

Algerian Case Study of Age Effect and Cross Linguistic Influence in Third Language Phonology Acquisition

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Abstract : Learning foreign languages is sine qua non in the era of globalization, mobility, and communications, which grants access and connectedness to the world. This urgent need is highlighted in monolingual settings, however, in multilingual contexts the case is, to some extent, complicated. In effect, research on bilingualism and multilingualism lead to the issue of Cross Linguistic Influence (CLI) which seeks to explain how and under which conditions prior linguistic knowledge of first language (L1) and / or second language (L2) influences the production, comprehension and development of a third language (L3) or additional language (Ln). Moreover, the issue of age is also one of the persistent topics in the field of language acquisition. This paper aims to scrutinize the effect of age and two previously known languages: Arabic (L1) and French (L2) in acquiring English (L3) phonology in Algerian context. The study consisted of 20 participants of different age range who were presented with recorded samples of English (L3). The findings confirm the results of some previous studies on the issue of Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and demonstrate a tendency for the L2 phonological transfer in L3 production at the initial stages of acquisition within young and later learners that for some circumstances diminished as L3 proficiency develop.

Keywords : acquisition, age effect, cross linguistic influence, L3 phonology

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