

**Tense and Passive feature/morphology in the
transitional English interlanguage of Persian
monolingual and Kurdish-Persian bilingual EFL
Learners**

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Abstract

The issue of cross-linguistic influence in non-primary language learning has long been an important topic. Studies conducted in this area suggest that a form of L1 or L2 transfer is evident in the language produced by third language learners (Cenoz 2001; Leung 2003; White 2003, among many others). On the nature of this transfer; however, there seems to be no consensus. Whether the acquisition of syntactic structures is a matter of mere parameter setting from a minus value in one language to a plus value in another or a rather painstaking process of reassembling the relevant features from the way they are conditioned and realized in the L1 to that of the L2 or L3 is not yet revealed. While, Hawkins (2003) supports a "Representational Deficit Hypothesis" (RDH) whereby interlanguage grammars are confined to L1 feature values and hence any problem in L2 or L3 initial state is attributed to problems in resetting syntactic features of L1, Lardier (1999, 2000, 2003) argues for a Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) in mapping lexical entries onto overt phonological forms. Still there is a third argument which claims that the entire L1 grammar (in the sense of all abstract properties)

constitute the initial state in L2 acquisition. Based on this stance, Schwartz & Sprouse (1994, 1996) argue that changes to the initial grammar can take place to the effect that the L2 learners are not confined to representations based on L1 steady state. Finally, Hawkins proposes a moderate modulated structure building Hypothesis (MSBH) which claims for an incremental leaning mechanism for L2 and L3. Inspired by the given issue, the present study attempts to see what effects the interaction of Kurdish and Persian have on Kurdish EFL students' acquisition of syntactic and morphological properties of tense and passive structures in English. To this end, 120 Persian monolingual and Kurdish-Persian bilingual EFL Learners took part in this study. They were assigned to three proficiency bands (after taking a general proficiency test, OPT) and received a grammaticality Judgment and a contextualized functional production tasks. The results showed no significant difference between the performance of monolinguals and bilinguals at each level of proficiency beyond the initial state. Nonetheless, significant differences were found across the levels of proficiency. The findings, interpreted in terms of the viewpoints of the current generative models of L2A, revealed a dominant role for L1 settings in L3 interlanguage grammar especially at the initial state and were more in line with the claims of MSBH.

Keywords: The Representational Deficit Hypothesis, Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis, Full Access/ Full Transfer, Modulated structure building hypothesis, Reassembling, Tense, Passivization

1. Introduction

It is generally assumed that certain aspects of L1 transfer to the interlanguage grammar of non-primary language learner causing

some form of morphological variability in the production of morphological inflection. Whether, such transfer is due to the selection or non-selection of particular features or a question of assembling or reassembling of such features is not yet fully resolved. Within the domain of inflectional morphology, it is highly debated as to whether non-primary language acquisition is constrained more by the morphosyntactic attributes of the L1 or the way such features are realized and conditioned in L2 and L3.. On the one hand, the affixal nature of inflection may produce structures that are illicit in an L1 grammar (Bliss, 2006). However, on the other hand, the morphosyntactic features represented by such structures may not be present in the L1. In short, L2 and L3 learners' failure to correctly supply inflectional morphemes may be due to transfer of either morphosyntactic constraints from the L1 or some form of morphological incompetence due to a breakdown in computation rather than representation (Lardier, 2000). Still, some scholars(Schwartz & Sprouse; 1994, 1996 among others) hypothesize that changes to the initial grammar can take place regardless of either of the above arguments; that is to say, the L2 and L3 learners are not confined to representations based on L1 steady state in ether forms; selection / non-selection or assembling / reassembling. In fact, the L2 learner has recourse to UG options not instantiated in the L1, including new parameter settings for functional categories and their feature values.

The goal of this paper is, then, to assess these and some other dominant proposals in the field regarding transfer effects in L2 and L3 inflectional morphology by investigating the role of transfer in the second and third language productions of English tense and passive morphology by Persian monolinguals and Kurdish-Persian bilingual learners of English. More specifically, this paper attempts to empirically substantiate the claim whether English L3 learners' distinct language background causes them to develop interlanguage patterns which are different or similar to those of monolingual learners of English. That is, the major question addressed in this study is the impact of the previously learned languages on the L3 interlanguage patterns and the extent to which the L3 learners' performance with regards to the syntactic features involved in the

formation of English tense and passive features would be similar to or different from that of L2 learners. In this respect the role of the language background possessed by Kurdish-Persian bilingual learners of English is investigated through a comparative study in light of the most recent syntactically- based generative models of L2A, namely, Full Access Full Transfer (FAFT), Representational Deficit Hypothesis (RDH), Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH), and Modulated Structure Building Hypothesis(MSBH).

2. The theoretical framework of the study

This study tries to test the most recent generative models of L2A and L3A on the issue of language transfer and non-primary language learning. Following Hawkins (2001, 2003), we propose that L2 and L3 are acquired in an incremental manner. This is the basis for the term Modulated Structure Building Hypothesis (MSBH). Hawkins (2001.2003) sees language and its acquisition as structured around the lexical-grammatical continuum in morphemes, their categories and phrases. Lexical morphemes such as nouns, verbs and adjectives have greater “specific conceptual content” than grammatical morphemes. Specifically, Hawkins (2001, 2003) proposes that in the “initial state” SL learners categorize words into lexical categories i.e. N (noun), V (verb), A (adjective) and P (preposition) and their phrasal projections i.e. NP, VP, AP and PP. In other words, in the “initial state” learners rely largely on words and the syntax of phrases. Then, in the “transitional state” they acquire words in the SL which are realizations of functional categories e.g. I (inflection), C (complementiser), D (determiner) and their phrasal projections IP, CP and DP and the bound morphology which accompanies this functional development. The idea that learners start their L2 and L3 mental grammars with lexical projections and add functional categories on the basis of positive evidence from L2 and L3 is the ‘structure building’ part of the theory. And the idea that structure building is influenced by properties of the L1 at the relevant point in the construction of grammar and not before is the modulated part of the theory. So based on this model learning starts with lexical projections in principle followed by structural projections by the L1.

Besides this model, three other models are, also, tested in this study. The first of these models is Full Access/Full Transfer (FAFT) of Schwartz & Sprouse, (1994, 1996). They propose that the entire L1 grammar (in the sense of all abstract properties) constitute the initial state in L2A. Furthermore, they hypothesize that changes to the initial grammar can take place; that is to say, the L2 learners are not confined to representations based on L1 steady state. In fact, the L2 learner has recourse to UG options not instantiated in the L1, including new parameter settings for functional categories and their feature values. Full access, then, is their claim about subsequent grammar restructuring during the course of development. Applying the model to L3/Ln acquisition, full transfer is predicted in the L3/Ln initial state but the source is not restricted to L1. In other words, it can be claimed that transfer in L3 does not necessarily come from L1 alone and the parameterized properties are ultimately acquirable in L2/L3/Ln final states. Lardier (2005) argues that parameter-resetting fails for explaining variability in the production of morphological inflection in second and third language acquisition. The claim that second language acquisition requires parameter-resetting was an idea that carried great promise. This approach, known as the representational deficit approach, (Hawkins & Liszka 2003, Tsimpli 2003) attributes L2 inflectional variability or error to a failure in the selection of parameterized formal features. According to the representational deficit approach, it is at the point of selection of particular features that languages vary. Parametric differences arise when languages make different selections among optional syntactic features (Hawkins & Liszka, 2003). In the case of adult second language acquisition, parameterized formal features (perhaps restricted to uninterpretable ones) which are present in the L2 but not selected in the learner's L1 are hypothesized to be unacquirable, due to critical period effects. This sort of hypothesis has also been referred to in earlier work as the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (Hawkins & Chan, 1997). Hawkins & Chan (1997) maintain that L2 learners have access only to those functional features instantiated in L1. This hypothesis predicts that interlanguage grammars will be confined to L1 feature values, even if there is ample evidence to motivate

resetting. The paradigm supported by Lardier and her colleagues predicts that such functional features might be instantiated in L1, but may or may not be realized in L2 or L3 development. Indeed, they like to focus not on the selection but rather on the assembly of elements of features in L2 and L3. Lardier(2005) argues that accounting for morphological variability simply by appealing to the parametric (non-)selection of features is too simplistic. Instead she attempts to show that the ways in which grammatical features are morphologically combined and conditioned may well affect their overt realization in L2 and L3. Their model is known as Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) which in turn is a kind of so-called developmental disjunction model based on which and unlike what RDH claims, the full range of categories and features is present in the lexicon from the outset, however, the problem is in producing appropriate inflectional morphology.

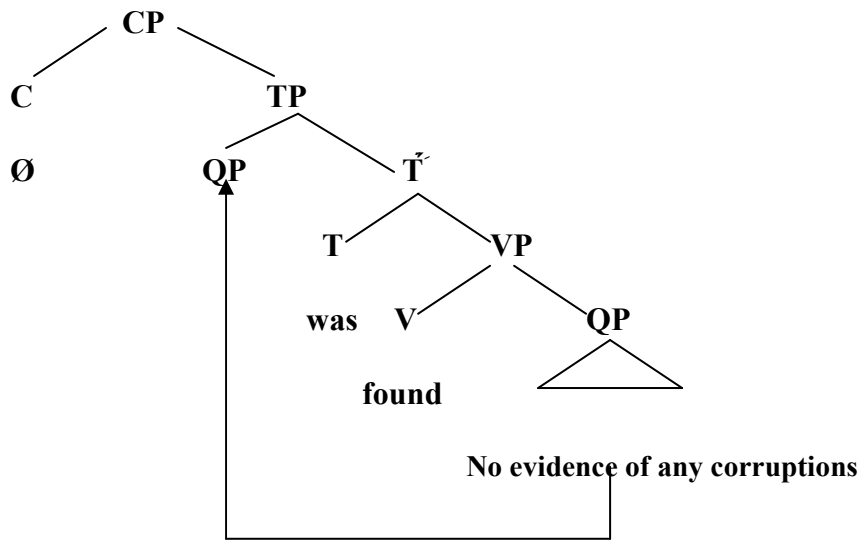
3. Linguistic assumptions

Passivisation is a movement operation whereby an expression which is the thematic complement of a verb becomes the subject of the same clause (as in 'The jewels were stolen') or the subject of another clause (as in 'The minister was said to have lied to Parliament'). In English, the passive is grammatically marked by a copular verb followed by a past participle. The structure *be + past participle* can also be replaced by other copular verbs such as *get, become, feel, look* and *seem* because the passive meaning is essentially expressed by past participle.

Following Radford (2004), it can be observed that in passive constructions, a passive subject is initially merged as a thematic complement of the main verb (i.e. it originates as the complement of the main verb as in

1. No evidence of any corruptions was found
and so receives the θ -role which the relevant verb assigns to its complements and subsequently moves from VP-complement position into TP specifier position in passive structures like 1. In this view, the derivation of the given sentence will proceed as follows:

2.



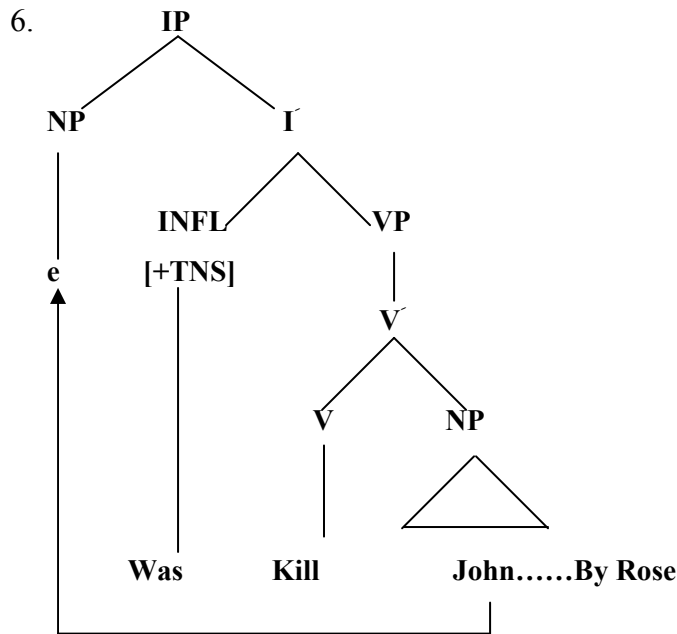
As it can be seen, In English, INFL is filled by some form of copular verbs or AUX hence no need for the movement of other constituents from lower nodes to upper ones for possible checking. We will see that this is not the case in Kurdish Passive and tense structures.

In Kurdish, a verb is made passive by a change in its morphophonological representation. The passive structures are mainly projected by lexical forms (a bound morpheme) in Kurdish whereas in Persian and English passives are formed using Copular verbs or auxiliaries. For example, compare the following sentences;

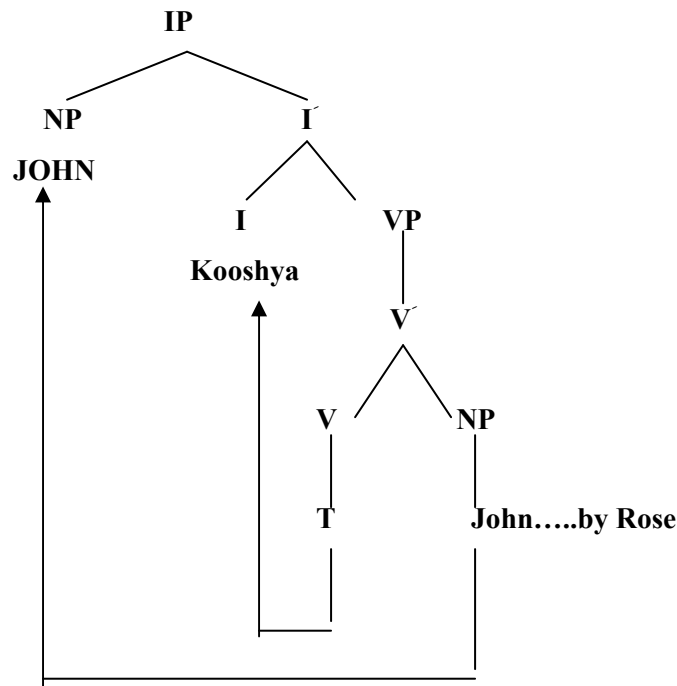
3. John was killed by Rose (English)
4. John be dast Rose koshte shod (Persian)
5. John wa das Rose koshya (Kurdish)

As you see in 6, the direct object NP John originates in the post-verb argument position and moves into the subject position of the sentence, occupied by an empty NP position (e) immediately dominated by the IP. The NP is in an argument position. When the direct object moves, it leaves behind a trace that is then co-indexed with the NP (the position to which it moves). As in 2, here again,

INFL is filled by some form of copular verbs or AUX hence no need for the movement of other constituents from lower nodes to upper ones for possible checking.



Now if we assume that AUX occupies a post verbal position internally within VP as in Kurdish, how can we account for the fact that verb (which would otherwise be expected to follow AUX in passive and as we will see later in tense constructions) ends up positioned in T position of TP. An obvious answer (Radford, 1997, 2004) is to suggest that when INFL is not filled by an auxiliary, the verb moves out of the head V position in VP into the head I position in IP. If this is so, then, 5 will have the derivation below:



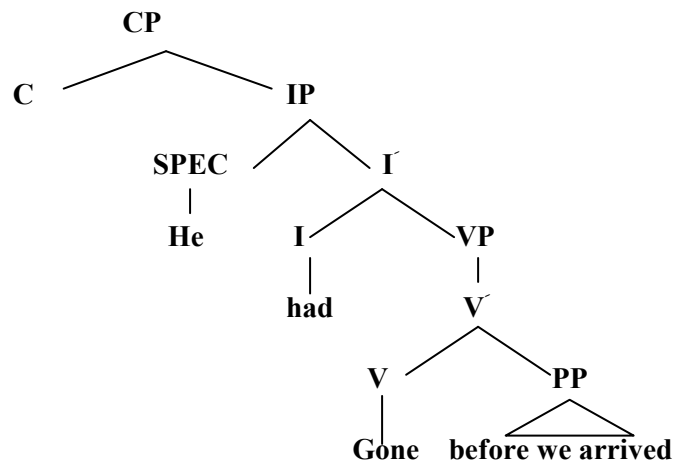
Thus the passive verb kooshya originates in the head V position within the VP and then moves into the head I position within the IP to check with the specifier IP. It can be observed that the main difference between Kurdish tense and passive constructions and that of their English and Farsi counterparts is that in Kurdish, such structures undergo a V to I movement. As in passive structures, tense, too is mainly inflected through some form of morphological affixation than a syntactic juxtaposition. Take for example past perfect:

- (4) He had gone before we arrived (English)
- (4) Raffe bud gabl az inke ma bereseem (Persian)
- (6) Chegui wazhda y age ima berasim(Kurdish)

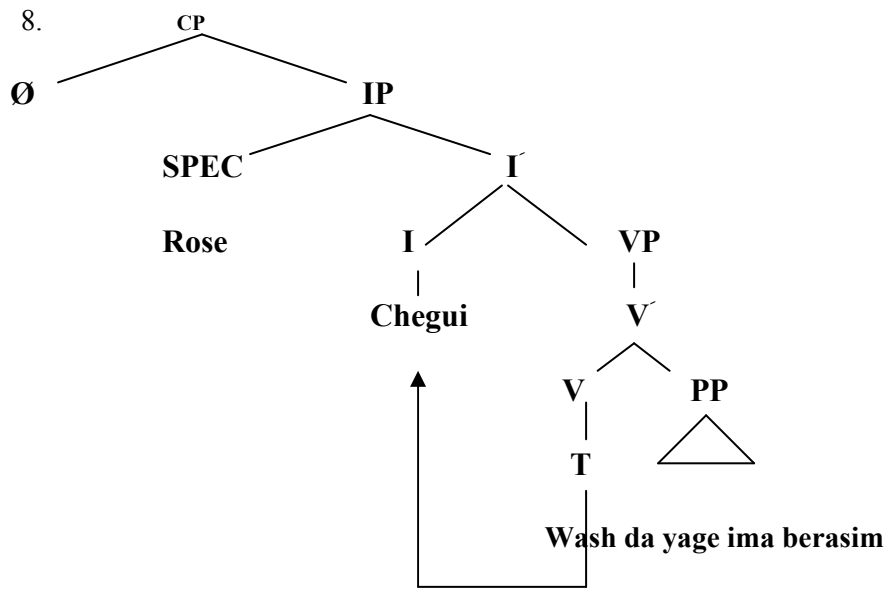
As you see in English and Persian the auxiliaries ‘had’ and ‘bod’ help the main verbs in the tense construction process while in their Kurdish counterpart the verb is inflected for past perfect by a

morphological change (the bound morpheme **UI**) through a morphological affixation.

7.



Now as in passive structures, if we assume that AUX occupies a post verbal position internally within VP as in Kurdish, how can we account for the fact that verb (which would otherwise be expected to follow AUX in tense) ends up positioned in T position of TP. An obvious answer (Radford, 1997, 2004) is to suggest that when INFL is not filled by an auxiliary, the verb moves out of the head V position in VP into the head I position in IP. Furthermore, as Belletti (1990) and Chomsky (1990), argue, auxiliaries are generated in the tense position or T position in TP and from there can move into separate agreement positions. The internal structure of English sentences is such that INFL is filled with auxiliaries in tense phrases. However, in verb-framed languages like Kurdish this is not the case. As you see in 8 tense is projected by a post-verbal suffix internally within VP and since INFL cannot be left unoccupied, the verb moves out of the head V position in VP into the head I position in IP.



4. This study

Since Kurdish, Persian and English differ in reassembling or the so-called parameter resetting of the syntactic features in questions, it can be assumed that Kurdish learners may have difficulties while acquiring English constructions under study. The present study investigates the acquisition of syntactic properties of tense and passive from the parameter resetting perspective. In other words, it will be examined if Kurdish L3 learners of English are capable of resetting or properly reassembling the parameter from the L1 value to the L3 value while the original setting of the parameter is maintained for the L1. From the learnability perspective, having to reset the parameter may cause problems in the process of l2 or L3 acquisition, which may result in transfer errors.

4.1. Research questions

In order to investigate the issues discussed above and based on the theoretical framework presented in section 2 and the parametric similarities and differences among the three languages of Persian,

Kurdish and English, the present study addresses the following questions:

1. Do the properties associated with the tense and passive constructions cluster in L2 and L3 acquisition?
2. If the L1 and L3 differ in parameter values, are Kurdish learners able to reset the parametric value of the L1 into the L3?
3. What is the relationship between learners' proficiency and their performance on various syntactic properties of Tense and Passive constructions?

5. Method

5.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 120 Kurdish and Persian learners of English (67 females and 53 males with an average age of 19) who had learnt English primarily in a formal setting. All of them were first- and second-year university students of English at the University of Ilam, Ilam Payam Nour University and Ilam Azad University, enrolled in various classes. The subjects were divided into two groups each with three levels of Proficiency on the basis of their scores on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT): there were 40 elementary, 40 lower intermediate and 40 higher intermediate students.

5.2 Instruments and procedure

The tasks were performed in the order in which they are presented here. Task 1 was a proficiency test, more specifically Oxford Placement Test (OPT). The experimental tasks (Task 2 and Task 3) tested the syntactic properties associated with tense and passive constructions. All of the test sentences were controlled for length and simplicity of vocabulary.

5.3 Oxford placement test

To measure students' level of English proficiency, an Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 1992) was administered. The OPT was chosen because it is objective, reliable as well as easy to administer.

Task 2: Grammaticality judgment task

In the present study an 80-item Grammaticality Judgment Task (GJT) was administered in order to tap L2 and L3 learners' linguistic competence on Tense and Passive properties. Students were asked to read and judge individual sentences according to the following categories: definitely grammatical, definitely ungrammatical. They were also asked to go by first impression and were not allowed to go back and change their initial decisions. The aim of this task was to indicate the degree of certainty of the subject with respect to their grammaticality judgment. There were 21 passive, 14 tense passive and 45 other distracters in the test. All the ungrammatical sentences would have been grammatical in Kurdish, but were ungrammatical in English. The ungrammatical sentences can be divided into the following categories, based on the sub-properties tested:

1. Sentences with null auxiliaries:

a, missing tense features in tense constructions:

(9).John lived here for the past 5 years.

(10)When I arrived, he already left.

b, missing tense features in passive constructions

(11) Rose killed in a car crash.

(12) Mary taken to hospital by an ambulance

2. Sentences with other ungrammatical features:

(13) Went the girl to the cinema last night.

(14) I want go now.

As for the evaluation of the task, the GJT was scored according to the following scoring system. Participants were given 2 points if they judged a '*definitely grammatical*' sentence as '*grammatical*' and conversely, a '*definitely ungrammatical*' sentence as '*ungrammatical*'. They were given no points if they judged a 'definitely grammatical sentences' as 'definitely/probably ungrammatical', and vice versa .In this study, Just one point was warded for each correctly accepted sentence (grammatical sentence judged as *definitely grammatical*) They were given no points if they judged a 'definitely grammatical sentence' as 'definitely

ungrammatical', and vice versa. Applying the above scoring system, the total score would be 35 (21 passive and 14 tense constructions).

Task 3: The Minialogue Functional production task

In order to provide enough contexts for the so-called natural elicitation purpose, a 30 item minialogue task was also prepared and given to the subjects. Like the preceding tasks, one point was given for structurally correct sentences. One more rationale behind applying this task was to account for the possible modality effect on the performance of the subjects.

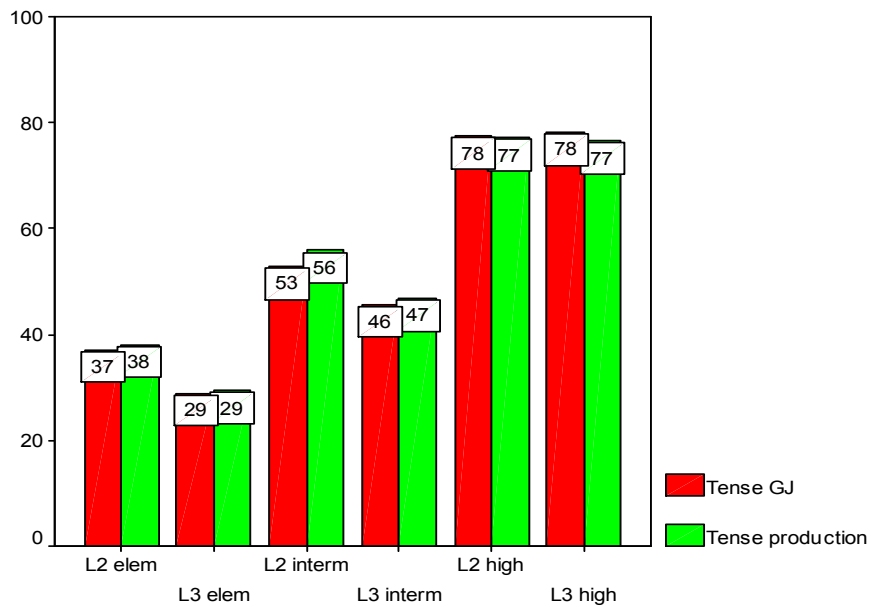
5.4 The procedure

Samples of L2 and L3 learners were randomly selected and grouped into three levels of proficiency after administering a standard proficiency test of English (a recent version of Oxford Placement Test). In the first step, a recent version of Oxford Placement Test was administered to the population of subjects out of whom 120 subjects were randomly selected and assigned to two groups each consisting of three subgroups. Each subgroup represented one level of English proficiency (elementary, Lower intermediate and higher intermediate). The given six subgroups, then, received two more tasks. The first task was a Grammaticality Judgment task consisting of 80 items; 21 ungrammatical passive sentences; 14 ungrammatical tense sentences and the rest were either grammatical tense and passive sentences or other ungrammatical distracters tapping subjects' grammatical competence in areas other than tense and passive features. Subjects were asked to mark the items for grammaticality or ungrammaticality. The third task given in the third session was a contextualized functional production task. This task consisted of 30 minialogue items ; 16 tense and 14 passive sentences. Subjects were asked to fill in the blanks. In some items there were two empty spaces to be filled .In these items, just the tense positions were corrected and no point was given to the other filled space. All correct responses were scored 1; otherwise they received no point.

6. Results

To arrive at plausible answers to research questions the results of the grammatical judgment and minidiologue production tests are presented in turn. To begin with, Figure (1) exhibits the mean percentages the learners obtained on the grammatical judgment and production tasks on tense features.

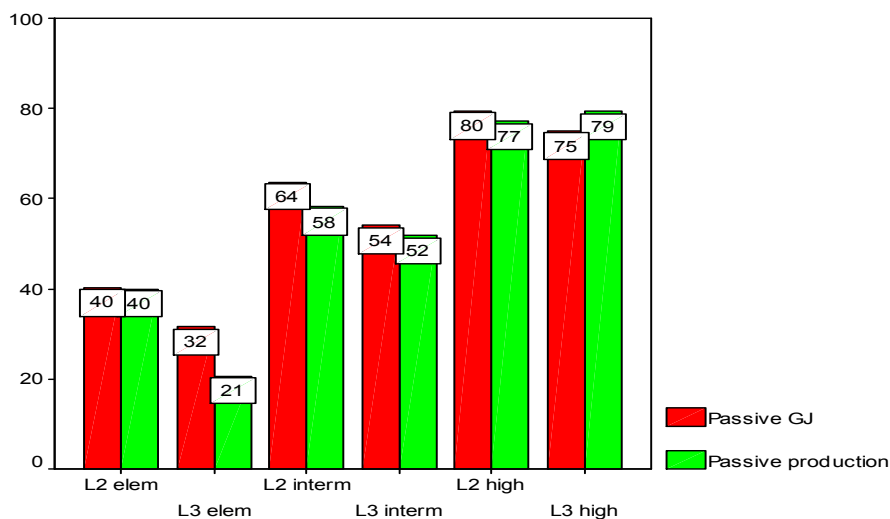
Figure 1: Mean percentages of the Grammaticality and production tasks on Tense features



As shown in table (1), at the elementary and intermediate levels the monolinguals and bilinguals performed differently, and the monolinguals were more accurate than their bilingual counterparts. The higher intermediate L2 & L3 learners obtained the same and the highest mean percentages on the GJ test. The results of an ANOVA performed on the scores of GJ and production tests on tense structures indicated significant differences between the groups ($F: 60.94$ and 45.65 respectively, $p: 0.00$). Multiple comparisons of post hoc Scheffe test (appendix) showed that the elementary L2 & L3 learners performed significantly different from both lower

intermediate and higher intermediate L2 and L3 learners. Moreover, the lower intermediate monolinguals and bilinguals performed differently from higher intermediate L2 & L3 learners.

Figure 2: exhibits the mean percentages the learners obtained on the grammatical judgment and production tasks on passive features.



As shown in figure (2), at the elementary and lower intermediate levels the monolinguals and bilinguals performed differently, and the monolinguals were more accurate than their bilingual counterparts. The higher intermediate L2 & L3 learners obtained the same and the highest mean percentages on the GJ and production tests on passive structures. The results of an ANOVA performed on the scores of GJ and production tests indicated significant differences between the groups ($F: 56.96$ and 63.99 respectively, $p: 0.00$). Multiple comparisons of post hoc Scheffe test (appendix) showed that the elementary L2 & L3 learners performed significantly different from both intermediate and advanced L2 and L3 learners. Moreover, the intermediate monolinguals and bilinguals performed differently from higher intermediate L2 & L3 learners. In the following table, the results of the multiple

comparisons of subjects' performance on the GJ and Functional Production tasks are presented.

7. Discussion

Before discussing the results of the study, the predictions of the models tested in this study are briefly presented below:

Predictions:

1. Full Access/Full Transfer (FAFT):

The entire L1 grammar (in the sense of all abstract properties) constitutes the initial state in L2A. The L2 learners are not confined to representations based on L1 steady state. In fact, the L2 learner has recourse to UG options not instantiated in the L1, including new parameter settings for functional categories and their feature values. So, we can predict full transfer from the previously learned grammatical system(s) into the grammatical system of the newly exposed-to-language; it also proposes that subsequent grammar restructuring is possible during the course of development.

2. Representational Deficit Hypothesis (RDH)

Interlanguage grammars will be confined to LI feature values and the target language parameterized properties that are not instantiated in LI are inaccessible in L2 and by extension in L3 interlanguage grammar. So, those formal features (perhaps restricted to uninterpretable ones) which are present in the L2 but not selected in the learner's L1 are hypothesized to be unacquirable.

3. Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH)

L2 learners have unconscious knowledge of functional projections and features including tense and agreement, but have problems with realization of the correct surface morphology. Learners' problems at the initial state will not disappear due to these mapping problems.

4. Modulated Structure Building Hypothesis(MSBH)

L2 and L3 are acquired in an incremental manner. Learning starts with lexical projections in principle followed by structural projections by the L1. Learning starts with VP projections followed

by IP and in final stages CP. Learners' linguistic problems will disappear with increasing levels of proficiency.

Findings:

1. The findings support RDH at the initial state because as shown in figure 1 and 2 and as predicted by RDH learners seem to have been influenced by those functional features instantiated in L1 and the way they are realized and selected. The results of the study, however, go against that part of RDH claims which proposes that no development is possible in the sense of restructuring if L2/Ln grammars are in some sense impaired in L1.

2. The results are inconsistent with claims made by MSIH since the differences disappear in the final stage though the parametric features might have been assembled in different manners in L1. As predicted by MSIH, due to mapping problems, learners' differences would be persistent to the end state. As shown in both figure 1 and 2, both Persian monolingual and Kurdish-Persian bilinguals seem to perform quite similarly at high-intermediate stage.

3. Findings go against FAFT claims regarding the initial states since with L1 and L2 realized in different manners; there is still much difference between L1 and L2 in the initial state. It follows that if LI had an exclusive role in the acquisition of languages other than the first as predicted by RDH, both groups would have performed differently due to their distinctive language backgrounds and hence, Persian monolinguals would have outperformed their monolingual counterparts as the former enjoys a first language background which is partly similar to English in the formation of Tense and Passive constructions. As shown in figure 1 and 2 learners perform quite differently at the initial state and this is against the claims made by FAFT about the initial state. However, the results support FAFT claims regarding the development phases due to restructuring. As shown in figures 1 and 2, L2 and L3 learners show an improvement over the initial states.

4. Findings support MSB since whatever L1 or L2 in terms of formal parametric features, learning takes place in an incremental step by step manner. Furthermore as predicted by this model, and as shown in figures 1 and 2 above, differences disappear in final stages.

In this study we tried to test the predictions of these syntactically- based L2A theories, namely, The Failed Functional Feature or Representational Deficit Hypothesis (RDH) ,the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis(MSIH) , the Full Access/ Full Transfer (FAFT) Hypotheses and Modulated Structure Building Hypothesis (MSBH) about the impact of previously learned language(s) on the target language and whether such theories provide insights into the acquisition of tense and passive structures in English by Kurdish-Persian bilinguals and Persian monolingual learners at three levels of proficiency.

The results obtained using the, GJ and Minidialogue functional production tests with monolingual and bilingual learners of English at different levels of proficiency are compatible with MSBH theory. Though, the findings as discussed above supported some of the arguments of both FAFT and RDH.

L2A theories tested in this paper have paid attention to different aspects of the L2 and L3 acquisition process. The findings in this study lead us to the idea that no single theory can offer a comprehensive explanation about the whole process of language acquisition. Each theory offers a different insight in the complex process of language acquisition. It seems that the time is prime for the development of a so-called Meta Theory. The given Meta theory overarches a number of Macro and Micro theories to account for the so –called macro and micro extremisms pervading the field. Among the extant theories of language acquisition the theories tested in this study seem to play a pivotal role on the development of a syntactically- based L2-LnA Meta Theory in question.

8. Conclusion

The findings of this study can briefly be reinterpreted in terms of three important points and within the predictions of the generative

models of L2A and their extension to L3A in this study, namely, RDH, MSIH, FAFT and MSBM.

The first is the role of language background in L3. The overall results of the study led to the conclusion that the L3 learners in line with the predictions of RDH and MSBM and unlike FAFT at the initial state were affected by their unique language experience due to the parametric differences between the target language, English, and their first language Kurdish.

Regarding the final attainment; the second point, the findings went against RDH and were more in line with the predictions of FAFT and MSBM models. As argued above, following RDH, those uninterruptible syntactic features not selected during primary language learning or L1 from the inventory of features given by the initial state of UG will disappear following a critical period (Tsimplici, 2003). Speculatively, then, the L3 learners were presupposed to be affected by their unique language experience due to the parametric differences between the target language, English, and their first language Kurdish and fail to acquire the features under investigation at the steady state. With regard to such considerations, the prediction was that the overall results of the study would lead to the conclusion that the bilingual learners did not perform well on the tasks due to their distinct language background.

As argued by Cenoz and Ulrike (2001) having a language background which is typologically distant or close to the target language would greatly affect the L2/L3 learners' interlanguage patterns. Here in the case of Kurdish-Persian bilinguals, the typological distance in terms of the lack of congruent structures between their first and second languages and English as their third language (due to a different type of selection and not a non-selection process) concerning some of the properties under investigation, more specifically, tense and passive constructions, seemed to override the interfering effect of their unique language experience and caused them not to perform significantly lower than their monolingual counterparts who enjoyed similar patterns as English. Indeed, the results of the study indicated that unlike the predictions of RDH, and Missing Surface Inflection

Hypothesis(MSIH) and in line with FTFA and MSBM, ,even such features as tense ad passive which are not realized and conditioned the same way as in non-primary languages are acquirable in an incremental manner and can be restructured.

Finally, the results demonstrate that with increasing level of language proficiency; the third point, both L2 and L3 learners show an improvement over the preceding levels.

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Appendix

Multiple comparisons of post hoc Scheffe test on the scores of subjects on both Grammaticality Judgment and Production tests.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Passive GJ	Between Groups	36491.41	5	7298.282	56.966	.000
	Within Groups	14605.26	114	128.116		
	Total	51096.67	119			
Passive product	Between Groups	49952.39	5	9990.479	63.999	.000
	Within Groups	17795.91	114	156.104		
	Total	67748.30	119			
Tense GJ	Between Groups	42398.83	5	8479.766	60.941	.000
	Within Groups	15862.65	114	139.146		
	Total	58261.48	119			
Tense productic	Between Groups	39275.63	5	7855.127	45.654	.000
	Within Groups	19614.67	114	172.058		
	Total	58890.30	119			