Cross-Linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Acquisition of syntactic structures by students Bilingual in Persian-Azerbaijani, Persian-Armenia, and Persian-Gilaki

Farzaneh Khodabandeh
Mobarak Payame Noor University
Iran

Abstract
The present study builds on recent claims that investigating the L3 initial state provides another test case for UG’s involvement in adult language acquisition (Leung, 2005, 2006, 2007; Rothman & Cabrelli, 2007). It focuses on two competing approaches to adult language acquisition, so-called Failed Functional Features approaches (FFFAs) (Beck, 1998; Franceschina, 2001) and Full Access approaches (FAAs) (Duffield & White, 1999; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996). Crucially, each approach makes different predictions for L2 ultimate attainment and thus indirectly makes different predictions for possible transfer at the L3 initial state. FFFAs claim that adult L2 learners are unable to acquire new functional features. In contrast, FAAs claim that adult L2 learners have continued full access to UG. Assuming transfer, both FFFAs and FAAs make contrasting predictions for the initial state of L3 acquisition. FFFAs predict that learners at the L3 initial state are restricted to transfer of features available from the L1. Conversely, because FAAs claim that it is possible for L2 learners to acquire new features, they predict that L3 learners can start with an initial state that demonstrates either L1 or L2 functional feature transfer. The present study tests the predictions made by these two competing approaches by examining the L3 initial state of three types of groups of L3 learners of English such as Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki- Persian bilinguals via knowledge of adjective order. The instrument of this study was a grammatical test which consisted of three parts. The findings of this research were in accordance with the predictions of (FFFH) hypothesis where L1 transfer being hypothesized. L3 learners performed significantly higher than L2 learners as their interlanguage grammar seemed to reflect more of the parameter values of their L1s.

Keywords: UG, FFFA, FAFTA, L2A, L3A, Persian-monolingual, Azerbaijani-Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki- Persian bilinguals

Suggested Citation: