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The acquisition of the syntax of negation in French and German: contrasting first and second language development[1]

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The acquisition of negation is perhaps the best-studied syntactic phenomenon in early interlanguage research, and many of these publications concluded that first (L1) and second language (L2) development had much more in common than had previously been assumed. In the present paper, the problem of whether the same underlying principles and mechanisms guide L1 and L2 acquisition will be re-examined from the perspective of more recent grammatical theory. The empirical basis consists of longitudinal case-studies of the acquisition of French and German as first and second languages. The L2 learners' first language is Spanish.

In L1 data one finds a rapid, uniform and almost error-free course of development across languages exhibiting quite different morphosyntactic means of expressing negation. This is explained in terms of Parameter Theory, primarily referring to functional categories determining the placement of finite verbal elements. L2 acquisition, on the other hand, is characterized by considerable variability, not only crosslinguistically, but also across learners and even within individuals. This can be accounted for by assuming different strategies of language use. More importantly, different kinds of linguistic knowledge are drawn upon in L1 as opposed to L2. It is claimed that adult L2 learners, rather than using structure-dependent operations constrained by Universal Grammar (UG), rely primarily on linear sequencing strategies which apply to surface strings.

I Introduction

The acquisition of the syntax of negation is a relatively well-studied phenomenon, both for first language (L1) development and for

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[1] This paper was written while I was a fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS); I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to live and work in this unique environment. Different versions of this paper were presented at NIAS and the universities of Hamburg, Paris III, Amsterdam and Lund. I want to thank the audiences for their helpful discussions. I owe special thanks to Susanne E. Carroll and to Bonnie D. Schwartz for their detailed and insightful comments on this work; needless to say, this does not imply that they agree with what I say.

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second language (L2) acquisition. The purpose of the present paper is to compare these two types of language acquisition, hoping that this comparison will help us to gain a better understanding of the principles and mechanisms underlying each of them. I am mainly concerned with the acquisition of Colloquial[2] French and German, and I will focus, in the empirical part of this work, on second language acquisition by native speakers of Spanish. This offers a welcome structural contrast since, in Spanish, the negative element precedes the finite verb, whereas in German and in Colloquial French it follows the finite element.

The starting point of my discussion is the observation that children acquiring their first languages seem to encounter few or no problems at all, so far as the syntax of negation is concerned. Given that this is true for languages which exhibit rather different morphosyntactic means of expressing negation, the rapid and almost error-free course of development requires an explanation. A brief look at French, German, Spanish and Basque suggests that the grammar of verb placement accounts for almost all word order properties of negative constructions. Guided by the knowledge described in linguistic theory as Universal Grammar (UG), verb placement is acquired with considerable ease once the grammatical notion of [±finite] is available to the child, as has been shown for a number of different languages.

Second language acquisition, on the other hand, exhibits an impressive amount of variability, as compared to L1 development, not only across languages but also across learners and even within individuals over a certain time span. An analysis of longitudinal data from L2 French and German indeed leads me to the conclusion that L2 acquisition is more variable, with respect to the syntax of negation, than has sometimes been claimed. This, I contend, is the case because L2 learners resort to different kinds of strategies of language use. My hypothesis, furthermore, is that in L2 acquisition the objects of learning are primarily linear strings of elements encountered in utterances, not hierarchical syntactic sentence structures. This is evidenced by the fact that L2 learners, at least for an extended period of time, do not refer to the [±finite] distinction when acquiring the placement of the negative element. In this sense, then, I view first and second language acquisition as fundamentally different in nature.

[2] The distinction between "Standard French" and "Colloquial French" is obviously only a rough approximation referring to two idealized varieties on what really is a continuum of varieties, defined by social as well as grammatical properties.

II The syntax of negation

Focusing on clausal as opposed to constituent negation and on what Bloom (1970) has called nonanaphoric[3] negation, a syntactic study ought to be primarily concerned with the internal structure of the negative element (NEG) and with its position in the sentence. This includes the possibility of having a discontinuous negative expression in a clause, as for example Standard French *ne-pas*. A particularly important aspect of the problem is the syntactic status of negative elements. In this study based on 240 languages from 40 different families, Dahl (1979) found three types of languages, depending on whether NEG is instantiated as a) an independent syntactic element, frequently an adverbial, b) a verbal affix or c) an auxiliary. In what follows, I will assume that cliticized elements belong to the type b). Since option c) is not found in the languages studied here, we will be concerned with a) and b) only. With respect to the position of NEG, the crucial observation is that there is a strong tendency for NEG to be placed next to the finite verbal element. This is obvious in case of types b) and c). But according to Dahl (1979), the large majority of a)-type languages exhibit the same preference, placing the negative adverbial close to the finite verb. Clause-initial position is another preferred option, depending, however, on whether or not it stands in conflict with the preference for placement close to the verb.

Turning now to the two languages to be studied here (French and German), the first observation to be made is that they exhibit a number of typologically uncommon features in their negative constructions. Standard French, an SVO language with relatively little word order variation, as compared to other Romance languages, normally requires 'double' negation, e.g., *ne-pas*. This kind of construction is quite rare according to Dahl (1979), but it existed in Middle High German as well. In Colloquial French, the use of *ne* has only survived in a limited number of contexts. The positions of both these elements are strictly fixed: *ne* precedes the finite verb and is cliticized to it; *pas* follows the finite element, usually appearing adjacent to it.

1) Il (N') *a PAS* servi le millésime à son amie.
'He has not served the vintage (champagne) to his friend.'

Only inverted clitic subject pronouns (*N'avons-nous pas* . . . 'Don't we have . . .') and some adverbs (e.g., *pourtant, d'ailleurs,*

[3] In anaphoric negation, the negative relationship holds between the negator and elements which are not part of the same clause.

probablement) may intervene between the finite verb and *pas*, thus preceding the non-finite verb if the clause contains one.

German is an SOV language, but in main clauses only the non-finite verb occupies the final position whereas the finite verb always appears in the second position of the sentence structure (V2 effect). In subordinate clauses, all verbal elements are placed clause-finally, the finite part following the non-finite one ($V_{inf}V_{fin}$).

2) a. In diesem Jahr *muß* die Oktobersonne den Riesling retten.
'This year the October sun must rescue the Riesling.'
b. Man weiß, daß der junge Wein im November kommen *wird*.
'It is known that the young wine will arrive in November.'

In main clauses, the negative expression *nicht* follows the finite verb and precedes the non-finite verbal element. Its unmarked position is indicated by 2 in example (3), immediately before the non-finite verb; but it can also precede the direct object, as shown by 1 in (3).

1 2
3) Er *hat* seinem Freund (NICHT) den Champagner (NICHT) angeboten.
'He has not offered the champagne to his friend.'

As has been alluded to above, separation of negative elements from the finite verb results in a typologically unusual structure. Note that this is also the case in German subordinate clauses although both verbal elements appear in final position.

4) ... daß er seinem Freund den Champagner NICHT angeboten *hat*
'... that he has not offered the champagne to his friend'

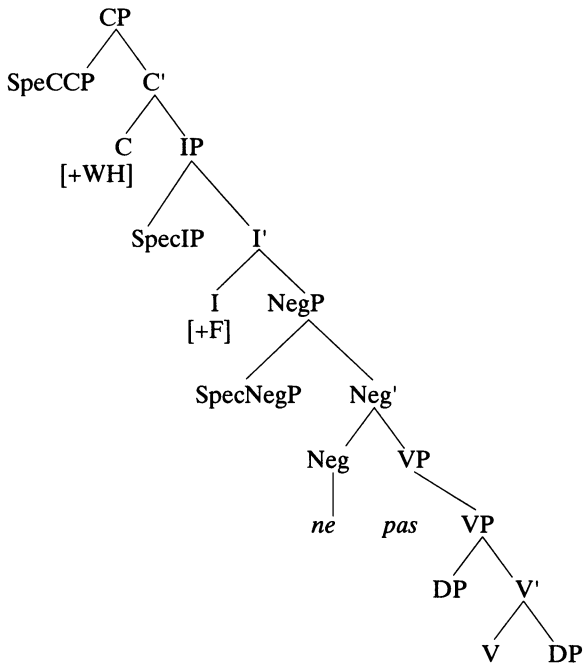
In what follows, I will try to describe the kind of grammatical knowledge learners have to acquire in order to be able to use constructions like the ones mentioned. In doing so, I adopt the Theory of Universal Grammar and, more specifically, the Principles and Parameters Theory (PPT) as developed by Chomsky (1981; 1986; 1989) and others. I will, however, not go into much detail concerning theoretical issues related to the topic of negation. For the sake of the discussion, I follow Pollock (1989) in assuming that there exists a functional category NEG projecting to NegP. The structural position of this phrase is controversial. The standard analysis was that it immediately dominates VP. Yet under the split-INFL hypothesis, according to which INFL is decomposed into two independent categories, AgrP and TP, NegP may occupy a position in between these two (Pollock, 1989). Zanuttini (1989;

1991), on the other hand, proposes that it should dominate both. It is also possible that the position of NegP, rather than being universally the same, is the result of a parametrized option of UG; see Ouhalla (1991). I will assume without further discussion that, at least for Romance and Germanic languages, the structural position of NegP is always the same, namely immediately above VP. The reason for this choice is that the non-parametrized option makes the stronger claims and is thus theoretically more interesting; as for the position above VP, it appears to be an empirically adequate solution, as should become apparent in the ensuing debate.

Zanuttini (1989), too, argues that the same structure underlies negative constructions in the different Romance languages. Depending on where NEG appears with respect to the finite verb in surface word order, she distinguishes between languages with (1) preverbal, (2) postverbal and (3) preverbal *and* postverbal negation. Standard French belongs to the third type. Following this suggestion but placing NegP above VP,[4] I propose (5) as a slightly simplified version of the underlying structure for Standard French. The subject which is generated in SpecVP position will have to move to SpecIP where it is assigned nominative Case, and the finite verb first raises to NEG and [NEG + V] subsequently to INFL. *ne* is thus cliticized to the finite verb, as has been suggested by, among others, Pollock (1989) and Belletti (1990). This analysis captures the fact that NEG is closely connected with the finite element. In languages with preverbal negation, like Spanish and Italian, the negator (*no* or *non*) occupies the same position as French *ne*, and the same analysis applies, i.e., the negator is cliticized to the finite verb and moves to INFL. These languages differ from Standard French in that they lack an element corresponding to French *pas*. The syntactic status of *pas* is, in fact, a controversial issue. Pollock (1989), for example, argues that it is generated in SpecNegP, whereas Zanuttini (1989) interprets it as an adverbial expression adjoined to the maximal projection dominated by NegP. The latter analysis is adopted here, as is shown by (5). What really matters for the present purposes is that *pas* does not move whereas [*ne* + V_{fin}] is raised to INFL. Both analyses agree on this, thus accounting for the fact that the finite verb always precedes *pas* in surface order, and the non-finite verb as well as the object follow *pas*.

[4] As mentioned above, Zanuttini (1989) argues that it should dominate both TP and AgrP.

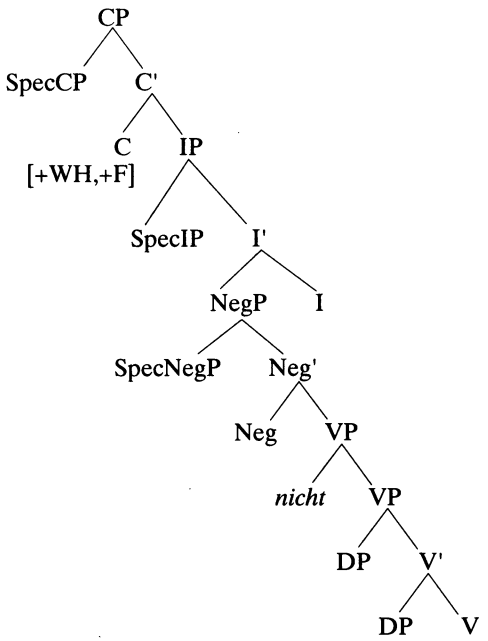
5) Standard French



Colloquial French, like Occitan, belongs to the second type of Romance languages. The sentence structure is the same as in Standard French, except for the fact that the head of the NegP can be lexically empty. The typologically marked position of *pas*, then, is explained by the fact that it is not the head of the NegP. In other words, it is a maximal projection which cannot be realized as a verbal affix.

One of the major structural differences between German and the Romance languages is that most categories in German are head-final. What further differentiates German and French is the fact that the German finite verb is raised higher up to COMP where it occupies the second position (V2 effect) since some maximal projection (the subject, an object or an adverbial) must raise to SpecCP. Both properties are shown in (6); the feature [+F] in (5) and (6) marks the position where the finite verb is moved to.

6) German



Returning to the syntax of negation, it has already been observed that, in many cases, *nicht* is not placed adjacent to the finite verb. This suggests that it is not the head of NegP. It seems, however, that it shares important properties with French *pas*. Again, two different analyses have been suggested: *nicht* is analysed either as occupying the SpecNegP position (Grewendorf, 1990) or as being adjoined to VP (Ouhalla, 1991). The latter proposal appears to account for the distribution of elements in adult German as well as for child grammars; see Clahsen (1988a), Hoekstra and Jordens (1994) and Hamann (1994). It further gains in plausibility in view of some historical facts which indicate that negative constructions in Middle High German resemble those of Modern French. A negative particle (*ne, en, in, -n, n-*) immediately precedes the verb and is cliticized either to the verb or to the preceding element.

7) a. vor dem tage enmohten sie
bei Tage NEG-durften sie
'during the day they couldn't (do it)'
b. Ichn gewan nie liep noch ungemach.
Ich-NEG bekam nie Liebe noch Leid
'I won neither love nor pain.'

An element can be added in order to stress the negative meaning of the sentence. This additional negator is derived from an Old High German adverb or noun into which the negative particle has been incorporated, e.g., *nicht* ('not') < nicht, *nie* ('never') < ne + eo (NEG + 'always'). Another possibility of negative reinforcement consists in adding a noun expressing a quantity or quality, e.g., *ein blat* ('a lead'), *eine bône* ('a bean'), *ein hâr* ('a hair').

8) Sie ne vorhtent niht eine bône uns.
Sie NEG fürchten nicht eine Bohne uns.
'They don't fear us at all (= for a bean)'.

Already in the twelfth century, double negation became obligatory, except for a small number of verbs, e.g., *tuon* ('do'), *wizen* ('know') and modal verbs. The similarities in comparison with modern French are striking and suggest a similar syntactic analysis for *nicht* and *pas*, i.e., as an adjunct to VP. It should be added that the position of *nicht* after the verb complement, i.e., in position 2 of example (3), indicates that, in this case, the object has been raised as well. This can be achieved either by movement to the specifier position of an Agr-OP, or by adjunction to VP or NegP as a result of scrambling, as suggested by Webelhuth and den Besten (1987, quoted by Clahsen, 1988a: 7).

III The syntax of negation in first language development

Before turning to an analysis of negative constructions in the speech of second language learners, I will briefly summarize some findings concerning first language development. This will make it possible to discuss similarities and differences between these two types of language acquisition.

According to Universal Grammar, a number of universal principles are accessible to the child without inductive learning. This applies to parametrized as well as to non-parametrized principles. In the former case, however, the child has to set the parameter to the value required by the target grammar, and although the principles themselves need not to be learnt inductively, parameter setting is triggered by information contained in the input. Parameters only relate to functional categories (e.g., INFL, COMP), not to referential (substantive) categories (e.g., V, N). As a consequence, one should expect that functional categories constitute the core problem area in first language development. This refers to the selection of the appropriate set of categories, assuming that grammars of human languages vary in this respect, as well as

to their internal structure and possibly also to their hierarchical ordering in sentence structures; see Meisel (1995) for a discussion of the role of parameters in first language acquisition. In the spirit of the 'Structure Building Hypothesis' by Guilfoyle and Noonan (1992) and the 'Small Clause Hypothesis' by Radford (1986; 1990), among others, I will assume that children's initial sentence structures lack functional categories. In other words, structures generated by early grammars resemble VPs rather than sentences (IPs or CPs).

Let us now see how one can define, in the theoretical framework sketched here, the acquisitional tasks of the child acquiring the syntax of negative constructions. The crucial problem appears to be the option of analysing NEG as the head of a NegP as opposed to NEG as a maximal projection. All other tasks are not, in fact, directly related to negation. They primarily concern the implementation of several layers of functional categories above VP and their head-first/head-last directionality. When these categories are accessible, the finite verb raises, going through the head of NegP. If NEG is a functional head, it forms a unit with the finite element, and both are moved together. If NEG is a maximal projection and the head of NegP is empty, the negator stays behind and appears in postverbal position in surface order. According to the Structure Building Hypothesis, we expect to find that, initially, NEG is adjoined to VP. No later than at that point of development when the verb is raised out of VP does the option between NEG as a head or as a non-head become relevant. It is unlikely, however, that this will constitute a major problem, for the data providing the necessary evidence, clitic or affixal status of NEG as opposed to movement of V_{fin} over NEG, are salient and frequently encountered in the input. In other words, once the [±finite] distinction is available, triggering verb movement, the syntax of negative constructions should not cause acquisitional problems. A brief look at some empirical findings will show to what extent these expectations are met.

The relevant facts, at least for English and some other Indo-European languages are known since the classic studies by Klima and Bellugi (1966) and McNeill and McNeill (1968). Based on these and some further research, Wode (1977: 100) suggested three universal stages in the development of negative structures which can be summarized as in (9). There has been some controversy with respect to IIa and IIb; see Park (1979) and Clahsen (1983). Since I am not concerned with anaphoric negation, this is not relevant. The extent to which the anaphoric element is used non-anaphorically is also controversial. Déprez and Pierce (1993: 41) claim that French

'children never substitute the anaphoric negative *non* for non-anaphoric *pas*'. Nor do they find non-anaphoric use of the anaphoric element in clause-internal position, a pattern mentioned as a marginal possibility by Wode. Again, focusing on syntactic problems, the choice of the adequate lexical device is only of marginal concern in the present context.

9) Developmental pattern of negation in L1
   I *One-word negation*: no, nein, non, etc.
   II *Multi-word negation with NEG placed in external position*
      IIa Anaphoric negation
      '. . . there is evidence that the negative element is placed in utterance-initial position.'
      IIb Non-anaphoric negation
      'In most studies, the children placed NEG utterance-initially. There are a few cases, however, where NEG was in final position.'
   III *Clause-internal negation*
      'The actual syntax of III is now clearly modelled on the respective adult language, with numerous language-dependent peculiarities.' There still remain, however, placement errors.

The crucial point is that at stage II, when negative multi-word utterances emerge, the negator appears in external position. This clearly confirms our predictions. What requires more careful analysis is the clause-internal position of NEG at stage III, especially since Wode mentions that occasional placement errors still persist. In German, for example (see Clahsen, 1983), it has been observed that the negative element initially tends to appear immediately after the finite verb, i.e., in position 1 of our example (3), above. This sometimes results in a target-deviant pattern if a direct object is present.

Subsequent research dealing with the acquisition of negative constructions in these and other languages confirms the developmental pattern presented here. Studies of Spanish child language, e.g., Pierce (1989; 1992), Meisel (1994), find that in early negative utterance *no* is always placed externally, in initial position. Since Spanish is a null-subject language, lexical subjects are extremely rare during this period. As a consequence, these corpora do not contain any negative utterances with lexical subjects. It is therefore not possible to decide whether NEG is indeed adjoined to the VP containing the subject. The first negative constructions with lexical subjects emerge during the age range between 2–3 and 2–6 (years, months). At this point, however, there is clear evidence that functional categories are already accessible; subjects as well as finite verbs are raised to IP, and *no* follows the subject and precedes the finite verb, as required by the adult grammar. The absence of

errors in child language is nevertheless significant, for *no* can also be placed after the negated element in the adult language. This is the case in constituent negations, including negated non-finite verb forms, as in *esto no* 'not this', *jugar no* 'play, no (= I don't want to play)', and children do use these constructions.

The acquisition of negation in French has been studied by de Boysson-Bardies (1969; 1976), Pierce (1989), Weissenborn and Verrips (1989), Déprez and Pierce (1993) and Meisel (1997), among others. Again, NEG first appears in external position. Note that this is almost exclusively *pas*, mostly in final position; *ne* is never attested during the period examined here, and anaphoric *non* appears only in some isolated examples, also in final position. Déprez and Pierce (1993) do find some utterances with *pas* in initial position and, as was to be expected, it precedes clause-initial subjects in such cases, and the verb is always non-finite. This is good evidence in support of the claim that, during this developmental phase, NEG is adjoined to the VP containing the subject. With respect to subsequent internal placement of NEG, all authors agree that French children almost never incorrectly place finite verbs after *pas* or non-finite verbs before *pas*. Déprez and Pierce (1993), for example, find that less than 3% of the negative utterances in this corpus contradict this generalization. But even these few apparent counterexamples can be accounted for, because it seems that, in these instances, the [±finite] distinction is not yet productive; see Meisel (1997). In other words, as soon as there is evidence that child grammars distinguish between finite and non-finite elements, the finite verb raises to INFL and precedes *pas* which, in turn, precedes the non-finite verb.

As for German, the development of the syntax of negation is also reasonably well studied; see, for example, Wode (1977), Park (1979), Clahsen (1983; 1988a), Mills (1985) and Meisel (1997). Once again, one finds that NEG is first placed externally. *Nein*, the element reserved for anaphoric use in the adult language, occasionally appears in non-anaphoric function, in first as well as in last position. When in initial position, it precedes the subject, thus confirming the hypothesis which claims that NEG is adjoined to the VP containing the subject. *Nicht*, on the other hand, is placed almost exclusively in final position; see Clahsen (1988a) and Meisel (1997). Much like in French, the preference for placing NEG in a specific position reflects input frequencies. As in the other languages reported on, the emergence of clause-internal negation coincides with that of the [±finite] distinction and verb movement. *Nicht* now always follows the finite and precedes the non-finite verb. In German, however, this does not exhaust the possibilities offered by the adult target

system. Remember that the unmarked position of *nicht* is that after the verb complement, i.e., in position 2 of example (3), above, where a constituent is inserted between the finite verb and NEG, either by movement to the specifier position of an Agr-OP or by adjunction to VP or NegP as a result of scrambling. Clahsen (1983) was the first to observe that German children initially tend to place *nicht* immediately after the finite verb, and he argues (Clahsen, 1988a: 7) that scrambling is not yet available at this point of development. At any rate, since in some cases position 1 of example (3) – i.e., NEG preceding the verb complement – is unacceptable according to the adult norm, the respective child utterances still violate this norm.

Let us finally have a brief look at Basque, a non-Indo-European language. The development of Basque negative constructions has been analysed by Ezeizabarrena (1991) and Meisel (1994). Basque is an SOV language and, although word order is quite free, the preference for verb-final order is very strong. Most verbs belong to the so-called 'analytic' group, i.e., tense and agreement markings are carried by an auxiliary, not by the main verb. This auxiliary is placed immediately after the verb, as in (10). In negative constructions, however, *ez* ('no, not') cliticizes to the finite element, and both are moved over the main verb towards the beginning of the clause, in the unmarked case after the subject (see (11)). Whereas in declarative sentences V and Aux are always adjacent, they are thus separated in negative constructions.

10) Nik ardoa ekarri dut.
I + Erg wine + def bring 3sgOD + Aux + 1sgS
'I bring the wine.'

11) Nik ez dut ardoa ekarri.
'I don't bring the wine.'

In Basque child language too, NEG is initially placed in external position. During the early phase, when the [±finite] distinction is not yet available, auxiliaries are omitted, i.e., they never appear in their non-finite form. During this period *ez* is placed initially as well as finally.

12) a. Itzi jan ez
'Itziar eat NEG'
b. ez hatzeko zure gauzak
'NEG take your things'

As soon as finite forms emerge, however, *ez* always correctly

precedes this element, it never follows it. This strongly suggests that *ez* is the head of NegP; it is cliticized to Aux, the head of IP (both are head-final projections in Basque), and together they move to head-initial CP; see Meisel (1994) for details.

To sum up, then, child language data from different languages confirm the hypothesis that NEG is initially placed externally. Structural analyses support the claim that it is adjoined to the VP containing the subject. It may appear to the left or to the right of the VP, but one can observe a strong preference for the position favoured by the target adult language, relative to the verb. As soon as one finds evidence for a productive use of finite forms, NEG is placed clause-internally. This indicates that the subject and the finite verb have been raised to their appropriate positions in a functional projection. In those languages where NEG is generated in the head of NegP, it is raised together with the verb. In other words, the option of analysing NEG as a functional head or as a maximal projection adjoined to VP does not appear to represent a problem for the child. Target deviant orders, like those observed in German, are not caused by deficiencies in the developing syntax of negation; they result, instead, from the failure to move the verb complement. One can, indeed, argue that, besides the fact that NEG may have to be cliticized to the finite verb, the syntax of negation merely consists in the implementation of NEG into the phrase structure. This explains why the acquisition of sentence negation happens fast and virtually without errors in the languages studied so far, in spite of the fact that the surface properties of negative constructions in these languages differ significantly.

The question to be asked now is whether second language learners succeed equally well in acquiring negative constructions. To the extent that this is not the case, one can raise the question of how their grammatical knowledge differs from that of children acquiring a first language.

IV The syntax of negation in second language acquisition

1 Invariant acquisitional sequences?

At the beginning of the 1980s, negation was 'probably the most studied feature of second language interlanguage' (Andersen, 1984: 122). The overwhelming majority of these studies, however, focused on English as a target language, e.g., Ravem (1968), Milon (1974), Cazden *et al.* (1975), Cancino *et al.* (1978), Stauble (1978), Fitzgerald (1978) and Schumann (1979). In spite of disagreement in detail, there was consensus in assuming that, acquiring the grammar of

negation, learners follow an invariant acquisitional sequence. Most authors, at the time, also agreed that the age of the learners is not a factor which causes significant changes in this sequence; in the works mentioned, the age range covers a period starting with children under 4 and goes up to adults of various ages. For summaries of the research of this time, see Schumann (1979), and especially Wode (1981) who dedicates an entire chapter to problems related to negation.

Early phases of this sequence are claimed to be characterized by the placement of the negator in preverbal or even in clause-initial position. The same structural properties had been found in pidgins and in creole languages, and such similarities led Bickerton (1977) and Schumann (1978), among others, to postulate identical underlying processes for first language acquisition and creolization, on the one hand, and for second acquisition and pidginization, on the other; see Andersen (1983). Stauble (1978; 1984) picks up on these ideas and develops a model representing the acquisitional phases of negation as a continuum of learner varieties ranging from 'basilang' to 'acrolang' via 'mesolang', i.e., from a variety most distant from the target norm to one closest to the target. In (13) I give a simplified version of this model, based on the speech of English L2 learners with L1 Spanish.

13) Acquisitional sequence of negation in L2[5]
   - I *Basilect: preverbal negation*
     no + V, *don't* + V, *no* + phrase
   - II *Mesolect: preverbal and postverbal negation*
     don't/doesn't + V, cop/aux + NEG, *no/not* + phrase
   - III *Acrolect: target pattern (NEG following the finite element)*
     present/past distinction, restructuring of unanalysed forms, *do* auxiliary, position of NEG after cop/aux

According to this model, the principal feature of basilectal speech is the position of the negator, primarily *no*, immediately preceding the element to be negated. At this point *don't* + V is a rote form, i.e., not analysed by the learner, and it is not yet used frequently. Moving up the continuum towards mesolectal learner varieties, *doesn't* + V appears, but learners do not yet use tense or agreement productively, and these forms are still regarded as unanalysed, i.e., as 'monomorphemic variants of *no*' (Stauble, 1984: 331). What really distinguishes mesolectal from basilectal speech is that NEG now increasingly follows auxiliaries and the copula. Moving further

[5] I prefer Bickerton's terms 'basilect', 'mesolect' and 'acrolect' which render the idea of different varieties of one system. In addition, I have eliminated the distinction between 'lower', 'mid' and 'upper mesolang'.

towards the acrolect, the use of preverbal NEG fades out, *do* + NEG is analysed, and the past/non-past distinction emerges with negative forms.

The question which arises now is how to explain this sequence. As for basilectal L2 English, one might suspect that the target system itself triggers preposing of the negator, for if *do* + NEG is treated as a single element, one could indeed claim that it frequently precedes the main verb. Placing NEG before the verb could also be the result of transfer from L1, since this is the order required by Spanish. Transfer, however, becomes less plausible in view of the results Milon (1974) and Stauble (1984) obtained with Japanese learners of English. In Japanese, NEG follows the verb, but Japanese speakers of L2 English exhibited, with some minor variations, the same acquisitional pattern; they, in fact, used *no/not* + V more persistently than the Spanish learners. The same observations hold for the Norwegian child learning English, studied by Ravem (1968), since in Norwegian, too, NEG follows the verb. Interestingly enough, Hyltenstam (1977; 1978), postulated basically the same acquisition sequence, having analysed the speech of learners of Swedish with 35 different first languages. Given that, much like in Norwegian or German, NEG in Swedish is placed after the finite verb in main clauses, this suggests that preverbal NEG cannot be explained satisfactorily either in terms of properties of the target L2, nor as transfer from the learners' L1.[6]

A first summary of this discussion, then, finds that all authors seem to agree on the idea that NEG is initially placed preverbally and that target-like constructions are first used with auxiliaries and the copula. The explanations offered for these at least partly invariant acquisitional sequences, however, are not satisfactory. Several authors point to similarities between first and second language acquisition, e.g., Ravem (1968), Milon (1978) and Wode (1981), and suggest that some kind of universal mechanism might still be active while, at the same time, L1 transfer might be a source of differences.

Based on our discussion in Sections II and III, we are able to define the underlying principles and mechanisms more precisely. The argument was that they primarily concern the basic phrase structure (layers of functional projections, headedness of these projections, etc.), the status of the negative element (head of NegP or adjoined maximal projection) and finiteness (triggering verb-raising and possibly also the movement of NEG). But this does not,

[6] It is still possible that transfer plays a more significant role at the mesolectal level; see Wode (1981: 196ff.).

in any straightforward way, enable us to explain the observed L2 pattern of acquisition. First, one had to determine the properties of early L2 phrase structures. We might assume, for example, that base structures are transferred from the L1. A similar claim is indeed made by proponents of the 'Full Transfer/Full Access' hypothesis; see Schwartz and Sprouse (1994; 1996). But this predicts a considerable amount of variation between learners with different L1 backgrounds where, in fact, we observe surprising uniformity. Note that in L1 speech one finds both final and initial placement of NEG, but apparently not even Japanese learners of English use V + *no/not*. This not only leaves open the question of why apparently only preverbal NEG is used by L2 learners, it further suggests that the head/non-head distinction for different NEGs is a problem in L2 acquisition. Alternatively, one would have to say that verbs in L2 structures are initially not raised out of VP; see Tomaselli and Schwartz (1990). Although this still leaves preverbal NEG unexplained, it is supported by the fact that tense and agreement appear to be absent, at this point, and it could account for the post-auxiliary position of NEG in mesolectal varieties, assuming that these elements are base-generated in INFL and NEG remains in its base position adjoined to VP. Perhaps the most serious problem, however, is that structural properties of the basilect continue to be used by mesolect and even acrolect speakers. Learners who have acquired tensed forms, for example, still use *no* + V; Milon (1974) counted 57% of these 'stage I' forms at 'stage III'. Clearly, the strong connection between finiteness and verb movement, amply documented for first language development, does not hold for second language acquisition, and this has obvious consequences for the syntax of negation. In spite of remarkable similarities in the acquisitional sequences of surface patterns, the grammatical explanations suggested for L1 sequences cannot be applied to L2 without major modifications (see Eubank, 1993/94, 1996) – if at all.

In what follows, I will examine in more detail the acquisition of negative constructions by second language learners, hoping to be able to come a little closer to an explanation of the apparent similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition. The target languages to be studied are (Colloquial) French and German, both placing NEG after the finite verb (in main clauses); the learners' first languages are Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, all placing NEG in front of the finite element.

2 *The acquisition of negation in French as a second language*

The acquisition of negation in French as a second language has been studied by Noyau (1982) and by Trévise and Noyau (1984) analysing the language use of 10 adult learners whose first language is Spanish. Based on their use of negators, these learners can be grouped as in (14).[7] The negative expression listed first, for each group, is the one used most frequently; the one in brackets only occurs in a few isolated examples. Note that there is also some variation within the groups. In group I, for example, A and F5 use *_pas* almost exclusively, and many of the negative utterances of A and B consist of formulaic expressions like *y a pas* 'there are no', *y en a pas de V* 'there are no (of) V', *moi sais pas* 'me I don't know', *c'est pas* 'that's not'. In group II, learner F2 uses *ne_* only in four out of 202 negative utterances, and she occasionally places *pas* after the non-finite verb, as in (15).

14) Learner groups according to French L2 negation

Group	*Negation*	*Learners*
I	_pas, ne_pas	A, B, F4, F5, F6
II	ne_pas, _pas, (ne_)	F1, F2
III	ne_pas, ne_, (_pas)	F3, M1, M2

15) Il a mangé pas.
'He has not eaten.'

In group III, preverbal *ne_* is attested in 20% of F3's utterances, in 70% of M1's, but only in 7–11% of M2's. This type of negative construction is certainly the most remarkable and also the most surprising finding here; an example is given in (16). *Pas* in preverbal position, however, is attested only once in the whole corpus; see (17).

16) Je ne fais le baccalauréat. M1
'I don't get the BA.'

17) Si continue le travail dans cette condition, je je pas continuerai le travail dans l'usine. M2
'If working conditions continue (to be the same) I, I will not continue to work in the factory.'

The studies referred to in the previous section unanimously predict an early phase of L2 acquisition during which NEG should

[7] Learners A and B are only studied by Noyau (1982). She suggested groups which were then rearranged by Trévise and Noyau (1984) into three. I moved learner B from Group III into Group I, for she apparently used *ne_* (*ne* preceding the verb, *_pas* indicating that it follows the verb) only once.

appear in initial position. Such a preposing pattern is, in fact, expected to be reinforced by similar L1 structures in the case of Spanish speakers. The question, then, is whether preverbal *ne_* of group III may be interpreted as fulfilling these expectations. Trévise and Noyau (1984: 180) argue, indeed, that *ne_* is an indication of what, above, has been called basilectal speech, and they attempt to explain it as a case of negative transfer from L1. Yet these two assertions, in part at least, make contradictory claims. In case of a general, perhaps even universal, basilectal strategy, one should expect *pas*, as the colloquial form of NEG, to appear in preverbal position, but only one such case is attested, i.e., (17). On the other hand, the choice of *ne_* could be favoured by transfer from L1 if the phonological properties of Spanish *no*/French *ne* are taken into account, as has been suggested by Noyau (1982). Still, it is unlikely that an item which is so infrequent in colloquial speech should be picked up by L2 learners. The most plausible hypothesis seems to be that the use of *ne_* is induced by language teaching and is then further stimulated by similarities between L1 and L2. In fact, all learners of groups II and III have had French language instruction. Those of group II work at the university and are likely to be influenced by written language. The use of negation by the learners of group I corresponds to Colloquial French. These observations suggest that group III does not really represent an early phase (basilect) of an invariant sequence in L2 acquisition but a specific type of learner influenced by foreign language instruction.

In sum, then, the available evidence from French L2 acquisition does not support the hypothesis of an early phase during which NEG is placed preverbally or in a position preceding the VP. But it does not represent counterevidence to such a claim, either, for the learners studied here may well earlier have gone through such a phase which is, however, not captured by this corpus. For the time being, the problem thus remains unsolved. It should be noted, nevertheless, that the L2 data differ from the patterns found in first language development where *pas* systematically appears before non-finite verbs. This confirms the observation in Section IV, based on English L2 data, that the strong correlation between finiteness and NEG placement found in L1 does not hold for second language learners.

In order to be able to test both hypotheses, i.e., early placement of NEG in initial position and the correlation between the syntax of negation and movement of finite verbs, it is necessary to analyse the speech of learners during the period of first contact with the target language. For L2 French, such data are made available by the

ESF (European Science Foundation) project; see Perdue (1993a; b).[8]

The two learners to be studied here are Paquita and Berta, both native speakers of Spanish from Chile. Paquita was first recorded after two months in France, Berta after one month in France.

Paquita, in recordings 1 to 12, uses 60 negative utterances, of which nine are anaphoric negations and 26 are constituent negations. *Non* appears in 31 utterances; *pas* is used in the other 29, and 18 of these in clausal negation. With the exception of its very first occurrence, *non* is always placed initially. It is often difficult to decide whether it is used anaphorically or non-anaphorically, but at least some cases are instanced of non-anaphoric negation. *Pas* emerges during recording 4 in different variants of the expression *je ne sais pas* 'I don't know'; see (18). In fact, during the entire period studied, the only other sentence negations with *pas* are the ones in (19). In the instances listed as (19c), it is impossible to decide which meaning is intended by the learner.

18) a. comment ne sais pas
'how, don't know'
b. no sais pas
'no don't know'
c. sais pas
'don't know'

19) a,. c'est pas possible
'that's not possible'
b. je comprends pas
'I don't understand'
c. n'est/ne pas(?)
'is not/not'

In sum, then, *non* is always placed initially, but one does not find unambiguous cases where it negates a verbal element. *Pas*, on the other hand, is always placed postverbally in clausal negation, but all occurrences seem to be formulaic expressions. Note that no occurrence of preverbal *ne_* (alone) is attested here.

In the recordings with Berta, one finds 111 negative utterances, of which 24 represent anaphoric uses and 13 are negated constituents. *Non* is used only anaphorically, mostly in initial position, or postposed in constituent negation. *Pas* emerges during session 5, in preverbal position but with a non-finite verb; see (20).

[8] I want to thank Colette Noyau who directed the collection and the transcription of the data and the Max Planck-Institut für Psycholinguistik in care of the electronic data base for making the data available and for allowing me to use them for this study.

As of recording 6, i.e., seven months after her arrival in France, Berta uses different variants of *n'est pas*; this includes contexts where other forms of the copula are required by the target grammar; see (21) for an example. As with Paquita, it is not always possible to decide whether these expressions are indeed instances of 'is not' or rather of *ne pas* 'not'.

20) nosotros trois mois un petit peu pas po- pas parlar français
'we [Sp] three months a little not (can) not to speak French'

21) moi n'est pas l'école
'me is not (in) the school'

A few months later, after 11 months in France, *je ne connais pas* and *je ne sais pas* 'I don't know' as well as *non (ne/no(?)) comprends pas* 'I don't understand', *c'est pas grave* 'it doesn't matter' are attested and reappear repeatedly, in all likelihood formulaic expressions, as had also been observed with Paquita. As of recording 23, i.e., two years after her arrival in France, Berta uses *(ne)_pas* productively with a number of different verbs – see the examples in (22) – approximately as in native French. It should be added that *pas* precedes the negated element in constituent negations, as required by the target norm.

22) a. Parce que c'est (. . .) elle ne s'habitue pas eh pas bien [en] l'école
'Because it's (. . .) she doesn't adapt eh not well in [Sp] the school.'
b. Je ne va pas arriver à parler le français.
'I am [3sg] not going to succeed in speaking French.'

To conclude, no evidence has been found which would support the claim that second language learners invariantly go through an early phase of L2 acquisition during which NEG appears in preverbal position in clausal negation. This is all the more surprising in the case of Spanish-speaking learners, for transfer from L1 should enhance the use of this hypothesized learner strategy. Note, however, that Berta uses *ne _pas* in contexts where in Coloquial French *ne_* may be dropped. As for the relation between verb movement and NEG placement, neither of the two learners, over the entire period of observation, uses finiteness productively. This is to say that although almost all verbs appear in finite form, finite as opposed to non-finite forms do not vary according to grammatical context, as required by the target language. As a consequence, the position of the finite verb before *pas* can hardly be explained as the result of movement of finite

elements. In what follows, these hypotheses will be tested against the evidence provided by L2 German.

3 The acquisition of negation in German as a second language

The acquisition of negation in German, in a setting similar to that of the French learners discussed in the previous section, has been studied in the ZISA[9] research project, combining a cross-sectional and a longitudinal study. The results of the cross-sectional part are summarized by Clahsen *et al.* (1983). The discussion of negative structures is based on the negated utterances of all 45 learners, comprising an average of more than 18 sentences per learner. At the time of recording, five of them had spent less than 12 months in Germany, the others between two and 17 years. The interpretation of the findings of this study was guided by the multidimensional model of second language acquisition developed by Meisel *et al.* (1981). According to this model, one needs to distinguish between a developmental dimension defining the invariant sequence through which all learners of a specific L2 proceed as they approach the target system, and a dimension of variability characterizing the variation space explored by different types of learners using the L2 knowledge available at a given point of development. From this it follows that not every linguistic feature in which learners' interlanguages differ can automatically be interpreted as characterizing a phase of L2 acquisition since it might, in fact, indicate a difference in use between learner types, possibly even during one and the same acquisitional phase.

Meisel *et al.* (1981) argue that, in the acquisition of L2 German, certain word order properties, notably verb placement, reliably define developmental phases; see (23). The acquisitional sequence thus characterized is corroborated, with only minor modifications, by longitudinal studies, e.g., Clahsen (1984). As for the syntax of negation, the question, therefore, is whether an acquisitional sequence like the one suggested by Stauble (1984), see (13) above, indeed captures a developmental pattern rather than learner type-specific language use.

23) Acquisitional sequence of L2 German
    1 SVO/ADV Preferred order is subject–verb/object/adverbial
    2 ADV-PRE Adverbials appear in initial position

[9] Zweitspracherwerb italienischer, portugiesischer und spanischer Arbeiter – Second language acquisition by Italian, Portuguese and Spanish workers.

3	PART	Non-finite verbal elements (including particles) are placed in final position
4	INV	Subject–verb inversion, e.g., after preposed adverbials
5	ADV-VP	Adverbials are inserted between the verb and its complement
6	V-ENDE	Finite verbs in embedded clauses are placed in final position

The first observation with respect to L2 German is that the overwhelming majority of learners use clausal negation only with a small group of verbs, i.e., *wissen* 'to know', *(Deutsch) sprechen* 'speak (German)', *(Deutsch) verstehen* 'understand (German)', *können* 'to be able', *arbeiten* 'to work', and *interessieren* 'to be interested'. Except for the last two, these are the same as those found in L2 French; this suggests that many occurrences are instances of rote learned forms.

The second finding is that learners at a given point of development do not consistently use the same kind of negative construction. Fourteen out of 16 learners who are in acquisitional phases 1 or 2, according to the definition given in (23), place the negative element before the verb and 14 out of 17 in phases 5 and 6 exhibit standard-like postverbal placement in the required contexts. Among the 12 learners in phases 3 and 4, three behave like the more advanced ones, three like those of earlier phases, and six use both[10] preverbal and postverbal negation. Clahsen *et al.* (1983: 148ff.) argue that the use of preverbal negation characterizes a specific type of learner rather than a phase of L2 acquisition. Learners of this type commonly resort to simplification strategies, as is shown by Meisel (1983) where 'simplification' is defined in terms of processing complexity. Strategies of this sort are thus properties of language *use* rather than of 'approximate' grammatical systems. In the case of negation, the strategy consists in placing the negator immediately before the element to be negated, in constituent as well as in phrasal negation. This NEG + X strategy is, thus, just one out of several strategies of simplification. It does not refer to specific features of grammatical sentence structure but to linear arrangements of the elements of speech. It may therefore well be semantic-pragmatic in nature as suggested by Meisel (1983). Note that Hyltenstam (1977: 389), too, interprets this pattern as a result of a simplication strategy, but he seems to view it as a syntactic entity and states that 'we can hypothesize that the point of departure for all learners is the following placement of

[10] Clahsen (1988a: 21) correlates postverbal negation with stage 3; but this expresses a tendency rather than a categorical choice; see Clahsen, *et al.* (1983: 123). Of the six learners at stage 3, only four use postverbal negation, the frequency of use ranging from 12% to 33%.

negation: X-NEG-V_{fin}-Y'. Yet although it is, indeed, a plausible assumption that learners at early stages of acquisition rely heavily on simplication, the French L2 data as well as the German L2 data from the ZISA cross-sectional study show that not *all* learners resort to these strategies. On the other hand, some learners at more advanced points of acquisition, even during stage 6, may still do so.

In reply to the question raised above with respect to the sequence described in (13), proposed by Stauble (1984), I want to argue that it conflates properties of the developmental and of the learner type-specific dimension of L2 acquisition. Preverbal negation is indeed used most frequently during early phases when L2 knowledge is limited and successful communication may depend on the availability of simple linguistic patterns. But the fact that some learners never resort to such means and others continue to do so during late acquisitional phases suggests that preverbal negation is not properly defined in terms of grammatical development alone. Note that Stauble (1984), too, finds that 'basilectal' features continue to be used later on.[11]

A final remark concerns the placement of NEG with respect to auxiliary verbs. Several authors, e.g., Hyltenstam (1977), observed that target-like postposition of negators first emerges with the copula and with auxiliaries; see also (13). In the ZISA cross-sectional study, this is indeed the case with modal verbs since one finds only a single example in this corpus (Eliseo at stage 2) where NEG precedes a modal; see, however, findings from the longitudinal study, below. As for auxiliaries, the situation is different in the ZISA cross-sectional data as well, for NEG + AUX is attested, even at stage 5, in the speech of simplifying learners; an example is given in (24).

24) auch net hat recht vielleicht — José
also not has right perhaps
'He is perhaps not right, either.'

It thus appears that, during early phases, target-like placement of the negator in postverbal position competes with the NEG + X strategy. During phases 3 and 4, postverbal negation becomes increasingly more common. It is difficult to decide whether this has to do with the acquisition of the grammatical notion of finiteness, as in L1 development. Although these phases are defined in terms of verb order patterns which, in the target grammar, depend on the

[11] One might add that, according to Trévise and Noyau (1984), the grouping of French L2 learners in (14) can better be explained as depending on sociolinguistic variables rather than as representing phases of L2 acquisition.

[±finite] distinction, i.e., placing non-finite verbal elements in final position and finite elements in second position, subject–verb agreement is not yet acquired during this period, and placement of finite and non-finite verbs is still highly variable. The role of finiteness thus cannot be assessed unambiguously for the learners studied cross-sectionally; I will return to this point below. At any rate, the NEG + X strategy does not fade out completely, not even during later phases.

In what follows, I will analyse the speech of three of the learners from the longitudinal study of the ZISA project – Ana, Giovanni and Zita – in order to test the claims based on the cross-sectional study. Ana was 22 years old when she came from Spain to Germany. Recordings with her began three months later and lasted for 13 months when she returned to Spain; nine months later, she came back to Germany for another three months during which she was, again, recorded. She attended German language courses, beginning in her third month in Germany. Giovanni, an Italian, was also 22 years of age when he came to Germany. The recordings with him started during the first month after immigration and lasted for 25 months. He had no formal instruction in German. Zita was 17 years old when she arrived from Portugal to live with her sister. Recordings started during her third month in Germany and went on for 16 months. During this period she did not attend German courses.

Let us first look at the respective tables. Before interpreting them, a few comments are necessary for a better understanding. V_{-f} in the second column refers to infinitives as well as to so-called stem forms, i.e., forms lacking any inflectional affix including the infinitive suffix. In (26) and (30), the figure after the slash shows the number of participial verb forms. In the fifth column, the figures in brackets give the frequency of occurrence of one particular expression, i.e., different variants of *ich weiss nicht* 'I don't know'. Negation of the copula or of a modal verb is indicated by a 'c' or an 'm', respectively.

25) Acquisitional sequence of phrasal negation: Ana

Recording	*Neg + V_{-f}*	*Neg + V_{+f}*	*NEG + Mod*	*V_{+f} + NEG*	*V_{-f} + NEG*
3				3	1
4				c1/5	1
5	1			8	1
6				4	
7				m2/c1/6	1
8	1			m1/c1/5	3
9				c1/3	1
10	c1			c2/9	
11				7	2
12				c3/1	1
13			1	m14/c1/14	
14	2			m6/c1/5	
15				c5/5	1
16				m3/c3/0	
17				m3/c5/14	
18				m1/c6/7	1

Ana clearly favours postverbal negation during the entire period of investigation. She also exhibits use of verb inflection from early on; compare Meisel (1991), where the acquisition of finiteness by these and three other learners from the longitudinal study is analysed. Although errors in subject–verb agreement persist during the entire period, she is, without any doubt, a relatively fast and successful learner. Note also that, at the onset of the recordings, she already attended German language courses. Consequently, the possibility cannot be excluded that an early stage in the acquisition of the syntax of negation is not represented in this corpus. In view of the fact, however, that other learners use preverbal negation over a period of 12 months or longer (see over), it is also possible that she never adhered to this strategy to a larger extent than is shown in (25).

26) Acquisitional sequence of phrasal negation: Giovanni

Recording	*Neg + V$_{-f}$*	Neg + V$_{=f}$	NEG + Mod	V$_{+f}$ + NEG	V-f + NEG
1	1				
2	9			(1)	3
3	7		3	1	
4	8			(2)	
5	7				
6	2			(1)	
7	1			(1)	
8	6	1			
9	2/1				
10				(1)	
12	5/2		2	(2)	
14	3				
16	1			(4)	
19	3	1		(2)	1
20	2			m1	2
22	0/1			(3)	
23	1			(4)	
25				m2/1(1)	
26	0/2			1(2)	
27	2/1		1	(2)	
28				m1/1(3)	
29	0/2			2(3)	
30	2			(2)	
31	1			1(2)	
32	0/1			5(4)	
33	1			1(8)	
34		1		3(4)	

Looking at (26), exhibiting the use of negation by Giovanni, the first observation one can make is that we find some variability, NEG appearing preverbally and postverbally, but that preverbal placement dominates quite clearly. Since virtually no finite verbs are attested in negative contexts during this period, this order is, superficially, in accordance with the target norm. But it certainly does not reflect knowledge about the target grammatical system, as is evidenced by the fact that NEG also precedes finite verbs and modals. A change seems to occur around the time of recording 25; from now on, NEG sometimes follows modals and finite verb forms. In previous recordings, this had only been the case in the rote-learned expression 'I don't know'. As of recording 28 one could argue that Giovanni is beginning to learn subject–verb agreement; first and second person markings emerge, and the frequency of non-finite verb forms in contexts requiring finite forms decreases.

Interestingly enough, Giovanni seems to be aware of grammtical properties of both his native and the second language at a time

when he does not make use of this knowledge in spontaneous speech; see the following excerpt from a dialogue with interviewer I in recording 16.

27) Dialogue between interviewer and Giovanni
I: Ich hol mir eine Pfeife, du auch?
'I'll get me a pipe, you too?
G: Keine rauch nicht
'no smoke not'
[Interviewer commenting that this not correct in German.]
I: Und wie is richtig?
'And how is it correct?'
G: eh, nich rauche, oder rauch nicht
uhm, not smoke, or don't smoke'
I: Ich rauche nicht.
'I don't smoke'
G: ja, ich rauche nicht
'yes, I don't smoke'
aber in deu- ehm italienisch, ne, keine keine subjekt
'but in Ger- uhm Italian, right, no no subject'

Zita initially places the negative element both preverbally and postverbally, with non-finite as well as with finite verbs. She occasionally also uses Portuguese-like double negation as in (28). Finite forms undoubtedly do not express finiteness yet; see (29).

28) ich nich verstand nix recording 3
'I not understood nothing'

29) in deutschlande ich nich verstehst recording 3
'in Germany I not understand [2sg]'

As of recording 5, postposition becomes more frequent, but this is true for non-finite verb forms, as well as for finite ones. Around recordings 22 and 23, Zita seems to have started learning subject–verb agreement, although it is not used consistently and not always correctly. It appears, thus, that postverbal placement of NEG is acquired independently of finiteness.

30) Acquisitional sequence of phrasal negation: Zita

Recording	*Neg + V_{-f}*	Neg + V_{+f}	NEG + Mod	V_{+f} + NEG	V_{-f} + NEG
2				c1	
3	8	2		c4/1	
4	4	2		c1	4
5					2
6	3		1	m2/1(10)	7
7	1			(4)	5
8	3/2			1(6)	1
9	2/2	1		(5)	
10	0/1	1	1	(10)	1
11	2/1	1	1	1(6)	1
13	1/1			c1 (7)	1
14	1			c1/1(4)	
15	5	1		2(11)	3
17	2			(22)	1
18	2			m1/1(20)	1
19	2			(7)	
21				(1)	
22	2	1		m2/2(22)	1
23	3	1		m1/7(11)	
24				5(14)	1
25	4/1			m2/5(21)	1
26	1			m1/20(9)	6
27				3(4)	
28				c3/10(5)	

4 Summary

Already in the 1970s, second language acquisition research focused on problems related to the syntax of negation. Acquisitional sequences like the one given in (13), in Section IV, were supported by a number of empirical studies, many of them, however, based on English as the target language, and almost all of them cross-sectional investigations. Not all of them did, in fact, find empirical evidence corroborating the alleged first phase of preverbal negation, but the authors suspected that they had simply missed it when collecting their data, e.g., Hyltenstam (1977). Explanations for why NEG should first appear preverbally, however, were difficult to find. Neither properties of the target system nor transfer from the first language can account for this word order pattern in a satisfactory way; see, for example, Hyltenstam (1978). The solution, then, was to postulate some kind of universal mechanism, e.g., Schumann (1978) and Wode (1981), which would allow learners to resort to 'simplified' structures (Meisel, 1977; Hyltenstam, 1977). Simplification was defined as the choice of an unmarked option on

a hierarchy of markedness (Hyltenstam, 1978) or of a structure which is easy to process in language use (Clahsen, 1984).

The second generalization captured by acquisitional sequences refers to the observation that postverbal negation, if required by the target language, is first attained with auxiliary and modal verbs. Interestingly enough, the possibility that this might be related to the acquisition of finiteness and that these verbal elements should be interpreted as the first finite forms, was not explored systematically, probably due to the fact that learners, at this stage, generally do not use tense or agreement markings systematically; see Milon (1974).

Our review of earlier studies on the acquisition of French and German as second languages as well as the analysis of longitudinal data from these languages showed that learners do not invariantly go through an initial phase during which NEG would be placed preverbally. This is all the more surprising since these are learners whose first language is Spanish where the negator precedes both auxiliaries and main verbs. The explanation suggested here is that the use of preverbal negation characterizes a specific type of learner, rather than an early phase of L2 acquisition. It has been further argued that this pattern cannot be interpreted as reflecting a grammatical universal. It should, instead, be understood as the effect of a strategy of language use which is favoured by many (but not all) learners during early phases and which some learners continue to apply later on.

The other finding of our data analysis is that the acquisition of NEG placement is independent of the acquisition of finiteness. Some learners, at least, use French and German postverbal negation well before they begin to learn target-like tense and agreement markings on verbs. Occasionally, the negator even precedes modals and the copula.

In the last part of this article, I will contrast these results with those from studies on first language acquisition, and I will suggest an explanation for the observed differences between the two types of language acquisition.

V Contrasting first and second language development

The discovery that second language learners, at least in naturalistic acquisition without formal instruction, proceed through invariant acquisitional sequences defined in terms of the grammatical features emerging in their speech, was perhaps the most important reason for researchers to hypothesize that first and second language acquisition share more similarities than had previously been

suspected. This assumption gained further plausibility when some researchers found that developmental sequences might be identical, at least in important parts, in first and second language acquisition. As intriguing as such similarities and differences in surface patterns may be, the crucial problem, from a theoretical perspective, is whether the two types of language acquisition are guided by the same underlying mechanisms.

The syntax of negation seems to be an appropriate area of investigation in order to study these issues. It represents an adequately limited problem space which is reasonably well understood from a synchronic syntactic perspective and whose development is well described for first and second language acquisition. German and Colloquial French are interesting target languages, for they require postverbal position of NEG, thus going against the claimed strong tendency of preverbal placement. In the case of L2 acquisition, Spanish as the L1 of the learners seems to be an appropriate choice, since it differs significantly from both French and German with respect to the syntax of negation.

The analysis presented here shows that, in L1 development, NEG is indeed placed externally during a first phase. But even at this early point, the target system exerts a strong influence. Both *pas* and *nicht* appear almost exclusively in final position. If, however, NEG is placed initially, it also precedes the subject; this corroborates the claim that NEG, at this point, is adjoined to the VP containing the subject. The emergence of clause-internal placement of NEG coincides, in all languages studied, with the acquisition of the [±finite] distinction. In fact, in French and German, NEG virtually never appears before the finite verb. This is interpreted as indicating that the subject as well as the finite element has been raised out of VP into the appropriate functional projections. The crucial point here is that the developmental pattern, i.e., both the initial placement in external position and the almost error-free acquisition of the position of NEG relative to the finite verb, follows naturally from grammatical accounts of the relevant facts. More precisely, the fact that the syntax of negation, in languages with rather different surface word order patterns, is acquired rapidly and apparently without effort, follows from a grammatical analysis which explains these structural patterns primarily in terms of verb movement, an unproblematic acquisitional task in L1 development, as has been shown for numerous languages. The specific problem in the acquisition of negation merely consists in deciding whether or not NEG is attached to the verb and raised together with it.

The acquisition of the syntax of negation by second language

learners is clearly different from children's L1 development. The issue at stake, however, is whether the differences point to different underlying mechanisms or whether they result from other factors intervening. Note, first of all, that 'external position' in L1 refers to clause-external placement of NEG, i.e., preceding the subject if placed clause-initially; in L2 acquisition NEG apparently always follows the subject and is thus placed externally to a VP which does not contain the subject. In the theoretical framework used here, this is normally interpreted as indicating that sentence structures underlying early L2 utterances already contain functional projections; but see Eubank (1996) for a different view. The exact nature of these structures cannot be discussed in any detail in the present context. Plausibly, however, one may assume that they are either identical to those accessible to children in early phases of L1 if the L2 learner has access to Universal Grammar in roughly the same way as children, or they are identical to L1 sentence structures if they are transferred from the previously acquired L1 grammar. The observed difference under discussion here suggests that sentence structures, or part of such structures, are transferred from L1. In other words, L2 learners use more complex structures from early on, and this appears to complicate acquisition rather than facilitating it; see Schwartz (1991: 300f.).

The second and most important difference between the two types of acquisition concerns the developmental relationship, in L1 acquisition, between the emergence of the [±finite] distinction and verb placement and consequently also target-like placement of the finite verb with respect to the negative element. This generalization clearly does not hold for L2 acquisition. Clahsen (1988b) has demonstrated that agreement and verb placement 'represent separate acquisitional tasks', and Meisel (1991) arrives at the same conclusion with respect to agreement and null subjects and case marking, respectively. In the present study this is further corroborated by the observation that NEG may precede the finite verb and even the (finite) modal, a pattern which, to my knowledge, never occurs in L1 German or French.[12] On the other hand, NEG is placed after non-finite verb forms, in L2, a position allowed neither by the L1 nor the target grammar and not encountered in L1 acquisition, either.

The conclusion I draw from these observations is that the underlying knowledge in L1 and L2 acquisition is substantially different in nature. Children's syntactic development can be

[12] The situation is different, of course, if modals are analysed as main verbs, as has been suggested for Swedish; see Håkansson and Dooley Collberg (1994).

accounted for by grammatical principles as formulated in the theory of Universal Grammar, and differences between child and adult language fall within the range of variation defined by parametrized principles.[13] To phrase it differently, there is good evidence that UG is an essential part of children's 'language acquisition device'. This is by no means equally evident for second language acquisition, as is demonstrated by the observed phenomena of L2 speech; see also the remarks in Section IV. The fact, for example, that NEG may precede finite verbal elements and follow non-finite ones suggests that, rather than resulting from placement of finite elements as in L1 and in adult grammars, the negator itself is moved, an option not offered by UG for elements like *pas* and *nicht*.[14] I would like to hypothesize that second language learners, rather than using structure-dependent operations constrained by UG, resort to linear sequencing strategies which apply to surface strings. A learner of French or German who becomes aware of the fact that NEG is placed postverbally in the target language is able to do so without taking the [±finite] distinction into account. This explains the overuse of NEG-final placement (with non-finite) verbs, as is evidenced in the data from Zita above. The same observation applies with respect to the fact that non-finite verbs show up in 'V2 position'; attraction by [+F] is ruled out, but linear sequencing might be a possibility. Note that the NEG + X strategy which some learners (e.g., Giovanni) rely on is also linear in nature. In this fashion, one can furthermore account for the marked differences between various L2 learners, as opposed to the uniformity in L1 development, not only with respect to the rate of acquisition and the ultimate success, but also with regard to the preference for pre- or postposition of NEG. Note finally that if we view L2 development not primarily as an indication of increasing grammatical competence in the second language but in terms of linear sequencing, this might, in addition, explain the equally considerable intra-learner variation in the course of acquisition where patterns characteristic of 'early phases' reappear although more target-like structures seemed to have been acquired.

Let me add, as a final remark, that I do not pretend to have given proof that Universal Grammar is not accessible to second language learners. In view of the fact that the theory of UG is still very much

[13] It does not really matter, for present purposes, whether functional categories are absent in children's initial structures, as claimed by the Structure Building Hypothesis, or whether they are present but cannot be accessed in the same way as in mature grammars.

[14] The situation may be different when NEG is an auxiliary, i.e., in type c) languages according to Dahl's (1979) classification, see Section II. As B. Schwartz pointed out to me (personal communication), a movement analysis is indeed suggested for Finnish by Holmberg *et al.* (1993).

in flux, this is hardly possible, and it may indeed be impossible for principled reasons. I do believe, however, that if one wants to argue that the observed differences between first and second language acquisition can be explained by assuming that second languages learners have access to UG in much the same way as children acquiring a first language, the burden of proof is on those who wish to defend this position. Notice that these differences cannot be accounted for by the mere presence, in L2 acquisition, of knowledge about the previously acquired language, for part of the L1 data reviewed in Section III stem from children acquiring two first languages simultaneously. These bilingual children acquire the syntax of negation for each of their two languages in exactly the same way as the respective monolinguals.

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