Revue de Traduction et Langues Volume 15 Numéro 01/2016, pp. 201-214
Journal of Translation and Languages **مجلة الترجمة واللغات**
ISSN (Print): 1112-3974 **EISSN (Online): 2600-6235**

Crosslinguistic Influence during Second Language Acquisition: The Reasons behind

Ghlamallah Nahed Rajaa
University of Oran2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed-Algeria
nahed_rg@yahoo.co.uk

To cite this paper:
Ghlamallah, N. R. (2016). Crosslinguistic Influence during Second Language Acquisition: The Reasons behind. *Revue Traduction et Langues 15(1),* 201-214.

Abstract: *This paper deals with the reasons behind Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI) during the acquisition of an L2, namely English. Based on theoretical concepts and empirical data, this work briefly (a) reviews what is currently known about CLI and (b) outlines some of the factors triggering such a phenomenon. While some scholars explain CLI according to internal (linguistic/cognitive) factors, others consider external (cultural/environmental) aspects as a real insight into Second Language Acquisition. This analysis aims at (a) comprehending CLI during English language acquisition, (b) understanding Algerian learners of English by investigating a process they go through and (c) delimiting the causes of CLI. The latter is investigated from different perspectives in order to target what may enhance or delay some linguistic deviations in English production and comprehension.*
Keywords : *Crosslinguistic Influence, English, transfer, Second Language Acquisition.*
Résumé : *Cet article propose quelques éléments d'analyse des raisons de l'influence interlinguistique lors de l'acquisition de l'anglais, langue seconde (L2). Après une brève définition de l'influence interlinguistique, nous identifions, sur la base de concepts théoriques et de données empiriques, certaines variables qui peuvent déclencher un tel phénomène chez l'apprenant. Alors que certains chercheurs expliquent ce phénomène en fonction de facteurs internes (linguistiques et cognitifs), d'autres le perçoivent comme le résultat de faits externes (culturels et environnementaux) qui peuvent influencer le processus de l'apprentissage de la L2. L'objectif est de comprendre et de délimiter les causes de cette influence interlinguistique en cours d'apprentissage, afin d'en interpréter les implications, et de mieux cibler ce qui peut provoquer ou au contraire permettre d'éviter certaines "déviations linguistiques" pour qu'elles puissent être mieux gérées par l'étudiant algérien.*
Mots clés : *Influence interlinguistique, acquisition, L2, Anglais, transfert.*

1. Introduction

Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI) represents an extensive area in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Numerous theories investigate its meaning, its occurrence, its effects on the process of SLA and the consequences of such a phenomenon for language learners. The term *Crosslinguistic Influence* (CLI) emerged in the 1980s to refer to a phenomenon occurring during the acquisition of L2, and it has increasingly been

Corresponding author : Ghlamallah Nahed Rajaa

under discussion for the past years. It consists of transferring linguistic features and norms from one language to another during comprehension or production (JARVIS & PAVLENKO, 2010). Besides, any type of transfer from a previously acquired language has been subsumed under CLI. In other words, during SLA any language learner may be the receiver or the sender of transfer.

The process of CLI is a phenomenon that can seriously alter the speed or the delay in L2 development, and it is important, therefore, to determine its reasons. This paper tries (a) to examine what may trigger Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI) and (b) to identify whether internal factors, external ones or both play partly if not entirely the principle role in the way learners of English acquire their L2. Moreover, it seeks to investigate other factors which are completely learner-based that may act as an additional interacting factor with what is internal and external. Those factors might also be prohibitive or conductive to CLI.

2. Internal Factors

Studies of transfer in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrate that the forces that shape CLI are internal ones rather than external ones. The internal factors are those that include the inner linguistic system of language and the obtained results after interacting with learners' capacity for cognitive and psychological development. Among the internal factors, this section outlines Developmental factors, Input and Frequency, Linguistic Awareness, Psychotypology and Language Factors.

2.1. Developmental Factors

In all their stages of acquisition, language learners generally progress from elementary to advanced levels. Concerning CLI, some linguists such as WENK (1986) view that transfer is more frequent in the early stages. Others, however, such as ELLIS (1997) state that not all transfer errors are eliminated in later stages and that some others may even rise to the surface because most of the errors made in L2 are also the same in L1. Furthermore, ELLIS believes that there must be some level of proficiency in L1 or L2 to be able to transfer formulas or linguistic structures. In fact, he suggests that in the case of speech acts, such as request or apology, learners do not start using transfer until they develop some L2 proficiency. Learners need to reach certain proficiency before any transfer could be made. In other words, through the development of L1, L2 and interlanguage (IL), transfer may linger or accelerate and may even become selective.

2.2.Input and Frequency

Learners' input varies from one learner to another depending also on the amount of the transfer made. We may suggest that if learners' input is determined by frequent CLI or a strong transferability of structures, learners might internalise those strategies as a component of their learning. According to their Input Frequency Hypothesis, HATCH & WAGNER-GOUGH (1976) suggest that the order of L2 acquisition can also be regulated by the frequency of occurrence of some L2 structures in a learners' input because the amount of accuracy in their language production reflects acquisition. In other words, the more frequent is some input, the more accurate learners become and the better the acquisition of L2 is achieved.

Some of the experiments that support this theory are as follows. LIGHTBOWN (1983), for instance, has found that 6th grade ESL learners overuse *verb+ing* structure because they have been exposed to it in the 5th grade (cited in ELLIS, 2012: 154-5). Also, ELLIS supports this argument by explaining how learners are sensitive to the frequency of a particular input they are often exposed to and that: "language learning is essentially 'frequency learning' …It follows that the input that learners are exposed to in the classroom will influence the course of language learning" (2012: 115).

Another recent experiment that has been conducted by ALONSO ALONSO, et al. (2016) has analysed the use of spatial prepositions (on, in, at) by native speakers of English, Spanish and Danish; all having an advanced level of English. All three groups had to use those prepositions in English, and the findings are the Danish use almost the same prepositions as the English do. ALONSO ALONSO, et al. explain that it is due to the fact that the Danish are more exposed to English than the Spanish. The exposure, however, has nothing to do with age since Danish speakers start learning English at nine, but Spanish learn it much earlier. It is simply a matter of frequent exposure to input. As to transfer, one cannot categorically delimit what kind of transfer is present in learners' input; one can only materialise what happens in the mind when output is being activated through oral or written production.

2.3. Linguistic Awareness

While *language awareness* refers to the knowledge and conscious perception about language and the way it works and how it is used; *linguistic awareness* relates to the reflection learners have on the linguistic codes and systems such as phonology, grammar, semantics, and so on. To 'know' or rather to 'know about' the linguistic systems of a language can have a close relationship with CLI. Linguistic awareness might be conscious or not. However, conscious knowledge of linguistic structures plays a major role in effective SLA and according to ODLIN (1989), linguistic awareness facilitates Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI).

In his Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis, CUMMINS (1981) claims that languages are interconnected psychologically, and the knowledge of one language paves the way to the knowledge of another one. He illustrates such an argument with an analogy between two languages and a dual iceberg; what is on the surface is the visible part of each language features but what is hidden underlies common cognitive proficiency, or what he terms CUP (Common Underlying Proficiency), existing in both languages. For him, the knowledge of a language is instrumental to the knowledge of another one because learners only need to transfer the concepts and not relearn them every time from the beginning. That is, CUMMINS claims what linguistic awareness learners have of their L1 is a key factor to positive transfer for L2 because it helps them develop similar abilities in the target language (TL). However, those learners need to have already acquired adequate prior knowledge in L1 for the transfer to be possible and efficient.

For the sake of comparison, we have purposely sought some recent research undertaken by linguists who are non-native speakers of English and who have carried out several experiments on the effect of linguistic awareness upon CLI. All of those experiments were published (a) to study language disorder and (b) to uncover the way CLI may help in the language learning process. Linguists such as RAMÍREZ, et al., (2013),

DANZAK & ARFÉ (2016) and others have worked with children having English as their TL, and among their objectives was the identification of clinical implications about language disorder. They have found that linguistic awareness such as phonological, morphological or lexical facilitates CLI and that occurrence boosts learners' abilities at the level of comprehension and production in L2. Given all that, one can presume that linguistic awareness in L1 develops transfer and equal awareness in L2 help in the process of language acquisition.

2.4.Psychotypology

For the vast majority of SLA linguists, the concept of *psychotypology* cannot be ignored if one deals with the factors affecting CLI. The notion was introduced by KELLERMAN (1978) and expanded later as a central key in the acquisition of an L2 by De ANGELIS & SELINKER (2001). According to the latter, the typological proximity between L1 and L2 is sufficient to account for where learners select their transferred structures. Normally, the more related the languages are, the more similarities are to be found, and the higher the transfer is. However, in multilingual contexts, learners have their own perception of which language is the nearest to the TL.

The difference between typology and psychotypology is that the latter reflects the learners' personal perception of what is close to the TL. For example, among Arabic, French and English, the last two languages are more related to each other from typological criteria; but, an Algerian learner may perceive some Arabic linguistic structures closer to English than French ones. Thus, that learner's sense of language proximity or language distance is purely psychotypological rather than typological because it is their own perception and that factor may constitute a constraint on SLA as it limits a considerable amount of linguistic potential. The sources of CLI are diverse, and so are the choices of learners who may favour one language over another for transfer.

2.5.Language Factors

Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI) can be affected by several factors that are proper either to L1 or L2. Equally, the native language (NT) and the target language (TL) can both cause serious difficulties in SLA whether at the perception or the production level. The linguistic factors dealt with in the following sections are Language Distance, Markedness, Psycholinguistic Factors, Sociolinguistic Factors and Linguistic Systems and Attitudes towards Language.

2.5.1. Language Distance (Typology)

The basis for transfer might be founded by several factors, among which linguistic typology remains crucial to L2 acquisition. As it has already been mentioned above, the differences or the similarities between L1 and L2 structures may largely depend on whether those languages belong to the same tree family or not. ELLIS claims that "language distance can affect L2 learning both positively and negatively" (1994: 338). For him, language distance can be the source of positive transfer in case of similarities and negative transfer in the event of divergences. Indeed, languages which share a close concordance in their linguistic subsystems are likely to have common aspects that can easily be assimilated by the learner. Furthermore, other linguists, such as RINGBOM (1987), state that lexical items found in both L1 and L2 make the learning easier. For

Algerian students of English, the word *information*, for example, can easily be learnt by a speaker of French because the word already exists in the above-mentioned language; however, the fact that the same word *information* is countable in French and uncountable in English makes some learners of English produce *informations* instead.

However, language distance and typological relations, though crucial, do no longer seem sufficient enough for contemporary studies. A new terminology has emerged regarding structural similarities or as it has become known as the *Linguistic Proximity Model*. The purpose of this model is not to relate languages according to their typology but to correlate them according to their structures. That model is said to empower CLI for more effective SLA (WESTERGAARD et al., 2016). Much more investigation can be pursued between typology and CLI; however, all of this points to the conclusion that in spite of the TL difficulties, similarities between L1 and L2, language distance remains very helpful in SLA.

2.5.2. Language Universal: Markedness

Markedness was initially introduced by the Prague School[1] when Trubetzkoy[2] and Jakobson[3] attributed binary features to phonemes so that they can be in opposition. A sound can be marked or unmarked; as an illustration /m/ is [+ nasal] it is marked by the presence of the feature nasal, but /b/ is [– nasal] it is unmarked; so, the only difference between those bilabial stops is the occurrence of the mark 'nasal'.

According to CHOMSKY & HALLE in *The Sound Pattern of English* (1968), a sound which is unmarked is more natural and more frequent; therefore, it is likely to be found in several world languages. A sound which is marked, however, is less natural and less frequent in the universal tendencies. In addition to the phonological meaning of markedness, there has been a semantic extension to this concept to include lexis and syntax as well. Words that are unmarked are more common, more general and more dominant/natural; marked words, however, are less common, specific and less natural. Marked words, for instance, have a feature added as it is the case in the following examples. If we take terms such as *happy/unhappy*, *work/worked*, *old/young*; we can see that the first element, on this list, is unmarked because they occur more often than the second one.

Unhappy is marked by negation, worked is marked by the past tense and young is marked by its restricted use – we use old not young in questions as in *how old are you?* Marked words are those to which a feature is added to provide a specific meaning proper to a language. Therefore, unmarked or 'more frequent' words can be found in several languages and that fact makes them part of language universals and evident for acquisition.

[1] The Linguistic Circle of Prague School: "The circle was founded in 1926 by Vilém Mathesius, Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy. Its main emphasis lay on the analysis of language as a system of functionally related units, an emphasis which showed Saussurean influence. In particular, it led to the distinction between the phonetic and the phonological analysis of sounds, the analysis of the phoneme into distinctive features, and such associated notions as binarity, marking and morphophonemics." (CRYSTAL, 2015: 380)

[2] Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1890–1938): A Russian linguist and a member of the Prague School and the founder of morphophonology in his book *Principles of Phonology* in 1946.

[3] Roman Jakobson (1896–1983): An American Linguist and a founder of the Prague School of Structural linguistics, he is known for the Distinctive Feature Theory.

In approaching the issue of Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI), markedness of linguistic units or their unmarkedness can play a major role in SLA. Unmarked units, which are part of language universal, can be easily learnt than marked ones. ELLIS (1994) views that the degree of markedness of linguistic features may affect language transfer. Marked units which are special structures, less natural and less frequent can be hard to acquire. In fact, there are two main approaches defining markedness regarding CLI. Firstly, according to CHOMSKY's universal grammar theory (UG), there are two types of grammatical rules, *core* and *peripheral*.

Core rules are unmarked but peripheral ones are marked. While core rules can be governed by general universal principles of structures and are innate; peripheral rules cannot be applied to universal principles, they are unique, basic and proper to a specific language. In other words, core rules can be found in language universals, peripheral rules are not, and they are peculiar to a language. Secondly, another approach, defining markedness, has closely been related to language acquisition to explain influences. This approach stems from the language typology analysis proposed by GREENBERG. The latter claims that "*complexity in thought tends to be reflected in complexity of expression, with complexity of expression being stated in terms of markedness*" (1966: 123). In other words, complex structures tend to be marked since they refer to an added feature to the original ones, the unmarked; and that complexity makes them difficult to learn as opposed to easy less complex structures.

2.5.3. Psycholinguistic Factors

ELLIS (1994) considers that any study of transfer should deal with psycholinguistic factors; otherwise, it would be considered as incomplete. KELLERMAN (1978) is among the first who have dealt with transfer as a psychological phenomenon, and not as a psycholinguistic behaviour. He assumes that native speakers are intuitive regarding their lexis and structures whether they are marked or not. On account of their 'intuition' about language, native speakers can perceive the distinction between marked and unmarked or between complex and general so that they can identify and predict what can easily be transferred to the target language.

2.5.4. Sociolinguistic Factors

As long as learners continue their acquisition, their interlanguage (IL) will be in constant development and will vary because of one context or another. Their IL development, however, largely depends on context and the style that should be adopted within. The performance of L2 learners constitutes, as TARONE (1982) claims, a continuum from a 'vernacular' style to a 'careful' one should the situation arise. She suggests that L2 learners adopt a 'careful' style in their speech when target language (TL) norms are needed and a 'vernacular' one when they are not.

To illustrate TARONE's claim, one can observe the behaviour of some Algerian students producing English at the University of Oran. In a conversation, for example, they switch from a 'vernacular' style to a more 'careful' one if the context demands Standard English norms. The way they speak to their teacher about their grades varies from the way they speak to their classmates about football. If the context does not require Standard English norms, their style becomes less careful in English. According to TARONE,

learners adapt their production to context and communication tasks; and the more careful learners are, the more likely they resort to CLI. Therefore, when Algerian students feel the need to use Standard English norms, their performance becomes more careful and more complex, and that demands the use of all their knowledge including the L1. However, not all students are alike in their perception of what should be produced in a particular context or not. It is undeniable that there are stylistic norms that are deemed to occur within particular contexts; yet, not all students show willingness in demonstrating their linguistic potential in class.

2.5.5. Linguistic Systems

The interconnection between CLI and linguistic systems is complex and substantial. It is in the linguistic systems, such as morphology, syntax, phonology and lexis, where most transfer occurs either in the perception or the production of structures. According to ELLIS (1994), linguistic systems constitute one of the salient factors that affect CLI. Many linguists presume that CLI is more present in phonology and lexis than it is in grammar since there is a formal context where much emphasis on grammar is laid and supervised.

However, RINGBOM (1987) explains that not all errors in the linguistic systems derive from CLI. Many students have trouble writing or spelling words correctly not because of transfer but because of the English pronunciation which they find difficult. He also explains that some errors in lexis result from partial translation. In the case of transfer, nevertheless, he affirms that between two different language speakers (Finnish speakers vs. Swedish speakers); those, whose L1 (Swedish) is more related to L2 (English) in its linguistic systems, acquire the L2 faster. In other words, CLI affects the linguistic systems since the obtained result has a direct impact on SLA.

2.5.6. Attitudes towards Language

Acquiring a second language is not devoid from the substantial set of reflections the language mirrors. Learners may construct their representations of a language from politics, religion, technology, literature, social media and so on. Those representations of language might either be positive or negative, and they can, therefore, result in language attitudes that shape CLI. Linguists such as ELLIS (1994) claim that negative or positive attitudes towards a language, its status, its speakers and its country or towards the culture it represents are significant in SLA. Sometimes, in class, even teachers' attitudes towards the language they teach can also be instrumental for the lesson.

In her article about English as a commodity language in the market value of languages, CAMERON states that acquiring or maintaining a language depends on what languages stand for. Language has some economic value in the market of languages because of its symbols of identity or some "prestigious vehicles of 'high culture'" and learners may favour forms of linguistic capital instead of others (CAMERON, 2012: 354).

This statement allows us to consider that learners may favour a language over another because of what it represents. Language attitudes are a consequence of cognitive development during the perception or the production of the TL, and that might elicit language attitudes or beliefs of what some languages reflect.

Furthermore, for bilinguals or multilinguals, the status of a language and the attitudes they may have towards it can influence the source of transfer. Learners attribute functions to the languages they know, and each language is designated a few

characteristics according to some or other factors and contexts. Status and attitudes are not restricted to the target language (TL) because learners may perceive a language to be more befitting than another for what they want to express.

3. External Factors

While transfer is psychological and it is only observable through learners' performance of L2, its occurrence can also depend on socio-cultural and on contextual dimensions. Understanding the external reasons that may cause or influence CLI is of paramount importance to this study. This part endeavours to briefly tackle two major factors: Socio-cultural Dimensions and Educational contexts.

3.1.Socio-cultural Dimensions

Although the deviations caused by CLI can be detected in learners' linguistic production, those deviations envelop a considerable amount of socio-cultural foundation that accompanies learners through all their stages of acquisition. According to KELLERMAN, learners who have an increased sense of awareness of their own culture are more likely to find refuge in transfer than those who lack it. Learners influence language transfer, and culture can affect those learners; by syllogistic reasoning, we may consider that culture influences language transfer.

Several scholars have tried to explain culture as an integral part that cannot be detached from people. As stated by HOFSTEDE (2001), from an early age, children develop a mental programming of culture supported by their environment from either family or school. He considers culture as 'the collective programming of the minds', and it functions as software or as a mental programme that guides people through their lives. Whether culture is a mental or an acquired product, it is undeniable that there is a relationship between culture and people. That interconnection is present in their stages of life; and whether it is intentional or not it is also present in CLI during SLA. This argument can easily be supported by the existence of several Englishes such as Indian English, Nigerian English and so forth. Several Englishes have partly emerged as a consequence of L1 cultural influence on the production of L2. Indeed, one may assume that the target language that is English does not reflect those speakers' socio-cultural factors that are found in their own L1. That cultural need might, therefore, be translated into a cultural transfer and materialised with an L1 culture surfacing L2 linguistic systems at the level of perception and production.

3.2. Education and Context

A language can be acquired either through complete or partial immersion in a particular speaking environment or, as it is the case of English in Algeria, through formal instruction. As we are interested in the latter, which is a non-natural process and is subject to several constraints, we can but only try to consider to what extent formal settings affect CLI and subsequently the process of SLA.

Several linguists such as DULAY, BURT & KRASHEN (1982) clearly assert that transfer affected by non-natural settings or formal instruction will be less significant than that affected by natural acquisition. They consider non-natural settings to be more effective than natural ones for language acquisition i.e. in a classroom, language is studied from its different angles according to methods and thoroughly experimented techniques

that have been the object of study of hundreds of teachers and linguists. Even though natural immersion is highly significant and it fulfils a few functions that non-natural contexts do not, formal scenery and education are much more needed in language acquisition. In respect of transfer, language learners may likely develop more awareness of L2 structures in a formal setting than in a natural one. Nevertheless, formal instruction is more effective in the short term since it puts the students under some constraints of time and scheduled assessment, and they need to learn efficiently and rapidly for their grades. In the long run, not all that has been learnt would be acquired or used properly.

4. Learner-based Factors

Although factors related to learners can be viewed as internal ones, we have, nevertheless, put them into a separate section. Learner-based factors are the ones related to the learner as an individual as a consequence of the synergy between the internal factors and the external ones. Learners are different, and that difference largely contributes to the quantitative and qualitative form of CLI that everyone processes in every learning situation. Among the learner-based factors, this paper attempts to understand, are Age, Level of Proficiency, Educational Background, Socio-psychological Aspects and Learners' Personality.

4.1.Age

Age factor may also be of considerable influence on CLI and SLA development, a standpoint that has been under a wide-ranging discussion. ELLIS (1994) states that transfer needs first some level of competence in L1. Such a statement may imply that learners of a certain age such as children might resort less to transfer since their L1 is not as developed as those of adult learners. However, some researchers such as LAKSHMANAN (1994) believe that children are also endowed with Universal Grammar UG that helps them acquire both L1 and L2 similarly. Others such, as ODLIN (1989), view that adults are much more flexible than children when it comes to SLA, i.e. the older, the better.

Furthermore, SKUTNABB-KANGAS & TOUKOMAA (1976) have advanced another postulate in their studies of bilingual immigrant children who had Finnish as their MT and who were schooled in Swedish institutions. They have found that those children were 'underachieved' in both Finnish and Swedish. SKUTNABB-KANGAS & TOUKOMAA's conclusion was that children need to acquire two languages either simultaneously (as their MT(s) at a very early stage) or sequentially (as one language after another in much later stages). While the first type of acquisition consists of Crosslinguistic Influence between both languages, the second one mainly involves the transfer of L1 to L2.

The fact of the matter is that age can determine the competence of children in SLA and consequently the role of transfer attributed to that acquisition. However, the remaining question one comes to is whether exposure to L2 at an early age reduces CLI or not. CENOZ (2001) asserts that older children tend to use more transfer because CLI requires

a developed cognitive and metalinguistic[4] ability which is progressively achieved through time. Her experiments have demonstrated that CLI is more present at an older age. This result means that she considers the cognitive and the metalinguistic development as specific requirements for CLI and that development cannot be reached at a younger age yet. To put it differently, younger age is more important to the development of SLA than it is to CLI strategies since the latter are better developed in later stages in which a complex development of cognitive and metalinguistic processes are needed. In simple terms, while young age helps a better performance in SLA; old age facilitates CLI constructions.

4.2.Level of Proficiency

There have been a few debates over the nature and the amount of transfer in relation to learners' level of language proficiency. According to KELLERMAN (1985), CLI is closely related to L2 proficiency regardless of the similarities or differences between L1 and L2 i.e. transfer alters in proportion to proficiency and not to the sum of differences between L1 and L2. ELLIS (1994), nevertheless, suggests that some errors in the TL can also be found in the acquisition of L1 and that it is not necessary for advanced learners to eliminate some of the transferability already used in previously experienced levels i.e. a high level of proficiency in L2 does not necessarily reduce transfer.

Many other scholars, however, firmly believe that CLI decreases as the level of proficiency in L2 increases. As RINGBOM (1987) puts it, for instance, learners' level of proficiency is one of the major reasons for the 'transfer load'. The learning stage at which learners find themselves can be a decisive factor in controlling the amount of CLI. A learner at an elementary level of the target language is more likely to turn to transfer than an advanced learner who has been more exposed to L2 structures and use. Also, we may infer that the role of L1 in the early stages of L2 acquisition is more important than in the subsequent ones. Besides, it is important to raise another issue of continuity and interaction when learners' proficiency improves. According to some linguists (RINGBOM, 1987), the higher is the level of acquisition in the second language the lower is the amount of transfer from the first language(s). Therefore, one should assume that L1 is the starting point for L2 acquisition because of transfer and then L2 structures gradually replace those of L1 as long as language competence in the TL is developed. The role of L1 is also to shape the development of learners' interlanguage (IL) which becomes selective of what should be transferred through higher proficiency.

4.3.Educational background

Educational background is different from the level of proficiency since the former is related to learners' education history whereas their level of learning refers to their proficiency in language. It seems logical to assume that a high level of proficiency is attained after a long educational background. However, learners' education along with interlocutors, the setting and the topic of conversation might also be a determining factor in Crosslinguistic Influence (CENOZ, 2001).

[4] Metalinguistics: a branch of linguistics that deals with the relation between language and other cultural factors in a society (CRYSTAL, 2015).

GROSJEAN (1998) argues that there is a difference in the TL acquisition between a monolingual and a bilingual learner. Indeed, the process of CLI when acquiring L2 may vary if the speaker knows only one language and if they have not yet developed learning strategies to acquire a new one. To illustrate, IBRAHIM (1978) states that Arabic speakers in Egypt would substitute /b/ for /p/ as in *playing*; later, when they acquire the /p/ sound, some would even tend to hypercorrect and use /p/ instead of /b/ where it is not necessary as in *habit*.

In Algeria, however, a student of English would rarely produce *blaying* [bleɪŋ] or *hapit* [hæpɪt] unless they were absolutely not exposed to French at all. Both English and French have an L2 status in Egypt and Algeria and both are introduced in primary education, English in Egypt and French in Algeria are also considered among the working tools owing to historical reasons. Yet, the difference between the speakers of both countries is that Algerian speakers are in contact with French or with French loan words such as *plateau* 'tray', *plastique* 'plastic' from an early age before acquiring English. Therefore, when they start learning English, they can already identify some of the similarities existing between French and English. As to adults, any Algerian would never confuse /p/ with /b/ by asking a hardware store seller for a *boumba* 'a bomb' instead of a *poumpa* 'a water pump'.

4.4.Socio-psychological Aspects

This section is included within the learner-based factors rather than in the internal or the external ones because the socio-psychological aspects act deeper within learners' behaviour which may result from both internal and environmental effects. In their study of transfer in the light of communication strategies, FAERCH & KASPER (1987), for example, argue that there are socio-psychological factors that may shape learners' interlanguage (IL). They consider transfer as a psycholinguistic strategy to activate prior knowledge and develop learners' IL. Learners may resolve to purposely produce an incorrect IL in particular L2 situations in a strategic way. Those situations may be due to (a) group solidarity, (b) foreigner role and (c) marking ones' origin.

First, a learner' sense of group solidarity or their strong feeling about their ethnic or social group may be observed in their L2 speech, if they deliberately seek demarcation from their co-speakers and they would retain more L1 features in their IL. This can be noticed in some of the male Algerian pronunciation in which the French /ʁ/ is realised as the Arabic [r]. Such pronunciation does not stigmatise a particular social group; for the Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, himself, realises that French phoneme as such despite his being bilingual.

Second, FAERCH & KASPER assume that learners sometimes need a 'foreigner role' to protect themselves from being assessed in TL by their co-speakers. This role is a 'confidential' communicative strategy that serves a face-saving purpose to create a positive environment for learning. In phonetics classes, for example, some Algerian students of English at the University of Oran tend to pronounce words that are either new or difficult with Arabic or French pronunciation by design then laugh at their production to mask their inability to achieve a proper pronunciation in the TL.

Third, transfer may also originate from learners' feelings to mark their origin. FAERCH & KASPER believe that when commodities of one culture are transported into

another, transfer may occur to mark ones' origin. Languages may be regarded as commodities i.e. English, for example, has its own value in the market of languages and it competes with other languages because of some economic, social or cultural reasons (CAMERON, 2012). In other words, some learners may purposely transfer from L1 to react against TL culture or against what they think it represents.

4.5.Learners' Personality

Scholars have often studied Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI) as a phenomenon affecting learners collectively rather than individually. Besides, SLA proved a long time ago that learners did not learn in the same way and that diversity is a right. According to ODLIN (1989), CLI varies from one learner to another even if some aspects of transfer are manifested in the production of the majority. He states that learners' personality differences such as empathy or anxiety may have a serious impact on the amount of transfer. Learners that are prone to anxiety tend to avoid complex TL structures and would rather feel more comfortable using their own NL structures. However, learners who feel empathy towards a language may try to approximate the TL structures. Factors, such as motivation, a low sense of self-efficacy, a willingness to communicate and so on, may make the acquisition process unstable and may, therefore, generate different amounts of transfer from one learner to another within contextual variation.

5. Conclusion

Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI) is a complex process that may reveal some significant insight into SLA. As mentioned above, there are so many aspects triggering CLI. Indeed, whether they are internal, external or learner-based; all those factors seem to converge towards identifying what might be of use to the acquisition of L2, namely English. The implications of those reasons may also assist in a better understanding of Algerian students of English and the CLI process they go through.

Besides, along with the development of English language learning and learners' achievements in the TL, linguistic deviations caused by CLI need not be ignored as to what might be enhancing or hindering the acquisition process. As CLI affects both comprehension and production, a selection of what might be helpful or completely impeding can prove time-saving and quality-improving. In fact, each learner transfers linguistic features according to several variables some of which might be modulated through targeted exercises and activities in class. Such a selection may vary to what best befits a lesson content and context.

Finally, all things considered, one may claim that what shapes Crosslinguistic Influence seems as much complex and multifaceted as what enhances L2 acquisition. Those reasons might represent the tiny pieces of a perplexing jigsaw puzzle that steadily fall into a large framework until the introduction of more other factors. In the light of this work, much has yet to be studied and much more has to be discovered.

References

[1] ALONSO ALONSO, R., CADIERNO, T., & JARVIS, S. (2016). Cross-linguistic Influence in the Acquisition of Spatial Prepositions in English as a Foreign Language. In R. ALONSO ALONSO (Ed.), *Crosslinguistic Influence in Second Language Acquisition*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 93–120.

[2] CAMERON, D. (2012). The Commodification of Language: English as a Global Commodity, In T. NEVALAINEN & E. CLOSS TRAUGOTT (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of English*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 352–361.

[3] CENOZ, J. (2001). The Effect of Linguistic Distance, L2 Status and Age on Cross-linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition. In J. CENOZ et al. (2001) (Eds.) *Cross-linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic Perspectives.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 8–20.

[4] CHOMSKY, N., & HALLE, M. (1968). *The Sound Pattern of English,* New York: Harper & Row.

[5] CRYSTAL, D. (2015). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (6th ed.), Malden, Massachusetts; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

[6] CUMMINS, J. (1981). *Bilingualism and Minority Children*, Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

[7] DANZAK, R. L., & ARFÉ, B. (2016). Globally Minded Text Production: Bilingual, Expository Writing of Italian Adolescents Learning English, In *Topics in Language Disorders, 36(1),* 35–51.

[8] De ANGELIS, G., & SELINKER, L. (2001). Interlanguage Transfer and Competing Linguistic Systems in the Multilingual Mind, In J. CENOZ, B. HUFESEN & U. JESSNER (Eds.) Cross-linguistic Influence in *Third Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic Perspectives*, 42–58.

[9] DULAY, H. C., BURT, M. K., & KRASHEN, S. D. (1982). *Language Two*, New York: Oxford University Press.

[10] ELLIS, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[11] ELLIS, R. (1997). *Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

[12] ELLIS, R. (2012). *Language Teaching Research and Language Pedagogy,* Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.

[13] FAERCH, C., & KASPER, G. (1987). Perspectives on Language Transfer, In *Applied Linguistics, 8(2),* 111–136.

[14] GREENBERG, J. H. (1966). *Universals of Language* (2nd ed.), Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.

[15] GROSJEAN, F. (1998). Studying Bilinguals: Methodological and Conceptual Issues, In *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 1(2),* 131–149.

[16] HATCH, E., & WAGNER-GOUGH, J. (1976). Explaining Sequence and Variation in Second Language Acquisition, In Language Learning, *Special Issue 4,* 39–47.

[17] HOFSTEDE, G. H. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

[18] IBRAHIM, M. (1978). *Patterns in Spelling Errors,* In ELT, 32, 207–213.

[19] JARVIS, S., & PAVLENKO, A. (2010*), Crosslinguistic Influence in Language and Cognition*, New York; London: Routledge.

[20] KELLERMAN, E. (1978). Giving Learners a Break: Native Language Intuitions as a Source of Predictions about Transferability. *Working Papers on Bilingualism 15,* 59–92.

[21] KELLERMAN, E. (1985). If at First you did succeed, In S. M. GASS & C. G. MADDEN (Eds.) *Input in Second Language Acquisition*, Rowley: Newbury House, 345–53.

[22] LAKSHMANAN, U. (1994), *Universal Grammar in Child Second Language Acquisition*, Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

[23] ODLIN, T. (1989). *Language Transfer: Cross-linguistic Influence in Language Learning,* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

[24] RAMÍREZ, G., CHEN, X., & PASQUARELLA, A. (2013). Cross-Linguistic Transfer of Morphological Awareness in Spanish-Speaking English Language Learners: The Facilitating Effect of Cognate Knowledge, In *Topics in Language Disorders, 33(1),* 73–92.

[25] RINGBOM, H. (1987), *The Role of the First Language in Foreign Language Learning,* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[26] SKUTNABB-KANGAS, T., & TOUKOMAA, P. (1976). *Teaching Migrant Children's Mother Tongue and Learning the Language of the Host Country in the Context of the Sociocultural Situation of the Migrant Family*, Helsinki: The Finnish National Commission for UNESCO.

[27] TARONE, E. (1982), Systematicity and Attention in Interlanguage, In *Language Learning, 32*, 69–82.

[28] WENK, B. (1986). Crosslinguistic Influence in Second Language Phonology: Speech Rhythms, In E. E. KELLERMAN & M. SHARWOOD-SMITH (Eds.), *Crosslinguistic Influence in Second Language Acquisition,* New York: Pergamon Press, 120–33.

[29] WESTERGAARD, M., MITROFANOVA, N., MYKHAYLYK, R., & RODINA, Y. (2016). Crosslinguistic Influence in the Acquisition of a Third Language: The Linguistic Proximity Model. In International Journal of Bilingualism, http://doi.org/10.1177/1367006916648859