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On the State of L_1 and L_2 Knowledge in FL Learners: A Review of Issues

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Abstract- *There has been extensive research into how L_1 affects L_2, commonly known as 'negative influence', but a lot less about the opposite direction, commonly known as 'Reverse or Backward' transfer. As well as the first language influences the second, the second language influences the first. The present study, therefore, attempts to examine and critically review pertinent research into the question of bidirectional influence between languages. First, it traces the conceptual framework of the notion $L_1 \rightarrow L_2$ effect. Second, it attempts to demonstrate how an emerging new language (L_2) affects the existing L_1. Third, it examines the pedagogical aspects of both directions, as manifested in L_2 classroom. Special focus will be given to how the concept of "multicompetence" sees the goal of L_2 learning and how language teaching should reflect such a goal. In addition, the advantages and disadvantages of using learners' first language in L_2 classroom will be highlighted and specific methodological recommendations will be made.*

Keywords- *L_1 effect on L_2; Reverse transfer; Pedagogical aspects*

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of whether the L_2 affects the L_1 has provided a rich new question for L_2 acquisition research to investigate. Relatedly, it has profound implications not only for our conceptualization of the mind with two languages, but also for our view of all human minds. It is commonly believed that the first language (L_1) has an effect on the second language (L_2). Second Language Acquisition (SLA) literature has shown extensive research on how the learning and use of an L_2 is affected by the L_1.What has hardly been investigated, however, is the influence that foreign language has on the learner's first language. The reason for this neglect may have been twofold:

1. for a long time, researchers have been interested in the non-advanced learners of L_2. At the beginning stages of L_2 learning the influence is mostly unidirectional, from L_1 to L_2.
2. L_2 acquisition research has been dominated by English as an L_2.

Advanced learners of English who supplied the data for research were immigrants to English-speaking countries, and knowledge of English was vital for their integration into the new society. Therefore, the development of this knowledge provoked researchers' interest and the state of their native language, on the other hand, was less important, and did not raise the same amount of interest (See Miller, 2011)[83].

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although anywhere we turn, we can find textbooks, articles, and workshops on the art and science of teaching and learning L_2, we are a long, long way from finding ultimate answers to the many difficult questions we have been asking. According to Brown (1988)[11], we have grown accustomed to the absence of final solutions as we discover an overwhelming multiplicity of variables at play in the process of L_2 learning. Specifically, there has been considerable progress in the study of native language influence during the last hundred or so years; however, because of the controversies that have accompanied this progress, the findings of transfer research must be interpreted cautiously (Oldin, 1996)[88]. Skepticism about the role of language transfer has had a long life not only among L_2 teachers and researchers, but also among linguists interested in questions of language contact and language change. Some scholars have argued for the importance of transfer; some have gone so far as to consider it the paramount fact of L_2 acquisition. Yet other scholars have been very skeptical about its importance (See Kellerman, 1984[70]; Faerch, 1984[46]). Moreover, Schachter (1994)[102] thinks that although it is true that much uncertainty remains about many issues related to cross-linguistic influences, and it is undeniably true that researchers are far from able to predict with full accuracy when transfer will occur, it is also true that skeptics are far from able to predict when transfer will never occur.

3. CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCES: RATIONALE

In discussing the state of L_1 and L_2 knowledge in FL learners, we need to keep in mind that there is no single scientific truth, In this connection, McLaughlin (1988: 6), correctly, points out that "disciplines tend to become fragmented into 'schools', whose members are loath to accept, and are even hostile to the views of other schools using different methods and reaching different conclusions. Each group becomes convinced that it has a corner on 'truth'. One philosophical position contends that truth can never be known directly and in its totality". McLaughlin (1988: 6) adds that "multiple ways of seeing result in multiple truths. Scientific progress is achieved as we come to illuminate progressively our knowledge in a particular domain by taking different perspectives, each of which must be evaluated in its own right". In this regard, Brown (1988: xii)[11] points out that "no single discipline or theory or model or factor will ever provide a magic formula for solving the mystery of second language acquisition". Keeping the above in mind, I would like to emphasize the following points:

1. viewing transfer as the single most important reality of second language acquisition is risky, though no more so than viewing transfer as a negligible factor in L_2 acquisition; and
2. the learning of a language must be viewed as a very complex process of which the development of a grammatical system is only one part.

Properties of L_1 and L_2 certainly do have some influence on this process and may account for some aspects of the learner's inter-language (Oldin, 1996)[88]. Other factors especially psychological ones are likely to be of much greater importance for our understanding of the process of L_2 acquisition, including linguistic and non-linguistic strategies involved. This view seems to be compatible with Ellis (1985: 40)[45] view: "While the learner's native language is an important determinant of second language acquisition, it is not the only determinant; however, and may not be the most important. But it is theoretically unsound to attempt a precise specification of its contribution or even try to compare its contribution with that of other factors" (See Midgley et al., 2009[82]; Akamatsu, 2005[2]; Luk & Bialystok, 2008[78]).

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 "Transfer" as a Notion

Although language transfer has been a central issue in applied linguistics, L_2 acquisition, and language teaching for at least a century, its importance in L_2 learning has been reassessed several times.

There are a number of reasons for language teachers and linguists to consider the problem of transfer. As Odlin (1996)[88] points out

1. teaching may become more effective through a consideration of differences between languages and between cultures.
2. Consideration of the research showing similarities in errors made by learners of different backgrounds will help teachers to see better what may be difficult or easy for anyone learning the language they are teaching.
3. Research on transfer is also important for a better understanding of the nature of language acquisition in any context and is thus of interest to anyone curious about what is common to all languages; that is; language universals.
4. For historical linguists, knowledge about native language influence can lead to insights about the relation between language contact and language change.

4.2 SLA Research in the 1960s: Focus on Learners' Errors

Most SLA research in the 1960s was conducted within the framework of Contrastive Analysis. In the course of the controversy over the viability of the CAH, two versions of this hypothesis have emerged: "The strong vs. the weak" versions. The idea of the strong version is that it is possible to contrast the system of one language with the system of L_2. On the basis of the result of this contrast, investigators can discover the similarities and differences between the two languages in question so that they can make predictions about what will be the points of difficulty for the learners of other languages. According to the strong version, wherever the two languages differed, interference would occur. That is, language transfer is the basis for predicting which patterns of the target language will be learned most readily and which will prove most troublesome. This version relies on the assumption that similarities will be easier to learn and differences harder. On the other hand, the weak version relies on two assumptions. First, error analysis may help investigators know, through errors the learners make, what the difficulties are. Second, investigators may realize the relative difficulty of specific errors through the frequency of their occurrence. The weak version may be easier and more practical than the strong version on the basis that it requires of the linguist that he/she use his/her linguistic knowledge to explain the observed difficulties in L_2 learning. The error analysis (EA) approach is based on the assumption that the frequency of errors is proportional to the degree of learning difficulty (Brown, 1980). EA research has come under fire (See Schachter & Calce-Murcia, 1977[103]; Taylor, 1975; Felix, 1980[47]; Pica, 1984[93]). As a reaction to the 'product' orientation of the morpheme studies and error analysis, and the feeling that a more 'process' oriented approach was needed, researchers began to work according to the inter-language framework, which

was developed in the late 1970s and 1980s. So, rather than focusing on the first or the target language, researchers began to develop data analytic procedures that would yield information about the dynamic qualities of language change that made the inter-language a unique system; both similar to and different from the first and target languages.

Inter-language has come to characterize a major approach to L_2 research and theory. Generally speaking, the term "inter-language" means two things:

1. the learner's system at a single point in time, and
2. the range of interlocking systems that characterize the development of learners over time.

The inter-language is thought to be distinct from both the learner's L_1 and from the target language. It evolves over time as learners employ various internal strategies to make sense of the input and to control their own output. These strategies were central to Selinker's thinking about inter-language. Specifically, Selinker (1972) argued that inter-language was the product of five cognitive processes involved in L_2 learning

1. language transfer from L_1;
2. transfer of the training process used to teach L_2;
3. strategies of L_2 learning;
4. strategies of L_2 communication; and
5. overgeneralization of the target language linguistic material.

In contrast to Selinker's cognitive emphasis, Adjemian (1976)[1] focused on the dynamic character of inter-language systems. Inter-language systems are thought to be by their nature incomplete and in a state of flux. In this view, the individual's L_1 system is seen to be relatively stable, but the inter-language is not. A third approach to the inter-language notion has been taken by Tarone (1979)[110] who maintained that inter-language is not a single system; but a set of styles that can be used in different social contexts. In this way, Tarone added to Adjemian's linguistic perspective a sociolinguistic point of view. In addition, as McLaughlin (1988: 81) points out, "more recent work on transfer has made apparent the folly of denying L_1 influence any role in inter-language development". He, further, maintains that "the bulk of the evidence suggests that language acquisition proceeds by mastering the easier unmarked properties before the more difficult marked ones".

In L_2 acquisition research, the term "markedness" was used by Kellerman (1979, 1983)[68][69] to predict when transfer is likely to occur from L_1. More marked struc- tures in the learner's L_1 were predicted to be less transferable than regular and frequent forms. Other authors distinguish marked or unmarked structures according to their degree of complexity. Unmarked forms are thought to be less complex than marked. Kellerman (1979)[68] reported that learners initially transfer both marked and unmarked features from their L_1, but that in the more advanced inter-language, they resist transferring marked features. This not to imply that beginners will necessarily transfer marked features from their L_1. In this regard, Zobl (1984)[117] noted that L_2 learners at all stages of development tend to avoid transferring marked L_1 rules. Eckman (1985) has argued that transfer occurs principally where L_1 feature is unmarked and L_2 feature is marked. According to Eckman's Markedness Differential Hypothesis, those areas of the target that will be most difficult for L_2 learners are those that are both different from L_1 and relatively more marked.

On the other hand, a number of researchers studying L_2 acquisition without formal in- structions have been struck by the relationship between social psychological acculturation and degree of success in learning the target language In this regard, Schumann (1978: 15)[104] characterized the relationship between acculturation and L_2 acquisition in the following way: "Second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target-language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language". In this view, acculturation and, hence, L_2 acquisition is determined by the degree of social and psychological "distance" between the learner and the target-language culture. It is assumed that the more social and psychological distance there is between L_2 learner and the target-language group, the lower the learner's degree of acculturation will be toward that group. It is then predicted that the degree to which L_2 learners succeed in socially and psychologically adapting or acculturating to the target-language group will determine their level of success in learning the target language (See Bylund, 2009[13]; Caspi, 2010[15]). More specifically, social and psychological distance influence L_2 acquisition by determining the amount of contact learners have with the target language and the degree to which they are open to the input that is available. In a negative social situation, the learner will receive little input in L_2 and he/she may fail to utilize available input. Odlin (1996)[88] argues that when individuals feel a strong sense of belonging to a group, they are frequently concerned about preserving the linguistic forms believed to characterize the group.

4.3 Transfer in the Cognitive Theory

Individuals working within the cognitive theory framework apply the principles and findings of contemporary cognitive psychology to the domain of L_2 learning (See Bialystok et al., 2008[8]; Jiang, 2007[64]).In this regard, Lightbown (1985)[76] pointed out that L_2 acquisition is not simply linear and cumulative, but is characterized by backsliding and loss of forms that seemingly were mastered. She attributed this decline in performance to a process whereby learners

have mastered some forms and then encounter new ones that cause a restructuring of the whole system:[Restructuring] occurs because language is a complex hierarchical system whose components interact in non-linear ways. Seen in these terms, an increase in error rate in one area may reflect an increase in complexity or accuracy in another, followed by overgeneralization of a newly acquired structure, or simply by a sort of overload of complexity which forces a restructuring, or at least a simplification, in another part of the system. (Lightbown 1985: 177)[76]. On the other hand, SLA theorists have argued whether bilingual individuals have two separate stores of information in long-term memory, one for each language, or a single information store accompanied by selection mechanism for using L_1 or L_2 (McLaughlin 1984). In this regard, O'Malley et al. (1987) pointed out that if individuals have a separate store of information maintained in each language, they would select information for use appropriate to the language context. To transfer information that was acquired in L_1 to L_2 would be difficult because of the independence of the two memory systems. An individual in the early stages of proficiency in L_2 would either have to translate information from L_1 to L_2 or relearn L_1 information in L_2, capitalizing on existing knowledge where possible. A contrast to this argument for separate L_1 and L_2 memory systems, Cummins (1984)[38] has proposed a common underlying proficiency in cognitive and academic proficiency for bilinguals.

Cummins argues that at least some of what is originally learned through L_1 does not have to be relearned in L_2, but can be transferred and expressed through the medium of L_2. L_2 learners may be able to transfer what they already know from L_1 into L_2 by

a. selecting L_2 as the language for expression,
b. retrieving information originally stored through L_1 but presently existing as non-language-specific declarative knowledge, and

connecting the information to L_2 forms needed to express it (See Montrul, 2008[84]; Ribbert & Kuiken, 2010[97]).

Learning strategy research indicates that students of English as L= consciously and actively transfer information from their L_1 for use in L_2 (See Kim et al., 2010[71]; O'Malley et al., 1985a, 1985b[89][90]).

5. REVERSE/BACKWARD TRANSFER: $L_2 \rightarrow L_1$

There are several ways of conceptualizing L_2 influence on L_1.

The concept of Multi-Competence (Cook, V. 1991)[22];

1. The common Underlying Conceptual Base (CUCB);
2. Representational Redescription Model;
3. The Dynamic model of Multi ligualism;
4. Analysis/ Control Model;
5. The Chomskyan Minimalist Program.

The above approaches share the following common features:

a. at some level of the L_2 users mind is a whole that balances elements of the L_1 and L_2 within it;
b. keeping in mind the number of people who use second languages, monolingualism can be considered the exception, not only statistically but also in terms of human potential;

relatedly, if monolingualism is taken as the normal condition of humanity, L_2 users can be treated as footnotes to the Linguistics of monolingualism (See Cook, 1983; 1989; 2002; 2003)[20][21][28][29].

5.1 Focus on Multi-Competence

5.1.1 Multi-competence: A declaration of independence for the L2 user

The concept "multicomptence" was introduced by Cook (1991)[22] to mean "Knowledge of two or more languages in one mind". It was introduced because while "Inter-language" had become the standard term for the speaker's knowledge of a second language, no word existed that encompassed their knowledge of both the L_2 and their L_1 (Cook, 2003)[29]. The notion of multicompetence has added a new spin by shifting the evaluation angle of the inter-language system (Selinker 1972)[106] from one being filled with deficiencies, when compared to native speakers' competence, to one that deserves to be studied in its own right. Multicompetence thus presents a view of second language acquisition (SLA) based on the second language (L_2) user as a whole person rather than on the monolingual native speaker. It, therefore, involves the whole mind of the speaker, not simply their first language (L_1) or their second. It assumes that someone who knows two or more languages is a different person from a monolingual and so need to be looked at in their own right rather than as a deficient monolingual (See Cook, 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009)[31][32][33][34]. From the multicompetence perspective, the different languages a person speaks are seen as one connected system, rather than each language being a separate system. People who speak a second language are seen as unique multilingual individuals, rather than people who have merely attached another language to their repertoire. Multi competence changes the angle from which second language acquisition is viewed. To avoid implying deficiency of the part of second language speakers, Cook prefers the term L_2 user to L_2 learner. An L_2 user is anyone who knows a second language and uses it in real life, irrespective

of their language level. Particular developments from multi-competence were:

a. The re-evaluation of the use of native speakers as the norm in favour of L_2 users in their own right;

Seeing transfer as a two-way process in which the L_1 in the L_2 user's mind is affected by the L_2, as well as the reverse (See Cook, 2003; 2005; 2006)[29][30][31].

5.1.2 The Concept of "Native Speaker": Re-Evaluation

Until the 1990s it was tacitly assumed that the only owners of a language were its native speakers. The objective of L_2 learning was therefore to become as like a native speaker as possible; any difference counted as failure. A working definition of a native speaker is "a person who has spoken a certain language since early childhood" (Mc Arthur 1992)[80].The native speaker construct has, however, become increasingly problematic in SLA research.SLA research has then been questioning its faith in the native speaker as the only true possessor of language. On the one hand, it is a highly idealized abstraction. Native speakers of any language vary from each other in many aspects of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary for dialectal, social and regional reasons. On the other hand, this seemed to be one group exercising power over another. Since Boas, linguistics has refrained from value judgments about different groups of speakers. Treating the native speaker as the model for SLA is falling into the same trap of subordinating the group of L_2 users to the group of native speakers, to which they could never belong by definition (See Cook, 1997; 1999; 2000; 2002)[23][24][25].

The object of acquiring a second language should be to become an L_2 user, and people should be measured by their success at being L_2 users, not by their failure to speak like native speakers. The L_2 user is a person in his or her own right, not an imitation of someone else. Relatedly, one group of human beings should not judge other people as failures for not belonging to their group (Grasjean, 1989[55]; Cook, 1997, 2003[23][29]).The interest of SLA research should be 'discovering L_2 users characteristics, not their deficiencies compared with native speakers" (Cook, 2003:5)[29].The concept "Multi Competence" leads us to see the L_2 user a person in his or her own right, not as an approximation to a monolingual native speaker. L_2 users make up the majority of human beings, and they form a very substantial group. Accordingly, people who have native-like skills in both languages are the exception rather than the norm among L_2 users. Accordingly, The use of native-speaker measure "will blind us in the future to the overwhelming majority of L_2 users who are far from native – like across two languages. However, a comparison of the L_2 user with the native speaker may be legitimate provided any difference that is discovered is not treated as matters of deficiency. Persistent use of this comparison led, for example, to a view that code-switching in adults or children was to be deplored rather than commended. (Is it a sign of confusion or a skillful L_2 use?(See Genesee, 2002)[51]. Two points to remember:

According to Kecskes & Papp (2003)[67], two interacting factors play a decisive role in shaping the $L_2 \longrightarrow L_1$ influence:

1. Level of proficiency and the development of a common Underlying Conceptual Base; and
2. nature of transfer.

The nature of the $L_2 \longrightarrow L_1$ effect can vary depending on the social context of the language contact situation (See Cook, 2011[36]; Cook, 2003[37]).

5.1.3 Transfer as a Two-Way Process

According to the separation model, L_1 and L_2 are stored in two separate entities with no possible connection between them. Accordingly, this model sees no point to discussing the effects of the L_2 on the L_1, as they do not exist (See Cook, 1991; 1997; 2006; 2011)[22][23][30][36]. According to the integration model, the language forms a single, unitary system. As Caramazza & Brones (1980) argued, rather than two separate mental lexicons, the L_2 user has a single lexicon where words from one language are stored alongside words from the other. L_2 users can choose which language to use in a given context. In this model, accordingly, the discussion is not about the influence of L_2 on L_1, but about the balance between elements of a single language system (See Cook, 2003[29]; Cenoz, 2003[16]; Coleman, 2006[19]).The linked model involves two separate systems which interact with other and cause bidirectional influence. The extent of influence might be related to a number of variables such as age and proficiency level (Kroll & Tokowicz, 2001[74]). Most of L_2 transfer research supports some kind of a linked model where both positive and negative transfer take place from L1 and L_2 and vice versa (See Silva, 2000[108]; Tran, 2007[112]; Wannaruk, 2008[115]). The partial integration model claims the existence of a shared area between the L_1 and L_2 systems. This area is most likely in the form of a Common Underlying Conceptual Base (Kecskes & Papp, 2000)[67] related to various aspects of language such as vocabulary, phonology, and syntax. Dominance of one language system over the other is quite common in this area and most of the time the dominance is in favour of L_1 because it is the language of cognitive development in children. Finally, according to integration continuum model, L_1 and L_2 systems may go through changes in the nature of their relationship. They could start as two separate systems, and then gradually turn into one system, as it is the case in consecutive Bilingualism. Conversely, they could start as one, and then gradually turn into

autonomous systems, as it is the case in Simultaneous Bilingualism. Furthermore, the integration Continuum Model allows for different relationship among the various language skill and elements. For example, the lexicon of two language systems might be unified, but the phonology is separate. In general, the model views the nature of the relationship between two language systems in the brain as very complex because it can be influenced by a number of issues such as social status of the target language, stages of L_1 and L_2 development, and a number of personal and contextual factors (See Qu et al., 2005[96]; Rose, 2000[98]; Sasaki & Beamer, 2002[99]; Seidlhofer, 2005; Jia, 2007[63]).

The above models tempt us to refer to the Language Mode Continuum (Grosjean, 2001)[56], according to which it is not about which language to use but about how much of each. As Cook (2003:10)[29] explains:"It is like a mixer tap that merges hot and cold water, but neither tap can be completely turned off. The L_2 user is the one who decides the proportions of the two languages to employ at a given moment in the light of multiple factors on a continuum between effectively activating only one language and activating both simultaneously"(See Kecskes et al., 2003[67]; Jarvis, 2003[62]; Chang, 2009[17]; Athanasopoulos, 2009[5]).

6. Positive Effects of L_2 on L_1

Knowledge of the First Language

When people learn a second language, the way they speak their first language changes in subtle ways. These changes can be with any aspect of language, from pronunciation and syntax to gestures the learner makes and the things they tend to notice (Cook, 2003)[37]. Garfinkel & Tabor (1991)[50] found that children in elementary foreign language programs outperformed their monolingual peers in the acquisition of basic skills. Thomas et al., (1993) and Hakuta (1986) found a correlation of bilingual proficiency with higher scores on standardized tests and tests of both verbal and nonverbal intelligence. Yelland et al., (1993) found that English children who are taught Italian for an hour a week read English better than those who are not. Balcom (1995)[7] found different acceptability judgments of French passive sentences in Francophone speakers who did or did not know English. Kecskes (1998)[66] has found beneficial effects on the development and use of mother skills with regard to structural well-formedness in Hungarian students of modern languages. Marcos (1998) found that learning a second language in an elementary school usually enhances a child's learning ability in English. Satterfield (1999)[101] showed that knowledge of English as an L_2 caused increased use of overt pronouns in non-emphatic contexts in L_1 Spanish by Spanish/English bilinguals. Another study on the influence of the second language on the first language is a study conducted by Darwish (1999)[39] in Australia on Arab migrants which showed that negative transfer from English into Arabic seems to produce a new variety of Arabic that diverges from the norms of Arabic spoken in the Arab world.

Dumas (1999)[43] showed that regardless of race, gender or academic level, students taking foreign language classes did better in the English section of the Louisiana Basic Skills Test than those who did not. Kecskes & Papp (2003)[67] found that Hungarian children who know English use measurably more complex sentences in their L_1 than those who do not. Bialystok (2001)[9] has found that L_2 user Children have more precious metalinguistic skills than their monolingual peers. Genoz (2002) found that there was a bi-directional interaction between English and Spanish in the pragmatic Component of Spanish / Bosque L_1 Speakers (See Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2009[61]; Laufer, 2003[75]). Murphy & Pine (2003), also revealed that bilingual children represented the knowledge of language more explicitly than the monolinguals of the same age. Laufer (2003)[75] showed that an experienced Russian speaker of Hebrew uses a less rich vocabulary in Russian than comparative new comers. Pavlenko (2003)[92] showed that Russian learners of English begin to rely on expressing emotions as states rather than as process. Cook et al., (2003)[29] showed that Japanese speaker of English are more prone to prefer plural subjects in Japanese sentences than Japanese who do not know English. Serrano & Howard (2003)[107] conducted a study in the United States of America on The influence of English on the Spanish Writing of Native Spanish Speakers in Two-Way Immersion Programs. They discovered some influences of the second language (English) on the students' first language (Spanish).

Hashemian (2011) has found a qualitative increase in the L_1 skills of the English major senior students who are intensively exposed to the L_2 instruction for, at least, four years. He concludes that L_2 learners may transfer the meaning system they already possess on their own to a new language. Intensive and successful L_2 learning can have-beneficial effect on the development of L_1 skills. Kaushankaya et al. (2011)[65] examined the influence of second language experience on native-language vocabulary and reading skills in two groups of bilingual speakers. English-Spanish and English-Mandarin bilingual adults were tested vocabulary knowledge and reading fluency in English, their native language. Participants also provided detailed information regarding their history of second-language acquisition, including on the age of L_2 acquisition, degree of L_2 exposure, L_2 proficiency, and preference of L_2 use. Comparisons across the two bilingual groups revealed that both groups performed similarly on native-language vocabulary and reading measures.

However, in English Spanish bilinguals, higher self-reported reading skills in Spanish were associated with higher English reading-fluency scores, while in English-Mandarin bilinguals, higher self reported reading skills in Mandarin were associated with lower English reading –fluency scores. These findings suggests that second-language experiences influence native-language performance and can facilitate or reduce it depending on the properties of the second-language writing system (See Tsimpli et al., 2004[113]; Al-Eryani, 2007[3]; Mennen, 2004).

Thought Processes

The effects extend outside the area of language. L_2 users think more flexibly than monolinguals, are more aware of language in general, and have better attitude towards other cultures. Bialystock (2001)[9] found that children who have learned a second language have a sharper view of language if they speak an L2.Yelland et al., (1993)[116] found that they learn to read more quickly in their L_1. Diaz (1985) found that they have better conceptual development, creativity and analogical reasoning (See Williams, 1977; Kroll, Tokowicz, 2001[74]; Genesee, 2002[51]; Athanasopolos, 2001[5]; Pavlenko, 2003[92]).

Current research is exploring whether certain basic concepts are modified in those who know a second language. For example, Athanasopoulos (2001)[5] found Greek Speakers who knew English had a different perception of the two Greek words covered by the English "blue", namely (ghalazio "light blue") and (ble, "dark blue) than monolingual Greek speakers. Bassetti et al.(2002) found that Japanese people who had longer exposure to English chose shape rather than substance more often in a categorization experiment than those with less exposure. This means that some concepts in the L_2 users' minds may be influenced by those of the second language; others may take forms that are the same neither as the L_1 or the L_2.This seems to suggest that people who speak different languages think, to some extent, in different ways.

To conclude, central to Cook's argument is the way in which people's language knowledge changes when they learn a second language. He makes three main points:

1. L_2 users' knowledge of the second language is not the same as native speakers' knowledge of their languages;
2. L_2 users' knowledge of their first language is not the same as that of monolingual native speakers;
3. L_2 users think in different ways than monolinguals.

7. CONCLUSION / PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Multi competence has two major implications for language teaching. The first is about the question of what the final goal should be for language learners. The multi competence viewpoint sees the goal of learning as becoming a successful L_2 user. Language teaching, therefore, should reflect this: the goal of language learning should be based on what successful L_2 users can do, not what monolingual native speakers can do. Also, teaching materials should show positive examples of L_2 use and L_2 users. The second implication is for the use of the first language in the classroom. If the first language can never truly be separated from the second language in the mind, it makes no sense to forbid the use of the first language in the language classroom. Cook argues that banning the use of the first language will not stop learners from using it to help with their language learning. It will only make its use invisible to the teacher. Instead, Cook suggests that teachers should think about how they can make use of both languages in suitable ways.

Cook (2001)[27] states that over the last century, the use of the first language has been largely taboo in second language teaching. In the strongest form, L_1 use is banned, and in the weakest sense, it is minimized. However, he advocates a more positive view: maximum L_2 use. Since multi competence means that the L_1 is always present in the user's minds, it would be artificial and sometimes inefficient to avoid its use. Language is not compartmentalized within the mind, so there is little reason they should be in the classroom. Some reasons for using the L_1 in the classroom are to convey and check the comprehension of lexical or grammatical forms and meanings, to give directions, and to manage the class. These things may be difficult or impossible to do without resorting to the L_1 (See Kecskes, 1998[66]; Kecskes & Papp, 2000[67]; Marcos, 1998[79]) The issue of the place of mother-tongue in foreign language instruction is one of the controversial topics in the field of foreign language teaching. Some recommend while others condemn the use of mother-tongue in the FL classroom. There are two extremes which are represented by the Grammar Translation Method and the Direct Method. The former, as its name suggests, makes Liberal use of mother-tongue. It depends on translation and considers the first language a reference system to which the foreign language learner can resort so as to understand the grammatical as well as the other features of the foreign language. The latter- (the other extreme)- tries to inhibit the use of mother-tongue. It depends on using the foreign language in explanation and communication in the language classroom and excluding the first language and translation altogether (Garfinkel & Tabor, 1991)[50].The problem does not lie in whether mother-tongue has a place in FL teaching / learning or not, but in how much of it is

permitted. In this respect, it can be said that there are many factors determining the quantity to be used. The quantification will differ according to the maturity level of the learners and their linguistic level. It also depends on the competence of the teacher, the material to be taught and the availability of teaching aids. Another point is that it is the individual teacher who sensitizes when to switch codes and when not to. It is also the teacher who can decide the pragmatic quantity to be used because what is workable in a certain class may not be so in another.

Those who condemn mother-tongue use view that optimal FL learning can be achieved through the intralingual tackling of the various levels of linguistic analysis as this helps provide maximum exposure to the foreign language. It is true that providing maximum exposure to the foreign language helps a lot in learning that language. However this, with confining oneself to the foreign language only, may be done at the expense of understanding and intelligibility or in a routine and non-creative way. With careful and functional mother-tongue use, intelligibility can be achieved and the time saved (by giving the meaning in the mother-tongue) can be used for practice. Therefore, mother-tongue use does not mean wasting time that can be better used for providing maximum exposure to the foreign language. Disregarding the mother-tongue and considering it "a bogey to be shunned at all costs" is a myth. Those who recommend nothing but English in English lesson neglect many important facts:

First, they have forgotten that FL learners translate in their minds and think in their own language and this cannot be controlled:"The teacher who says: I forbid the use of the pupil's own language in my class, nothing but English in the English lessons is deceiving himself. He has forgotten the one thing he cannot control - what goes on in the pupil's mind. He cannot tell whether, or when, his pupils are thinking in their own language. When he meets a new English word, the pupil inevitably searches in his mind for the equivalent in his own language. When he finds it, he is happy and satisfied, he has a pleasurable feeling of success" French (1972:94)[49]. Supporting this idea, Finocchiaro (1975: 35)[48] says: We delude ourselves if we think the student is not translating each new English item into his native language when he first meets it.

Second, they have also forgotten that "the unknown (a second language pattern) cannot be explained via something less known (the second language)" (Hammerly, 1971:504)[57]. This idea was supported by Seleim (1995)[105].

Third, they have forgotten that the mother-tongue is first in terms of acquisition and proficiency and so FL learners cannot escape its influence:"The mother- tongue is so strongly ingrained that no amount of direct method drill can override its influence. Therefore, according to this line of thought it is better to capitalize on the students' knowledge of (mother-tongue) than to pretend it is not there". (Grittner 1977: 165)[54].

Fourth, they have forgotten that there are individual differences among students and that the weaker students may have difficulties in grasping a point in the foreign language. They do not advise FL teachers what to do in cases where attempts at English-English explanations have failed (See Grosjean, 1989; 2001[55][56]; Bialystok, 2001[9]).

It is pedagogically important to emphasize the element of meaningfulness in the teaching learning process. Students become motivated and active if they understand what is involved and if they know what they are doing. Therefore, it is important not to disregard the learners' need for the comprehension of what they learn or exclude the mother-tongue because it is their right that they should make sense in their own terms of what they are learning. It is also important to use the learners' native language so as to avoid misunderstanding and achieve intelligibility (See Proctor et al., 2006[95]; Sparks et al., 2008[109]).Mother-tongue plays a vital role in diminishing or at best eliminating the psychological factors that have an inhibiting effect on FL teaching and learning. It has been noticed that the non-conventional methods of language teaching make use of the mother- tongue and translation in FL/SL teaching and learning. They emphasize that mother-tongue employing removes the fear of incompetence, mistakes and apprehension regarding languages new and unfamiliar. One point is that, to overcome the problems of dissatisfaction and avoidance, FL teachers should permit some mother-tongue use. Students, having linguistic inadequacies, can get confused and become hesitant about their oral participation. They may abandon a message they have started because a certain idea or a thought is too difficult to continue expressing in the foreign language. To overcome the feeling of dissatisfaction and psychological avoidance, FL learners should come to terms with the frustrations of being unable to communicate in the foreign language and build up, cognitively and effectively, a new reference system which helps them communicate an idea. This reference system is the mother-tongue which is indeed very important for enhancing the FL learners' feeling of success and satisfaction. Another point is that mother-tongue use helps create a climate that alleviates the learners' tension, insecurity and anxiety. It makes the class atmosphere comfortable and productive and helps establish good relationships between the teacher and his students. However, it must be kept in mind that mother-tongue should be used as little as possible, but as much as necessary. Mother tongue should be rule-governed and not be freely or randomly used:"The individual is able to switch from

one language to another... in a rule-governed rather than a random way" (Bell, 1978: 140-141).

It is important to emphasize the fact that mother-tongue should not be used in the wrong way. It is desirable in cases where it is necessary, inevitable and where otherwise valuable classroom time would be wasted. We do not want the FL teacher to use the mother-tongue freely and to automatically translate everything on the learners' book. This unlimited use is so harmful that it discourages the learners from thinking in English (the language they are learning) and so it will not be taken seriously as a means of communication." Translating can be a hindrance to the learning process by discouraging the student from thinking in English" (Haycraft, 1979:12)[59]. Students in most cases think in their mother-tongue and lean too much on it. This makes them acquire and develop the habit of mental translation. They interpose the mother-tongue between thought and expression developing a three-way process in production and expressing their intentions: Meaning to Mother-tongue to English Expression. They always think, while trying to express themselves (in the foreign language), in their mother-tongue and all their attempts to communicate in the foreign language are filtered through the mother- tongue: "The mother-tongue is not relinquished, but it continues to accompany - and of course to dominate the whole complex fabric of language behavior.... all referent- whether linguistic or semantic - are through the Mothertongue" Grittner 1977:81)[54].

FL teachers should guard against mental translation. This can be achieved by permitting the learners to express themselves (in speech or writing) within their linguistic capacities and capabilities. This means that the student, for instance, should first practice expressing given ideas instead of trying to fit language to his free mental activities and "if he is freed from the obligation to seek what to say, he will be able to concentrate on form and gradually acquire the correct habits on which he may subsequently depend" (Morris, 1959:133)[85]. It is important to familiarize the learners with the fact that no word in one language can have or rightly be said to have the same meaning of a word in another language. FL teachers should provide more than one native equivalent for the FL word; give the meaning on the sentential level and in various contexts (See Nakamoto et al., 2008[86]; Michael & Gollan, 2004[81]). According to Byram et al., (1994)[14], cultural learning positively affects students' linguistic success in foreign language learning. Culture can be used as an instrument in the processes of communication when culturally-determined behavioral conventions are taught. Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996: 18)[111], further claims that 'culture shouldn't be seen as a support to language teaching but that it should be placed on an equal footing with foreign language teaching'. Post and Rathet (1996)[94] support the use of student's native culture as cultural content in the English language classroom. In fact, a wide range of studies has shown that using content familiar to students rather than unfamiliar content can influence student comprehension of a second language (Anderson and Barnitz 1984[4]; Long 1990). In other words, unfamiliar information can impede students' learning of the linguistic information used to convey the content: Why overburden our students with both new linguistic content and new cultural information simultaneously? If we can, especially for lower-level students, use familiar cultural content while teaching English, we can reduce what Winfield and Barnes-Felfeli call the 'processing load' that students experience (Post and Rathet, 1996: 12). In this regard, Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996) argue that the development of people's cultural awareness leads us to more critical thinking as citizens with political and social understanding of our own and other communities (Serrano & Howard, 2003; Darwish, 1999; Dekeyser, 2003; 2005).

Another model that could be provided to the L_2 learners is a non-native speaker teacher. Cook (2002) points out those students are more likely to identify with and to be able to emulate non-native speaker teachers than native speakers. Also, these teachers would be able to share their own experiences of learning the language, and may be more sensitive to the difficulties faced by the students (See Noor, 2007; Wang et al., 2003; Bialystock et al., 2005; Harrison & Kroll, 2007).Metaphorically one could compare the languages in contact in the individual's mind to two liquid colours that blend unevenly; i.e. some areas will take on the new colour resulting from the mixing, but other areas may look like the new colour, but a closer look may reveal a slightly different hue according to the viewer's angle (Cook, 2003). Multi-competence should be seen as a never-ending, complex, non-linear dynamic process in a speaker's mind" (Dewaele and Pavlenko, 2003: 137). It is hoped that Cook's recommendations, "can convince students that they are successful multicompetent speakers, not failed native speakers" (Cook, 1999:204). (For more, see Gottardo & Muller, 2009; Kroll & Sunderman, 2003; Ivanova & Costa, 2008; ChiKamatsu, 2006).

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