ROMANIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES
RJES 18 /2021

sciendo

DOI: 10.1515/RJES-2021-0011

THE EFFECT OF THE SECOND LANGUAGE ON METALINGUISTIC AWARENESS IN THIRD LANGUAGE VOCABULARY LEARNING

FATIHA SADOUKI
University of Szeged

Abstract: *This study aims at investigating the effect of second language in third language learning. It focuses on metalinguistic awareness, which reflects the extent to which learners can use their background languages in the process of third and additional language learning. The study gives insights into the issue of metalinguistic awareness by testing the participants' vocabulary knowledge in learning English as a foreign language. The number of participants in this study is 30; they are all middle school students who have Arabic/Berber as native languages, French as a second language, and English as a third language. Two translation tasks were designed to find out how participants use their background languages in learning English: translating words in the first task and paragraph translation (from English into Arabic) and think-aloud protocols in the second task. Additionally, a semi-structured interview is conducted with 8 participants. The findings reveal how participants possess greater cognitive control in language acquisition due to language relatedness between the foreign languages they learn.*
Keywords: *Metalinguistic awareness, Second language learning, Third and additional language learning, Vocabulary learning.*

1. Introduction

Second language acquisition (L2) is often used in the literature to refer to learning languages apart from the first one (see Ortega 2009), and bilingualism refers to the ability to use two languages with a level of native-like abilities (see Grojean 2008). Many issues in second language acquisition research have been widely investigated to understand the process of second language learning, and to find out how learners cope with the task of learning (Ellis 1989). Recently, this area of research has been extended to explore learning languages beyond the second one. The number of languages involved in the third language context leads researchers to ask the question of which language influences the other one(s) and which one of the previously acquired languages affects the learning of a new language leading to the examination cross-linguistic influence in the L3 context (e.g. Cenoz et al. 2001, Dewaele 2001, Hermas 2014, Kırkıcı 2007, Rothman 2011). This paper sheds light on metalinguistic awareness in the learning of vocabulary and its impact on a third language acquisition process. Subsequently, it reviews types of metalinguistic awareness such as syntactic, phonological, and semantic awareness. The theoretical section of this paper focuses on the importance of awareness as a topic for research and the extent to which learners can link the knowledge they possess to the target knowledge. Also, a section is devoted to describe the settings of the current study.

It has been proven in second and third language learning that background knowledge affects the learning process of L3, and L1 may play a facilitative role in non-native language learning (Nation 2003). Language learning is made easier when learners can wisely use the common aspects and similarities between languages so that L2 works as facilitation for learners in the process of L3 acquisition Cenoz 2003b, Jarvis and Pavlecko 2008, Negadi 2015, T. Balla, 2013). Also, the level of metalinguistic awareness plays a significant role in L3 learning which reflects the learners' awareness of the similarities and differences that may result in negative transfer when learners have difficulties in recognizing these similarities and differences (Calvo Cortés 2005). According to Cenoz et al (2001), one of the differences between L2 and L3 learners

is that L3 learners have two background languages they can rely on, while L2 learners have only one source of transfer.

According to De Angelis and Selinker (2001), transfer in learning is more likely to occur between typologically similar languages. In TLA studies, "it turned out that the speakers did not rely on their first language (L1) as expected, but on the L2" (Jessner 2008: 271). Second language may also have an impact on third language learning, and both L1 and L2 may affect L3, learning depending on the level of relatedness between the languages involved and on learners' level of awareness which leads to the investigation of metalinguistic awareness in multilingual contexts to find out how learning is affected when more than two languages are involved (Cenoz 2003, Sanz 2012). Metalinguistic awareness reflects language learning experience and the advantage of being familiar with the common points that exist between languages. When it comes to studying the relation between metalinguistic awareness and vocabulary, there is limited research on this issue (see Carlisle 2000, Kieffer and Lesaux 2012, Ramirez et al. 2013).

Although language awareness has been widely discussed in first and second language research there are only a few studies on metalinguistic awareness in third language acquisition. The present study sheds light on the effect of a second language in the process of learning a third language. It focuses on metalinguistic awareness and its role in third language learning, and it aims to provide further insight into the issue of metalinguistic awareness in learning vocabulary in multilingual contexts. Two main research questions are formulated as follows:

- Does L2 French have a positive effect on learning L3 English vocabulary?
- To what extent does the activation of L2 in a think-aloud task reflect positive transfer from L2 French to L3 English?

Seeking to answer these research questions, I present the following hypotheses regarding the research questions. In response to the first research question, I hypothesize that L2 French has a positive effect on learning vocabulary in L3 English as both languages are typologically related; therefore, learners will use L2 as a source language in learning L3 English. With regard to the second research question, I hypothesize that asking the participants to think aloud will reflect the extent to which participants activate their L2 during their L3 learning.

2. Research on metalinguistic awareness

In a world where many people learn and speak more than one language, multilingual awareness becomes one of the language skills one should have. It is important to mention that knowing how to link previous knowledge to the use of the target language plays a significant role in the learning process. According to Jessner (2008: 227), metalinguistic awareness is "the ability to focus on linguistic form and to switch focus on form and meaning". Metalinguistic awareness is a dynamic process that allows third language learners to control their language use and enable them to know the points in common between two languages or more.

According to De Angelis and Selinker (2001), linguistic awareness of L3 learners differs from that of L2 learners, as metalinguistic awareness allows the learners of a third language to control their language use. Several studies have revealed that there are factors affecting L3 learning such as learners' proficiency level in the previous languages, language relatedness and psychotypology (Cenoz 2001, De Angelis 2007, Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008, Odlin 1989, Ringbom 2001, Rothman and Cabrelli 2009, Sadouki 2020a, Sadouki 2020b). Learners' conscious or unconscious judgment concerning L1 and L2 similarities is a determining factor that reflects language transfer (Odlin 1989: 27). Learners compare the three languages and activate the one that seems to help them in learning L3. Cenoz (2003) reviews a number of studies that have been conducted on the role of second language in third language learning and provides a critical evaluation of the additive effect of bilingualism on the cognitive development in L3 acquisition. However, Jessner (2008: 280) states "multilingualism cannot be interpreted as additive

monolingualism, but that a multilingual system must be interpreted as a different system with different rules".

Herdina and Jessner (2002) propose a model known as 'Dynamic Systems Theory' (henceforth DST) in which they mention that multilingual development is a dynamic process. They discuss the advantages of applying the DST model to multilingualism, which presents a clear image for multilingual development. The theoretical perspective arising from the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (henceforth DMM) is meant to achieve various purposes as in (Herdina and Jessner 2002). Firstly, DMM serves as a bridge between second language and multilingual research. Secondly, DMM gives insights into future research to focus on language contact between two languages or more through covering interesting facts in multilingualism. Moreover, one of its goals is to develop a model that accounts for multilingualism apart from the traditional explicit and implicit monolingual views towards multilingualism. This model is proposed to extend the assumed factors in multilingual development (Herdina and Jessner 2002). It is important to note that metalinguistic awareness is becoming one of the important topics in multilingualism, learning in multilingualism.

3. Types of metalinguistic awareness

As language transfer and cross-linguistic influence of different types, the same is true for metalinguistic awareness, which may occur at different levels such as syntax, phonology, and semantics. Studies have shown that learners' production in multilingual contexts reflect both metalinguistic awareness and cross-linguistic transfer based on learners' level of awareness (see Cenoz 2003, Chiappe and Siegel 1999). Some findings (Ianco-Worrall 1972) suggest that learners who know more than two languages are expected to have a higher level of metalinguistic awareness than those who know only one language. Studies investigating the additive cognitive role of bilingualism have revealed that "bilingualism helps develop higher levels of mental flexibility and metalinguistic awareness at earlier age" (Sanz 2012: 2). This section is devoted to explain briefly the subcategories of metalinguistic awareness such as syntactic, morphological, and phonological awareness. Next, it focuses on the relation between vocabulary size and metalinguistic awareness, and discusses how learners use their vocabulary background in acquiring a target language. The present study focuses on metalinguistic awareness in vocabulary learning in subsequent learning, when learners already have vocabulary background in their L1 and L2, which might help them in developing the target language vocabulary.

One of the types of metalinguistic awareness occurs at the level of syntax. Syntactic awareness, also known as grammatical awareness, refers to the ability to manipulate the grammatical structure of a given language (Cain 2007). The literature on syntactic awareness has been extended to include second language and recently third and multilingual contexts, Sanz (2007) claiming that learners need to understand the relationship between literacy developments in two languages in order to enhance their ability to learn a third language. It is worth mentioning that Galambos and Hakuta (1988) conducted two longitudinal studies to investigate metalinguistic awareness in bilingualism by comparing two groups of children (monolingual and bilinguals). The aim of the first study was to examine their ability to detect the grammatical errors and to correct the syntactic structures of sentences in Spanish, whereas the second one focused on the ability to detect ambiguity and paraphrase various meanings. The findings showed that the proficiency level in both first and second language plays a significant role in metalinguistic awareness. It must also be mentioned here that there are different ways to assess syntactic awareness such as error-correction, sentence-correction, oral-correction, morphosyntactic-correction tasks and so on (Juwairia 2015). In addition, previous research has established a strong correlation between reading comprehension and syntactic awareness as the latter contributes to increasing the reading comprehension level (Juwairia 2015, Tik-Sze and Suk-Han 2020).

Another type of metalinguistic awareness is morphological awareness, which is the ability to identify and manipulate the smallest segments of meaning found within words (Ramirez et al. 2013). Teaching morphology is one of the vital topics that should be considered to direct learners' attention to cognates to help them achieve a certain level of vocabulary knowledge (Ramirez et al. 2013). Research has shown that various aspects of language development such as vocabulary usage and reading comprehension are significantly related to morphological awareness (e.g. Carlisle 2000). One of the advantages of giving instructions on morphological awareness is that developing morphological awareness which in turn builds metalinguistic awareness which helps develop morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge is the contribution in raising metalinguistic awareness which helps in developing the level of morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge that will result in learners' academic level (Ramirez et al. 2013). In addition, teaching the direct meaning of words reflects an effective improvement in vocabulary learning (McKeown and Beck 2003).

The next type of metalinguistic awareness to be discussed is phonological awareness, which refers to "one's awareness of and an access to the sound structure of oral language" (Wagner et al. 1997: 469). According to Wagner et al. (1997), it also describes the ability to divide a word into segments, small units and sounds. Children start recognizing sound (in their first language) at an early age, and this ability builds phonological awareness over time. In this line, Canbay (2011) compared the phonological metalinguistic awareness of bilingual children (Turkish-English) to pre-school monolingual English children by testing both groups through word-recognition tasks to determine which group has an advantage over the other one. His findings show that children in the bilingual group outperformed those in the monolingual group in terms of phonological awareness. Demont and Gombert (1996) conducted a study on the relation between different metalinguistic abilities (phonological awareness and syntactic awareness). He found that phonological awareness could be used as a predictor for recording skills while syntactic awareness acts as a predictor of reading comprehension skills.

In fact, there are other subtypes that have been tackled in investigating the issue of metalinguistic awareness such as semantic and pragmatic awareness (Ianco-Worrall 1972), where bilinguals are recognized to develop a higher level of semantic metalinguistic awareness in comparison with monolinguals. Pragmatic awareness is the realisation of how to use language contextually by taking into consideration social and cultural factors. In a first language learning context, pragmatic awareness is related to "what children know about language use and the social and contextual factors that affect the usage" (Sajavaara et al. 1999: 230). Metalinguistic awareness on advanced levels of metalinguistic awareness in language learning go beyond the simple interpretation of words, syntactic structures and specific language use in a given context and refer to a certain degree of competence in the fields of semantics, pragmatics and discourse (Grabe 2009).

4. Vocabulary size and metalinguistic awareness

The knowledge of a first and a second language has a special role in the learning process of a third language when three languages come into contact. As both first and second language may affect the learning of L3, the directionality of transfer differs from one context to another depending on the languages involved and whether these languages have some aspects in common (i.e. typologically related), or whether they are typologically different. In other words, "Different languages are distinct from each other since they have different surface aspects such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, but there is an underlying academic/ cognitive proficiency, that is shared or interdependent across languages" (Javadi-Safa 2018: 187). In language learning, second and third language acquisition have a lot in common, but third-language learners have more than one language experience at their disposal compared to second language learners (Cenoz 2003a).

The more languages one knows, the more experience s/he can have. According to Brandes and McMaster (2017), vocabulary knowledge is usually associated with reading comprehension and proficiency in reading as there is a connection between phonological awareness and developing vocabulary knowledge (Farnia and Geva 2011). Therefore, "the relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension can be regarded as reciprocal, such that as students learn more words their comprehension is better facilitated" (Brandes and McMaster 2017: 53).

5. Language learning and speaking Algeria

Contemporarily, the Algerian society is considered a multilingual one due to circulation of several languages on a daily basis - Arabic, Berber and French - that are used by Algerians on a daily basis. Chami (2009: 387) states that Algeria was "a place of invasion and a crossroad of civilizations that made the linguistic plurality reign among its speakers since Antiquity". Algeria's linguistic situation is a bit complex, which lies in the interaction between languages, their varieties in Algeria, and French as a kind of code-switching between them. The Arabic language has two varieties (Modern Standard Arabic and dialectal or Algerian Arabic): Modern Standard Arabic is usually used in formal settings like schools and universities, mass media, and scientific conferences, while dialectal Arabic is used in informal settings, and it differs from one region to another. For example, Algeria and Saudi-Arabia share Arabic as the official language, but the Arabic used in Algeria differs from the one used in Saudi-Arabia due to the differences in their dialects. Berber, also known as Tamazight which is referred to as L1, includes varieties such as Kabayle, Chawi, Targi; it is usually used in regions such as Tizi-ouzou, Khenchla, Ghardaia. Additionally, French is widely used in the country due to the French colonization in Algeria, which lasted for more than 130 years. In primary schools, students develop their knowledge of Standard Arabic and French, and in some regions Berber. When it comes to English, students in Algeria start learning it as a foreign language in middle schools and thus it often functions as L3. Students often use French as a source language when learning English at this stage since it is more typologically close to English than Arabic and Berber.

6. The study

The current study aims to explore metalinguistic awareness in third language vocabulary learning and to find out the role of the second language in raising metalinguistic awareness in TLA. As mentioned above, Algerians learn English in middle school when students already learn Standard Arabic and French in primary school. This study is carried out with the participation of 30 middle school students in Algeria. All of the participants are aged between 11 and 15. The participants had started to learn French in the third grade in primary school at the age of 7 and English from the first grade in middle school at the age of 10.

The instruments of this study are two tasks in addition to a semi-structured interview. The first two tasks are translation tasks. In the first one, participants were given a list of 21 words in English, and they were asked to translate these words from English into Arabic, and these words were selected according to a set of criteria, namely that they are frequent vocabulary items studied in school. In the second translation task, participants were asked to think aloud when translating a paragraph from English into Arabic. As they were doing so, they were recorded, and the recordings were transcribed. The purpose of these tasks is to focus on the participants' cognitive process while doing the translation to analyse their verbal recording and find out which one of their previous languages they activate. In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted with eight participants. The age of onset for French is from birth for four participants while the other four started learning French at school as in the following table:

Table1: information about the participants

Details of participants		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	4	50%
	Female	4	50%
Age	11	2	25%
	12	2	25%
	13	2	25%
	14	2	25%
Native language (s)	Arabic	4	50%
	Berber	4	50%
Age of onset for French	From birth	4	50%
	In school at the age of 7	4	50%
Age of onset for English	In school at the age of 10/11	8	100%
Total		8 participants	100%

Participants were interviewed in Arabic, and they were free to answer questions in the language they prefer, and the semi-structured interview questions are simple and clear to make sure all participants understand the content. They focus on the participant's opinion about the languages they acquired at early age and at school, and what they think about language relatedness between Arabic/Berber, French and English, and here are some of the questions of the semi-structured interview as follow:

1. What are the languages you use in your daily life (with family and friends)?
2. Do you think that the languages you know help you in learning English? How?

The purpose of using the second thinking-aloud translation task is to explore the participants' cognitive processes when they translate the paragraph, and how they verbalise their thoughts showing the language they use during their translation process. According to Charters (2003: 68), "think-aloud research methods have a sound theoretical basis and provide a valid source of data about participant thinking, especially during language based activities".

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 English vocabulary awareness

As previously stated, participants were asked to translate 21 words from English into Arabic. Three criteria are set to analyse the translation of the 21 words. These criteria are correct translation, incorrect translation and no answer if they did not produce a translation. The answers are analysed by the SPSS version 24 to turn the answers into scores to find out the extent to which participants correctly translated the given words (See Figure 1). Then, the descriptive statistics were analysed to find out the mean of the correct translations of all participants as well as the standard deviation based on participants' translations. The descriptive results of mean and standard deviation are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1 : Mean scores , standard deviation of the translation task (descriptive statistics)

	1.Correct translation	2.Incorrect translation	3.No answers
Mean	3.6600	1.4300	1.1000
Std. Deviation	1.28094	1.31237	1.27920
Minimum	7	1	0
Maximum	28	10	5

The statistics showed that the correct translation has the highest mean (M= 3.66), and for the standard deviation scores, the results were mostly around (SD =1). That is, the mean and the

standard deviation represent the extent to which students translated the given words correctly, where correct translations occur as a reflection of positive transfer, Woll (2018) mentioning that the number of correct translations operationalizes positive lexical transfer from the second language to the third language.

Participants translated correctly the words that seem typologically similar to their equivalents in French as the word *traditional*, which is translated correctly by 28 out of 30 (the total number of participants). For example, words such as *reality, traditional, ordinary, and capture* are typologically similar to their equivalents in French *realité, traditionnel, ordinaire and capturer*, which also include meaning correspondence to the English words. The majority of the word translations were correct due to the relation between the English words and their French equivalents. The finding is consistent with Woll's research (2018), where words were successfully translated into L1 French based on positive transfer of L2 English on L3 German. Javadi-Safa (2018) states that there is an evidence for the relation between learners' previous languages and the language they are learning. In the case of the present study, there was evident learner transfer across these languages, the correct translation of words ranging between 7 and 28 due to the typological similarity of certain English items and their equivalents in French (such as o*rdinary, traditional,* and *reality*, which were the most frequently transferred words). Figure 1 below shows the participants' translations of the 21 words based on their correct translation presented on a vertical axis whereas the horizontal axis represents the words they were asked to translate.

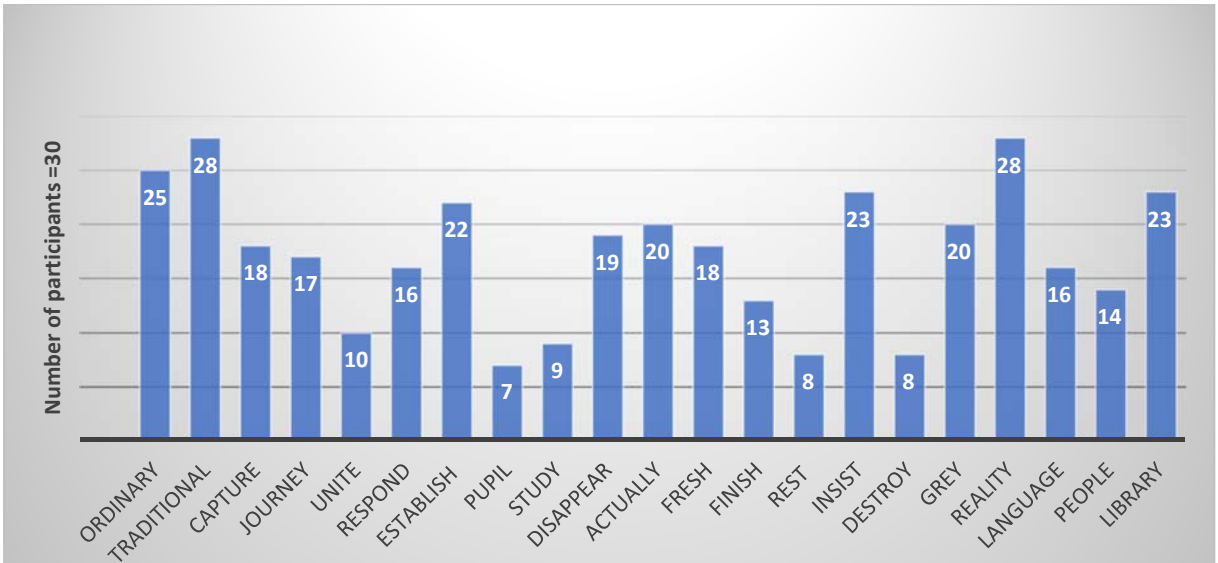

Figure 1. Correct translations (instances of positive transfer)

The correct translation of certain words, which are considered English-French cognates, reflects the awareness of the similarities between the two languages, and the extent of positive transfer from L2 French to L3 English. As found Woll (2018) underlined, the maximum number of correct translations could be considered instances of positive transfer from L2 English to L3 German. Not surprisingly, the number of correct translations is higher than the incorrect ones, and participants translated words based on their knowledge of French, which plays a facilitative role in this context. Thus, we can also claim that the correct translation of target language words operationalised positive morphological transfer, which is associated with the equivalents of these words in the second language as also observed by Woll (2018).

7.2 Positive transfer in multilingual context

According to Leow's (2000) findings on thinking aloud protocols, he classified learners into two categories: aware and unaware learners. Aware learners performed better than unaware ones as they "significantly increased their ability to recognize and produce in writing the targeted morphological forms" (Leow 2000: 568). In the present study, the participants' use of L2 French in learning L3 English gives evidence for the positive influence of the second language on L3 as reported by Cenoz (2003b) and Flynn et al. (2004). The recordings reveal that the participants correctly recognized more than 16 items in the paragraph, and they could translate them into Arabic based on their French background, probably due to the Romance origins of these words in which typological similarity can be clearly noticed between these items and their equivalents in French. These findings reveal that most of the participants could link their background knowledge to the target language and use it as an advantage in learning English. For instance, Words such as *natural, relatively and distances* were easily recognized by the participants due to their typological relatedness to the French words: *naturel, relativement and distances* and due to the meaning overlap between the English words and their equivalents in French.

The second translation task focused on collecting verbal data, the participants' loud reasoning during the translation task and the findings reveal that French is often used as a source language in translating the paragraph into English. Clear examples of positive influence of the more typologically similar language (i.e. French) to English on participants' performance can be seen in the recordings, which provide evidence for participants' awareness as can be seen in the following examples:

> 1. "…hadi lparagraph fiha yaser kalmat ybano yhabbo lil Français…when the air is clear…hadi fiha zouj kalmat ychabbo *l'air* w *Claire*, mais tbanli ma3naha عندما يكون الجو صافيا... "
> 1. "… this paragraph has many words which look like the French words… when the air is clear… this sentence includes two words look like *L'air* and *Claire* (French words), I think this sentence means [Arabic for عندما يكون الجو صافيا...]" [our translation]

Example 1 clearly describes the correct translation of the two words *air* and *clear* into Arabic based on French background that was activated as a link between the original sentence and its equivalent into Arabic. Another example showed that participants' thinking-aloud reflects the explicit recognition of the positive role of French in translating vocabulary from English into Arabic as follows:

> 2." hadi lkalma ndon 3andha nafs l ma3na ta3 *relativement* li bel Français. Concernant al-kalma li ba3dha ndon [silence for 1 minute] hmm angles tani ma3naha 9rib lil kalma *angles*"
> 2. "I think this word has the meaning as the French word *relativement*. And concerning the next word [silence for 1 minute] hmm angles means *angles* in French, so it means [Arabic for زوايا....]" [our translation]

The participants intuitively recognized the relation between English words and their equivalents in French, that is how their translation into Arabic was correct. As can be seen above also from the way the students speak a mix of L1, L3 and L2 when thinking-aloud, facilitation in the translation task. The second language knowledge illustrates the level of awareness of the participants in this context of French and English lexical similarities.

3. "W hadi 'if the air is polluted'… Le mot *air* rahi m3awda w polluted 9riba men *pollution* ma3naha te3ni *pollué*… natural ma3netha طبيعي in Arabic wela *naturel* …"
3."and in this sentence 'if the air is polluted'… The word *air* is repeated which means *L'air* in French and concerning the word *polluted*, I think it comes from the word *pollution,* so it means *pollué*…and the word *natural* means *naturel* which means طبيعي in Arabic…" [our translation]

Regarding example 1 above, we can say that it is clear that participants used the three languages they know in an attempt to find the equivalents in Arabic for the English words *air* and *clear* via French equivalents While in example 3 we see that the majority of the participants translated the word *polluted* correctly, which is the adjective derived from the noun *pollution*. Interestingly, 10 of the participants also correctly decoded the adjective *polluted* as part of the same word family of the noun *pollution*, a cognate proper of the French noun *pollution*.

Think-aloud tasks clearly highlight the cognitive process participants went through during the translation task. The strategies that participants followed during the task intended to identify a possible link between L3 English acquisition and any of the participants' previously acquired languages (L1+L2). Therefore, participants recognise the similarity of form and lexico-grammatical meaning for the English - French cognates and use it as scaffolding in the translation task similarly to the conclusion drawn by McKeown and Beck (1983: 17):

> *"fluency of access to word meaning and expanded semantic network connections, both of which were promoted by vocabulary instruction that provided rich opportunities for children to acquire, explore, and develop word knowledge".*

7.3 Level of awareness regarding French-English similarities

In the semi-structured interviews, the participants talked about the beneficial role of French in learning English, and they claimed that French helps them when learning English. Both participants use French in their daily life situations. The majority of participants' answers on the questions about the usefulness of the previous languages (Arabic/Berber, and French) in learning English reflect the positive role of L2 French as a facilitative language in the learning process. As some of the participants expressly pointed out during the interview while using L2 French:

4."Je pense que le Français m'aide beaucoup à apprendre l'Anglais"
4. "I think French helps me a lot in learning English" [our translation]

In relation to vocabulary knowledge, participants claimed that French has a positive impact on learning since they started learning French before learning English. They insist on the positive influence of the second language as they considered it closer to English in the writing of some words as some of the participants mentioned:

5."أنا نشوف أنو الفرونسي قريبة ياسر من الأونجلي علابيها كي نعود نقرا في الأونجلي نتفكر الكلمات اللي مش كيما العربية مختلفة Il y a beaucoup des points entre les deux يشبهو للكلمات تاع الفرونسي على الاونجلي"
5. "I consider French closer to English than Arabic. Sometimes, when I read a paragraph, for instance, in English; I remember the French words that are written slightly the same way. There is a lot in common between the two languages in comparison to Arabic" [our translation]
6. كي par example في رايي الفرونسي والأونجلي يتشابهو اكثر من العربية و الأونجلي... بالنسبة ليا نقرا كاش فقرة مكتوبة بالأونجلي مرات نعرف المعنى تاع بعض الكلمات لأنهم يتشابهو في الكتابة للكلمات تاع الفرونسي.

> 6. "In my opinion, French and English are more related than English and Arabic… For me for instance, when I read a paragraph in English, sometimes I know the meaning of some words because they are written in slightly the same way as the French word"

As the participants' comments above clearly show, there is a certain level of awareness of the possible connections between the role of second language and of metalinguistic awareness in third language vocabulary decoding/learning. Both the think-aloud tasks and the semi-structured interview reflect the positive cross-linguistic influence in vocabulary learning, the participants guessing the meaning of the words based on their background in French. In addition, they mention that they use French as scaffolding in learning English since both are Indo-European languages and more typologically related. There are so many ways through which English was influenced by the Romance languages like cognates and borrowing words that have Latin origins. As the above analysis shows, the data collected from the research instruments revealed the participants' awareness of the cognates in their L3 learning.

8. Conclusion

The findings of the present study show that L2 French has an impact on learning L3 English due to language relatedness between L2 and L3. In this case, Arabic and Berber (L1) were blocked when decoding L3 word meaning since they are typologically different, whereas French (L2) was highly activated as the participants show that they are aware of and can use L2 French as the bridge language in learning English; i.e. "The active language with the highest level of activation is the preferred source of lexical information. Access to lemmas of languages that have a lower level of activation is partially blocked" (Dewaele 1998: 488). The analysis of the first two tasks show that French plays a facilitative role and positively influences the learning of English in this context. Another finding of particular interest is that French, in this context, serves as a reference language in learning English in this context due to the activation of the more typological language to English i.e. French, and the analysis reflects positive influence of L2 French on L3 English learning.

To sum up, the findings of the study address two issues: firstly, bilingualism and its role in raising students' knowledge, and secondly the positive role of the previously acquired languages, which have a positive cross-linguistic influence and may facilitate the learning process of the target language. One of the limitations of this study is the number of the participants which is rather small for a detailed study on metalinguistic awareness in third language learning. The phenomenon can be investigated more by using more research instruments such as classroom observation that gives insights on learners' performance and explores metalinguistic awareness up-close. Also for further research, we may also investigate the treatment of deceptive cognates or that of partial cognates in such translation tasks to understand the limitations of the scaffolding language. Finally, the present research revealed that there is a need for more studies to be carried out in order to fully understand the multi-faceted nature of multilingualism in this particular context.

References

Brandes, Dana R, and McMaster Kristen L. 2017. A Review of Morphological Analysis Strategies on Vocabulary Outcomes with ELLs. *Insights into Learning Disabilities 14, no. 1*, 53-72.

Cain, Kate. 2007. Syntactic awareness and reading ability: is there any evidence for a special relationship? *Applied Psycholinguistics 28*, no. 4, 679–694.

Calvo Cortés, Nuria. 2005. Negative language transfer when learning Spanish as a foreign language. *INTERLINGÜÍSTICA 16*, no. 1, 237-248.

Canbay, Orkun. 2011. Comparing the phonological awareness of bilingual and monolingual pre-school children. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences15,* 976–980.

Carlisle, Joanne F. 2000. Awareness of the structure and meaning of morphologically complex words: Impact on reading. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 12, 169–190.

Cenoz, Jasone. "The effect of linguistic distance, L2 status, and age on cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition". In *Cross-Linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives*, edited by Jasone. Cenoz, Britta. Hufeisen and Ulrike. Jessner, 8-20. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001.

Cenoz, Jasone. 2003a. Cross-linguistic in third language acquisition: Implications for the organization of the multilingual mental lexicon. *Vereinigung für angewandte Linguistik in der Schweiz* 78, 1-11.

Cenoz, Jasone. 2003b. The additive effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition: A review. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 7, no. 1, 71- 87.

Cenoz, Jasone., Hufeisen. Britta, and Jessner Ulrike, eds. 2001. *Cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Chami, Abdelkarim. 2009. A Historical Background of the Linguistic Situation in Algeria. *Al-Mawakif Journal of Research and Studies on Society and History* 4, no. 1, 387-395.

Charters, Elizabeth. 2003. The Use of Think-aloud Methods in Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Think-aloud Methods. *Brock Education* 12, no. 2, *68-82.*

Chiappe, Penny, and Siegel Linda S. 1999. Phonological awareness and reading acquisition in English- and Punjabi-speaking Canadian children. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 91, no. 1, 20–28.

De Angelis, Gessica. 2007. *Third or additional language acquisition.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

De Angelis, Gessica, and Selinker Larry. "Interlanguage transfer and competing linguistic systems in the multilingual mind". In *Cross-Linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives*, edited by Jasone. Cenoz, Britta. Hufeisen and Ulrike. Jessner, 42-58. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001.

Demont, Elizabeth, and Gombert J E. 1996. Phonological awareness as a predictor of recoding skills and syntactic awareness as a predictor of comprehension skills. *British Journal of Educational Psychology 66*, 315–332.

Dewaele, Jean-Marc. 1998. Lexical inventions: French interlanguage as L2 versus L3. *Applied Linguistics* 19, no. 4, 471–490. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/19.4.471.

Dewaele, Jean-Marc. "Activation or inhibition? The interaction of L1, L2 and L3 on the language mode continuum". In *Cross-Linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives*, edited by Jasone. Cenoz, Britta. Hufeisen and Ulrike. Jessner, 69-89. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001.

Ellis, Rod. 1989. Second language learning and second language learners: Growth and diversity. *Ournal/Revue TESL du Canada* 7, no. 1, 74-94.

Farnia, Fataneh, and Geva Easther. 2011. Cognitive correlates of vocabulary growth in English language learners. *Applied. Psycholinguistics* 32, no. 4, 711–738.

Flynn, Suzanne., Foley. Claire, and Vinnitskaya Inna. 2004. The cumulative-enhancement model for language acquisition: Comparing adults' and children's patterns of development in first, second and third language acquisition. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 1, no. 1, 3–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710408668175.

Galambos, Sylvia Joseph, and Hakuta Kenji. 1988. Subject-specific and task specific characteristics of metalinguistic awareness in bilingual children. *Applied Psycholinguistics 9,* 141–162.

Grabe, William. 2009. *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. NewYork, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Grojean, François. 2008. *Studying bilinguals*. Oxford: Oxford university press.

Herdina, Philip, and Jessner Ulrike. 2002. *A dynamic model of multilingualism: Perspectives of changes in psycholinguistics.* Multilingual Matters.

Hermas, Abdelkader. 2014. Multilingual transfer: L1 morphosyntax in L3 English. *International Journal of Language Studies* 8, 1-24.

Ianco-Worall, Anita D. 1972. Bilingualism and cognitive development. *Research in Child Development* 43, no. 4, 1390-1400. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1127524

Jarvis, Scott, and Pavlenko Aneta. 2008. *Crosslinguistic influence in language and cognition*. New York: Taylor & Francis Inc.

Javadi-Safa, Azim. 2018. An Overview of Cross-linguistic Influence in Language Learning. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research* 5, no. 3, 186-203.

Javadi-Safa, Azim. 2018. A Brief Overview of Key Issues in Second Language Writing Teaching and Research. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies* 6, 12. 10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.6n.2p.15.

Jessner, Ulrike. 2008. A DST model of multilingualism and the role of metalinguistic awareness. *The Modern Language Journal 92*, 270-283.

Juwairia, S. 2015. The within- and cross-language role of syntactic awareness in reading comprehension among French immersion students. Unpublished MA thesis., university of Toronto.

Kieffer, Michael J, and Lesaux Nonie K. 2012. Direct and indirect roles of morphological awareness in the English reading comprehension of native English, Spanish, Filipino, and Vietnamese speakers. *Language Learning 62*, 1170-1204.

Kırkıcı, Bilal. 2007. Meine Hobbys sind Müzik hören und Swimmen: Lexical transfer in L1 Turkish-L2 English learners of L3 German. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterrich* 12, no. 3, 15 S.

Leow, Ronald P. 2000. A study of the role of awareness in foreign language behavior. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge University Press 22, 557–584.

McKeown, Margaret G., Beck. Isabel L, Omanson. Richard C, and Perfetti Charles A. 1983. The effects of long-term vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension: a replication. *Journal of Reading Behavior* 15, no. 3, 3-18.

McKeown, Margaret G, and Beck Isabel L. 2003. Taking advantage of readalouds to help children make sense of decontextualized language. In *On reading books to children,* edited by Kleeck. A. Van, S. A. Stahl, and B. E. Bauer*, 159-176.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003.

Nation, Paul. 2003. The role of the first language in foreign language learning. *Asian EFL Journal*, 1-8.

Negadi, Mohammed Nassim. 2015. Learning English in Algeria through French-based background proficiency. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences 199*, 496-500. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.537.

Odlin, Terence. 1989. *Language transfer: Cross-linguistic influence in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ortega, Lourdes. 2009. *Understanding second language acquisition*. Hodder Education.

Ramirez, Gloria., Walton. Patrick, and Roberts William. 2013. Morphological awareness and vocabulary development among kindergarteners with different ability levels. *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 47, no. 1, 54– 64. DOI: 10.1177/0022219413509970.

Ringbom, Håkan. "Lexical transfer in L3 production". In *Cross-Linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives*, edited by Jasone. Cenoz, Britta. Hufeisen and Ulrike. Jessner, 59-68. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2001.

Rothman, Jason. 2011. L3 syntactic transfer selectivity and typological determinacy: The typological primacy model. *Second Language Research 27*, 107–127.

Rothman, Jason, and Cabrelli Jennifer. 2009. What variables condition syntactic transfer? A look at the L3 initial state. *Second Language Research* 254, 1-30. 10.1177/0267658309349410.

Sadouki, Fatiha. 2020a. Examples of cross-linguistic influence in learning German as a foreign language: The case of third-year students of foreign languages at Al-Kawakibi Secondary School in Touggourt, Algeria. *Edulingua* 6, no. 1, 61-83. https://doi.org/10.14232/edulingua.2020.1.4.

Sadouki, Fatiha. 2020b. The Influence of French on Learning English Vocabulary for L1 Arabic Speakers: The Case of Secondary School Students in Algeria. *European Journal of Teaching and Education 2*, no. 1, 179-189. https://doi.org/10.33422/ejte.v2i1.188.

Sajavaara, Kari., Alanen. Riikka, Dufva. Hannele, Mäntylä. Katja, Pääkkönen. Merja, and Saarela Soile. "Children's metalinguistic awareness in l1 and l2: A sociocognitive perspective". In *Multiple Languages – Multiple Perspectives.*, edited by Pietilä. P, and O-P. Salo, 218-227. AFinLA Yearbook Publications de l'Association Finlandaise de Linguistique Appliquée 57, 1999.

Sanz, Cristina. "The role of bilingual literacy in the acquisition of a third language". In *A Portrait of the Young in the New Multilingual Spain* edited by Perez-Vidal, C., Bel, A., and Garau, M.J, 220-240. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007.

Sanz, Cristina. "Multilingualism and Metalinguistic Awareness". In *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* edited by C.A. Chapelle, 3933-3942. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

T. Balla, Á. (2013). The perceived role of L2 English in the process of learning L3 German. *Romanian Journal of English Studies, 10*(1), 62-76. https://doi.org/10.2478/rjes-2013-0005

Tik-Sze, Carrey Siu, and Suk-Han Connie Ho. 2020. A longitudinal investigation of syntactic awareness and reading comprehension in Chinese-English bilingual children. *Learning and Instruction 67.* Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2020.101327.

Wagner, Richard K., Torgsen. Joseph K, Rashotte. Carol A, Hecht. Steve A, Barker. Theodore A, Burgess. Stephen R, Donahue. John, and Garon Tamara. 1997. Changing relations between phonological processing abilities and word-level reading as children develop from beginning to skilled readers: A 5-year longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology* 33, no. 3, 468-479. American psychological association.

Woll, Nina. 2018. Investigating dimensions of metalinguistic awareness: what think-aloud protocols revealed about the cognitive processes involved in positive transfer from L2 to L3, Language Awareness 27, 1-19.

NOTES ON THE AUTHOR

Faitha SADOUKI is a doctoral student at the English Applied Linguistics PhD program, Doctoral School in Linguistics, University of Szeged. Her research interests include third language acquisition (TLA), multilingualism, language transfer and cross-linguistic influence.