The Influence of French on Learning English Vocabulary for L1 Arabic Speakers: The Case of Secondary School Students in Algeria

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to explore the cross-linguistic influence of French on the learning of English vocabulary for L1 Arabic Speakers who have French as L2 and English as L3 in Algeria. In order to investigate this issue, 30 first-year students, at Metkanat Hasi El-ghara Al-gharbiya secondary school – Lmniaa in Algeria, were asked to do two exercises. Both of them is fill in the gap exercises. They were designed to find out how French knowledge affects English and what types of lexical transfer students encountered to be analyzed qualitatively. The findings showed that students tend to transfer from French. These findings support the idea that transfer occurs due to the similarities that exist between languages.

Introduction

Language transfer or cross-linguistic influence has been investigated in the field of SLA for decades. In SLA, there have been so many studies on language transfer that highlight how L1 effects the acquisition of L2 and how L2 may influence the first language. In the last few years, the area of cross-linguistic influence studies extends to tackle language transfer in the field of third language acquisition, and it focuses on multilingual acquisition contexts for studying a more complicated language transfer between L1-L2-L3-Lx that may occur (Kırkıcı, 2007) when more than two languages come into contact in one mind. In third language acquisition, some studies have been conducted on TLA (e.g. Cenoz, 2001) on the issue of cross-linguistic transfer and more precisely how second language influences the learning of a third or additional language (Cenoz, 2001; Cenoz, 2003; Hammarberg, 2001; Negadi, 2015; Türker, 2017; Solís, 2015; Kırkıcı, 2007; Hanafi, 2015; Talebi, 2013; Murphy,2003).

In this paper, we start by giving a brief introduction to the points that we are going to tackle. Then, we highlight three topics in the literature review. First, we direct attention to cross-linguistic influence and language transfer in third language acquisition and learning. The second topic represents a brief history of the status of French in Algeria before and after independence (1962) regarding the use of the French language in various domains in Algeria. The third topic is specified to demonstrate the status of French and English in the Algerian education system. After that, we present the preference in language transfer and focus more on lexical transfer. At the same time, we summarize, in the literature review, some previous studies that are related to the topic of this study. In the second section, we highlight the methodology that we follow in our study including data collection procedures, participants in this study, and data analysis. Next, we provide a discussion concerning the analysis of the data and findings. At last, we answer the research questions of the study.

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2. Literature Review

The first part of the literature review provides a general overview of cross-linguistic influence and language transfer. The second part shows the status of the French language in Algeria before and after independence. The third section eventually highlights how French and English are classified in the Algerian education system. The fourth part tackles preference in language transfer and lexical transfer.

In recent years, learning more than one or two languages becomes widespread., and the number of multilingual people is in increasing day after day. De Angelis (2007) argues that "most of today's language learners go on to learn languages beyond the second one"(p.2), and according to research statistics, learning languages has been increasing all over the world. According to the previous studies, the second language might affect the learning of a third or additional language. This issue has been strongly investigated through a huge number of studies that have been conducted on language transfer in third language acquisition and learning. Recent works have demonstrated how L2 affects the learning of L3 in various areas of transfer, among which: lexical transfer (e.g. Ringbom, 2001). Langauge transfer occurs due to the similarities that exist between languages at all linguistic levels, such as lexical, orthographical, and phonological levels which are studied extensively in TLA research (T-Balla, 2013). In this regard, this study is an attempt to investigate the influence of the French language on the learning of English in Algeria.

2.1 Cross-Linguistic Influence and Language Transfer

Wang (2013) reports on the findings of some previous studies concerning language transfer (e.g. Hammarberg 2001; Cenoz, 2001; Wrembel, 2010; Tremblay, 2006; Alonso, 2002; Llisterri and Poch-Olivé, 1987; Llama et al, 2008). In an attempt to have a clear image and to understand the interaction between more than two languages, Wang (2013) mentions some kinds of language transfer by providing a background about cross-linguistic transfer and more precisely the transfer that happens at the level of the phonology, lexicon and morphology and syntax. This paper aims to highlight the concept of language transfer when more than two languages come into contact in the mind of the speaker.

According to Hammarberg (2001), Cross-linguistic influence and the background of languages play a big role in switching languages i.e. the activation of first and second language use during third language acquisition and learning. His study supports and confirms the findings of other L3 research in the sense that the impact of L1 and L2 inevitably occurs in the learner's L3 acquisition and learning. That is, language transfer occurs mainly when the first acquired language and the target language have some similarities at various levels such as syntactic, semantic, lexical, morphological and phonological level. Cenoz (2001) mentions that students' awareness of the linguistic distance between languages comes to be considered cross-linguistic influence through using words from L1 and use it in L2 or L3 learning.

Cenoz (2001) conducted a cross-sectional study on 90 elementary and secondary school students in a tri-lingual Basque school. In northern Spain, Basque is considered the most appropriate and preferred language of instruction, and Spanish is the language used at the level of the society whereas English is highlighted and taught as a third language. He formulated five research questions regarding the influence of Basque and Spanish on the learning of English. His study aims at exploring the source of language transfer in English oral production and finding out the relationship between cross-linguistic influence and their first language. The participants varied in their order of languages they know which one is their first language and which one if their second language. Some of the participants had Basque as their first language, some others have Spanish, and others had both Basque and Spanish as their first languages. The findings show that the performance of old students reflects cross-linguistic influence from Spanish. It was the source language for the majority of

the participants. The results also show that participants who have Spanish as L1 used Basque as a source language more often than subjects who have Basque as L1.

Some researchers argue that learners of L3 tend to transfer from the language which is considered to be more similar to L3 than the other language. For instance, native speakers of Arabic have French as L2 and learning English as L3. In this case, according to some studies, learners will base their learning of the English language on what they already know in French as the conclusion drawn by Hanafi (2014). Kırkıcı (2007), in a similar fashion, explains that cross-linguistic influence that L1Turkish who have English as L2 and German as L3 produce appears to be language transfer from English rather than from Turkish. This, according to him, is due to the similarities that exist between L2 and L3 of the participants. In the same sense,

> "Studies involving L3 speakers of different combinations of languages have consistently reported that learners use a second language which is typologically closer to the L3 as the supplier language rather than a typologically distant first language" (Cenoz, 2003, p.2).

Murphy (2003) sheds light on the study of cross-linguistic influence which resulted from language transfer during the process of acquiring a new language. She represents how the learners' first and second languages affect and influence the learning of a third language. In her paper, she examined the impact of the second language on the learning of a third language within the broad context of cross-linguistic influence. Her study tackles the evolution of the perspectives on cross-linguistic influence. Language transfer is the point that Murphy (2003) focuses on. Following her discussion, she mentions the variables that operate and interconnect languages when they come into contact. The variables are classified as learner-based or language-based, and she presents them according to the contexts of second and third language acquisition and learning.

2.2 The Status of French in Algeria before and after the independence
In order to understand the situations of the languages in Algeria and how they influence each other, In this part, we focus mainly on providing a clear explanation of the status of French in the Algerian context.

Algeria, in the days of the French colonization (starting from 1830), was obliged to adopt the French language for more than 130 years. France sought to control the field of education to remain the French language in Algeria even after independence (Maamri, 2009). Although Algeria gained independence in 1962, French remains used in various domains, for example: in education, in the media, in the press, and so on (Maamri, 2009). In Algeria, the majority of the Algerian people can speak French and understand it. In addition to the mother tongue in Algeria (Arabic or Berber in some regions), French is the second most widely spoken language in the country, and it is already acquired in society since the older people in Algeria took their education only in French before and after the independence (Negadi, 2015). At that time, French was used as the only language of instruction in Algeria. According to the Negadi (2015), French helps learners to develop proficiency in English through the transfer of their French-based background.

Recently, Negadi (2015) conducted a study to investigate how the prior knowledge, in this case (L2), of the learners, facilitates their L3 learning. The total number of participants in this study is 25 male learners. They are between 20 and 30 years old. All of them have Arabic as their L1 and French as their L2. They were asked to translate an English text into a language they prefer (Arabic or French). The findings of this study showed that the majority of the participants tended to translate the English text into French since they find it easier for them

to translate it into French rather than translating it into Arabic. Murphy (2003) summaries the language mode developed by Grosjean (1995, 2001) in which the amount of language transfer depends on the speaker's language mode. Her paper was written as an attempt to explore the different variables which affect linguistic transfer on the basis of current studies of third language acquisition.

2.3 French and English in the Algerian Education System

Algerians start learning French from the third grade in primary school while English is taught first in middle school. French, according to the Algerian education system, is considered as the first foreign language, and English is the second foreign language, though when it comes to society, French is the second language, and English is the third. One of the fields that France tried to control was the field of education for remaining French language in Algeria even after independence (Maamri, 2009). In this study, we focus on the issue of the influence of French as the second language in Algeria on the learning of English as a foreign language. French, as the first foreign language (L2), is taught in the Algerian educational system together with English as the second foreign language (L3).

> "The knowledge and understanding of how the mind acquires, treats, stores, organizes and uses all the linguistics information that is available to the learner, not just the information that belongs to the first or the second language" (De Angelis, 2007, p.4).

Hanafi (2014) studied the Second language influence on foreign language learners' errors. The context of his study is Algeria in which English is being taught as a foreign language in the country. He investigated the sphere of interference errors that occur in tri-lingual societies. Hanfi (2014) narrowed the scope to focus on the impact of the French language on learning English at the university to see the errors committed by the Algerian students in their learning to English as a foreign language. This study adopted a contrastive analysis to explore whether this role is inhibitory or facilitative and to see whether the knowledge of the French language facilitates the process of learning English or make it more difficult through the appearance of errors. Students were asked to translate a text from French into English and the same text from Arabic into English. Hanafi (2014) desifned a chart to compare the frequency of errors in the two translation (from French into English and from French into Arabic). The analysis of errors displays that students made error in the Arabic version of the text than in the English version. Consequently, Hanafi (2014) conclude that French facilitates the learning of English.

Talebi (2013), in his study, attempts to explore the relationship between languages in one mind. He based his study on Cook's multi-competence perspective which tackles the existence and the interaction between two languages or more in one mind, and this forms a super linguistic system as one block that includes more than one language. Similar studies have been conducted on the reading in third language acquisition that arrive at the same results. All agreed upon the idea that reading in a given language pushes the reader to activate the existing languages in his/her mind. Therefore, this may reflect some improvements in other languages.

2.4 Language Transfer Preference and Lexical Transfer

Psychotypology is defined as the perceived distance between languages the learner knows (Kırkıcı, 2007, p.2). That is, learners tend to transfer from the language which they consider to be closer to the target language they are learning. For instance, if the L1, L2, and L3 of a learner are: Turkish, German, and English respectively, s/he will

transfer from German to English not from Turkish to English since both German and English are perceived to be kind of closer regards language families.

It is worth mentioning that Kırkıcı (2007), in his analysis, classifies the lexical types of cross-linguistic influence that found in the answers of learners who have Turkish as L1, English as L2, and German as L3 into three types which I am going to adopt in my current study.

2.4.1 Full Lexical Switches

Full lexical switches are an interesting issue for Ringbom (2001) in which he highlights types of errors in translation that occur as a result of lexical transfer as one of the types of cross-linguistic influence, and he focuses on language switches. In Kırkıcı (2007), " a complete lexical item from a non-target language occurs in the production of the target language"(p.7) is referred to full lexical switch. The latter is found in the analysis of Kırkıcı (2007) when he found that the source of 48 of the total 55 full lexical switches are transferred from L2 English. As in the following example from Kırkıcı (2007):

*Ich arbeite, dabei höre ich music (Musik).

2.4.2 Morphologically Hybrid Forms

Morphologically hybrid forms, accrding to Kırkıcı (2007), occur when combining two morphemes from different languages to produce a lexical item on the assumption that this item is correct. Here is an example from Kırkıcı(ibid) analysis:

*Ich kann das nicht rightig (richtig) schreiben.

As we can see from this example, the word 'rightig' is not correct in either language (English and German), but rather it is a combination of the word forms in the two languages. The source of the first morpheme (right) of the word is English while the second part of (tig) is used as a bound morpheme in German.

2.4.3 Orthographically Hybrid Forms

This type is defined as a lexical item that is related neither to the first or second language nor to the third language, and it is not related to any of the three languages (Kırkıcı (2007). As in his next example:

*Was felth (fehlt) ihnen?

In this example, the word used is not correct in both languages, neither in English nor in German.

2.4.4 Research Questions

Based on the previous studies that focused on cross-linguistic transfer in SLA and TLA, the present study aims at investigating the cross-linguistic influence of French on the learning of English in Algeria and more precisely in secondary schools. Since the French language does occur in Algerian society, it is widely used in various domains such as education. For that reason, we conduct this study to know how French, as a second language in Algeria, influences the learning of English vocabulary. So, the main objective of this study is to find out how French affects the learning of English at secondary schools and whether the similarities between French and English make the learning of English easy or make it more difficult. Based on the objectives stated above, we formulated the following main question:

- Does French as L2 have an impact on the learning of English as L3 in the written production of French-English cognate words by secondary school learners in Algeria?
- What is the source of lexical transfer that occurs in L3 English?

- What are the types of lexical transfer in L3 English? And what is the most frequent type of lexical transfer?

3. Methodology
In the previous part, we mentioned some previous studies that have been conducted on cross-linguistic influence in TLA. To further investigate this phenomenon of language transfer in the Algerian context, the present study tends to examine the secondary school students' knowledge about English as L3 to see whether there is an impact of French as L2 on the learning of English as L3. We follow the types of lexical transfer and their classification as in (Kırkıcı (2007).

3.1 Research Design
We adopted a qualitative research method to analyze two tests that address secondary school students in Algeria to investigate the influence of French as L2 on the learning of English as L3. This study is carried out in two steps: data collection and data evaluation. The first one is to ask secondary school students to do two exercises, and the second step is to analyze the answers of the students to check whether there is an impact of French on their learning of English since French is taught according to the Algerian education system, before English.

3.2 Subjects
The subjects were 30 first-year secondary school students who have Arabic as L1, French as L2, and English as L3. They study at Metkanat Hasi El-ghara Al-gharbiya secondary school –Ghardaya in Algeria. 11 males and 19 females. Their age is (15-17years old). All of them started learning French from the third grade in primary school for three years, for four years in middle school and one year in secondary school. Whereas they started learning English from the first year in middle school, so they have 4 years experience learning English in addition to one year at secondary school. They have two classes per week in both French and English.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures
The study has two exercises for first-year students at Metkanat Hasi El-ghara Al-gharbiya secondary school -Ghardaya in Algeria. The purpose of these two exercises is to investigate the French's impact on learning English as L3. Students were free to participate. The two exercises are fill in the gap exercises (See Appendix 1). To reach the aim of this study, we designed two exercises with a specific purpose in each one. They mainly focused on French-English cognates.
In the exercise, we sought to shed light on false cognates between French and English to see whether secondary school students can distinguish between the English written forms of (reason, toilet, possibility, example, intellectual, energy, savor) from the French version of the same words (raison, toilette, possibilité, exemple, intellectuel, énergie, saveur). This exercise includes seven sentences. It is fill in the gap exercise with two choices in each sentence (See Appendix 1). One word is in English, and the other word is French. We wrote simple sentences so that any one of the students can understand.
In the second exercise, our purpose is to go deeper with the cross-linguistic influence between French and English. We wrote five sentences in which the students were asked to complete the sentences by writing the missing words correctly (See Appendix 1). The teacher reads the whole sentence, and the students wrote down the missing word in each sentence as it was pronounced by the teacher. The purpose of this exercise is to explore

the impact of French on learning English in Algeria and to analyze the students' spelling mistakes, and find out the types of these errors to be classified later.

4. Results and Discussion
The present study aims at investigating the impact of French on the learning of English in Algeria and precisely at secondary school. First-year secondary school students learned French for 8 years starting from the third grade in primary school whereas they learned English for five years starting from the first grade in middle school. In this section, we are going to discuss the findings that we found after our analysis of the two exercises.

4.1 The results of the First Exercise
After receiving the answers of the students, we started analyzing the exercise by focusing on the chosen word in each sentence. We calculated how many students choose the English word and how many times they choose the French word. By doing so, it helps us to know the number of students who choose the English word from those who choose the French word in each sentence regarding the total number of the participants. Table1 below shows clearly the frequencies of the words chosen by secondary school students.

Table 1.
The frequencies of Chosen words (French and English)

Sentence' Number	The English Word	The French Word
1	13	17
2	15	15
3	23	7
4	13	17
5	14	16
6	25	5
7	12	18
		Total Number of the students : 30

Table1 shows that in the first sentence (See Appendix) the majority of the participants choose the French word (raison) rather than choosing the English word (reason) which is the correct answer in this case since the exercise is in English. In the second example, half of the students use the English word and the other half use the French word on the assumption that it is correct. In sentence 3 and 6, the majority of students choose the correct words, respectively. We can argue that the reason behind their choice of the correct English words is that the other French words in the same sentences (possibilité and énergie) contain a letter that does not exist in English which is (é). Concerning the sentence 4, 5 and 7, the French words (example, intellectual and savor) were chosen by the majority of students rather than the correct English words. We can explain the reason for choosing the French words than the correct English ones is the similarity between the French and the English words.
From the analysis of the first exercise, it can be said that French has an impact on learning English in Algeria. Since the answers of the majority of students shaped how cross-linguistic influence occurs even in the use of cognates.

4.2 The results of the Second Exercise

In the analysis of the second test, we adopted the classification of lexical transfer that Kırkıcı (2007) follows in his analysis of L3 German written production of Turkish-English-German trilinguals. In the classification of lexical transfer, there are three types as mentioned above: full lexical switches, morphological hybrid forms, and orthographical hybrid forms.

The analysis of this exercise revealed the impact of French on the learning of English to some extent. In all sentences, we detected various forms of the words in all of the sentences which reflected one the three types of lexical transfer I mentioned above. In the following list below, we mentioned some common mistakes that occurred in students' answers in each sentence of the second exercise including the most frequent forms of the students' answers:

Person, personne, persone, personn, and pirson
Demand, demande, domand, domond, and dimond
Continue, contine, contenu, kantinu, and cantinu
Research, recherche, rosherch, recherch, and rishersh
Environment, environnement, environement, and invairement

For the words 'person' in the first sentence, there are some students who could write the word correctly while some others wrote it differently. As we can see in the same sentence that some students wrote the word 'person' as it is written in French 'personne' which is full lexical switches since it a French word used in the English language context. Another type of lexical transfer that occurred in the answers of the same sentence which is orthographically hybrid forms such as persone, personn, and pirson. The latter, in our opinion, can be explained as a result of linking the sound they heard to the written form directly.

As in the first example, the second-word 'demand' was written in different ways: correct English word, correct French word, and some other forms which are neither correct English forms nor correct French form. The correct French word represents the full lexical switches whereas the new other forms they wrote are classified under orthographically hybrid forms. Here are some examples of the new written form of the word 'Demand'.

In the third sentence, the word 'continue' was written correctly for some students, and it was written incorrectly by the majority of students. Here are some of the forms that students came up with: contine, contenu, kantinu, and cantinu. For these new incorrect forms, it is clear that this type of lexical transfer is orthographically hybrid forms since they are not correct in any of the languages students know. What attracted our attention is that in this example, unlike the other examples, there was no use of the French version of the word 'continue' which I can argue that those students know clearly that the French equivalent which is 'contniuer' that is written with 'er' at the end which a sign for the stem of the verb. So, if they decided to put it in the sentence, it is expected to conjugate it.

Concerning the words 'research and environment', the results found were the same as the first and second examples. There was a choice of the correct French version of the words which are: recherche and environnement. Those two words represent orthographical hybrid forms.

From the results presented above, it can be said that French does have an impact on learning English in a secondary school in Algeria. From the second exercise, orthographically hybrid forms were classified to be the most frequent types of lexical

transfer that reflect the cross-linguistic influence of French as L2 on learning English as L3.

What we could notice is that only French occurs in the two exercises, and there is no effect on Arabic at the lexical level of English learning. This, according to many studies in TLA, as mentioned in the literature of the previous studies, is resulted from the similarities that exist between languages that considered being similar or related to the same language family. In other words, "L2 English was very likely to be perceived as more similar to the target language L3 German due to the various formal features that these two languages share" (Kırkıcı, 2007:12). This also supports the findings of Kırkıcı (2007) when he found that Turkish-English-German participants in his study tend to transfer from English more than from Turkish despite that Turkish is their L1.

5. Conclusion

To put in a nutshell, the present study shows that French has an impact on secondary school students learning English since they learned French for eight years while English for five years. It is also clear that secondary school students did not transfer at the level of the lexicon from their L1 which is Arabic whilst they transferred from French which is considered to be their L2. So, since there are no similarities between Arabic and English, students tend to activate their knowledge about French as an attempt to reach the correct answers. This study confirmed the findings of previous studies in which the lexical language transfer occurs when there are similarities that may lead to the correct answers.

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Appendices
Appendix 1: Tasks

Exercise N01: Fill in the gap using the right word.
1- Maya said: "Give me one good ………… why I believe you this time". (reason, raison)
2- He thought the house was empty, and then he heard the ………… flush. (toilette, toilet)
3- One ……………..is to allow all the students to retake the exam. (possibility, possibilité)
4- A teacher should set a good ……….. for his students. (example, exemple)
5- Bruce Lee was a great martial artist and a prominent …………… (intellectuel, intellectual)
6- After a long day at work, I had no …………… left to take a shower. (énergie, energy)
7- You could taste the subtle ………… of burned plastic in the hot coffee. (saveur, savour)

Exercise N02: Listen and fill the gap
1- She is a very good ………………(person)
2- The police man asked the witnesses: "I …………… to know what is going on here". (demand)
3- They …………… their speech. (continue)
4- Ahmed helps Maria in her ……………....(research)
5-We ought to do our best not to pollute our ……………….. (environment)

Appendix 2: Types of Transfer Regarding Students'Answers

Missing words	Full Lexical Switches	Morphologically Hybrid Forms	Orthographically Hybrid Forms
1.Person	9	0	9
2. Demand	6	0	14
3. Continue	2	4	10
4. Research	6	2	15
5. Environment	4	0	16