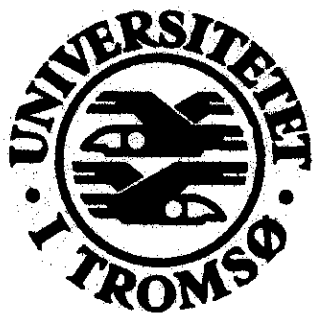
"UNLEARNING"

-On the Acquisition of Case Absorption Effects in English Passives by Native Speakers of Norwegian



By Anne Dahl

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of Tromsø
as a partial fulfillment of the degree of Cand Philol.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people for their help in making this thesis possible:

My supervisor, Marit Richardsen Westergaard, for guiding me through the last 18 months.

Ion Drew and everybody else at the Norwegian Study Centre in York, as well as Michael Cordner, Dr. McDonaldson, Dr. Walsh and Dr. Roe at the English Department, University of York, for helping me find subjets for my studies, and Holger Hagan for help registering the data.

All the subjects who took the time to participate.

Kristine, Stig, Kjetil, Geir, Asbjørn, Anne Sofie, Marianne and Hilde for proof reading, comments, and for putting up with me.

Stud.-AU HUM and stud.-AU SVF for their incredible hospitality.

And last but not least, thanks to Helge for moral and technical support, fruitful discussions, and everything else.

1 Introduction

This thesis deals with the L2 acquisition of English by Norwegian native speakers. L2 acquisition research often focuses on how language acquirers interpret the L2 input that they are exposed to, and how they acquire new linguistic items. However, in this thesis I will focus on the acquisition of the ungrammaticality of certain structures, which are grammatical in the L1 but not in the L2.

The structures that I will be focusing on are impersonal passive constructions with postverbal NPs, as illustrated in (1), and passive constructions with intransitive verbs, as in (2). These sentences are ungrammatical in English. Chomsky (1981) proposes that this is a result of passive morphology absorbing objective case in English, so that, for (1), there is no such case to be assigned to the postverbal NP *many bottles of beer*. In (2), the verb *cry* does not assign objective case, being intransitive, so that there is no case for the passive morphology to absorb. Thus, (1) has to be changed into the personal passive in (3), where the NP receives nominative case, and the objective case is free to go to the passive morphology. The verb in sentence (2), however, cannot be used in the passive voice at all.

(1) *There were drunk many bottles of beer.
(2) *It was cried a lot in England when Princess Diana died.
(3) Many bottles of beer were drunk.

Both the structures discussed in this thesis are grammatical in Norwegian. However, the options available in English, viz. personal passives and active sentences, are equally possible. Åfarli (1992) therefore proposes that Norwegian has optional case absorption, so that in sentences (4) and (5), passive morphology does not absorb case, and in (6), it does.

(4) Det ble drukket mange flasker øl.
(5) Det ble grått my i England da prinsesse Diana døde.
(6) Mange flasker øl ble drukket.

These differences between English and Norwegian makes the acquisition of the former language by native speakers of the latter interesting. I will be looking at different theories for how the distinction may be acquired.

The acquisition of the ungrammaticality of structures is a problem not frequently addressed in L2 acquisition research. Within a principles and parameters approach to L1 acquisition, researchers work with theories of why children do not try out a less restrictive option, i.e. an option generating a larger set of structures, when their L1 contains the more restricted parameter setting. One such theory is that of the Subset Principle, which is assumed to be a principle connected to UG, which tells the L1 acquirer always to adopt the more restrictive parameter setting initially, and to use the less restrictive setting if encountering positive evidence for it.

I will not be discussing the various proposals for how English children acquire the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. Since there are no reports of children producing such structures, I will merely assume that some mechanism similar to the Subset Principle operates in L1 acquisition.

What this thesis will be dealing with is the interlanguage of advanced Norwegian L2 acquirers of English. I will be looking at whether these L2 acquirers use the ungrammatical structures, i.e., whether the mechanism ruling out such structures in L1 acquisition are relevant also for L2 acquisition. If the Norwegian L2 acquirers do use such structures in English, this is an indication that whatever mechanisms guide L1 acquisition in these respects, are not present in L2 acquisition. I will then investigate whether the Norwegian L2 acquirers of English seem to assume Norwegian and English to be entirely similar in these respects, or whether they seem to be more skeptical to the structures in question in English than in Norwegian. In that case, I will be looking at factors which may cause this uncertainty, and especially at the possible role of indirect negative evidence in L2 acquisition.

In this thesis, the personal pronoun *he* will be used generally to refer to a person of whom I do not know the gender. This is not an attempt to take a stand in the ongoing debate on language and sexism; it is merely an attempt to make my thesis more readable, since the only neutral alternative entails a general use of the complex pronoun *he/she*.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Audiolingualism

Over the past 50 years or so, increasing attention has been paid to the actual process of language acquisition. Originally, this focus was a result of the desire to teach second languages (L2s) more efficiently. The traditional method of explicit grammar instruction and translation was during World War II beginning to be replaced in the USA by a new method. This new method drew heavily on the theories of behaviorist psychology where habit formation on the basis of stimulus and response played a central role. Audiolingalism, as the language theory was called, was supposed to lead to fluency in the target language within nine months. The theory assumed that second language learning is like all other kinds of learning, namely a mechanical process which is the result of experience, and is evident in changes in behavior (Ellis 1990). Although audiolinguists admitted that first language (L1) and L2 acquisition are not completely the same, the mechanisms of habit formation based on experience were assumed to be identical. The main difference between L1 and L2 acquisition, it was assumed, is that L1 acquirers have no previous language knowledge. It was thus suggested that all errors in L2 acquisition are due to interference from the learner's L1 (Ellis 1990:21-22).

Audiolingualism may be seen as part of a shift away from the traditional, philosophical focus on language as a "mirror of the mind". During the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, linguists seemed less interested in the deep mental processes involved in the production of language, and the language learner was seen more as a passive recipient of knowledge than as a producer of language (Chomsky 1986).

1.1.2 L1 acquisition

1.1.2.1 Universal Grammar

In the late 1950's, the behaviorist view of language was seriously challenged by Noam Chomsky. Chomsky describes language knowledge as much more than simply knowing a set of rules or habits which could be listed in a formal book of grammar (Chomsky 1957). He thus argues that language is far too complex a system to be learned as simple habits. Chomsky (1986:xxv) writes that: "The essence of Plato's problem was well expressed by Bertrand Russel in his later work when he raised the question: 'How comes it that human beings, whose contacts with the world are brief and personal and limited, are nevertheless able to know as much as they do know? '"

This problem – "Plato's Problem" – has become the main focus of Chomsky's work on language. The question he has sought to answer is: How can it be that all normal human children are able to acquire a full knowledge of their native language, given that they in their surroundings encounter only a small portion of the possible utterances that they will ultimately be able to produce? Chomsky's answer to this problem, which he calls the "poverty of the stimulus", is to propose that the child at the prelinguistic stage is not a linguistic "tabula rasa", but rather that the child comes to the language acquisition task with a full set of grammatical structures, a Universal Grammar (UG) (Chomsky 1986:2). UG includes rules about grammar that are universal to all human languages, e.g. phrase structure rules, and parameters that account for cross linguistic variation. An example of a parameter is the proposed pro-drop-parameter, the setting of which determines whether or not an overt subject is required. In a non-pro-drop language, like English, all sentences must have overt subjects, as in (7). In a pro-drop language, like Russian, an overt subject is possible, but not required, as shown in (8). The pro-drop parameter is an example of a parameter where one setting is more restrictive, i.e. allows for fewer sentences, than the other does.

(7) a) I bought beer.
b) *Bought beer.

(8) a) Ya kupila pivo[1]
b) Kupila pivo

UG approaches generally assume that the only available evidence for children acquiring an L1 is positive evidence, that is, clear instances of the structure to be acquired in the input. Direct negative evidence in the form of corrections and instruction is of course conceivable. However, numerous studies show that feedback from parents, caretakers, etc. does not really have an effect. Indirect negative evidence, the absence of structures in the input, is assumed to be equally irrelevant in L1 acquisition, since children do producing sentences that they have never heard before (e.g. Roca 1990). In cases like the pro-drop-parameter, the assumption that only positive evidence is relevant creates a problem, since English children will never encounter positive evidence that subjects must always be present. It has therefore been proposed that there is a principle within, or connected to, UG, which tells children always to start out with the most restrictive parameter setting, and to only use the less restrictive setting after encountering positive evidence for it. In the case of the pro-drop-parameter, this would mean that children initially assume that all sentences require an overt subject, and that they produce subjectless sentences only after encountering them in the input.

Within a UG approach, L1 acquisition is seen as a relatively simple process, consisting mainly of vocabulary learning and parameter setting (Chomsky 1986). The theory of UG is also supported by the fact that all children acquiring the same L1 are reported to have a very similar sequence of acquisition of different structures and syntactic features, regardless of the different input they may have encountered during the acquisition process (Brown 1973). The theory of UG, or Special Nativism, as it is often called, has been widely accepted within the field of L1 acquisition research over the past decades.

The UG theory is not entirely unproblematic. The theory very well accounts for the fact that children acquire their native language within a few years and from highly impoverished input, but it requires additional hypotheses to account for the fact that children during the acquisition process produce utterances that are very unlike the ones of the adult language. One example of this is the fact that children when producing their first word combinations

[1] The transcription from the Cyrillic alphabet is mine.

(sentences) typically omit all functional categories like inflection, pronouns and auxiliaries. Typical sentences at the early multiword stage are illustrated in (9) (from Radford 1992):

(9) a) Hayley draw boat
b) Jem get in

Explaining the ease and success of L1 acquisition merely by positing a full inborn grammatical system, then, is insufficient. The uniqueness of child language as opposed to adult language has led to two opposing theories within the UG framework, the Continuity Hypothesis and the Maturation Hypothesis. The Continuity theory assumes the full set of principles and parameters in UG to be available to the child from the very start, and attributes the lack of functional categories in early speech to other factors, such as memory or attentional factors, or to the fact that the actual morphology expressing these functional categories are not very salient, and thus may be acquired late. (e.g. Klima and Bellugi 1966, Bloom 1970, Pinker 1984, Hyams 1996).

Platzack (1996) proposes one version of the Continuity Hypothesis to explain why early child English is apparently different from adult English. Platzack claims that all language acquisition, both L1 and L2, is guided by the *Initial Hypothesis of Syntax (IHS).* According to this hypothesis, all parameters are initially set at their unmarked values. He assumes that IHS is part if UG. Since Chomsky (1993, 1995) assumes that overt operations are more costly than covert ones, he assumes that the mechanisms in a language forcing overt operations are the marked ones. Thus no movement is required, according to the IHS. Another aspect of the marked/unmarked distinction is the distinction between strong and weak features. Only strong features require movement, and thus according to IHS, all features are weak. Weak features need not be PF-visible, or overt, and this accounts for the apparently missing functional categories of child language.

The UG theory of maturation states that UG is an inborn system but that it only becomes available to the child with maturation. Radford (1990) has suggested that children at the age of 20-24 months only have lexical projections such as Verb Phrases, Noun Phrases, etc. This means that functional categories such as Inflection Phrases and Determiner Phrases are not present. Thus in a sentence like (10a) (from Radford 1992) not only the phonological representations but also the syntactic functional projections are missing; the projection for the

determiner *the* and the inflection *–s* if you take the sentence to have the interpretation in (10b) or the determiner *the,* the copula *is* and the progressive ending *–ing* could be missing, if you assume the interpretation in (10c).

(10) a) Baby eat cookies.
b) The baby eats cookies.
c) The baby is eating cookies.

The problem with this theory is of course explaining how children proceed from these simple structures to the full adult constructions

1.1.2.2 Alternative theories of L1 acquisition.

Theories of language acquisition have also been formulated by linguists who do not believe in an innate language faculty like UG. These theories typically emphasize an acquisition process based on semantics rather than on syntax. Schlesinger (1982) has for example argued that the development of language is closely connected with cognitive development. It has been suggested that certain syntactic structures are only acquired after the child has developed cognitive abilities that can be seen as linked to the relevant syntactic structure. The cognitive approaches then see language development as a result not of innate capacities specific to language, but as a part of the general cognitive development that children go through. In this approach, the theories typically rely on the work of Jean Piaget. Piaget (1952) describes various cognitive stages that the child goes through, and links them to the linguistic structures acquired at the same age. The prelinguistic stage, for instance, is described as a period when children have no perception of the world except in what they can directly sense or in the activities they perform on their surroundings. This stage is thus described by Piaget as the sensorimotor stage. Language only becomes necessary as the child learns the permanence of objects independently of his perception of them.

O'Grady (1997) evaluates four alternatives to UG-based theories, namely the Inductivist Approach, the Semantic Approaches, the Procedural Approach and General Nativism. All these theories assume that the human mind possesses a unique quality that makes language

acquisition possible, but they question the degree to which this quality is specifically linguistic, and especially the degree to which it is focused on syntactic categories.

1.1.2.3 The question of innateness.

Many factors can be seen as evidence for an innate language acquisition device. The poverty-of-the stimulus problem and the speed of children's first language acquisition have been mentioned. Also, during the last few centuries, many new peoples have been discovered in different parts of the world. Some of these had had no contact with other cultures previous to being "discovered", yet they all had language. And while the tools that they used were very primitive and they may have had no sophisticated number system, it seems that every language in the world has about the same complexity when it comes to expressing ideas. If language were simply a social construct, then one might wonder why all cultures seem to have developed it, and why all cultures seem to have developed it to the same extent (Pinker 1994).

Another kind of evidence comes from the assumption that all speakers of a given language end up with roughly the same grammar, which is reflected in the fact that they generally give more or less the same judgements as to what is a well-formed sentence in their language and what is not. This seems odd since no two learners are likely to encounter the same linguistic input during the acquisition process, and it is thus plausible that some innate mechanism helps shape the input into a grammar. Another indication that language is not merely a socially constructed phenomenon in a given culture is the finding of several linguistic phenomena that seem to be universal to all languages. One such universal is said to be *structure dependency,* that is, the fact that all languages seem to have the kind of phrase structure rules described earlier (Pinker 1994).

Last, but not least, of course, there is the argument that there has to be some mechanism facilitating language in the human biology, because otherwise it would be a mystery why we are the only species who have developed anything like it. One might wonder why no animals have developed anything like human language, and indeed seem unable to do so. Several attempts have been made to teach chimpanzees sign language. One such experiment was carried out by Allen and Beatrice Gardner on the chimpanzee Washoe (Gardner and Gardner

1974). Another study chimpanzee was named Nim Chimpsky, after Chomsky (Pettito and Seidenberg 1979). Not even the name seemed to help much, however. Chimpanzees have shown themselves capable of learning certain gestures and to connect them to meaning, but they seem unable to string these gestures together, that is, to form sentences (Pinker 1994). Humans, of course, are fully capable of this, whether they use spoken words or gestures. Deaf people speak sign languages all over the world, and these are natural languages like any other, with a full syntax, and sufficient to express any kind of meaning that the hearing express by verbal language.

Assuming that humans are born with some innate capacity to learn language is not, however, the same as accepting a detailed innate system like UG. The UG theory makes certain very specific predictions about the speed and success of the language acquisition process, and needs additional theories whenever one of these predictions is not fulfilled. This becomes especially evident if one considers L2 acquisition.

1.1.3 L2 acquisition

1.1.3.1 L1 and L2 acquisition – similarities and differences

The UG theory was formulated within L1 acquisition research. However, it has been discussed also by L2 acquisition researchers. Originally, the theory was used to show the difference between the invariably successful L1 acquisition and adult L2 acquisition, which has a much more variable result. It was then assumed that the reason why adult L2 acquisition is so much more laborious, and its result normally not as successful, is that only children have access to UG and adults do not. This was also supported by the fact that children also seem to be able to acquire an L2 much more effortlessly than adults (e.g. Towell and Hawkins 1994).

Some of the arguments for UG in L1 acquisition must, however, also hold for L2 acquisition. Acquiring a second language consists of much more than just learning new vocabulary, and L2 acquirers are able to acquire a syntax which can be very different from their native language, with structuring of meaning very different from what they are used to. The most striking UG argument that holds also for L2 acquisition is probably the “poverty-of-the stimulus” argument. If the input that an L1 acquirer encounters is impoverished, then that of

most L2 acquirers is even worse. Some are able to learn a second language very well without even spending time in a country where that language is actually spoken. Even immigrants living in a community where only the L2 is spoken will most often have some family and friends with whom they speak their native language. In contrast, an L1 acquirer will most likely encounter only his target language during the acquisition process. This and other similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition seem to imply that there is probably some instinct guiding L2 acquisition also.

White and Genesee (1996) have for example shown that some L2 learners of English do indeed have native-like linguistic competence. If UG theorists are right in stating that achieving native competence is impossible without the help of UG, it then follows that UG must be available also to adults. If this were the case, however, it should follow that all adults should be able to acquire an L2 as fast and as effortlessly as children acquire their L1. Numerous studies show that this is not so.

Another of the arguments for UG in L1 acquisition, the shared sequences of acquisition (e.g. Brown 1973), has proved difficult for researchers investigating the role of UG in L2 acquisition. Meisel (1997) has investigated the developmental sequences of the acquisition of negation in German and Colloquial French. When comparing L1 acquirers with native speakers of Spanish acquiring French and German as L2s, he found quite different paths of development. Clahsen & Muysken (1988) have also shown different developmental sequences in the acquisition of verb placement and inflection in L1 and L2 German.

It has been suggested that adults may have only partial access to UG, and that this partial access accounts for their variable achievement in acquisition (e.g. Bley-Vroman et al. 1988). It is, however, hard to picture exactly how this partial access would look, and why it would yield so much better results for some learners than for others. One suggestion could be that adults have access to universal grammar through their native language (Schachter 1996, Cook 1996:156). Since the principles of UG are universal to all languages, it is possible that after having acquired them in your native language, you intuitively know them to hold also for all other languages. However, this suggestion does not explain resetting of parameters. Since the parameters of UG is a part of cross-linguistic variation, L2 acquirers will obviously have to reset parameters when the settings of the target language are different from those of their native language. Furthermore, Felix (1988), in a study on native speakers of German

acquiring English as an L2, found that the majority of the subjects had correct intuitions about several UG principles that are manifest in English but not in German. If UG were only accessible through the L1, one would expect L2 acquirers to make mistakes with parameter settings when and only when their L1 and the target L2 have parameters set at different values or when the native language does not show overt evidence of some UG principle. This does not invariably seem to be the case, according to studies such as that by Felix, and explaining L2 acquisition solely by assuming access to UG thus becomes difficult.

There are some obvious differences between L1 and L2 acquisition which are indisputably present whether we assume that L2 acquirers have access to UG or not. One of this is that the L2 acquirer already holds linguistic knowledge through his L1. The role of transfer from the L1 is one of the crucial questions in L2 acquisition research. As mentioned earlier, in the days of behaviorism transfer was thought of as interference, and seen as the sole source of errors in the L2. This view has changed radically over the past decades. Within generativism, language transfer is actually often argued to facilitate language acquisition (e.g. Gass and Selinker 1992).

Another difference is that in L2 acquisition, negative evidence is often present, through instruction or through corrections from the environment. It is also argued that, unlike in L1 acquisition, negative evidence may actually play a role in L2 acquisition (e.g. Long 1983).

Yet another difference between L1 and L2 acquisition is the fact that L2 acquisition is not necessarily a successful process. The development of the interlanguage of L2 acquirers is known often to stop developing short of the linguistic competence of a native speaker, regardless of further exposure to the target language. This phenomenon of fossilization is not present in all L2 acquirers. Another characteristic of L2 acquisition is that, unlike in L1 acquisition, there are significant differences in the individual achievements of L2 acquirers.

In this thesis, the term “L2 acquisition” is used primarily for adult L2 acquisition. As mentioned earlier, it seems that children acquire an L2 much more effortlessly than do adults. For this reason a “critical period” for language acquisition has been proposed, suggesting that there is some biological characteristic in humans that makes language acquisition more laborious after a certain age. The exact age defining this period has been debated, and it has even been suggested that there might be several critical periods for the acquisition of different

aspects of language. The most common hypothesis is that the critical period, at least for the acquisition of syntax, ends around the onset of puberty (e.g. Long 1990).

1.1.3.2 Interlanguage

As the insight into L2 acquisition began to increase, Selinker (1972) formulated the Interlanguage Theory. This theory states that the L2 acquirer constructs a system of abstract linguistic rules that underlies his L2 production and comprehension. This grammatical system, or *interlanguage,* is a system in its own right and must be studied as such, not only as an imperfect, incomplete version of the native grammar of the target language.

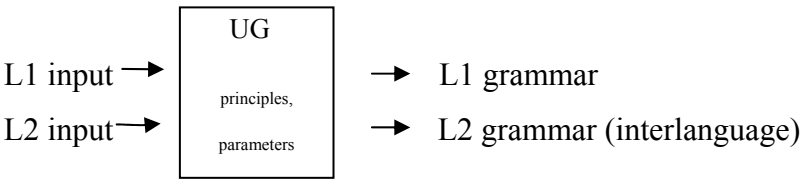
Interlanguage theory does not claim that language transfer from the L1 may not be relevant, merely that it is not a sufficient explanation for the process of L2 acquisition. Several characteristics of interlanguage (IL) have been proposed: ILs are like natural languages, they contain a system of linguistic rules and general constraints that are the same as those that hold for natural languages. Unlike other natural languages, however, interlanguage grammars are permeable, meaning that they are incomplete and unstable, and that they are revised by exposure to new linguistic forms. The interlanguage is also transitional in that each stage of acquisition is a step towards the next stage. ILs are to a much greater extent than native grammars variable, and they reflect the operation of communication strategies. Also, unlike the grammars of L1 acquirers, ILs may fossilize at a point short of the grammatical systems of the native grammar (Ellis 1990:51-52). McLaughlin (1987) comments that although interlanguage theory and the proposed characteristics of IL have changed considerably over the years, the notion that ILs are hypothesis testing grammars remains at the core. This means that when constructing an interlanguage, what the L2 acquirer is actually doing is formulate hypotheses about the L2 which he then tests against the available data, the input. The interlanguage is then revised on the basis of these data.

1.1.3.3 Approaches to L2 acquisition

1.1.3.3.1 UG approaches

There is no single theory of how UG may play a part in the acquisition of an L2. The most radical of the UG theories will argue that L2 acquisition is no different from L1 acquisition, and that input and innate linguistic principles are the only relevant factors also in L2 acquisition. This approach is represented in the model in (11), where UG is represented as a sort of "black box" processing the input. (This model is taken from Cook 1996).

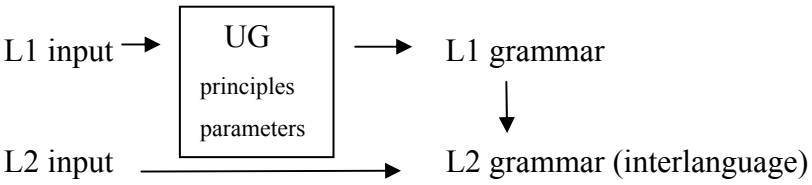
(11)



This model assumes that UG is the only factor involved in the analysis of the interlanguage. This is compatible with the suggestion that L2 acquirers are "conservative", that is, that they are sensitive to the Subset Principle, and that they thus always start out with the most restricted setting of a given parameter. However, studies show that L2 acquirers transfer structures from their L1 and that they are not necessarily conservative (e.g. Izumi and Lakshmanan 1998). It has therefore been proposed that L2 acquirers may have access to UG but not to the Subset Principle. We might then ask how the L2 acquirer may set their parameters in those instances where there is no positive evidence, as with the structures studied in this thesis. If we assume that UG is the only relevant factor in L1 and L2 acquisition alike, but that only L1 acquirers have access to the Subset Principle, then we have no way of predicting which parameter setting L2 acquirers will adopt.

Another theory stating that UG plays a crucial role in L2 acquisition is represented in (12). According to this theory, UG is supplemented by the previous linguistic knowledge of the L1 (This model is also taken from Cook 1996). This gives an account of parameter setting, but it implies that the parameter setting adopted by the L2 acquirer will be that of the L1 when there is no evidence to the contrary.

(12)



1.1.3.3.2 Other approaches

Other models of L2 acquisition that do not see UG as relevant have been constructed. Some of these look at language universals without reference to UG. Whereas the universal principles of UG are proposed on theoretical grounds, there is another type of universals, typological universals, that are proposed on the basis of their occurrence across a wide selection of languages. Four types of universals are proposed. Absolute universals hold for all languages with no exceptions, whereas universal tendencies hold for most, but not all languages. Both these types of universals may be implicational or non-implicational. Implicational universals are universals where one feature of a language implies another feature (if *p* then *q*). Non-implicational universals make no such reference to a relationship between the features of language. Typologists also define markedness differently from the UG approaches. Whereas markedness within a generative framework is generally defined theoretically looking at learnability, typological markedness is defined in terms of concepts like simplicity versus complexity, frequency and distribution. With implicational universals, the feature implied by another structure (*q*) is assumed to be unmarked relative to the feature implying the other feature (*p*). In terms of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, I assume that these structures will be seen as the marked structures, since their presence also implies the presence of personal passives with the patient NP as subject, which are then assumed to be unmarked. This is illustrated in (13).

(13) a) If the presence of *p* implies the presence of *q* then *q* is unmarked relative to *p*.
b) If the presence of impersonal passives imply the presence of personal passives, then personal passives are unmarked relative to impersonal passives.

Eckman (1977) has used typological universals and markedness in an attempt to isolate the areas of L2 acquisition where transfer is predicted in his Markedness Differential Hypothesis. This hypothesis states that those areas of the target language which are more marked than those of the native language will be difficult (i. e. transfer will occur), that the degree of difficulty will correspond to the relative degree of markedness, and that those areas of the target language that are unmarked relative to the native language will not be difficult.

The study of L2 acquisition is the study of interlanguage. The question is not only whether or not UG is available, but also what kinds of other factors may be relevant. Such questions deal with the role of transfer, of other cognitive processes, of conscious learning strategies, and of course, the role of innate, language-specific learning mechanisms.

One of the first attempts to construct a comprehensive theory of L2 acquisition focusing on the processing of linguistic input was made by Krashen (1981) with his Monitor Model. Krashen makes the distinction between "learned" and "acquired" knowledge, the former being the kind of formal rules of grammar encountered in formal instruction. The only use for learned knowledge, according to Krashen, is for monitoring one's output, whereby the language acquirer can correct himself. The output is, of course, a result of the acquired knowledge, which Krashen assumed to be acquired only by comprehensible input at the level above the language acquirer's current interlanguage (i+1), when the affective filter of the language acquirer is low (i. e. when the language acquirer is both motivated and confident).

The Monitor Model has been widely criticized and is today more or less discarded. Among the main points of criticism was the lack of explanatory value in the model. Furthermore, the assumption that explicit knowledge gained from formal instruction can never directly lead to acquisition has been seriously questioned. However, several of the main points of the Monitor Model are widely accepted. Among these are the importance of exposure to the target language and opportunities for production, the facilitating effects of monitoring one's production, and the importance of a low affective filter, that is, of being comfortable and confident in the acquisition process.

Extensive research has been conducted on L2 acquisition, both investigating the role of UG and trying to identify other relevant factors. One problem with much of this research is that it typically focuses on the early stages of acquisition. The role of comprehensible input for

example becomes largely irrelevant for advanced learners who generally understand the L2 perfectly and who are now mainly acquiring the finer points of the target language. Functionalists like Givon (1979) argue that L2 acquirers initially rely heavily on pragmatics rather than syntax in order to make their target language output comprehensible. The problem, however, is to explain how this reliance on pragmatics becomes less important as the acquirer becomes more advanced. Klein and Perdue (1992) argue that the main driving force behind this shift is "the subjective need to sound and to be like the social environment". Such a desire to sound like native speakers of the target language can hardly be said to be responsible for all L2 acquisition of syntax, but it may very well be relevant at more advanced stages of L2 acquisition. The problem, however, is to identify the strategies used to accomplish this.

Another question is that of the organization of the interlanguage in advanced learners. The question is whether L2 acquirers whose performance is native-like have indeed succeeded in restructuring their interlanguage so that it has become identical to a native grammar of the target language, or whether they are relying on different rules and strategies that make their actual performance, rather than their competence, native-like. Linked to this is the question of individual learner differences. The majority of L2 acquirers never attain a native-like proficiency in the target language. The question is what differences in the strategies used for language acquisition exist among adult L2 acquirers.

In short, then, there are problems with assuming that the process of L2 acquisition is identical to that of L1 acquisition. Observable facts like individual learner differences and the common lack of success in the acquisition process suggest that whether or not you assume UG to play a part, a series of other factors will also have to be considered for L2 acquisition.

In this paper, I will present studies investigating the interlanguage of advanced Norwegian acquirers of English. By looking both at the acquirers linguistic competence and their performance, my aim is to discover whether the apparent near-native performance of advanced L2 acquirers is the result of a system similar to that of a native speaker, or if the interlanguage is qualitatively different from a native speaker's internal grammar. In doing this, I will, as already mentioned, be focusing on a subtle difference in English and Norwegian passive constructions, This will be described in more detail in section 1.2.

1.2 Passives

1.2.1 Analyses of the passive phenomenon

The passive phenomenon has been analyzed differently by different linguists. Before we discuss the different analyses, it might be useful to take a brief look at some subtheories of grammar that are relevant to the following discussion.

1.2.1.1 Theta theory and case theory

One subsystem of grammar which is relevant to passives is theta theory. This theory deals with the thematic roles assigned to the different NPs in a clause. It is assumed that the thematic role of AGENT is assigned to the subject position not by the verb alone, but by the entire verb-complement structure. To the object position, the thematic role PATIENT is assigned by the verb. Only transitive verbs assign this role. Chomsky (1981) describes the Theta-criterion as in (14):

(14) Each argument bears one and only one theta-role, and each theta-role is assigned to one and only one argument.

It is also assumed that an argument is assigned a theta-role by virtue of the theta-position that it or its trace occupies. (Chomsky 1981:36).

Another important subsystem of grammar is case theory. Many languages of the world have a system of distinct morphology on NPs depending on the role that they play in a sentence. German for instance has distinct morphology for accusative case, used for the direct object and for NPs following certain prepositions, and another set for the dative, used for indirect objects and certain other prepositions. The subject is always nominative, and possessive can be indicated by use of genitive case morphology. Many languages use far more than these four cases in order to express relations within a clause.

Norwegian and English are very similar with respect to case morphology. With the exception of pronouns, which have alternations such as *he* for the subject and *him* for objects, the only

trace of case morphology in English is the possessive *–s* of the genitive case. Norwegian also has the pronoun alternation to some extent, slightly depending on which dialect or written standard you look at. The genitive *–s* is frequent in the written standard Bokmål, but only has very restricted use in the written standard Nynorsk. Aside from a very few Norwegian dialects that actually show more traces of case morphology, Norwegian and English thus seem to be very similar in the fact that they basically have no case morphology on nouns.

This, however, does not mean that there is no case in these languages. Case features are assumed to be part of the intristic grammatical features of phrases in any natural language (Radford 1997). The Case Filter can be described as in (15) (Stowell 1981)[2]:

(15) *N, where N has no case.

In languages like Norwegian and English, case is assumed to be abstract on NPs, that is, case features are present but there is no overt case morphology.

1.2.1.2 Chomsky's analysis of the passive phenomenon

Consider the following sentence pairs:

(16) a) Mary hit the boy.
b) The boy was hit (by Mary).
c) Americans love hamburgers.
d) Hamburgers are loved by Americans.

What these sentences show is the active/passive alternation, a phenomenon presumably present in some form in all human languages (Chomsky 1981). Traditionally, the focus when describing passives has been on the process in which the object of an active sentence changes into the subject of the corresponding passive.

---

[2] In recent linguistic theory, NPs are assumed to have case features that must be checked against the case features of another element. In this thesis, I will be using the terminology of Chomsky (1981), where verbs and prepositions are assumed to *assign* case to the NP. The distinction between these two analyses has no consequences for my argument.

In order to capture the essence of the passive phenomenon, the following rule has thus been suggested (taken from Åfarli 1992:7):

(17) Passive:
(SUBJ) → Ø/(OBL$_{AG)}$[3]
(OBJ) → (SUBJ)

However, numerous examples of passive sentences can be thought of that do not conform to this rule, as shown in (18):

(18) a) It was believed that the conclusion was false.
b) John was believed to be stupid.
c) The bed was slept in.

In (18a), there is no postverbal NP that can be moved. The postverbal element is a clause, which can remain in postverbal position since English clauses do not take case (Stowell 1981). It remains in the same place as it would in the active counterpart, and an expletive subject is inserted instead of the active subject. In (18b) the moved element is not an object but rather the subject of the postverbal, embedded clause. The moved element in (18c) is also not an object of the verb; rather, it is a part of a PP. It seems, then, that a revision of the traditional analysis is in order.

Chomsky (1981) notes that all languages seem to have devices for suppressing the subject, but shows that these devices differ considerably both cross-linguistically and within one single language. He agrees with the traditional view in that in the majority of passives, the subject seems to originate in postverbal position in D-structure, as in (19):

[3] By this is meant that the agent, i.e. the subject of the corresponding active sentence, can either be left out, or be included as an oblique (prepositional) phrase.

(19) A donkey was beaten.
D-structure: (_ was beaten a donkey)

However, Chomsky points out that this is not a property of all passive constructions. Movement, then, is not necessarily a part of passive formation, although Chomsky proposes that movement and the assumption of a new grammatical function are the core case of the passive phenomenon, and he suggests that a language will only have passive morphology if this core case is present (Chomsky 1981:126).

In order to account for the frequent movement of the postverbal NP, as well as for other aspects of passives, Chomsky proposes two crucial properties of the passive (Chomsky 1981:124). This means that in D-structure, no Theta role is assigned to the subject position, and non-arguments can thus fill this position, as in (21). Examples like (22) however are ungrammatical because of (20b), since the NP *a car* is the only NP in the VP and thus cannot receive case.

(20) a) [NP,S] does not receive a Theta role
b) [NP,VP] does not receive case within VP, for some choice of NP in VP[4].

(21) It was believed that the conclusion was false.

(22) *There was stolen a car.

Chomsky proposes that the two principles in (20) are interdependent. He suggests that one characteristic of passive morphology is that it "absorbs" case. This means that one NP in VP must receive case from some external grammatical function. This grammatical function can only be subject, and the NP thus has to move to subject position. However, the moved NP

[4] Chomsky does not elaborate on the suggestion that case is absorbed *for some choice of NP in VP*. However, in double object passives, such as in (i), only the direct object can be fronted in English, as in (ii). Fronting of the direct object in such structures is ungrammatical, as illustrated in (iii). It thus seems that it is not always the direct object which loses its case due to case absorption. The reasons for this variation will not be discussed here.
(i) I gave Mary a present.
(ii) Mary was given a present.
(iii) *A present was given Mary.

receives a Theta role through its trace in object position. If it was to assume a Theta role in subject position also this would violate the Theta-criterion, and it thus follows that subjects cannot be assigned Theta roles in passive constructions. This assumption is supported by the fact that non-arguments are allowed in subject position. The theory also implies that in passives where there is no NP requiring case within the VP, no movement is necessary, as in (21).

Thus, the basic property of passives in Chomsky's analysis is that the passive verb does not assign postverbal case to some choice of NP in VP. The other properties of passives essentially follow from this property.

There are several problems with Chomsky's analysis. Åfarli (1992) has pointed out three major problems. In passives, the Theta role assigned to the subject in the active counterpart never completely disappears; it is understood in the passive sentence. This can be illustrated by the sentence pair in (23) (from Åfarli 1992). The active sentence in (23a) is ungrammatical because there is no real agent in it; a stone is not assumed to be able to perform an action for a purpose. The passive counterpart in (23b), however, is grammatical because there is an understood agent phrase so that the meaning of the sentence is something like (24).

(23) a)* The stone rolls onto the road to stop the traffic
b) The stone is rolled onto the road to stop the traffic.

(24) The stone is rolled onto the road by the police...

Åfarli's claim is thus that even where this agent phrase, which would have been the subject NP of the grammatical active counterpart, is missing, it is still in some sense understood. Chomsky's analysis of passives gives no explanation for this.

The next point of criticism is that Chomsky's account establishes no organic link between passive morphology and the dethematization of the subject position. (Åfarli 1992:23). Chomsky proposes that the postverbal NP must move to subject position in order to receive case, and dethematization is stipulated just in order to make this possible without violating the Theta-criterion. However, no property of passive morphology is suggested that would make dethematization probable.

The third point of criticism which Åfarli points out is the most serious one, and the one which has the greatest relevance for my purpose. In Chomsky's analysis, case absorption is taken to be a basic, possibly even universal, characteristic of passives. This would mean that impersonal passives of transitive verbs as in (25) (from Åfarli 1992) should be universally ungrammatical, since the postverbal NP cannot receive case. However, many languages do have such passives, among them Norwegian, as shown in (26) (from Åfarli 1992).

(25) *There was bought a car.
(26) Det ble kjøpt en bil.[5]

1.2.1.3 Åfarli's analysis

The idea of Åfarli's analysis is that the passive morpheme is an argument of the verb, or that the addition of passive morphology to a verb entails the addition of a verb-internal argument to that verb. This position must, according to this analysis, be the external role normally assigned to the subject position. Thus, the subject position becomes Theta-free, and a possible landing site for NP-movement.

Åfarli proposes an abstract item PASS. He suggests that this item is not necessarily the passive morpheme, yet it is closely related to passive morphology (Åfarli 1992:32-35). If PASS is an argument of the verb, then it follows that it must receive a Theta role. In (11) it was illustrated that it is the external Theta role of the active sentence which is understood in passives. However, it is not obvious that this should be the Theta role received by PASS, since the passive morpheme never occurs in subject position, and since PASS is situated to the right of the verb. It is also not obvious that PASS should be able to receive a Theta role from the verb at all, since PASS is a part of the verb and Theta role assignment normally does not take place inside words (Åfarli 1992).

---

[5] The reason why there is a slight difference between Åfarli's sentence and mine is that he uses the Norwegian written standard Nynorsk. I will be using the written standard Bokmål, and for the sake of uniformity I have changed Åfarli's sentence into this standard. The difference in this sentence is a matter of vocabulary and morphology rather than of syntax.

PASS , in Åfarli's analysis, is affixed to a verb by means of adjunction in the syntax. This means that it is not added to a verb by application of morphological rules, but rather by syntactic rules. Åfarli thus assumes that Theta role assignment is allowed inside words formed by syntactic rules (Åfarli 1992:42).

Åfarli furthermore proposes that the Theta role that PASS receives is necessarily the external role assigned by the verb. Åfarli proposes that the constituent receiving an external Theta role must be adjoined to the maximal projection that assigns this role, or to the head. This assumption is consistent both with the observation that PASS is adjoined to the verb and receives the external role, and with the proposal that the subject, which normally receives the external role, is adjoined to VP. PASS cannot be assigned the internal Theta role, because PASS cannot occur in the structural position required for assignment of the internal role, PASS being adjoined in the syntax (Åfarli 1992:42-43).

In order to explain why impersonal passives are generally ungrammatical in English when they are frequent in Norwegian, Åfarli suggests that case absorption is not a universal principle but rather one setting of a parameter which may be described as in (27) (from Åfarli 1992):

(27) a) +/- PASS must receive (abstract case).
b) English: PASS must receive abstract case.
Norwegian: PASS need not receive abstract case.

Given that case assignment, unlike Theta role assignment, does not have different assignment directions word internally and word externally, this proposal would imply that PASS is always assigned postverbal case in English, whereas in Norwegian postverbal case may remain free to go to a postverbal NP. Movement of the postverbal NP thus becomes obligatory in English transitive passives in order for the NP to receive case, but not in Norwegian ones, where an expletive subject can be inserted in order to provide the clause with a subject. This accounts for the following contrasts:

(28) a) Det ble sett en mann.
b) *There was seen a man.

c) En mann ble sett.

d) A man was seen.

e) Det ble antatt at konklusjonen var feil.

f) It was assumed that the conclusion was false.

g) Det ble sunget.

h) *It was sung.

Sentence b) is ungrammatical because there is a postverbal NP requiring the case that is being absorbed by PASS. The postverbal NP thus has to move to subject position as in d) in order to receive case. Sentence f) is grammatical because the postverbal argument is not an NP but a clause which does not require case. Movement thus becomes optional. Sentence h) is ungrammatical since *sung* is an intransitive verb which cannot assign the postverbal case required by PASS. All the Norwegian sentences are grammatical, simply because in Norwegian case assignment to PASS is optional.

Åfarli's analysis does not assume case absorption to be neither basic nor universal to passives. Case absorption does, for instance, not take place in Norwegian passives. Thus nothing seems to force movement of the postverbal NP to subject position. Movement is however common in order to provide the clause with a subject. Dethematization of the subject position, then, is taken as the basic property of passives. Thus we can explain why every personal passive has an impersonal counterpart in Norwegian.[6]

Åfarli's analysis also explains why the active, external Theta role is always understood and also has syntactic significance in the passive, since PASS is assumed to have the properties of this role. This analysis also establishes a link between passive morphology and dethematization of the subject position. If PASS must receive the external Theta role, then that is why the subject cannot. Since dethematization, not case absorption, is taken to be the basic property of passives, then impersonal passives are in fact predicted right away.

[6] The only limitation on Norwegian impersonal passives comes from the Definiteness Effect, which states that the postverbal NP in impersonal passives must be indefinite.

1.2.2 Related issues

There are areas other than passives where case assignment apparently works differently in Norwegian and English. Consider the sentence pair in (29):

(29) a) * Many newspapers wrote about that prince Edward did not kiss his bride at the wedding.
b) Mange aviser skrev om at prins Edward ikke kysset bruden i bryllupet.

To have a preposition followed by a clause is ungrammatical in English. According to Stockwell (1981) the reason for this might be that prepositions inherently assign case, or, following more recent theory, they have case features that need to be checked. Since clauses do not have case features, such constructions become impossible. This theory is supported by the very similar sentences that are grammatical in English.

(30) a) Many newspapers wrote about the fact that prince Edward did not kiss his bride at the wedding.
b) Many newspapers noted that prince Edward did not kiss his bride at the wedding.
c) Many newspapers noted on the bride's beautiful gown.

In (30a) the problem of the case filter violation is solved by inserting the NP *the fact* between the preposition and the clause. Thus the preposition can assign case to the NP and the clause is no longer in a case-marked position. In (30b), the problem is solved by using a verb that does not need a preposition. English has many such verbs which may appear with or without a preposition. In (30c) the preposition is necessary in order to assign case to the NP *the bride's beautiful gown.*

Norwegian, in contrast, allows for prepositions followed by clauses, as seen in (29b). Apparently, there is some difference between English and Norwegian with respect to case assignment also in sentences other than passives. One possible solution is that clauses in Norwegian actually do receive case. This assumption would also make Åfarli's account of passives simpler. Instead of positing that PASS in Norwegian may assign case, such as in impersonal passives with a postverbal NP, and may absorb case, as in impersonal passives

with a postverbal clause, one might suggest that PASS in Norwegian always assigns case. The rule outlined by Åfarli in (27b) above would then be modified as in (31):

(31) English: PASS must receive case.
Norwegian: PASS cannot receive case.

The obvious problem with this analysis is that Norwegian also allows for personal passives. The question then is what happens to the case assigned by the verb in these structures. Sobin (1985) shows that in Ukrainian, the NP which is fronted in personal passives actually bears accusative case in some instances. We could suggest that this is the case also for Norwegian, since NPs have no overt case morphology in Norwegian, so that we cannot readily tell their case. However, with passives where the NP is definite, Norwegian has obligatory fronting because of the Definiteness Effect. In such sentences, when the NP is a pronoun, we clearly see that the case of the NP is nominative, just like in English. This is illustrated in (32). In the grammatical sentences (32a) and (32c), the noun bears nominative case, whereas in (32b) and (32d), the pronoun has accusative case, and the sentences are ungrammatical. Thus, Åfarli's proposal that Norwegian has optional case absorption after all seems to be the most plausible one.

(32) a) Hun ble slått i ansiktet.
b)*Henne ble slått i ansiktet.
c) She was hit in the face.
d)*Her was hit in the face.

In studying the acquisition of case absorption effects I also need to make sure that the answers given by the subjects are not influenced by factors other than what I am testing. It is a known fact that Norwegians are sometimes confused by the difference between the expletive *there* and *it*, both translated *det* in Norwegian. It is also conceivable that some subjects might think that impersonal passives are always ungrammatical in English, independently of case theory. I will therefore test the subjects on active *it/there* sentences as well as on a construction very similar to the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs but which is grammatical in English as well as in Norwegian, namely impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, of which we saw examples in (28e-f).

1.2.3 Theoretical implications

For the study of language acquisition, Åfarli's analysis is interesting. Passive constructions in Norwegian and English are in other respects very similar. It thus follows that they are not paid much attention to in English classes in Norway, and I think it is safe to assume that very few, if any, Norwegian learners of English have been made explicitly aware of the distinction. Norwegian L2 learners of English will of course never encounter positive evidence of the distinction, given that the English system is more restrictive than the Norwegian one. Within a UG framework, it must thus be assumed that if Norwegian learners of English have acquired the distinction between English and Norwegian passive, they must have access to UG, and on this basis somehow have been able to reset the relevant parameter.

There are two possible ways that this could be accounted for. One is to propose that the case absorption parameter is a distinct one which has to be set individually. This suggestion also requires the assumption that L2 learners are conservative in the same way as L1 acquirers are assumed to be, i.e. that they have access to the Subset Principle discussed in chapter 1. It is otherwise difficult to imagine how native speakers of Norwegian could proceed from the less restrictive parameter setting for Norwegian passives to the English setting. A problem with this suggestion, however, is that within the UG framework, one seeks to find as few parameters as possible. Language acquisition would not be a possible process if there were too many parameters to be set, and the difference in Norwegian and English passives being very subtle, a distinct parameter for this variation would suggest a vast number of other parameters for other cross-linguistic differences.

Another way to account for the distinction between Norwegian and English passives in terms of parameters is to assume that linguistic features cluster. This would mean that the case absorption parameter is only a part of a larger parameter, where positive evidence for one part of the parameter would lead to the acquisition of all its features. The problem with this theory is that English and Norwegian are very similar with respect to both passive constructions and case assignment. It is thus hard to picture a larger parameter containing some other distinction between the two languages, where Norwegian learners would encounter positive evidence of the distinction in the English input and thus be able to reset the case absorption parameter.

It is, of course, possible to look for factors other than UG that account for the acquisition of case absorption both for L1 and L2 acquisition. If it is the case that L2 acquirers seem indeed to have acquired case absorption, then one has to look for other processes or strategies by which this may have taken place.

Should it turn out that Norwegian learners of English do not hold correct intuitions about the passive distinction in the two languages, the picture of course becomes very different. In that case, one plausible suggestion within a UG framework would be the traditional view that adult L2 learners are not guided by UG. Another suggestion could be that they have access to UG through their native language only, and that they are thus only able to acquire structures derived from the universal principles of UG or by an identical parameter setting in their native language and the target language. If one is not to assume that UG is a factor in L1 acquisition, then the problem is of course pointing out what factors might make the acquisition of case absorption possible for L1 acquirers but not for L2 learners.

2 The acquisition of Case Absorption Effects

2.1 A theory of learnability

For the acquisition of case absorption effects, i.e. the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs by Norwegian acquirers of English, several hypotheses are possible. I will focus on four such possible hypotheses:

(1) L2 acquirers, like L1 acquirers, are conservative, and Norwegian L2 acquirers of English start out assuming that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are ungrammatical, regardless of their L1.
(2) L2 acquirers are not conservative, and since they encounter no positive evidence telling them that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, Norwegian acquirers of English will assume that these structures are grammatical in English just like in Norwegian.
(3) L2 acquirers are not conservative, and Norwegian L2 acquirers of English initially assume that impersonal passives and with intransitive verbs are grammatical in English. However, on the basis of cues in the input, they eventually reset their parameter from the Norwegian to the English setting.
(4) L2 acquirers are not conservative, and Norwegian L2 acquirers of English initially assume that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs are grammatical also in English. However, L2 acquirers may, especially at more advanced stages, be sensitive to indirect negative evidence, i.e. the absence of certain structures in the input. Advanced Norwegian acquirers of English may therefore have an intuition that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are ungrammatical in English, without necessarily resetting the case absorption parameter.

2.1.1 Markedness

If we assume that Norwegian L2 acquirers do acquire the difference between English and Norwegian passives one explanation could be to assume that it had to do with markedness

relations. We could, for instance, use the theory of the conservative language acquirer mentioned in chapter 1. This hypothesis has been investigated by e.g. White (1989).

For L1 acquisition, the theory of the conservative language learner would, for the structures that I am studying, mean that the L1 acquirer assumes that both impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitive verbs are ungrammatical until they encounter positive evidence for them. In Norwegian the child does encounter such evidence, and acquires the structures, whereas English children never hear them and thus never begin to use them.

Within generative theory, it is common to distinguish between marked and unmarked structures of language, and it is assumed that the unmarked structures are the ones that the L1 acquirer initially assumes to hold for the language being acquired. Marked structures are not used until positive evidence is encountered. For the structures that I am studying, this would mean that the English setting of the proposed case absorption parameter is the unmarked one, and that the Norwegian setting is marked, so that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs are not used until such structures are encountered in the input.

Other researchers (i.e. Platzack 1996) assume that the unmarked setting is the setting which requires no movement. This would mean that impersonal passives are in fact the unmarked structures, and that personal passives are marked. This would mean that children should initially assume only impersonal passives to be grammatical, and produce personal passives only after encountering them in the input. This approach not only faces problems with the fact that English children are not reported to use impersonal passives initially. Even if they did, another theory would be needed to explain why they, when encountering personal passives, abandon the use of impersonal passives entirely, whereas Norwegian children continue to produce both structures.

Typological markedness, as defined by Eckman (1977), would of course also imply that the English setting is the unmarked one, and the Norwegian setting the marked one, as argued in chapter 1. Again, this does not explain L2 acquisition of the unmarked setting when the L1 has the marked one, unless we assume L2 acquirers to be conservative.

However, studies like Izumi & Lakshmanan (1998) indicate that L2 acquirers are not conservative, and that they may initially assume that all the structures of their L1 are possible also in the L2. This is indeed also the conclusion of White's article.

There is evidence that Norwegian L2 acquirers of English initially use impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. I have a few examples from the natural production in English of such acquirers. The sentences below are all taken from the exam papers of basic level students of English at the University of Bergen in the spring of 1998:

(5) It should be noted that there is made no distinction between long and short vowels in SSE.
(6) In this example there is used a perception verb to illustrate...
(7) Lately there has been discovered several prints.

With the sentence in (5), the student had first fronted the NP, thus producing a grammatical sentence, but had then corrected himself into ungrammaticality. It is very possible that this is an example of the use of learned rules, since one of the few rules that English basic level students have probably learned which is relevant to these structures is the principle of end weight. This principle is stated in one of the basic level linguistics books as follows: *There is a tendency to place relatively long and heavy elements towards the end of the sentence*. (Johansson and Lysvåg 1987:301). By using an impersonal passive with existential *there* as the grammatical subject, the relatively long and heavy NP is indeed kept at the end of the sentence.

It seems then that hypothesis 1 does not hold; unlike L1 acquirers, L2 acquirers may start out assuming that the less restrictive parameter setting is the correct one for the L2, at least when it is in the L1.

Within a generative framework, the kind of evidence normally seen as relevant for language acquisition is positive evidence. Language acquisition is assumed to take place on structures and elements encountered in the target language, not by those not encountered. Direct negative evidence in the form of corrections has been shown in several studies not to play a significant role in L1 acquisition. Indirect negative evidence, i. e. the very absence of certain structures in the language is generally assumed to be equally irrelevant. As White (1989)

points out in the case of L1 acquisition: "We would need a theory which would explain why children notice the non-occurrence of some sentence types but not of others." In other words, since children do produce structures that they have never heard before, both grammatical and ungrammatical ones, it seems odd to assume that they avoid some structures on the sole base of never having encountered them. If we are to assume that the process of L2 acquisition theory is more or less identical to that of L1 acquisition, then these arguments must hold also here.

According to generative theory, an English acquirer of Norwegian would then have no particular problem acquiring the less restricted use of impersonal passives in Norwegian. All he would need would be to encounter impersonal passives with postverbal NPs enough times to acquire it. The same would be true for passivized intransitive verbs. A Norwegian learner of English, however, should have a problem. He will never encounter any positive evidence of the difference in Norwegian and English passives, since all the structures that he encounters in English are also grammatical in Norwegian. If the studies in this thesis should show that Norwegian L2 acquirers of English indiscriminately use impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs in English, this would confirm Hypothesis 2.

If, however, my studies show that Norwegian L2 acquirers of English reject impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with passivized intransitive verbs significantly more often than other (grammatical) structures in English, then this would indicate that they are in the process of acquiring the ungrammaticality of such sentences in English, and thus also possibly that they are in the process of acquiring case absorption. This could be an indication that either Hypothesis 3 about a late parameter resetting, or Hypothesis 4 about the relevance of indirect negative evidence holds true.

2.1.2 Methodology

Grammaticality judgment tests have regularly been used in second language acquisition research as well as in L1 acquisition research. Lately, the reliability of such tests in L2 acquisition research has been questioned. Davies and Kaplan (1998) show that the strategies used for grammaticality judgments in a second language are not the same as in a first language. Both L2 learners and native speakers are known to use the same three strategies

when judging grammaticality. They try to decide whether the sentence "feels" right, they look for the meaning of the sentence, they try to fix the sentence if it seems odd and they use learned rules. However, L2 acquirers are in addition reported to use the strategies translation, analogy and guessing.

Mandell (1999), on the other hand, argues that his study shows that grammaticality judgment tests provide reliable results. In this study he compares the subjects' results on a classical grammaticality judgment test and a different test with what he calls dehydrated sentences. These are strings of uninflected words which the subjects are asked to combine into sentences. His subjects were L2 acquirers of Spanish, and an example of his dehydrated sentences is given in (8):

(8) Jaime / visitar / el laboratorio / manana

Comparing the results of these two tasks, he found a strong correlation between the subjects' grammaticality judgments and their performance with the dehydrated sentences.

The problem is that in many cases, grammaticality judgment tests are more or less the only option for testing certain structures. Other methods are of course conceivable in my case; a translation task was one option that I did use. However, this kind of test takes longer for the subjects to complete, which makes it less practical. In addition, it is not clear that the translation study is necessarily entirely reliable in my case. The impersonal passive construction is a relatively rare one, in Norwegian as well as in English, and it might be that many subjects would rephrase such sentences just to be on the safe side. Thus I would not find out whether they actually thought they were ungrammatical. Other kinds of normally more reliable tests have the same problem. Spontaneous speech, which is generally considered the most reliable source of information, rarely contains impersonal passives. Thus, if the spontaneous speech of the subjects was recorded, and none of the subjects used any impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, this would not necessarily mean that they thought they were ungrammatical. The same problem applies to different kinds of elicited responses; in order to be able to say something useful about the subjects' feelings about impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, I would have to provide them with cues that would elicit obligatory impersonal passives in response. Such cues are hardly conceivable. The difficulty

of testing specific structures through methods other than grammaticality judgment tests is also addressed by Munnich, Flynn and Martohardjono (1994).

There are of course certain key points that may make the grammaticality judgment test more or less reliable. Perhaps most important is that the test be made in such a way that the test sentences do not contain elements other than the one targeted that may make subjects judge it ungrammatical. One such element is vocabulary. Since Davies and Kaplan (1998) show that one strategy employed by L2 acquirers on grammaticality judgment tests is to look for meaning, one obviously has to be careful not to use vocabulary unfamiliar to the subjects. Another element that may interfere with judgment is, as pointed out after the pilot grammaticality study, length and complexity of the sentences. Also the use of other rare and thus potentially unfamiliar syntactic structures obviously has to be avoided (see e.g. Cowan and Hatasa 1994).

The fact that L2 acquirers may use different strategies than native speakers when judging grammaticality does not in itself mean that such tests are not useful. The different strategies employed may simply reflect different strategies when using an L2 in general. In my case, it is clear that if the subjects reject impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitive verbs, the reason is not translation or analogy, which are two of the strategies proposed by Davies and Kaplan. Translation would have yielded only incorrect judgments since both structures are grammatical in Norwegian. Also analogy would probably give incorrect results, since the most natural structure for comparison would be impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. Although these strategies may certainly have been used, they do not explain skepticism toward impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. Guessing might certainly be an important factor in the judgments, but it still leaves us with the question of why there should be a need to guess, i.e. why they did not simply assume these structures to be grammatical.

Should it turn out that the subjects of my studies reject impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, we are thus left with three possible strategies; the subjects might have been guessing, but that still leaves the question of why feel the need to guess in the first place, i.e. what makes them uncertain about these sentences. If they try to repair the sentence, the question is still why they should do this if they did not have an idea that it is not grammatical. The proposed strategy *feel* would then be assumed to play a significant role in

making the subjects unsure about the grammaticality of English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitives. The question which remains is that of the basis of this feeling. Whether the subjects are skeptical to these sentences out of purely syntactic intuitions, or for other reasons, still has to be explained. This will be returned to in the next section.

If my studies should show that the subjects use impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, this means that Hypothesis 1 about the conservative L2 acquirer must be wrong. If, however, they reject these structures to a significantly greater extent than they do with grammatical structures, then this is an indication that Hypothesis 2, which states that L2 acquirers are not conservative, and therefore unable to acquire the ungrammaticality of certain structures when the target language has a more restrictive parameter setting that the native language, cannot be correct either.

We are then left with Hypotheses 3 and 4. Both these hypotheses state that the L2 acquirer initially assumes that the target language is like the native languages when structures like the ones that I am studying are involved. However, whereas Hypothesis 3 assumes an actual parameter resetting to take place autonomously on the basis of syntactic cues to take place eventually, Hypothesis 4 states that the L2 acquirer may be able, more or less consciously, to develop intuitions about the ungrammaticality of certain structures on the basis of indirect negative evidence. This Hypothesis does not rule out an eventual parameter resetting, but is states that a skepticism toward the structures in question can develop with the structures still included in the interlanguage.

2.1.3 Input in L2 acquisition

In L1 acquisition, when talking about input, we are talking about positive evidence, that is, instances of grammatical sentences. In L2 acquisition, studies (e. g. Izumi & Lakshmanan 1998) indicate that direct negative evidence in the form of instruction may play a role. Any language teacher will probably be able to testify that correcting an L2 acquirer does not lead to the instant acquisition of the ungrammaticality of a structure, but there is still little doubt that L2 acquirers do to some extent benefit from at least some forms of direct negative evidence. In my case, this is hardly relevant, since the structures in question are not normally

taught in Norwegian classrooms, and since, in fact, most English teachers in Norway are probably not even explicitly aware of this difference in English and Norwegian.

Is it possible that also the role of indirect negative evidence is different in L2 acquisition? Could it be that indirect negative evidence, that is, the absence of certain structures, can facilitate the acquisition of the ungrammaticality of those structures? Even though indirect negative evidence is not normally assumed to be relevant within the generative approaches, Chomsky himself opens for the possibility of the relevance of indirect negative evidence:

> "In the absence of evidence to the contrary, unmarked options are selected. Evidence to the contrary or evidence to fix parameters may in principle be of three types. 1. Positive evidence, 2. Direct negative evidence (...), 3. Indirect negative evidence - a not unreasonable acquisition system can be devised with the operative principle that if certain structures or rules fail to be exemplified in relatively simple expressions, where they would be expected to be found, then a (possibly marked) option is selected excluding them in the grammar so that a kind of "negative evidence" can be available without corrections, adverse reactions etc." (Chomsky, 1981)

Researchers who do not assume UG to be available for L2 acquirers have also proposed the possibility of indirect negative evidence as a relevant factor in L2 acquisition. Inferencing as a learning strategy has been discussed in L2 acquisition research for decades. Carton (1969) and Bialystok (1978) for instance emphasize the role of inferencing in the acquisition of new items. They propose that the meaning of an unfamiliar word can be inferenced on the basis of context, similarity to words of the L1 and gestures. Also Rubin (1981) and Naiman et al. (1978) include induction and inferencing as a part of their proposed schemas for acquisition strategies employed by successful L2 acquirers.

Plough (1995) proposes that the use of indirect negative evidence is in fact a form of inductive learning. Whereas deductive learning makes conclusions based on evidence where the conclusion contains nothing more than the evidence, and where the conclusion is therefore definitely true, inductive inferencing is supposed to result in conclusions that contain more than the evidence, and which are therefore only probably true. Plough proposes the following stages in the induction process:

Stage 1: Scanning what is known (L1, L2 and/or other knowledge)
Stage 2: Linking new material with what is known (it is at this stage where the absence of a structure may be noticed)
Stage 3: Establishing probably true conclusions or generalizations based on the (mis)match between new material and what is already known. (Plough 1995:90)

The process, according to Plough, is dependent on a wide range of variables like individual learner differences, input etc.

Stage two in Plough's proposed model is the stage where the Norwegian L2 acquirers of English may notice the absence of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. The question is only exactly what in the linking between known and new material makes the language acquirer aware of the absence of these structures. These structures are relatively rare in Norwegian, and it would therefore probably take quite a bit of input to realize that they are not present. It is thus likely that other factors, such as the overrepresentation of other structures are more noticeable. These problems will be returned to later.

What is important here is that there is a fundamental difference between L1 and L2 acquirers which makes Plough's proposal probable for L2 acquisition but not for L1 acquisition. Whereas the L1 acquirer has no previous linguistic knowledge, the L2 acquirer comes to the language acquisition task with knowledge of their native language, and thus, possibly with expectations as to what structures will be used in various situations. Section 4.3 will be used to take a closer look at these expectations that a Norwegian acquirer of English may have regarding impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, respectively.

Plough also conducted a study investigating the use of inductive inferencing in American L2 acquirers of French. Her results, however, were inconclusive. Her subjects were intensive first-year students at university, viz. students who had learned some French before but who were not ready for second-year French.

The subjects of my pilot studies were also first-year university students of the L2 in question. However, first year English in Norway is a fairly advanced course, and the students have, as already mentioned, normally already been acquiring English for about ten years. I therefore

assume that my subjects were in all likelihood far more advanced L2 acquirers than were Plough's subjects. Negative evidence and induction are likely to be strategies employed at advanced stages of L2 acquisition, since they will normally entail fairly subtle differences between the languages. My proposal is thus that effects indirect negative evidence are more likely to appear in my studies.

2.1.4 Inferencing and case absorption effects

2.1.4.1 Impersonal passives with postverbal NP

Impersonal and personal passives are not used haphazardly in Norwegian. Impersonal passives are very common and are used when the subject is long and heavy, since Norwegian, just like English, is subject to the Principle of End Weight as shown in (9). Even with shorter subjects, impersonal passives are often used when there is a desire not to specify an agent as in (10), as well as in formal language. Impersonal passives are also used when there is a desire not to topicalize the patient, which is of course consistent with the fact that only indefinite nouns can be left in postverbal position in Norwegian due to the Definiteness Effect. This means that although all personal passives of the English type are grammatical in Norwegian, they are less acceptable in many contexts.

(9) Det blir solgt mange klær som bare kan brukes av jenter som er undervektige og på konstant diett.
"There are sold many clothes that can only be worn by girls who are underweight and on a constant diet"[7]

(10) Jeg vil ikke nevne navn, men det ble drukket mye alkohol i går kveld.
"I don't want to mention names, but there was drunk a lot of alcohol yesterday"

Hestvik (1986) proposes that impersonal passives are in fact the unmarked structures. His argument in proposing this is that while there is an impersonal passive for any personal

[7] The English translations of examples (9)-(12) are direct translations of the Norwegian sentences, and therefore not necessarily grammatical in English.

passive (aside from the Definiteness Effect), there are impersonal passives that do not have a corresponding personal passive, such as passivized intransitives, as in (11), and many impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, as in (12).

(11) a) Det har aldri blitt reist mer av unge mennesker enn i 1990-åra.
"There has never been traveled more by young people than in the 1990s"
b) *Mer har aldri blitt reist av unge mennesker enn i 1990-åra.
"More has never been traveled than in the 1990s"

(12) a) Det blir argumentert med at en økning i nasjonalbudsjettet vil føre til inflasjon.
"It is argued that an increase in the national budget will lead to inflation"
b) *At en økning i nasjonalbudsjettet vil føre til inflasjon blir argumentert med.
"That an increase in the national budget will lead to inflation is argued"

Given Åfarli's assumption that case absorption is not a universal factor and that it is a result of language specific intervening factors, Hestvik's proposal seems plausible. Åfarli and Hestvik agree that the core element of passives is the fact that the subject position is theta-free. Chomsky (1981) also mentions this as a central characteristic of passives. It then seems plausible that the unmarked passive keeps the object in the same place as in D-structure, and an empty subject or an expletive in subject position, but that intervening factors such as the Definiteness Effect or Case Absorption may force the object to move into subject position. It is important that nothing in this theory disallows the use of personal passives. Saying that the object does not have to move to subject position is not the same as saying that it may not. Many factors may make the movement desirable if not necessary, such as topicalization, end weight and so on.

As we saw earlier, the most common generative definition of markedness, i.e. the Subset Principle, leads to the definition of personal passives as unmarked, and impersonal passives as marked. According to Platzack (1996), these markedness relations would be reversed, since they assume children always to start out with the option requiring the least amount of movement. If we assume current minimalist theory, and take postverbal NPs to be the D-structure of passives, this would mean that children should initially use impersonal passives rather than personal. Such a development has not been reported, and would indeed be problematic since the use of impersonal passives does not exclude the use of personal

passives. As mentioned earlier, it is therefore difficult to imagine how the children would then come to realize the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives. With Hestvik's proposal that postverbal NPs are the unmarked version of passives, we are not necessarily talking about markedness in the generative sense. It is however consistent with the minimalist framework that movement only takes place if it has to, and it is therefore likely that leaving the NP in object position is somehow less costly that moving it to subject position. This suggestion does not necessarily mean that children cannot initially start out with the assumption that the NP has to be moved, starting to leave it in place only after encountering positive evidence.

Whether we assume that impersonal passives are unmarked or not, we may assume that they are in some contexts more acceptable than personal passives in Norwegian. This means that although Norwegian L2 acquirers of English will never encounter instances of personal passives in English in contexts where they would be ungrammatical in Norwegian, they will certainly meet them in contexts where the Norwegian counterpart would be less acceptable than impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. This was shown with the examples (8) and (9), and the other contexts discussed earlier. Encountering such evidence, which is at best circumstantial, would of course not lead to a realization of the differences as rapid and complete as when positive evidence of L2 structures that are ungrammatical in the L1 are met. However, it might be enough to create a doubt in the mind of the L2 acquirer as to whether the two languages are indeed identical in the relevant respect.

This kind of indirect evidence would not lead to the quick acquisition that for instance hearing subjectless sentences in a pro-drop L2 would (i.e. a language that allows for subjectless sentences). In the opposite situation, it is more difficult to see how the ungrammaticality of subjectless sentences in an L2 can be acquired by a native speaker of a pro-drop language, since overt subjects are also grammatical in pro-drop languages. It has therefore been proposed that native speakers of pro-drop languages acquiring a non-pro-drop language as an L2 come to realize the ungrammaticality of subjectless sentences in the target language on the basis of the presence of expletives such as *it* and *there*, as in structures like *it snowed* in English. In a pro-drop-language, like Italian, this sentence would be expressed simply as *snowed*.

The proposal that indirect negative evidence may play a part in L2 acquisition opens for another possibility as to how the obligatoriness of subjects in an L2 are acquired by native

speakers of pro-drop languages. It is possible that also the use of subjects in contexts where it would be entirely unnecessary in the L1 makes the use of subjectless sentences less natural in the interlanguage of the acquirer. The combination of expletive subjects and of lexical subjects in contexts where they would be unnecessary in the L1 may then be what makes the subjects realize the ungrammaticality of subjectless sentences.

2.1.4.2 Passivized intransitive verbs

With passivized intransitive verbs, we could of course take the same approach as we did with those structures, and assume that it is the relative overrepresentation of other structures that makes the subjects doubt the grammaticality of these sentences. There are however several problems with this. For one thing, there are no obvious parallel structures of the kind of the personal passive alternative to avoid postverbal NPs. This means that there is no structure used in English which would obviously be replaced by passivized intransitives in Norwegian.

Another solution could be to look at verb forms. Intransitive verbs have no passive participles in English. This could mean that since L2 acquirers of English never hear such forms, they are never stored in the interlanguage. However, most passive participles in English are like those in Norwegian in that they are identical to the perfect participle. In Norwegian, this is the case with transitive and intransitive verbs alike. It is not really conceivable that the passive participle is acquired independently for each ver, and the acquirers probably acquire a general rule for the construction of passive participles. Since this rule goes for both transitive and intransitive verbs in Norwegian, and since the intransitives have perfect participles identical to what would normally be the passive participle in English, so that the actual verb form should not sound unfamiliar, there seems to be no reason why the subjects should not assume that intransitive verbs, like transitive verbs, have passive participles that look like the perfect participle in English, just like in Norwegian.

If Davies and Kaplan (1998) are right in proposing that one common strategy in grammaticality judgments is *repair*, this might possibly sometimes actually lead to impersonal passives with postverbal NPs being accepted rather than rejected. It is possible that the L2 acquirers at times, when encountering an impersonal passive with a postverbal NP, feeling that the structure is unfamiliar, will try to repair it by turning it into a personal passive.

Finding that the sentence is easily changed into a structure which is familiar, they may then also accept the original sentence. In this connection, the strategy of *analogy* may also be relevant; since all personal passives have impersonal counterparts in Norwegian (aside from the Definiteness Effect), these two structures may to some extent be seen as analogous, so that if one is grammatical, the other is grammatical as well, though possibly less acceptable.

Impersonal passives with intransitive verbs, however, cannot be repaired in any easy way. I have argued that Norwegian L2 acquirers of English are skeptical to impersonal passives on the whole, but that in some instances they may accept impersonal passives with postverbal NPs to some extent because, analyzing it, they find that the difference between these structures and the familiar personal passives is basically a matter of word order and of the use of an expletive. They will of course find that the picture is much more complicated with the passivized intransitives. These verbs cannot be used passively at all, except in a very few instances for verbs that can also be used transitively or with clausal objects, as shown in (13b) and (14b), and then new information in the form of an NP or a clause has to be added, slightly changing the meaning of the verb.

(13) a) *It was sung a lot at the party.
b) The Led Zeppelin song “Stairway to heaven” is often sung at parties.

(14) a) *It was argued relatively little at the meeting.
b) It was argued that giving methadone to heroin addicts helps them live a normal life.

In this connection, it is also a point that Norwegian acquirers of English are often advised that passives are generally less used in English than in Norwegian, and that they entail a more formal language than what they necessarily do in Norwegian. This may serve as a basis for the subjects’ reasoning that certain verbs may not be passivized at all in English, even if no rules about impersonal passives have been learned.

Sorace (1996) argues that grammaticality judgment tests in language acquisition research have a weakness in that they normally only allow for the categories grammatical/ungrammatical, and sometimes also “not sure”. Sorace argues that rather than two categories of structures, either grammatical or ungrammatical, there are acceptability hierarchies within internal native grammars and in L2 interlanguages. In such a hierarchy, one

grammatical structure may be far more acceptable than another structure, though it may be equally grammatical. Conversely, one ungrammatical structure may, albeit ungrammatical, be more acceptable than another.

If we look at the subjects' grammaticality judgments in the pilot study as judgments mainly on acceptability, we can propose that personal passives with the patient in subject position will be seen as far more acceptable than are impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. Passivized intransitive verbs, however, will arguably be seen as even less grammatical. It is possible that we are here dealing with an acceptability hierarchy where personal passives are the most accepted, being the ones that are encountered in the input. Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are seen as less acceptable, since they are not encountered. Passivized intransitive verbs. However, are neither encountered, nor similar to structures encountered. On the basis of these considerations, we may thus assume the subjects to have the following acceptability hierarchy for English passives:

personal passives, impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, etc.

|

impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

|

passivized intransitive verbs

In this hierarchy, the top level includes those passives actually encountered in the input, i.e. those for which there is positive evidence. The middle level includes structures never encountered, thus unfamiliar, but which can easily be changed into familiar structures. The lowest level of acceptability includes those sentences never encountered, and which cannot be changed into a familiar structure without a change in voice (e.g. to active) or including new information (postverbal NP or clause which would slightly change the meaning.)

2.1.5 Avoidance

Schachter (1974) conducted an analysis of the relative clause errors produced by two sets of learners (one Arabic and Iranian, and the other Chinese and Japanese). She found that the first group of learners made more errors than the second group, despite the fact that relative clause

structures existed in their L1s and did not exist in the L1s of the second group. However, she also discovered that the Arabic and Iranian learners made many more attempts to use relative clauses than did the Japanese and Chinese learners. She concluded that learners may resort to avoidance if they find a structure difficult.

When acquiring an L2, language acquirers are known to avoid structures that are present in the L2 but not in the L1. This may happen even when the L2 acquirer actually knows and understands the new structure. This tendency is also shown by Kleinmann (1978) Kellermann (1979), Dagut and Laufer (1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena (1989). These studies all show avoidance of structures that are present in the L2 but not in the L1, i.e. the reverse situation of the one I am studying.

Kellerman (1979) argues that the extent to which transfer takes place has do to with the L2 learner's beliefs about the distance between the L1 and the L2. The language acquirer, he argues, holds certain assumptions as to which kinds of structures are likely to be universal for all languages, and which are likely to be specific to his own language. These beliefs are not necessarily true, but the language acquirer will typically avoid those structures that he is not sure are grammatical in the L2 even when the L1 and the L2 are actually similar. This is, of course, in a way an assumption that L2 acquirers are in fact conservative. However, the reasons for their beliefs about the distance between languages do not necessarily have to do with markedness or the Subset Principle. Also, the proposal that the subjects avoid certain structures is not the same as saying these structures are not part of their interlanguage. The avoidance may very well be a somewhat conscious strategy which takes place more in planned than in unplanned output.

If we assume that indirect negative evidence does play a part, and that it makes the L2 acquirer uncertain about the grammaticality of certain structures, then it would be reasonable to assume that they might avoid these structures. This would correspond to Kellermann's beliefs about distance. Although Norwegian acquirers of English apparently initially assume that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitive verbs are grammatical in English just like in Norwegian, after encountering indirect evidence of the opposite and becoming uncertain, they may very well begin to avoid these structures exactly like Kellerman predicts.

2.2 The Pilot Studies

In 1999 I carried out two studies among students at the University of Tromsø. The aim of the studies was to explore the extent to which Norwegian learners of English acquire the distinction in grammaticality between Norwegian and English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, passivized intransitive verbs, and other possibly related structures My prediction was that the subjects would not show signs of being conservative, i.e. that they will to a large extent accept impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. However, I did expect that they would show signs of being more skeptic to these structures in English than in Norwegian, and that they would to some extent avoid them in production. In other words, I expected to find evidence in these studies that Hypothesis 4 from the beginning of this chapter holds.

2.2.1 The Grammaticality Judgment Study

2.2.1.1 The Study

The grammaticality judgment study was conducted in May 1999. The subjects were 19 students, mainly basic level students of English at the University of Tromsø. Four of the subjects were students who had completed the basic level course earlier. The age of the subjects ranged from 19 to 36, with an average age of about 23. They had all started to learn English in school around the age of 10, and were all monolingual speakers of Norwegian, except for one subject who was a bilingual speaker of Norwegian and Sami, and whose judgments did not diverge from those of the others. The subjects were asked to fill out a form with 48 sentences, indicating whether they felt that each of the sentences was grammatical or ungrammatical, or whether they were not sure. They were also asked to indicate why they felt the sentence was ungrammatical if they rejected it.

The fact that the subjects had all started to learn English around the age of 10 means that they at this point were probably within the critical period, which, as discussed in chapter 1, is assumed to end around puberty. However, Norwegians are normally by no means proficient

users of English before puberty. The number of English classes per week is usually no more than four, and although English is a language that Norwegians encounter daily through music and television, they normally do not have the kind of input that would be necessary to assume some kind of bilingualism. I therefore think it is safe to assume that even though the subjects had been learning English for a year or two when reaching the end of the critical period, their interlanguage construction was still in the beginning stages, and that passives and other more complex structures had probably not been included in the interlanguage at all.

The sentences were seven pairs of impersonal passive sentences with a postverbal NPs, exemplified in (15a), three pairs of passives with intransitive verbs, as illustrated in (15b), two pairs of impersonal passives with a postverbal clause as in (15c), and five sentence pairs with an expletive subject, three of which are grammatical both in Norwegian and in English, and two of which were grammatical in Norwegian but not in English, since the use of existential *there* is rather restricted in English. These sentences are exemplified in (15d-e) respectively. In addition there were various "trick" sentences containing none of the relevant syntactic features. All of the test sentences were presented both in English and in Norwegian, in random order.

(15) a) *There was seen a man at the crime scene just before the police arrived.
b) * It was sung a lot at the party last night.
c) In Medieval times, it was believed that the earth was flat.
d) There were many people I did not know at the party last night.
e) There exploded a bomb in a shopping center in London yesterday.

Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs were the structures that I basically wanted to investigate in this study. These sentences are ungrammatical in English, according to Chomsky (1981) because the passive morphology absorbs objective case so that the postverbal NP cannot receive case. In Norwegian such sentences are grammatical, arguably because Norwegian has optional case absorption (Åfarli 1992). By asking the subjects to indicate whether they felt such sentences were grammatical both in Norwegian and English, I hoped for an indication of the extent to which they knew the difference in case absorption.

Passivizing intransitive verbs is grammatical in Norwegian. This, according to Åfarli (1992), is also because Norwegian has optional case absorption. In English, however, passivized

intransitive verbs are ungrammatical since intransitive verbs have no case features to be checked against those of PASS, or passive morphology. Investigating the extent to which the subjects master this distinction was thus another way to get an indication of whether they had acquired the distinction in Norwegian and English when it comes to case absorption.

Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses are structurally much like the ones with postverbal NPs. However, when the postverbal element is a clause, the sentence is grammatical in English as well as in Norwegian, since English clauses are assumed not to have case features. By comparing the judgments on these sentences to those of the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, I could again get an indication of the role of the actual case absorption rule in the judgments. Because of the similar structure of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with postverbal clauses, an equal percentage of rejection of the two sentence types would indicate that the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs were rejected not out of considerations of case absorption, but out of a general skepticism toward impersonal passives in English.

In order to check that it was not the use of the expletive *there* which made the subjects reject the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, I also included three active sentences with the expletive subject which are grammatical in both languages, and two which are grammatical in Norwegian but not in English.

There is no standard measurement in L2 acquisition research for when a structure can be assumed to be acquired. In L1 acquisition research, it is common to label a structure "acquired" when it is used correctly 90% of the time. This means that the structure has to be used in at least 90% of all obligatory contexts. However, it means that it cannot be used in the wrong contexts more than 10% of the time, or, in other words, that in contexts which exclude the use of the structure, it must be absent at least 90% of the time (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:40-41). In this study there were too few tokens of each sentence type for the 90% measure to be used, but it is still a useful principle to bear in mind. Also, because of the small number of sentences as well as subjects, only response percentages were calculated, since the numbers were too low for statistics to be useful.

2.2.1.2 The Results

2.2.1.2.1 Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

All the sentences in table 1 to some extent illustrate the tendency that whether or not the subjects detected the ungrammaticality of the English sentences depended on whether they accepted these same sentences in Norwegian. On 5 of the 7 sentence pairs there was some disagreement also on the Norwegian version of the sentence. However, the subjects clearly accepted such structures to a far greater extent in Norwegian than in English.

Table 1: Grammaticality Judgments impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

a) There has been bombed many towns in Yugoslavia.	Grammatical	10.5%
	Ungrammatical	73.7%
	not sure	15.8%
b) Det har blitt bombet mange byer i Jugoslavia.	Grammatical	57.8%
	Ungrammatical	21.1%
	not sure	21.1%
c) There was seen a man at the crime scene just before the police arrived.	Grammatical	47.4%
	Ungrammatical	47.4%
	not sure	5.3 %
d) Det ble sett en mann på åstedet like før politiet kom.	Grammatical	84.2%
	Ungrammatical	5.3%
	not sure	10.5%
e) Due to the hopeless logistics of the organization, there was bought a van.	Grammatical	36.8%
	Ungrammatical	47.4%
	not sure	15.8%
f) Grunnet organisasjonens håpløse logistikk ble det kjøpt en varebil.	Grammatical	84.2%
	Ungrammatical	5.3%
	not sure	10.5%
g) There is drunk more beer in Denmark than in Norway.	Grammatical	0%
	Ungrammatical	78.9%
	not sure	21.1%
h) Det blir drukket mer øl i Danmark enn i Norge.	Grammatical	100%
	Ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%
i) It was laughed at a lot of bad jokes at the meeting.	Grammatical	21.1%
	Ungrammatical	52.6%
	not sure	26.3%
j) Det ble ledd av mange dårlige vitser på møtet	Grammatical	78.9%
	Ungrammatical	10.5%
	not sure	10.5%
k) There was confiscated a large quantity of heroin near Svinesund yesterday.	Grammatical	63.2%
	Ungrammatical	26.3%
	not sure	10.5%
l) Det ble konfiskert et stort parti heroin nær Svinesund i går.	Grammatical	100%
	Ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%
m) There will be born many children on New Year's Eve this year.	Grammatical	47.4%
	Ungrammatical	26.3%
	not sure	26.3%
n) Det vil bli født mange barn på nyttårsaften i år.	Grammatical	100%
	Ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%

As can be seen from table 1, the sentence pair in g)-h) was the one where the subjects had the most correct intuitions about grammaticality. Here all the subjects agreed that the Norwegian version is grammatical, and none of them felt that the English counterpart is grammatical, although 21.1%, or 4 out of 19, were not sure that it is ungrammatical.

With the sentence pair in k)-l), everybody agreed that the Norwegian sentence in l) is fully grammatical, but as many as 63.2%, or 12 out of 19 of the subjects felt that the ungrammatical English version in k) is also grammatical. The same pattern is seen in the sentence pair in m)-n).

2.2.1.2.2 Impersonal passives with postverbal clause

There were only two pairs of impersonal passives with postverbal clauses in this study. With both of these sentences, all subjects agreed that the Norwegian version was grammatical.

Table 2: Grammaticality Judgements impersonal passives with postverbal clause*s*

a) It is being discussed whether the war i Yugoslavia could have been avoided	Grammatical	63.2%
	Ungrammatical	31.5%
	not sure	5.3%
b) Det blir diskutert om krigen i Jugoslavia kunne ha vært unngått.	Grammatical	100%
	Ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%
c) In Medieval times, it was believed that the earth was flat.	Grammatical	73.7%
	Ungrammatical	26.3%
	not sure	0%
d) I middelalderen ble det antatt at jorda var flat.	Grammatical	100%
	Ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%

In the sentence pair in a)-b), 68.4% of the subjects judged the English sentence as grammatical, 21.1% felt that it is ungrammatical, and 10.5% were not sure. The English sentence in c) 73.7% of the subjects felt was grammatical, while 26.3% thought it was ungrammatical. This means that more subjects accepted each of these sentences than any of the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

2.2.1.2.3 Active sentences with existential *there*.

The active sentences with existential *there* were included in order to check that the subjects knew the use of existential *there* in English. Table 3 shows that the subjects accepted the grammatical English sentences in a), c), and e) to an even greater extent than they accepted impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. The ungrammatical sentences in g) and i) were largely rejected, even though some subjects accepted the latter. It thus seems that the subjects know the use of existential *there,* and that their rejections of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs cannot be attributed to a general skepticism toward, or uncertainty of, the use of existential *there.*

Table 3: Grammaticality Judgments impersonal active sentences

a) There are fewer students at the university than before.	Grammatical	78.9%
	Ungrammatical	21.1%
	not sure	0%
b) Det er færre studenter ved universitetet enn før.	Grammatical	89.5%
	Ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	10.5%
c) There were many people I did not know at the party last night.	Grammatical	84.2%
	Ungrammatical	5.3%
	not sure	10.5%
d) Det var mange mennesker jeg ikke kjente på festen i går.	grammatical	94.7%
	ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	5.3%
e) There were many fights downtown last night.	grammatical	89.5%
	ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	10.5%
f) Det var mange slåsskamper i sentrum i går.	grammatical	100%
	ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%
g) There burnt a house at Åndalsnes on New Year's Eve	grammatical	0%
	ungrammatical	100%
	not sure	0%
h) Det brant et hus på Åndalsnes på nyttårsaften.	grammatical	68.4%
	ungrammatical	21.1%
	not sure	10.5%
i) There exploded a bomb in a shopping center in London yesterday.	grammatical	21.1%
	ungrammatical	68.4%
	not sure	10.5%
j) Det eksploderte en bombe i et kjøpesenter i London i går.	grammatical	100%
	ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%

Table 3 shows that the subjects accepted the grammatical English sentences in a), c), and e) to an even greater extent than they accepted impersonal passives with postverbal clauses.

2.2.1.2.4 Passivized intransitive verbs

If we take case absorption as the main factor in the subjects' grammaticality judgments, we should expect the results of the passivized intransitive verbs to be much like those of the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. However, in the sentences containing a passivized intransitive verb, the picture is not very clear. Only two such sentences were presented in each language.

Table 4: Grammaticality Judgments passivized intransitive verbs

a) It was sung a lot at the party last night.	grammatical	0%
	ungrammatical	78.9%
	not sure	21.1%
b) Det ble sunget mye på festen i går	grammatical	100%
	ungrammatical	0%
	not sure	0%
c) It was gesticulated a lot at the meeting	grammatical	36.8%
	ungrammatical	36.8%
	not sure	26.3%
d) Det ble gestikulert mye på møtet	grammatical	78.9%
	ungrammatical	10.5%
	not sure	10.5%

With the sentence pair in a)-b), everybody agreed that the Norwegian version is grammatical, and none of the subjects judged the English counterpart grammatical. 78.9% were convinced that it is ungrammatical, the rest were not sure.

There was much less agreement on the sentence pair in c)-d), although these sentences have exactly the same structure as those in a)-b). While 78.9% of the subjects felt that this is a grammatical sentence in Norwegian, 10.5% were not sure, and the same percentage actually felt that the sentence is ungrammatical. On the English counterpart, there was even more confusion; 36.8% labeled this sentence grammatical, the exact same percentage said it is ungrammatical, and 26.3% were not sure.

2.2.1.2.5 Individual results on the grammaticality judgement test.

In order to see whether the distinction between Norwegian and English impersonal passives can be acquired by L2 acquirers, it is useful to look at the judgments of each individual subject. The tables showing judgments by sentence of course tell us nothing about the differences between the subjects.

Table 5 Individual grammaticality judgements on all sentences

SUBJECT NO.	***S-1 E***	***S-1 N***	***S-2 E***	***S-2 N***	***S-3 E***	***S-3 N***	***S-4 E***	***S-4 N***	
1.	4		2		1				incorrect
	2	1					1		not sure
2.	3				1				incorrect
				1					not sure
3.							1		incorrect
	1		1						not sure
4.	1								incorrect
	1							1	not sure
5.	5		1						incorrect
									not sure
6.	4		1						incorrect
	1								not sure
7.	2		1		1		1		incorrect
	2		1	1			1	1	not sure
8.	3			1	1				incorrect
	1								not sure
9.	2		1						incorrect
	2								not sure
10.	4				1				incorrect
	2		2				1		not sure
11.	3								incorrect
	3	2	2						not sure
12.	3		1						incorrect
	1	2			1				not sure
13.	3	1	2						incorrect
	2								not sure
14.	3		1						incorrect
	2		1						not sure
15.		1							incorrect
	1						1		not sure
16.	2	2		1	1		1		incorrect
		1	1						not sure
17.					2		1		incorrect
		1							not sure
18.		1	1		2				incorrect
									not sure
19.		3	1		1		1		incorrect
	2	1	1				1		not sure

S-1=Impersonal passives with postverbal NP (8 pairs)

S-2=Passivized intransitive verbs (2 pairs)

S-3=Impersonal passives with postverbal clause (3 pairs)

S-4=Active sentence with existential *there* (3 pairs[8])

E =English sentence

N =Norwegian sentence

[8] I have only included the sentences of this type that are grammatical in English as well as in Norwegian, since the main point of including these sentences was to check that the subjects knew that existential *there* can be used.

Two of the subjects, subjects 17 and 18 in table 5 correctly judged all the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs as ungrammatical. Subjects 3, 15 and 19 did not incorrectly judge any of the sentences grammatical, but had one or two "not sure" marks each. Subject 4 made one incorrect judgment and had one "not sure" answer, whereas subject 16 had two incorrect judgments. These were the 7 subjects (17, 18, 3, 15, 19, 4, 16) whom I think it is fair to believe might have acquired the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs when we take only their judgment on these sentences and not on different structures into consideration. The rest of the subjects normally had three or four errors and one or two "not sure" answers.

Before trying to evaluate the subjects' acquisition of the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English, we also have to look at their answers on the Norwegian sentences and on the English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. Subject 18, who rejected all the English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs also rejected one such sentence in Norwegian, and he also rejected three out of four impersonal passives with postverbal clauses in English. Subject 17, who also rejected all English passives with postverbal NPs was unsure about one such sentence in Norwegian and also rejected two of the four English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. Subject 19, with only two "not sure" marks on the English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs had rejected 3 of the Norwegian counterparts and reported to be unsure about a fourth. Subject 16, who accepted only two English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, rejected two such sentences in Norwegian and was unsure about a third. These four subjects seem to be skeptical either towards impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in any language, or to English impersonal passives in general, although the English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs were certainly least accepted also by these four. Subjects 3, 4 and 15 all accepted all the English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, and only subject 15 rejected one Norwegian impersonal passive with a postverbal NP.

Of the subjects who judged about half of the ungrammatical English sentences grammatical, only two had judged one of the Norwegian sentences ungrammatical, and four had one or two "not sure" marks. This means that although they did not seem to have any clear intuitions about the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English, there is definitely something about these sentences that makes the subjects more skeptical to them than to their Norwegian counterparts. Of these twelve subjects, only six had judged one of the

sentences with a postverbal clause ungrammatical. If we were to assume that their judgments on the sentences with postverbal NPs were pure guesswork, we would expect that most of them had made at least one mistake on the sentences with postverbal clauses. The fact that the incorrect judgments on these sentences were so few is an indication that some intuition about case absorption is present.

Five of the 19 subjects seemed sure about the ungrammaticality of passivized intransitive verbs in English and judged them both ungrammatical. Among these were subject 17, who had rejected all the English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, but who was unsure of one such sentence in Norwegian and who had also rejected two English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. Among the 5 who seemed to know the ungrammaticality of passivized intransitive verbs were also subjects 4 and 15, who had rejected 8 and 9 English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs respectively, and who seemed to generally accept both Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. Two more subjects, subjects 3 and 16, who were both assumed to have acquired the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, were only unsure about one each. All the others either admitted to be unsure on both the sentences, or they made at least one mistake. Only one subject made two errors.

2.2.1.3 Discussion

There is no doubt that the subjects generally had some idea that there is a difference between which passive sentences are grammatical in Norwegian and in English. The ungrammaticality of passivized intransitives seemed to be acquired by approximately half of the subjects. Although most of the subjects accepted several English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, all of them accepted far more of the Norwegian counterparts, and they also accepted English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses to a considerably greater extent. While 5 of the 19 subjects accepted all the sentences with postverbal clauses and nobody rejected them all, none of the subjects accepted all the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and two subjects rejected them all.

It is still clear that very few, if any, of the subjects mastered the difference between grammatical and ungrammatical impersonal passives to such an extent that it can be

considered fully acquired, assuming that acquired structures are used correctly about 90% of the time.

If we are to regard the acquisition of the ungrammaticality of English passives with postverbal NPs and of passivized intransitives as resetting of the case absorption parameter from the Norwegian [–case absorption] to the English [+case absorption] setting, then we would have to expect the judgments on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitives to correspond, since these structures are both affected by that parameter. However, it seems that more of the subjects had acquired the ungrammaticality of the passivized intransitives than of the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. Subjects 18 and 19 furthermore seemed to know the ungrammaticality of English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs but not of passivized intransitives, whereas the opposite was the case for subjects 2 and 8. However, this picture is obviously not clear since there were very few tokens of passives with intransitive verbs.

It does in any event seem that neither Hypothesis 1 nor Hypothesis 2 from the beginning of this chapter were borne out; the subjects did not reject impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs to such an extent that we can be assumed to have started out thinking they were ungrammatical. Still, they did not accept them to the same extent as they did in Norwegian, indicating that they do not assume that Norwegian and English are identical in allowing for these structures.

2.2.2 The Translation Study

The problem with the type of test that I used in the first study is that it investigates only the subjects' intuitions about explicit grammatical rules. When asked to judge whether or not a sentence is grammatical, their answer does not necessarily reflect whether or not they would actually use the sentence. I order to investigate the performance of advanced Norwegian L2 acquirers of English, I conducted another study in October 1999.

2.2.2.1 The Study

My subjects were still students of English at the University of Tromsø. There were 12 subjects, three of which had also participated in the grammaticality judgment study earlier the same year. They had all started acquiring English around the age of ten, and they were all monolingual speakers of Norwegian.

In order to test whether or not the subjects would actually use English impersonal passives correctly, this test consisted of 20 sentences in Norwegian. The sentences were a mixture of several different structures, and the subjects were asked to translate these sentences and encouraged to rephrase them if they thought it was necessary in order to make the sentence better. This way I hoped to discover whether the subjects would actually produce impersonal passives with a postverbal NP in English, independently of their explicit beliefs about the grammaticality of such structures.

In order to get as full as possible a picture of the subjects' competence, I used a mixture of different structures in the study. In addition to the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and sentences with passivized intransitive verbs, I also included impersonal passives with postverbal clauses.

I also tested several other structures in this study. One such structure was the preposition + infinitive structure, which is grammatical in Norwegian but not in English. I also included some sentences containing a preposition followed by a that-clause. These sentences are also grammatical in Norwegian but not in English, arguably because Norwegian clauses have case features that can be checked against the case features of the preposition, whereas English clauses do not. Since this represents a difference in case assignment in Norwegian and English, this could be a part of a larger parameter including case absorption, as discussed in chapter 1.

2.2.2.2 The Results

2.2.2.2.1 Impersonal passive + NP

With impersonal passives with a postverbal NP, most of the subjects rephrased. We see that all the sentences in table 10 were rephrased by well over half of the subjects.

Table 6: Translations Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

a) Det blir drukket mer øl i Danmark enn i Norge.	rephrased	83.3%
	did not	16.7%
b) Denne uka har det blitt åpnet en ny platebutikk i Tromsø.	rephrased	75%
	did not	25%
c) Det blir solgt mange mobiltelefoner i Norge.	rephrased	83.3%
	did not	16.7%
d) Det blir lest flere aviser i Norge enn i de fleste andre land.	rephrased	83.3%
	did not	16.7%
e) Som i enhver valgkamp ble det gitt mange løfter i forbindelse med valgkampen.	rephrased	58.3%
	did not	33.3%
f) Det ble sett en mann på åstedet like før politiet kom.	rephrased	91.7%
	did not	8.3%

2.2.2.2.2 Impersonal passive + postverbal clause:

With all these sentences except one, the majority did not rephrase, and it thus seems clear that the reason why the subjects generally rephrased impersonal passives with postverbal NPs was not a general skepticism toward impersonal passives.

Table 7: Translations Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

a) Det blir stadig lovet at skoleverket skal forbedres.	rephrased	25%
	did not	75%
b) Det blir sagt at gresset alltid er grønnere på den andre siden.	rephrased	25%
	did not	75%
c) Det blir snakket mye om at noe må gjøres for å forbedre miljøet.	rephrased	66.7%
	did not	25%
	did not translate	8.3%
d) Det blir diskutert om Norge tar i mot for mange flyktninger.	rephrased	33.3%
	did not	58.3%
	did not translate	8.3%

The sentence which was generally rephrased, sentence c), needed rephrasing for other reasons, which may explain the high percentage of rephrasing here. This sentence contained the preposition+*that* structure, which will be returned to shortly.

It is also important to remember that the fact that the subjects rephrased an impersonal passive with a postverbal clause does not necessarily mean that they thought it was ungrammatical if translated directly. The instructions on the study said to rephrase the sentence if they thought it would make it better. This was done in order to avoid confusion about the term *grammatical*, but it may have caused higher numbers of rephrasing.

2.2.2.2.3 Passivized intransitive verbs

The translations of passivized intransitive verbs seem to indicate that most of the subjects know that intransitive verbs cannot be passivized in English. These results suggest that if the subjects' responses reflect their internal grammar, their English grammar tells them about case absorption. This would of course lead us to expect the results from the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs will be much like those from passivized intransitive verbs, a discussion to which I will return shortly.

Table 8: Translations Passivized intransitive verbs

a) Plasseringen av bygder i Norge viser tydelig at det i gamle dager ble rodd til butikk og kirke.	rephrased	100%
b) Det ble kranglet relativt lite på møtet.	rephrased	91.7%
	did not	8.3%
c) I begravelser blir det grått mye.	rephrased	91.7%
	did not	8.3%
d) På enkelte fester hender det nok at det blir sovet litt i krokene.	rephrased	83.3%
	did not	8.3%
	didn't translate	8.3%

2.2.2.2.4 Preposition + infinitive:

All the subjects rephrased all three sentences with a preposition followed by an infinitive into grammatical English sentences. It seems clear that the subjects have acquired the ungrammaticality of prepositions followed by infinitives.

Table 9: Translations Preposition+ infinitive

a) Kronprins Håkon innrømmer at han har tenkt på å ikke bli konge.	rephrased:	100%
	P+inf.	0%
b) Tenåringsjenter drømmer ikke lenger bare om å gifte seg.	rephrased:	100%
	P+inf.	0%
c) Enkelte grupper argumenterer for å forby prostitusjon.	rephrased:	100%
	P+inf.	0%

2.2.2.2.5 Preposition + that-clause:

The ungrammaticality of prepositions followed by *that*-clauses in English is generally taught in Norwegian schools, though it is not explained in terms of case theory. It is obvious that most of the subjects have acquired the ungrammaticality of such sentences. One of the

subjects made two mistakes on this structure, which may suggest that he has not fully acquired the structure. One other subject made one mistake. The other subjects all rephrased all these sentences, and thus seem to have acquired the ungrammaticality of English sentences containing a preposition followed by a *that*-clause.

Table 10: Translations Preposition + that-clause

a) Vi er alle passive vitner til at mennesker dør av sult i den tredje verden.	rephrased:	100%
	P+that	0%
b) Det blir klaget over at bensinprisen er for høy.	rephrased:	100%
	P+that	0%
c) Det er nok mange unge som ikke tenker over at de selv vil bli gamle en dag.	rephrased:	91.7%
	P+that:	8.3%
d) Det blir snakket mye om at noe må gjøres for å forbedre miljøet.	rephrased:	83.3%
	P+that:	16.7%

2.2.2.2.6 Individual differences

Only three of the subjects translated all four impersonal passives with postverbal clauses directly into English. However, only subject 6 in table 11 rephrased all these sentences. With passivized intransitive verbs, two of the subjects made two mistakes each, one made one mistake. The others never passivized an intransitive verb.

Subject 11 obviously had not acquired the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, translating the grammatical Norwegian sentence directly into an English one in all cases. Subjects 5 and 7 made this mistake in half of the sentences, and subjects 2 and 12 translated one of the 5 sentences directly, whereas the remaining 7 subjects actually rephrased all the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

Table 11: Individual translations all sentences

SUBJECT NO.	***S-1***	***S-2***	***S-3***	***S-4***	***S-5***	
1.			4			direct translations
2.			3	1	1	direct translations
3.			4			direct translations
4.			2[9]	1		direct translations
5.		2	3		3	direct translations
6.			0			direct translations
7.			2		3	direct translations
8.			2			direct translations
9.		1	1			direct translations
10.			2			direct translations
11.			4	2	6	direct translations
12.			1		1	direct translations

S-1: *To*+infinitive (3)

S-2: Preposition + *that*-clause (4)

S-3: Impersonal passive + postverbal clause (4)

S-4: Passivized intransitive verb (4)

S-5: Impersonal passive with postverbal NP (6)

2.2.2.3 Discussion

Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs were used in the translation study to a far lesser extent than they were judged grammatical in the grammaticality judgment study. The same was the case with passivized intransitive verbs. It thus seems that although the subjects accept a sentence as grammatical, this does not necessarily mean that they would actually use it. However, this also holds for the grammatical impersonal passives with postverbal clauses which were also accepted in the grammaticality study far more than it was used in the translation study. However, the difference here was less than with the two ungrammatical sentence structures.

[9] This subject had only translated two of these sentences.

2.2.3 Concluding remarks

The two pilot studies indicated that Norwegian learners of English are less ready to accept passivized intransitive verbs and impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English than in Norwegian, and more willing to accept impersonal passives with postverbal clauses than impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English. However, there were too few tokens of each sentence, and obviously too few subjects to draw any firm conclusions. The same is the case with passivized intransitive verbs. In the translation study, the subjects regularly rephrased such sentences when translating them from Norwegian into English. In the grammaticality judgment study, there were no clear indications that the majority of the subjects saw such sentences as ungrammatical in English, but since there were only two such sentences in English, any conclusion drawn from the results is not very reliable.

On the basis of these studies, it seems at last fairly safe to assume that these L2 acquirers are not conservative when it comes to the setting of the case absorption parameter, since the majority accept a fair amount of the structures that are ungrammatical in English due to its [+case absorption] setting. This means that Hypothesis 1 from the beginning of this chapter is probably wrong. At the same time, it seems that Hypothesis 2 is not sufficient, either. The subjects of my pilot studies do reject and rephrase impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs to a much greater extent than the grammatical structures in the study, indicating that they have somehow become skeptical of these structures.

We are left, then, with Hypotheses 3 and 4. Hypothesis 3 states that it is possible for L2 acquirers to reset their parameters in the course of the acquisition process, even when no apparent positive evidence is available. I argued in chapter 1 that it is possible to assume case absorption to be a part of another, larger parameter, for which there may be other positive evidence. The sentences containing a preposition followed by an infinitive and a preposition followed by a *that*-clause were included since they are ungrammatical in English but not in Norwegian, arguably due to a difference in case assignment. It could be possible that this difference in clauses, where the parameter setting for Norwegian sentences would be [+case] and the English setting [-case], is a part of the same parameter as is case absorption. However, if we are to assume Hypothesis 3, and assume that the skepticism that the subjects showed toward impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs stems from a parameter resetting in progress, then it is not likely that case absorption in passives and case

assignment in clauses are part of the same parameter, since the subjects seemed to have acquired the differences caused by the latter to a far greater extent than those of the former.

In any event, it is problematic to assume that the variable judgments of the subjects in the pilot studies are a result of them being in the process of resetting their parameters.
The results from my study show that the subjects do have an idea that passivized intransitives and impersonal passives with a postverbal NP are more acceptable in Norwegian than in English, but for most of them there is no evidence that they have the intuition of a sharp distinction in grammaticality that would follow from different parameter settings for the two languages. If we assume L2 acquisition to be a process of parameter resetting, we would expect that the subjects used the L1 setting regularly in the beginning of the acquisition process, and the L2 parameter setting after the parameter was reset. Most of the subjects in the grammaticality judgment study and about half of the subjects in the translation study use the L1 and the L2 setting simultaneously, sometimes accepting all sentence types as they would in Norwegian, and sometimes rejecting those sentences that are ungrammatical in Norwegian. It is therefore difficult to assume that they have clearly reset their case absorption parameter, but at the same time they cannot clearly be said not to have reset it. Parameter setting within a UG framework is assumed to be a fairly quick process once the relevant linguistic input is encountered. Since the subjects differed with respect to age, and also presumably also with respect to how much English they had been exposed to, it is not likely that they were all in the process of resetting this parameter, and that this was the explanation for the confusion. One thus has to look for alternative explanations for why the subjects feel that the English sentences are not as acceptable as the Norwegian ones.

It thus seems that Hypothesis 3, which assumes the L2 acquirer initially to assume that the L2 is like the L1 in these instances, but to then become uncertain because of negative evidence, hold. It also seems clear that the indirect negative evidence does not lead to a quick parameter resetting the way that positive evidence in assumed to do. If we look at the results from my pilot studies, it seems likely that some kind of inductive learning might very well have taken place. The absence of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and of passivized intransitive verbs in the English which the subjects had encountered, may have led to the conclusion that such structures *might* be ungrammatical. Since this conclusion is probably largely subconscious, it results in variable grammaticality judgments on these structures, but to the avoidance of such structures in translation. This is indeed what we find in the pilot studies.

2.2.3.1 The state of the interlanguage

For the majority of the subjects in my pilot studies, the difference in grammaticality in English and Norwegian impersonal passives did not seem to be judged with the consistency needed to assume the rule of case absorption or any other rule actually excluding such structures from the interlanguage. However, a handful of the subjects did indeed seem to reject such sentences consistently in English. It seems then that there has to be some process by which the L2 acquirer moves away from the confusion about such structures that merely leads to avoidance, and by which he eventually reshapes his interlanguage to exclude such structures entirely.

2.2.3.2 Automatization

Many L2 acquisition researchers make the distinction between learned linguistic knowledge and acquired or automatized knowledge. Krashen (1985) distinguishes between the explicit rules that the L2 acquirer has learned about the target language and the actual linguistic competence that he has acquired. Bialystok (1978) in her cognitive model of L2 acquisition distinguishes between an analyzed and an automatized factor. The analyzed factor is the language knowledge that the language acquirer is aware of (although this awareness might not be conscious) whereas the automatic factor leaves the acquirer unaware of the organization of his language knowledge. However, automatic knowledge is what leads to fluency, and can also lead to analyzed knowledge. Automatic knowledge is achieved through practice, that is, through input and production (Bialystok, 1978).

As the subjects of my pilot studies use inferencing and begin to believe that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs may be ungrammatical in English, they start to avoid using such structures. Thus they are neither receiving such structures in the input, nor producing them to any great extent themselves. This means that the chances of the automatization of such a structure are very slight. Other structures that can be used to replace such sentences in Norwegian, such as personal passives and active sentences with intransitive verbs and a non-specific subject such as *they*, *people, somebody* will be relatively more frequently heard and practiced, thus becoming the ones that are automatized.

It is likely that for most subjects, the ungrammatical impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs will be a part of the interlanguage, though they may be rarely or hardly ever used. It is still conceivable that some of the subjects, especially those who have had a lot of English input and who are also paying conscious attention to the differences between the L1 and the L2, will eventually feel that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs sound so unfamiliar that they judge them ungrammatical.

2.2.3.3 Individual differences

The subjects in my study must be assumed to generally hold positive attitudes toward English and to be genuinely interested in learning the language, since they have decided to study the language at university level. Yet, there is no doubt that the motivations for acquiring the language may vary quite a bit. Some of the subjects may be studying English out of a genuine interest in the language and its culture. Others may need it for a planned career, whereas yet others may only need some extra university credits and the choice of subject may have been more or less random. These things were not studied for each individual subject, and so the differences in motivation can only be assumed to exist.

L2 acquisition may also be influenced by the affective state of the language acquirer. This is a factor which may certainly vary among the subjects. Anxiety in the acquisition process may affect the acquisition, and the extent to which students are nervous about using the L2 certainly varies.

Another factor which is presumably less relevant for my study is that of age. Most Norwegians generally begin to learn English in school at the approximate age of ten, that is, at the very end of the proposed critical period. This as indeed the age at which all the subjects in my pilot studies had reported to have started acquiring English. However English is at this age only one of many subjects in school, and, as mentioned in earlier, the number of English classes per week is relatively limited. This means that most of these subjects' English must be assumed to have been acquired after this period. However, it is possible that some of the subjects have acquired more English than others even before the age of ten. Some may have known English speaking people previous to this age, some might have been traveling or even living in an English- speaking community, and some may have encountered more English

through television and movies than others. It is however important to emphasize that all the subjects in my pilot studies were monolingual native speakers of Norwegian, with the exception of the one who was a bilingual speaker of Norwegian and Sami.

All other things being equal, there still seems to be a difference between subjects in terms of what learning strategies are employed in the language acquisition task. More or less conscious strategies like planning of output, monitoring the output and requesting/paying attention to feedback may be used to various degrees by the subjects, and the extent to which they actively analyze their input may vary (see e.g. O'Malley and Chamot 1990). It is also very likely that the extent to which the subjects pay attention to indirect negative evidence varies.

In the next chapter, I will present the results of a larger study which I conducted in order to further investigate these issues. In this study, all subjects were asked to do a grammaticality judgment task and a translation task. Even though it is unlikely, it is not impossible that the different results in grammaticality judgments and translation in my pilot studies stem from the fact that they were conducted on different subjects.

The next study also includes subjects of different levels of English studies; basic level students are in their first year of university level studies. Intermediate students are in their third semester. The graduate program of English in Norwegian university lasts for two years, meaning that graduate students are somewhere between their fourth and seventh semester of university English studies.

So far, it has been assumed that the structures described as ungrammatical by Chomsky (1981) will in fact be rejected by native speakers of English. In order to test this assumption, the next study includes a large group of native speakers of English as controls.

The main weakness with the pilot studies is, of course, that they are very small-scale. They include very few tokens of each sentence and, even more importantly, very few subjects. In the next study, there are more tokens of all sentence types, and these are considerably more subjects.

2.2.4 Predictions for the next study

Based on the theory outlined in this chapter, certain predictions are made. The assumptions are that although Norwegian learners of English at university level are very advanced L2 acquirers, and their English performance may often be very close to native-like, there will still be a considerable difference between the grammar of their interlanguage and the native grammar of a speaker of English. This will be evident in that the Norwegians will avoid the use of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitives, but they will not invariably judge them as ungrammatical. We must assume that native speakers of English will almost invariably judge these structures ungrammatical, although, with the use of grammaticality judgments, some inconsistency must always be anticipated. The results from English subjects are at any rate expected to be much less variable than those of Norwegian subjects.

I also predict that the subjects will be fairly consistent about accepting structures that are related to impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitive verbs, but that are grammatical both in Norwegian and in English, such as impersonal passives with postverbal clauses and impersonal active sentences. In translation, they will not normally rephrase these structures. In this study, they will be asked to rephrase only if they feel a direct translation would be ungrammatical.

Furthermore, since I have argued that one of the reasons why impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are sometimes accepted may be considerations of end weight, I assume that such structures will be accepted more when the postverbal NP is longer, and less when it is shorter.

Since indirect negative evidence is assumed to be a very subtle clue for acquisition, subjects who have received more input, i.e. have spent more time in an English-speaking country or used more English in other contexts will perform better.

In February and March, 2000, I carried out a study to test these assumptions. This study had more test sentences, more Norwegian subjects were used, and a large group of native speakers of English was included.

3 The main study

3.1 The subjects

The main study in this paper was conducted at the universities of York and Tromsø in February and March, 2000.

The Norwegian subjects were university students of English. There were 50 Norwegian subjects, 29 of which were basic level students of English. 16 were intermediate level students, and five were graduate students. Four of the graduate students were working on English literature, one on language acquisition[10]. The subjects ranged in age from 19 to 43, with an average age of about 22. All subjects had started to learn English around the age of 10, except for one who had started at the age of four, two at the age of six and four around the age of eight. As in the pilot study, all the subjects were monolingual speakers of Norwegian except one who was a bilingual speaker of Norwegian and Sami. The judgments of this subject did not differ in any significant way from those of the others.

In order to compare the judgments of Norwegian L2 acquirers of English to those of native speakers of English, I also included a group of 63 undergraduate students of English literature at the university of York. The English subjects varied in age from 18 to 38, with an average age of 20. All these subjects were monolingual speakers of English, except one bilingual speaker of Welsh and English. One of the subjects used American English, the rest used British English. Neither the judgments of the bilingual nor of the American subject were significantly different from those of the others.

[10] This last student was at the very beginning of the graduate program, and discussions before and after the study revealed that she did not know or understand the specific aims of the study, nor did she have anything like an explicit rule of case absorption.

3.2 The study

The Norwegian version of the study consisted of two parts; a grammaticality judgment section and a translation section. The grammaticality judgment section contained ten pairs of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, five pairs of impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, five pairs of passives with intransitive verbs, and five pairs of active sentences with existential *there*. All sentences were presented in both English and Norwegian, and in random order. The subjects were also asked to provide corrections or comments if they felt a given sentence was ungrammatical, or if they were not sure, so that I would know whether or not they had rejected it for the relevant reasons.

The translation section of the study consisted of 15 Norwegian sentences; five impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, five impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, and five sentences with passivized intransitive verbs. The subjects were asked to translate the sentences into English, and to rephrase them if they felt it was necessary in order to make them grammatical in English.

The English version of the study contained only a grammaticality judgment test with 40 sentences. These were the English versions of the sentences in the grammaticality judgment section of the Norwegian version, as well as direct translations of the sentences in the translation section, i.e. five ungrammatical impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, five ungrammatical passives with intransitive verbs, and five grammatical impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. Also the English subjects were asked to provide comments or corrections.

The study questionnaires were distributed after regular lectures, and I was present while they were being filled out. The subjects were of course not allowed to consult each other or any other sources, but were told to use their own intuitions. They were allowed as much time as needed, but I indicated that they would need about 45 minutes for the Norwegian version and 20 minutes for the English version. None of the subjects used significantly more time than this, although a few used a little less time. The subjects were also asked not to reject sentences

on the basis of vocabulary or spelling, in order to keep the number of irrelevant corrections down.

3.3 The results

When registering the results, I disregarded irrelevant corrections. These were corrections where the subject had rejected a sentence or reported to be unsure about it for reasons that clearly did not have to do with the structures that I was investigating. Such corrections included corrections on spelling, vocabulary and punctuation, as well as of syntax and word order when they took place in a subclause that did not contain the relevant structures. When a sentence was rejected on such grounds, I counted it as having been accepted.

After having eliminated the irrelevant corrections, I was left with nine categories. The first three were the categories on my questionnaire, grammatical (gr), ungrammatical (un) and not sure (ns). A fourth category was for when a subject had missed a sentence (-). The last five categories are all variations of these four categories: the code (gr*) indicates that the subject judged the sentence grammatical but provided a comment which indicated that he thought it might be ungrammatical, the code (un*) indicates that the subject judged the sentence ungrammatical but that his proposed correction did not make it grammatical (although the correction had to do with overall sentence structure, and thus, unlike the irrelevant corrections category, may have been influenced by correct intuitions), the code (ns*) means that the subject reported to be unsure but provided an unsuccessful, but relevant correction, and the code (-*) indicates that although the subject did not provide a judgment, he did provide some kind of comment that he thought the sentence may be ungrammatical. The category (gr/un) is found only in one subject in translation. This subject had provided two translations, one a grammatical direct English translation of a Norwegian impersonal passive with a postverbal clause, and one a rephrased version, and it was difficult to determine whether he provided the rephrased version in an attempt to repair the first translation. In the translation section, the category (gr) means that the subject obviously saw the structure as grammatical in English, and thus translated directly, and the category (un) means that the subject seemed to find the structure ungrammatical in English, and thus rephrased.

We thus find the following nine categories in the results:

gr: the subject has judged the sentence grammatical, or translated it directly.

un: the subject has judged the sentence ungrammatical, or rephrased it in translation.

ns: the subject has reported not to be sure about the grammaticality of the sentence.

gr*: the subject has judged the sentence grammatical, but given a comment indicating that he thinks it might be ungrammatical.

un*: the subject has judged the sentence ungrammatical, and provided a correction that deals with relevant aspects but that does not make the sentence grammatical.

- : The subject has failed to judge or translate the sentence

-*: the subject has failed to judge or translate the sentence, but has given a comment indicating that he thinks it might be ungrammatical.

gr/un: the subject has provided two translations, one direct and one rephrased, and it is hard to determine his feelings about the relative grammaticality of the two.

3.3.1 Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

As described in section 1.2, impersonal passives like in (1a) are ungrammatical in English, in Chomsky's analysis because passive morphology or some element closely linked to it absorbs the case needed by the postverbal NP. The Norwegian counterpart in (1b) is however grammatical, a fact that Åfarli explains by suggesting that Norwegian has optional case absorption.

(1) a) *There are still written many books which are inspired by J. R. R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings".

b) Det blir fortsatt skrevet mange bøker som er inspirert av J. R. R. Tolkiens "Ringenes Herre".

In the grammaticality judgment section of the Norwegian version, I was aiming to explore the extent to which the Norwegian subjects knew the ungrammaticality of such sentences, by looking at the extent to which they rejected such sentences in English, and at the relationship between their judgments on the English and the Norwegian sentences.

3.3.1.1 Grammaticality judgments Norwegian subjects - results by sentence

10 of the 25 sentence pairs in the grammaticality judgment section were impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. The response categories (-*) and (gr/un) were not present. As we see in table 1, less than half of the Norwegian subjects generally judge the English sentences ungrammatical. However, the level of uncertainty is relatively high, with over a tenth of the subjects on average reporting to be unsure. In table 2, we see that the subjects generally accept the Norwegian sentences.

Table 1: Grammaticality judgments Norwegian subjects - results by sentence
English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

sentence no.	-	**gr**	gr*	**un**	un*	Ns	ns*	**Total:**
1		**22**		**19**	2	7		**50**
2	1	**27**		**14**	2	4	2	**50**
3		**32**		**11**		6	1	**50**
4	1	**17**	1	**20**	1	8	2	**50**
5	1	**28**		**11**	6	3	1	**50**
6	1	**28**		**16**	1	3	1	**50**
7		**22**		**19**	1	7	1	**50**
8		**30**	1	**11**		7	1	**50**
9		**28**		**12**	2	7	1	**50**
10		**31**		**14**		5		**50**
Total:	**4**	**265**	**2**	**147**	**15**	**57**	**10**	**500**

Table 2: Grammaticality judgments Norwegian subjects - results by sentence
Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

sentence no.	-	**gr**	gr*	**un**	un*	Ns	ns*	**Total:**
1	1	**45**		**1**	1	1	1	**50**
2	2	**46**		**2**				**50**
3		**33**		**10**	1	6		**50**
4		**48**				1	1	**50**
5		**49**		**1**				**50**
6		**33**		**8**		9		**50**
7		**46**		**2**		1	1	**50**
8	1	**46**		**3**				**50**
9	3	**41**		**4**		2		**50**
10	1	**45**		**2**		2		**50**
Total:	**8**	**432**	**0**	**33**	**2**	**22**	**3**	**500**

If we are to assume that Norwegian acquirers of English generally start out with the assumption that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are grammatical in English as well as in Norwegian, then something must have happened to make them doubt this assumption, since, in table 1, a little over half of the subjects (on average 53%) generally judge the English sentences grammatical, but in table 2 more than 90% accept at least 7 of the 10 Norwegian counterparts (average acceptance percentage for all the sentences being about 86%).

3.3.1.1.1 Individual grammaticality judgments impersonal passives with postverbal NPs - Norwegian subjects[11]

Only one Norwegian subject (5)[12] rejected all 10 English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in the grammaticality judgment section. Four more subjects, (15, 18, 20, 50) have rejected all but one such sentence. The acceptance of one ungrammatical sentence out of 10 is the kind of variability that you can certainly expect with grammaticality judgments, and it also means that these five subjects have rejected these ungrammatical sentences 90% of the time. It seems safe to assume that these subjects have all somehow acquired the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English. The rest of the subjects have accepted more of the ungrammatical sentences; eight subjects (9, 12, 16, 19, 21, 26, 27, 49) have accepted between 7 and 10 sentences each. 25 subjects have rejected less than half of the sentences, which means four or less. Even though not all of these have accepted all the sentences that they did not reject, but reported to be unsure about some, they all accepted more sentences than they rejected. 12 subjects did not reject any of the ungrammatical impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. None of these accepted all the sentences, however. They all either failed to judge at least one sentence, reported to be unsure, or rejected it for the wrong reasons.

To sum up, half of the subjects rejected one or more English impersonal passive with postverbal NP, but accepted more sentences than they rejected. 12 subjects, or about one-fourth, did not reject any sentences, although they all seemed unsure about at least two sentences. Six more subjects had rejected more sentences than they accepted, whereas five subjects rejected at least 90% of the sentences and can fairly safely be assumed to have acquired the ungrammaticality of such sentences in English.

In order to establish whether the subjects have specifically acquired the ungrammaticality of English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, it is useful to look at their judgments on the

---

[11] The table representing these results can be found in Table (1) and (2) in Appendix 2, showing the judgments on English and Norwegian sentences, respectively. Tables of individual differences for the other structures are also found in Appendix 2, with numbers corresponding to the tables of results by sentence in this chapter.

[12] Numbers in parenthesis in the sections on individual results in this chapter refer to the number of the subject(s) in question in the tables found in Appendix 2.

same sentences in Norwegian. Of the five subjects who judged more than 90% of the English sentences ungrammatical, four (5, 15, 18, 50) had accepted at least 90% of the Norwegian counterparts. Only subject 20 accepted less than 90% of the Norwegian sentences. This subject had however not rejected any of the Norwegian sentences, but had failed to judge one sentence and reported to be unsure about one. All but three of the 50 Norwegian subjects in this study (23, 42, 33) accepted more Norwegian than English sentences. Two of these had accepted the same number in both languages, whereas the third (33) had actually accepted one more impersonal passive with postverbal NP in English than in Norwegian.

The conclusion must be that with only three exceptions, the subjects were more skeptical to English than to Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, and that those 5 who seemed sure that such structures are ungrammatical, all felt that they are grammatical in Norwegian.

3.3.1.1.2 Translations Norwegian subjects impersonal passives with postverbal NPs - result by sentence

There were 5 Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in the translation section. The only categories present here were (-), (gr), and (un).

Compared to the grammaticality judgment section, where less than half of the subjects on average rejected English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, table 3 shows that the number of subjects who translated such sentences directly into English is relatively low

Table 3: Translations Norwegian subjects
Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs - result by sentence

sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	**Total:**
1	2	**5**	**43**	**50**
2	4	**11**	**35**	**50**
3	2	**17**	**31**	**50**
4	4	**13**	**33**	**50**
5	3	**15**	**32**	**50**
Total:	**15**	**61**	**174**	**250**

Only about a third of the subjects translated sentences 2 to 5 directly, and only 10% did so with sentence 1. It might also be that the relatively high number of subjects who did not

translate the sentences at all somehow reflects the fact that they found it difficult because the direct translation sounded wrong in English.

3.3.1.2 Individual translations Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

25 subjects, or 50%, had rephrased all five sentences when translating. All those who had rejected more than 90% of these sentences in the grammaticality judgment had rephrased all 5 sentences when translating. However, whereas none of the subjects had accepted all impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in grammaticality judgment, four subjects (12, 33, 37, 40) had translated all such sentences directly. Except for these four, and subjects 23 and 48, who failed to do the translation section altogether, all the subjects had rephrased at least as many sentences as they had rejected. For most subjects, the percentage of sentences rephrased was much higher than that of sentences rejected, and several subjects who had not rejected one single impersonal passive with postverbal NP in the grammaticality judgment section had actually rephrased them all in translation.

In all, it seems that the predictions of chapter 2 were borne out when it comes to impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. While most of the subjects rejected no more than half of the sentences in grammaticality judgment, and showed a high level of uncertainty, most of them were fairly consistent in their rephrasing of such sentences in translation.

3.3.1.3 English judgments - judgments by sentence

In the English subjects' judgments on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, only the categories (-), (gr), (un) and (ns) were present. The sentences marked with a *t* are the ones that appeared as translation sentences for the Norwegian subjects.

Even though the vast majority of subjects rejected these sentences, every sentence was accepted by between 6% and 30% of the subjects. The overall percentage of rejections for all the sentences was only about 78%. Still, there is no doubt that the English subjects accepted such sentences to a much smaller extent than did the Norwegian subjects. Table 4 shows that the judgments on those sentences that the Norwegian subjects translated were similar to the

judgments on the sentences that appeared in the grammaticality judgments section for the Norwegian subjects, except for sentence 2t, which was rejected by all the English subjects. This means that the much higher number of translations than of rejections by the Norwegian subjects probably cannot be attributed to the translation sentences being less acceptable for other reasons. The reasons for the unison rejection of sentence 2t, to which I will return, were not relevant for the Norwegian subjects.

Table 4: Judgments by sentence English subjects impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	ns	**Total:**
s1	1	**14**	**46**	2	**63**
s2		**10**	**49**	4	**63**
s3		**7**	**51**	5	**63**
s4		**4**	**57**	2	**63**
s5	1	**20**	**40**	2	**63**
s6		**6**	**57**		**63**
s7	1	**7**	**53**	2	**63**
s8		**21**	**33**	9	**63**
s9	1	**5**	**54**	3	**63**
s10	1	**6**	**49**	7	**63**
s1t	1	**9**	**47**	6	**63**
s2t			**63**		**63**
s3t	1	**8**	**48**	6	**63**
s4t	1	**14**	**42**	6	**63**
s5t	1	**10**	**49**	3	**63**
Total:	**9**	**141**	**738**	**57**	**945**

Sentence 2t was rejected by all the English subjects. The reason for this is probably that whereas the other sentences appeared with the use of existential *there,* sentence 2t, due to an editing error, came on the questionnaire as illustrated in (1) below:

(2) Among housewives, it is read many romantic books about beautiful women and men in prestigious professions.

This is obviously not the most likely impersonal passive. However, it turned out that several Norwegian subjects attempted to repair impersonal passives with postverbal NPs by changing the existential *there* into the expletive *it*, possibly confused by the fact that this is the structure of the grammatical impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. It was thus not surprising yet relevant to find that none of the English subjects were thus confused.

3.3.1.4 Individual judgments

Only 8 of the 63 English subjects rejected all 15 impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. 14 more rejected 14 sentences. This means that 22 of the 63 subjects, or almost 35%, rejected more than 90% of these sentences. 10 subjects rejected 13 sentences, 9 rejected 12 sentences, 5 rejected 11 sentences, and 3 rejected 10 sentences each. That leaves 14 subjects who rejected less than two-thirds of the sentences, 6 of which had rejected less than half.

Since we normally assume native speakers to be experts on their own language, these results are of course not as consistent as we might expect. Compared to the Norwegian subjects, however, the English subjects reject a significantly higher percentage of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. About 35% of the English subjects had rejected at least 90% of these sentences, compared to 10% of the Norwegian subjects. Less than 10% of the English subjects had rejected less than half of these sentences, compared to almost 59%, of the Norwegian subjects. It might be suggested that although impersonal passives are probably generally seen as ungrammatical in English, they are still relatively higher on some kind of acceptability hierarchy than are other ungrammatical structures.

3.3.1.5 Other observations

An interesting point which does not show up in the tables is a difference in the corrections made by Norwegian and by English subjects. Whereas the Norwegian subjects usually corrected these impersonal passives by turning them into personal passives, which is a grammatical structure also in Norwegian, the English subjects generally used a reduced relative, as in (3), which is not normally an option in Norwegian. Only one Norwegian subject used this structure for repairing the English sentences.

(3) Because of the cold weather, there were many warm clothes bought in Tromsø this winter.

3.3.2 Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

There were 5 pairs of impersonal passives with postverbal clauses in the study. Since these structures are grammatical in English as well as in Norwegian, I included them to check that it was not impersonal passives in general that the subjects were skeptical to.

3.3.2.1 Judgments Norwegian subjects - results by sentence

The results show that there were no instances of the categories (-*), (gr*) or (gr/un) on these sentences in the grammaticality section of the study. The number of sentences accepted in English is considerably higher here than with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with passivized intransitive verbs.

Table 5: Judgments by sentence Norwegian subjects impersonal passives with postverbal clauses - English sentences

Sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	un*	ns	ns*	**Total:**
1	1	**47**			2		**50**
2	1	**33**	**9**		7		**50**
3		**32**	**12**		6		**50**
4	1	**26**	**12**		9	2	**50**
5	1	**38**	**5**		6		**50**
Total:	**4**	**176**	**38**		**30**	**2**	**250**

Table 6: Judgments by sentence Norwegian subjects impersonal passives with postverbal clauses - Norwegian sentences

Sentence no.	-	**Gr**	**un**	un*	ns	ns*	total
s1	1	**43**	**1**		4	1	**50**
s2		**44**	**3**		3		**50**
s3	1	**35**	**9**		5		**50**
s4	2	**37**	**3**	2	6		**50**
s5		**46**	**1**	1	1	1	**50**
total	**4**	**205**	**17**	**3**	**19**	**2**	**250**

One of these sentences is even accepted by more subjects in English than in Norwegian. The sentence that is the least accepted is rejected by many subjects also in Norwegian. With this sentence, there was a high number of irrelevant corrections. It is possible that many subjects have rejected it for irrelevant reasons, but without providing comments making this clear. An example of the most common irrelevant correction is given in (4).

(4)

Sentence on questionnaire: Although it is not anyone's mother tongue anymore, it is still claimed by many that Latin is the most sophisticated language in the world.

Correction: Although Latin is not anyone's mother tongue anymore, it is still claimed that it is the most sophisticated language in the world.

In any event, it seems that the Norwegian subjects accept impersonal passives with postverbal clauses in English to a greater extent than they do impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. Whereas the latter structures were accepted in 53.8% of the instances, the former were accepted in 70.4% of the instances.

3.3.2.2 Individual results, Norwegian subjects Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

33 of the 50 subjects, or 66%, had accepted proportionally more impersonal passives with postverbal clauses than with NPs in English. None of the subjects rejected all the sentences with postverbal clauses. One subject rejected 4 of the 5 sentences, but accepted the remaining sentence. Interestingly, this subject had rejected only 6 of the 10 ungrammatical impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English. Of the five subjects who seemed to have acquired the ungrammaticality of postverbal NPs, two had accepted 4 of the 5 impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. One subject had accepted only two sentences and rejected three, whereas one accepted two sentences, but was uncertain about the remaining three. One accepted three sentences and rejected two. It thus seems that with the three subjects 15, 18 and 20, the rejection of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs may to some extent have something to do with a general uncertainty of the grammaticality of impersonal passives. However, they did reject the sentences with postverbal NPs to a far greater extent than those with postverbal clauses, so there has to have been other factors about the postverbal NPs that made these subjects reject them. With subjects 5 and 50, the rejection of English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs did not seem to be connected to a general skepticism toward impersonal passives. With Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, 19 of the subjects accepted all 5 sentences. 21 of the subjects had accepted 4 sentences.

The subjects were then generally more ready to accept impersonal passives with postverbal clauses than with postverbal NPs both in English and in Norwegian, and they accepted more sentences of both kinds in Norwegian than in English. Five subjects clearly felt that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are ungrammatical in English, but three of these may to some extent have been influenced by a general skepticism toward impersonal passives in English.

3.3.2.3 Translations - results by sentence

With the 5 impersonal passives with postverbal clauses in the translation section, all categories except (-*), (gr*) and the "not sure" categories (ns) and (ns*) were present.

From these results, it seems clear that the subjects were not at all as reluctant to use impersonal passives with postverbal clauses as they were with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitives.

Table 7: Individual translations impersonal passives with postverbal clauses – Norwegian subjects

Sentence no.	-	**gr**	gr/un	**un**	un*	**Total:**
s1	3	**39**		**8**		**50**
s2	2	**23**	1	**23**	1	**50**
s3	2	**39**		**9**		**50**
s4	4	**32**		**14**		**50**
S5	3	**36**		**11**		**50**
Total:	**14**	**169**	**1**	**65**	**1**	**250**

With the exception of sentence 2, which may have been low on acceptability for other reasons, less than a third of the subjects rephrased each of these sentences. The overall percentage of direct translation with these sentences was almost 68%, compared to less than 25% on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

3.3.2.4 Individual translations

With impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, 15 subjects, or 30%, had rephrased all 5 sentences directly. Only subjects 1 and 20 had rephrased all these sentences. However, the former had in one case provided both a direct and a rephrased version, and did not indicate whether he actually felt that one was better than the other. 27 of the subjects rephrased more such sentences than they had rejected.

3.3.2.5 English subjects - judgments by sentence

Here, the English subjects seem fairly unison in accepting impersonal passives with postverbal clauses. The variability shown in table 8 is no more than can be expected with this kind of test.

Table 8: Judgments by sentence English impersonal passives with postverbal clause[13]

Sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	ns	**Total:**
1	1	**57**	**3**	2	**63**
2	1	**57**	**2**	3	**63**
3	1	**57**	**3**	2	**63**
4		**57**	**3**	3	**63**
5		**53**	**5**	5	**63**
1t		**61**		2	**63**
2t		**42**	**9**	12	**63**
3t	1	**62**			**63**
4t	1	**48**	**5**	9	**63**
5t	1	**62**			**63**
Total:	**6**	**556**	**30**	**38**	**630**

As with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, there is generally no big difference between the judgments on those sentences which were grammaticality judgments also in the Norwegian version, and those which were translation sentences, meaning that the higher percentage of translation than of rejection of these sentences cannot be attributed to a difference in acceptability. The overall percentage of acceptance by English subjects on

[13] The sentences marked with a *t* in this chapter are again direct translations of those sentences that were translation sentences for the Norwegian subjects. This holds for all tables on judgments by the English subjects.

impersonal passives with postverbal clauses is a little over 88%, compared to about 70% by the Norwegian subjects.

The fact that the English subjects are more unison in accepting impersonal passives with postverbal clauses than they are in rejecting impersonal passives with postverbal NPs is another indication that the latter structure might not be viewed as among the most unacceptable structures in the language.

3.3.2.6 Individual judgments

As for individual differences in the English subjects' judgments on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, we find that 26 of the English subjects, or about 41%, accepted all 10 impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, and another 18 accepted 9 out of 10. In all, that makes almost 70% who accepted more than 90% of these sentences. Furthermore, only one subject (63) accepted less than half of the sentences. The acceptance of impersonal passives with postverbal clauses is then relatively unison by the English subjects.

3.3.3 Passivized intransitive verbs

3.3.3.1 Norwegian subjects - judgments by sentence

There were 5 pairs of sentences containing passivized intransitive verbs in the grammaticality judgment section of the Norwegian version. There were no instances of the categories (-*), (gr*) or (gr/un).

Table 9: Judgments by sentence Norwegian sentences passivized intransitive verbs English sentences

Sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	un*	ns	ns*	**Total:**
1	1	**16**	**22**	4	5	2	**50**
2		**2**	**33**	1	13	1	**50**
3		**5**	**35**	2	7	1	**50**
4	3	**17**	**19**	2	8	1	**50**
5		**22**	**16**	2	7	3	**50**
Total:	**4**	**62**	**125**	**11**	**40**	**8**	**250**

Table 10: Judgments by sentence Norwegian sentences passivized intransitive verbs Norwegian sentences

sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	un*	ns	ns*	**total**
1	1	**41**	**2**		4	2	**50**
2		**26**	**10**		12	2	**50**
3		**17**	**25**		1	7	**50**
4		**46**	**1**		3		**50**
5	1	**42**	**1**	2	3	1	**50**
total	**2**	**172**	**39**	**2**	**23**	**12**	**250**

Here we see the same trend as with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs; with sentences 1, 4 and 5, between 32% and 44% of the subjects accepted the English version of the sentence, whereas about 90% accepted the same sentence in Norwegian. With sentences 2 and 3, only 4% and 10%, respectively, accepted the English sentence. However, only about half of the subjects accepted these sentences in Norwegian, indicating that they may have been low on acceptability in any case. These sentences are illustrated in (5):

(5)

Sentence 2: At some parties, especially where there are many young people, it is probably slept a little in the corners.

Sentence 3: It has never been traveled more by young people than in the 1990s.

3.3.3.2 Individual judgments

If we are to assume that the rejection of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English has to do with the acquisition of the English setting of the case absorption parameter, then we would expect that the subjects' judgments on these sentences are fairly consistent with those on passivized intransitive verbs. English passivized intransitive verbs were rejected consistently by seven subjects (5, 12, 18, 20, 27, 28, 34). Of these, subjects 5, 18 and 20 were among those who rejected at least 90% of the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. Nine subjects had rejected four of the five passivized intransitive verbs in English. Among these was subject 50, who had rejected all impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. 20 subjects had rejected less than half of the passivized intransitive verbs, that is, one or two sentences.

It thus seems that passivized intransitives are not generally accepted, apparently even less so than impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. The overall percentage of acceptance on the

former sentences was less than 25%, compared to 53% with the latter. However, this low percentage of accepted passivized intransitive verbs may also have been influenced by the fact that two of these sentences were frequently rejected also in Norwegian.

With passivized intransitive verbs in Norwegian, only eight subjects accepted all 5 sentences. This might indicate that these structures, though grammatical in Norwegian, may not be seen as very acceptable.

None of the seven subjects who had rejected all the passivized intransitives in English had accepted them all in Norwegian. Of the eight subjects who accepted all the sentences in Norwegian, three had rejected all but one in English.

3.3.3.3 Translations by sentence

There were 5 Norwegian sentences containing a passivized intransitive verb in the translation section of the Norwegian version. With these sentences, all categories but (gr*), (gr/un) and the "not sure" categories were present in the results.

Table 11: Translations by sentence Norwegian subjects passivized intransitives

sentence no.	-	-*	gr	**un**	un*	**Total:**
1	2	1	10	**37**		**50**
2	2		5	**43**		**50**
3	3		11	**36**		**50**
4	5	1	11	**33**		**50**
5	3		7	**39**	1	**50**
Total:	**15**	**2**	**44**	**188**	**1**	**250**

With passivized intransitive verbs, we see the same trend as with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs; the subjects avoid using the former structures in English to approximately the same extent as they do with the latter, 70.2% and 69.6% respectively, and they rephrase such sentences when translating them from Norwegian to English to a much greater extent than they reject them in grammaticality judgments.

3.3.3.4 Individual translations

With passivized intransitive verbs, nobody had translated all 5 sentences directly. Of the six subjects who had consistently rejected all these sentences in grammaticality judgments, only subject 12 had translated one sentence directly, while the others had rephrased all these sentences. Aside from subjects 23 and 48, who had not done the translation section at all, only three subjects (12, 31, 33) had rejected more sentences than they had rephrased. The others had rephrased at least as many sentences as they had rejected.

3.3.3.5 English judgments - results by sentence

Like the Norwegian subjects, the English subjects rejected passivized intransitive verbs to an even greater extent than impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

Table 12: Judgments by sentence passivized intransitive verbs English subjects

sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	un*	ns	ns*	**Total:**
1		**1**	**57**		5		**63**
2	1	**1**	**58**	1	2		**63**
3	1	**8**	**47**		7		**63**
4	1	**16**	**40**		6		**63**
5		**1**	**57**	1	4		**63**
1t	1	**3**	**56**		3		**63**
2t		**2**	**58**		3		**63**
3t	1	**2**	**58**		2		**63**
4t	1	**6**	**47**	2	6	1	**63**
5t	2	**2**	**56**	1	2		**63**
Total:	**8**	**42**	**534**	**5**	**40**	**1**	**630**

Again, the English subjects rejected these sentences to a much greater extent than did the Norwegians, yet at least one subject accepted each passivized intransitive, and sentence 4 was in fact accepted by about 25% of the English subjects. This sentence is given in (6):

(6) Even though many controversial issues were discussed, it was argued relatively little at the meeting.

3.3.3.6 English subjects - individual judgments

About 35%, or 22 of the English subjects, rejected all sentences containing a passivized intransitive verb. 14 more had rejected 9 out of 10 sentences, so that in all about 57% had rejected at least 90% of these sentences. By comparison, only about 35% rejected that many impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. Eight subjects had rejected less than 2/3 of the

sentences, compared to 14 with the impersonal passives, and only three rejected less than half of the sentences with passivized intransitive verbs. The number for impersonal passives was six.

3.3.3.7 Other observations

It was clear that even though the Norwegian subjects rejected passives with intransitive verbs like (7) to a great extent, they perceived these sentences quite differently from the English subjects. While the Norwegian subjects clearly understood the meaning of these sentences, and provided corrections using a non-definite subject such as *they* or *people,* as in (7a), the English subjects generally commented that they were unable to repair the sentence because they did not understand the reference of *it*. When they did try to correct the sentence, they provided sentences like in (7b), which does not have the same meaning that the original sentence would have in Norwegian. It is of course possible that the high number of English subjects who actually accepted this sentence reflects this difference, and that those English subjects accepting it attached a lexical meaning to *it*, as referring to an issue not mentioned in the sentence, rather than interpreting it as an expletive. This might also be the reason why the English subjects clearly saw passivized intransitive verbs as even more unacceptable than impersonal passives with postverbal NPs; whereas the latter structure they apparently had no problem interpreting, the former may have been making no sense to them at all.

(7) Although many controversial issues were discussed at the meeting, it was argued relatively little.

a) Although many controversial issues were discussed at the meeting, people argued relatively little.

b) Although many controversial issues were discussed at the meeting, they were argued relatively little.

3.3.4 Impersonal active sentences

There were 4 pairs of active sentences with existential *there* or the expletive subject *it* in the grammaticality judgment section of the Norwegian version. These sentences were included in order to check that it was not a general problem with impersonal constructions that made the

subjects skeptical to impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitive verbs in English. The categories (-*), (gr*) and (gr/un) were not present.

3.3.4.1 Norwegian subjects - judgments by sentence

The subjects clearly accepted impersonal active sentences to a larger degree than the two ungrammatical structures, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. However, they accepted these sentences slightly less than impersonal passives with postverbal clauses (68% for the former compared to 70% for the latter). They had also accepted these sentences less in English (68%) than in Norwegian (84%).

Table 13: Individual judgments Norwegian subjects impersonal active sentences English sentences

Sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	un*	ns	ns*	**Total:**
1	1	**33**	**6**	1	9		**50**
2		**40**	**5**		5		**50**
3		**36**	**4**	1	9		**50**
4		**26**	**15**		9		**50**
Total:	**1**	**135**	**30**	**2**	**32**		**200**

Table 14: Individual judgments Norwegian subjects impersonal active sentences Norwegian sentences

Sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	un*	ns	ns*	**Total:**
1	1	**44**	**4**		1		**50**
2		**36**	**7**		6	1	**50**
3		**41**	**3**		6		**50**
4		**46**	**3**			1	**50**
Total:	**1**	**167**	**17**		**13**	**2**	**200**

3.3.4.2 Individual judgments

30 of the subjects, or 60%, had accepted more impersonal active sentences in Norwegian than in English. 11 subjects accepted the same number of sentences in both languages, and 9 accepted one more sentence in English than in Norwegian.

The conclusion after examining the Norwegian subjects' judgments is that they generally judge more sentences of all types ungrammatical in English than in Norwegian. However, they reject the ungrammatical structures, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitives, more often than other structures. This, however, also holds for their judgments on Norwegian sentences.

3.3.4.3 English subjects - judgments by sentences

These sentences the English subjects were fairly unison in accepting.

Table 15: Impersonal active sentences – English subjects

sentence no.	-	**gr**	**un**	ns	**total**
1	1	**57**	**3**	2	**63**
2		**60**	**1**	2	**63**
3		**59**		4	**63**
4		**39**	**17**	7	**63**
total:	**1**	**215**	**21**	**15**	**252**

Aside from sentence 4, which may have been low on acceptability for other reasons, about 90% of the English subjects judged each sentence grammatical. Sentence 4 is given in (8), along with the most frequent correction of this sentence by the English subjects. The reason why this sentence was rejected so frequently seems to have to do with the adjective *closed* which seemed to be interpreted as a participle rather than an adjective, so that many subjects preferred to use a reduced relative, as they did with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

(8)

Sentence on questionnaire:	There have been many closed roads in Northern Norway this winter.
Correction:	There have been many roads closed in Northern Norway this winter.

3.3.4.4 Individual judgments

Even on impersonal active sentences, the judgments among the English subjects were not altogether consistent. 35 of the 63 subjects judged all four sentences grammatical. 22 more accepted three such sentences.

3.4 Summary

The judgments of Norwegian as well as English subjects were fairly variable on all sentence types. However, the majority of English subjects clearly indicated that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passives with intransitive verbs are ungrammatical in English, whereas impersonal passives with postverbal clauses and active sentences with expletive subjects are grammatical.

Also the Norwegian subjects clearly preferred impersonal passives with postverbal clauses and impersonal active sentences to impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passives with intransitive verbs. For most subjects, however, their judgments did not show clear intuitions about the ungrammaticality of the latter structures. Also, the subjects more frequently rejected such structures in Norwegian also, albeit not to such an extent as to explain their judgments on the English sentences. Furthermore, those few Norwegian subjects who did seem to have clear intuitions about the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and of passives with intransitive verbs generally accepted such sentences in Norwegian. Finally, there did not necessarily seem to be a relationship between the Norwegian subjects' intuitions about impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and about passivized intransitive verbs. The judgments of both English and Norwegian subjects however showed that passivized intransitive verbs are probably even less acceptable than impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in both languages. The percentages of correct responses for both Norwegian and English subjects are shown in table 16 (correct responses being rejection for the first two sentence types, and acceptance for the two latter).

Table 16: Percentage of correct judgments on all sentences types by Norwegian and English subjects[14]

	Norwegian subjects	English subjects
Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs	29.4%	76.5%
passivized intransitive verbs	50%	84.8%
Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses	70.4%	88.3%
Impersonal active sentences	67.5%	85.3%

With translation, the Norwegian subjects generally avoid the ungrammatical sentences consistently. Here, a majority rephrased to an extent where they matched the English subjects' judgments. This means that when using English these Norwegian subject probably sound as if they know the ungrammaticality of both impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, but that this most likely is a result rather of avoidance than of rules in the interlanguage. I will return to these assumptions in the next section.

3.5 Data analysis and discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate further the assumptions made on the basis of the pilot studies. In chapter 2, I argued that the results of the pilot studies gave no evidence that the subjects were conservative, and that they initially assumed impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs to be ungrammatical. This means that Hypothesis 1 from the beginning of chapter 2 does not seem to be correct.

Furthermore, I argued that Hypothesis 2, which stated that L2 acquirers are not conservative, and that they therefore cannot acquire the ungrammaticality of structures when the parameter setting of the L1 generates a larger set of sentences than that of the L2, seems not to hold. The subjects of my pilot studies may not have rejected the ungrammatical structures consistently, but they showed a notable larger skepticism toward these structures than toward structures which are grammatical in English. I also argued that the unstability of the subjects' judgments did not seem to be a result of their being in the process of resetting their case absorption

[14]When calculating these percentages, I left out sentence 2t for the English subjects, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, since this was the sentence which nobody had accepted but which had *it* as its dummy subject instead of *there.*

parameter, as would follow from Hypothesis 3. My argument was that it was difficult to imagine what syntactic cues would lead to this parameter resetting, and that in any event, the fact that the majority of the subjects seemed to be using both parameter setting simultaneously made it problematic to assume that they were in the process of parameter resetting, since this process is assumed to be a fairly quick one.

On this basis, I argued in chapter 2 that Hypothesis 4, proposing that the ungrammaticality of the structures in question is acquired on the basis of indirect negative evidence seemed the most likely. What do the results of the main study tell us about these assumptions?

3.5.1 The extent of acquisition

3.5.1.1 Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, as in (9), were the structures of which there were the most tokens in the main study. As we saw in chapter 5, there was little evidence that the majority of the subjects had acquired the ungrammaticality of English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. Only five subjects (5, 15, 18, 20, 50) fairly consistently rejected these sentences. It may be assumed that these five had some rule excluding impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in their interlanguage.

(9) There are still written many books which are inspired by J. R. R. Tolkien's
"Lord of the Rings."

Even though only these five subjects were consistent in their rejections of these structures, none of the subjects judged 90% or more of the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs grammatical. Seven subjects (29, 33, 35, 36, 39, 42, 46) had accepted 8 out of the 10 sentences. Of these, only one rejected one sentence. The rest of the sentences, the subjects reported be uncertain about. These seven subjects may possibly be assumed not to have intuitions of the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. Yet, most of them had been uncertain about 2 out of 10 sentences, or 20%. Three of these subjects (29, 39, 46) did not reject nor report to be uncertain about any impersonal passives with postverbal clauses of the type in (10). This might mean that at least some of these subjects are right at the

point when they begin to realize that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are not very acceptable. However, with the variability that always shows up in grammaticality judgments as well as the fact that there were relatively few tokens of each sentence type, it is hard to draw any firm conclusions.

(10) It is being discussed whether Norway accepts too many refugees.

Except from the five subjects who seemed to have acquired the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, and the 7 who accepted 8 out 10 sentences, there were then 38 subjects who rejected a few sentences and accepted some, and who typically also reported to be uncertain about a few. It is worth noting that as many as 30 out of the 50 subjects reported to be uncertain about the grammaticality of at least one impersonal passive with postverbal NP. Furthermore, as many as 12 subjects made at least one unsuccessful correction when rejecting such sentences. These were typically corrections of the type illustrated in (11). There were also two subjects who changed the sentence into progressive aspect, inserting *being* between the copula and the main verb, as in (12b). Several others had made various attempted corrections involving the use of *is/are* and *it/there*, as illustrated in (12c) and (12d). These unsuccessful corrections may indicate that the subject felt something was wrong with the sentence, but did not know what. From such a viewpoint, these unsuccessful corrections again illustrate the uncertainty of many of the subjects on these structures.

(11)

a) Sentence on questionnaire: Because of the cold weather, there were sold many warm clothes in Tromsø this winter.

b) Correction: There were sold many warm clothes in Tromsø this winter because of the cold weather.

c) Correction: Because of the cold weather, it was sold many warm clothes in Tromsø this winter.

(12)

a) Sentence on questionnaire:	There are still written many books that are inspired by J. R. R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings."
b) Correction:	There are still being written many books that are inspired by J. R. R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings".
c) Correction:	It is still written many books that are inspired by by J. R. R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings".
d) Correction:	There is still written many books that are inspired by by J. R. R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings".

3.5.1.2 Passivized intransitive verbs

There were five tokens of English passive sentences containing an intransitive verb, as in (13), in the grammaticality judgment section of the Norwegian version of the study.

(13) It has never been traveled more by young people than in the 1990's.

Six subjects (5, 12, 18, 20, 28, 34) had rejected all passivized intransitive verbs, and may thus be assumed to know about their ungrammaticality. Seven more had not accepted any, although they had been uncertain about one or more sentences. This means that there are 13 subjects who feel more or less sure that such sentences are not grammatical. No subjects had accepted all these sentences, but six subjects had not outright rejected any. That leaves at least 31 subjects who have accepted some sentences, rejected some, and who were typically uncertain about some.

With these sentences, 10 out of the 50 subjects had provided unsuccessful corrections. As with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, these corrections often involved changes in the order of adverbial clauses and the main clause, but also often changes in the word order inside the clauses. As with impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, there seemed to be some

confusion with *it/there* and *is/are*. The most typical unsuccessful corrections are illustrated in (14) and (15).

(14)

a) Sentence on questionnaire: At some parties, especially where there are many young people, it is probably slept a little in the corners.

b) Correction: It is probably slept a little in the corners at some parties, especially where there are many young people.

c) Correction: At some parties, especially where there are many young people, there is probably slept a little in the corners.

(15)

a) Sentence on questionnaire: It has never been traveled more by young people than in the 1990's.

b) Correction: Never has it been traveled more by young people than in the 1990’s.

3.5.1.3 Discussion

The most striking aspect of the Norwegian judgments on English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs is, in short, their variability. This means that it becomes difficult to explain the results in terms of UG and parameter setting. Unless all these more than 30 subjects were at exactly the same point in the process of resetting their parameter, it is hard to explain how they could all seem so uncertain about these sentences. Since parameter resetting is assumed to be a relatively quick process, and since the subjects are of different ages and different levels of acquisition, it is not likely that they are all in the process of resetting the parameter.

It could of course be argued that it is the nature of grammaticality judgment tasks which brings out this insecurity in L2 acquirers. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Davies and

Kaplan (1998) argue that L2 acquirers use different strategies than do native speakers when making grammaticality judgments, and claim that these strategies make the judgments less reliable. Sorace (1996) argues that L2 acquirers often have intuitions about acceptability rather than of grammaticality, to a greater extent than L1 acquirers. However, if we look at the grammatical structures in the study, namely impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, as in (16), and impersonal active sentences, as in (17), we see that the judgments here are much less variable.

(16) It is being discussed whether single parents should be allowed to adopt children.

(17) There are many people who think we will have a new snow record this year.

With impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, none of the subjects had provided unsuccessful corrections. With impersonal active sentences, there were two unsuccessful corrections. One of these was simply a comment on the use of the relative pronoun, saying that "it sounded strange, but was acceptable." The other was a change in the order of the adverbial and the main clause. Neither with impersonal passives with postverbal clauses nor with impersonal active sentences did there seem to be any confusion about the use of *it* and *there*, nor *is* and *are*. Table 17 illustrates the greater consistency in the judgments on impersonal passives with postverbal and of impersonal active sentences, compared to impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs.

Table 17: Grammaticality judgments by Norwegian subjects on English sentences.

	impersonal passives with postverbal NPs	passivized intransitive verbs	impersonal passives with postverbal clauses	impersonal active sentences
grammatical	53%	24.8%	70.4%	67.5%
ungrammatical	29.4%	50%	15.2%	15%
other	17.6%	25.2%	14.4%	17.5%
total:	100%	100%	100%	100%

In table 17, the "not sure" responses are combined with those responses giving unsuccessful corrections as well as those where a judgment is given followed by a contradictory comment, with the assumption that all these judgments reflect uncertainty. When the judgments of the Norwegian and the English subjects are compared, we see that the Norwegian subjects certainly do give more incorrect responses than do English subjects (when correct responses

are counted as those that correspond to current linguistic theory, i.e. if we assume the proposals of Chomsky (1981) discussed in section 1.2). However, the discrepancy between Norwegians and English is clearly greater on the ungrammatical structures than on the grammatical ones. This means that Kaplan and Davies' argument about L2 acquirer judgment strategies and Sorace's proposed uncertainty about grammaticality are not sufficient explanations for the insecurity about impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. It may very well be that the subjects are using different strategies when judging these ungrammatical structures from what they use on the grammatical ones, and it may be that their judgments reflect intuitions about acceptability rather than of grammaticality. However, none of these explanations address the problem of why the subjects should be using different strategies, and why they are uncertain about the acceptability of certain structures but not of others.

Table 18: Acceptance percentage on all sentence types by Norwegian and English subjects[15]

	Norwegian subjects	English subjects
Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs	29.4%	76.5%
Passivized intransitive verbs	50%	84.8%
Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses	70.4%	88.3%
Impersonal active sentences	67.5%	85.3%

Looking at table 18, it is also worth noting that the percentage of judgments by Norwegian subjects rejecting English impersonal passives is only a little higher than the percentage of English subjects *not* rejecting them. If we assume that the English subjects do know that these sentences are ungrammatical and that the percentage of sentences not rejected are merely variation to be expected in grammaticality judgment tasks, then it may seem natural to assume that the Norwegians do not know this ungrammaticality, and thus the percentage of Norwegian subjects rejecting them are also what can be expected as variability. These judgments could then be argued to be influenced by other linguistic factors; the subjects could, for instance, disagree with the choice of words or the punctuation in the sentence. Also factors such as the semantic contents of the sentences could have played a part. There is evidence that some of the subjects did reject sentences on such grounds, even though they

[15]Again, sentence 2t is left out for the English subjects, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

were asked told not to pay attention to them. The sentence *It is being discussed whether single parents should be allowed to adopt children* was rejected by one subject who commented subject that if you are already a single parent, you probably do not want to adopt more children! Another subject consistently rejected all sentences he found ambiguous. As long as not all subjects explained all their judgments, it is possible that many rejected impersonal passives with postverbal NPs for reasons that did not have to do with syntax.

However, it is shown elsewhere in this and the previous chapter that the Norwegian subjects showed confusion about these sentences also in ways that the English subjects did not. This is illustrated in the table below. Here we see that although the group of Norwegian subjects rejecting impersonal passives with postverbal NPs (29.4%) is hardly any larger than that of English subjects not rejecting them (23.5%), the percentage of Norwegian subjects actually accepting them (53%) is much lower than that of English subjects rejecting them (76.5%) . The percentage of ”other” judgments by Norwegian subjects (17.6%) includes rejections followed by unsuccessful corrections, as well as ”not sure” judgments and failures to judge sentences. The group of ”other” judgments for the English subjects (7.5%) does not include any unsuccessful corrections.

Table 19 Grammaticality judgments by Norwegian and English subjects on English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs	Norwegian subjects	English subjects
Grammatical	53%	16%
Ungrammatical	29.4%	76.5%
Other	17.6%	7.5%
Total:	100%	100%

The results of this study, then, seem to support the assumptions made in chapter 2. Hypotheses 1 and 2 seem quite clearly not to hold. Both these hypotheses predict the judgments should be fairly consistent for all subjects. Hypothesis 3 is also problematic, since this hypothesis predicts that though the judgments may certainly vary from subject to subject, each individual subject should be fairly consistent in his judgments, unless he was right in the process of resetting his parameter.

It thus seems plausible that Hypothesis 4, proposing that L2 acquirers may develop intuitions about the ungrammaticality of certain structures on the basis of more or less conscious strategies rather than syntactic cues may be correct, and that the assumption of this hypothesis that these intuitions do not necessarily lead to a resetting of the relevant parameter may also be true.

3.5.2 Avoidance

We have seen that the Norwegian acquirers of English in my study do indeed show clear signs of having some intuition that English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs are not as acceptable in English as in Norwegian, but that this intuition manifests itself rather in confusion than in outright rejection of such sentences in grammaticality judgments. In chapter 2, it was proposed that a common strategy in L2 acquisition when one feels uncertain about the grammaticality of a structure is to avoid it. The translation section of the main study had as its aim to investigate whether this was the case.
Four subjects had translated all 5 impersonal passives with postverbal NPs directly into English. However, 25 subjects, exactly half, had rephrased all 5 sentences.

In table 20, we see that the subjects avoid the use of the ungrammatical impersonal passives with postverbal and with intransitive verbs in at least 70% of the instances, but the grammatical sentences with postverbal clauses, only in 26%. The number of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs which were rephrased in the translation section (70%) is then notably higher than that of the same sentence type which were rejected in the grammaticality judgments section (29.4%), as well as of the number of rejections, “not sure” judgments and unsuccessful corrections (47%). For impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, the number of sentences that were rephrased (26%) was also higher than the number of sentences rejected (15.2%), but not than the number of such sentences rejected or not accepted in other ways (29.6%). This supports the assumption that a common feature of L2 learner language may be avoidance, and it shows that some subjects were probably uncertain about the grammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal clauses and avoiding these structures also. However, whereas impersonal passives with postverbal NPs were avoided to a greater extent than the uncertainty in the grammaticality judgments should predict, impersonal passives with

postverbal clauses were only avoided to roughly the same extent as there was skepticism or uncertainty in the grammaticality judgment section.

Table 20: Translations of all sentence types by Norwegian subjects.

	impersonal passives with postverbal NPs	Passivized intransitive verbs	impersonal passives with postverbal clauses
Rephrased	69.6%	75.2%	26%
Did not	24.4%	17.6%	67.6%
Other	6%	7.2%	6.4%
Total:	100 %	100%	100%

The small group of graduate students had rephrased impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in 88% of the instances. The intermediate students did so in almost 89% of the instances, whereas the basic level students only did so in about 61.4%[16] of the instances. Those subjects who had spent 12 months or more in English-speaking countries had rephrased the sentences in about 88% of the instances, whereas those who had spent between two and 12 months in English-speaking countries rephrased in a little over 82%[17] of the instances. Those who had spent less than two months in English-speaking countries had only rephrased these sentences in about 59% of the instances. This indicates that this is a structure which Norwegian acquirers of English initially assume is grammatical, but that as their interlanguage develops, they stop using it.

The graduate students of English had rephrased passivized intransitive verbs in 84% of the instances. This relatively low number is probably explained by the low number of subjects in this group; three of the graduate students had rephrased all these sentences, and the fourth had rephrased four out of five sentences. However, one of these subjects had translated 3 such sentences directly, thus influencing the number of sentences rephrased. The intermediate

[16] When calculating the percentages for the basic level students on translation, I left out subjects 23 and 48, since these two failed to do the translation section altogether. They are included in the overall translation percentages in the previous sections, since also other subjects occasionally failed to translate a sentence. However, this means that overall the percentages of rephrasing are actually slightly, though not significantly, higher if we exclude these two subjects.

[17] Again, I left out subjects 23 and 48 when calculating these percentages. Subject 23 had spent less than 2 months in English-speaking countries, subject 48 between 2 and 12 months.

students had done so in as much as 92.5% of the instances, whereas the basic level students only had done so in a little under 69% of the instances. Those students who had spent a year or more in English-speaking countries had rephrased almost 86% of the sentences with passivized intransitive verbs. Those who had spent between two and 12 months in English-speaking countries had rephrased these sentences in about 88% of the time, which is actually slightly more, although not significantly. hose who had spent less than 2 months in English-speaking countries had only rephrased in about 64% of the instances. Again, we see that exposure to the target language seems to play a part for whether the subjects are willing to use the structure although the group who had spent the most time in English speaking countries had not performed better than those who had spent a little less. The tendency is at any rate fairly clear. The subjects quite obviously avoid the ungrammatical structures to a greater extent than they reject them, and the amount of English that the subject has been exposed to seems to play a significant role for this avoidance.

3.5.3 The interlanguage

We have established that most of the Norwegian subjects in the study had not fully acquired the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, but that most of them seemed to be uncertain of these structures. We have also seen that for most of the subjects, this insecurity led the subjects to avoid such structures in translation. This probably means that most advanced Norwegian acquirers of English probably do not normally use such structures.

However, the question still remains of whether it is possible for Norwegian acquirers of English to actually restructure their interlanguage so that it resembles the internal grammar of a native speaker of English and thus excludes impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs.

Several subjects did reject such sentences consistently – five for impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and six for passivized intransitive verbs. This means that it has to be possible for Norwegian acquirers of English to incorporate rules excluding these structures in the interlanguage. However, only three subjects consistently judged both sentence types ungrammatical, and also for the others, their judgments on the two sentence types were often

different. This indicates that the rule incorporated in the interlanguage is probably not the rule of case absorption, since this rule should affect both sentence types to the same extent.

So far we have assumed that those who rejected a structure at least 90% of the time had acquired its ungrammaticality. However, it is hard to pinpoint an exact percentage of correct responses which indicates acquisition, especially since the English subjects on average only rejected impersonal passives with postverbal NPs about 78% of the time, and passivized intransitive verbs in about 85% of the instances. If we assume the point of acquisition for these structures to be at about the percentages of the English subjects, we actually in effect end up with the same number of Norwegian subjects who have acquired the ungrammaticality of English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs as we would if we assumed the point to be 90%. However, if the rejection average for English subjects was 78% and 85% respectively, this means that some English subjects actually rejected fewer sentences than that. In fact, only 28 of the 63 English subjects judged 90% or more of the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs ungrammatical, and one subject did not reject any of these 14 sentences (not counting the one sentence where the structure *it is* was used instead of *there are*, and which all the subjects rejected). With passivized intransitive verbs, one English subject only rejected 3 out of 10 such sentences.

It seems then that the English subjects were not at all as stable in their judgments as one might expect. The unstable judgments by native speakers are probably best explained by a lack of understanding of the term ”grammaticality”. The majority of English subjects performed better than the average. Those who rejected fewer of the ungrammatical sentences than the average often deviated significantly, pulling the average down. For the sake of simplicity, I will therefore assume the average percentages of rejection of the two structures to be roughly at the point where a Norwegian subject can safely be assumed to have acquired these structures. (Although I am well aware that some of the Norwegians may have performed poorly for the exact same reasons as the English subjects, not having to do with the interlanguage). In effect, defining the point of acquisition of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs as about 78% and that of passivized intransitive verbs as about 85% means including only those subjects who have given correct judgments at least 90% of the time, since the tokens of each structure were so few, one judgment constitutes a substantial percentage. We thus end up with five subjects who know the ungrammaticality of either impersonal passives with postverbal NPs or with intransitive verbs, and, in addition, three

who seemed to know both. It follows from my argument that this is probably the lowest number that we can assume.

This means that it is probably possible to restructure the interlanguage. In chapter 2, it was argued that this restructuring may depend on automatization. It would follow that it is likely that the amount of input received is important to the automatization process, thus the amount of time that the individual subjects have spent in English-speaking countries should be of importance. This is indeed what we find with both structures.

3.5.4 Factors influencing acquisition

3.5.4.1 Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

The question of exactly why and how the subjects come to realize the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs remains. In chapter 2, it was argued that impersonal and personal passives are not used randomly in Norwegian, and that impersonal passives are in fact the unmarked, or "most natural" structure. This means that although hearing personal passives where an impersonal passive with a postverbal NP would be more natural in Norwegian is probably not enough to make the Norwegian acquirers of English realize that there has to be some rule in English excluding these sentences, it may be enough to make them start avoiding such sentences, and also to make them show signs of uncertainty in their grammaticality judgments.

This is compatible with Plough's (1992) proposal that indirect negative evidence may lead to induction that certain structures are *probably* ungrammatical. In stage 2 of Plough's proposed model of inferencing, the language acquirer scans the input looking for discrepancies compared to his previous linguistic knowledge, in this case, mainly the L1. At this point, they will probably notice the infrequency of impersonal passives, if not actually the absence. At the same time, they will also probably notice the relatively higher frequency not only of personal passives, but also of active sentences, all kinds of passives being used generally less often in English than in Norwegian. Unlike positive evidence, which is assumed to lead to deduction and thus definitely true conclusions, induction would then lead to the kind of confusion that we find in the grammaticality judgments. If we assume that Kellerman (1979)

is also correct in assuming that L2 acquirers avoid not only structures that are difficult because they are present in the target language but not in the native language, but that they also avoid structures that are grammatical in the native language but that they for some reason think may be ungrammatical in the target language, then we have an explanation for the high percentage of rephrased sentences (70%) compared to rejected sentences (29.4%) when it comes to impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

The argument that Norwegian acquirers of English come to realize the ungrammaticality of English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs because of the relative frequency of personal passives where the NP appears in subject position is also supported by the corrections made by the Norwegian subjects in the study. Whereas the English subjects mostly changed the postverbal NP into a reduced relative, as discussed in the previous chapter, the overwhelming majority of relevant corrections on English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs by the Norwegian subjects in the study was, in fact, to move the NP to subject position.

One point not discussed so far is how the length of the sentence, and especially of the postverbal NP in impersonal passives, may influence the way the sentence is judged. It is possible that longer, more complex sentences will be accepted to a greater extent, since the structure of these sentences will be less transparent, and longer NPs may be accepted more often in postverbal position since we are assuming that the subjects know the principle of end weight. Whether they actually know this principle explicitly is not really relevant, since this is a principle which holds for Norwegian and English alike, so that the subjects probably have intuitions about it in any event.

Each English impersonal passive with postverbal NP was accepted by somewhere between 34% and 64% of the Norwegian subjects in the study. The sentence in (18), which was accepted only by 34%, or 17 subjects, was the only sentence actually rejected more often than accepted. The sentence in (19) was accepted by 64%, or 32 of the 50 subjects, and only rejected by 22%, or 11 subjects.

(18) Because of the cold weather there were bought many warm clothes in Tromsø this winter.

(19) The ideal for young girls is to be thin, and there are made lots of clothes that can only be worn by girls who are underweight and on a constant diet.

Looking at these sentences, it seems that the length of the sentence does influence whether or not it is accepted. The sentence in (18) has only a fairly short initial adjunct, a three-word postverbal NP and another, sentence-final adverbial. In sentence (19), the impersonal passive actually occurs in the second of two coordinated clauses, and the postverbal NP in the impersonal passive is very long. We also argued that the length of the postverbal NP may play a role. The postverbal NP in (18) both short and simple, consisting merely of a noun preceded by a quantifier and an adjective. The postverbal NP in (19), on the other hand, is also a noun preceded by a modifier, again modified by a relative clause, this relative clause containing yet another relative clause. The difference in the NPs are illustrated in (20) and (21), with the NPs fronted and in italics. It thus seems that the length of the postverbal NP does indeed play a role, and that it is likely that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs may often be accepted due to considerations of end weight.

(20) Because of the cold weather, *many warm clothes* were sold in Tromsø this winter.

(21) The ideal for young girls is to be thin and *lots of clothes that can only be worn by girls who are underweight and on a constant diet* are made.

3.5.4.2 Passivized intransitive verbs

With passivized intransitive verbs, it was argued that it is more difficult to pinpoint what triggers an insecurity in L2 acquirers, since impersonal passives with intransitive verbs cannot be replaced by a personal passive, there being no object to front to subject position. In chapter 4 it was therefore argued that the subjects may reject these because of an influence of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. In chapter 2, we looked into the implications of the fact that intransitive verbs do not have passive participles in English. However, we argued that as the passive participle is in most cases identical with the perfect participle, like in Norwegian, there should be no reason why the subjects should not assume that this is the case also for intransitive verbs. However, whereas perfect participles are found with the auxiliary *have*, passive participles are found with the auxiliary *be*. This means that if we are to assume

that indirect negative evidence does play a part in the acquisition of the ungrammaticality of structures, then the fact that these verbs are never found with the participle *be* might help trigger the uncertainty.

However, we also argued in chapter 2 that many intransitive verbs can have passive participles in certain contexts. Some verbs can be used transitively, and some can be used in impersonal passives with a preposition or a postverbal clauses, as in (22) and (23). These constructions do, however, have a slightly different meaning from those in the study, and it seems likely that the subjects do feel that intransitive verbs are fairly unacceptable in the passive. The five English sentences in the study which contained passivized intransitive verbs are shown in table 21.

(22) When he got home, he saw that the bed had not been slept in.

(23) It is argued that a separation of state and church will benefit both parties.

Table 21: Judgments by Norwegian speakers on English passivized intransitive verbs

Sentence no.	gr	un	other	Total:
1 In the miss universe finals, it is smiled a lot, even though a pretty smile is probably not all it takes to win.	16	22	12	50
2 At some parties, especially where there are many young people, it is probably slept a little in the corners.	2	33	15	50
3 It has never been traveled more by young people than in the 1990s.	5	35	10	50
4 Even though many controversial issues were discussed, it was argued relatively little at the meeting.	17	19	14	50
5 In political debates, it is often talked more than it is listened.	22	16	12	50
Total:	40	109	51	200

Looking at the Norwegian subjects' judgments on passivized intransitive verbs, we find that there is a vast difference between the different sentences when it comes to whether or not they are accepted. While sentences 1, 4, and 5 in table 21 have been accepted by between 16 and 22 subjects, that is, about the same percentage as with the least accepted impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, sentences 2 and 3 have hardly been accepted by anyone at all.

In table 22 below, the Norwegian counterparts to the English sentences are represented, in the same order as the English sentences in table 21. Here we see that the two sentences which hardly anyone had accepted in English are only accepted by 17 and 26 subjects in Norwegian. This number is comparable to the judgments on English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. The latter structure we have argued to be very low on acceptability in the interlanguage of these subjects. The other sentences are all accepted by more than 80% of the subjects.

Table 22: Judgments on Norwegian passivized intransitives

sentence no.	-	Gr	un	un*	ns	ns*	Total:
1	1	41	2		4	2	50
2		26	10		12	2	50
3		17	25		1	7	50
4		46	1		3		50
5	1	42	1	2	3	1	50
Total:	2	172	39	2	23	12	250

It seems that sentences 2 and 3 are not seen as very acceptable regardless of language. With sentence 3 this especially seems to be the case, since this sentence was rejected by as many as 25 out of 50 subjects in Norwegian, compared to 35 out of 50 in English. Sentence 3, however, although accepted by only 26 subjects in Norwegian, was only actually rejected by 10, compared to 33 in English. It thus seems that this sentence has been rejected relatively frequently in English compared to Norwegian. Since the other sentences seem to conform when it comes to the relationship between the judgments on the Norwegian and the English sentences, it seems likely that this difference may still have to do with other factors.

It is also worth noting that while sentence 2 was among the most rejected sentences by the English subjects (92%), sentence 3 was among those that had been rejected to a relatively small extent (75%). I will not go into details about the factors making these sentences unacceptable. Suffice it to say that sentence 2 was seen as fairly unacceptable in Norwegian, and as highly unacceptable in English by English and Norwegian subjects alike. Sentence 3, however, was apparently seen as highly unacceptable both in Norwegian and English by the Norwegian subjects, but as relatively acceptable, considering that it is, in fact, ungrammatical in English, by the English subjects.

Having argued that the low frequency of acceptance of these two sentences is due to factors irrelevant to my study, we have to assume that this also influences the low percentage of

acceptance in table 22, and that the difference between the Norwegian subjects' judgments on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs (acceptance 34%-64%) and with intransitive verbs is not as significant as might seem. We still see that the acceptance of the sentences with intransitive verbs is relatively low, 32%, 34% and 44% respectively for sentences 1, 4 and 5 in table 21. The overall percentage of acceptance of these three sentences is only about 37%, compared to almost 54% for the impersonal passives with postverbal NPs.

This, of course, supports the proposal in chapter 2 that passivized intransitive verbs are less accepted than are impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. If we look at the acceptability hierarchy proposed for English passives in chapter 2, repeated in (24), we see that it seems to hold. This is not really surprising, since the highest level includes those structures which we can assume that the subjects have encountered in the English input, the middle level includes those structures most closely related to these, and the bottom level includes those structures not encountered, and which are not very closely related to those on the top level.

(24) Acceptability hierarchy:

personal passives, impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

|

impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

|

passivized intransitive verbs

So far, we have not discussed the subjects' judgments of the two grammatical English structures in the study, namely impersonal passives with postverbal clauses and active sentences with an expletive subject. In chapter 2, it was argued that one factor in the development of the Norwegian L2 acquirers skepticism toward impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs may be that in school they are advised that passives entail a very formal language in English, and should be avoided. This argument implies that active sentences should in general preferred by the subjects. However, we saw in table 18, repeated as table 23 below, that whereas impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

were accepted in more than 70% of the instances, the active sentences were only accepted 67.5% of the time.

Table 23: Acceptance percentage on all sentence types by Norwegian and English subjects

	Norwegian subjects	English subjects
Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs	29.4%	76.5%
Passivized intransitive verbs	50%	84.8%
Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses	70.4%	88.3%
Impersonal active sentences	67.5%	85.3%

We might find some clues as to the reasons for this fairly low acceptance percentage by looking at the sentences. The active sentence which was accepted the least, shown in (25a), was only accepted by about 62% of the English subjects. I argued in section 3.3.4.3 that it seemed that many of the English subjects interpreted the adjective *closed* as a participle, and therefore rejected the sentence. This may very well have happened with the Norwegian subjects as well. The sentence in (26a) was accepted by 80% of the subjects. Whereas the sentence in (25a) could easily have been changed as in (25b), avoiding the use of an expletive, this is less natural with the sentence in (26), as we see in (26b). My proposal is, then, that these sentences are sometimes rejected because they would be more natural without the expletive subject. Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses, on the other hand, are like (26a) in that the sentence becomes somewhat awkward if the postverbal element is fronted. This argument resembles the one made for impersonal passives with postverbal NPs. We saw that the subjects seem to accept such sentences less when the postverbal NP is short, so that a personal passive would be natural, and more when the postverbal NP is long so that a personal passive would not be very acceptable. I therefore assume that active sentences are generally more accepted by Norwegian acquirers of English than are passives, but that the active sentences in this study were rejected slightly more than were impersonal passives with postverbal NPs because of what the subjects felt to be unnecessary use of expletives.

(25) a) There have been many closed roads in Northern Norway this summer.
b) Many roads have been closed in Northern Norway this winter.

(26) a) It is likely that the new Austrian government will run into problems with the rest of the world.

b) That the Austrian government will run into problems with the rest of the world is likely.

3.5.5 Discussion

We have seen that the results of the Norwegian subjects' judgments and translations on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs conform to the theory outlined in section 2.1. The majority of subjects do not seem to have clear intuitions about the ungrammaticality of these structures when making grammaticality judgments. They do, however, generally show signs of being skeptical to such sentences. This is consistent with Plough's (1992) proposal that indirect negative evidence may lead to a *probably true* conclusion about the target language. The fact that the subjects with very few exceptions changed the sentences into personal passives when trying to repair them, lends support to the assumption that it is the relative frequency of these structures which makes the subjects skeptical toward the impersonal passives. This proposal is also supported by the fact that exposure to English seemed to be of importance to this process, which means that input is crucial before this inferencing can take place.

Furthermore, we saw that the majority of the subjects consistently rephrased impersonal passives with postverbal NPs into personal passives when translating them into Norwegian. This supports Kellerman's (1979) proposal that L2 acquirers tend to avoid not only structures that are present in the target language but not in the native language, but also structures which are grammatical in the native language, but which the language acquirer thinks may be ungrammatical in the target language. Finally, we saw that a few subjects did seem to know the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs in English, and of passivized intransitive verbs. However, none of them gave an explicit rule when commenting on the reasons for their rejections, which lends support to theories assuming that the interlanguage is built by automatized knowledge, such as (1978) and Krashen (1981).

Furthermore, since very few subjects rejected impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs to the same extent, it seems fair to assume that the variable results on the two ungrammatical English structures in the study are acquired somewhat independently. It also seems natural to conclude that it is therefore probably not the rule of case absorption which is eventually incorporated into the interlanguage, but rather two separate rules excluding impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with passivized intransitive verbs respectively.

In chapter 4, I will sum up the arguments and conclusions drawn in this thesis in order to show more clearly that these results are not easily explained by other models of L2 acquisition, such as UG models, and that Hypothesis 4 from chapter 2, along with its additional assumptions, seems to hold some explanatory value for the results.

4 Conclusions

In chapter 1, it was argued that the study of L2 acquisition is the study of interlanguage. That means that the conclusions drawn from the studies in this thesis will have to be conclusions about the interlanguage of relatively advanced Norwegian acquirers of English, as well as possible conclusions as to how they have arrived at this interlanguage. The latter of these investigations will of course depend on the former, since the extent to which the interlanguage of the subjects corresponds to the native grammar of an English speaker determines the extent to which we can assume models of acquisition that explain L1 acquisition to hold for L2 acquisition as well. In chapter 2, four hypotheses were formulated that made predictions about the interlanguage and the mechanisms leading to it. These hypotheses are repeated below.

(1) L2 acquirers, like L1 acquirers, are conservative, and Norwegian L2 acquirers of English start out assuming that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are ungrammatical, regardless of their L1.
(2) L2 acquirers are not conservative, and since they encounter no positive evidence telling them that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, Norwegian acquirers of English will assume that these structures are grammatical in English just like in Norwegian.
(3) L2 acquirers are not conservative, and Norwegian L2 acquirers of English initially assume that impersonal passives and with intransitive verbs are grammatical in English. However, on the basis of cues in the input, they eventually reset their parameter from the Norwegian to the English setting.
(4) L2 acquirers are not conservative, and Norwegian L2 acquirers of English initially assume that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs are grammatical also in English. However, L2 acquirers may, especially at more advanced stages, be sensitive to indirect negative evidence, i.e. the absence of certain structures in the input. Advanced Norwegian acquirers of English may therefore have an intuition that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs are ungrammatical in English, without necessarily resetting the case absorption parameter.

4.1 The interlanguage

Provided that we assume grammaticality judgments to reflect the linguistic competence of the Norwegian subjects, it seems quite clear that their interlanguage still to be quite different from the grammar of a native speaker. In table 22 in chapter 3, repeated below, we saw that the percentage of correct responses by the Norwegian subjects was considerably lower than for the English subjects (when we assume correct responses to be those corresponding to current linguistic theory, i.e. of Chomsky 1981 etc.). In contrast, the Norwegian subjects gave correct responses on the Norwegian sentences over 80% of the time, which matches the percentages of correct judgments by the English subjects, with all sentences except passivized intransitive verbs. The low percentage on the latter structure seemed to stem from the low acceptability of two of the sentences, as was discussed in chapter 3.

Table 1: Percentage of correct responses on all sentence types by Norwegian and English subjects[18]

	Norwegian subjects	English subjects
Impersonal passives with postverbal NPs	29.4%	76.5%
passivized intransitive verbs	50%	84.3%
Impersonal passives with postverbal clauses	70.4%	88.3%
Impersonal active sentences	67.5%	85.3%

It is also worth noting that the lower number of correct judgments by the Norwegian subjects entails not only a too high percentage of rejected, nor of accepted sentences. Two of the structures, viz. impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs, are ungrammatical, and a high percentage of incorrect responses here entails a too high percentage of accepted sentences. The two other structures, impersonal passives with postverbal clauses and impersonal active sentences, are grammatical in English, which means that the high percentage of incorrect responses here implies that the Norwegian subjects have rejected too many sentences.

[18] As mentioned earlier, I left out sentence 2t from when calculating the percentages for the English subjects on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, since this was the sentence which nobody had accepted but which had *it* as its dummy subject instead of *there.*

Not only the Norwegian subjects' grammaticality judgments indicate the difference between their interlanguage and the grammar of a native speaker. In section 3.3.1.6, it was noted that whereas the majority of the English corrections on impersonal passives with postverbal NPs entailed a change of the sentence into a reduced relative, the Norwegian subjects almost invariably changed such sentences into personal passives, fronting the NP. Also the high number of unsuccessful corrections by the Norwegian subjects might indicate a difference between the interlanguage and the grammar of a native speaker.

With passivized intransitive verbs, it was noted in section 3.3.3 that whereas the English subjects often seemed to have problems interpreting these sentences, commenting that they did not understand the reference of *it*, the Norwegian subjects did not seem to have this problem. This might indicate that the Norwegian subjects are still relying somewhat on the grammar of their L1 for interpreting sentences.

We may then conclude that the interlanguage of the Norwegian L2 acquirers in the studies reported in this thesis is, in various ways, different from the grammar of a native speaker of English.

4.2 Performance

When arguing that the interlanguage of these acquirers of English is still different from the grammar of a native speaker of English, it is of course useful to look at the performance of these same acquirers. If their performance differs significantly from that of native speakers, it is not surprising that their interlanguage does so, too. If, however, their performance can be said to be close to native-like, then the differences in linguistic competence become more interesting.

The studies reported in this thesis do not give much information about the linguistic performance of the subjects. We can, of course, assume that most of them are fairly fluent speakers of English, since they are all university students of English, and since close to half of them have spent a year or more in English-speaking countries, and most of them more than a month. Also, the subjects have been acquiring English for at least 10 years.

There is still some evidence of the performance of the subjects in the studies. The pilot translation study and the translation section of the main study were of course included for this purpose. In the pilot study, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs were rephrased when translated from Norwegian to English about 79% of the time, passives with intransitive verbs almost 92% of the time. In the translation section of the main study, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs were rephrased when translated into English 70% of the time. This number is only slightly lower than the percentage of English subjects rejecting these sentences (78%). Passivized intransitive verbs were rephrased slightly more often; in 75.2% of the instances. (The percentage of rejections here was about 83% for the English subjects.) This means that as long as we assume grammaticality judgments to reflect linguistic competence, then these subjects' performance far exceeded their competence (rejection percentages were 28.4% and 50% for impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs respectively in the main study).

The translations show also other aspects of the subjects' performance, such as their use of verb forms, vocabulary etc. Here we find that there are indeed very few mistakes. The confusion about *is/are* and *it/there* which was seen in the grammaticality judgment was not frequent in the translation section. Whereas concord errors were made a few times by two or three subjects, there was only one *it/there* mistake made by one of the subjects. The overall picture is that the vast majority of subjects are, if not native-like, then at least fairly near-native in their performance. By contrast, we see that only around 3 of the 50 subjects show a competence in the grammaticality judgments that can be seen as near-native, consistently rejecting both ungrammatical English structures in the grammaticality judgments.

4.3 Models of L2 acquisition

In the previous chapter the results from the main study were analyzed, and it was argued that although these results were extremely ambiguous and variable when it comes to the two ungrammatical structures, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs (exemplified in (5) and (6) respectively), there was evidence that the subjects had some intuition that these structures are not as acceptable in English as in Norwegian. It was furthermore proposed that this intuition may stem from the use of inductive inferencing, as

proposed by Plough (1992), and that in this process, indirect negative evidence may be relevant in constructing an accessibility hierarchy for English passives. In the following sections, I will show that other approaches to the acquisition of case absorption effects are not sufficient explanations for the results of my studies.

(5) There are still sold millions of Elvis' records all over the world.
(6) It was argued relatively little at the meeting.

4.3.1 UG and the acquisition of case absorption effects

As already mentioned, Universal Grammar is assumed to consist of universal principles, which hold for all languages, and parameters, which account for cross-linguistic variation. In order to account for parameter setting in language acquisition, markedness relations are often defined. The most common way to define markedness within a generative framework is to assume that the unmarked parameter settings are those that generate the smallest possible number of sentences. For parameters where there is no positive evidence of the more restrictive setting compared to the less restrictive setting, it is assumed by many generativists that children initially assume the unmarked setting, i. e. the Subset Principle. For the case absorption parameter suggested by Åfarli (1992), discussed in section 1.2, this means that the English setting is the unmarked, since this setting allows for a smaller number of possible sentences than does the Norwegian setting. Hypothesis 1 assumes the Subset Principle to be relevant also in l2 acquisition, and thus clearly does not explain the results of my studies.

Platzack (1996), as already mentioned, argues that the parameter settings initially adopted are those where the least amount of movement is required, since movement is assumed to be a costly process that will only take place if necessary. Movement, he proposes, is only acquired after the child has realized that there are strong features that need to be checked by movement. This argument implies an analysis like Hestvik's (1986) proposal that impersonal passives are the unmarked, i. e. the "most natural", less costly structure, and would then predict that impersonal passives are the structures used initially. This is however not consistent with the fact that English children have never been reported to initially use impersonal passives. Furthermore, in terms of the questions raised in this thesis, it is not a fruitful theory, since, if we are to apply it to L2 acquisition, it only suggests that the Norwegian L2 acquirers will

initially assume that impersonal passives are the grammatical ones, and does not explain how these acquirers might realize that movement of the NP is in fact necessary. Furthermore, the fact that those Norwegian acquirers in the pilot study who accepted the most impersonal passives also accepted personal passives implies that even though they initially seem to assume that impersonal passives are grammatical in English, they do not think that personal passives are ungrammatical. applied to L2 acquisition, Platzack's arguments would lead to the same predictions as Hypothesis 2, which have shown not to hold.

Lightfoot (1999) proposes that language acquisition is not a question of markedness, but rather, of *cues* in the input. Lightfoot argues that the structures of the target language (which, in his discussion, is the L1) are acquired on the basis of cues in the input received. An example of such a cue, he proposes, is the movement of the main verb in sentences with an initial non-subject for the acquisition of V2 word order. An important part of Lightfoot's argument is that such cues must be very strong in order to lead to acquisition, and that when the cues are weak, the structure is not acquired. Thus, he argues, the language acquired by children is not the language of their parents, but rather, their own language based on the cues in the language of their parents. In this way, he argues, we can also account for language change; the change of English word order in Middle English from V2 to SVO, he proposes, is an example of the cues becoming too weak for acquisition.

We could of course argue that the way in which English children acquire case absorption is through cues in the input. It is, however, difficult to imagine what cues can be assumed that are strong enough to cause acquisition, since case absorption seems only to exclude possible structures, and not to allow for structures not grammatical in languages with optional case absorption (e.g. Norwegian)[19].

We encounter a more profound problem if we attempt to employ Lightfoot's ideas to L2 acquisition. If we assume that children acquire case absorption by the use of cues in the input, then we will have to wonder why the Norwegian acquirers of English in my studies do not seem to have been very sensitive to these cues, since very few of them seem to have acquired

[19] This, of course, also means that it is hard to imagine the cues which would lead to the acquisition of case absorption for L1 acquirers. Again, the way in which this is acquired in an L1 will not be discussed in detail in this thesis.

the effects of case absorption after at least 10 years of acquisition. We could assume that the sensitivity to cues in the input disappears with age, assuming a critical period. This proposal, of course, leads us to the old problem of explaining how they develop intuitions about the ungrammaticality, as most of them seem to have done in my studies.

Another solution would be to assume that the ability to utilize syntactic cues in the input does not disappear over time, it merely weakens. This could, then, explain the late development of case absorption. However, if the capacity for acquiring language on the basis of cues in the input is weakened in these subjects to such an extent that they are still struggling with noticing the cues after ten years, then we would expect L2 acquirers in general to make more mistakes in all areas of language than they in fact do. Cues for the acquisition of V2 have already been discussed. If L2 acquisition proceeds on the basis of a weakened capacity to notice cues, then we would not expect native speakers of SVO languages to show signs of acquiring V2 word order in an L2 until years into the acquisition process. Applying Lightfoot's arguments to L2 acquisition, as was done in Hypothesis 3, thus also seems problematic.

It seems then that theories assuming UG to be a crucial factor in L2 acquisition cannot explain the results of the studies in this thesis. The L2 acquirers in these studies are obviously not sensitive to the Subset Principle, since they seem initially to assume that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs are grammatical in English as well as in Norwegian. If we assume that they are conservative, but that this conservatism leads them initially to assume that impersonal passives are the correct ones, then we have a problem explaining why they invariably seem to accept personal passives as well. More importantly, though, such an approach explains only why the subjects initially seem to accept impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs in English, and not how they become uncertain and possibly eventually realize that these structures are ungrammatical.

As long as we assume that the Subset Principle is not necessarily a part of UG, then there is of course nothing in the previous discussion excluding the possibility of UG in L2 acquisition. Since both the Norwegian and the English uses of passive are of course possible within UG, the problems in differentiating between them do not necessarily stem from a lack of access to UG. Furthermore, none of the subjects' comments, corrections or translations were violations of UG. Most of the English produced in the study was grammatical. When there was

ungrammaticality in the English produced by the Norwegian subjects, it only violated language-specific rules. One obvious example is the violations of case absorption. Also the errors regarding *is/are* and *it/there* are probably mistakes in choice of vocabulary stemming from the fact that Norwegian only has one word, *er*, for the present tense of the verb *to be* regardless of person, and one word, *det*, for both existential *there* and the expletive subject *it.*

We have, then, no evidence indicating that UG may not play a part in L2 acquisition. On the other hand, there is no real evidence that it necessarily *does* play a part. At any rate, there does not seem to be anything in the nature of UG that explains the fact that while the subjects apparently initially assume that impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs are grammatical in English, they then, at a fairly advanced stage in their L2 acquisition, start getting confused and skeptical to such sentences, and then finally, possibly, realize that they are ungrammatical.

4.3.2 Other approaches and the acquisition of case absorption effects

As mentioned in chapter 1, linguistic universals are also proposed within a typological framework. The structures discussed in this thesis would be defined by typologists as implicational universals in that the presence of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs also imply the presence of personal passives with the patient NP in subject position. With the definition of implicational universals and markedness described in chapter 4, this means that English acquirers of Norwegian should have problems with Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal NPs, these being the marked structures, but that Norwegian acquirers of English should not have a problem, since the personal passives that are the only option in English are the unmarked structures. Again, we see that this is not compatible with the data from my studies, since they clearly indicate that Norwegian acquirers of English initially transfer impersonal passives with postverbal NPs from Norwegian, which is assumed to be the more marked structure.

It seems then that linguistic universals, either generative or typological, and their markedness relations, are not a sufficient explanation for the data of the studies in this study, and that considering arguments like those made in Hypothesis 4 is worthwhile.

L2 researchers like Bialystok (1978) argue that one major difference between L1 and L2 acquisition is that whereas the former seems to be a more or less unconscious process, L2 acquisition involves the use of conscious learning strategies. The use of induction proposed by Plough (1992) is probably at least partly conscious. The process involves a comparison between the L2 input and the previous (L1) linguistic knowledge, and it involves conclusions based on, but not following necessarily from, the differences found. Also the construction of the acceptability hierarchy outlined in chapter 4 and repeated in chapter 6 implies a use of conscious strategies, since it entails a comparison of structures, use of analogy, and attempts at rephrasing.

If the use of indirect negative evidence and induction is indeed a conscious strategy, then the question is what motivates the L2 acquirers to use this strategy.

As mentioned in chapter 1, Klein and Perdue (1993) argue that since it is possible to communicate relying on pragmatics only, the driving force behind the movement toward what Givon calls the syntactic end of the syntactic/pragmatic continuum is probably a subjective desire to sound like native speakers of the language. I argued in chapter 1 that this desire to be identified with native speakers of the target language can hardly be assumed to account for all L2 acquisition of syntax. However, it is not unlikely that, after acquiring the main structures of the target language, the L2 acquirer may turn to the more subtle aspects, driven by a desire to become as native-like as possible. The subjects of my studies probably do not have significant problems understanding and being understood in the target language, and have also most likely acquired most of the main structures of the L2. This would be the most likely time to start scanning the L2 input for more subtle discrepancies between input and output, and the avoidance of structures that the acquirer does not encounter.

This approach also accounts for the fairly large individual differences found in the results of the studies, since the desire to become native-like may be stronger in some L2 acquirers than in others. In chapter 3 it was argued that those of the Norwegian subjects who performed most like the English subjects were typically those who had spent a considerable amount of time in English-speaking countries, and who were beyond the basic level of university English studies. This was taken to imply that input is a crucial factor in the acquisition of the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. However, time exposed to English did not seem necessarily to lead to acquisition. The subject

who had spent the most time in English-speaking countries, subject 49, was also a graduate student of English. This subject, however, did not perform particularly well, compared to many of the subjects who had spent considerably less time in English-speaking countries and who were at lower levels of studies. The number of subjects in the study was of course far too low for any firm conclusions to be drawn, but the relatively poor performance of this subject may indicate that there are differences in the extent to which strategies such as induction are used by L2 acquirers. The extent to which such strategies are employed may have to do with the extent to which the subject wants to be identified with the native speakers of the target language, i. e. motivation, but it may also have to do with the extent to which the language acquirer actually pays attention to the structures used in the L2, as well as the extent to which he is able to utilize relevant learning strategies. The suggestion that the use of induction is, at least at some level, a conscious one, implies that it entails cognitive skills, and thus that some people may be better at it than others, as is the case with learning in general.

4.4 The final state

In addition to differences in rate and strategies employed in L2 acquisition, another attested difference between L1 and L2 acquisition is the success of the acquisition process. As mentioned in chapter 1, studies like that of White and Genesee (1996) show that L2 acquisition can indeed lead to a native-like linguistic competence. This is also the impression given by the fact that three subjects in my studies consistently rejected all the ungrammatical English structures. It is, however, a well-documented fact that this kind of competence in the target language is the exemption rather than the norm in L2 acquisition. So far, the variability of the judgments by the majority of the subjects has been seen as an indication that they are in the process of acquiring the ungrammaticality of impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and with intransitive verbs. However, this is not necessarily the case for all of them. L2 acquirers are known to fossilize at a point where their interlanguage is still very different from the grammar of a native speaker, and it is likely that at least some of the subjects of my studies will not develop further when it comes to these structures. According to my argument of how the acquisition of the ungrammaticality of the structures in question proceeds, it is likely that these are the subjects who are the least able to notice discrepancies between the input received and their own output, and the least able to use notice the absence of certain forms.

Some of the subjects in my studies had apparently acquired the ungrammaticality of one or both of the ungrammatical structures in question. It was argued earlier that automatization of forms encountered and used may play a crucial role in this acquisition. Again, however, individual differences probably play a role. There is evidence that the majority of subjects had automatized alternatives to both impersonal passives with postverbal NPs and passivized intransitive verbs. They almost invariably rephrased such structures when translating. Moreover, their questionnaires proved that this must have happened automatically. There were very few instances of a subject having started out using the ungrammatical alternative, and then erased it and rephrased. Those few subjects, then, who performed as well in grammaticality judgments as in translation, seem to have been more convinced that their automatic intuitions held true. This entails a greater self-confidence in relation to one's own interlanguage, and possibly also a greater conscious attention to the difference in system between the L1 and the L2.

4.5 Suggestions for further research

The studies in this thesis had, of course, their weaknesses. In order to further investigate the issues discussed in this thesis, several studies can be done. The proposed acceptability hierarchy for English passives could be further explored by a grammaticality judgment test differentiating between more than three response categories (e. g. very acceptable, fairly acceptable, fairly unacceptable, very unacceptable). The actual use of the ungrammatical structures in question by Norwegian L2 acquirers of English can be studied by looking at a larger corpus of output by such acquirers. In order to investigate whether the inconsistent judgments by the majority of my subjects reflect acquisition in process, or whether it merely reflects fossilization, studies using subjects at different stages of acquisition can be conducted. Last but not least, in order for my thesis to have explanatory value for L2 acquisition in general, other structures similar to those in my study could be studied, preferably also with subjects with different L1s and L2s.

APPENDIX 1

Test sentences in the main study

English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

1. During the 17th century there were invented many new machines that completlely revolutionized the industry and brought about great changes in society.
2. There are still written many books which are inspired by "The Lord of the Rings" by J. R. R. Tolkien.
3. Although sexual education is getting better in the USA, there are still born many children with parents who have not yet finished high school.
4. Because of the cold weather there were bought many warm clothes in Tromsø this winter.
5. There have been made many movies about UFOs and other supernatural phenomena.
6. The ideal for young girls is to be thin and there are made large amounts of clothes that can only be worn by girls who are underweight and on a constant diet.
7. More than 20 years after his death, there are still sold millions of Elvis' records all over the world.
8. In the USA there are frequently held beauty pageants for children where little girls are dressed up like grown up women.
9. It is no secret that there have been kept records of many Norwegians because of their political convictions.
10. For Valentine's Day there are sold millions of romantic cards decorated with pink hearts and little love poems.

English equivalents of translation sentences (English subjects only)

1. This week there has been opened a new record store which is independent of the big franchises in Tromsø.
2. Among housewives it is read many romantic books about young, beautiful women and rich men in prestigious professions.
3. There are sold many cellular phones with more or less useful functions in Norway.
4. During the election campaign, there were given promises about more money to the elderly and the sick as well as to schools.
5. There are made incredibly many violent movies which give both children and adults nightmares.

Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

1. I løpet av 1800-tallet ble det funnet opp mange nye maskiner som fullstendig revolusjonerte industrien og førte til store forandringer i samfunnet.
2. Det blir fortsatt skrevet mange bøker som er inspirert av J. R. R. Tolkiens "Ringenes Herre".
3. Selv om seksualundervisninga har blitt bedre i USA, blir det fortsatt født mange barn med foreldere som ikke enda er ferdig med ungdomsskolen.
4. På grunn av det varme været ble det kjøpt mange varme klær i Tromsø i vinter.
5. Det har blitt lagd mange filmer om UFOer og andre overnaturlige fenomener.
6. Idealet for unge jenter er å være tynn, og det blir lagd store menger klær som bare kan brukes av jenter som er undervektige og er på evig slankekur.
7. Mer enn 20 år etter hans død blir det fortsatt solgt millioner av Elvisplater over hele verden.
8. I USA blir det ofte holdt skjønnhetskonkurranser for barn hvor små jenter blir dresset opp som voksne kvinner.
9. Det er ingen hemmelighet at det har blitt lagret opplysninger om mange nordmenn på grunn av deres politiske overbevisning.
10. Før Valentine's Day blir det solgt millionvis av romeantiske kort dekorert med rosa hjerter og små kjærlighetsdikt.

Translation sentences (Norwegian subjects only)

1. Denne uka har det blitt åpnet en ny platebutikk som er uavhengeig av de store kjedene i Tromsø.
2. Blant husmødre blir det lest mange romantiske bøker om unge vakre kvinner og rike menn i prestisjefylte yrker.
3. Det blir solgt mange mobiltelefoner med mer eller mindre nyttige funksjoner i Norge.
4. I forbindelse med valgkampen ble det gitt løfter om mer penger både til eldre, syke og skoler
5. Det blir laget utrolig mange filmer som gir både barn og voksne mennesker mareritt.

English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses:

1. It has been claimed that random violence is increasing dramatically.
2. For many centuries it was assumed that the peoples of other continents were inferior to Europeans.
3. It is still being discussed whether single parents should be allowed to adopt children.
4. Although it is not anyone's mother tongue any more, it is still claimed by many that Latin is the most sophisticated language in the world.
5. It was feared by many that the turn of the millennium would lead to the end of the world.

English equivalents of translation sentences (English subjects only)

1. It is claimed that it is healthy to drink two glasses of red wine every day.
2. In the newspapers it is written that the government will soon resign.
3. It is said that the grass is always greener on the other side.
4. It is being discussed whether Norway accepts too many refugees.
5. It is feared that higher speed limits will lead to more traffic accidents.

Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal clauses:

1. Det har blitt hevdet at blind vold øker dramatisk.
2. I mange århundrer ble det antatt at folkeslagene i andre verdensdeler var underlegne i forhold til europeere.
3. Det blir fortsatt diskutert om enslige foreldre bør få adoptere barn.
4. Selv om ingen lenger har det som morsmål blir det fortsatt påstått av mange at latin er det mest sofistikerte språket i verden.
5. Det ble fryktet av mange at årtusenskiftet ville føre til verdens undergang.

Translation sentences (Norwegian subjects only)

1. Det blir hevdet at det er sunt å drikke to glass rødvin om dagen.
2. I avisene blir det skrevet at regjeringen snart vil gå av.
3. Det blir sagt at gresset alltid er grønnere på den andre siden.
4. Det blir diskutert om Norge tar imot for mange flyktninger.
5. Det blir fryktet at høyere fartsgrenser vil føre til flere trafikkulykker.

English passives with intransitive verbs

1. In the Miss Universe finals it is always smiled a lot although a pretty smile is probably not all it takes to win.
2. At some parties, especially where there are many young people it is probably slept a little in the corners.
3. It has never been traveled more by young people than in the 1990s.
4. Even though many controversial issues were discussed, it was argued relatively little at the meeting.
5. In political debates, it is often talked more than it is listened.

English equivalents of translation sentences (English subjects only)

1. The flu season is here, and it is coughed wherever you turn.
2. Among teenage girls, it is giggled a lot.
3. During natural disasters and other dramatic events, it is often prayed more than usual.
4. Since the school age was lowwered, it is played more in class.
5. In the old days, it was walked more than these days when everybody has their own car.

Norwegian passives with intransitive verbs

1. I Miss Universe-finalen blir det alltid smilt mye, selv om et pent smil neppe er alt som skal til for å vinne.
2. På enkelte fester, særlig der det er mange unge mennesker hender det nok at det blir sovet litt i krokene.
3. Det har aldri blitt reist så mye blant unge mennesker som på 90-tallet.
4. Selv om mange kontroversielle emner ble diskutert, ble det kranglet relativt lite på møtet.
5. I politiske debatter blir det ofte snakket mer enn det blir lyttet.

Translation sentences (Norwegian subjects only)

1. Influensasesongen er her, og hvor man enn snur seg blir det hostet.
2. Blant tenåringsjenter blir det fnist mye.
3. Under naturkatastrofer og andre dramatiske begivenheter blir det ofte bedt mer enn ellers.
4. Siden skolealderen ble senket blir det lekt mer i timene.
5. I gamle dager ble det gått mye mer enn nå for tiden når alle har sin egen bil.

Englisn active sentences with expletive subjects:

1. There are McDonald’s restaurants in every corner of the world today.
2. There are many people who think that we will have a new snow record this year.
3. It is not easy to learn a foreign language, and it often becomes more difficult the older you get.
4. It is likely that the new Austrian government will run into problems with the rest of the world.
5. There have been many closed roads in Northern Norway this winter.

Norwegian active sentences with expletive subjects:

1. Det McDonald's-restauranter i hver avkrok i verden nå for tida.
2. Det er mange mennesker som tror at vi vil få en ny snørekord i år.
3. Det er ikke lett å lære et fremmed språk, og det blir ofte vanskeligere jo eldre du blir.
4. Det er sannsynlig at den nye østerrikske regjeringen vil havne i problemer med resten av verden.
5. Det har vært mange stengte veier i Nord-Norge i vinter

Appendix 2: Individual differences

Subject	Age	Time in English-speaking country	Age of first acquisition	Level of studies
1	24	13 months.	10	graduate
2	25	2 months.	10	graduate
3	24	12 months.	10	graduate
4	20	12 months	4-5	intermediate
5	24	8 months	11	intermediate
6	20	6 months	10	intermediate
7	43	12 weeks	10	intermediate
8	20	5 months	10	intermediate
9	21	12 months	10	intermediate
10	20	2 months	11	intermediate
11	23	12 months	10	intermediate
12	21	24 months	11	intermediate
13	26	2 months	8	intermediate
14	20	3 months	10	intermediate
15	20	3 months	10	intermediate
16	22	3 months	10	intermediate
17	20	3 months	10	intermediate
18	20	12 months	6	intermediate
19	24	12 months	10	intermediate
20	21	12 months	10	basic
21	20	3 months	10	basic
22	21	12 months	10	basic
23	20	10 weeks	10	basic
24	24	2 weeks	10	basic
25	26	14 months	10	basic
26	19	16 days	10	basic
27	25	5 weeks	10	basic
28	27	12 months	10	basic
29	20	12 months	9	basic
30	22	1 month	10	basic
31	22	4 weeks	10	basic
32	21	17 months	10	basic
33	21	6 weeks	10	basic
34	19	15 months	10	basic
35	19	9 weeks	9	basic
36	20	6 months	10	basic
37	22	3 weeks	10	basic
38	20	3 weeks	6	basic
39	21	?	8	basic
40	20	3 weeks	10	basic
41	21	2 weeks	10	basic
42	21	2 weeks	10	basic
43	20	3 weeks	8-9	basic
44	20	3 weeks	9-10	basic
45	20	4 weeks	10	basic
46	20	2 weeks	10-11	basic
47	20	2 weeks	10	basic
48	22	6 months	7-8	basic
49	28	36 months	10	graduate
50	23	16 months	10	graduate

table 1

Norwegian subjects, English impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

subject	-	gr	gr*	un	un*	ns	ns*	total
s1		4		2		1	3	10
s2		7		1		2		10
s3		5		4		1		10
s4		6		1		2	1	10
s5				10				10
s6		7			3			10
s7		5		4	1			10
s8		6			1		3	10
s9		4		6				10
s10		7				3		10
s11		5		3	1	1		10
s12		5		5				10
s13		6		4				10
s14		7			2	1		10
s15				9	1			10
s16		4		6				10
s17		6		2		2		10
s18		1		9				10
s19	1	2		5		2		10
s20		1		9				10
s21		3		6	1			10
s22	1	7		1		1		10
s23		6		4				10
s24		6		2		2		10
s25		6		4				10
s26		2		7		1		10
s27		4		6				10
s28		4	1	1		4		10
s29	1	8			1			10
s30		7		2		1		10
s31		5		1		4		10
s32	1	4		2		3		10
s33		8			2			10
s34		6		4				10
s35		8		1			1	10
s36		8				2		10
s37		7		1		2		10
s38		6		2	2			10
s39		8				2		10
s40		5				5		10
s41		6			1	3		10
s42		8				1	1	10
s43		5		2		3		10
s44		7		2		1		10
s45	1	7		1		1		10
s46		8				2		10
s47		6		4				10
s48		6		3		1		10
s49		4		6				10
s50				9		1		10
total	5	263	1	151	16	55	9	500

table 2

Norwegian subjects, Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

subject	-	gr	un	un*	ns	total
s1		10				10
s2		10				10
s3	1	8			1	10
s4		8			2	10
s5		9	1			10
s6		8	1		1	10
s7		10				10
s8		10				10
s9		6	4			10
s10		10				10
s11		10				10
s12		8	2			10
s13		10				10
s14		8	1		1	10
s15		10				10
s16		10				10
s17		8			2	10
s18		10				10
s19		7	3			10
s20	1	8			1	10
s21	1	7		2		10
s22		10				10
s23		6	3	1		10
s24		10				10
s25		8	1		1	10
s26		10				10
s27		9	1			10
s28		9			1	10
s29	2	8				10
s30		10				10
s31	2	6		2		10
s32		6	2	1	1	10
s33		7	1		2	10
s34		10				10
s35		9			1	10
s36		9			1	10
s37		9	1			10
s38		10				10
s39		10				10
s40		9	1			10
s41		10				10
s42		8			2	10
s43		7	1		2	10
s44		8			2	10
s45		8			2	10
s46		9			1	10
s47		9	1			10
s48		9	1			10
s49		9		1		10
s50		9	1			10
total	7	436	26	7	24	500

table 3

Norwegian subjects, translation, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

subject	did not do	direct	rephrase	total
1			5	5
2		1	4	5
3		2	3	5
4			5	5
5			5	5
6			5	5
7			5	5
8			5	5
9	1		4	5
10			5	5
11		2	3	5
12		5		5
13			5	5
14			5	5
15			5	5
16			5	5
17		1	4	5
18			5	5
19			5	5
20			5	5
21		1	4	5
22			5	5
23	5			5
24			5	5
25	1		4	5
26			5	5
27			5	5
28			5	5
29		4	1	5
30	1	3	1	5
31	1	1	3	5
32			5	5
33		5		5
34			5	5
35		2	3	5
36		4	1	5
37		5		5
38		1	4	5
39		4	1	5
40		5		5
41		3	2	5
42		1	4	5
43	1	3	1	5
44			5	5
45			5	5
46		3	2	5
47		3	2	5
48	5			5
49			5	5
50			5	5
total	15	59	176	250

table 4

English subjects, impersonal passives with postverbal NPs

subject	-	gr	un	ns	total
1		1	14		15
2		1	14		15
3		4	11		15
4		1	14		15
5			14	1	15
6	1	1	7	6	15
7		1	14		15
8			11	4	15
9			11	4	15
10			14	1	15
11		3	9	3	15
12		2	13		15
13		6	9		15
14		2	13		15
15			15		15
16		4	11		15
17		1	14		15
18		5	10		15
19		2	11	2	15
20		7	8		15
21		2	12	1	15
22		4	10	1	15
23			15		15
24		4	6	5	15
25		2	10	3	15
26		2	12	1	15
27		1	14		15
28			15		15
29		5	10		15
30		2	13		15
31		1	13	1	15
32			11	4	15
33		3	12		15
34		3	12		15
35	3	1	11		15
36		2	13		15
37		9	4	2	15
38			14	1	15
39			14	1	15
40		3	12		15
41			15		15
42		13	1	1	15
43		1	14		15
44			15		15
45	1	9	5		15
46		3	11	1	15
47		3	12		15
48		3	12		15
49	1	1	13		15
50		1	13	1	15
51		6	9		15
52		3	11	1	15
53		3	9	3	15
54		1	12	2	15
55		2	13		15
56			14	1	15
57			14	1	15
58			15		15
59			14	1	15
60			15		15
61		1	14		15
62		5	6	4	15
63	2		13		15
total	8	140	740	57	945

table 5

Norwegian subjects, English impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

subject	-	gr	gr*	un	un*	ns	ns*	total
s1		4				1		5
s2		4				1		5
s3		3		2				5
s4		3				2		5
s5		4		1				5
s6	1	3		1				5
s7		5						5
s8		5						5
s9		2		3				5
s10		4				1		5
s11		5						5
s12		3		2				5
s13		3				2		5
s14		4		1				5
s15		2				3		5
s16		1		4				5
s17		5						5
s18		2		3				5
s19		5						5
s20		3		2				5
s21		5						5
s22	1	4						5
s23		2		3				5
s24		5						5
s25		2		3				5
s26		4		1				5
s27		1		2	1	1		5
s28		5						5
s29	1	4						5
s30				1		4		5
s31		2				3		5
s32	1	1		1		1	1	5
s33		3		1		1		5
s34		5						5
s35		4				1		5
s36		4				1		5
s37		4				1		5
s38		4		1				5
s39		5						5
s40		5						5
s41		4				1		5
s42		2				2	1	5
s43		2		2		1		5
s44		3		1		1		5
s45		3		1		1		5
s46		5						5
s47		3		1		1		5
s48		4		1				5
s49		4				1		5
s50		4				1		5
total	4	173		38	1	32	2	250

table 6

Norwegian subjects, Norwegian impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

subject	-	gr	gr*	un	un*	ns	ns*	
s1		4				1		5
s2		4				1		5
s3		4					1	5
s4		5						5
s5		5						5
s6	1	3				1		5
s7		4				1		5
s8		5						5
s9		4		1				5
s10		3		1		1		5
s11		5						5
s12		4		1				5
s13		5						5
s14		5						5
s15		5						5
s16		5						5
s17		3		1		1		5
s18		4		1				5
s19		5						5
s20		3		2				5
s21		5						5
s22		5						5
s23		3		2				5
s24		5						5
s25		4				1		5
s26		5						5
s27		3		2				5
s28		4				1		5
s29	1	4						5
s30		4		1				5
s31		5						5
s32	1	3				1		5
s33		4				1		5
s34		4				1		5
s35		4		1				5
s36		5						5
s37		5						5
s38		5						5
s39		5						5
s40		5						5
s41	1	3		1				5
s42		4				1		5
s43		5						5
s44		5						5
s45		4				1		5
s46		4				1		5
s47		4				1		5
s48		5						5
s49		4		1				5
s50		2				3		5
total	4	212		15		18	1	250

table 7

Norwegian subjects, translation, impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

subject	did not do	direct	dir/re	rephrase	total
1			1	4	5
2		4		1	5
3		1		4	5
4		4		1	5
5		3		2	5
6		2		3	5
7		2		3	5
8		3		2	5
9		5			5
10		3		2	5
11		5			5
12		5			5
13		4		1	5
14		5			5
15		2		3	5
16		2		3	5
17		4		1	5
18		2		3	5
19		2		3	5
20				5	5
21		3		2	5
22		4		1	5
23	5				5
24		4		1	5
25		3		2	5
26		4		1	5
27		4		1	5
28		5			5
29		5			5
30		3		2	5
31		3		2	5
32		3		2	5
33		5			5
34		5			5
35		4		1	5
36		5			5
37		5			5
38		2		3	5
39		5			5
40		5			5
41		5			5
42		3		2	5
43		2		3	5
44		5			5
45		3		2	5
46		4		1	5
47		5			5
48	5				5
49		2		3	5
50		4		1	5
total	10	168	1	71	250

table8

English subjects, impersonal passives with postverbal clauses

subject	-	gr	un	ns	total
1	4	4	1	1	10
2		10			10
3		9	1		10
4		9		1	10
5		7	1	2	10
6		10			10
7		9		1	10
8		8		2	10
9		6		4	10
10		10			10
11		9		1	10
12		8	1	1	10
13		10			10
14		10			10
15		9		1	10
16		10			10
17		9		1	10
18		10			10
19		9	1		10
20		9		1	10
21		8	1	1	10
22		10			10
23		10			10
24		8	1	1	10
25		10			10
26		10			10
27		10			10
28		10			10
29		5	4	1	10
30		10			10
31		9		1	10
32		8	2		10
33		8	1	1	10
34		8	1	1	10
35	3	6		1	10
36		10			10
37		10			10
38		9		1	10
39		9		1	10
40		10			10
41		10			10
42		9		1	10
43		8	2		10
44		9	1		10
45		10			10
46		9	1		10
47		10			10
48		7	3		10
49		8	2		10
50		9		1	10
51		9	1		10
52		10			10
53		10			10
54		10			10
55		7	1	2	10
56		7		3	10
57		8		2	10
58		10			10
59		9		1	10
60		10			10
61		10			10
62		9		1	10
63	2	2	5	1	10
total	9	553	31	37	630

table 9

Norwegian subjects, English passivized intransitive verbs

subject	-	gr	un	un*	ns	ns*	total
s1		1	1			3	5
s2		2	1		2		5
s3	2	1	1		1		5
s4		1	2		2		5
s5			5				5
s6		1	2	2			5
s7		1	4				5
s8		1	1	1	1	1	5
s9		2	3				5
s10		2	1		1	1	5
s11		2	2		1		5
s12			5				5
s13		1	4				5
s14		1	2		1	1	5
s15	1		2		2		5
s16		1	4				5
s17		1	4				5
s18			5				5
s19		1	2	2			5
s20			5				5
s21		1	4				5
s22		2	3				5
s23		1	4				5
s24			2		3		5
s25		2	3				5
s26			2	1	2		5
s27			4		1		5
s28			5				5
s29	2	2		1			5
s30		1	2	1	1		5
s31			3		2		5
s32			2		3		5
s33		2	2		1		5
s34			5				5
s35		1	1		3		5
s36		2	2		1		5
s37		4	1				5
s38		2	3				5
s39		1		3	1		5
s40			2		2	1	5
s41		1	1		3		5
s42		1		1		3	5
s43			4		1		5
s44		1	2	1	1		5
s45		2	3				5
s46		3			2		5
s47		3			2		5
s48		1	4				5
s49		2	2	1			5
s50		1			4		5
total	5	55	122	14	44	10	250

table 10

Norwegian subjects, Norwegian passivized intransitives

subject	-	gr	un	un*	ns	ns*	total
s1		3			1	1	5
s2		3				2	5
s3		4	1				5
s4		4			1		5
s5		3	1		1		5
s6		1	1		3		5
s7		5					5
s8		5					5
s9			2		3		5
s10		4	1				5
s11		3	1		1		5
s12		4	1				5
s13		4			1		5
s14		5					5
s15		5					5
s16		5					5
s17		4	1				5
s18		4	1				5
s19		2	3				5
s20		3	1		1		5
s21		4	1				5
s22		4	1				5
s23		3	2				5
s24		5					5
s25		5					5
s26		5					5
s27		4	1				5
s28		4			1		5
s29	1	2		1	1		5
s30		3	1		1		5
s31		3			2		5
s32			2		3		5
s33		4			1		5
s34		4	1				5
s35		4	1				5
s36		4	1				5
s37		5					5
s38		3	2				5
s39		5					5
s40		3	1		1		5
s41		5					5
s42		1	1		2	1	5
s43		2	2		1		5
s44		4	1				5
s45		3	1		1		5
s46		4			1		5
s47		4	1				5
s48		3	2				5
s49		4	1				5
s50		2	2	1			5
total	1	177	39	2	27	4	250

table 11

Norwegian subjects, translation, passivized intransitive verbs

subject	did not do	did not do*	direct	rephrase	rephrase*	total
1				5		5
2			1	4		5
3				5		5
4				5		5
5				5		5
6				5		5
7				5		5
8				5		5
9				5		5
10			1	4		5
11			2	3		5
12			1	4		5
13			1	4		5
14				5		5
15				5		5
16				5		5
17		1		4		5
18				5		5
19				5		5
20				5		5
21				5		5
22				5		5
23	5					5
24				5		5
25	1		1	3		5
26			1	4		5
27				5		5
28				5		5
29			4	1		5
30	1			4		5
31	2		3			5
32				5		5
33			4	1		5
34				5		5
35			1	3	1	5
36				5		5
37			4	1		5
38			1	4		5
39	1		3	1		5
40			4	1		5
41				5		5
42				5		5
43		1		4		5
44			1	4		5
45				5		5
46			4	1		5
47			4	1		5
48	5					5
49			3	2		5
50				5		5
total	15	2	44	188	1	250

table 12

English subjects, passivized intransitive verbs

subject	-	gr	un	un*	ns	ns*	
1			9		1		10
2			10				10
3			10				10
4			10				10
5		2	8				10
6		1	8		1		10
7			9		1		10
8			6		4		10
9			10				10
10			9		1		10
11			10				10
12			10				10
13		4	6				10
14			10				10
15			10				10
16			10				10
17			10				10
18			10				10
19		5	5				10
20			10				10
21			10				10
22			10				10
23			10				10
24			8		2		10
25		1	6		3		10
26		2	8				10
27		3	7				10
28			10				10
29		1	9				10
30			10				10
31			9		1		10
32		2	8				10
33		1	8		1		10
34		1	8		1		10
35	2		8				10
36		1	9				10
37		1	9				10
38			10				10
39			8	2			10
40			9		1		10
41			4		6		10
42		1	9				10
43			10				10
44			10				10
45		1	9				10
46			10				10
47		1	9				10
48		1	8		1		10
49		1	9				10
50	1		7		2		10
51			9		1		10
52		1	9				10
53		1	7		2		10
54	1	1	5	1	2		10
55			7		3		10
56			6		4		10
57		1	8		1		10
58		1	9				10
59			10				10
60		1	8		1		10
61			9		1		10
62	1	3	3		2	1	10
63		1	8		1		10
total	5	40	537	3	44	1	630

table 13

Norwegian subjects, English impersonal active sentences

subject	-	gr	un	un*	ns	total
s1		4				4
s2		3			1	4
s3		2	2			4
s4		3			1	4
s5		3	1			4
s6		4				4
s7		3			1	4
s8		4				4
s9		2	1		1	4
s10		2	1		1	4
s11		3	1			4
s12		1	3			4
s13		2	1		1	4
s14		2	1		1	4
s15		1	1		2	4
s16		4				4
s17		2	1		1	4
s18		2	2			4
s19		3	1			4
s20		2	1		1	4
s21		3	1			4
s22		4				4
s23		2	2			4
s24		3			1	4
s25		3			1	4
s26		4				4
s27		4				4
s28		1			3	4
s29	1	2	1			4
s30		4				4
s31		2			2	4
s32		2			2	4
s33		4				4
s34		3	1			4
s35		2			2	4
s36		3	1			4
s37		3			1	4
s38		3		1		4
s39		3	1			4
s40		2			2	4
s41		3			1	4
s42		4				4
s43		3			1	4
s44			1	1	2	4
s45		1	1		2	4
s46		4				4
s47		4				4
s48		4				4
s49		3			1	4
s50		4				4
total	1	139	26	2	32	200

table 14

Norwegian subjects, Norwegian impersonal active sentences

subject	-	gr	un		total
s1		4			4
s2		4			4
s3		3	1		4
s4		3	1		4
s5		4			4
s6		3	1		4
s7		4			4
s8		4			4
s9		4			4
s10		4			4
s11		4			4
s12		2	2		4
s13		4			4
s14		4			4
s15		4			4
s16		4			4
s17		3	1		4
s18		4			4
s19		4			4
s20		3	1		4
s21		4			4
s22		3	1		4
s23		2	2		4
s24		4			4
s25		2	2		4
s26		3	1		4
s27		3	1		4
s28		3	1		4
s29		4			4
s30		4			4
s31		4			4
s32	1	3			4
s33		4			4
s34		4			4
s35		4			4
s36		4			4
s37		4			4
s38		4			4
s39		4			4
s40		4			4
s41		4			4
s42		4			4
s43		3	1		4
s44		3	1		4
s45		4			4
s46		4			4
s47		4			4
s48		4			4
s49		3	1		4
s50		3	1		4
total	1	180	19		200

table 15

English subjects
impersonal active sentences

subject	-	gr	un	ns	total
1		4			4
2		4			4
3		4			4
4		3	1		4
5		4			4
6		4			4
7		3	1		4
8		1		3	4
9		3	1		4
10		3	1		4
11		4			4
12		4			4
13		4			4
14		4			4
15		3	1		4
16		4			4
17		4			4
18		4			4
19		4			4
20		4			4
21		3	1		4
22		4			4
23		3	1		4
24		3		1	4
25		2		2	4
26		4			4
27		3	1		4
28		3	1		4
29		3	1		4
30		4			4
31		4			4
32		4			4
33		4			4
34		4			4
35	1	2		1	4
36		4			4
37		4			4
38		3		1	4
39		3		1	4
40		4			4
41		4			4
42		4			4
43		4			4
44		3	1		4
45		4			4
46		4			4
47		4			4
48		3	1		4
49		4			4
50		3	1		4
51		4			4
52		4			4
53		4			4
54		4			4
55		3		1	4
56		4			4
57		3		1	4
58		4			4
59		3	1		4
60		2	1	1	4
61		3	1		4
62		2	1	1	4
63			3	1	4
total	1	217	20	14	252

Literature:

Bley-Vroman, R., Felix, S., and Ioup G. (1988) "The Accessibility of UG in Adult Language Learning" in *Second Language Research* 1/88

Bloom, L., 1970: *Language Development:Form and Function in emerging Grammars,* MIT University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Baker, Mark C., 1988: *Incorporation; A Theory of Grammatical Function Changing,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Bialystok, E., 1978: "A Theoretical Model of Second Language Learning", in *Language Learning 28, 69-84*

Bohannon III, John Neil and Warren-Leubecker, Amye 1985: "Theoretical Approaches to Language Acquisition" in J.B.Gleason (ed.): *The Development of Language*, Charles E. Merril, Columbus, Ohio

Braine, Martin, 1987: "What is Learned in Acquiring Word Classes – a Step toward an Acquisition Theory", in B. MacWhinney (ed.) *Mechanisms of Language Acquisition,* Erlbaum, New York

Brown, R., 1973: *A First Language; the early stages,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Carton 1969: *The Psychology of Second Language Learning,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Chomsky, Noam, 1957: *Syntactic Structures,* Mouton, The Hague

Chomsky, Noam, 1981: *Lectures on Government and Binding,* Foris, Dordrecht

Chomsky, Noam, 1986: *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin, and Use,* Praeger, New York

Chomsky, Noam, 1993: *Lectures on Government and Binding*, de Gruyter, Berlin

Chomsky, Noam, 1995: *The Minimalist Program*

Clahsen, Harald, and Muysken, Pieter, 1988: "The UG paradox in L2 acquisition", in *Second Language Research* 1/89

Cook, Vivan, 1996: *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*, Arnold, London

Cowan, R., and Hatasa Y., 1994: "Investigating the validity and reliability of native speaker and second language learner judgments about sentences" in Tarone et al. (eds.): *Research Methodology in Second Language Acquisition*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ

Dagut, M., and Laufer, B., 1985: “Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs – A Case for Contrastive Analysis” in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 7, 73-79*

Davies and Kaplan 1998: "Native Speaker vs. L2 Learner grammaticality Judgement" in *Applied Linguistics 2*

Derwing, Bruce, 1973: *Transformational Grammar as a Theory of Language Acquisition,* Cambridge University Press, New York

Eckman, F., 1977: “Markedness and the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis” in *Language Learning 27, 315-330*

Ellis, R., 1990: *Instructed Second Language Acquisition,* Blackwell, Oxford

Felix, Sascha, 1988: “UG-Generated Knowledge in Adult Second Language Acquisition” in S. Flynn and W. O’Neil (eds.) *Linguistic Theory in Second Language Acquisition,* Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht

Gardner, R. A., and Gardner, B. T., 1974: “Teaching Sign Language to a Chimpanzee” in *Science, 165:664-672.*

Gass, Susan M., and Selinker, Larry, (eds.), 1992: *Language Transfer in Language Learning*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam

Gass, Susan M., and Selinker, Larry, 1994, *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory ourse*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ

Givon, T., 1979: *Syntax and Semantics*, Academic Press, New York

Hestvik, A., 1986: "Case Theory and Norwegian Impersonal constructions: Subject-Object Alternations in Active and Passive Verbs" in *Nordic journal of Linguistics 2*

Hulstijn, J., and Marchena, E., 1989: “Avoidance: Grammatical or Semantic Causes?” in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 11, 241-255*

Hyams, Nina, 1996: “The Underspecification of Functional Categories in Early Grammar”, in H. Clahsen (ed.), *Generative Perspectives on Language Acquisition,* John Benjamins, Amsterdam

Izumi and Lakshmanan, 1998: " Learnability, Negative Evidence and the L2 acquisition of the English Passive” in *Second Language Research 1*

Johanson and Lysvåg, 1987: *Understanding English Grammar*, Scandinavian University Press, Oslo

Kellermann, E., 1979: “Transfer and Non-transfer: Where we are now” in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition 2, 37-57*

Klein and Perdue, 1993: "Concluding Remarks" in Perdue (ed.): *Adult Language Acquisition: Cross-linguistic perspectives, Vol 2: The results*

Kleinmann, H., 1977: “Avoidance Behavior in Adult Second Language Acquisition” in *Language Learning* 27, 1.

Klima, E., and Bellugi, V., "Syntactic regularities in the speech of children" in Lyons and Wales (eds.) *Psycholinguistic Papers*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh

Krashen, S., 1981: *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning,* Pergamon, Oxford

Krashen, S., 1985: *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*, Longman, New York

Larsen-Freeman, D., and Long, M., 1991: *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research*, Longman, London

Long, M., 1983: “Does second language instruction make a difference? A review of the research” in *TESOL Quarterly 17:359-82*

Long, M., 1990: “Maturational Constraints on Language Acquisition” in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 12: 649-662

Mandell 1999: "On the Reliability of Grammaticality Judgment Tests in Secons in Second Language Acquisition" in *Second Language Resarch*

McLaughlin, B., 1987: *Theories of Second Language Learning,* Edward Arnold, London

Meisel, Jurgen M., 1997: The acquisition of the syntax of negation in French and German: contrasting first and second language development, in *Second Language Research* 3/97

Munnich, E., Flynn, and Martohardjono, G., 1994: "Elicited imitation and grammaticality judgment tasks: What they measure and how they relate to each other" in Tarone et al. (eds.): *Research Methodology in Second Language Acquisition*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ

Naiman, N., Frolich, M., Stern, H., and Todesco, A., 1978: *The Good Language Learner*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto

O’Grady, William, 1997: *Syntactic Development,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Pettito, L. A., and Seidenberg, M. S., 1979: “On the Evidence for Linguistic Abilities in Signing Apes” in *Brain and Language 8:162-183*

Piaget, 1952: *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, International Universities Press, New York

Pinker, Steven, 1984: *Language Learnability and Language Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachussetts and London, England

Pinker, Steven, 1994: *The Language Instinct*

Platzack, Christer, 1996: “The Initial Hypothesis: A Minimalist Perspective on Lnaguage Acquisition and Attrition”, in H. Clahsen (ed.), *Generative Perspectives on Language Acquisition,* John Benjamins, Amsterdam

Plough, I., 1992: "Indirect Negative Evidence, Inductive Inferencing and Second Language Acquisition" in Eubank, Selinker and Sharwood Smith (eds.) *The Current State of Interlanguage*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam

Radford, Andrew, 1990: *Syntactic Theory and the Acquisition of English Syntax, Blackwell*, Oxford

Radford, Andrew, 1992: " The Acquisition of the Morphosyntax of Finite Verbs in English", in J. Meisel (ed.), *The Acquisition of Verb Placement,* Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht

Radford, Andrew, 1997: *Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English: A Minimalist Approach*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Roca, I. M., 1990: *Logical Issues in Language Acquisition*, Foris, Dordrecht

Rubin, J., 1981: "Study of Cognitive Processes in Second Language Learning" in *Applied Linguistics 9:41-51*

Safir, K. J., 1985: *Syntactic Chains*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
Schachter, J., 1974: "An error in error analysis" in *Language Learning 24, 205-214*

Schachter, Jacquelyn, 1974: "An error in error analysis" in *Language Learning 24, 205-214*

Schachter, Jacquelyn, 1996: " Maturation and the Issue of Universal Grammar in Second Language Acquisition" in W. Ritchie and T. Bhatia (eds.): *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* Academic Press, San Diego

Schlesinger, I. M., 1982: *Steps to Language,* Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ

Selinker, L., 1972: "Interlanguage" in *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 10, 209-231*

Singleton, David, 1989: *Language Acquisition: The Age Factor,* Multilingual Matters, Clavedon

Slobin, Dan, 1966: "Comments on 'Developmental psycholinguistics'" in F. Smith and G. Miller (eds.): *The Genesis of Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge

Slobin, Dan, 1973: "Cognitive Prerequisites for the Development of Grammar" in C. Ferguson and D. Slobin (eds.): *Studies of Child Language Development,* Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York

Slobin, Dan, 1985: "Crosslinguistic Evidence for the Language-Making Capacity" in D. Slobin (ed.): *The Cross-Linguistic Study of Language Acquisition* vol.2 *Theoretical Issues,* Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ

Sobin, 1985: "Case assignment in Ukranian Morphological Passive Constructions" in *Linguistic Inquiry 16:649-662*

Sorace, A., 1998: "The Use of Acceptability Judgments in Second Language Acquisition" in William C., *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, Academic Press

Stowell, T., 1981: *Origins of Phrase Structure*, MIT, Cambridge, Mass.

White, L., 1989: *Universal Grammar and Second Language Acquisition,* John Benjamins, Amsterdam

White, Lydia and Genesee, Fred, 1996: “How native is near-native? The issue of ultimate attainment in adult second language acquisition” in *Second Language Research,* 3/96

Åfarli, Tor A., 1989: “Passive in Norwegian and in English”, in *Linguistic Inquiry 1/89*

Åfarli, Tor A., 1992: *The Syntax of Norwegian Passive Constructions*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam