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## **Language Acquisition**

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# **The Acquisition of Prepositional Relative Clauses by Spanish Learners of English**

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## Abbreviations List

**a.o.:** among others

**AoA:** Age of Acquisition

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**et al.:** et alii ('and others')

**FAFT:** Full Access Full Transfer

**FANT:** Full Access No Transfer

**GJT:** Grammaticality Judgement Task

**i.e.:** id est ('that is')

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**n:** number

**Null Prep:** Null Preposition

**p.:** page

**pp.:** pages

**PiP:** Pied-Piping

**PS:** Preposition Stranding

**Res Pron:** Resumptive Pronoun

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

## Abstract

The acquisition of prepositional relative clauses by second language (L2) learners has become an important area in the study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Thus, different theories have been suggested so as to explain the acquisition process of this type of constructions, theories such as the Subset Principle and the Theory of Transfer, which go in opposite directions. With respect to the empirical research (Duffeler & Coene, 2014; Perpiñán, 2008; Sadighi et al., 2004; a.o.), it can be seen that there is not a consensus regarding the acquisition of this phenomenon, so I decided to carry out a pilot study. This study in particular focuses on the use of prepositional relative clauses by Spanish learners of English, with specific interest in the production of this phenomenon by using this construction with Pied-Piping (PiP) and Preposition Stranding (PS), taking into account that there has been scarce research about the acquisition of English prepositional relative clauses by first language (L1) Spanish speakers.

For the present study, different hypotheses and predictions have been formulated taking into account the participants' responses as the dependent variable and the independent variables age of acquisition (AoA) and input. Four Spanish learners of English and an English native speaker as control have taken part in the study as participants, and they have been classified according to their AoA and the input of English received. For the purpose of collecting information, a data elicitation task has been distributed to the participants and, then, the results have been analysed.

The results stand in favour of the Subset Principle and reject the theory of L1 Negative Transfer, since participants showed a preference for the marked structure which is ungrammatical in their L1, i.e. PS, over the unmarked structure which is the only one available in their L1, i.e. PiP. However, it has been found that participants produced relative clauses with Null Prep, which is ungrammatical in both their L1 and L2, despite their native-like preference for PS. Moreover, the findings suggest that the independent variable AoA is more important than input, since those participants who were exposed to English at an earlier age have performed more target-like in the data elicitation task. The work concludes by arguing that further research is needed for a better understanding of some of the results obtained and by considering a bigger sample for a future study.

**Keywords:** Pied-Piping, Preposition Stranding, Subset Principle, Theory of Transfer

## 1. Introduction: Phenomenon under Study

In this work the acquisition of prepositional relative clauses –i.e. relative clauses introduced by a prepositional phrase– by L2 learners is studied. As a case in point, the phenomenon which is under study in the present work allows two different structures depending on the language that is being used. On the one hand, PiP would be the unmarked prepositional relative clause structure, since it is the structure that can be found cross-linguistically. On the other hand, PS would be the highly marked structure, given the fact that it is the not-so-frequent structure, being salient in only some languages, since PS is a language-specific property. PiP (see example (1)) is the term used in linguistics to refer to those prepositional relative constructions where “the preposition optionally moves to the front of the clause, following its WH-noun phrase object” (Crystal, 2008, p. 369). PS (see example (2)) refers to a preposition “which is left unattached [or stranded] after it has been moved out of a construction, [...] or after the noun phrase within the prepositional phrase has been moved” (Crystal, 2008, p. 453).

(1) The person **about whom** I told you was my friend when we were young.

(2) The person **who** I told you **about** was my friend when we were young.

In example (1) we can see how the preposition *about* is followed by the relative pronoun *whom*, forming a prepositional relative clause with PiP, whereas in example (2), the preposition *about* is left stranded out of the relative clause construction, producing a prepositional relative clause structure by using PS.

When L2 learners want to avoid choosing one of the structures over the other, they make use of Null Preposition (Null Prep) constructions. As Sadighi, Parhizgar & Saadat (2004) state, although Null Prep constructions are not common in natural languages, L2 learners tend to produce them in relative clauses instead of producing either PS or PiP, thus creating ungrammatical constructions. When producing Null Prep (see example (3)), L2 learners omit the required prepositions in their prepositional relative clauses, forming a structure that is not allowed neither in their L1 nor L2.

(3) \*The exam **which** you are worrying is not a big deal.

As it can be seen in example (3), the preposition *about* does not appear neither preceding the relative pronoun *which*, nor stranded out of the relative clause construction, since it has been omitted.

Besides, apart from the production of Null Prep, Perpiñán (2008, 2015) noticed how certain L2 learners both accepted and produced, always in a low rate, relative clauses with Resumptive Pronouns (Res Pron) (see examples (4a,b)), which Perpiñán (2008) states to be “condemned by prescriptive grammars” (p. 113). Crystal (2008) defines the term resumptive as “an element or structure which repeats or in some way recapitulates the meaning of a prior element” (p. 415).

- (4) a. \*The exam **which** you are worrying **about it** is not a big deal.  
b. \*The exam **about which** you are worrying **about it** is not a big deal.

In the case of relative clauses with Res Pron like the example in (4a), the element that repeats the meaning of a prior element is the personal pronoun *it*, which makes the construction ungrammatical, since the WH-relativizer or relative pronoun *which* already provides that meaning to the sentence. Moreover, in example (4b), not only does the personal pronoun *it* repeat the meaning of the prior relative pronoun *which*, but the preposition *about* is also repeated by placing it both preceding the WH-relativizer and leaving it stranded out of the relative clause construction.

In what follows, the theoretical framework will be described (see section 2) and the empirical research will be reviewed (see section 3). Then, when describing the pilot study, different hypotheses and predictions will be suggested, the methodology of the present study (participants, research instrument and procedure) will be explained, and the results will be shown (see section 4). Finally, in the discussion section, the obtained results will be explained as well as contrasted with the previous literature (see section 5) and, after that, a final conclusion will be drawn (see section 6).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

When conducting SLA research, a close relationship between the acquisition of an L2 and the Markedness Theory could be established (Eckam, 1977; Kellerman, 1979; Licerias, 1986, as cited in Perpiñán, 2008). According to this theory, different syntactic structures in different languages hold either marked and unmarked properties or just unmarked properties. Whereas the unmarked properties can be found universally in all the existing languages of the world, the marked ones are language-specific properties that do not apply cross-linguistically (Crystal, 2008). Thus, the notion developed by this theory is that the marked structures of a certain language are more complicated to be

acquired than the unmarked ones. For this reason, those languages allowing the type of structures that hold the marked properties are much more difficult to acquire as foreign languages.

As opposed to the Markedness Theory, by which it is stated that the marked property is the most difficult property and the last one to learn, some other linguists opt for the Saliency of the marked property, which is based on the most prominent or noticeable property that appears in a construction and which, according to Bardovi-Harlig (1987), is the reason why in some cases the marked, and presumably the most difficult property, is in fact the first one to be acquired, even before the unmarked counterpart (considered the easiest one to be learned by the Markedness Theory). Bardovi-Harlig (1987) concludes then that salience is also an important factor that determines the order of acquisition of the different constructions (as cited in Sadighi et al., 2004).

According to the Saliency Theory, PS will be the first structure to be acquired by learners whose L1 is an unmarked language which does not allow this structure, since PS is the marked structure of the marked L2 they are acquiring. They will be aware of a marked L2 allowing a new relative clause construction different from the one which is grammatical in their unmarked L1, namely PiP. These learners, then, will notice that PS is not available in their unmarked L1, and, so, they will acquire it first. In this way, and according to this theory of Saliency, learners of a marked L2 whose L1 is an unmarked language will better remember the structure which is unavailable in their unmarked L1, that is, PS. As a consequence, these L2 learners will acquire, accept, and produce the marked structure (PS) before the non-salient one (PiP).

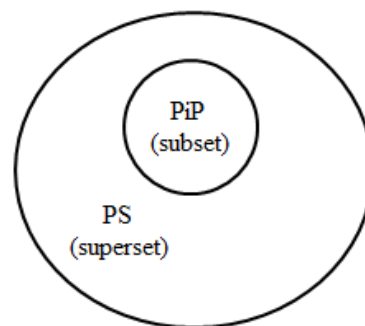
Together with the Markedness properties and the Saliency of some syntactic structures, the Subset Principle is also taken into account by some researchers when conducting a study on SLA (Perpiñán, 2008). According to this principle, both the marked and the unmarked properties of a certain structure hold a subset/superset relation. In this way, an applying it to the phenomenon under study, PiP is a proper subset of PS since all the languages that allow PS constructions do also allow PiP, while on the contrary, languages where PiP is permitted PS does not necessarily apply.

According to the so-called Subset Principle “the child starts hypothesising the narrowest possible grammar, [i.e. PiP], according to the input” (Berwick, 1985; Manzini & Wexler, 1987, as cited in Perpiñán, 2008, p. 107). If this is the case that takes place



during the acquisition of an L2, learners whose L1 belongs to the Superset will not transfer the marked property of their dominant language, namely PS, to the L2 Subset dominated one, since they will be hypothesising their narrowest grammar, PiP, which is also available in their language and the only grammatical structure in the L2.

On the contrary, speakers of languages that only allow PiP, that is, the narrowest grammar that can be hypothesised, they would never hypothesise PS in their relative clause constructions, because the narrowest grammar is the only one which is available in their L1. Thus, according to this principle they will first hypothesise the narrowest grammar, i.e. PiP, and later, with a greater exposure to the target language through positive evidence, they will be able to acquire a wider grammar, i.e. PS. If we take into account and compare the availability of the prepositional relative clauses in both an unmarked language and a marked one, the former has a more restrictive grammar than the latter, since the former only makes available the smallest set depicted in Figure 1 (adapted from Perpiñán, 2008, p.108), while the latter makes both sets available.



**Figure 1:** PiP represented as a proper subset of the PS superset.

Together with the Saliency Theory and the Subset Principle, the theory of L1 Transfer is also considered by some researchers (Makvandi & Gorjian, 2014; Perpiñán, 2015) taking into account both L1 Negative and Positive Transfer. Regarding L1 Negative Transfer, learners of a marked L2 will be negatively influenced by their unmarked L1 and they will prefer the unmarked structure (PiP) available in their L1 than the marked structure (PS), which is grammatical only in the L2. On the other hand, according to L1 Positive Transfer, learners will be positively influenced by their L1 if this allows a prepositional relative construction with a marked property (PS and Res Pron, for instance).

As related to L1 Transfer, some researchers (Duffeler & Coene, 2014) have proposed the Full Access Full Transfer (FAFT) theory, according to which “learners use

the L1 as basis to learn the L2 and the parameters reset progressively” (Duffeler & Coene, 2014, p. 129). So, taking this FAFT theory into account, learners will be negatively influenced by the L1 when they are acquiring an L2. Besides, these researchers (Duffeler & Coene, 2014), also mention the Full Access No Transfer (FANT) theory, whereby “the learner starts learning the second language while having access to the lexical and functional categories of Universal Grammar and not the L1” (Duffeler & Coene, 2014, p. 129). According to this theory, then, L2 learners will not be negatively influenced by their L1 since they will not have access to it but to Universal Grammar.

In conclusion, the Subset Principle and the L1 Negative Transfer make different and contradictory predictions, since, according to the theory of L1 Transfer, there is no room for the Subset Principle to apply, because learners cannot hypothesise the narrowest grammar when they already have a wider one, that is, PS. For instance, if negative transfer from a marked L1 to an unmarked L2 prevails over the Subset Principle, it would be expected for those learners of a unmarked L2 whose L1 is a marked one, to accept and produce ungrammatical relative clauses with PS, transferring in this way the marked property that their L1 permits to an L2 that does not allow it. In the same way, those learners of a marked L2 whose L1 is a unmarked one would be expected to both accept and construct sentences with only PiP and no PS, as the latter is ungrammatical in their L1 but not in the L2 they are acquiring.

### **3. Literature review**

The studies conducted on the acquisition of PS and PiP, mostly experiments carried out with speakers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as an L2, show dissimilar results and findings, which support different theories regarding the acquisition of an L2 (see section 2).

In fact, (i) some studies (Almahammed et al., 2015; Duffeler & Coene, 2014; Perpiñán, 2008; Sadighi et al., 2004) back up the Subset Principle, the Saliency of the marked property and the FANT Theory, which all support the learners’ preference for PS (which is ungrammatical in their L1), over PiP (see section 3.1); (ii) while other studies (Makvandi & Gorjian, 2014; Perpiñán, 2015) are in support of L1 transfer, backing up the theory of both L1 negative and positive transfer or the Full Access Full Transfer (FAFT) theory, which will make learners of English as an L2 prefer the use of PiP, the

only structure available in their L1, over PS (see section 3.2); whereas (iii) others (Salehi, 2011; Suprpto, 2013) cannot draw any clear conclusion in favour of a theory, since they get contradictory results in their studies (Salehi, 2011), or they conclude that the amount of input received by the students has a close relationship with the results obtained (Suprpto, 2013), which differ depending on the level of proficiency of the participants and change from preferring the structures which hold the unmarked property in the lowest stages of acquisition, to those which hold the marked property when they acquire more knowledge and receive more input from the L2 they are learning (see section 3.3).

### **3.1 Studies in support of the Subset Principle, the FANT Theory and the Saliency of the marked property**

Regarding the acquisition of EFL, the purpose of Sadighi et al. (2004)'s experiment was to find out the acceptance and production of PiP and PS in relative clauses and interrogatives in Iranian EFL speakers, and whether in their relative and interrogative constructions the Null Prep phenomenon meaningfully emerged. For that purpose 80 Iranian university students who studied EFL were selected as participants for the study, all of them ranging from a level of English which went from 1 to 12 including the volumes 'beginner', 'intermediate' and 'advanced'. Since the aim of the study was to compare the subjects' performance across the different levels of proficiency, students from all the three volumes participated in the experiment, who were specifically named as low (level 4), mid (level 8) and high level groups (level 12). For the data collection two experimental tests were fulfilled: a Grammaticality Judgement Task (GJT) and a correction task where the participants were required to correct the sentences judged as ungrammatical in the former task.

All the participants at all levels showed a high percentage regarding the acceptance of Null Prep in both relative clauses and interrogative structures and, even though these percentages decreased as the proficiency level increased, there was not a significant difference among the three groups. With reference to PiP and PS, the results displayed a preference of the L2 learners for PS constructions in both relatives and interrogatives, using PiP with less frequency. Surprisingly, given that in Persian only PiP, but not PS, is admissible, in the low- and mid-levels PS constructions outnumbered those of PiP. On the contrary, in the high level group the production of PiP relative clauses and interrogatives increased abruptly, while that of PS suffered a sudden decrease. It is also

important to mention that, as an increment on the production of both PiP and PS happened, together with a growth in the level of proficiency, the use of Null Prep gradually diminished.

Although PS is not a possible construction in Iranian relative and interrogative clauses and only PiP is allowed, results showed that Iranian EFL learners tended to produce at a higher level the former construction rather than the latter. The conclusion drawn by Sadighi et al. (2004) is that this preference is due to the saliency of the marked property of PS in the L2 English and, obviously, not due to the negative transfer from the L1 or to prior linguistic knowledge.

As for the studies conducted on L2 Spanish, Perpiñán (2008) focused on the acquisition of Spanish prepositional relative clauses by L1 English speakers who had a different AoA and sociolinguistic contexts. While English allows both PiP and PS in its prepositional relative constructions, the production of the latter is ungrammatical in Spanish, which only allows PiP. Hence, Perpiñán (2008) wanted to prove whether the L1 negative transfer would prevail over the Subset Principle and in this way the English participants would construct ungrammatical sentences with PS in Spanish, or, the other way round, whether the participants would construct grammatical sentences with PiP, not displaying transfer from the marked language English to the unmarked Spanish and so, the Subset Principle would prevail over the L1 transfer. Furthermore, she hypothesised that if the AoA plays an important role in language acquisition processes, different results from the two groups tested would be expected.

Two experimental groups took part in this study: the first group consisted of 20 Spanish-English early bilinguals who were all born in the United States and, despite being schooled in English (their age of immersion to English varying from 0 to 5), they were raised speaking Spanish. The second experimental group consisted of 22 L2 Spanish learners whose L1 was English, and they had been learning Spanish since they were between 13 to 15 years old, having an intermediate level of proficiency in Spanish. The mean age of the first experimental group was 20.5 years and 19.2 years for the second one. The participants had to carry out a (i) GJT where they judged the correctness of different grammatical and ungrammatical prepositional relative clauses, and (ii) a sentence-combining task where they had to produce prepositional relative clauses on their own as in (5a,b).

(5) a. **Example:** El señor es muy rico. María **depende de** ese señor.

El señor \_\_\_\_\_.

b. **Expected:** El señor *del que depende María es muy rico.* (Perpiñán, 2008, p. 111).

The results showed that the L2 learners: (i) had a meaningful acceptance and production of Null Prep, which can only be found in Spanish in an informal or oral register but not in written Spanish; (ii) a low acceptance and production of PiP, which is grammatically correct in Spanish; (iii) and a low acceptance and production of PS, which is utterly ungrammatical in Spanish but perfectly grammatical in their L1 English. On the other hand, early bilinguals showed a noticeable acceptance and production of PiP, being their responses more approximate to those of natives than to L2 learners. Nevertheless, they also accepted and produced, in a low rate, both PS and Null Prep.

Perpiñán (2008) proposes then that English native speakers who have Spanish as their L2 are hypothesising Null Prep as the narrowest grammar instead of PiP, being that the reason for the high acceptance of Null Prep constructions by English learners of Spanish, which leads, at the same time, to change the subset/superset relationship regarding the acquisition of prepositional relative clauses. In this way, Null Prep will be a proper subset of both PiP and PS, and PS will be the proper superset of both Null Prep and PiP, being Null Prep, and not PiP, the simplest and the narrowest grammar that L2 learners can hypothesise when acquiring a new language.

So, although there is weak evidence of the marked property (PS) being transferred to the L2, which only has the unmarked property (PiP), there is yet some little evidence. Nonetheless, Perpiñán (2008) argues that, taking into account the low percentages of the production and acceptance of PS, “this ungrammatical feature will easily disappear from the more advanced interlanguage grammars” (2008, p. 116). For this reason, she disregards the hypothesis of transfer or language influence and she asserts that the Subset Principle prevails over this hypothesis of transfer, since both the L2 learners and the early bilinguals show little influence of their L1.

Duffeler & Coene (2014) carried out an experiment which had 59 French university students as participants, who were learning English as an L2 and had studied the language for 7.12 (mean=) years, having an intermediate level of English (B1). The

study focused on relative clauses with PS, since it is an absent construction in the native language system of the French participants, being PiP the only available in their native language. Duffeler & Coene (2014) hypothesised that “relative clauses with preposition stranding [would be] less well understood by French learners of English than their PiP equivalents as the former is infelicitous in the native language of the L2-learner” (Duffeler & Coene, 2014, p. 126). To prove this hypothesis right, the researchers conducted a comprehension test including subject and object relatives and relative clauses with the fronted preposition (the so-called PiP) and PS.

When comparing the mean comprehension scores of oblique relative clauses, (i.e. relative clauses where the nominal head fulfils a non-subject or non-object role) with PiP versus those with PS, the results obtained were confusing for the researchers, since what they had predicted was not fulfilled. Although French does not allow PS in its relative constructions, surprisingly, the respondents comprehended in a higher rate the oblique relatives with PS than those with PiP. Even though Duffeler & Coene (2014) expected the FAFT theory to happen (see section 2), they concluded that either the L2 learners were not negatively influenced by their L1, or that their parameters had already been reset to their L2, what they found unlikely, taking into account their intermediate level of proficiency (B1). However, these results are compatible with the FANT theory, whereby the learners acquire the L2 while not having access to their L1 but to the Universal Grammar.

Almahammed et al. (2015) investigated the acquisition of PS and PiP relative clauses by Arab Jordanian university students who studied EFL. It is of importance to know that, even though in Arabic only PiP is possible, another prepositional relative clause construction containing a marked property is also permissible, i.e. Res Pron. The sample was comprised of 355 males and females who have studied EFL for twelve years before going to university. The participants ranged from first to fourth academic years of university and they were all similarly exposed to English in the years prior to university. The study aimed at determining whether there was or not any statistical difference between the production of PiP and PS in interrogatives, and if any instances of Null Prep emerged, as Arab Jordanian EFL speakers were acquiring PiP and PS.

In order to collect the data, the respondents were required to do both a GJT and a correction test. The researchers concluded that Arab Jordanian English speakers had a

slight preference for the use of PiP over PS in interrogatives. However, this difference was statistically insignificant; in other words, the production of PiP and PS by Arab Jordanian EFL speakers was of similar frequencies and they produced almost the same amount of instances of both constructions. Almahammed et al. (2015) concluded then that these results were due to the salience of PS in English, what in Almahammed et al. (2015)'s words refers to "the quantity of input received by EFL speakers concerning [a] specific L2 grammatical pattern" (2015, p. 24). Thus, they came to the conclusion that the high production of PS was associated to the abundant input received (by the subjects) with respect to PS when acquiring English.

### **3.2 Studies in support of L1 transfer**

With respect to the acquisition of EFL, Makvandi & Gorjian (2014)'s research study is different from the other studies on L2 English acquisition in that they make a comparison between Arab-Persian bilinguals and Persian monolinguals who are EFL learners (with regard to the acquisition of PiP and PS), whereas the rest of the studies' participants are monolinguals acquiring English as an L2. They wanted to find out if bilingualism has any advantages or benefits when it comes to learning a third language and acquiring these prepositional structures. Since neither Arabic nor Persian allow PS relative clauses, the researchers wanted to know if there is any difference in the quality of the transfer of language from the participants' L1 (monolinguals) or L1s (bilinguals), being this transfer either negative or positive, since Arabic does allow another prepositional relative construction with a marked property, namely Res Pron. 76 Iranian Arab-Persian bilinguals and Arab monolinguals were chosen, separated into high (Master of Arts; MA) and low achievers (Bachelor of Arts; BA), with respect to the level of studies they had, all of whom were students majoring in English Teaching. They were asked to label different sentences as 'correct', 'incorrect', and 'not sure' in a GJT which was adapted to the different levels.

The results of the study concluded that, although the difference was not significant, the performance of the low achievers bilinguals in distinguishing PS and PiP structures was slightly better than the performance of the low achievers monolinguals. With respect to the high achievers' production, there was almost no difference between bilinguals and monolinguals in both PiP and PS constructions, being nearly an equal number of accepted-as-correct sentences for both structures. Regarding the difference

between low and high achievers (both bilinguals and monolinguals), high bilingual and monolingual achievers outperformed low bilingual and monolingual achievers in distinguishing PS structures.

In view of these results, the conclusion drawn by Makvandi & Gorjian (2014) was that the better comprehension of Arab-Persian bilinguals when acquiring an L3 over Persian monolinguals acquiring an L2 was due to a positive transfer in the case of the bilinguals and a negative one in that of the monolinguals. The explanation for positive L1 transfer in the case of the bilinguals is that, even if Persian does not allow PS, Arabic does in fact allow another prepositional relative construction with a marked property: the use of Res Pron. Therefore, Iranian Arab-Persian bilinguals benefit from this structure and it is easier for them to understand that in the target language construction there is also a marked property. Since PS is not allowed in Persian, Iranian monolinguals are negatively affected by their native language, producing in English just what is admissible in their native language and avoiding different and more difficult structures than those that their L1 permits. Makvandi & Gorjian (2014) conclude then that “the bilingual[s]’ and monolinguals’ background knowledge did affect EFL learners’ syntactic structures acquisition” (2014, p. 338), both negatively and positively.

As for the research regarding the acquisition of L2 Spanish, Perpiñán (2015)’s study aimed at exploring the acquisition of Spanish prepositional relative clauses by L1 English speakers and L1 Arabic speakers. The author explains that, although both L1s accept and produce the unmarked property which is the only one permitted in Spanish (PiP), other prepositional relative clause constructions are preferred in those L1s: PS in the case of English and Res Pron in Arabic. Therefore, the acquisition of the L2 in this case consists of an “unlearning process” (2015, p. 580), since English and Arabic learners of Spanish need to unlearn the structure available in their L1: Res Pron in the case of Arabic and PS in English (which are both ungrammatical in the L2). The participants for this experiment were gathered in two different groups, both having an intermediate level of proficiency: (i) 21 English-speaking learners of Spanish, and (ii) 21 Arabic L2 Spanish learners. The mean ages at the testing time were 21.9 and 25.6, respectively. The study consisted of two different research instruments: an oral production task and a GJT.

The results showed that although PiP was the construction most produced by both groups and that this production increased together with the increment of the level of



proficiency of the L2 learners (as the statistical analysis of the correlation between the two variables showed), there was a significant production of other prepositional relative clause constructions: Null Prep and Res Pron in the case of L1 Arabic speakers, the latter construction being the one preferred in their L1; and Null Prep and PS in L1 English speakers' case, this last one being the most frequently used in English.

Perpiñán (2015) concluded that the L1 of the learners was negatively transferred to the L2, resulting in the construction of prepositional relative clauses with Res Pron by Arabic speakers and PS by English native speakers, as both constructions are ungrammatical (PS) or substandard (Res Pron) in the target language (Spanish). That is, "L2 learners still transfer some structures only available in their L1 grammars" (2015, p. 588), which means that, in this case, the participants' L1s are an obstacle for the correct acquisition of the target construction and that they still need more L2 knowledge. It is also noteworthy that, as proficiency increased, so did the production and knowledge of PiP, while the production of Res Pron and PS decreased.

### **3.3 Studies with contradictory results**

As regards the studies conducted on EFL, the aim of Salehi (2011)'s study was to observe whether there was a preference in the production of PiP or of PS by Persian learners of English. He examined if the order of acquisition between PiP and PS differed among the participants, based on the Markedness Theory. For this purpose, 30 Iranian EFL learners were chosen and they were divided into three groups, considering their level of proficiency: beginning (low, level 3), intermediate (inter[mediate], level 2), and advanced (high, level 1). The research instrument employed was a data elicitation task, which consisted of an item completion test where the test-takers had to complete different sentences by inserting a WH-relative clause with its corresponding preposition, producing in this way different prepositional relative clauses, using either PiP or PS.

Although the results showed that there was indeed a relationship between the proficiency level and the prepositional relative clause structure chosen by the subjects, this relationship was not as expected by the researcher, who predicted that the higher the level of proficiency and the input received, the greater the use of PS by the participants would be. While participants in level one (the advanced level) preferred PiP over PS, being this last one the less employed by this group, the intermediate level participants'

production of PS outnumbered that of PiP. Furthermore, the intermediate level participants' production of PS outnumbered the production of PS of the advanced level with a significant difference in frequency, participants of the intermediate level producing twice as many instances of PS than those of the high level. The lowest level subjects' preferred option was Null Prep, which is utterly ungrammatical in English and, surprisingly, the participants of the highest level did also make use of this ungrammatical construction quite frequently.

As seen in the results, there was a significant difference between the use of PiP, PS and Null Prep and between the distribution of each structure among the three different proficiency groups. In view of the results, the answer to whether there is a preference in the acquisition of PiP and PS by Persian learners of English was uncertain for the author. Salehi (2011) suggested that the preference of the advanced level group for PiP was due to the negative transfer from the L1. However, this negative transfer does not seem to apply in the case of the intermediate level group, which was a puzzling outcome for the researcher, since the negative transfer could have also arisen among the intermediate level participants. And in case negative transfer would only emerge in one group, that would not have been in the highest level group, regarding the level of proficiency, since the higher the level of proficiency, the greater the amount of input received and, thus, the less the L1 negative transfer (Perpiñán, 2008, 2015). In addition, although the production of Null Prep should negatively correlate with the learners' proficiency level as the production of PS and PiP increases (Sadighi et al., 2004), the advanced participants made a great use of this ungrammatical construction.

The experiment conducted by Suprpto (2013) aimed at investigating the preference of Indonesian EFL learners regarding the form of prepositional constructions, namely, PiP and PS, since only the former is permissible in Indonesian, as opposed to English which allows both prepositional structures. The researcher wanted to know whether the preference for one construction over the other suffered any change across the two different proficiency levels tested. Two groups of 30 and 32 students belonging to different proficiency levels, – elementary level (students of second semester) and intermediate level (fourth semester students), respectively–, were selected as the participants of the study, all of them taking English Grammar courses at different stages.

For the collection of the data, a sentence combining task was distributed to all the subjects of the study, which consisted in embedding two given sentences into one by means of a WH-relative clause and where participants were expected to use either PiP or PS. As shown in the results, (i) while the elementary group showed a preference for the use of PiP over PS, (ii) there was almost no difference between the number of sentences combined using both types of structures by the learners with an intermediate level, (iii) being the use of PS more frequent among the intermediate level than the elementary one. Moreover, both groups produced constructions with Null Prep at an important level of frequency.

Suprpto (2013) gives these results different interpretations taking into account the different proficiency levels: for the elementary group who produced PiP significantly more than PS, he suggests that this could happen because of L1 transfer, since PS is not allowed in Indonesian, and thus, the syntactic structure of PS is much more difficult for them to produce. Still, this problem decreases progressively as the level of proficiency increases, as it can be seen in the intermediate level's results. For the intermediate group, who produced both constructions almost with the same frequency, outnumbering the elementary group in the number of PS occurrences, the Subset Principle arises, according to which a greater exposure through positive evidence to the target language leads to the acquisition of a wider grammar, i.e. PS; being positive evidence and input, thus, the explanation for the production of a non-available construction in the learners' L1, namely PS.

#### **4. The Pilot Study**

Given the fact that there is not a consensus in the previous literature with respect to the acquisition of prepositional relative clause constructions when learning an L2, I decided to conduct a pilot study. Besides, taking into account, as far as I am concerned, that there has been scarce research about the acquisition of English prepositional relative clauses by L1 Spanish speakers, I have conducted this study to explore and examine the use of PiP and PS in English prepositional relative clause constructions by native Spanish speakers, having in mind that Spanish does not allow PS in its constructions while in English both PiP and PS are permissible.

## 4.1 Hypotheses

For the formulation of the first hypothesis, which at the same time is divided into two different hypotheses (Hypothesis 1.1 and Hypothesis 1.2), two opposed theories had been considered: the Subset Principle (see Hypothesis 1.1), according to which participants will first hypothesise the narrowest grammar, and later, with a greater exposure to the target language through positive evidence, they will be able to acquire a wider grammar; and the Theory of Transfer (see Hypothesis 1.2), by which participants will construct sentences by using the only available structure in their L1 when producing sentences in the L2. Moreover, another two hypotheses had been formulated taking into account the two independent variables that have been considered in the present study, i.e. AoA (see Hypothesis 2) and input (see Hypothesis 3).

Hypothesis 1.1: Subset Principle (Makvandi & Gorjian, 2014; Perpiñán, 2008; Suprpto, 2013). According to the Subset Principle, Spanish learners of English will hypothesise the narrowest grammar available, i.e. PiP, and then, after being exposed to a wider grammar through positive evidence, they will be able to acquire the construction that holds the marked property, i.e. PS. In this way, Spanish learners will not display L1 negative transfer and they will construct sentences with the grammatical PS in English, and not exclusively with PiP, the only available construction in their L1.

Hypothesis 1.2: Theory of Transfer (Perpiñán, 2008). If negative transfer from L1 Spanish to L2 English prevails over the Subset Principle, Spanish learners of English will construct more prepositional relative clause sentences with PiP rather than PS, since PiP is the only possible construction in their L1.

Hypothesis 2: Age of Acquisition (AoA) (Perpiñán, 2008). If we assume that the AoA of English by the participants plays a significant role in the acquisition process of prepositional relative clause constructions in English, different outcomes will be expected for the early and late learners regarding the AoA, i.e. more native-like responses from the early learners than from the late ones, since the early learners will be exposed to English from a younger age and during a greater period of time.

Hypothesis 3: Input (Perpiñán, 2008, 2015; Salehi, 2011). If we assume that the input of English received by the learners plays a significant role in the process of acquiring an L2, we expect different results between the high and low input receivers, i.e.

more native-like responses from the participants who have received a high input than from the ones with a low one, since the exposure to English will be greater if they receive a higher input of the L2.

## 4.2 Predictions

Different predictions were formulated for each of the hypotheses. Therefore, for these predictions to be formulated, the two opposing theories about the acquisition of prepositional relative clauses, namely, the Subset Principle and the Theory of Transfer, will be taken as the basis for Prediction 1.1 and Prediction 1.2, respectively; and the two independent variables that have been considered in the present study, that is, AoA (see Prediction 2) and input (see Prediction 3), will also be taken into account.

Prediction 1.1: taking into consideration the studies carried out by Duffeler & Coene (2014), Perpiñán (2008) or Sadighi et al. (2004), and if Hypothesis 1.1 proves right, the Subset Principle will prevail over the negative transfer from the subjects' L1 to their L2, and although the subjects will produce prepositional relative clauses with PiP, prepositional relative clause constructions with PS will outnumber the productions with PiP. Showing in this way that the participants will be able to acquire a wider grammar and produce sentences with PS, a construction that is not available in their L1.

Prediction 1.2: bearing in mind the studies conducted by Makvandi & Gorjian (2014) or Perpiñán (2015), and if Hypothesis 1.2 is right, the Theory of Transfer will prevail over the Subset Principle, and although the subjects will produce prepositional relative clauses with PS, prepositional relative clause constructions with PiP will outnumber the productions with PS. Showing, thus, that participants will negatively transfer the only available structure in their L1 Spanish, i.e. the unmarked prepositional structure (PiP), to their L2 English, where the marked prepositional structure (PS) is allowed.

Prediction 2: it is expected that the earlier the exposure to the marked structure the L2 holds, the higher the presence of this marked structure, namely PS, will be. On the other hand, the later the exposure to the mentioned marked structure of the L2, the greater the production of the unmarked structure and the only one available in the L1, i.e. PiP, will be (Perpiñán, 2008). In this way, we expect more native-like responses from the subjects who have had an earlier exposure to the L2.

Prediction 3: it is expected that the higher the input received or the exposure to the L2, the easier for the participants to produce the marked structure the L2 holds, that is, PS, will be (Perpiñán, 2008, 2015; Salehi, 2011). On the contrary, the lower the input or the exposure to the L2, the higher the presence of the unmarked structure, namely PiP, will be. In this way, we expect more native-like responses from the subjects who have had a greater exposure to the L2.

### **4.3 Methodology**

#### *4.3.1 Participants*

For the pilot study, I selected four Spanish learners of English as participants (P1, P2, P3 and P4) and a native English speaker as a control (C1), taking the participants' responses as the dependent variable and the AoA and the amount of input as independent variables. In this way, I classified them as having an 'early' or a 'late' AoA: 'early' if the subjects started acquiring English when they were children and 'late' if this happened once they were adults; and 'low' or 'high' regarding the input they had received: 'low' if participants were in contact with English for only a few hours a week and 'high' if they were exposed to English every day. If proficiency had been taken into consideration as a third independent variable for the study (although it could also be considered a covert/latent variable), first a questionnaire about the participants' linguistic profile (a Linguistic Background Questionnaire) and then a proficiency test (a Quick Oxford Placement Test, for instance) would have been distributed to the participants.

(P1) For the early and low profile, I selected a 24-year-old female who started learning English at school when she was 6 years old and has attended different English academies until the present day, having a B2 English level, that is, an intermediate level. Besides, at the time of the study, this participant was attending an English academy for only two hours a week.

(P2) For the late and low profile, a 51-year-old woman with a B1 English level, i.e. intermediate, was chosen. Although she started studying English at school when she was 12, she dropped it when she was 18 but resumed it when she was 49 years old, attending an English academy for just four hours a week at the testing time.

(P3) A girl, who at the time of the study was 25 years old, was selected for the early and high profile. This participant started learning English when she was 6 both in an English academy and at school, having a C1 level of English (i.e. high). In addition, her sociolinguistic context differed from the other participants', since at the moment of the testing time she was living and studying a University Degree in the UK, being this the reason why this participant was selected for the high input profile.

(P4) A 43-year-old man who started studying English when he was 30 was elected for the late and high profile, having a C1 English level, that is, a high level. This participant was considered to be receiving a high input of English, because at the testing time, he was taking a University Degree in English Studies, and so, this participant was exposed to English every day for several hours.<sup>1</sup>

(C1) Finally, a 27-year-old English native speaker, born and raised in England participated as control in the present study.

#### 4.3.2 *Research Instrument*

The research instrument (see Appendix 1) that was used in the study was a data elicitation task consisting of a 25-item completion test for PiP and PS.<sup>2</sup> The participants were asked to complete different sentences using *who*, *whom*, or *which*, to form sentences using relative clauses, as in (6):

(6) **Example:** The woman.....*who* Bob sent a postcard *to*.....was his aunt.  
Bob sent a postcard to the woman

Apart from the critical sentences (those that prompted the use of prepositional relative clauses), 10 relative clauses with no prepositional phrase and with no relation to the distinction between PS and PiP were used as fillers, as in the example below (7):

(7) **Example:** Mary saw the man.....*who* had stolen her purse.....  
The man had stolen her purse

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to mention that while this pilot study was carried out, he was taking a University Degree in English Studies, and so, he had a wide metalinguistic knowledge, apart from being exposed to Academic English, which could be covert variables having a positive influence on his outcome.

<sup>2</sup> Task adapted from Salehi (2011, pp. 98-99).

As only relative clauses with overt WH-relativizers, namely *who*, *whom*, or *which*, among others, allow prepositional relative clauses with both PiP and PS, participants were instructed to complete the sentences by using only *who*, *whom*, or *which*. On the other hand, since relative clauses introduced by zero or null relativizers ( $\emptyset$ ), and *that*-relativizers, that is, relative clauses with no overt WH-element, are only well formed when the preposition is left stranded, these ones could not be used by the participants when doing the completion test. This is the reason why they were instructed to use only *who*, *which* or *whom* relativizers.

#### 4.3.3 Procedure

For the data collection an email was sent to every participant with the data elicitation task and a brief text with some instructions they had to follow in order to complete the task on their own. I asked all the participants to note down how long it took them to complete the task and I specified that no more than thirty minutes would be necessary to carry out the data elicitation task. Although the timing was not taken into account for the results of this pilot study, I specified a time limit so that the participants did not overthink about the responses. Besides, no specific details about the purpose of the study were given; they were simply told that they were going to complete a linguistic task for a piece of research on L2 English acquisition.

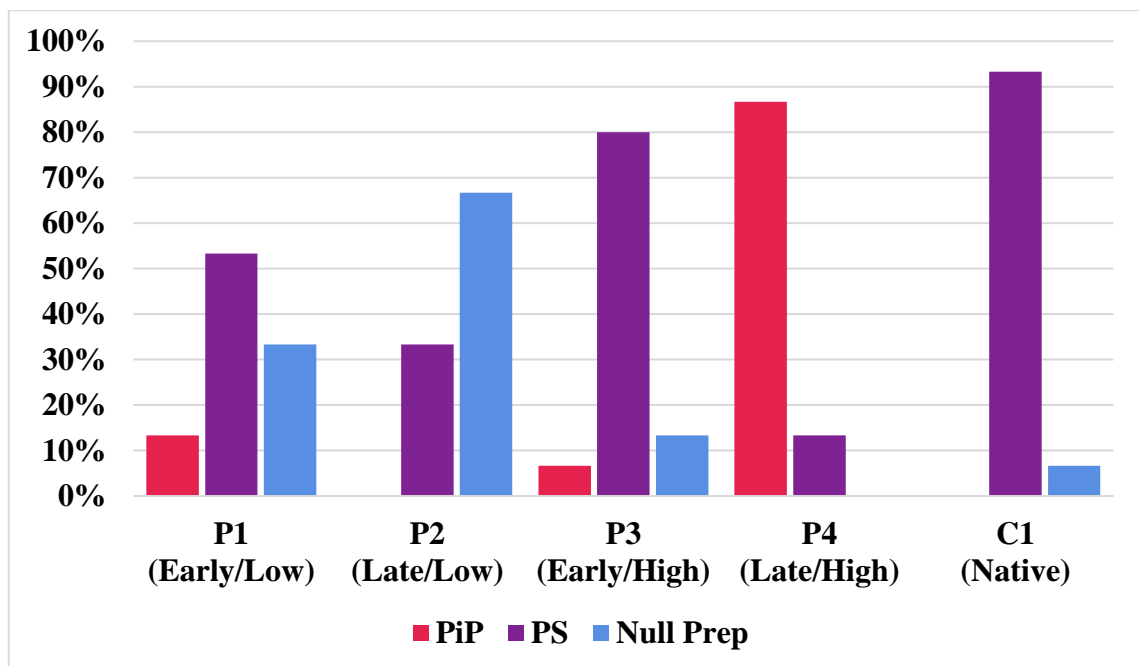
## 4.4 Results

As regards the codification of the results, each prepositional relative clause construction was classified according to its structure. Thus, the three main structures found in the collected data are illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 2 as: PiP, PS, and Null Prep. Besides, the four different participants are represented as P1, P2, P3, and P4, and the native speaker who participated as control in the study as C1.



Participants	Linguistic Profile	PiP	PS	Null Prep	Total (n=15)
<b>P1</b>	Early/Low	2 (13.33%)	8 (53.33%)	5 (33.33%)	15 (100%)
<b>P2</b>	Late/Low	0 (0%)	5 (33.33%)	10 (66.67%)	15 (100%)
<b>P3</b>	Early/High	1 (6.67%)	12 (80%)	2 (13.33%)	15 (100%)
<b>P4</b>	Late/High	13 (86.67%)	2 (13.33%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)
<b>C1</b>	Native	0 (0%)	14 (93.33%)	1 (6.67%)	15 (100%)

**Table 1:** Number of tokens and the corresponding percentage for each type of construction.



**Figure 2:** Percentage of responses by construction and participant in the Data Elicitation Task.

Each of the participants produced 25 sentences, 15 of which were meant to be constructed with a prepositional relative clause, and 10 of which were just relative clauses with no preposition used as fillers. The analysis of these results was done separately so as to make a comparison between the four Spanish learners of English (i, ii, iii, and iv) and the native English speaker (v).

(i) The structure most produced by the participant with the early and low profile (P1) was PS (n=8; 53.33%). Moreover, although the number of prepositional relative clauses produced with PiP was not high (n=2; 13.33%), P1 produced 5 sentences with Null Prep (33.33%), such as *The guard was watching the player **who** Philip threw the football  $\emptyset$* . It is important to mention that most of the times that this participant used this structure, the sentence with which the participants had to complete the data elicitation task did not contain any preposition, for instance, *Philip threw the player the football*, as opposed to the sentence *Philip threw the football **to** the player*, with which P1 produced the following correct sentence using PS: *The guard was watching the player **who** Philip threw the football **to***.

(ii) As for the participant with the late and low profile (P2), the ungrammatical Null Prep was produced in more than 50% of the cases (n=10; 66.67%), and alike P1, the majority of the times that this structure was used, the sentence with which the participants had to complete the data elicitation task did not contain any preposition, although there were a few sentences that did in fact contain a preposition, such as *Cathy gave the book **to** the man*, constructing the following ungrammatical sentence with Null Prep: *The man **who** Cathy gave the book  $\emptyset$  was Kevin*. Furthermore, no sentences containing PiP and 5 sentences containing PS (33.33%) were produced by P2.

(iii) The participant with the early and high profile (P3) mostly produced sentences with PS (n=12; 80%), constructing sentences such as *The children **who** Miss Smith read a story **to** begged for another one*, producing almost no sentences containing either PiP (n=1; 6.67%) or Null Prep (n=2; 13.33%).

(iv) The participant with the late and high profile (P4) overwhelmingly produced PiP (n=13; 86.67%), mostly with the use of the relative pronoun *whom*, as in *The policeman **to whom** John had reported the accident arrested him*. Moreover, no instances of the ungrammatical Null Prep and only 2 instances of PS (13.33%) were found in the responses of P4.

(v) The participant who was selected as control (C1) constructed almost all the sentences with PS (n=14; 93.33%), as in *The guard was watching the player **who** Philip through the football **to***, and did not produce any sentence with PiP. Besides, only 1 instance of Null Prep (6.67%) was found in the responses given by C1.

## 5. Discussion

Taking into account the results that have been previously described, different interpretations can be made. The results indicate that there is weak evidence of L1 negative transfer in the prepositional relative clause domain, and that the AoA plays a more important role than the amount of input received. Even those participants with a low input constructed more sentences by using PS than PiP.

However, the participant with the late and high profile (P4) produced more relative clauses with PiP than with PS, since this participant's metalinguistic knowledge and the exposure to Academic English might be a covert variable affecting his outcome and making the participant produce the not-so-common construction in English, i.e. PiP (see section 4.3.1). For this reason, it cannot be said that the preference of P4 for the use of PiP over PS is due to the L1 negative transfer, but due to this participant's exposure to Academic English.

Thus, after having taken into consideration studies such as the ones from Duffeler & Coene (2014), Perpiñán (2008) or Sadighi et al. (2004), the present results stand in favour of Prediction 1.1, satisfying, thus, Hypothesis 1.1 of this study, which predicted that the Subset Principle would prevail over the negative transfer from the subjects' L1; and although some of the subjects did in fact produce prepositional relative clauses with PiP, prepositional relative clause constructions with PS outnumbered the productions with PiP. These results show, then, that the participants are able to acquire a wider grammar and produce sentences with PS, a construction that is ungrammatical in their L1 (thanks mainly to the AoA rather than input).

As for Prediction 2, by which it was expected that the earlier the exposure to the L2, the higher the presence of this marked structure, namely PS, would be, the results are in favour of this prediction, fulfilling, thus, Hypothesis 2. In this way, the subjects who have had an earlier exposure to the L2 (P1 and P3) have produced more native-like responses than those who have had a later exposure (P2 and P4), which was the expected outcome. It is important to mention that, although P2 (the one with the late and low profile) did not produce any sentence with PiP (which shows no L1 negative transfer), this participant produced numerous instances of Null Prep, an ungrammatical structure in both the L1 and the L2.

Prediction 3 claimed that the higher the input received or the exposure to the L2, the easier for the participants to produce the marked structure the L2 holds, that is, PS, would be; and, on the other hand, the lower the input or the exposure to the L2, the higher the presence of the unmarked structure, namely PiP, would be. However, the results stand against this prediction, not satisfying Hypothesis 3, since the participant with the late and high profile (P4) made almost no use of PS, the construction preferred by the control native speaker (C1), for reasons that have already been explained regarding this participant's metalinguistic knowledge and exposure to Academic English (see section 3.4.1). In the same way, participants with a low input produced more prepositional relative clauses with PS than PiP, outcome that does not stand in favour of Prediction 3, contradicting then Hypothesis 3. As for the participant with the early and high profile (P3), the responses were almost equal to those of C1, which goes in favour of both Predictions 2 and 3 and proves both Hypotheses 2 and 3 right.

Regarding the high rates in the use of Null Prep by P1 and P2, we might consider proficiency to be the covert variable affecting the results obtained. While the participants with a high level of proficiency (P3 and P4) produced almost no sentences containing Null Prep, the participants with an intermediate level of proficiency (P1 and P2) did make a big use of Null Prep. One of the reasons for this outcome could be the lack of knowledge about how the relative pronoun *whom* is used, reducing in this way the possibilities of constructing prepositional relative clauses with PiP, structure that requires the use of this specific relative pronoun. These results go in line with Sadighi et al. (2004), who state that the production of Null Prep negatively correlates with the learners' proficiency level as the production of PS and PiP increases. This is the reason why the production of Null Prep of the intermediate level participants –who make use of this construction to avoid choosing one of the structures– outnumbered that of the high level participants.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, even though we have individual differences and different results, they go in line with the studies conducted by Duffeler & Coene (2014), Perpiñán (2008), and Sadighi et al. (2004), all of which are in support of the Subset Principle and the Saliency of the marked property (see section 3.1). In this pilot study in particular, apart from concluding that the Subset Principle prevails over the negative transfer from the subjects'

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<sup>3</sup> In this pilot study it was not expected that relative clauses with Res Pron would appear, since this structure was only present in the studies carried out by Perpiñán (2008, 2015) on the acquisition of L2 Spanish and not in studies regarding the acquisition of L2 English, like the present pilot study.

L1, the results have shown that the independent variable AoA plays a more important role than the input of English received by the participants in the acquisition of prepositional relative clauses.

Some other studies (Suprpto, 2013; Almahammed et al., 2015) conclude that the input received by the participants and the different proficiency levels play a significant role in the results obtained, and thus, participants change from preferring the structures which hold the unmarked property to those which hold the marked property when they receive more input from the L2 they are learning. However, this is not the case in the present study, since participants with a low input and an intermediate level of proficiency (P1 and P2) have produced more prepositional relative clauses with the non-available structure in their L1, i.e. PS, than the participant with a high input and a high level of proficiency (P4).

Consequently, further research is needed so as to find out, for example, why P1 and P2, the two participants who have a low input, produce no instances or almost no instances of PiP, just as the native participant, showing, in this way, no L1 negative transfer in their responses, while on the other hand, they make great use (P2 in a higher degree) of the ungrammatical Null Prep. Although their preference for PS instead of PiP is a native-like one, this resource consisting in omitting the preposition so that participants do not have to choose one structure over the other, is used, mainly by P2, several times throughout the data elicitation task.

To conclude, it is important to mention that I am aware that the amount of participants who have taken part in the pilot study is limited. However, taking into consideration this limitation and that this study is in fact a pilot study with a simple research instrument, a clear conclusion can be drawn: in view of the results, an early exposure to English (AoA) plays a crucial role in the acquisition of prepositional relative clauses by Spanish learners of English. That is the reason why the two participants with a late AoA (P2 and P4) experience a disadvantage with respect to the two participants with an early AoA (P1 and P3).

## 6. Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the acquisition of prepositional relative clauses, more precisely the acquisition of PiP and PS, in L2 English by Spanish speaking learners. For this purpose, five respondents, four L2 English learners and one English native speaker, took part in the study and the required data was collected by using a data elicitation task. In addition, two different types of variables: (i) one dependent variable, the participants' responses, (ii) and two independent variables, AoA and input, were taken into consideration in the present study.

The results showed a preference of almost all the participants for the use of prepositional relative clauses with PS over PiP, conforming in this way to the Subset Principle. Furthermore, although there might exist individual differences among the participants and there is only one subject for each linguistic profile since this is a pilot study, it has been found that AoA is much more important than input regarding the acquisition of this type of phenomenon in particular.

Bearing in mind the previous studies conducted on prepositional relative clauses, as well as the present work, it can be concluded that this is a difficult area for investigation and that further research is needed, since there is not a consensus regarding the acquisition of prepositional relative clause constructions when learning an L2.

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## Appendix 1

### The Research Instrument Used in the Study

Complete the following sentences using *who*, *whom*, or *which* wherever possible.

**Example:** Mary saw the man.....**who had stolen her purse**.....

The man had stolen her purse

1. The person.....was Louise.

Allen lent the person 100 dollars

2. Hotel del Coronado is a famous hotel.....

The hotel hosts many conventions

3. The man.....was Kevin.

Cathy gave the book to the man

4. Bill wrote down his information.....

He had looked up the information

5. The desk.....belonged to your grandfather.

We just cleaned out the desk

6. The student.....went to the employment office.

The student wanted a job

7. The guard was watching the player.....

Philip threw the player the football

8. The children chased the leaves.....

The wind blew the leaves around

9. The teacher helped the student.....

The lesson was difficult for the student

10. I paid 25 dollars for the same book.....

Marcy paid only 15 dollars for the book

11. The woman.....was his aunt.

Bob sent a postcard to the woman



12. I went to the school .....  
The children had burned down the school
13. The manager hire the student.....  
The teacher had recommended the student
14. The children.....begged for another one.  
Miss Smith had read the children a story
15. The bicycle.....was expensive.  
Jack asked his parents for the bicycle
16. The policeman.....arrested him.  
John reported the accident to the policeman
17. The man .....was Kevin.  
Cathy gave the man the book
18. The woman.....was his aunt.  
Bob sent the woman a postcard
19. The hungry people took the food.....  
The restaurant had thrown away the food
20. The store.....was not open.  
We called up the store
21. The guard was watching the player.....  
Philip threw the football to the player
22. The artist painted a picture.....  
He sold the picture for 3000 dollars
23. The clerk.....was fired.  
Jill had complained about the clerk
24. The person.....was Louise.  
Allen lent 100 dollars to the person
25. The children.....begged for another one.  
Miss Smith read a story to the children