

Singular generic noun phrases in L3 Norwegian

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Introduction. In this study, we explore the effect of previously acquired languages on the acquisition of generic singular nouns in L3 Norwegian. We look at three different types of generics: *Kind*, denoting members of a species; *characterizing*, or prototypical representatives of a class (Carlson & Pelletier, 1995); and *type-denoting*, non-referential NPs (Borthen, 2003). Acquisition of genericity is prone to cross-linguistic influence as studies from L2 (Ionin, Montrul, Kim, et al., 2011; Snape, 2013; Snape et al., 2013) and L3 (Ionin, Montrul, & Santos, 2011) have shown.

Rationale. We focus on the form-to-meaning mapping of singular forms (bare/definite/indefinite) in the three types of generic NPs. Norwegian and English are compatible in their use of the definite singular in kind contexts (1) and the indefinite singular specifically for characterizing contexts (2). Norwegian and Polish show similarities in the use of the bare form, as this form is used in Norwegian to express number-neutral meanings (3). Polish does not have articles, while English bare singulars are ungrammatical; the target L3 Norwegian uses all three forms (Table 1). If CLI comes from L1 Polish, we will expect target-like behavior in type-denoting contexts and a possible over-acceptance of the bare form across the test items; if L2 English is the source of transfer, we expect high accuracy in kind and characterizing contexts.

Participants. The trilingual participants resided either in Norway (PolN, n=14) or in Poland (PolP, n=26). Our control groups consisted of Norwegian native speakers (Nor, n=32), and native English speakers residing in Norway (EngN, n=36).

Materials. We used a contextualized acceptability judgment task which was distributed via an online platform. The participants read a context sentence after which the target generic sentence appeared. They were instructed to judge this sentence as good/bad in the given context. **Analysis.** We fitted *glmer* models on each NP form with response (good vs. bad) as the dependent variable, and group and condition as independent variables. Participant and test item were set as random effects.

Results. The PolN group results revealed a good grasp of the semantic uses of the forms (e.g, statistically significant rejection of the indefinite in Kind contexts). The PolP group results do not show any statistical differences, indicating overall acceptance of all test items. In the group comparisons, the definite form is accepted significantly less in the Kind condition, but it is accepted significantly more in type-denoting conditions when compared to the controls, suggesting that our target groups have not fully acquired the use of the definite form in Norwegian. The Polish L1 speakers are more accurate with the indefinite form by accepting it in characterising contexts, but they nevertheless have a significant rejection of this form in type-denoting conditions, differing significantly from control groups.

Interpretation. The PolN group is more finely attuned to the semantic differences in Norwegian than the PolP group. Both groups signal transfer from L1 Polish rather than L2 English, as the bare singular is highly accepted in all three conditions. Possible explanations will be discussed.

Keywords: Genericity, Third language acquisition, Acceptability judgment task, Norwegian

Table 1: Overview of form-meaning mapping in the three languages

	<i>Kind</i>	<i>Characterizing</i>	<i>Type-denoting</i>
Polish (L1)	Bare	Bare	Bare
English (L2)	Definite	Indefinite/definite	Indefinite
Norwegian (L3)	Definite	Indefinite/definite	Bare
Overview	Pol≠Eng=Nor	Pol≠Eng=Nor	Pol=Nor≠Eng

(1) Kind context

Context: Mange dyrearter som har levd på jorda er nå borte for alltid. Et eksempel er at ...

Item: *elefantfuglen/ en elefantfugl/ elefantfugl* er utryddet

Translation: Many animal species that have lived on our planet are now gone forever. For example, the *elephant bird/an elephant bird/ elephant bird* is extinct.

(2) Characterizing context

Context: På skolen i dag lærte vi noen ganske ukjente fakta om dyreriket. Et eksempel er at ...

Item: *sjiraffen/en sjiraff/sjiraff* har lilla tunge.

Translation: Today at school we learned some little-known facts about the animal kingdom. For example, *the giraffe/a giraffe/giraffe* has a purple tongue.

(3) Type-denoting

Context: Under pandemien var mange mennesker ensomme. Forskning har vist at ...

Item: det er sunt å ha *hunden/ en hund/ hund*.

Translation: During the pandemic a lot of people suffered from loneliness. Research has found that it is healthy to have *the dog/a dog/dog*.

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