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Title:

***The Effects of Multilingualism on Students' Learning
Experience of English as a Foreign Language: The Case of
Third Year Students in the Department of English, Mouloud
Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou***

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To my beloved parents : Rabah and Malika

My Sister Thileli

My Brother Amazigh

To My Uncles and Aunt

To my Beloved Grand Mother Fatima

To my cousins

*My Friends: Dyhia, Lila, Lydia, Hadjira, Lydia, Sarah, Lynda, Kenza,
Hayet, Mhenna, Ghiles*

Thara

To my dear Parents: Slimane and Nassima

To my Two beloved Brothers Merzouk and Menad

To my Sister Hayet

To my Uncles and Aunts

My Grand Mothers Saidia and Khelidja

My cousins Gaya and Yanis

*My friends: Lila, Lynda, Kenza, Lydia, Katia, Kamelia, Souad,
Nouara,*

Dyhia

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Abstract

This research aims at investigating the effects of multilingualism on EFL students' learning of English as a foreign language. The case of third-year students of the department of English at MMUTO. It attempts to discover whether multilingual experiences of students have an effect on their learning of English as a foreign language and to see to what extent these language experiences are important when learning English as a foreign language. For the practical part of the research, we have adopted the Theory of Affordances put forward by Gibson in 1977. A mixed-method approach is adopted for collecting data and data analysis. It combines quantitative and qualitative procedures. In terms of data collection, a questionnaire is administered to 100 students. Besides, the research relied on an interview conducted with six teachers of the third-year level. For the analysis of the collected data, our research adopted the statistical package for social science to analyze the numerical data, and the qualitative content analysis for the interpretation of the qualitative data. The results of the research demonstrated that multilingualism has an effect on students' learning of English as a foreign language. They also revealed that multilingual experiences are important when learning English.

Keywords: Effects, EFL , Multilingualism, Theory of Affordances

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

MT: Mother Tongue

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

L3: Third Language

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

Q: Question

H : Hypothesis

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

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General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Learning is an important process in our lives since it is a key to get knowledge and acquiring different languages. In fact, Learning is a complex process of discovery, collaboration, and inquiry facilitated by language. Indeed, Language learning is an active process. Students learn a language as they use it to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences to establish relationships with others. They may come to school speaking more than one language or learn another one. Experience in one language can benefit the learning of other languages. Being a multilingual person with different learning experiences helps the learning process. Nowadays, English has become the language of communication and globalization and the world's most widely used language.

Furthermore, multilingual education is increasing. There are several reasons for this. Societies are becoming more multilingual because of globalization. Increasingly, individuals have more mixed language backgrounds. All of this is leading to a demand for more multilingual education. In fact, Algeria is a multilingual country.

EFL is an abbreviation for "English as a Foreign Language". This is mainly used to talk about students whose first language is not English. And they are learning it while living in their own country. Yoko Iwai (2011) said that EFL refers to those who learn English in non-English speaking countries. For instance, Japanese people who learn English in their country are EFL learners.

According to De Jong (2008), it is necessary to learn a foreign language because of the exchanges in many domains. As a result, the English language was integrated into many school systems all over the world. Learning and teaching a foreign language allows learners to communicate in the EFL. However, the learning process is not a simple task to achieve. This is because of the differences between previously learned or acquired languages and the target

one. As a result, students are submerged with new concepts and rules that are specific to each language they learn or have already acquired. That is to say, being a multilingual means is using more than one language, either by an individual speaker or by a group of speakers. Herdina and Jessner (2000:93) refer to this capacity as “the multilingual art of balancing communicative requirements with language resources.”

Various studies have been conducted in relation to the effects of previously learned languages on learning English as a foreign language at the national and international levels. The first study is entitled “Learning English in Algeria through French-based background proficiency”, and was conducted by Negadi in 2015 at Tlemcen University. He aimed at showing that the learners’ prior linguistic experience in L2 may be a facilitator to learn an L3. The learners’ prior linguistic experience was taken into account in language learning. Negadi (2015) came to the conclusion that the learning process can be influenced by the proximity of languages. That is to say, if the learner already knows French as a second language, it will be easier for him/her to learn English than another typologically unrelated language. Thus, he/ she can make use the experience and capacities gained from his/ her learned language and take into account the similarities that are shared between his/ her previously learned language and the language that he/ she is learning.

The second work was conducted by Holst in 2018 at Bergen University. It is entitled “Language Awareness and multilingualism in lower and upper secondary school in Norway”. He aimed at showing whether students relate and use their knowledge of several languages in their own language learning and their awareness of the ability to compare languages. The findings of the study have shown that students compare the languages they already learned and the language they are learning. Moreover, they acquire a higher language awareness.

Aims and Significance of the Research

The main aim of our investigation is to explore the effects of multilingualism on students' learning of English as a foreign language, the case of third-year students at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. The research was conducted in the academic year 2018/2019. To be more clear and precise, our research seeks to analyse whether students' multilingual experiences have a positive or negative influence on students' learning of English as a foreign language. Moreover, it seeks to discover if multilingualism is important during the learning process. In addition, it gets information about students' and teachers' perceptions of the effects of multilingual experiences and their importance in learning English as a foreign language. In addition, they discover to what extent multilingual experiences can influence further foreign language learning.

We have chosen this topic because of the importance of multilingualism in the process of learning other languages. In other words, this research aims to consider the importance of previous language background knowledge during the process of learning additional languages.

This study is significant since it tackles the effects of multilingualism on students' experience of learning English as a foreign language. Our purpose behind this investigation is to show that multilingual experience has prominent importance for further language learning.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Our research addresses a particular gap by exploring whether the multilingual experiences are beneficial for learning English as a foreign language or not at the level of the department of English. To fulfill this purpose, we will attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

Q1: Does multilingualism have an effect on students' experience of learning English as a foreign language?

Q2: What are the effects of multilingualism on students learning English as a foreign language?

Q3: To what extent can multilingual experiences be necessary for learning a foreign language?

As a major step in the present research, we put forward the following hypotheses:

H1: Multilingualism has an effect on students' experience of learning English as a foreign language.

H2: There are several effects of multilingual experiences on students learning English as a foreign language such as interference and errors.

H3: Multilingual experiences are necessary for learning a foreign language.

Research Techniques and Methodology

In our study, we adopt the mixed-method approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. The first one is used to collect data while the second is used for analyzing them. The data of this study are collected by means of two main instruments: a questionnaire submitted to third-year students and an interview conducted with teachers at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. In fact, selecting third-year level is not done haphazardly; it is due to the fact that they have already acquired some capacities and have reached a certain level to express themselves.

Structure of the Dissertation

The overall structure of the present dissertation follows a traditional-complex model. It consists of a General Introduction, Four Chapters and a General Conclusion. The General Introduction aims at introducing the study under investigation. It includes the statement of the

problem, aim and significance of the study, research questions and hypotheses, research techniques, methodological design, and structure of the dissertation. The first chapter is entitled the Review of Literature and discusses in detail the theoretical framework related to our research study and the definition of the main concepts related to it. The second chapter focuses on the Research Design. It gives detailed information about the participants involved in the study (third-year teachers and their students). It also explains the procedures for data collection and data analysis procedures. The third chapter is called “Presentation of the Findings”. It discusses the findings in the form of pie charts, tables and diagrams. It also provides answers to the research questions. Lastly, the dissertation ends with a “General Conclusion” that provides a summary of the different findings. It indicates the limitation of the study and makes suggestions for further researches.

Review of Literature

Introduction

The chapter consists of a literature review. It includes the main concepts that are related to language learning and the effect of multilingualism on students' experience of learning English as a foreign language. The aim of this chapter is to identify and explore the impact of learners' previous language experiences on learning English. Mainly the effect of multilingualism on learning English. This review starts by considering the different definitions related to multilingual experiences and learning English as a foreign language. In addition, it elaborates the theoretical frameworks to be used. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of the previous language experiences of the learners and accounts for different views of scholars in the field of foreign language teaching and learning.

I. English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL means learning English as a foreign language. According to Gebhard (2006), EFL can be defined as the study of English by people who do not have English language as their mother tongue. Camenson (2007) indicates that EFL students may learn English for their academic studies or for travelling to an English-speaking country. Moreover, it is learned by learners who do not live in an English speaking country in order to develop foreign language competence. So, Learning English helps them succeed in different parts of their lives such as getting employment opportunities.

English as a foreign language (EFL) is generally learned and taught for two main reasons: for business and academic matters. The latter is reserved for scholars and students who want to get access to knowledge around the world. This is the case of the English language nowadays which has an international status.

I.1. The Influence of Previously Learned Languages on English

According to Rivers and Golonka (2009), learners tend to establish links between the target language and previously learned languages and to look for similarities among known languages. Therefore, the experience gained in those previously learned languages can still make learning an additional language easier, because experienced language learners have a much better idea of how to learn a new language. Moreover, learners make use of these experiences to feel secure during the process of learning. However, previously learned languages can have a negative influence on the language being learned.

I.1.1. The Influence of Arabic on Learning English

Arabic and English are two different languages since Arabic is a descendant of Semitic languages, whereas English is an Indo-European language. For this, as Ali (2007:3) demonstrates “*There are distinctive differences between Arabic and English in almost all syntactical, morphological, phonological, lexical, semantic, rhetorical and orthographical aspects*”. As a result, students can face several difficulties when learning English as a foreign language. According to Ellis (2006:165), “*mistakes are inevitable consequence of our previous experience*”. Indeed, having previous experiences induce learners to commit errors. This is because they usually refer to their previously learned languages when learning a foreign language.

Furthermore, learners of English commit errors that are due to the divergence between Arabic and English language. In other words, the absence of similarities between these two languages can be the source of errors during their EFL learning.

I.1.2. The Influence of French on English

The strong position of French in Algeria is continuously increasing and gaining an important role among its population. It can be regarded as the co-official language and the most widely studied foreign language.

The influence of French on English is seen at different levels. The most important influence is the introduction of a great number of French words into English. Indeed, the vocabulary of English was greatly enriched by words drawn from the French language. Mc Mahon (1994:201) states :

The unifying factor underlying all borrowings is probably that of projected gain; the borrower must stand to benefit in some way from the transfer of linguistic material. This gain may be social, since speakers often borrow material from a prestigious group or it may be more centrally linguistic, in that a speaker may find a replacement in her second language for a word which has become obsolete or lost its expressive force. However, the most common and obvious motive for borrowing is sheer necessity. Speakers may have to refer to some unfamiliar object or concept for which they have no word in their own language.

Moreover, several consonants sound come to spell differently because the influence of French. Besides, the pronunciation of English changes. For example, French people do not pronounce the letter /h/ at the beginning of a word. Consequently, English words with initial /h/ are pronounced with or without /h/.

Furthermore, English grammar was influenced by French grammar by borrowing a great number of French affixes. they are added to the English language. In addition, some French idioms were adopted and some of them were kept and used in their French forms, such as *force majeure*, *vis a vis*, *vice versa*, etc.

I.1.3. The influence of the Mother Tongue on Learning a Foreign Language

The Mother Tongue (MT) “is the child's first language”. According to Ashworth (1992), the Mother Tongue is the language that the child acquires in the early years. It naturally becomes a means of thought and communication. Thus, the mother tongue of students is Berber. It is the first language they acquired. According to Babington (1903), it is an Afro-Asian language. In addition, it does not share the same origin as the English language. Berber differs from English in many aspects such as morphology, grammar, syntax, and phonology.

Indeed, the first language (L1) of a learner might have an influence on foreign language learning. Mahmoud (2000) explains that the mother tongue plays a prominent role in learning a foreign language. In other words, the mother tongue is important because it is the first language the learners acquire.

On the one hand, some researchers argue that the Mother tongue has a positive influence when learning a foreign language. Undoubtedly, Leafstedt and Gerber (2005) state that learners of L2 benefit from their L1 knowledge by transferring some of their L1 components. That is to say, the learners use some features of their mother tongue like grammar rules or structures when learning another language. In addition, according to Sharma (2006), the total prohibition of the students' L1 in the EFL classroom may deprive the students of certain opportunities to learn L2 efficiently. Moreover, as shown by Harbord (1992), Auerbach (1993) and Deller and Rinvulcri (2002), L1 represents a powerful source that can be used to enhance L2 learning. In other words, L1 can be a powerful tool to learn another language. Besides, the mother tongue can play a supportive and facilitating role in the EFL classroom as a valuable linguistic resource, and consequently, it should not be totally avoided. In this context, Mukattash (2003) points out that using the

mother tongue facilitates the learning of the new language. Furthermore, Auerbach (1993:18) claims, *“when the native language is used, practitioners, researchers and learners consistently report positive results”*. Said differently, teachers and learners have positive attitudes when they rely on the mother tongue in the classroom when learning an additional language. This facilitates the learning process.

On the other hand, other researchers argue that the mother tongue has a negative influence on learning a foreign language. Indeed, using the mother tongue might affect students' learning process negatively since it reduces the exposure to the L2 and reduces their opportunities to the target language. Harbord (1992) claims that overusing L1 makes students believe that word for word translation is a useful technique. Consequently, they will work towards transferring meaning from another language. To explain more, Richard (1971) and Cook (2001) state that interference is a major source of difficulty in the target language learning, and to avoid that, the separation of L1 from L2 should be made. That is to say, learners tend to refer to their mother tongue when learning a foreign language. As a result, they usually commit errors. Consequently, L1 should be separated from L2.

II. Multilingualism

Nowadays, multilingualism is a very common phenomenon all over the world. It can be studied from different perspectives in disciplines such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and education. The term can be applied to people who have competences in a number of languages. Many definitions of multilingualism are given by many researchers. European Commission (2007:6) defines it as: *“the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives”*. In other words, multilingualism is used to describe the presence of multilingual learners in a language environment. Thus, Multilingual learners have knowledge of several

and different languages. According to Kemp's (2007:241) "*multilinguals are experienced language learners who use three or more languages without necessarily having equal control of all domains in all languages*". As a result, multilingual learners have the advantage of learning more languages. In this context, Kemp's (2007:243) explains that "*multilinguals learn more languages, their use of strategies may increase in number, frequency, complexity, and appropriateness. Including strategies related to grammar learning*". That is to say, learners who have language background and experiences have more chances to build strong and effective learning strategies. Consequently, they can easily learn a new language regardless of its difficulties.

III. Language Awareness

In recent years, Language Awareness has attracted much attention in language education and foreign language learning. Indeed, according to Jessner (1999), learners who learn a third language, have a higher level of language awareness than second language learners. In this context, multilingual learners are more experienced language learners than bilinguals. Moreover, according to Hufeisen (2000), this language awareness is due to language learning experiences and specific strategies used to learn the foreign language. In the same context, scholars have proposed that the interaction between several languages systems can enhance language awareness. Cenoz (2013:75) assumes that L3 learners "*can develop a higher level of metalinguistic awareness on the basis of their previous experience of the task of learning a language and their knowledge of two linguistic systems*". That is to say, learners amplify their metalinguistic awareness since they have already learned other languages. This makes them experienced learners who can learn other languages more easily.

Awareness may play a part in raising the learners' consciousness. The learner should be aware of what he/she knows in his previously learned languages. Consequently, he can

distinguish between transferable and non-transferable structures. For this reason, James (1996:139) points out that it is necessary to take into consideration the *“knowledge of the relationships holding between one’s two languages”*. Consequently, in order to reach language awareness, the learner must have some knowledge of the target language and must develop some metacognition for language rules and skills. As a result, according to Simard and Wong (2004), language awareness can improve the learning process.

IV. Language Transfer

Transfer is a strategy that language learners tend to use as a means to compensate for their lack of L2 knowledge. According to Odlin (1989:27) *“transfer is the influence of the first language (L1) on the second one (L2), resulting from the similarities and differences between them”*. That is to say, transfer is due to the interference between the first and second languages because of the similarities and distinctions between them. More specifically, Jarvis and Odlin (2000:573) state that, *“learners may retain something from their L1 [...] to aid in coping with new challenges”*. Nevertheless, some linguistic features help cope with L2 learning difficulties. Moreover, Lado in his book *“Linguistic Across Culture”* (1957) points out that language learners tend to transfer the language patterns and meanings from their mother tongue and culture into the one of another foreign language .

On the report of De Angelis and Selinker (2001), the relations that take place during language transfer is that L3 can influence and can be influenced by both L1 ($L1 \leftrightarrow L3$) and the L2 ($L2 \leftrightarrow L3$).

IV.1. The Role of Language Transfer in Learning a Foreign Language

When learning a new language, the more it is related to previously acquired language, the less time it takes learners to understand its linguistic features. The similarities between

previously learned languages permit the learner to build a basis for learning a foreign language. As those similitudes are naturally established, the transfer will be inevitable. According to Brown (1993:117), transfer is “*the interaction of previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge with the present learning event to facilitate a new language learning task*”. In fact, previous linguistic knowledge is a key tool for simplifying the learning of a new language. However, in a case where no similarities are found between the previously known languages and the current new language, errors occur. Furthermore, perceiving similarities and differences between the target language and prior learned languages is important for the decision-making of the transferable elements. To sum up, the role of language transfer cannot be separated from learning a new language.

V. Theoretical Framework

The theory of affordances is proposed by the psychologist Gibson between 1977 and 1979. Gibson (1979) defines affordances as the perceived opportunities for action provided for the observer by an environment. That is to say, affordances are the possibilities that an object offers or does not offer for functioning. In this case, the previously learned languages of students are the affordances. According to Segalowitz (2001:15), “*Language like any other physical environment possesses affordances*”. Consequently, students perceive some aspects of those languages that can help them learn another language. Van Lier (2004: 91) defines affordances as “*what is available to the person to do something with*”. That is to say, learners have multilingual experiences at their disposal to achieve the learning process of another language.

Multilingual students can have at their disposal a range of linguistic affordances compared with monolinguals and bilinguals. Aronin (2007) states that multilingual learners have an advantage over monolinguals since they exploit their multilingual affordances in

language learning. These affordances should be perceived and associated with enhanced level of language awareness gained from students' multilingual experiences. Jessner (2006) claims that learners should be aware of their needs to learn a language and what to use when learning further languages. As a result, they can use their previous knowledge when learning a foreign language. Furthermore, Aronin and Singleton (2012) state that affordances permit to facilitate the acquisition of languages.

Some studies about the affordances theory have been conducted in multilingualism contexts. One of them is the study done by Singleton (1987). He involved a learner of French whose native language was English. He had some knowledge of Irish and Latin learned at school. Spanish was acquired during a 3-year working visit to Spain. French had been picked up during three brief visits to France. He was recorded conversing in French and performing short narration and translation tasks. This research reveals that: (1) when trying to produce French, this learner prefers Spanish as a source of transfer to English, Irish and Latin because he knows that Spanish is typologically related to French. Moreover, he is aware that this relatedness had practical value when he communicates in French. On the other hand, this learner's competence in Latin was very weak.

Conclusion

This chapter allowed us to review the literature relevant to multilingualism and learning a foreign language. It was organized into five main sections. The first one was about learning English as a foreign language and the influence of previously learned languages on English. Then, the second section dealt with multilingualism and its importance when learning a foreign language. Moreover, the third section was about language awareness. Furthermore, the fourth section was about language transfer and its role. Finally, we moved to

the fifth section where we tried to bring the appropriate theory related to our subject of investigation.

Research Design

Introduction

The present chapter covers the methodological section and the research tools that we will rely on in our research. It describes the procedures to be followed to carry out our investigation. In addition, it explains the research techniques used to explore the effects of multilingualism on third-year students' experience of learning English in the department of English at MMUTO. Our research design is divided into two sections, data collection, and data analysis. The first part deals with the tools to be used to collect data for our investigation. It contains a questionnaire submitted to third-year students and an interview for their teachers. The second part is about the data analysis method used.

1. Context and Participants of the Study

The present research took place in the department of English at the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. The target population under investigation was third-year LMD students during the academic year 2018/2019. This research work sought to explore the effect of multilingualism on third-year students when learning English as a foreign language. For this reason, we have administered one hundred (100) questionnaires for students with eighteen (15) questions to be answered. In addition, six (6) interviews were conducted with teachers in the department of English at MMUTO in order to find out to what extent these multilingual experiences influence students' learning of English.

2. Procedures of Data Collection

In order to investigate and discover the influence of multilingualism on students and its importance for learning English as a foreign language. A questionnaire for students was administered, and interviews with teachers were conducted. Furthermore, a mixed-method approach, qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather and analyse the data.

2.1. Students' Questionnaire

In order to better understand the influence of multilingual experiences on students and their importance when learning English as a foreign language, we rely on the use of a questionnaire. It is a valuable research tool for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Brown (2001:6) defines it as *"any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers"*.

According to Dornyei (2003), the questionnaire is helpful for collecting data from a large number of people in a short period. In addition, it guarantees the anonymity of the respondents. Moreover, it is efficient in terms of researcher time as it is less time-consuming. As Dornyei (2003:9) claims that *"collecting a huge amount of data in a short period of time"*. A questionnaire could be in the form of open-ended format in which the participants are asked to answer using their own words. Besides, close-ended questions can take the form of multiple-choice.

In this research study, we relied on a questionnaire that is divided into three sections. The first one is named students' multilingual experience. The second section is about Students' awareness about the importance of multilingual experiences. We ended our questionnaire with a section named, the effects of language transfer from previously learned languages.

2.1.1. Piloting the Questionnaire

According to Doody and Doody (2015), piloting is often used to test the techniques, methods, questionnaires and interviews. It shows how they function together in a particular context. Thus, the students' questionnaire was piloted in order to pre-test it. In fact, piloting is a strategy that helps in identifying unclear questions, and in exploring the

students' understanding of the questionnaire. According to Dornyei (2003:63), "*the purpose of piloting the questionnaire is to collect feedback about how the instrument works and whether it performs the job it has been designed for*". We piloted the questionnaire in order to check whether the questions were answerable and the terms used were understandable. After pre-testing our questionnaire, we obtained the final version that contains eighteen (15) questions. As a result, we got a clear and easy questionnaire to be answered by the students.

2.2. Teachers' Interview

In our investigation, we conducted six (6) structured interviews with six (6) teachers of the third-year level. The interviews took place at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou between 9th June and 13th June. The purpose of this interview was to investigate the effects of multilingual experiences on third-year students and their importance when learning English as a foreign language. It comprised eight (7) ordered questions that were asked face to face to teachers. A mobile phone was used to record the interviewees.

3. Data Analysis Procedures

In the present study, we used the mixed-method research that involves the combination of two research methodologies (quantitative and qualitative methods). In fact, the mixed-method approach involves collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study that investigates the same underlying phenomenon.

3.1. Quantitative Method

The quantitative method is a method used to present statistical data. For the data collected from the questionnaire, we used the statistical package for social science (SPSS).

According to the SPSS Base User's Guide, *"SPSS is a comprehensive system for analysing data. SPSS can take data from almost any type of file and use them to generate tabulated reports, charts, and plots of distributions and trends, descriptive statistics, and complex statistical analysis"*. This software is used in social sciences when dealing with statistical analysis. It provides techniques and methods for entering and processing a variety of data. It can be used to carry out statistical analysis. SPSS transforms data into graphs, charts and pie charts.

3.2. Qualitative Method

It is a method used to present non-numerical data. It describes the results obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the interviews. We used the qualitative content analysis method (QCA) in order to analyse the open-ended questions. Holsti (1969:14) defines QCA as *"any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages"*. It is an appropriate tool for interpreting the answers of teachers' interviews concerning this issue.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter displayed the methodology and research techniques of the study. It presented the necessary data collection tools that were used for drawing out the data related to our topic of investigation. These data collection tools consisted of a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers. Then, we moved to the procedures of data analysis used for the analysis of the gathered data. On one hand, we used SPSS to provide percentages of the analysed data that have been collected through the questionnaire. On the other hand, we used qualitative content analysis to analyse the open ended questions of the questionnaire, and the questions of the interview. The aim of these

tools was to explore the effect of multilingualism on students and their importance when learning English as a foreign language. In the next chapter, we are going to present the findings of our research.

Presentation of the findings

Introduction

This chapter introduces the findings gained from our study. It presents the results obtained from the questionnaire distributed to third-year students, and the interview conducted with their teachers in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou. It encompasses two sections. The first one is devoted to the presentation of the questionnaire's results. They are displayed in percentages and shown in tables, pie charts and bar charts to ease the discussion of the results later in the next chapter. The second section intends to present the results obtained from the interview.

I. Results of the Students' Questionnaire:

I.1. Section One: Students' Multilingual Experiences

Q1: What languages have you learned?

The majority of students declared that they have learned Tamazight, Arabic, French, and English whereas the minority added Spanish and German to the previously learned languages.

Q2: What is your mother tongue?

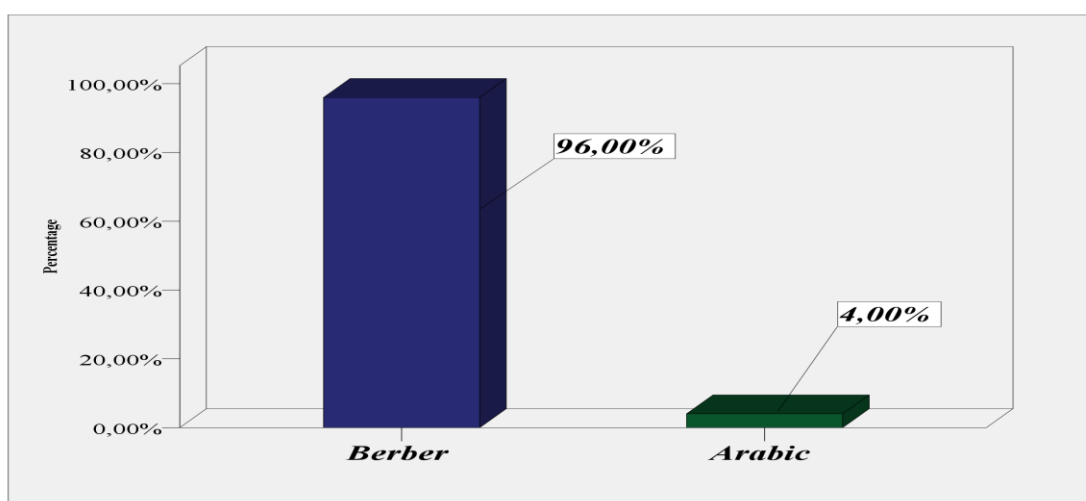


Figure1: Students' Mother Tongue

The results show that the majority of students (96%) have Berber as their mother tongue while the minority (04%) confirmed that their mother tongue is Arabic.

Q3: Do you think that English language is different from the other learned languages?

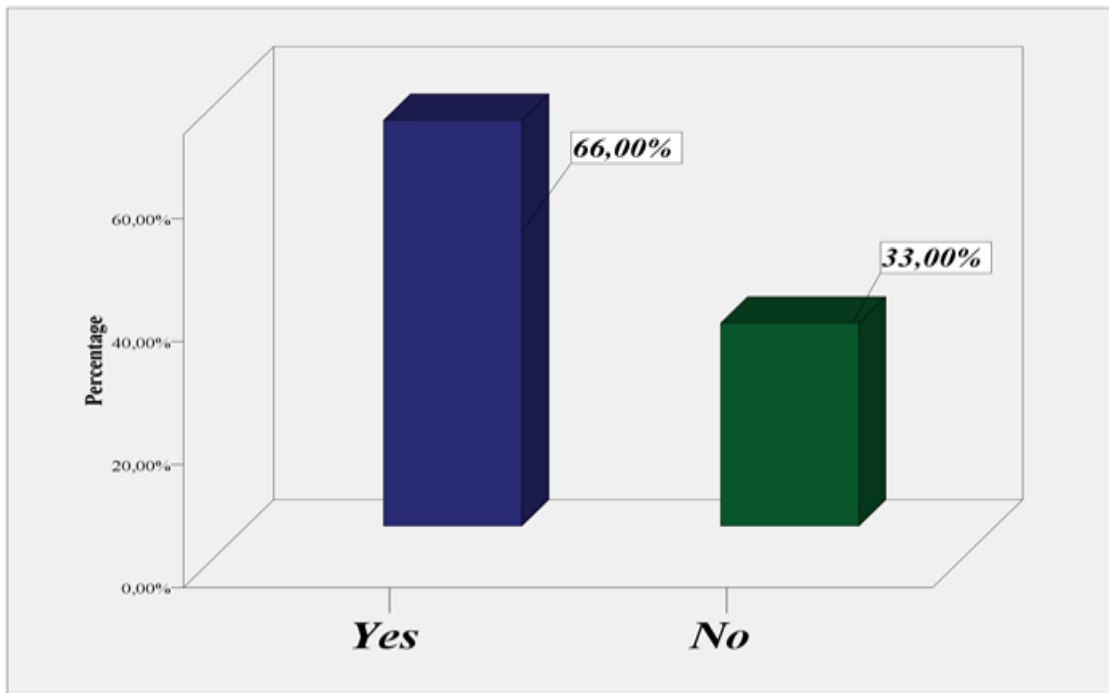


Figure2: Students' Views about the Differences between English and other Languages.

The results presented in the bar chart show that the majority of third-year students (66%) are aware that the English language is different from other languages whereas (33%) think that there is no difference.

I.2. Section Two: Students' Awareness about the Importance of Multilingual Experiences

Q4: Do you rely on your previously learned languages when learning English?

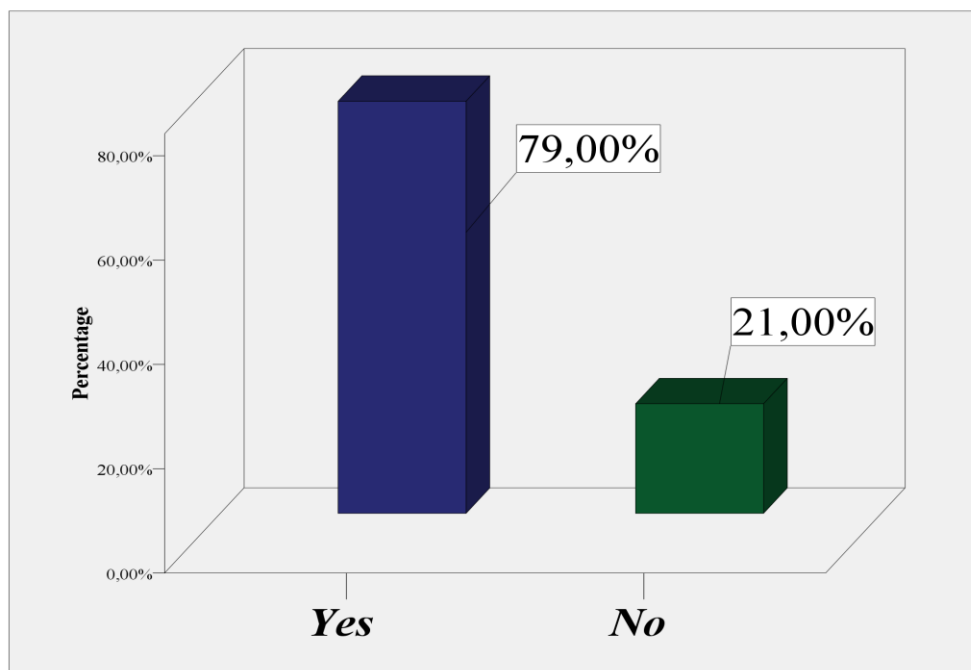


Figure3: Students' Reliance on their Previously Learned Languages

From the data displayed in the bar chart above, we observe that the majority of the participants (79%) rely on their previously learned languages when learning English whereas only (21%) of them do not rely on them.

Explanation

From the majority of students' answers, we can conclude that they rely on their previously learned languages especially French. Some students said: *"Yes, I always rely on French language when learning English since they are similar"*. Adding to that, they sometimes make translation. As they said, *" Yes, I rely on previously learned language to*

translate some words". The other students who do not rely on them said: " *I prefer learning each language alone because every language has its own rules and basis*".

Furthermore, they claimed that they are a source of errors.

Q5: Do you compare English with the other learned languages when learning it?

	Effective	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	41	30.4	41.0	41.0
No	59	43.7	59.0	100.0
Total	100	74.1	100.0	

Table1: Students' Comparison of English to previously learned languages

The present table shows that the majority of third-year students (59%) do not compare the English language with the other acquired ones. Concerning the minority of students (41%), they learn it as the previously learned ones.

Q6: How do you find learning English in comparison to Tamazight, Arabic, and French?

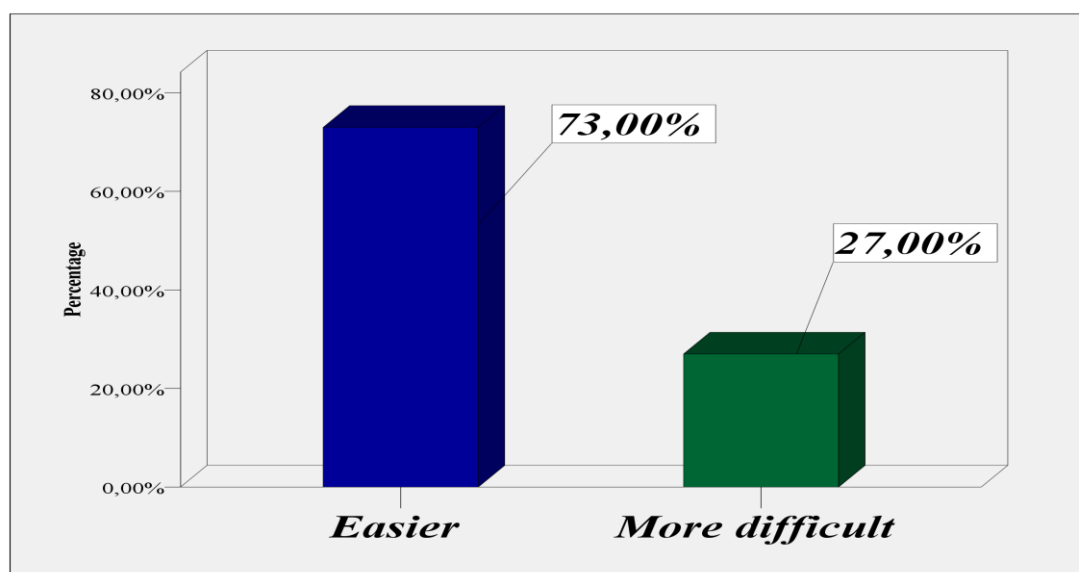


Figure4: Students' Opinions about Learning English in Comparison to Tamazight, Arabic, and French

The bar chart above demonstrates that the majority of students (73%) find learning English easier comparing to Tamazight, Arabic, and French while (27%) of them consider it more difficult.

Justification

From the answers provided by students to this question, we notice that the majority of them consider English easy to learn compared to other languages. This is because they see English as a simple language with clear grammatical rules and easy vocabulary. In addition, they assume that there are divergent and effective ways to learn it. Others say that it is difficult to learn.

Q7: In case you rely on your previously learned languages, which one (s) is useful for you?

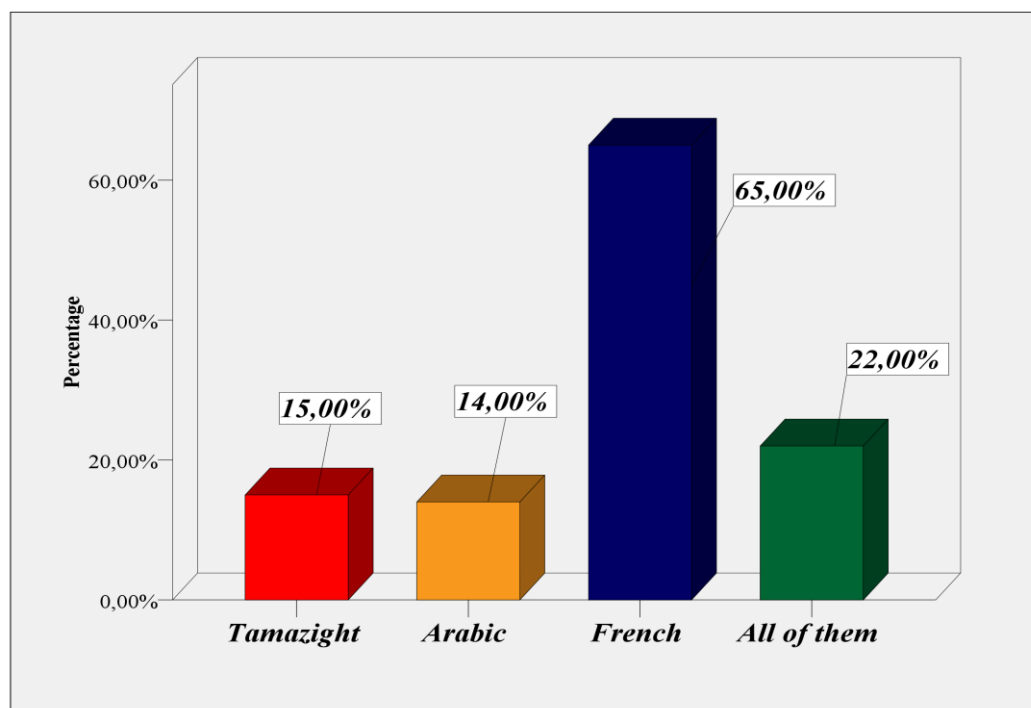


Figure5: Students' Language Choice

As it is shown in this bar chart, the majority of students (65%) rely on the French language when learning English. Moreover, 22% of them choose to rely on all the

languages, and 15% of students choose the Tamazight language. Only 14% choose the Arabic language.

Explanation

Most of the target participants rely on the French language in order to learn English. They justify their answers by saying that French is quite similar to English. They claimed *“I rely on French language because it shares some features with English language”*, *“I rely on French because it is the first foreign language in our country and there are some similarities between the two”*. In addition, the target participants who rely on Arabic language explained why by saying that it is useful for translation. They said, *“I rely on Arabic because I translate words using only Arabic language”*.

Q8: The Arabic language helps you learn English.

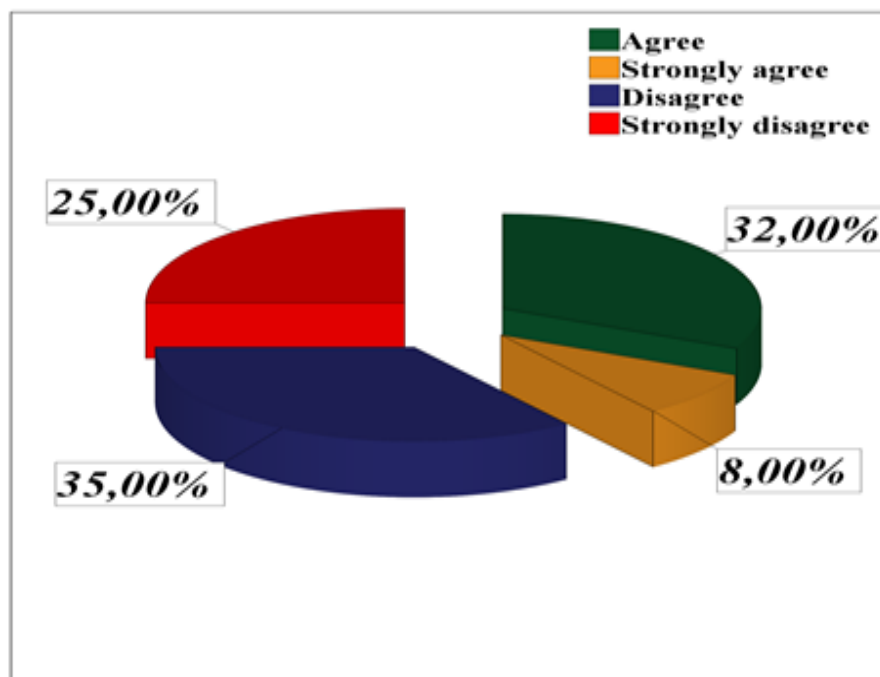


Figure6: The Role of Arabic when Learning English

From the results displayed in the pie chart above, we notice that the majority of the participants (35%) disagree with the fact that the Arabic language helps them learn English

while (32%) of them agree that it helps them. We also observe that (25%) of third-year students strongly disagree that Arabic helps them learn English whereas only a few of them (8%) strongly agree.

Q9: The French language helps you learn the English language.

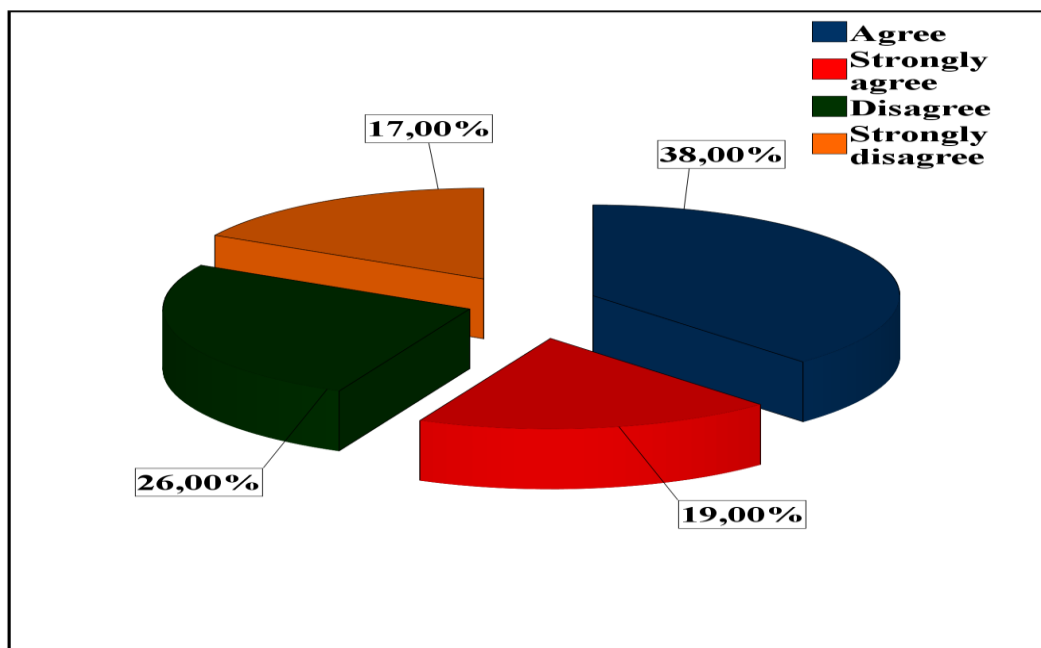


Figure7: The Role of French when Learning English

From the pie chart above, the majority of students (38%) agree that the French language helps them learn English, and about 26% of them disagree. In addition, few students (19%) strongly agree that French helps them learning English while only 17% strongly disagree.

Q10: Tamazight language helps you learn the English language.

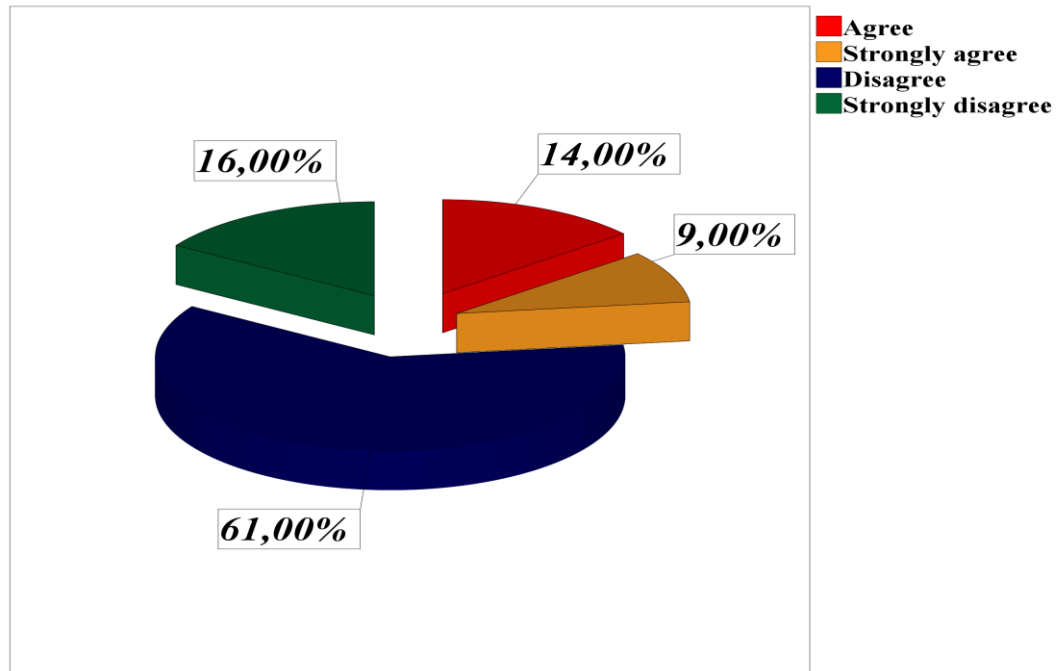


Figure8: The Role of Tamazight when Learning English

The pie chart above reveals that the majority of students (61%) disagree with the idea that Tamazight language helps them learn the English language and 16% strongly disagree with that. However, only 14% of students agree that Tamazight helps them in learning English and a few of them (9%) strongly agree.

Q11: Knowing several languages helps you understand that different languages have different language systems.

	Effectives	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	98	72.6	98.0	98.0
No	2	1.5	2.0	100.0
Total	100	74.1	100.0	

Table2: Students' Awareness of the Differences in Language Systems

The present table shows that the majority of third-year students (98%) are aware that language systems differ from one language to another. However, only 2% of them ignore.

Q12: How would you consider making reference to other languages when learning English?

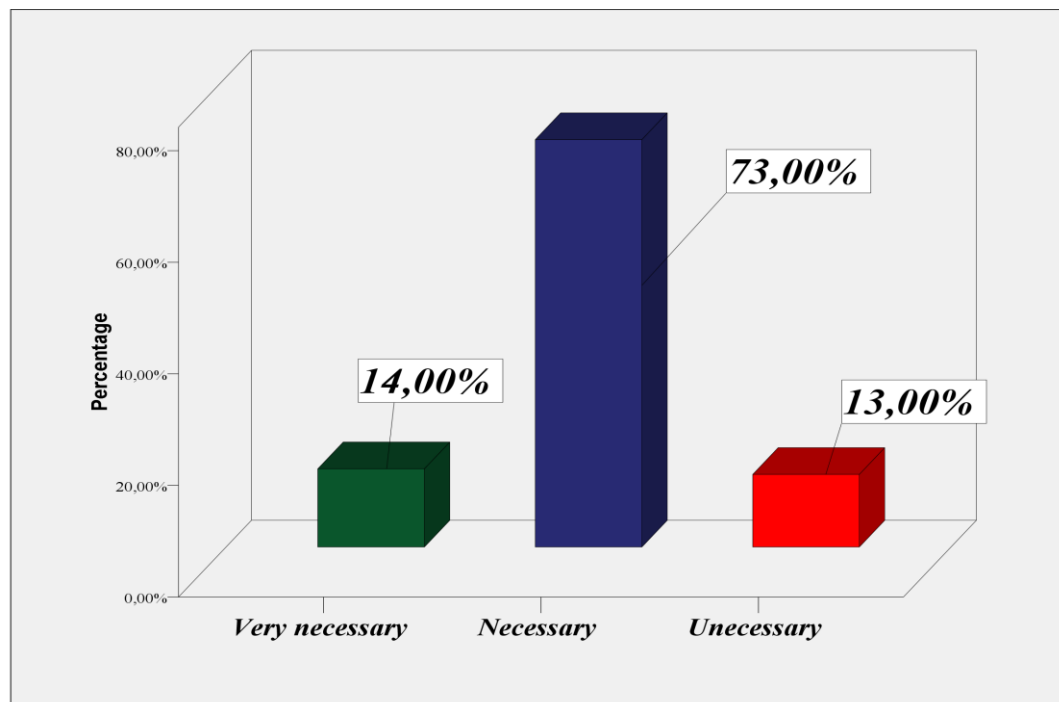


Figure9: Students' Necessity to Refer to other Languages

From the data displayed in the bar chart above, we observe a divergence in the respondents' opinions. The majority of them (73%) consider that it is necessary to refer to other languages when learning English. 14% of them consider it very necessary. However, fewer students (14%) consider it unnecessary.

Q13: How often do you make errors when trying to learn English by referring to other languages?

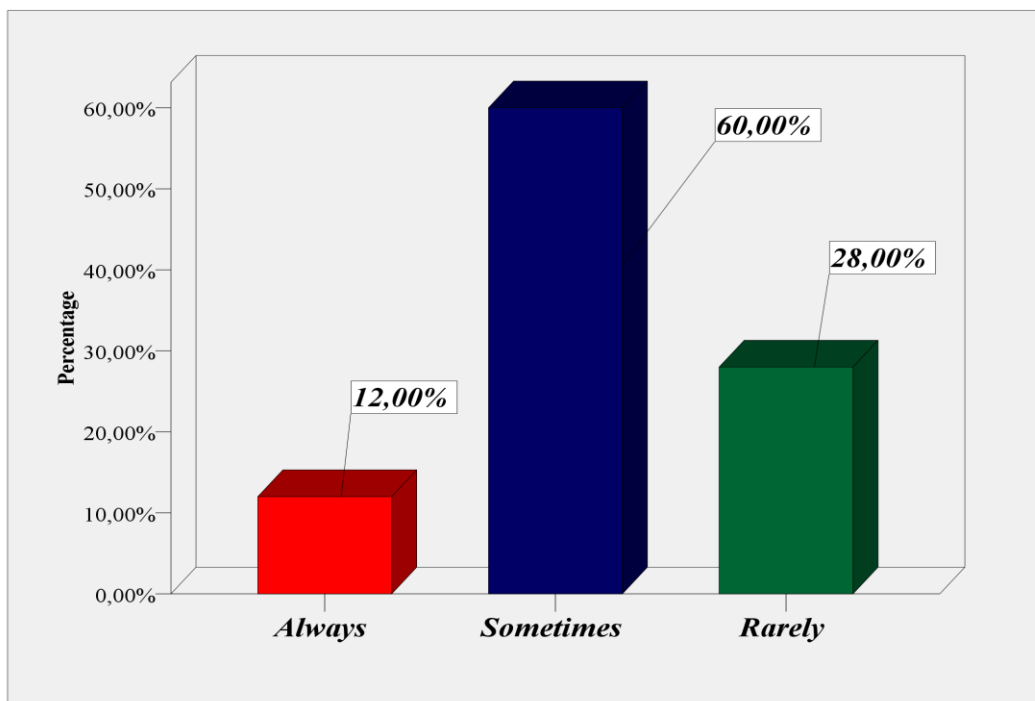


Figure10: Frequency of Students' Errors

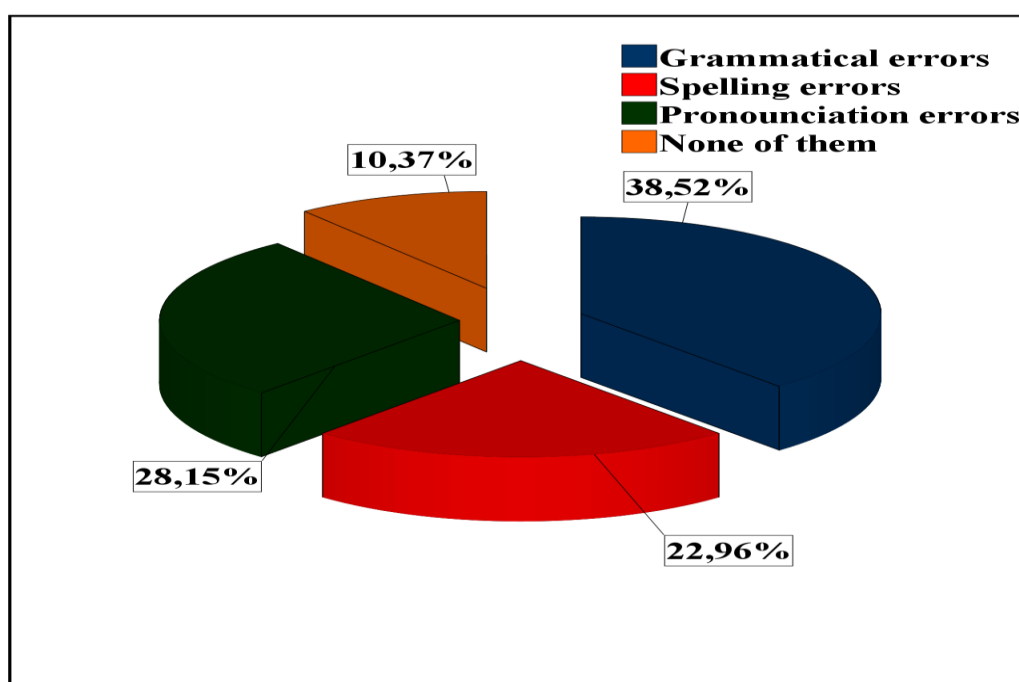
From the results displayed in this bar chart, we notice that the great percentage of students that represent (60%) answer with 'sometimes' and 28% of them respond with 'rarely'. Nearly 12% of students answer with 'always'.

Justification

From the students' explanations, we can notice that those who answer either with 'sometimes' or 'always' argue that it is due to the differences between grammatical structures and rules of other languages and English. Some of them said: *"I sometimes make mistakes because there are some differences in grammar"*. Others claimed: *"I sometimes make mistakes because some rules of English are different from other languages"*.

However, the 28% that answer with ‘rarely’ say that they only translate some words when necessary. As some of them said: “ *I rarely make mistakes because I only use previously learned languages to translate*”.

Q14: What kind of errors do you make when referring to other languages in order to learn English?



This pie chart shows that the majority of students (38. 52%) make grammatical errors when referring to other languages, and 28.15% of them make pronunciation errors. In addition, nearly 22. 96% of students make spelling ones whereas the minority (10. 37%) do not make these kinds of errors.

Q15: Do you think that language transfer from Tamazight, Arabic, and French should be avoided when learning English as a foreign language?

	Effective	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	60	44.4	60.0	60.0
No	40	29.6	40.0	100.0
Total	100	74.1	100.0	

Table3: Students' Views about the Avoidance of Language Transfer

The table above shows that the majority of third-year students (60%) think that language transfer from Tamazight, Arabic, and French should be avoided when learning English. However, nearly 40% of them assume that it should not be avoided.

Justification

From the answers provided by the students, we notice that those who prefer to avoid language transfer justified their choice by saying that language transfer can be the source of their errors. Moreover, they assumed that the language should be learned as it is. However, those who think that it should not be avoided explained that it helps them learn the English language better. Some students justify their answers by saying: "*Language transfer should not be avoided because it helps me to understand better English words and rules*".

Results of the Teachers' Interview**Q1: Do your Students Rely on their Previously Learned Languages when Learning English?**

All the interviewed teachers answered by “yes, *students rely on their previously learned languages*”. They also assumed that “*students prefer to rely on French language because of the existing similarities between French and English*”

Q2: According to you, what are the effects of students' multilingual experiences on learning English?

The answers vary from one teacher to another. The majority of teachers said that multilingual experiences could have a negative effect on learning English. They claimed: “*learners usually do not stick to one structure when learning English*”. Others said: “*Multilingual experiences have negative effects on students because they think in one language and answer in another*”. Moreover, it is not helpful for successful learning. Some teachers claimed “*having a multilingual experience is an advantage to better learning*”. Moreover, it helps students to acquire more vocabulary.

Q3: Do you think that your learners' multilingual experiences can influence their learning of English? Explain

Four participants affirm that multilingual experiences have a negative influence on students' learning. This is because it leads to language transfer. One of the participants said: “*When students learn English they think in another learned language. As a result, they do not learn this language adequately*”. However, the two other participants claimed that this influence could be positive. When the language structure is similar between English and other languages such as French, it helps them acquire new words and clarify some aspects of language.

Q4: Do you think that previously learned languages are a source of students' errors when learning English? Explain

From the teachers' answers, we can notice that all of them agree that previously learned languages are a source of students' errors when learning English. They explain that it is due to language transfer. In fact, students think in another language to learn English. One teacher said: *"Students make errors when referring to other languages because sometimes they are not aware of the differences between English and the other languages"*.

Q5: Do errors occur when students refer to Tamazight, Arabic, and French when learning English? If yes, what kind of errors?

The results obtained from this interview confirm that all teachers agree that errors occur when students refer to Tamazight, Arabic, and French when learning English. One teacher claimed: *"The most common errors that students make are spelling errors, grammatical ones especially from Arabic to English, and structures of the sentences"*. In addition, some teachers say that students sometimes resort to wrong translation or word for word translation.

Q6: Do you think that language transfer has a good or a bad influence on students when learning English?

From the answers provided by some teachers, language transfer from students' previously learned languages can sometimes be positive. But, in most cases, it is negative since it leads to the wrong structure of sentences, quite distorted word class and strange sentences, unusual word order.

Q7: Do you think that students' multilingual experiences help in learning English?

From the answers obtained from the interview, the teachers confirmed that multilingual experiences help students learn English. It is useful if students are aware of what to refer to or not during the learning process. One teacher said: *"Multilingual experiences of students help in consolidating the process of learning English"*.

Conclusion

This chapter displayed the presentation of the findings. It provided us with results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews. The findings of the questionnaire were presented in the form of tables, pie charts and bar charts. Moreover, we described the outcomes of the teachers' interviews. After the presentation of the findings obtained, the results will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

The present chapter aims at discussing and interpreting the findings obtained from the questionnaire administered to third-year students at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. A structured interview was also conducted with teachers of the same level. The findings that are gained from both the students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews are interpreted in relation to the theory of affordances (1977) included in the first chapter entitled "Review of Literature". This section aims at answering the research questions and at checking the hypothesis advanced in the general introduction.

I. Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is the first data collection tool that we have used in our research. One hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed randomly to third-year students.

I.1.Students' Multilingual Experiences

The results of this study show that the majority of students' multilingual experiences vary between Tamazight, Arabic, French, and English. Indeed, from the students' answers, we can notice that third-year students have learned Arabic and French since primary school. In addition, they have learned Tamazight and English in secondary school. Therefore, all those multilingual experiences come after their mother tongue, which is Berber. As a result, they acquired sufficient multilingual experiences in order to use them in their learning process.

As it is presented in the previous chapter, most of the students (66%) assume that the English language is different from other languages. To be sure, English is different from other languages, especially Arabic in terms of structure. In addition, we can find

differences in grammar rules between the two languages. Adding to that, there are phonological discrepancies that include sounds, articulations, and phonological rules. For the students who think that the English language is similar to other languages, it is due to the fact that there are some similarities between English and French. This is especially the case of lexis.

I.2. Students' Awareness about the Importance of Multilingual Experiences

From the outcomes of this research, most of the students (79%) rely on their previously learned languages when learning English. As a result, this goes hand in hand with the concept of affordance. Singleton and Aronin (2007) suggested that multilingual learners have an advantage over monolinguals since they tend to exploit their multilingual affordances in language learning. These affordances are the previously learned languages. Actually, multilingual experiences assist students when learning English. This is because of the existing similarities between the learned languages and English especially French. Faerch and Kasper (1987) argue that transfer is a mental and communicative process through which L2 learners develop their interlanguage skills by activating and using their previous linguistic knowledge.

From the results of the questionnaire, about 59% of the third-year students do not learn English as they learn previous languages. In fact, English is a universal language. For this reason, students have access to multiple ways and choices to learn it. That is to say, it is easy to find new techniques to learn this language. However, those who learn English as they have learned other languages think that previous languages are beneficial and they feel secure to learn the English language as the other languages.

The outcomes of this research reveal that the majority of third-year students (93%) consider the English language to be easy to learn compared to other languages. This easiness can be found in the clear vocabulary of English since it is similar to the French one. If the student already knows French, it will be easier for him/her to learn English as foreign language. Consequently, students do not face difficulties to learn new vocabulary and can guess the meaning of sentences easily. In this regard, Cenoz (2001) states that the positive transfer of vocabulary processing skills from L2 to L1 occurs in the context of two close languages. Therefore, this closeness has positive effects on third language learning. Adding to that, students qualify English grammar as being simple with easy rules.

The outcomes displayed in the previous chapter reveal that the greater part of students (65%) rely on the French language when learning English. In fact, the French language splits different common points with the English language in terms of vocabulary, structure, and lexis. Students bring some aspects of vocabulary from the language to learn new items in English. The prior knowledge of the French language can be helpful in learning new vocabulary. For example, the verb “découvrir” has the same meaning as the verb “to discover” in English. Lindqvist and Bartel (2010) suggests that learners use their knowledge of languages in which they are highly proficient and not languages in which they only have low proficiency. In this case, students have mastery of the French language rather than Arabic and Tamazight. However, few students (15%) rely on Tamazight because there is less resemblance with the English language in terms of structure, vocabulary, syntax, and grammar. In addition, only 14% of the students rely on the Arabic language since it is a difficult language to learn with complex rules, and it is different from the English language. Finally, about 22% of students use all of those cited languages to learn English. In fact, they bring some words from one language and grammar rules from another one.

Students create deviant structures based on their experience of other structures in the target language.

As indicated in the previous chapter, some students (35%) disagree and some (25%) strongly disagree with the idea that the Arabic language can help them learn English. Indeed, the Arabic language is different from English. Consequently, students can face various difficulties when learning English. For this reason, students can be pushed to commit errors during the learning process. In this context, Nunan (2001: 89) states, *“Where the first and the second language rules are not the same, errors are likely to occur as a result of interference between the two languages.”* However, 32% of students agree that the Arabic language helps them learn English since they use translation to learn some aspects of the language. Therefore, they find it helpful and feel at ease in the process of learning the English language.

The findings of this work show that the greater part of students (38%) agree and (19%) strongly agree that the French language helps them in learning English. In fact, French is quite similar to English in terms of sentence structure and vocabulary. Therefore, students find it easier to learn. Many French words exist in the English language. Therefore, it is not difficult for students to learn them. Ringbom et al (2006) argue that when confronted with new words in a new language, learners discover similarities between their mother language or any other language they already know. These similarities influence their language practice. Moreover, English grammar borrows various affixes from the French language to form new words in English.

As it is presented in the previous chapter, the larger part of students (61%) disagree and (16%) strongly disagree that Tamazight language helps them during learning English. Actually, Tamazight language is different from the other languages. These differences are

found in the grammatical systems, syntax, and vocabulary. As a result, it is difficult to rely on it when learning the English language.

The outcomes of this research show that the majority of third-year students (98%) are conscious that knowing several languages helps them understand that they have different language systems. In fact, previously learned languages help students to distinguish the differences between them and the language they are learning. These differences can be shown in the rules of grammar, syntax, and structure of sentences. As a result, the student can acquire language awareness, which will facilitate the learning process. As Hufeisen and Marx (2007:75) show:

It seems that learners do not use their previous language and strategy knowledge automatically, but rather have to be aware of parallels and transfer possibilities between languages, as well as be introduced to potentially useful techniques of how to use and employ previous foreign languages and language learning strategies.

From the outcomes of the questionnaire, the majority of students (73%) affirm that it is necessary to refer to other languages when learning English. In fact, relying on previously learned languages is very important because it facilitates the learning process. So, having a multilingual experience is necessary for students to learn additional languages. Bialystok (1988) shows that the presence of two languages has cognitive advantages, such as enhanced metalinguistic awareness. This can be helpful for additional language learning. Consequently, it enhances students to consider the necessity of referring to their language background knowledge. Moreover, previously learned languages help students feel at ease and comfortable when learning English. Therefore, students refer to them to learn new items of the target language. Cummins (1993:65) states that *“considerable evidence shows that the development of competence in two languages can*

result in greater levels of metalinguistic awareness and the facilitation of additional language learning". Besides, only 14% of students consider referring to other languages very necessary to learn English. They think that they learn better in this way. That is to say, their previously learned language is for them a basis for any further language learning, and they are a reference for them. However, about 14% of students judge that it is unnecessary to refer to other learned languages. For this reason, it is preferable to learn English as it is without mixing between languages. Furthermore, learners prefer not to rely on unsuccessful experiences when learning another language and they choose to learn it as it is without any reliance on the languages learned before.

I.3. The Effects of Language Transfer from Previously Learned Languages

If we consider the answers of the students, we can notice that the majority of them (60%) confirm that they sometimes make mistakes when referring to other languages, and (12%) of them say that they always do. This means that the divergences between these languages. In the Algerian context, Arabic and Tamazight are languages that are very different from English. As a result, Algerian students make errors when trying to learn English. The minority of students (12%) answered by rarely. We can discuss it by saying that students translate only some words during their learning of the English language.

The outcomes collected demonstrate that 38.52% of students make grammatical errors during their learning of English. This is because each language has its own grammatical rules. In fact, when students use the grammatical rules of their previously learned languages to learn English, they frequently make errors. Selinker (1969) states that the Arabic language has different concepts of time. There are only perfect and imperfect (past and present). As a result, when students refer to Arabic in terms of verb tenses, they

face difficulties in using progressive and perfect aspects. In addition, 28.15% of students make pronunciation errors. This is due to the similar words that are not pronounced in the same way as in the English language. For example, the word ‘social’ in French is written in the same way as in English. But, it is pronounced differently. It is sometimes hard to pronounce words that are written because English words are not really pronounced as they are spelled. For instance, ‘cough’, ‘Weight’. Effectively, the English vowels have diverse sounds. However, the vowels are usually articulated as they are written in most languages. As an illustration, the final ‘a’ in French words is always pronounced in the same way. Yet, it can have different sounds in the English language. This can be shown in the two words ‘Cat’ and ‘Car’.

In addition, 22.96% of students affirm that they make spelling errors. The similarities of certain words of French and English languages push students to make spelling errors when they write. Indeed, English spelling is irregular. Consequently, it is quite difficult for EFL learners to master it. For example, the two words ‘Sun’ and ‘Son’ sound identical but are immediately differentiated in writing. However, concerning the Arabic language, there are no silent sounds and orthography. In addition, the spelling is almost identical. That is to say, we pronounce the word and write it as it is. A small number of students (10.37%) affirm that they do not make mistakes. Richard (1992: 205) advances that *“the use of a negative language pattern or rule leads to an error or inaccurate form in the target language”*.

The results of the research show that the majority of third-year students (60%) prefer to avoid language transfer from Tamazight, Arabic or French when learning the English language. Actually, this can be explained by the students’ awareness of the divergences that exist between languages, and their consciousness about the errors that can

result during language transfer. In addition, each language should be learned as it is. However, 40% of third-year students think that language transfer from their previously learned languages should not be avoided when learning the English language. Since language transfer can help students. As a result, it creates a cross-linguistic influence. This is because more than two languages are used together.

II. Discussion of teachers' interview

The interview is the second data collection tool that we have adopted in our research. It was conducted with six teachers of the third year.

From the answers obtained from the interview, teachers claim that students rely on their previously learned languages when learning English. This can be explained by saying that previously learned languages help them to learn English. In fact, students always use their multilingual experiences for further language learning, because of the existing similarities between the languages. Moreover, students can enhance their learning by using their background language experience. Since, they can adopt the same methods of learning, or use translation to clarify ambiguities, as some teachers affirm it. Therefore, students rely on their previously learned languages to facilitate their learning of English as a foreign language.

The data gathered in this research show that the majority of teachers affirm that having a multilingual experience can have a negative effect on learning another language. This can be explained by the learners' mixture of language structures and rules. As a result, they cannot learn the foreign language as it. Moreover, they think in one language and answer in another. However, some other interviewed teachers confirm the advantage of being a multilingual learner. Actually, having multilingual backgrounds facilitate the

assimilation and learning of a new language since learners have already the necessary experience and methods in language learning. Jarvis (2015) claims that the more languages a learner knows, the better he can learn a foreign language. That is to say, the more learners have language experiences the more he/ she has chances for better further language learning. Because he/she has already developed his/her capacities to learn the language

From the answers obtained from the teachers' interviews, the majority of teachers agree that learners' previously learned languages can have an influence on learning English. This influence can be either positive or negative. In fact, if the influence of multilingual experiences is negative, language transfer is inevitable. This is because most of the students think in another language. As a result, learners are not able to learn the language appropriately. As Herdina and Jessner (2002:26) point out "*transfer can occur on all linguistic levels, that is both on phonological, syntactic, semantic and [...] on pragmatic level*". Moreover, if students do not master their previously learned languages, it can influence negatively their learning of another language. According to Ringbom (1986), the less the learner knows about the target language, the more he is forced to refer to any other prior knowledge he/she possesses. However, the influence of previously learned languages can also be positive and beneficial for students. Because, it can stimulate a resemblance between the language learned and the one which is in being learned. As Jarvis (2015) states, the benefit of multilingualism can be stronger if the target language is typologically related to the previously learned languages. According to Kellerman (1987), one should be aware of what one knows in L1, L2 as well as in foreign languages, in order to discriminate between transferable and non-transferable structures.

The results reached from this interview show that teachers confirm that students' previously learned languages are the source of their errors when learning English. In fact, the answers of teachers can be explained by their daily remarks in the class and during their students' evaluation. In addition, students sometimes confused between their previously learned language and English in structures, grammar, phonetics, and vocabulary. Thus, they tend to make errors. Furthermore, students tend to transfer aspects of language from the learned languages to English without knowing the existing differences between them. To add, from teachers' answers, we can explain how Tamazight, Arabic, and French languages can be the source of students' errors when learning English.

The answers of the teachers during the interview demonstrate that language transfer from the students' language experiences lead to errors when they learn English. The errors made are spelling errors, grammatical ones, and errors in sentence' structure. Actually, teachers' views can be explained by the fact that their students always ignore the divergences that exist between those languages and English. Consequently, such kinds of errors occur during language transfer. Indeed, the English language differs from Tamazight and Arabic. As a result, they find themselves learning English with errors. This is because they transfer without considering the differences that characterize each one of these languages. In this case, it is called interference, which is the negative language transfer from previously learned languages. Since learners transfer rules, grammar, sentence structures without paying attention to the differences that exist between these languages. This is either conscious or unconscious. As a result, the learners' multilingual experiences negatively influence their learning of English.

The data gathered in this research demonstrate that teachers consider language transfer from previously learned languages sometimes positive when learning English. Thus, it has positive effects. In this way, the student can benefit from his previously learned languages to learn English. Herdina and Jessner (2002:28) state that “*language systems do not coexist without influencing each other*”. However, the teachers also claim that in most cases, language transfer is negative. Therefore, it leads to different kinds of errors that will prevent students from adequate learning. According to the teachers’ answers, language transfer leads to the wrong structure of sentences, quite distorted word class, strange sentences and unusual word order. This is due to the different structures that each language has like the Arabic language and the English language.

The data gathered in this research show that some teachers affirm that multilingual experiences help in learning English. Indeed, knowing several languages help students learn a foreign language better. This is because they can gain experience. To be sure, multilingual language learners may rely on different languages when learning a new one. Cenoz (2013:75) assumes that learners “*can develop a higher level of metalinguistic awareness on the basis of their previous experience of the task of learning a language and their knowledge of two linguistic systems*”. In accordance with Gibson’s theory of affordances, Singleton and Aronin (2007) suggests that a learner has certain affordances connected with the language. That is to say, learners can use their multilingual experiences to help them learn easily any other language.

Conclusion

The present chapter has discussed the data gathered from the students’ questionnaire and teachers’ interviews concerning the effects of multilingualism on students’ experience when learning English as a foreign language. The discussion of the

findings provides us clear answers for the research questions advanced in the general conclusion.

Based on the obtained results, the importance of multilingual experiences of learners when learning English cannot be ignored. In addition, as it is noticed from all the outcomes of this investigation, there are several effects of multilingualism on learning English as a foreign language. On one hand, it can be negative when there are language interference and errors. On the other hand, it can be positive because students acquire language awareness in their further language learning. In addition, we can say that multilingual experiences are important in the learning process of students. This is because it is helpful for students to learn English as a foreign language.

General Conclusion

This research investigated the effect of multilingualism on students' experience when learning English as a foreign language. It has two important objectives. The first one aimed at exploring the effects multilingual experiences on students when learning English as a foreign language. The second objective consisted in analyzing whether multilingual experiences are necessary when learning English as a foreign language.

As a first step, we took Gibson's (1977) theory of affordances in relation to multilingualism studies. The study has attempted to answer the research questions proposed in the general introduction. Regarding the first question that states that does multilingualism has an effect on students' experience of learning English as a foreign language is answered. As a result, the first hypothesis was confirmed. The second question stated that what are the effects of multilingualism on learning English as a foreign language. This question is also answered. Consequently, the second hypothesis is confirmed. The last question stated that to what extent can multilingual experiences be necessary for learning a foreign language is answered. Consequently, the second hypothesis is also confirmed. This can be explained by saying that multilingualism helps in learning the English language.

In our investigation, we encountered limitations that made it difficult to achieve our goals. The unseriousness of students is one of the limitation. Some of them did not hand back the questionnaire, others handed an incomplete version.

In order to achieve the research objectives, we have relied on the Mixed-Methods Approach. It merges quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection and data analysis. We have randomly selected one hundred third-year EFL students at the department of English at MMUTO as participants to respond to a questionnaire. This latter consists of fifteen (15) questions divided into three main sections. To support the data

gathered from the questionnaire, we have used a second tool, which is the structured interview. It was conducted with six teachers of third-year to get their perceptions about the effect of multilingual experiences on students and their importance when learning English as a foreign language. For the quantitative data analysis, the Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was employed to analyze the statistical data. Concerning the qualitative data, we have used Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to examine the data obtained from the teachers' interviews.

After discussing the results obtained from the questionnaire, we have noticed that students' multilingualism has both positive and negative effects on students' learning experience. To be sure, students rely on their previously learned languages to learn the English language. In addition, only the minority of them think that it is not necessary to refer to the previously learned languages to learn a foreign language.

The outcomes gathered from teachers' interviews revealed that multilingualism has an effect on students' learning of English as a foreign language. Furthermore, the answers provided by teachers show that the students' multilingual experiences could have both positive and negative effects on their learning of English.

After the present investigation, it has been found that multilingualism has effects on students when learning English as a foreign language. Moreover, they are helpful for students. Furthermore, we can say that the hypotheses advanced in the general conclusion are partly confirmed. The results obtained have displayed the effects and importance of multilingual experiences when learning English as a foreign language.

As a first investigation at the level of the department of English at UMMTO, we expect that our work has contributed to the field of applied linguistics and it will help for a new perspective of further research. This can raise attention to the role of multilingual

experiences when learning foreign languages. The results showed that the multilingual experiences have both positive and negative effects on learning English as a foreign language. Furthermore, they are important and helpful when learning English as a foreign language.

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Appendices

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

The present questionnaire is part of our research work concerning the effect of students' multilingual experiences on their attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. We would really be grateful if you could contribute by filling this questionnaire that will serve to gather data for our investigation. Please try to give honest answers to these questions. We pledge that the answers you provide will be kept anonymous and confidential. Thank you for your collaboration.

Please put a cross (x) in the right box and provide statements wherever required.

Section One: Students' multilingual experiences

Q1: What languages have you learned? Mention them

.....

.....

.....

Q2: What is your mother tongue?

.....

.....

.....

Q3: Do you think that English language is different from the other learned languages ?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Section Two: Students' awareness about the importance of multilingual experiences

Q4: Do you rely on your previously learned languages when learning English ?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Justify

.....

.....

Q5: Do you learn English as you have learned the other languages?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Q6: How do you find learning English in comparison to Tamazight, Arabic, and French?

☐

Easier

☐

More difficult

Justify

.....

.....

.....

Q7: In case you rely on your previously learned languages, which one (s) is useful for you?

☐

Tamazight

☐

Arabic

☐

French

☐

All of them

Justify

.....

.....

Q8: Arabic language helps you learning English language.

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

Q9: French language helps you learning English language.

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

Q10: Tamazight language helps you learning English language.

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly disagree

Q11: Knowing several languages helps you understand that different languages have different language systems.

☐

Yes

☐

No

Q12: How would you consider making reference to other languages when learning English?

☐

Very Necessary

☐

Necessary

☐

Unnecessary

Section Three : The effects of transfer from previously learned languages

Q13:How often do you make mistakes when trying to learn English by referring to other languages?

☐

Always

☐

Sometimes

☐

Rarely

Justify your answer

.....

.....

Q14: What kind of errors do you make when referring to other languages?

☐

Grammatical

☐

Spelling

☐

pronunciation

☐

none of them

Q15: Do you think that language transfer from Tamazight, Arabic and French should be avoided during learning English as a foreign language?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Justify your answer.....

.....

Thank you for your collaboration.

Teachers' interview

Q1: Do your students rely on their previously learned languages when learning English?

Q2: According to you, what are the effects of students' multilingual experiences on learning English ?

Q3: do you think that your learners' multilingual experiences can influence their learning of English? Explain

Q4: Do you think that previously learned language are a source of students' errors when learning English? Explain

Q5: Do errors occur when students refer to Berber, Arabic and French when learning English? If yes, what kind of errors?

Q6: Do you think that language transfer has a good or a bad influence on students when learning English?

Q7: Do you think that students' multilingual experiences help in learning English ?