

Third Language Acquisition: A Systematic Review

Icha Fadhilasari ¹

¹Universitas Negeri Surabaya, ¹Universitas Hasyim Asy'ari

Corresponding Author : ¹ icha.22039@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Abstract

The phenomenon of third language acquisition has spread rapidly in recent decades, as one of the multifaceted effects of the current era of globalization. In a world where multilinguals outnumber monolinguals, the study of third language (L3) acquisition has become an area of interest for many researchers. This article aims to provide an overview of reviews of several studies regarding third language acquisition. A systematic review method was used in this study, based on research questions that govern which studies will be included for review. This study aims to investigate research trends on third language acquisition. The results of this research show that several studies after 2020 only focused on transfer errors due to cross-linguistic influences at the morphosyntactic level.

Keywords: Third language acquisition, Transfer, Cross Linguistic Influences

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Introduction

Research on trilingualism and third language acquisition in recent decades has seen an increase and is very interesting ((Cenoz, Jasone, 2001);(Hoffman, C. & Ytsma, 2004);(Clyne et al., 2010)). Trilingualism and mastery of a third language are likely to become increasingly important due to continued migration and globalization. The success of third language learners compared to second language learners has been documented in studies such as(Cenoz & Jessner, 2001),(Lasagabaster, 2000), shows that bilinguals learning L3 show higher metalinguistic awareness than monolinguals learning L2.

Third language acquisition (L3) can be defined as the process of learning or acquiring an additional language by someone who already masters two languages. Recent models of L3 acquisition have suggested that this process is not simply an additional example of second language (L2) learning, but rather corresponds to its own field of research.(Flynn et al., 2004);(Parrish, 2022). That is, the field of L3 acquisition in general has moved towards the perspective that, unlike L2 learners whose new language will inevitably be influenced by their mother tongue, L3 learners have two linguistic systems

on the basis of which the L3 can be influenced. In general, the study of L3 acquisition provides insight into not only how bilinguals learn a new language, but the nature of the language they previously acquired. Models in third language acquisition debate the role of previously acquired languages, namely the role of L1 and L2.

Over the past three decades, many researchers have highlighted important findings that differentiate L2 from L3 acquisition both qualitatively and quantitatively (e.g.(De Angelis, 2005); Hirosh & Degani,2018). For example, in L3 acquisition more language can lead to positive or negative transfer, as L1 and L2 represent possible sources of transfer. Transfer is usually defined as 'the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and another previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired language' (Odlin,1989, P. 27). Transfer, however, is neither inevitable nor universal, and various factors have been found to have an influence on language acquisition: linguistic factors per se (e.g. typological similarity), factors internal to the learner (e.g. psychotypology, L2 status, proficiency, novelty of language use, metalinguistic awareness) and factors external to the learner (e.g. sequence of acquisition, language formality). context) (e.g. De Angelis,2007; Jarvis & Pavlenko,2010).

Cross-linguistic influence research is particularly interesting to research because it has taken unprecedented strides in the field of second and third language acquisition. Research findings in second and third language acquisition argue that a learner's previous linguistic repertoire has a significant impact on second and third language acquisition(Cenoz, Jasone, 2001). These studies have shown that learners' native (L1) and non-native (L2, L3, Ln) languages can be a source of influence when acquiring a new language ((Cenoz, Jasone, 2001);(Hammarberg, 2001);(Ringbom, 2006)). This study explores the influence of first language (L1) or second language (L2) on third language (L3) acquisition in a linguistic constellation that has not been well investigated – adposition.

It is recognized in the literature that sources of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) can take different forms. L1 has been considered the primary source of transfer for further language acquisition for a long time(Angelovska, 2012). Recent studies show that L2 status, i.e. the influence of languages other than L1 (foreign) is a variable that predicts CLI in third language acquisition ((De Angelis, 2005);(Williams, S., & Hammarberg, nd)). Several other studies cite typological similarity as a source of CLI and show that typologically similar languages are influential in CLI regardless of whether it is L1 or L2 (Montrul et al.,2011; Rothman,2010,2015; Bachelorette & O'Laoire,2006). Some researchers report that when language learners perceive similarities between their L2 and L3, this has a facilitative effect on the L3 learning process (Cenoz,2003; De Angelis,2005;).

Along with the development of research on third language acquisition that is only focused on cross-linguistic influences due to transfer at the morphosyntactic level. This study aims to compare the results of research on third language acquisition in recent years. So several focuses were found which could later become references for further research updates regarding third language acquisition.

Literature Review

The term B-3 acquisition emerged in the last decade to answer cases of language acquisition in a bilingual, trilingual or multilingual person. While some researchers use 'second language acquisition' as a general term for any type of language learning after

first language acquisition (Gut, 2010), it has been recognized by many people that studying a third language (B-3) is fundamentally different from studying a second language (B-2). When associated with the terms B-1 and B-2 acquisition, it means third language acquisition defined as a language acquired after B-2. This means that if someone relearns a language other than the language they have already acquired, sentences B-4 will appear after B-3 is mastered, and so on. Humans may be able to learn 40 languages considering the very rapid development of technology and language, making the term ambiguous. Therefore, the term "B-3 acquisition" is only used to refer to the concept attua idea of some scholars who study cross-linguistic influences. Thus, the term 'third language' is usually used to emphasize the difference between 'second' (B-2) and 'advanced' language acquisition and is often used to refer to any language acquired after a 'second language' has been learned, however imperfect the language may be. the (Wrembel et al., 2010)

Third language acquisition can be defined as the acquisition of an additional language by a bilingual individual (Stakhnevich, 2009). Although the process of acquiring a third language has some similarities to the process of acquiring a second language, it is very different in meaning (Cenoz & Jessner, 2001) that third language learners have more language experience than second language learners, influenced by the general effects of bilingualism. on cognition, and having access to two linguistic systems when acquiring a third language. (Hammarberg, 2001) terming B-3 a language that is being studied after someone obtains B-2. According to Hammarberg, B-2 may be available in multiple languages. On the one hand, the third language concept used here is comparable to the ideal concepts B-1 and B-2. Languages taken after B-1 are usually referred to as B-2. However, a person will obtain one or more B-2s. Hammarberg uses the terms B-3 for the language currently being studied and B-2 for the more advanced language taken after B-1 to provide a basis for exploring multilingual cases.

Method

A systematic review method was used in this study, based on research questions that govern which studies will be included for review (Uman, 2011). This study aims to investigate research trends on third language acquisition. Additionally, there is a difference between a literature review and a systematic review. Data search was carried out using Tandfonline with the keyword third language acquisition. The sources or references obtained are data in the form of international journals, textbooks, scientific articles containing third language acquisition published after 2020. This research mreview five articles on third language acquisition.

Discussion

In this section, we will describe a comparison of several articles on third language acquisition that focus on cross-linguistic influences and transfer. When searching for data using Tandfonline, there were 225,865 articles regarding third language acquisition. However, this research only focuses on articles published after 2020.

Table 1. Comparison of research on cross-linguistic influences on third language acquisition

No	Writer	Title	Research focus	Method	Research Findings/Results
1.	(Puig-Mayenco et al., 2020)	<i>A systematic review of transfer studies in third language acquisition</i>	examine factors in the extent of experience previous linguistics (from L1/L2) influences early stages onwards adult L3 mastery at the morphosyntactic level.	Qualitative and quantitative	A systematic review revealed that transfer/influence at various stages in B3 development
2.	(Çabuk-Ballı, 2021)	<i>Cross-linguistic influence in the acquisition of adpositions in L3</i>	This study set out to investigate the possible effects of language previously studied in the acquisition of English as third language by examining six prepositions (in, at, on, behind, above, to) when they show spatial relationships.	Qualitative	this finding shows structural similarity and typological closeness as major factors in cross-linguistic influences in L3 acquisition English.
3.	(Diaubalick et al., 2020)	<i>Influence of L1/L2 linguistic knowledge on the acquisition of L3 Spanish past tense morphology among L1 German speakers</i>	establishes categorical differences regarding the configuration of aspects to source language (i.e. L1 as Germanic and L2 as Romance) to isolate the possible influence of	Qualitative Experiments	Findings indicates that learners with high L2 proficiency tends to match the preferences of the native speaker group within prototypical context (e.g.

			each source language for the development of knowledge aspect in L3.		Preterite with telic predicate), but not in non-prototypical contexts (telic predicates in the background behind).
4.	(Zhu & Mok, 2023)	<i>Cross-linguistic influences on the production of third language consonant clusters by L1 Cantonese-L2 English-L3 German trilinguals</i>	examined the production of third-language German consonant clusters (L3) by 26 English Cantonese-L2 L1 bilinguals, with objectives uncover possible cross-linguistic influences on L3 pronunciation.	Qualitative	L3 pronunciation accuracy is influenced by the similarities between each L3 consonant clusters and their possible correspondences in L1 Cantonese and L2 English.
5.	(Foryś-Nogala et al., 2020)	<i>Cross-linguistic influences, language proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge in L3 Italian subject placement</i>	to investigate how the CLI of Polish L1 and L2 English influences the acquisition of course placement in L3 Italian.	Qualitative	demonstrated some negative CLI of L2 English at levels lower than L3-Italian, or cognitively based general problems with zero subjects, which are gradually reduced with growth in L3 proficiency.

Onstudy(Puig-Mayenco et al., 2020), a systematic review to examine what factors determine when, how and to what extent previous linguistic experience (from a first or second language) influences the early and later stages of adult third language (L3) acquisition. This research discusses what is seen from the eye about data informing competing theoretical accounts of L3 morphosyntactic transfer. In this research, several models themselves were reduced to certain combinations of positive and negative values for these variables, namely, L1 transfer, L2 transfer,

typological transfer, hybrid transfer and non-facilitative transfer. And the final result is a typological proximity model which causes many morphosyntactic transfers.

Further research by (Çabuk-Balli, 2021), this study set out to investigate the possible effects of previously learned language on the acquisition of English as a third language by examining six prepositions (in, on, on, behind, over, to) as they indicate spatial relationships. Two picture description tasks were used to find out which of the two known languages (L1 and/or L2) is the main source of cross-linguistic influences on the acquisition of English (L3) prepositions considering the fact that adpositions have different morphosyntactic representations in Turkish, Kurdish, and England. Turkish-Kurdish bilinguals learning English as a third language formed the experimental group and Turkish monolinguals learning English as a second language served as the control group in this study. The results revealed that Turkish-Kurdish bilinguals performed better in comprehension and production of target prepositions than the Turkish monolingual control group, especially when there was structural overlap (i.e. prepositions in Kurdish and English) between the L1-Kurdish and L3-English adposition systems. These findings point to structural similarity and typological proximity as key factors in cross-linguistic influences in L3 English acquisition.

The third research by (Diaubalick et al., 2020), building on studies that have revealed imperfect L2 transfer of meaning from one Romance language to another [Salaberry, MR (2005). Evidence of transfer of aspectual knowledge from L2 Spanish to L3 Portuguese. In D. Ayoun & R. Salaberry (Eds.), *Tense and aspect in romance languages: Theoretical and applied perspectives* (pp. 179– 210). Benjamin; Foote, R. (2009). *Transfer in L3 acquisition: The role of typology*. In YI Leung (Ed.), *Third language acquisition and universal grammar* (pp. 89–114). *Multilingual Matters.*], we analyzed data from 73 German-speaking learners (divided into three groups according to their proficiency in another Romance language as an L2) and 149 native Spanish speakers using a written completion task. The findings show that learners with high L2 proficiency tend to match native speaker groups' choices in prototypical contexts (e.g. Preterite with telic predicate), but not in non-prototypical contexts (telic predicate in background). This suggests that L2 knowledge is only beneficial for conditions that do not require high processing costs. In turn, in nonprototypical contexts, speakers must process conflicting features that represent the 'deep' conceptual components of language.

The next research is by (Zhu & Mok, 2023) This study examines the production of third language (L3) German consonant clusters by 26 L1 Cantonese-L2 English bilinguals, with the aim of uncovering possible cross-linguistic influences on L3 pronunciation. Learners' production of 17 onsets and 21 codas of German consonant groups was analyzed auditorily with respect to accuracy and error types. The findings suggest that L3 pronunciation accuracy is influenced by the similarity between each L3 consonant cluster and its possible correspondence in L1 Cantonese and L2 English. L3 German consonant clusters that contain more Cantonese and English consonants will be produced more accurately, whereas L3 consonant clusters that look similar to English but do not match English orthography will result in production errors (e.g. kn [kn] → kn [n]) . Individual variation between different L3 consonant groups suggests that cross-linguistic influences on L3 can occur from both L1 and L2 at the feature level and can be both

positive and negative. At the same time, this study also shows that L3 speech is significantly influenced by the factors of marking and language experience.

Recent research by (Foryś-Nogala et al., 2020) L3 acquisition is influenced by the L1-L3 typology, the learner's proficiency in the language, and metalinguistic knowledge. However, the precise pattern of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) in L3 acquisition remains unclear.

This study aims to examine how the factors mentioned above influence students' sensitivity to subject placement in L3 Italian. We examined L1-Polish (pro-drop) speakers with L2-English (non-pro-drop) who learned Italian as their L3 (pro-drop). Subject placement patterns are shared by Polish and Italian, but differ from English, which can lead to positive CLI from L1 or negative CLI from L2. To verify which is the case, 49 Polish undergraduate students from Italy took part in a computerized admissions assessment task (AJT), which contains examples of appropriate and incorrect subject placements in Italian. We also measured participants' knowledge of English and Italian, their language background, and their metalinguistic knowledge. The results showed that participants were less sensitive to the excessive use of open and null subjects. Subsequent regression analysis revealed L3 ability as the only significant predictor of AJT performance. Our data show some negative CLI of L2 English at lower levels than L3-Italian, or general cognitively grounded problems with zero subjects, which are gradually reduced with growth in L3 proficiency. Subsequent regression analysis revealed L3 ability as the only significant predictor of AJT performance. Our data show some negative CLI of L2 English at lower levels than

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The study of foreign language acquisition and processing has long been concerned with the interaction between 'old' and 'new' linguistic knowledge (an issue that has been discussed in Weinreich, 1953), both in vocabulary and grammar. Foreign language learners often speak more than one language at the start of acquiring a new one; for example, immigrants arriving in Europe or the United States from India or Malaysia tend to have spoken several languages previously. Accumulating evidence seems to suggest that third or later language (L3/LN) acquisition presents differently from second language (L2) acquisition (see De Angelis, 2007; Falk and Bardel, 2010; González Alonso et al., 2017). Whereas in second language acquisition the learner can only rely on his or her experience with one language, in L3 acquisition more than one linguistic representation system is available.

Comparative Research on Third Language Acquisition

Given these observations, it is not surprising that a large number of studies on L3 acquisition in recent articles have focused on determining cross-linguistic influences due to transfer resulting from a lack of knowledge in the L3, and have only focused on the morphosyntactic level. If we look further, there are several focuses that can be researched on third language acquisition so that there is novelty about this study, for example communication strategies in third language acquisition. Communication strategies are seen as a set of skills, which learners use to overcome their deficiencies in the target

language. When students fail to communicate because of their limited knowledge in the target language they must find ways to communicate in other ways, for example by imitating sounds, code switching or avoiding topics.

In line with the explanation above, the author can say that communication strategies are communication strategies that must be known by someone who is not a native speaker of a language to avoid several problems that may occur during a conversation with the other person. It is also important to know that culture and language cannot be separated, therefore in the context of language teaching, knowledge about language and culture needs to be taught to second language learners as well. By letting learners know, they can solve their problems during communication and can choose exactly which communication strategy they will use. The teacher's role in introducing communication strategies to students can determine students' success in dealing with communication problems that occur in real life situations.

Third language acquisition also revolves around a psycholinguistic perspective. From the perspective of psycholinguistics, language acquisition refers more to the internalization of naturally acquired linguistic competence. Language acquisition occurs from mastery of the first language (B1), then the second language (B2) and the third language (B3). Basically, the study of language acquisition can also be viewed from a sociolinguistic perspective regarding language behavior in third language learners.

Conclusion

Considerable research investigating possible effects on L3 learning suggests that better performance in some linguistic aspects of bilingual learners in additional language learning may be the result of the advantages that bilinguals have compared to monolinguals. However, many studies only focus on the field of psycholinguistics because of cross-linguistic influences due to L1 and L2 and focus on the morphosyntactic level. This research tries to compare and provide suggestions for finding another focus so that third language acquisition research can find updates for further research. Some examples are stronger metalinguistic awareness, and more effective communication strategies and higher language aptitude.

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