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

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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 (FFFs) (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:
1. Introduction

The role of language transfer in second language acquisition has long been the focus in the study of cross-linguistic influence. Much has been written about how the learner’s existing linguistic knowledge influences the course of second language development. In the last decade, however, there have been a considerable number of books and journal articles dealing with a relatively under-explored field: the role of language transfer during third language acquisition. The question arises as to how the learner’s three languages interact with each other during the language learning process.

The present study attempts to describe the influence of Azerbaijani, Armenia and Gilaki as L1 in third-language acquisition of English and its pedagogical implications by reporting and discussing the results of research carried out on how bilingual and monolingual students acquire the English adjective patterns.

A brief overview of the study of language transfer and the possible affecting factors are provided.

1.1 Transfer

The cross-linguistic influence between a person’s native language and their target language is commonly referred to as transfer. Transfer can be defined as, “the carryover of previous performance or knowledge to previous or subsequent learning” (Brown, 1994, p: 391). This process takes place through the use of “sounds, expressions, or structures” from the native language when performing in the target language (Yule, 2006, p: 167).

Transfer can be negative or positive, depending on the similarity of language features. Negative transfer, or interference, occurs when previous learned information hinders the understanding of new information features of the native language are inaccurately applied to the target language. In contrast, positive transfer occurs when knowledge of a native language facilitates the learning of a target language: past knowledge is accurately applied to present subject matter (Brown, 1994, p: 102). During any type of second language acquisition, positive and negative transfer are likely to occur.

Discussion of language transfer most often begin with the work of American linguists in the 1940’s and 1950’s. The thinking of Fries (1945), Lado (1957), and others was clearly a major catalyst of the subsequent research.

During the last decade, scholarship on L2-L3 transfer in general has increased considerably. With the increase there has been many more recent accounts of language transfer. Language transfer is best thought of as a cover term for a whole class of behaviors, processes and constraints, each of which has do with CLI (cross-linguistic influence), i.e. the influence and use of prior linguistic knowledge, usually but not exclusively native language (NL) knowledge (Selinker, 1992, p: 208). According to Gass (1996, p: 321), transfer is the use of the native language (or other language) information in the acquisition of an L2 (or additional language).

Another recent development is the study of multilingual transfer. That is, language transfer occurs not only in the process of acquiring the second language but also when three or more languages are in contact. As Murphy (2003) points out, rather than viewing the study
of third language acquisition simply as an extension of SLA research, the current trend is to consider the L3 learner as a learner with a unique and specific linguistic configuration. Evidently, cross-linguistic influence is an important factor in the field of second language acquisition and cannot be regarded as a minor phenomenon with slight side-effects on the acquisition process. It is important not only to concentrate on the learners native language as any additional languages the learner might have previously acquired are likely to play a role in the acquisition process as well.

The notion of cross-linguistic influence was first proposed during the post-war years and has ever since been of interest to second language researchers. It is clear that research in this area is on-going and the influence of the native language as well as any possible additional languages continues to attract attention in the field of second language acquisition.

1.2 Third Language Acquisition

L3A is a field which has gained great importance in recent years (Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, 2001). Jorda (2005) explains that L3A means widening one’s linguistic system quantitatively and qualitatively even more. Although L3A and L2A have common properties, L3A is more diverse and complex than L2A as it has its unique characteristics which are: (1) non-linearity, (2) language maintenance, (3) individual variation, (4) interdependence and quality change (Jorda, 2005).

Non-linearity is considered to be one of the main characteristics distinguishing L3A from L2A (Herdina & Jessner 2000, cited in Jorda, 2005). In the L2A field, language competence and development is seen as a gradual and linear process in which learners get more proficient by time.

On the other hand, non-linearity here is defined as a language development which does not follow gradually and linearly. As Jorda states, non-linearity is argued for multilingual processes by Herdina and Jessner. They say “according to biological principles language development is seen as a dynamic process with phases of accelerated growth and retardation” (Herdina & Jessner, 2000, p: 87, cited in Jorda, 2005). If the non-native language is not used, it will be quite normal for the learners to lose the previously acquired knowledge in time. Therefore, language growth is not always linear in L3A as the part of the L3 knowledge which is not actively used is easier to lose in L3 than in L2.

Non-linearity leads us to the second feature of L3A, which is language maintenance. Learners have to make effort to keep their proficiency levels in their non-native languages. The more languages known by the learner, the more effort is needed to be able to maintain the proficiency levels and previously acquired knowledge in the target languages.

The third defining feature of L3A is individual variation. While learning the L3, learners can be affected by many internal and external factors. The relation between these factors and their interactions are more complex in L3A, by virtue of the existence of more languages, than in L2A. As Jorda states, L3A can be regarded as a dynamic process as well with the variation and interaction of its defining characteristics.

The last defining feature of L3A is interdependence and quality change. Interdependence in L3A means that learners’ first, second and third languages are considered as a whole...
linguistic system which operate at the same time meaning that all the languages a person has acquired are regarded as a whole unit, rather than being 3 separate units. That is to say, an additional language changes the whole system by restructuring it with new links, skills, relationships and learning experiences, and a quality change occurs. The system becomes more complex with the L3. Thus, L3A is not a straightforward phenomenon, but rather complicated.

1.3 From L2 initial state to L3/Ln initial state

The growing interest in the “initial state” in generative L2A research is quite recent (Schwartz & Eubank, 1996), and is often tied to the investigation of the functional domain of interlanguage grammar (i.e. the emergence of functional categories, the operation of features and feature strength). The term “initial state” loosely refers to the grammar at the outset of language acquisition. Under the generative paradigm, the L1 initial state is Universal Grammar (UG), which is the “blueprint” or set of principles/constraints that guide the process of language acquisition universally (Chomsky, 1981, 1986, 1995).

In L2A, however, owing to the existence of an additional variable, i.e. the L1 (end-state) grammar, the issue of the initial state becomes more complicated. Generative L2A researchers are divided as to whether UG still constitutes the L2 initial state, or whether the L1 grammar instead (and if so, to what extent) forms the L2 initial state.

Generative theorists have proposed a number of hypotheses with respect to the acquisition of non-primary languages. These generally make claims about two aspects of the learners’ interlanguage grammars (ILGs); one, the nature of the initial state of these grammars and two, what, if any, type of access the learner has to the properties of UG in subsequent development.

The current study will discuss the role of the language background possessed by the bilingual learners of English through a comparative study in light of the most recent syntactically- based generative models of L2A, namely, Full Access Full Transfer (FAFT) and the Failed Functional Feature Hypothesis (FFFH). We review these in the following sections.

1.3.1 Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (FFFH)

The Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (FFFH) can be seen as a modern version of “no parameter resetting”, or “full transfer partial access” (White, 2000). In more recent terminology, it can also be grouped under the so called “impairment” camp (White, 2003).

The Full Transfer/Partial Access (FT/PA) Hypothesis, proposes full transfer of the L1 end-state grammar for L2 learners, but further claims that they will fail to acquire specific syntactic features of the L2 if these same features are not present in the L1 (Hawkins & Franceschina, 2004).

Formerly known as the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (Hawkins & Chan, 1997) and motivated by the results of a study by Smith and Tsimpli (1995), this hypothesis proposes a critical period for SLA in that if a subset of features (specifically uninterpretable syntactic features) is not activated during primary language acquisition and thereby instantiated in the L1, L2 learners will never fully acquire them. In other words, L2 learners are “stuck” with their L1 grammar (at least as far as formal features are
concerned), and they will not be able to acquire those formal features that have not been exemplified in their L1.

With respect to L3 acquisition, the assumption is that the FT/PA would predict full transfer of the L1; that is, even if the L3 features are additionally present in the L2, the initial state will be L1 (end-state) grammar and hence the features will remain un-acquirable (Leung, 2002).

1.3.2. Full Transfer/Full Access (FT/FA)

Initially proposed by Schwartz and Sprouse (1996), this again proposes an initial state grammar of the entire L1 end-state grammar, but differs from the above proposal in that it assumes full access to UG properties, including those which are not instantiated in the L1 grammar. The prediction here is that the end-state L2 grammar may not necessarily be target-like but it will be UG-constrained.

In relation to L3 acquisition, this proposal would predict full transfer of either L1 or L2 grammars, proposing that the initial state L3 grammar is not necessarily constrained solely by the L1 (Flynn, Foley, & Vinnitskaya, 2004).

The approach taken this research is a generative one within the framework of UG. Much of the earlier research referred to within this study assumes a Principles and Parameters UG framework, as proposed by Chomsky (1981; 1986) and such an approach will be assumed in the current study. However, the assumptions made in this research may be considered to be within the minimalist spirit, as proposed in the Minimalist Program by Chomsky (1995). The current study examines the UG properties of ordering of nouns and adjectives.

1.4 Bilingual Studies

1.4.1 Background

Although the study of adult additive multilingualism or L3/Ln acquisition has been the subject of a considerable amount of research from several cognitive/psycholinguistic perspectives for well over two decades (Cenoz, 2001), prior to the turn of the millennium there was a noticeable paucity of generative based L3/Ln research (Klein, 1995). While this has changed in recent years (Leung 2005; 2006; 2007a; 2007b; Bardel & Falk, 2007; Jaensch, 2008), such studies comprise an infinitesimal part of all generative studies investigating adult non-primary acquisition.

Despite the fact that generative L3 acquisition as a subfield proper is still in its infancy, much of the work that has been done to this point has significant implications for future research, especially those programs working to ultimately determine the role of previous linguistic knowledge in the acquisition of non-primary languages in adulthood and how this informs acquisition hypotheses and theories of the mental constitution of language and human cognition. We investigate this question – determining the source and role of transfer when there is more than one linguistic system available for transfer – in the present study. In light of this, this section reviews the generative L3 studies which have relevance to the current study.

1.5. Previous L3 research
As the current research will test UG properties in the L3 acquisition of English, the findings from some previous L3 or multilingual studies observing the acquisition of specific properties will be discussed in this section.

An important contribution to target language acquisition studies was made by Klein’s (1995) study of mono- and multilingual participants. She looked at the acquisition of specific properties in both lexical learning and syntactic learning. Grammaticality judgment and correction tasks were administered orally and in written form to a group of 17 L2 learners and a group of 15 multilingual high school learners of English. The previous languages of the multilinguals varied but all of the prior languages were similar to English in the manner in which wh-questions are formed and furthermore none of the previous languages allowed preposition stranding. The participants had to make judgments about a series of sentences from which the preposition had been omitted. If deemed ungrammatical they had to correct the sentences but were not told how. Both groups of learners made the same types of errors, which Klein interpreted as both taking the same route leading to the acquisition of this parameter; however, the rate at which each group progressed was significantly different. The multilinguals significantly outperformed the monolinguals both in correct sub-categorizations and in preposition stranding, from which the author concluded that the attitude to learning, heightened metalinguistic skills, enhanced lexical knowledge and cognitive skills of multilinguals are all advantageous in triggering the setting of UG parameters.

Flynn, Foley and Vinnitskaya (2004) looked at the acquisition of relative clauses in L3 English by adults and children, with L1 Kazakh and L2 Russian of low, mid and high proficiencies in English. The researchers compared the results obtained in this study with those of an earlier study, which looked at the acquisition of L2 English by Japanese and Spanish speakers. It was surmised that if the L1 holds a privileged role in the acquisition of subsequent languages and only typological differences determine the pattern of development, then the L3 learners should pattern with the Japanese of the previous study (since the head direction is the same). However, if the L1 does not hold a privileged role, the prediction for the L3 learners learning an L3 with a Complementizer Phrase (CP) different to the L1, but consistent with the L2, is a pattern of acquisition matching that of the Spanish L2 learners. Results showed the native Kazakh speakers contrasting strongly with the Japanese speakers, patterning instead with the Spanish speakers. The authors concluded that the L1 does not appear to hold a privileged role in the acquisition of subsequent languages, as the L3 learners demonstrated that prior CP development was a positive influence in the acquisition of the CP structure in English.

Moreover, Leung (2003) investigates the acquisition of the formal features associated with the functional category of T tense), namely, Finiteness, agreement and [+-past] in French as L3 vs. L2 by Cantonese-English bilinguals and Vietnamese monolinguals. Extending the predictions of the two current L2A competing models namely, the Failed Feature Hypothesis (FFH) and the Full Transfer Full Access (FTFA) to L3A. In general, the results on the L3 experimental group have supported the presence of the L2 English steady state in the L3 French initial state. The data are inconsistent with FFH which predicted the
L3 French initial state to be L1 Chinese. Actually, the findings supported FTFA hypothesis instead, which has predicted the possibility of L2 effect: verbal features, though absent in L1 Chinese, were acquired in the L2 English acquisition process and these successfully facilitate acquisition in the L3 French initial state. To sum up, L2 group’s performance was significantly poorer than that of the L3 group especially with respect to agreement features. It is argued that this is because the L3 group has acquired the relevant properties in English (their L2) which aids the subsequent acquisition of French (the L3) right at the onset; the L2 subjects, on the other hand, do not benefit from this advantage because they have not acquired English as an L2 previously. This borne out the author’s claim that L3 is different from L2A at least as far as the initial state is concerned.

Shooshtari (2009) investigated the acquisition of two syntactic properties of head and operator movements in English by L2 and L3 learners within UG framework. The participants consisted of 144 Persian monolingual and Arabic-Persian bilingual learners of English who were assigned to three proficiency bands after taking the general proficiency test (ECPE). The results showed no significant difference between the performance of monolinguals and bilinguals at each level of proficiency. Nonetheless, significant differences were found across the levels of proficiency. The overall results of the study led to the conclusion that bilingualism presents no significant advantage in third language acquisition. Of course, in some cases the bilingual learners performed higher than the monolingual ones but not significantly. This means that the bilingual learners did not take full advantage of their distinct language background as their performance did not outweigh that of the monolingual learners.

As stated by Leung (2003), there are few comparative studies that have investigated different combinations of source/target languages with respect to some grammatical property to find out about the route of L3 development within a generative framework. Accordingly, it seems worthwhile to pursue generative L3A further by looking at other syntactic properties across different L3 populations.

1.6 Linguistic assumptions

Comparison of English, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Gilaki and Persian adjective order

1.6.1 English

In English, a noun phrase (abbreviated NP) is a phrase whose head is a noun or a pronoun, optionally accompanied by a set of modifiers. Possible modifiers include: determiners, adjectives, and modifiers which are placed before the noun.

Examples:
The red ball
Two beautiful ladies

1.6.2 Persian

In Persian language the head Noun is followed by the modifiers, which usually consist of an Adjectival Phrase (AP) construction. There can be several modifiers in a Noun Phrase. The elements preceding the head noun are the determiner, the numeral constructions and
the quantifiers. Although adjectives always follow the noun, the superlative adjective can only appear before the head.

Examples:
Ketab-e kohneh
Old book
Ketabhayeh kohneh
Old books

1.6.3. Armenian
The Armenian language is an Indo-European language spoken by the Armenian people. It is the official language of the Republic of Armenia. The language is widely spoken by Armenian community living in Julfa, the Armenian quarter of Isfahan, Iran.
In Armenian language, adjective precedes noun:
Examples:
Hin girke (հին գիրք)
Old book
Yerko hin girker
Two old books
Ice yenko hin girker
These two old books

1.6.4. Azerbaijani
Azerbaijani or Torki is a language belonging to the Turkic language family, spoken in southwestern Asia, primarily in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran. Azerbaijani is member of the Oghuz branch of the Turkic languages and is closely related to Azerbaijani, Qashqai and Turkmen.
Azerbaijani is a very adjectival language. At a low level the adjective always preceded its noun, as in English.
Example: Turkish: bijah Ghara sichan
English: a black mouse
Persian: yek mooshe siyah (a mouse black)

1.6.5. Gilaki
The Gilaki language is an ancient and living Caspian language, and a member of the northwestern Iranian language branch, spoken in Iran's Mazanderan and Gilan Provinces.
There are some grammatical differences between Gilaki and standard Persian, especially in possessive and adjectives. Unlike Persian, most possessives and adjectives precede the head noun, similar to English. In Gilaki, the modifier precedes the noun and the Ezafe vowel is not used. The examples are as follows:
äbi-xodkār (Gilaki) vs. xodkār-e äbi (Standard Persian)
blue-pen pen-Ez blue
“blue pen” “blue pen”
More examples:
Kehneh ketab
An Old book
Kehneh ketabha
Old books
As can be seen in the above examples, English, Gilaki, Armenian, and Azerbaijani have the same adjective structure, in all of them adjectives precede nouns, on the contrary in Persian, nouns come before the adjectives.

1.7 The present study
Based on the theoretical framework presented in the previous sections and the parametric similarities and differences among the 5 languages of Persian, Turkish, Gilaki, Armenian and English as the target language, the present study addresses the following questions:

- Do Persian monolingual and Azerbaijani-Persian bilinguals perform similarly according to FAFT or differently as predicted by FFFH in the formation of adjective order due to the effect of their L1?
- Do Persian monolingual and Gilaki-Persian bilinguals perform similarly according to FAFT or differently as predicted by FFFH in the formation of adjective order due to the effect of their L1?
- Do Persian monolingual and Armenian-Persian bilinguals perform similarly according to FAFT or differently as predicted by FFFH in the formation of adjective order due to the effect of their L1?

To give logical answers to these questions, it is hypothesized:

FFFH hypothesizes that Azerbaijani, as L1, is a significant (or even more influential) source language of transfer in the acquisition of adjective. As Turkish and English are similar, positive transfer is expected to lead to the production of the correct English form.

FFFH hypothesizes that Gilaki, as L1, is a significant (or even more influential) source language of transfer in the acquisition of adjective. As Gilaki and English are similar, positive transfer is expected to lead to the production of the correct English form.

FFFH hypothesizes that Armenia, as L1, is a significant (or even more influential) source language of transfer in the acquisition of adjective. As Armenia and English are similar, positive transfer is expected to lead to the production of the correct English form.

2. Data Collection and Analysis
2.1 Subjects and Tasks
The participants of this study were the Persian monolinguals and three groups of L3 learners of English namely Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian – Persian and Gilaki- Persian bilinguals. Two guidance schools were chosen randomly for each group. The Azerbaijani – Persian bilingual subjects were chosen from among guidance schools in Ardebil (an Azerbaijani speaking city in Iran), the Armenian – Persian subjects were selected from the Armenian guidance school in Julfa, Isfahan (an Armenian speaking quarter in Iran), and the Gilaki-Persian bilingual subjects were chosen from among guidance schools in Rasht (a Gilaki speaking city in Iran). As regards, the second group consisted of monolingual Persian speakers residing in Isfahan (a Persian-speaking city in Iran), with no Azerbaijani, Armenian and Gilaki knowledge.
The subjects of all groups were low-intermediate students who were beginning learners of English. The subjects were chosen from among female guidance schools to control sex as a variable. The participants in all groups were homogeneous in terms of the socio-educational context, type of schools attended by each group, methodology used at school, number of hours devoted to the teaching of English, and the age of the participants. It needs to be added that the educational system in Iran is centralized; therefore the textbooks and methodology for teaching English as a foreign language are the same nationwide.

After selecting the schools, a general English test was administered among both Persian monolinguals and Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki- Persian bilingual students in order to get a homogeneous group. The mean and the standard deviation of the subjects’ test scores were used as the criterion for their selection. Students who had scored ‘mean ± one’ standard deviation (µ±σ) were chosen. A total of 64 Persian monolinguals, 44 Azerbaijani-Persian, 41 Gilaki-Persian, and 41 Armenian-Persian bilinguals were selected.

It should be noted that a brief oral interview was conducted to check on the language background of Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki- Persian bilinguals. This interview helped the selection of those bilingual learners who were raised in a linguistic community where both parents were Azerbaijani for Azeri students, Armenian for Armani students and Gilaki for Gilaki subjects and they used their mother tongue among family and local linguistic community members.

At the end, to all groups, an English test was administered. Their performances in the task and the mean score were compared. A T-test was conducted to test whether there was the significant difference between the mean scores.

2.2. Procedure

Experimental tasks

A test which was consisted of 45 questions was provided. The questions of the test that were used in the experiment are as follows: a sentence completion task with 10 items, a true/false test with 10 items as well as a translation task with 15 items. Hence the maximum total possible score was 35.

The questions just tested the students’ knowledge of the order of adjectives, its position before the noun (like Azerbaijani, Armenian, Gilaki and English) or after the noun (like Persian). My intention was to ascertain whether the role of Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Gilaki as L1 was prominent in learning English L3 in terms of place of adjectives.

Details of each question are as follows:

2.2.1 Sentence completion on use of adjectives

The first elicited written production task was a sentence completion task. The test items were written in such a way that it would test students' knowledge of adjective order. There were a total of 10 test items. An example task is shown in (1) below:
2.2.2 True/false test
The second type of test to be reported in this paper is a grammatical preference task. The task involves pairs of sentences; subjects were to decide whether the structure is correct or not. There were 10 items on this kind of test. An example is given below:

*She has a bag white. True/false*

2.2.3 Translation test
The last kind of questions were translation ones. 15 sentences in students' L1 were given to them and they were asked to translate them in English. Here are the examples:

- مینا نین بیرنده گیمرمزی ماسیون وار (Azerbaijani sentence)
  (Mina has a red car.)
- مینا یک ماسیون قرمز دارد. (Persian sentence.)
  (Mina has a red car.)
- مینا ایتا قرمز ماسیون دره. (Gilaki sentence) (Mina has a red car.)

The questionnaire is reproduced in the Appendix.

3. Results
This study aimed at comparing the performance of Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian – Persian and Gilaki-Persian bilingual groups of low-intermediate students with that of a Persian monolingual group on a grammatical test. In order to see whether there was a difference between the groups a test which had 35 questions was given to the both groups. The test consisted of three parts, the first part, sentence completion, the second part, true/false and the third part was translation test. The results of the question test are as follows:

3.1. The comparison of Azerbaijani and Persian students at the first level of the exam 'sentence completion'

An independent samples t-test was performed to compare the mean scores of the two groups.

**Table : 3.1.1 Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.656</td>
<td>2.96658</td>
<td>0.37082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.181</td>
<td>2.92760</td>
<td>0.44135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the descriptive statistics of the two groups, it can be seen that the mean of the "Azerbaijani" group (7.19) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (3.65) in the sentence completion part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

**Table : 3.1.2 Independent Sample Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td>099</td>
<td>.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The independent samples t-test in Table 3.1.2 reveals that the critical value for t at 0.05 significance or 95% significant is t (106) = -6.101 and p<0.00. Since -6.101 is less than 0.00, the result shows that the bilingual group has performed higher compared to the monolingual group, in other words in the sentence completion part, the scores of the bilingual group are more than the monolingual group.

3.2. The comparison of Azerbaijani and Persian students at the second level of the exam 'true/false'

**Table: 3.2.1 Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>true</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8.3438</td>
<td>1.71102</td>
<td>.21388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.5122</td>
<td>1.05171</td>
<td>.16425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.5122</td>
<td>1.05171</td>
<td>.16425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table 3.2.1 shows, the mean of the "Azerbaijani" group (9.52) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (8.34) in the true/false part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

**Table: 3.2.2 Independent Sample Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td>17.538</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>102.869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the Table 3.2.2 shows the p value of the test is .000 which is less than the level of significance 0.05. It indicates that in the true/false part, the scores of the bilingual group is above than the monolingual group, in other words the students who were familiar with Azerbaijani language performed better.

### 3.3. The comparison of Azerbaijani and Persian students at the third level of the exam 'translation'

**Table: 3.3.1 Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.8594</td>
<td>5.67609</td>
<td>.70951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12.7045</td>
<td>4.19068</td>
<td>.63177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Table 3.3.1, it can be seen that the mean of the "Azerbaijani" group (12.70) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (9.8594) in the translation part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

**Table: 3.3.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>18.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>2.995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that there was a significant difference in performance between bilingual and monolingual groups, \( t (106) = -2.834, p = .005 \). Because the p-value is less than the test score, so in the translation part, the scores of the bilingual group is more than the monolingual group, that is, the average performance score of bilinguals (\( M = 12.70, SD = 4.19 \)) was significantly different from that of monolingual group (\( M = 9.86, SD = 5.68 \)).

### 3.4. The comparison of Azerbaijani and Persian students at the whole test

**Table: 3.4.1 Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.8594</td>
<td>8.56139</td>
<td>1.07017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijani</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27.6591</td>
<td>8.92590</td>
<td>1.34563</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table: 3.4.2 Independent Sample Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translation</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translation</td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A t-test was used to compare the differences in the performance of bilingual and monolingual groups on the English adjective order test. On average, Azerbaijani students ($M = 27.65, SD = 8.92$) got better results than Persian students ($M = 21.85, SD = 8.57$). This difference was statistically significant, $t(106) = -3.400, p < .001$, indicating that the bilingual students outperformed monolingual students.

As the results show, L1 Azerbaijani speakers applied the Azerbaijani rule to English sentences, leading to the production of the correct English form. The analysis revealed that Azerbaijani, the participants’ L1, is by far the main source of influence on the English (L3) for the experimental group. So, this finding seems to be 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 L1, Azerbaijani.

3.5. The comparison of Armenian and Persian students at the first level of the exam 'sentence completion'

An independent samples t-test was performed to compare the mean scores of the two groups.

Table: 3.5.1 Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>complete</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.6563</td>
<td>2.96658</td>
<td>.37082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.4390</td>
<td>2.31353</td>
<td>.36131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the descriptive statistics of the two groups, it can be seen that the mean of the "Armenian" group (8.44) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (3.65) in the sentence completion part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

Table: 3.5.2 Independent Sample Test
The independent samples t-test in Table 3.5.2 reveals that the critical value for t at 0.05 significance or 95% significant is t (103) = -8.753 and p<0.05. Since -8.753 is less than 0.05, the result shows that the bilingual group has performed higher compared to the monolingual group, in other words in the sentence completion part, the scores of the bilingual group are more than the monolingual group.

3.6. The comparison of Armenian and Persian students at the second level of the exam 'true/false'

Table: 3.6.1 Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>true Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8.3438</td>
<td>1.71102</td>
<td>.21388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.512</td>
<td>1.05171</td>
<td>.16425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table 3.6.1 shows, the mean of the "Armenian" group (9.52) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (8.34) in the true/false part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

Table: 3.6.2 Independent Sample Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table 3.6.2 shows the p value of the test is .000 which is less than the level of significance 0.05. It indicates that in the true/false part, the scores of the bilingual group is above than the monolingual group, in other words the students who were familiar with Armenian language performed better.
3.7. The comparison of Armenian and Persian students at the third level of the exam 'translation'

Table: 3.7.1 Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.8594</td>
<td>5.67609</td>
<td>.70951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translation Persian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13.8780</td>
<td>2.28249</td>
<td>.35646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the Table 3.7.1, it can be seen that the mean of the "Armenian" group (13.88) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (9.8594) in the translation part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

Table: 3.7.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translation</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>71.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>- 5.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that there was a significant difference in performance between bilingual and monolingual groups, $t (103) = -4.75$, $p = .000$. Because the $p$-value is less than the test score, so in the translation part, the scores of the bilingual group is more than the monolingual group, that is, the average performance score of bilinguals ($M = 13.87$, SD = 2.28) was significantly different from that of monolingual group ($M = 9.86$, SD = 5.68).

3.8. The comparison of Armenian and Persian students at the whole test

Table:3.8.1 Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.8594</td>
<td>8.56139</td>
<td>1.07017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31.0244</td>
<td>4.12000</td>
<td>.64344</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 3.8.2 Independent Sample Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A t-test was used to compare the differences in the performance of bilingual and monolingual groups on the English adjective order test. On average, Armenian students ($M = 31.03, SD = 4.12$) got better results than Persian students ($M = 21.85, SD = 8.57$). This difference was statistically significant, $t(103) = -6.389, p < .05$, indicating that the bilingual students outperformed monolingual students.

As the results show, L1 Armenian speakers applied the Armenian rule to English sentences, leading to the production of the correct English form. The analysis revealed that Armenian, the participants’ L1, is by far the main source of influence on the English (L3) for the experimental group. So, this finding seems to be 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 L1, Armenian.

3.9. The comparison of Gilaki and Persian students at the first level of the exam 'sentence completion'

An independent samples t-test was performed to compare the mean scores of the two groups.

**Table: 3.9.1 Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete the sentences</td>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3.6563</td>
<td>2.96658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gilaki</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7.8537</td>
<td>2.49561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the descriptive statistics of the two groups, it can be seen that the mean of the "Gilaki" group (7.85) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (3.65) in the sentence completion part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

**Table: 3.9.2 Independent Sample Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>1.577</td>
<td>.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95.506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The independent samples t-test in Table 3.9.2 reveals that the critical value for $t$ at 0.05 significance or 95% significant is $t$ (103) = -7.512 and $p<0.05$. Since -7.512 is less than 0.05, the result shows that the bilingual group has performed higher compared to the monolingual group, in other words in the sentence completion part, the scores of the bilingual group are more than the monolingual group.

3.10. The comparison of Gilaki and Persian students at the second level of the exam 'true/false'

Table: 3.10.1 Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8.3438</td>
<td>1.71102</td>
<td>.21388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilaki</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.0000</td>
<td>1.53297</td>
<td>.23941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table 3.10.1 shows, the mean of the "Gilaki" group (9) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (8.34) in the true/false part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

Table: 3.10.2 Independent Sample Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>3.142 .079</td>
<td>1.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table 3.10.2 shows the p value of the test is .049 which is less than the level of significance 0.05. It indicates that in the true/false part, the scores of the bilingual group is above than the monolingual group, in other words the students who were familiar with Gilaki language performed better.

3.11. The comparison of Gilaki and Persian students at the third level of the exam 'translation'

Table: 3.11.1 Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9.8594</td>
<td>5.67609</td>
<td>.70951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilaki</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14.1707</td>
<td>1.44745</td>
<td>.22605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the Table 3.11.1, it can be seen that the mean of the "Gilaki" group (14.1705) is higher than that of the "Persian" group (9.8594) in the translation part. That is, Bilingual students performed better than the monolingual group.

**Table 3.11.2 Independent Sample Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>106.360</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>5.790</td>
<td>75.219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that there was a significant difference in performance between bilingual and monolingual groups, \( t (103) = -4.75, p = .000 \). Because the p-value is less than the test score, so in the translation part, the scores of the bilingual group is more than the monolingual group, that is, the average performance score of bilinguals (\( M = 14.18, SD = 1.45 \)) was significantly different from that of monolingual group (\( M = 9.86, SD = 5.68 \)).

### 3.12. The comparison of Gilaki and Persian students at the whole test

**Table: 3.12.1 Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>nationality</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.8594</td>
<td>8.56139</td>
<td>1.07017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilaki</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31.0244</td>
<td>4.12000</td>
<td>.64344</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.12.2 Independent Sample Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-7.340</td>
<td>98.848</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A t-test was used to compare the differences in the performance of bilingual and monolingual groups on the English adjective order test. On average, Gilaki students (\( M = 31.03, SD = 4.12 \)) got better results than Persian students (\( M = 21.85, SD = 8.57 \)). This
difference was statistically significant, $t(103) = -6.389$, $p < .05$, indicating that the bilingual students outperformed monolingual students.

As the results show, L1 Gilaki speakers applied the Gilaki rule to English sentences, leading to the production of the correct English form. The analysis revealed that Gilaki, the participants’ L1, is by far the main source of influence on the English (L3) for the experimental group. So, this finding seems to be 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 L1, Gilaki.

4. Discussion

Ellis (1994) mentions that in some cases, the learner’s L1 can facilitate L2 acquisition. This type of effect is known as “positive transfer”. Selinker (1972) also reconceptualized transfer within a cognitive framework. He claims that learners do not construct rules in a vacuum; rather they work with whatever information is at their disposal. This includes knowledge of their L1. The L1 can be viewed as a kind of “input” from the inside. Learners draw on their L1 in forming interlanguage hypothesis. According to this view, transfer is not “interference”, but a cognitive process.

One relevant factor which should be mentioned is Kellerman’s (1983) psychotypology, which considers language transfer as a conscious process based on the learner’s perception of language typology between the source language and the target language and his/her linguistic awareness of particular features. That is, if the two languages are perceived as similar, transfer will more likely occur, whereas a perceived dissimilarity will tend to lead to avoidance.

In our case of acquisition of the adjective order, the results showed a significant difference between the bilingual groups (Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki–Persian bilinguals learning English) and the monolingual group (Persian L1 speakers learning English). As the background questionnaire results showed, over 90% of the students transferred from their L1 Azerbaijani, Armenian and Gilaki due to the similarity in these languages and English.

To be more concrete, in the first place, the overall results of tasks revealed that at each level of the test, the bilingual and monolingual learners performed significantly different from each other. That is to say, at the first level of the test "sentence completion" the L3 and L2 learners performed differently from each other. This finding supports the prediction of (FFFH) model which claims that L2 learners have access only to those functional features instantiated in their L1. The extension of this claim to L3/Ln situation implies that the L1 steady state partially affects the L3/Ln interlanguage patterns in case the L1 and subsequent languages share the same parameters. It shows that L1 had an exclusive role in the acquisition of language(s) other than the first, the Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki– Persian bilinguals outperformed their monolingual counterparts as the formers enjoy a first language background which is partly similar to English in the formation of adjective order.
The same results also showed that at the second and third levels, the bilingual and monolingual learners performed differently. These findings highlight that the interlanguage patterns of the L3 learners beyond the initial state are significantly different from the L2 learners’ grammar with respect to the adjective order.

As the results of the study show the monolingual group’s performance (Persian native speakers learning English as L2) was significantly poorer than that of the L3 group (Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki- Persian bilinguals, learning English as L3). We argue that this is because the L3 groups have acquired the relevant properties in their L1s which aid the subsequent acquisition of English (the L3) right at the outset; the L2 subjects, on the other hand, do not have this advantage.

What we have found was that the results obtained using the written translation tests with monolingual and bilingual learners of English are compatible with FFFH theory but failed to support the FAFT stand point. The main justification for this claim turns to be the overall finding that Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki- Persian bilinguals outperformed significantly their monolingual counterparts.

5. Conclusion

In this paper it is argued that bilingualism can have certain advantages for the individual. Bilingual students would achieve better results in their foreign language studies compared to monolingual students.

Judging by the overall results, the bilingual group did perform better in the exercises than the monolingual group. With the test the bilingual’s scores were higher in all parts of the test, and thus also in the total. As we see, the bilingual group outperformed better than the monolingual group. In other words, those who were familiar with the second language performed better.

It can be concluded that positive transfer can simplify the process of acquisition of English for Azerbaijani – Persian, Armenian –Persian and Gilaki- Persian speakers. Regardless of the prevalence of similarities or differences between the languages, a person’s knowledge of his native language directly impacts his acquisition of a second language. Knowledge of the similarities and differences between Azerbaijani, Armenian, Gilaki and English is crucial in regards to establishing connections between the languages and in facilitating positive transfer from Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Gilaki to English.

With regard to the role of language background in L3A, the overall results of the study led to the conclusion that bilingualism presents a significant advantage in third language acquisition. In other words the bilingual learners performed higher than the monolingual ones significantly. This means that the bilingual learners took full advantage of their distinct language background as their performances outweighed that of the monolingual learners. The L3 learners benefited from their unique language experience at initial state in two ways: the privilege of having knowledge of two separate grammar systems and the availability of the parametric similarity between the target language, English, and their first language.

The L3 learners outperformed their monolingual counterparts due to the very fact that they already had access to the knowledge of more than one language system which possibly
results in ‘multi competence’ defined by Cook as ‘the compound state of a mind with two grammars.’ (1992: 12). Cook’s notion of ‘multi competence’ refers to multilingual linguistic competence characterized by the increased metalinguistic awareness, greater creativity and cognitive flexibility and more diversified mental abilities. The findings identified a facilitative role for this unique knowledge in the enhancement of the L3 learners’ performance and acquisition processes with regard to the above-mentioned features.

The recent research also proves the claim that transfer is more likely from the first language than those learned later on (Ringbom, 2001). Furthermore, it confirms the prediction of FFFH which argues for the resetting of only those parameters instantiated in the L2/Ln learner’s L1.

To sum up, the findings of the study with respect to language transfer in L3A give rise to the conclusion that the source of cross-linguistic influence in L3A is probably more of the learners’ L1. The other logical conclusion is that the bilinguals’ unique language experience plays a facilitative role in the enhancement of the L3 interlanguage grammar. Taken together, these results suggest that experience in any prior language can be drawn upon in subsequent acquisition.

6. Pedagogical implications

Similarities, or perceived similarities, between languages can exist to varying degrees in languages, in grammatical structures of sentences, in word order, tense usage, verb inflections, in their pragmatics and style, and in the way they deal with questions and negatives, to name just a few, as well as in the spelling and morphology of individual words. It is important to be aware of these similarities when we are learning a language as it is to learn the differences and in some cases these similarities can be capitalized upon to good effect.

An important implication that is nonetheless borne out in our findings with respect to foreign (multiple) language learning is that, the more languages one has acquired, the more beneficial it would be for the acquisition of additional non-native languages, so far as the rate of (successful) acquisition is concerned.

7. Further study

This study is a limited survey conducted with a small number of samples. A larger sample in a longitudinal study could provide more information on the influence of L1 and L2 (Persian) on the acquisition of English at different developmental stages. Further investigation on subjects with different L1s and identical L2 (Persian) learning English as L3 could give us a better understanding of the multilingual mind, which will benefit multilingual education.

About the Author:

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Works Cited:


Appendix

A: Complete the following sentences.

She is an ...........................................

He is an ...........................................

He is a ...........................................

It is a ...........................................

He is a ...........................................

It is a ...........................................
It is a..............................................

B: Which one of the following sentences is in the correct order?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>correct</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is a red hat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is table square.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is a woman beautiful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a chair blue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a small glass.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has a dirty tie.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is a man thin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has a fat sister.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His father is an old man.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah has eyes blue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C: Translate the following sentences into English. (For Azeri students)

مینا نین بیردنگ گیرمزي مانئینی وار

علینین بیردنگ ساري گولی وار.

مینا نین بیردنگ کهنه کتبابی وار.

او نون بیردنگ گجا دده سی وار.

رضا نین بیردنگ یکه اوئی وار.

بیردنگ بز میز اتاقدادی.

مینا نین بیردنگ کچیچ صندلیسی وار.

علي بیردنگ ته تلویزون آليب.

مینا نین بیردنگ گره تیلگی وار.

او بیردنگ استی بله یدی.

او بزلو سو ایشیدی.
او نین بیردنه گی نیپ وار.
او نین بیردن کهچچی جامیسی وار.
او نین بیردنه گرگ کوینگی وار.

Translate the following Gilaki sentences into English (For Gilaki students).

مینا ایتا قرمر ماشین دره.

علي ایتا زرد گول دره.

مینا ایتا کهنه کتاب ییه.

اون ایتا پیر پر دره.

رضا ایتا پله خانه دشه.

ایتا قهوه ای میز اتاق درون نه.

مینا ایتا کرچ صندلی دره.

علي ایتا ناره تلویزیون ییه.

مینا ایتا سیاه تلفن دره.

اون ایتا گرم ساندویچ بوخورد.

اون سرد آب بوخورد.
Translate the following sentences into English (for Armenian students).

Առցանց մի հարձակություն ենթադրում են?

Այն իրեն Բեյրութի համար է?

Արդյոք իմ անձնակազմի համար է?

Անդամ է իրեն համար է?

Արձակությունը տեղականի համար է?

Այս արձակությունը պետական է?

Առցանց մի հարձակություն ենթադրում են?

Արդյոք իմ անձնակազմի համար է?

Անդամ է իրեն համար է?

Արձակությունը տեղականի համար է?

Այս արձակությունը պետական է?
Khodabandeh, F.

Cross-Linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition

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