THE ACQUISITION OF THE V-RAISING PARAMETER BY YOUNG THAI EFL LEARNERS

BY

MISS BUSSARAKAM HOMCHUEN

AN INDEPENDENT STUDY PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
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ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the pattern of development of the V-Raising parameter by Thai learners of English. Two English constructions types were employed, i.e. Progressive Negative and Yes-No Question, as they are derived by the raising of an auxiliary over 'not' to I(nfl) and C(omplementizer), a phenomenon of the V-Raising parameter. These structures were chosen as they represented IP and CP, which project in sentential hierarchy and are assumed to be available in L2 Grammar.

Thai is considered a language that does not exhibit V-Raising; therefore, the pattern of development, via assessment of Thai learners' knowledge of English IP and CP can be revealed. In terms of acquisition, we assign to it an L2 development pattern that is similar, or parallels that of an L1 pattern.

Two hypotheses were formulated on the basis of L2 initial state approaches. Firstly, based on the Full Access approach, if young Thai learners have acquired V-to-I and I-to-C, they should be able to judge English Progressive Negatives and Yes-No questions in a similar manner to young English native speaking counterparts. Secondly, based on the Partial Access approach, if young Thai learners have acquired only V-to-I but not I-to-C, they would judge English Progressive Negatives more accurately than they would Yes-No questions.

We conducted a Grammaticality Judgment task, with 24 minimal pairs (12 target pairs and 12 fillers). A target pair consists of a grammatical version and an ungrammatical counterpart. Grammatical versions contain a correct word order, whereas the ungrammatical counterparts contain an incorrect word order. In each test item, there were a minimal pair and multiple choices. Subjects were to judge if a pair member was correct, both correct, or both incorrect.

Forty-eight sixth graders from a public primary school in Kanchanaburi, Thailand and five young American English controls participated. The Thai students' judgments on Progressive Negatives were of higher accuracy when compared to their judgments on Yes-No questions (t (47) = 4.514, p <.001). Correct percentages were 51 on Progressive Negative and 30 on Yes-No questions. The native speaking controls were far more accurate than the Thai students, with correct percentages of 97 and 63, respectively. These results suggest that Thai learners have the knowledge of IP, but they have not acquired CP.

Our results indicate developmental stages, supporting the Partial Access hypothesis. Although the pattern of IP prior to CP is similar to that of the native speaking controls, the Thai students were considerably less accurate in CP. This suggests that their knowledge of CP is not settled, and as a result the Full Access is not supported.

As English Yes-No questions, which represent CP, pose a problem for the young learners in this study, we recommend that teachers provide intensive input in the classroom and English language resources with regard to Yes-No questions.

Keywords: Universal Grammar, Second Language Acquisition, V-Raising Parameter, L2 Thai of English

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I am grateful for the young participants as well as their guardians and teachers who allowed them to take part in the study and monitored them when they were working on the task.

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Bussarakam Homchuen

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Universal Grammar (UG) is a model proposed by Chomsky for L1 acquisition. UG constitutes the L1 child's initial state. L1 speakers have UG as an innate biologically endowed language faculty (e.g. Chomsky 1965, 1981; Pinker 1984, 1994). L1 learners acquire a grammar on the basis of UG, which is activated when they are exposed to primary linguistic data (input). UG consists of principles and parameters. Principles are constant across languages. Parameters are options that languages choose to accompany the invariant principles. In L2 acquisition, it is controversial if UG remains operative. Researchers, in an attempt to check if L2 grammar is guided by UG, use a parameter that exists in the L2 but not in the L1, as a tool. If data suggest that a given parameter is acquired, UG can be determined to be applicable to L2 acquisition. Parameters can be thought of as a switch box metaphor, in which the switch can be on or off. When it changes from the on to the off position, or vice versa, a parameter is said to be reset. For instance, if a French learner of English can change the postverbal position of a French adverb to the preverbal position of its English adverb counterpart in their production of English, they are considered to have reset the V-raising parameter.

As to L1 Thai, the V-raising parameter does not exist. If a Thai learner of English can recognize a sentence structure with V-to-I movement (i.e. an auxiliary preceding the subject), they are also considered to have reset the non V-raising to the V-raising parameter.

Since there are two V-to-I related structures, i.e. Perfective Negative and Progressive Negative and Progressive sentences are assumed to be initially introduced to L2 learners, part of the test items in this study were Progressive Negatives.

In terms of patterns of acquisition, two major proposals are widely discussed, i.e. Partial Access and Full Access to UG. These two proposals viewed the L2 acquisition at the initial state with different viewpoints. The Partial Access approach (Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1996a) claims that lexical projections, e.g. VP, are present first and functional categories, e.g. IP and CP, are available subsequently. In

contrast to the Partial Access approach, the Full Access approach (Epstein, Flynn, and Martohardjono, 1996) claims that both the lexical and functional projections, e.g. VP, IP, and CP, are readily available from the start of L2 acquisition. Therefore, phrases and sentences that illustrate VP, IP, and CP have been employed to examine if the Partial Access or Full Access approach is supported toward the acquisition of an L2. There are various English sentence structures containing CP elements, such as embedded clauses and questions. As for IP, Progressive Negatives and declaratives containing finite verbs and modals have been employed as tools in the literature.

By means of the V-to-I and I-to-C sentence structures, this study aims to examine if UG also imposes constraints upon the acquisition of L2 and if the learners acquire L2 in the manner that is consistent with the Partial Access or the Full Access. In this study, we used Progressive Negative declaratives and Progressive Yes-No questions, corresponding to IP and CP, as test items, as we assumed that our young Thai participants had a lot of exposure to these structures.

1.2 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Our hypotheses were brought about by the initial state approach and the V-raising parameter as well as the findings of resetting ability in Thai learners.

Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996a) stated that L1 children acquired functional categories in developmental stages - VP, prior to IP, and CP. L2 learners were assumed to develop this phrase structure in a much similar way to acquire their L2 grammar (Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1994; 1996a; 1996b).

Epstein et al (1996); however, argued that children have full access of UG. Therefore, IP and CP were available simultaneously during children's syntactic acquisition process.

In order to see if Thai learners acquired functional categories by initial state or full access of UG, the V-raising parameter was used in this study to identify whether the L2 learners acquire the functional categories step by step or all at once. In Singhapreecha (2000), L2 Thai learners are able to reset the non V-raising parameter to the V-raising parameter.

Assuming the similar result of resetting by the Thai participants, the following hypotheses are formed to see which approach L2 learners apply to acquire L2 grammar.

Based on Epstein et al, if young Thai learners have acquired V-to-I and I-to-C, they should be able to judge English Progressive Negatives and Yes-No questions in a similar manner to young English native speaking counterparts, despite different rates of accuracy.

Based on Vainikka and Young-Scholten, if young Thai learners have acquired only V-to-I but not I-to-C, they would judge English Progressive Negatives more accurately than would they Yes-No questions.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate whether young Thai EFL learners can reset the non V-raising parameter to the V-raising parameter and to assess whether young Thai non-native learners acquire IC and CP developmentally or simultaneously.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Definitions of terms of this study are as follows:

Progressive: a sentence containing the order of *be* and a verb inflected for the –ing suffix (e.g. She is taking her son to school.)

Progressive Negative: a sentence containing the order *be*, *not* and a verb inflected for the *-ing* suffix (e.g. She is not taking her son to school.)

Perfective Negative: a sentence containing the order of *have/has, not* and a verb inflected for past participle (e.g. She has not taken her son to school.)

Yes-No Question: a question with an auxiliary in sentence initial position, followed by a subject and a verb with the –ing suffix.

Students refer to the 48 Thai sixth graders who participated in this study.

Acquisition in this study is defined in a relative fashion. That is, an L2 structure is considered to be acquired if L2 learners exhibit a pattern that parallels to that of L1 learners, despite lower accuracy rates.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted with forty-eight sixth-graders, who served as the experimental group, compared with five native English speaking children, aged between eight to nine years old. The parameter under investigation was V-raising, which is involved in Progressive Negatives, and Yes-No questions.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results provide evidence in the sense of the V-raising parameter, which can give insight into the theory of SLA.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Formal English Yes-No questions require auxiliaries in sentence initial position. In colloquial English, a declarative with rising intonation can also serve as a Yes-No question.

As we focused on the raising of I to C, i.e. the position of auxiliaries in sentence initial position, the judgments of declaratives as the correct forms of Yes-No questions were not taken into account and received a score of zero.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 1, we describe the background of the study, research hypotheses, objectives of the study, definitions of terms, scope of the study and significance of the study. In Chapter 2, previous studies and related literatures are reviewed. In Chapter 3, methodology of the study is illustrated. In Chapter 4, results are presented. Finally, conclusions, discussions and recommendation appear in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section is organized as follows. In 2.1, we discuss theoretical background for the derivations of English progressive declaratives, negative sentences and Yes-No questions, and the description of their Thai counterparts In 2.2, we discuss three studies that investigated the V-raising parameter, i.e. White (1990), Singhapreecha (2000) and Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011). Finally, as we address the question of whether or not UG constrains the acquisition of an L2, in 2.3, we discuss two approaches on L2 initial state, i.e. those by Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996a) and Epstein et al (1996).

Thus the discussions on the structures of English Progressive Negatives and Yes-No questions and the Thai counterparts, prior investigations on the V-raising parameter, and the L2 initial state, serve as the basis of our hypotheses.

2.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this section, the derivations of English Progressive Negative and Yes-No questions and the description of the Thai counterparts appear in 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, respectively.

2.1.1 VERB-RAISING OF *BE*

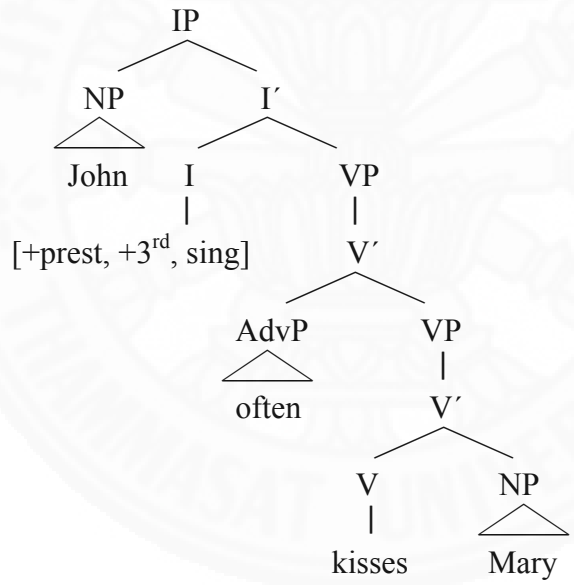
In derivation of Progressive Negative and Yes-No Questions, *be* is the verb that raises. As an instance to check the availability of a UG parameter, the raising of the auxiliary *be* to I (the head of IP or Inflection Phrase or Sentence) in English is chosen. English auxiliaries are assumed to be semantically vacuous and are used to express tense and aspects in connection with participles. *Be* is used in connection with the present participle for progressive aspect while *have* with the past participle for perfective. Chomsky (1993; 1995) as stated in Singhapreecha (2000) proposes that English auxiliary verbs do not contain semantic contents, they are uninterpretable and invisible at LF. The morphological features namely Tense and Agreement the

auxiliaries carry along must also be invisible at LF. Owing to their LF-invisibility, the auxiliaries are then forced to raise to higher functional heads from V to I in order to perform feature-checking movement in overt syntax.

In Chomsky (1993; 1995), the verbal element that raises to I is either *be* or *have*. *Be* and *have* raise to I to associate with tense and agreement in I. The auxiliary *be* is focused upon in this study. Other contentful verbs do not raise. Evidence for why other contentful verbs do not raise can be found in (1) 'John often kisses Mary.' In (1), as the adverb 'often' occupies a position higher than the node V, it follows that 'kisses' stays inside VP and does not raise across VP.

(1) John often kisses Mary.

Tree Diagram 1

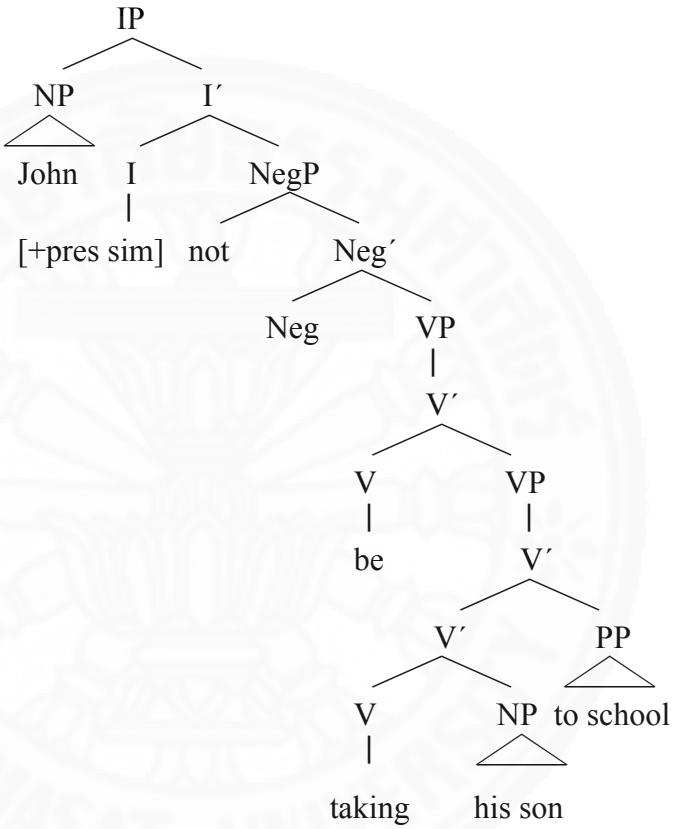


As seen in (1) above, there is no Verb-raising with contentful verbs in declaratives.

Sentence (2) illustrates V-to-I in a negative progressive sentence. In the word order of (2), *is* precedes *not* in Progressive Negative.

(2) John is not taking his son to school.

Tree Diagram 2



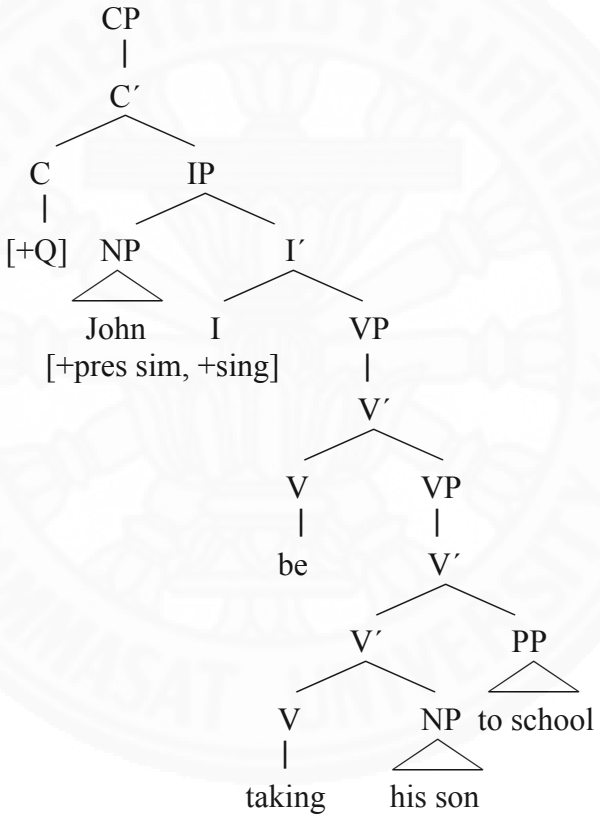
Assuming that 'not' occupies a position (i.e. NegP) between IP and VP, the derivation of (2) involves *be* raising across 'Neg' to I. The result shows V-to-I of the auxiliary *be* in negative progressive. In the grammatical knowledge of L2 learners of English who can perform (2), the auxiliary *be* needs to perform their feature-checking movement. However, if the learners do not realize the needs of auxiliary raising to higher functional head overtly, and treat it as lexical main verbs which do not raise over Neg, an ungrammatical sentence may thus be produced as *John not is taking his son to school.

Sentence (3) illustrates V-to-I and I-to-C in a progressive Yes/No question.

(3) Is John taking his son to school?

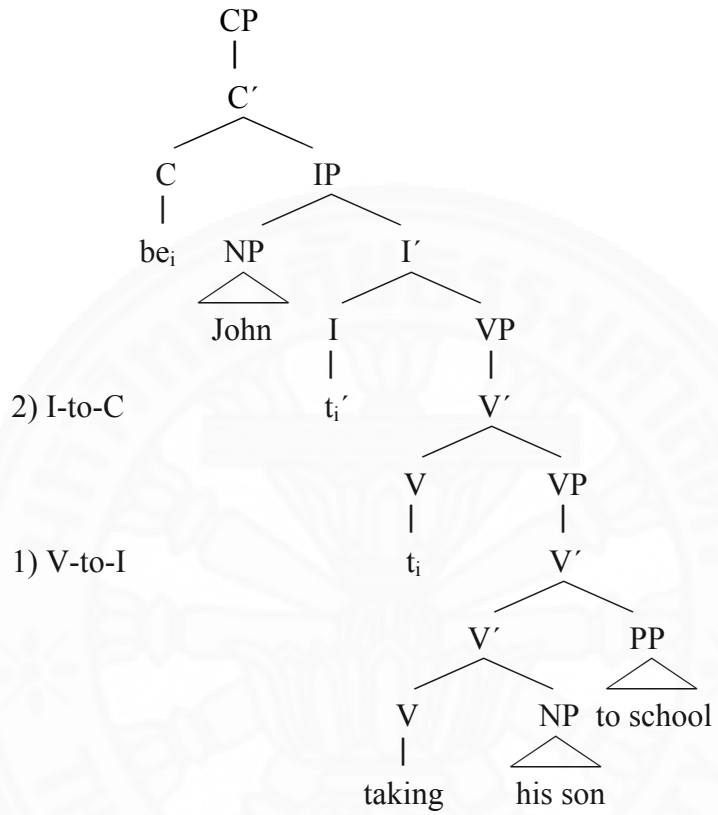
In (3), the structure is derived from V raising to I, to associate with tense and agreement in I, followed by I raising to C to satisfy the [+Q] feature. Subsequently, *be* will raise into C, a result of I-to-C movement. After the movement, a trace is left under I, with its antecedent being co-indexed.

Tree Diagram 3



V-to-I and I-to-C movements appear in Tree Diagram 4.

Tree Diagram 4



In Tree Diagram 4, V-to-I and I-to-C of *be* operate in interrogative progressive; therefore, progressive questions can be used as a point of investigation in this study.

2.1.2 THAI PROGRESSIVE STRUCTURES

Thai is a non-inflectional language, in which there are no tense and agreement markings. Nouns, adjectives and verbs are not inflected in Thai, unlike English or other inflectional languages. Time reference can be indicated by time adverbs or from discourse contexts. Aspect and mood can be presented in terms of auxiliaries in pre-verbal and sentence final position.

To form declarative progressive such as (4), the verb is bare with a progressive aspect marker [kamlaŋ] added before the main verb. Tense and agreement markings are absent. Sentences (4), (5), and (6) were adapted from (6e), (7j) from Singhapreecha (2000), and (8) from Singhapreecha (2014).

(4) kháw kamlaŋ ʔàan nǎŋsɨ̌ɨpim

He progressive read newspaper

'He is reading a newspaper.'

To convey negation in a progressive context as in (5), a negative compound 'mâjdâj' was inserted before the progressive aspect marker [kamlaŋ]. [mâjdâj] is a compound of [mâj] "not" and [dâj] "able". Noss (1964) gave the definition of [mâjdâj] as "in fact not".

(5) kháw mâjdâj kamlaŋ ʔàan nǎŋsɨ̌ɨpim

He not progressive read newspaper

'He is not reading a newspaper.'

To express Yes-No questions in Thai, question particles 'rɨ̌ɨplàaw' or 'chậjmáj' are added in sentence final position in (6).

(6) kháw kamlaŋ ʔàan nǎŋsɨ̌ɨpim rɨ̌ɨplàaw/ chậjmáj

He progressive read newspaper question particle

'Is he reading a newspaper?'

As shown in (5) and (6), in Thai, no auxiliaries precede negative elements in Progressive Negatives, nor do they occupy the sentence initial position in Yes-No questions. It can be concluded that Thai does not use auxiliaries to form negative

sentences and Yes-No questions, unlike English. This suggests that the V-raising parameter does not operate in Thai, and Thai learners of English have to reset the non V-raising to the V-raising parameter of English, particularly the raising of 'be,' in the course of the acquisition of the L2 English.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

L2 ACQUISITION OF V-RAISING

As our study is concerned with the acquisition of the V-raising parameter, we narrow down the scope of the literature review in this section to studies on how learners performed when they were tested with structures that involved V-raising to I or C.

2.2.1 THAI LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

Singhapreecha (2000) conducted a study addressing whether or not clustering, the model of language acquisition predicted by UG, is applicable to Thai learners of English. Three syntactic operations were used to test the subjects – Case checking, raising of auxiliaries (via Perfective Negatives and Progressive Negative) and non-raising of lexical main verbs. As the focus of our study is the V-raising parameter, the part on raising of auxiliaries in Singhapreecha (2000) is presented in this literature review.[1] In this respect, she predicted that clustering between Progressive Negative (Be+Neg) and Perfective Negative (Have+Neg) would occur; both auxiliaries *be* and *have* needed to raise from V to I to check tense and agreement due to their semantically vacuous properties and invisibility at LF. In terms of UG parameters, Thai does not utilize the V-raising raising parameter; there are no auxiliaries in sentence initial position in Thai Yes-No questions. Thus, a resetting from the non-V raising to V-raising would occur, if Thai learners performed English Progressive and Perfective Negatives accurately.

[1] As Singhapreecha (2000) found that Perfective Negative was more difficult than Progressive Negative and our participants were young Thai EFL learners, we selected Progressive Negative, the easier structure, as our test stimuli.

The subjects in the study were sixty-nine Thai learners of English, the experimental group, and ten monolingual American English speaking subjects, the control group. The Thai participants were staying in Bangkok, and the control participants were residing in New Jersey and New York City. The Thai students were from different classes varying from Grades 5 to 12 and their age ranged from 9 to 18 years old. All of them were from two public schools in Bangkok. Fifth graders were recruited as the lowest level of participants because English sentences and paragraphs were introduced at this level. Singhapreecha (2000) notes that it is essential to track English instruction from the beginning, Grade 5, to the completion of study, Grade 12. The control group also ranged from Grade 4 to Grade 12 to match the Thai group in terms of age range and school Grades.

Test materials used were Grammaticality Judgment (GJ) and Elicited Production (EP). There was an English test conducted on the Thai group, which established 3 proficiency levels. The GJ task was a preference task (cf. White 1990), consisting of 40 pairs of stimulus sentences. Each pair differed only in one grammatical aspect. There was only one correct answer to each item. The participants were shown two sentences at a time and were instructed to choose only one answer among the four choices, i.e. only sentence (a) was correct, only sentence (b) was correct, both sentences (a) and (b) were correct, and neither sentence was correct. The test items were arranged in a way that only one item was shown on each page. The participants from both groups were told to open one page at a time and not to go back to the previous page. Only the correct answer was scored as there was only one single correct answer for each pair.

The GJ results confirmed the prediction that Progressive Negative (Be+Neg) and Perfective Negative (Have+Neg) clustered with each other. However, in the EP task, most of the student participants failed to produce the auxiliary *have* in Perfective Negative, and consequently a statistical analysis could not be performed.

When these results were compared with those of the control group, the native speakers performed 100% correctly in the GJ test for both structures, and only on Progressive Negative in the EP task. Some native speaking members of the control group made errors in Perfective Negative by supplying ‘did not’ and ‘didn’t’ and the past simple instead of the past participle form. She noted that Perfective Negative was a challenge even among the control group.

For the experimental Thai group, a significant correlation appeared between the learners' proficiency level and their performance in Have+Neg but not in Be+Neg. A significant correlation was also found between the judgments of Have+Neg and Be+Ne; Singhapreecha (2000) concludes that clustering occurs, as predicted.

As for difficulty of the structures, the prediction was also confirmed by GJ. Be+Neg was predicted to be easier than Have+Neg, due to the similarities between Thai and English, frequency in the input, and simplicity. The results showed that Be+Neg was significantly easier than Have+Neg.[2]

It is noteworthy that the Thai student participants in Singhapreecha's study were able to perform Be+Neg, i.e. Progressive Negative, accurately across tasks and groups. This suggests that they were able to reset the non V-raising (of Thai) to the V-raising parameter (of English).

2.2.2 FRENCH LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

White (1990) investigated the effects of instruction on the acquisition of the V-raising parameter. In her investigation, she proposed a set of related structures that are theoretically associated with this parameter and recruited a group of participants whose L1 parameter was hypothesized to be different from that of L2. The hypothesis involved whether the properties of L1 would appear as a cluster initially and whether this cluster would disappear at a later stage and L2 properties would be learned together. White aimed to see whether generalization from explicit teaching of one structure could trigger the learning of another since both structures were assumed to occur within the same parameter.

French and English were chosen in the study. It has been well-established that French is a language with strong Agr features, resulting in the checking of main verbs in the Agr and T positions, while English has weak Agr features, and consequently

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[2] Even though no statistical analysis could be performed in the EP task, it was obvious that Be+Neg was easier than Have+Neg due to the subjects' highly accurate performance on Be+Neg and at their total failure on Have+Neg. With regard to the errors of Be+Neg in the EP task, she found that the beginners and intermediate level student subjects dropped the auxiliary *be* and used *do* instead of *be* 20 percent of the time, on average.

English lexical main verbs stay inside VP. [3] In this study, two main differences between both languages were selected: one was the position of certain adverbs such as 'always', which follows the verb in French while in English it precedes the verb. Another property was the derivation in question formation. Main verbs raise in French question sentences. However, English lexical verbs do not raise in questions; *do-support* is needed in the modal position to bear Tense and Agreement.

White (1990) conducted a study with young French learners of English. She examined whether the explicit teaching of English *do-support* in forming questions (which was associated with the lack of verb movement in English) could trigger the learning of English preverbal adverb structure. Pretest and posttest were used with teaching question formation as the treatment. French learners of English who were at the same stage of interlanguage development were recruited. They were fifth and sixth graders and could be considered as beginners due to their slight exposure to English before they participated in this study. The subjects were divided into two groups: the adverb and question groups. The adverb group was taught placement of English adverbs of frequency and manner for two weeks. Meanwhile, the question group was taught English question formation with auxiliaries and 'do'. Pretest on English adverb placement was applied to both groups before the training. After the training, they were tested at two different times. Three tasks, i.e. grammaticality judgment, preference, and manipulation were administered. In Task 1 – the grammaticality judgment task, the subjects were assigned to indicate incorrect word orders and correct them in cartoon stories. In Task 2 - the preference task, they needed to choose a single correct answer from a pair of grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. In Task 3 - the manipulation task, they laid out a set of cards to form sentences.

The results from the pretest session showed no significant differences between the adverb and question groups. However, in both resulting posttests, the scores of the adverb group were significantly higher than those of the question groups, in identifying the preverbal adverb structure of English. White (1990) concludes that instruction on one property does not generalize to another property and no clustering occurs. With

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[3] On a standard assumption, English Agr features raise to check off their features in Agr and T only at LF.

explicit teaching of question formation, the learners were unable to perform well on the English preverbal adverb structure. The findings suggest that clustering of knowledge of *do-support* and preverbal adverb structure does not occur. Conscious learning of a given structure may not create unconscious learning of another related structure.

The resetting from V-raising to non V-raising does not receive support from the results of the question group in White's study. However, the opposite direction, i.e. the resetting from non V-raising to V-raising receives support from Singhapreecha (2000).

2.2.3 ENGLISH LEARNERS OF SPANISH

Spanish is widely known as a language which has V-raising in questions and declaratives.

Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) investigated whether English learners of Spanish were able to reset their non V-raising parameter to the V-raising parameter of Spanish.

The subjects were undergraduate students from different universities, residing in the UK. They learned Spanish as part of their degree requirements. They ranged in age from 20 to 37, with an average age of 28.9 years old. Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) examined both whether or not the V-raising parameter was operative and degrees of accuracy in supplying agreement morphology. Based on a Spanish language placement test, there were 12 beginners, 7 low-intermediate, 7 intermediate, and 15 advanced student subjects.

Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) conducted multiple tasks on five Spanish structures, all of which involved V-raising, i.e. Adverbial, Yes-No, Direct-Wh, Indirect Wh, Pseudo Wh. We will focus on the GJ task, which is directly relevant to the task, to be presented in section 2. In this task, pairs of Spanish sentences were presented to the subjects. In each pair, one sentence in whichthe verb was raised, was grammatical, while the other sentence in which the verb was not raised, was ungrammatical. They found that levels of proficiency did not affect the subjects' judgments. On average, grammatical (raised) Indirect Wh was rejected at a remarkably higher rate than Yes-No and Pseudo-Wh. While the Adverbial remained problematic (i.e. it was unexpectedly accepted by the native controls), the subjects did well on Direct-wh, among the four

structures. This suggests that the English speaking subjects in Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) were able to acquire certain structures of V-raising, e.g. Direct-wh, while it remained controversial whether they acquired the other related structures. In this respect, Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) argued, based on results in a different task checking verb agreement, that there was morphological difficulty that could be a factor explaining why the subjects were unable to recognize the grammaticality of the other structures.

To summarize, while it remains obscure whether or not V-raising can be suppressed by L2 learners in White (1990), Singhapreecha (2000) and Guijarro-Fuentes and Larrañaga (2011) found evidence that can substantiate L2 learners' ability to reset the non V-raising to V-raising parameter. We take such evidence to be a basis for the formulation of the hypotheses of the present study.

2.3 APPROACHES ON UG-CONSTRAINED L2

As our study addresses the question of L2 initial state, two approaches of L2 acquisition are discussed in this section, the Partial Access hypothesis (Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1996a), and the Full Access to UG hypothesis (Epstein et al, 1996).

2.3.1 THE PARTIAL ACCESS (MINIMAL TREE) HYPOTHESIS

Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996a) argue for gradual development of L2 acquisition. The data of L2 German acquisition of Korean, Turkish, Italian and Spanish-speaking adults without formal instruction was reviewed. In addition, there were discussions on other studies on the L2 French acquisition by English speakers and the L2 English acquisition by speakers of various L1s. L2 learners could transfer lexical projections. The researchers claimed that while learners were acquiring L2, the functional projections developed in succession.

In L1 acquisition, Radford (1988; 1990) proposes that English speaking children acquire lexical projections such as the bare VP projection first, and that functional projections mature later. Similar proposals were also made by Guilfoyle and Noonan (1992) for English and Platzack (1990) for Swedish.

In terms of the hierarchy of lexical and functional projections in L1 grammar, Radford's VP proposal entails that VP, IP, and CP project successively. Radford's approach is largely in line with the Weak Continuity Hypothesis, presented for L1 German in Clahsen et al. (1994) and was further defined and developed for English in Vainikka (1992; 1993/4).

Having examined an English speaking child's production of subject pronouns in a longitudinal study, Vainikka (1993/4) argues for developmental stages at the initial state.

According to Vainikka, given the child's data, at the earlier stage there were utterances with non-nominative subjects, suggesting the absence of subject pronouns (Nominative forms), which corresponds to the VP projection. Later, nominative subjects appeared, corresponding to the emergence of IP, a projection containing Spec,IP, the domain where nominative subjects occupy. In respect of CP, Vainikka raises a question as to its presence. In the data, while subjects were produced in WH-questions, the forms of these subjects were non-nominative.[4]

Vainikka concludes that the non-nominative forms of the subjects are a consequence the CP projection deficit at this stage. She adds that the adult's full phrasal hierarchy (CP), where nominative subjects appear in *Wh*-questions, is acquired in the final stage.

Based on these results, Vainikka argues for a developmental stage in young English speakers, in which VP is acquired prior to IP and CP. Since the syntactic (phrase structure) tree consists of VP, IP, and CP, and in Vainikka's claim, they are argued to occur in a step-wise fashion, her approach is termed Minimal Tree, in addition to Partial Access hypothesis.

In respect of adult L1 German structural tree, viewed from the Minimal Tree approach, a difference from the English counterpart is that VP and IP are head-final (cf. den Besten, 1983; Koster, 1975; Platzack, 1986; Safir, 1981; Thiersch, 1978). In adult's L1 German, theoretically finite verbs raise into the head-initial C-position in a matrix

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[4] Vainikka attributes the reoccurrence of non-nominative subjects in Wh-questions in the child's data to the absence of CP. The *wh*-phrases occupy Spec,IP and prevent the subjects from raising into Spec,IP to have their Nominative case features checked, resulting in thee incorrect forms of nominative subjects.

clause. However, if the C-position, in an embedded clause, has been filled by a complementizer, the finite verb can only raise to the head-final I-position. As a data set displays finite verbs in IP in early L1 German, this is consistent with a model where VP projection was available first, then the IP and CP later.

In L2 acquisition of German, Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994; 1996a; 1996b) propose that L2 learners' construction of phrase structure is built in much the same way as that of L1 children. There is an early stage without functional projections for L1 and L2 learners. At the initial state, L1 children acquire their L1 with no previous knowledge of any language, whereas L2 learners bring their L1 knowledge of principles and the optional parameters of UG to their L2. L2 learners use their L1 VP to create a toe-hold in the L2 only to the extent of VP transfer. After this, higher functional projections developed via the interaction of the X'-Theory, the principle to construct the sentential hierarchy, with the input. Hence, the initial state in L2 acquisition is not equivalent to the learners' knowledge of their native language.

Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994; 1996a; 1996b) collected longitudinal and cross-sectional data, as supporting evidence for the above claim, from adult L2 learners of German whose L1 were Korean, Turkish, Italian and Spanish. The subjects did not receive any substantial formal instruction in German, which helped control a crucial variable. For data collection, a data elicitation task, informal interviews and brief oral translation tasks were conducted. All of the sessions were tape-recorded. The elicitation task was designed for the subjects to elicit different sentence types with subjects and finite verbs in various persons and numbers in extra-linguistic contexts. Several hundred utterances were collected from each speaker. In spite of numerous sentence types, only those containing a verb and additional VP-related elements were selected and imitations or idiomatic phrases were excluded.

Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994; 1996a; 1996b) report their results as follows. At the VP-stage, the learners did not acquire the head-final IP/AgrP nor did they acquire the head-initial CP of German. In addition, no transfer of their L1 head-initial or head-final IP/AgrP or CP was evident. The initial state was characterized by the bare VP projection, with L1 transfer.

At the functional projection (e.g. IP) stage, if L1 head directionality played a role, the scenario was that Korean and Turkish speakers would produce head-final

sentences, and Italian and Spanish speakers would produce head-initial sentences in German. The results were different, as the L2 learners from these four language backgrounds acquired functional categories in a similar manner, a pattern that was similar to that of child L1 German acquisition of functional categories.

Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994; 1996a; 1996b) conclude that, in respect of the early development of functional projections, L2 learners begin the acquisition of German by transferring their native language VP and switch its headedness (in case it is different) to match that of German. The functional elements associated with the functional categories are absent at this earliest stages of L2 acquisition. Through the interaction between the X'-Model and the German input, an L2 head-initial underspecified functional projection is then acquired in the similar manner to that of L1 German children. Little evidence of a CP projection is present at this stage for both adult L2 learners and child L1 speakers. Next, there is a subsequent, systematic increase in the production of functional projection elements. The emergence of functional elements, co-occurring with the acquisition of new syntactic positions, also indicates that functional projections are emerging.

To sum up, Vainikka and Young-Scholten argue for their Partial Access to UG hypothesis by claiming that learners transfer the VP from their L1s, and later posit head-initial functional projections. Further studies on L2 acquisition by other researchers, according to them, also reveal that a CP is not transferred into L2 French or English, but a CP emerges at a point in development. As stated in Grimshaw (1993), only lexical projections (VP) can be transferred, not IP and CP, the higher functional categories. They remark that functional categories may not be projected until a phonetic content is present.

2.3.2 THE FULL ACCESS HYPOTHESIS

Epstein et al (1996) conducted a study, addressing three approaches to the role of UG in L2 acquisition. They attempt to answer the question of to what extent, adult L2 acquisition is constrained by the linguistic principles that determine L1 acquisition. The first was the No Access hypothesis which asserts that there is no aspect of UG available to L2 learner. The second was the Partial Access hypothesis, which claims that

only L1-instantiated principles and L1-instantiated parameter-values of UG are available to the L2 learners. The third is the Full Access hypothesis, which states that UG in its entirety constrains L2 acquisition. Epstein et al (1996) argue that no compelling evidence supports the first two hypotheses. However, the existing evidence is consistent with the third.

With respect to the no-access hypothesis, Bley-Vroman (1989), Clahsen (1988), and Clahsen and Muysken (1986) view that the L1 acquisition of children is constrained by principles of UG, whereas L2 learners use general learning strategies – UG-independent principles in guiding their L2 grammar construction.

Epstein et al. refer to Schachter (1988)'s Partial-Access hypothesis, the predecessor of Vainikka and Young-Scholten's, that her claim, i.e. UG is not entirely available to adult L2 learners, as less extreme and more attractive than the no-access hypothesis. However, they point out that Schacter's (1988), Radford's (1990) and Vainikka's (1992; 1993/4) arguments are untenable, as their research was based on a case study, and a generalization could not be held. As proposed by these researchers, the early grammars of L1 and L2 learners, while gaining access to certain principles of UG, are still incomplete, due to the absence of functional categories and related elements, e.g. verb tense, agreement, and question formation. In this respect, according to the Partial Access proponents, L2 acquisition is different from L1 acquisition since functional categories will eventually be incorporated in L2 learners' grammar. Epstein et al. disagree with this model and point out that it fails to postulate L2 acquisition that is constrained by UG.

Epstein et al. (1996) conducted a study, to obtain data that could lend support for the Full Access hypothesis. The participants were 33 Japanese-speaking children and 18 Japanese-speaking adults learning English as a second language in USA. The test items were a range of IP and CP related structures. IP structures included simple present, past tense, progressive and negative sentences and those with modals. CP structures included topicalized sentences, wh-questions and sentences containing relative clauses. They employed the Elicited Imitation (EI) task, because, as they noted, the EI could be a basis for future comparisons and it could provide production data that would be comparable to those in previous studies.

In terms of participants, the number in Epstein et al. was greater than that of Vainikka. In addition, the syntactic competence could be directly tested in Epstein et al's study since the experimental stimuli were controlled. The test items were equalized in syllable length, 16, and in number of words, 9 to 11. The subjects had studied the lexical words appearing in the test items before participating in the study. In the test session, the subjects also needed to indicate their understanding of each word by providing a synonym or Japanese analogue. Epstein et al. remark that this procedure aimed to increase the probability that if a subject experienced difficulty in producing a given stimulus sentence, the error was due to the sentence structure, not the failure to understand the meaning of a particular lexical word.

The overall results of the study indicate that the children and adults produced the target sentences 59% and 60% accurately, respectively. The subjects showed a general ability to produce sentences containing XPs in Spec,CP position and sentences containing non-phrasal syntactic categories in the I(nfl) position. According to them, the findings suggest that the grammar of the subjects of both groups contain functional categories at early stages of L2 acquisition. The ANOVA results indicated no significant differences in results between the L2 children and L2 adults. This further suggests that the child and adult grammars are constrained in a similar way. A similar pattern of IP and CP acquisition between both groups was also observed. The sentences involving IP-elements had a lower error rate than those involving movement to Spec CP. Percentage results show higher accuracy on IP than CP sentences across the spectrum of children and adults. Child and adult IP accuracy rates were 69 and 68, while their CP accuracy rates were 50 and 45, respectively.

Epstein el al (1996) attributed the difference in accuracy between IP and CP rates to the complexity of CP structures. They state that the movement to Spec CP involves long-distance maximal movement, while movement to I(nfl) involves only short-distance head movement. In addition, as they remark, another factor is concerned with the number of clausal boundaries that the topicalized element crossed in the derivation of CP topicalized structures, which incurred higher error rates. Epstein et al. suggest that the errors are not a result of the total absence of functional categories in the L2 grammar, but the complexity in the derivation of CP structures, such as those involving topicalization.

They add that the problems that appeared in the learners' utterances do not involve a grammatical, but production deficit. The errors, as they emphasize, do not reflect a knowledge deficit, nor do they indicate the absence of functional categories.

In line with the above discussion, Epstein eta al. argue that, firstly, UG principles and parameters are available to L2 learners, and secondly, L2 development is restricted by lexical, phonological, and morphological aspects and parametric options in the L2, and the integration of linguistic knowledge that the learner acquired with the grammar external systems.

The hypotheses of the current study were formulated based on Vainikka and Young-Scholten's (1996a) and Epstein et al's (1996) approaches. The first hypothesis addresses the Partial Access, predicting gradual development of IP prior to CP; the second one the Full Access, predicting the availability of both IP and CP to Thai learners since the start of their L2 acquisition. We now turn to the methodology to find support for either hypothesis.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the following - (1) the subjects, (2) the materials, (3) the procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data.

3.1 SUBJECTS

There were mainly two groups of subjects: Thai subjects and native American English speaking subjects who served as a control group.

3.1.1 THAI SUBJECTS

The participants in this study were forty-eight Thai learners of English. They were sixth-graders from a public primary school in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. The subjects could be considered as coming from a homogeneous English instruction background since they were in the same classes and in the same school. Thirty-four of them were from Class 6/3 while the rest were from Class 6/4. Their English proficiency level could be considered lower than the proficiency level of those students from private primary schools in Thailand.

The possible reasons for this were assumed as follows. The total number of hours of English instruction per week was 3 while many other primary schools offered about five hours of English lessons for Grade 6. The students had been exposed to English from in-class and outside the classroom for at least a few years before participating in this study. They had slight exposure to English spoken by native English teachers, when they were studying in previous academic years. The school also had volunteer native English speaking teachers, who occasionally conducted classes at the school. The classes were considered extracurricular activities since the native English speaking teachers were unable to assign grades to the students.

The students learned English with basic spelling and vocabulary since they were at lower Grades; however, they were introduced to English sentences and paragraphs when they were in Grades 4 and 5. According to a number of teacher interviews, the students had exposure to present progressive sentences including negatives and Yes-No

questions in their previous academic years, but had not learned complex sentence structures. Therefore, we assumed that the student subjects had been exposed to Progressive Negatives and Progressive Yes-No questions, structures representing the V-raising parameter, through class lessons.

3.1.2 CONTROL SUBJECTS

Five American English speaking participants served as a control group. They were children of friends and friends of the children residing in Vancouver and Tacoma in the State of Washington, USA. Four of them were third-graders and one was a fourth-grader. They ranged in age from eight to nine years old: three were eight and the other two were nine. Three of them were Thai-American whose parents were Thai and American while the other two were American. All of them were born and grew up in the US. The control subjects were chosen to match the Thai group in terms of anticipated ability to be tested on the Grammaticality Judgment Test of the study.

3.2 MATERIALS

Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJ) was used in this research to measure subjects' L2 grammatical knowledge. Most of the progressive items were adopted from Singhapreecha (2000) while the Yes-No questions were the interrogative declarative counterparts of the Progressive Negatives. Commonly known vocabulary items for sixth graders were selected and the pilot sentences were tested with a few sixth graders. We used the GJ task to assess the participants' acquisition on V-raising in English Present Progressive Negatives and Yes/No questions. There were six items per sentence type. Each item also had its grammatical counterpart, which differed from one another in respect of word order. Sentences (7a) and (7b), adopted from Singhapreecha's study (7), p. 159, illustrate an ungrammatical version, where *not* precedes *is*, and a grammatical progressive negative form, where *is* precedes *not*, which in turn, precedes *falling*. The asterisk marks ungrammaticality.

(7) a. *The woman *not is* falling into the water.

b. The woman *is not* falling into the water.

In (8), a pair in the Yes-No targets, *is* precedes *the old man* in the grammatical version while no inversion between the auxiliary *is* and *the old man* occurs in the ungrammatical version.

(8) a. *Is the old man* falling into the river?

b. **The old man is* falling into the river?

The sequence of the items was randomized by the random number generator on StatTrek.com. The stimulus sentences were 8-10 syllables in length. There were six lexical verbs, i.e. break, drive, fall, give, speak, and take. The subjects were asked to read the stimulus sentences and choose only one correct answer from these four choices: a) is correct, b) is correct, both a) and b) are correct, and both a) and b) are wrong. The distribution of target and filler sentences appears in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of Target Sentences and Filler Sentences

Target Sentences	Filler Sentences
6 Progressive Negative Sentences (+6 Grammatical Counterparts) 6 Yes-No Questions (+6 Grammatical Counterparts)	12 Filler sentences (+12 Grammatical fillers)
A is right, B is right, C both are right, D both are wrong.	A is right, B is right, C both are right, D both are wrong.
Out of 6 items in each structure Choices a) are correct (3 times) Choices b) are correct (3 times)	Out of 12 items, Choices a) are correct (2 times) Choices b) are correct (2 times) Choices c) are correct (4 times) Choices d) are correct (4 times)

For the complete set of test items, fillers, and an actual test paper, see appendix A, B, and C, respectively.

3.3 PROCEDURE

The procedure was carried out as follows.

3.3.1 ADMINISTRATION

The Grammatical Judgment test was administered in a single session for the Thai participants. There were two forms of the test – Form A and Form B, each of which contained identical items. By means of randomization, the ordering of the items in FORM A was different from that in FORM B, to ensure no effects from item ordering. The subjects read 24 pairs of sentences from a test booklet, in which each page consisted of only one pair of sentences and four answer alternatives. Form A test booklets were distributed to the odd seating columns while Form B test booklets to the even ones. The experimenter monitored the test session by instructing the subjects to open each page at the same time and not to go back to make changes in the previous test items. The allotted time was 15 seconds to choose the correct answer from the sentence pair.

The procedure also applied to the control group, but the difference was that the control group was tested individually by their parents.

3.3.2 SCORING

A score was assigned to the single correct choice for a pair and no score for any other choices. The scores derived from the V-raising items indicated the subjects' knowledge of word order. A subject received a score of 1, when he/she chose the choice which indicated that (1b) or (2a) was correct. Otherwise, he/she received a score of zero.

3.3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The pattern of scoring above applied to both young Thai learners and young native English speakers. Descriptive statistics – mean scores, Standard Deviations,

percentages and t-test were employed. Commonly wrong answers were discussed, by comparing percentages, and presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This chapter reports results that are relevant to the testing of the hypotheses. Prior to presenting the data, the two hypotheses are repeated below.

Hypothesis 1: If young Thai learners have acquired V-to-I and I-to-C, they should be able to judge English Progressive Negatives and Yes-No questions in a similar manner to young English native speaking counterparts, despite different rates of accuracy.

Hypothesis 2: If young Thai learners have acquired only V-to-I but not I-to-C, they would judge English Progressive Negatives more accurately than they would Yes-No questions.

4.1 COMPARISON BETWEEN PROGRESSIVE NEGATIVES AND YES-NO QUESTIONS

4.1.1 NATIVE SPEAKERS

To determine the accuracy, percentages were calculated for the accuracy of the GJ task results. The American English speakers judged the progressive negatives more accurately than they did the Yes/No questions, with 97 and 63 percent of accuracy, respectively. As noted in the limitations of the study, it is possible that they accepted the declaratives with a question mark because declarative questions are used in colloquial English. [5]

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[5] If declarative questions were also accepted as scorable answers, the accuracy rate of I-to-C stimuli changed substantially, from 63% to 83%.

Table 2: Results of GJ: Control Subjects

	Progressive Negatives	Yes/No Questions	Total
Percent of accuracy	97 (0.45)	63 (3.03)	80 (3.29)
(if declarative questions are considered correct)	97 (0.45)	83 (2.24)	90 (2.17)

Note: The figures in the parentheses represent standard deviations.

4.1.2 THAI LEARNERS

Percent results comparing between judgments of the two structures of the Thai student group revealed that they judged Progressive Negatives more accurately than they did Yes-No questions.

Table 3: Results of GJ: Thai Subjects

	Progressive Negatives	Yes/No Questions	Total
Percent of accuracy	51 (1.67)	30 (1.48)	41 (2.51)
(if declarative questions are considered correct)	51(1.67)	44(1.42)	47 (2.27)

Note: The figures in the parentheses represent standard deviations.

In addition, a t-test performed on the Thai students' judgments showed a significant difference t (47) = 4.514, $p < .001$, indicating that Progressive Negatives are much easier than Yes-No questions.

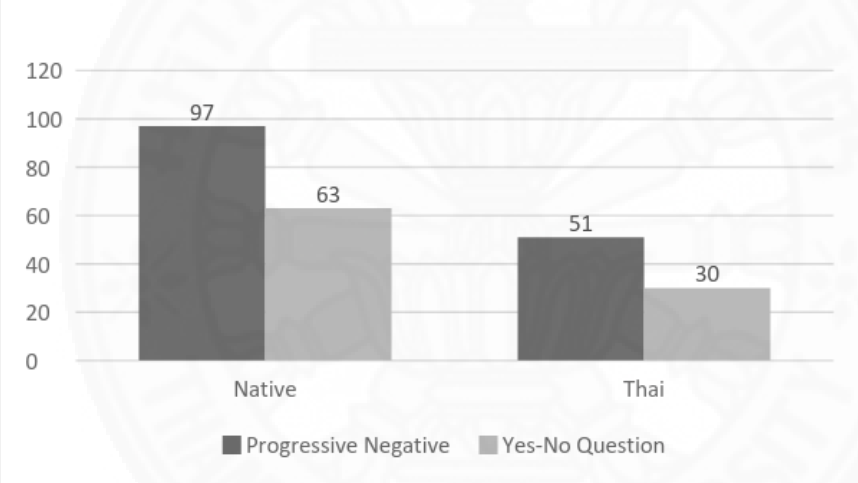
Therefore, hypothesis 2 is confirmed. It is noteworthy that the subjects chose the C choice, i.e. both declarative and interrogative forms of questions are right, with a 14%

increase in correctness. This suggests that their L2 grammar allows either the declarative with a question mark or the interrogative as a way to express Yes-No questions.

The Thai subjects can judge Progressive Negatives correctly at 51% while only at 30% for Yes-No questions. The data show a vast difference of accuracy between judging these two structures.

As for Hypothesis 1, the results did not confirm the hypothesis. The Thai learners were relatively inaccurate, compared to the native speakers, despite a similar pattern as illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1: Comparison of Results: Control Subjects and Thai Subjects



As shown in Figure 1, Progressive Negatives receive higher scores than Yes-No Questions. While the English speaking controls and the Thai students performed in a parallel fashion, there were substantial differences in accuracy percentages between the English controls and the Thai subjects (97 vs 63 in Progressive Negatives and 51 vs 30 in Yes-No questions). In particular, if choice C answers were included, the native speakers' judgments on Yes-No questions would be as almost accurate as their judgments on Progressive Negatives. On the basis of their accuracy in the GJ test, we can conclude that the control participants have acquired both types of structures.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL TEST ITEMS

4.2.1 PROGRESSIVE NEGATIVE

For Progressive Negative, the most inaccurately judged item was ‘take’ as in ‘The daughter is not taking her lunch to school,’ with 40 percent of accuracy. On the contrary, ‘drive’ as in ‘The father is not driving to the football field,’ was judged most accurately, with 58 percent of accuracy.

If we added the scores of the native English speaking children, the most inaccurate item was ‘fall.’ This verb was also the most inaccurately judged item among the native group themselves.

4.2.2 YES-NO QUESTIONS

For Yes-No question, the test item ‘fall’ as in ‘Is the old man falling into the river?’ was the most inaccurately judged item, with merely 25% of correctness, and ‘speak’ as in ‘Is the nurse speaking to her new friend?’ was the most accurately judged item, with 35% of correctness.

If the scores of the native group were added, the most inaccurate items would be ‘drive’. Within the group, all 6 verbs would be the most challenging ones, except ‘fall’.

Table 4: Results of Individual Sentences: Control Subjects and Thai Subjects

	Progressive Negatives						Yes/No Questions					
	fall	take	speak	break	give	drive	fall	take	speak	break	give	drive
Native	80	100	100	100	100	100	80	60	60	60	60	60
Thai	54	40	54	54	46	58	25	31	35	29	33	27
Both	67	70	77	77	73	79	52.5	45.5	47.5	44.5	46.5	43.5

4.2.3 INDIVIDUAL VERBS

Having analyzed all six verbs in both progressive negatives and Yes-No questions, we present the results in Table 5 and Table 6.

When scores from both structures were calculated as shown in Table 5, the score of 80 percent was found on each test item conducted on the control group. However, the equal distribution of the scores was not found in the Thai subjects' data. For the experimental group, the most inaccurate verb item was 'take' while the most accurate one was 'speak'. When taking scores from both groups into account, 'take' was the most challenging item and 'speak' received the highest score.

Table 5: Results of Individual Verbs: Control Subjects and Thai Subjects

	fall	take	speak	break	give	drive
Native	80	80	80	80	80	80
Thai	39.5	35.5	44.5	41.5	39.5	42.5
Both	59.75	57.75	62.25	60.75	59.75	61.25

From Table 6, the verb 'take' was the least inaccurate item, with 35.50 percent of correctness. It appeared in 'The daughter is not taking her lunch to school,' and 'Is the doctor taking his lunch to work?' The verb *take* functions as a transitive verb with an object, followed by an adverbial with the preposition of place. Compared to the other verbs, the word 'take' ranks 63 in COCA, which suggests its high frequency.[6] The fact that it was judged most inaccurately is interesting. One factor might involve input. Thai learners' input generally comes from their teachers or classroom interaction, unlike English speaking children, who are exposed to parents' or caretakers' input.

[6] COCA is an abbreviation of a Corpus of Contemporary American English.

The verb ‘speak’ was the most accurate item, receiving 44.50 percent. As noted above, one possible reason might be that the subject had the most frequent input of the verb in class since the verb was associated with speaking activities.

Table 6: Results of Individual Verbs with Rankings on COCA: Thai Subjects

Verb	**Percent of Correctness**	**Rank**
speak	44.50	336
drive	42.50	491
break	41.50	495
give	39.50	98
fall	39.50	411
take	35.50	63

In addition to input, one may view ‘take’ and ‘speak’ from semantic aspects. According to online Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the meaning of ‘speak’ is to talk to someone about something. In respect of ‘take,’ it is virtually meaningless in the sense that the meaning of ‘take’ is largely dependent on the following constituents, e.g. ‘her lunch’ and ‘to school.’ Thus, ‘speak’ is more meaningful, as the meaning can be conveyed by the verb itself.[7] The lexical complexity might contribute to the high error rate. As a consequence, the session of introducing lexical words as in Epstein et al (2006) should be taken into consideration.

[7] It is noteworthy that the verb *take* in our study appears as the second entry in the Longman Dictionary, meaning “to move or go with someone or something from one place to another.” The first entry of *take* is not associated with a particular meaning, but a recommendation that it be used with a noun to describe an action.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of the following sections: a summary of the study, the discussion of the findings in relation to Singhapreecha's (2000) study, the Partial Access hypothesis (Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1996a), and the Full Access hypothesis (Epstein et al, 1996), recommendations for further study, and recommendations for ELT.

5.1. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The current study examined whether or not Thai EFL learners could reset their L1 non V-raising parameter to the L2 V-raising parameter. A Grammaticality Judgment task containing Progressive Negative and Progressive Yes-No question items, representing IP and CP, was conducted with 48 young Thai learners of English. Knowledge of these sentence structures can indicate if learners have acquired the V-raising parameter. In addition, based on the Full Access Approach (Epstein et al, 1996) and the Partial Access Approach (Vainikka &Young Scholten, 1996a), two hypotheses were formulated, in respective order.

Firstly, if young Thai learners have acquired V-to-I and I-to-C, they should be able to judge English Progressive Negatives and Yes-No questions in a similar manner to young native English speaking counterparts, despite different rates of accuracy.

Secondly, if young Thai learners have acquired only V-to-I but not I-to-C, they would judge English Progressive Negatives more accurately than would they Yes-No questions.

The American English speaking group judged Progressive Negatives and Progressive Yes-No questions accurately 97 and 63 percent of the time, respectively. The correct percentages of the native speakers' judgments suggest their acquisition of both IP and CP, with higher accuracy on IP than CP.

Results from the young Thai learners support the second hypothesis. They judged Progressive Negative and Progressive Yes-No question items accurately 51 and 31 percent of the time, indicating low accuracy, despite higher accuracy on IP than CP,

a similar pattern to that of the native speaking controls. Therefore, the first hypothesis is not confirmed. As the Thai learners' accuracy rate on Progressive Yes-No questions was clearly smaller than Progressive Negatives, we conclude that the second hypothesis can be confirmed. With the higher percent of correctness on IP, the young Thai learners were acquiring V-to-I but not I-to-C as they raised the verb *be* in the V-to-I manner more frequently than they did the I-to-C.

5.2 DISCUSSION

5.2.1 NOTES ON SINGHAPREECHA'S VERB RAISING IN THAI EFL LEARNERS

Our study was based on Singhapreecha's study (2000) in many aspects, e.g. subjects, the GJ task with the V-raising stimuli, and the procedure. In this study (2000), clustering was investigated in a cross-sectional fashion. Her GJ task was controlled, similar to our task. Her test stimuli consisted of seven sentence types, namely Nominative, Accusative, ECM, Progressive and Perfective Negative, Preverbal Adverb, and Do-Support. Our Progressive Negatives test items were adopted from some of the Progressive Negatives in Singhapreecha's relevant items and our Yes-No questions were interrogative declarative counterparts. Her young participants consisted of Thai students in school Grades 5 to 6 and young native speakers, serving as the control group. As she noted, Grade 5 was the grade in which English was taught at a sentential level. Our subjects were selected from Grade 6 due to exposure to negatives and interrogatives, and the control participants were native English speakers aged 8 to 9. Although we did not employ English proficiency placement, the proficiency level of our subjects can be considered equivalent to the beginning level in Singhapreecha's study, due to their low accuracy on Progressive Negatives. Lower English language proficiency could be attributed to the low percent correct judgment.

In terms of percent results from Negative Progressives, which both the current study and Singhapreecha's study investigated, our young learners' judgments were considerably less accurate than Singhapreecha's beginning learners' judgments (51 vs 75%). One account that is worth considering is that Singhapreecha's learners, who were

residing in Bangkok, had a strong English educational background, compared to our participants, which consisted of students in a primary school in Kanchanaburi, whose English education background would be weaker, with slight exposure to input within and outside the classroom. Thus, it is possible that our participants' level of English proficiency is relatively lower than that of Singhapreecha's participants. If a proficiency examination had been included, an explanation for the results could have been stated more explicitly.

5.2.2 NOTES ON PARTIAL ACCESS

Based on the Partial Access (Minimal Tree) Hypothesis (cf. Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1996a), the interlanguage initial state was a grammar containing lexical categories but no functional categories. The lexical categories were drawn from the L1 grammar. The developmental stages involved the addition of functional categories which are available from UG. The functional categories are triggered by L2 input and emerged gradually. The representation of the emergence appeared in the bottom up style as IP must be acquired prior to CP. In other words, CP could not be acquired before the acquisition of IP.

Although the methodology in Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996a) is different from ours, the findings support the Partial Access Hypothesis. As discussed in section 2.3.1, Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996a) examined data from a number of different studies. Some were longitudinal, in which different learners were followed over time. and some were cross-sectional with different learners at different stages of development. The L1s were Turkish and Korean, which had head-final VPs, and Spanish and Italian, which were head initial. The target language was German which had head-final VPs. The data were collected from spontaneous and elicited production task. The subjects were adult learners of German who immigrated to Germany. Vainikka and Young-Scholten conclude with their results as follows. The early interlanguage grammar has lexical categories with headedness characteristics from the L1, suggesting the lack of IP. Moreover, the absence of *wh*-questions or subordinate clauses introduced by complementizers suggests the lack of CP.

In an experimental study conducted by the researchers, L1 was Thai, a non V-raising language, unlike L2 English which had V-raising in auxiliary constructions. A

grammaticality task was designed with Progressive Negatives and Yes-No questions items, representing IP and CP, respectively. The subjects were Thai sixth-graders from a public school in Thailand with the control group of native English speaking children residing in America. We found that the subjects judged the IP structure more accurately than they did the CP structure. Based on the findings, The Thai learners had VP, but CP may not be available. They could raise 'be' across Neg within IP, but the raising of 'be' from I to C in Yes/No questions, was infrequent.

Our findings support Vainikka and Young-Scholten's Minimal Tree hypothesis. Particularly, our young Thai participants acquire IP and CP, in a step-wise fashion.

5.2.3 NOTES ON FULL ACCESS

Epstein et al. (1996) examined three different approaches on the role of UG in L2 acquisition by conducting their experiments with adult and child Japanese learners of English. A controlled elicited imitation task was employed. The results reveal that child L2 grammar and adult L2 grammar are constrained in much the same way. In addition, IP and CP were acquired in a similar pattern, despite a lower error rate for IP. Their claim was that the errors did not involve a deficit in grammar but a production deficit. Epstein et al. (1996) conclude that functional categories (IP and CP) are readily available in the early L2 grammar, in line with the Full Access to UG hypothesis.

Our findings do not support the Full Access hypothesis. As noted above, the students' judgments revealed higher accuracy on IP than CP. As the IP and CP test items in our study were comprehension based and constructed in a controlled GJ fashion, production deficit as claimed in Epstein et al could not explain the high and low percentages on IP and CP in the current study's results.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

Input frequency might account for why the subjects chose the declarative with a question mark as the correct form of Yes-No questions. Therefore, future research should make it explicit to the participants that formal English is required for Yes-No

questions. Also, for the current study, it would have been clearer if interviews were conducted to see whether there was an underlying reason why declaratives with a question mark was chosen as a correct answer for grammatical Yes-No questions.

A standardized language proficiency test should also be conducted so that the exact proficiency level of the subjects can be determined. As noted in 5.2.1, our young learners' correct percentage was rather low, compared to Singhapreecha's (2000). It would be interesting to see if the findings of future studies will be similar to ours, as the beginning learners are clearly determined.

5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ELT

The current ELT method of introducing negative sentences before Yes-No questions is consistent with our findings. As English Yes-No questions pose a problem for the young learners in this study, it is recommended that teachers provide input in the classroom and English language resources with regard to Yes-No questions intensively.

As a number of auxiliary terms (e.g. 'do', 'be', 'have,' and modals) are used in Yes-No questions, teachers may ensure that their students have adequate exposure to these auxiliaries. By virtue of this, it is hoped that students will be able to realize that the auxiliary items occur before subjects in English Yes-No questions, which can enhance their accuracy in English expressions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
TEST ITEMS

Here is the full set of test items. Progressive Negatives appear in 1-6 and Progressive Yes-No questions in 7-12.

1. A. The woman *not is* falling into the water.
   B. The woman *is not* falling into the water.

2. A. The daughter *is not* taking her lunch to school.
   B. The daughter *not is* taking her lunch to school.

3. A. The student *not is* speaking to his new teacher.
   B. The student *is not* speaking to his new teacher.

4. A. The man *is not* breaking the floor with the hammer.
   B. The man *not is* breaking the floor with the hammer.

5. A. The girl *not is* giving a doll to her sister.
   B. The girl *is not* giving a doll to her sister.

6. A. The father *is not* driving to the football field.
   B. The father *not is* driving to the football field.

7. A. *Is the old man* falling into the river?
   B. *The old man is* falling into the river?

8. A. *The doctor is* taking his lunch to work?
   B. *Is the doctor* taking his lunch to work?

9. A. *Is the nurse* speaking to her new friend?
   B. *The nurse is* speaking to her new friend?

10. A. *Is the firefighter* breaking the wall with a chair?
    B. *The firefighter is* breaking the wall with a chair?

11. A. *The mother is* giving a mobile phone to her son?
    B. *Is the mother* giving a mobile phone to her son?

12. A. *The brother is* driving to the park?
    B. *Is the brother* driving to the park?

APPENDIX B
FILLERS

The fillers reproduced from Singhapreecha (2000)'s (2), (5), and (9), pages 158 and 159 appear in 9, 10 and 12.

1. A. Anna will come to class *tomorrow*.
   B. *Tomorrow* Anna will come to class.

2. A. *Every Saturday* Michael plays football with his friends.
   B. Michael plays football with his friends *every Saturday*.

3. A. Jane spoke to her parents on the phone *last night*.
   B. *Last night* Jane spoke to her parents on the phone.

4. A. Joe goes to the market with his mother *every weekend*.
   B. *Every weekend* Joe goes to the market with his mother.

5. A. Mary *watch* TV last night.
   B. Mary *watches* TV last night.

6. A. Before the game this morning, he *brushes* his teeth.
   B. Before the game this morning, he *brush* his teeth.

7. A. Tom *enjoys* the lesson yesterday.
   B. Tom *enjoy* the lesson yesterday.

8. A. Last Sunday Ben *go* to the cinema.
   B. Last Sunday Ben *goes* to the cinema.

9. A. The cook thinks that *he* can open a food shop. (2, p.158)
   B. The cook thinks that *him* can open a food shop.

10. A. Jane loves her son. She wants *him* to go to college. (5, p.158)
    B. Jane loves her son. She wants *he* to go to college.

11. A. Peter loves his children. He wants *they* to be strong.
    B. Peter loves his children. He wants *them* to be strong.

12. A. The man hopes that *him* will get a new computer. (9, p.159)
    B. The man hopes that *he* will get a new computer.

APPENDIX C
GRAMMATICALITY JUDGMENT TEST (FORM A)

Instructions: You will see pairs of English sentences. For each pair of sentences, there are four choices. Choose choice a. if you think only sentence A is right, choice b. if you think only sentence B is right, choice c. if you think both sentences A and B are right, and choice d. if you think both sentences A and B are wrong. **Please circle only one answer – a), b), c) or d).** You will have about 15 seconds to decide. Please do not go back to make changes on the items you have chosen. Let's practice the following pairs of sentences.

Practice Sentences:

I. A. He speaks English very well.

B. He speaks English very good.

a) Only A is right.

b) Only B is right.

c) Both A and B are right.

d) Both A and B are wrong.

II. A. Bill can speak many languages.

B. Mary believes that Bill can speak many languages.

a) Only A is right.

b) Only B is right.

c) Both A and B are right.

d) Both A and B are wrong.

Now look at the following pairs of sentences and choose the correct answer for each pair.

1. A. Is the old man falling into the river?
   B. The old man is falling into the river?

2. A. The man is not breaking the floor with the hammer.
   B. The man not is breaking the floor with the hammer.

3. A. The cook thinks that he can open a food shop.
   B. The cook thinks that him can open a food shop.

4. A. The brother is driving to the park?
   B. Is the brother driving to the park?

5. A. Anna will come to class tomorrow.
   B. Tomorrow Anna will come to class.

6. A. Peter loves his children. He wants they to be strong.
   B. Peter loves his children. He wants them to be strong.

7. A. Every Saturday Michael plays football with his friends.
   B. Michael plays football with his friends every Saturday.

8. A. The woman not is falling into the water.
   B. The woman is not falling into the water.

9. A. The mother is giving a mobile phone to her son?
   B. Is the mother giving a mobile phone to her son?

10. A. Mary watch TV last night.
    B. Mary watches TV last night.

11. A. The girl not is giving a doll to her sister.
    B. The girl is not giving a doll to her sister.

12. A. Before the game this morning, he brushes his teeth.
    B. Before the game this morning, he brush his teeth.

13. A. The student not is speaking to his new teacher.
    B. The student is not speaking to his new teacher.

14. A. Joe goes to the market with his mother every weekend.
    B. Every weekend Joe goes to the market with his mother.

15. A. The doctor is taking his lunch to work?
    B. Is the doctor taking his lunch to work?

16. A. Is the nurse speaking to her new friend?
    B. The nurse is speaking to her new friend?

17. A. Jane loves her son. She wants him to go to college.
    B. Jane loves her son. She wants he to go to college.

18. A. Tom enjoys the lesson yesterday.
    B. Tom enjoy the lesson yesterday.

19. A. Jane spoke to her parents on the phone last night.
    B. Last night Jane spoke to her parents on the phone.

20. A. The daughter is not taking her lunch to school.
    B. The daughter not is taking her lunch to school.

21. A. The father is not driving to the football field.
    B. The father not is driving to the football field.

22. A. The man hopes that him will get a new computer.
    B. The man hopes that he will get a new computer.

23. A. Last Sunday Ben go to the cinema.
    B. Last Sunday Ben goes to the cinema.

24. A. Is the firefighter breaking the wall with a chair?
    B. The firefighter is breaking the wall with a chair?

BIOGRAPHY

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