition, since they involve the integration/coordination of different types of knowledge. For Sorace, the acquisition of phenomena requiring the integration of syntactic knowledge and knowledge from other domains is more complex than the acquisition of those involving syntactic knowledge only. Sorace also discusses the role of the input in relation to such interface problems. She argues that differences between the input of monolinguals and bilinguals might have destabilizing

effects and may affect emerging grammars in different ways. Overall, Sorace raises the question of whether reduced/non-target input affects representations or processing abilities in bilinguals. Her hypothesis is that quantitative differences in the input may affect processing abilities because of fewer opportunities to integrate syntax and other knowledge in interpretation and production, while qualitative differences may affect representations because of insufficient evidence for interface mappings. We have shown in this study that Ali-John's patterns show evidence in support of English influence on his acquisition of subject realization in Turkish. While his syntactic knowledge appears to be intact, his problems belong to the level of discourse, or to the interface between syntax and discourse. In line with Sorace's (2005) proposal, it appears that constructions requiring the integration of syntactic and discourse-based knowledge seem to require more resources than constructions requiring syntactic knowledge only. We believe that future research is needed for a better understanding of interface conditions in monolingual and bilingual acquisition.

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