

Classroom Discourse in Negotiating Meaning via Cross-Linguistic-Cultural Interferences

Djilali BELAIDOUNI, Mohammed Larbi SIMERABET, Abdellah Taha Arafat YAHIAOUI

Department of English Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret/Algeria

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7012119>

Received: 14 December 2023; Revised: 26 December 2023; Accepted: 29 December 2023; Published: 13 January 2024

ABSTRACT

The negotiation of meaning that is carried by cross-linguistic transfers and cultural interferences exerts an influence on the learners' interpretation of the negotiated foreign locutions, where items from the previously acquired languages come to sway the process of decoding and encoding discussions about the nature of discussed meaning. In researching this phenomenon, we chose to observe, interview and experiment with a group of ten learners from The International Language Institute – RIHI. In the district of Tiaret, Algeria, the data garnered here was used as inputs to be treated, discussed and analyzed which permitted us to develop a deeper understanding about the subject being researched. Further developments went on to conceptualize the elements within the phenomenon, this allowed us to categorize its components by determining the rate and the frequency of the researched structure and how it affected the adult learners' competences in gaining knowledge about foreign concepts in the target language. The interpretations of these concepts were a decisive factor in determining the extent of influence the previously acquired languages have on negotiating meaning.

Keywords: Adult EFL learners, cross-linguistic transfers, cultural interferences, negotiation of meaning.

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to examine how cross-linguistic transfers and cultural interferences shape how adult learners from the International Language Institute – RIHI in Tiaret,/Algeria negotiate meaning. The study seeks to understand how learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds influence their ability to negotiate meaning in English.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs a mixed methods approach to investigate the role of cross-linguistic transfer and cultural interference in the negotiation of meaning processes of adult EFL learners. The overarching aim is to develop a conceptual understanding of how learners' negotiation strategies relate to influences from their native languages and cultures.

In our upcoming work we will examine and analyze the negotiation of meaning in relation to cross-linguistic transfers and interferences of the adult language learner. Interpretations are presumed to be influenced by learners' cultural backgrounds where languages carry culture.

The following research questions guide this study:

1. How does cross-linguistic transfer and cultural interference shape negotiation of meaning in adult EFL learning?

2. How does learners' linguistic/cultural background affect negotiation of meaning?
3. How do culturally influenced interpretations and previously acquired languages intertwine to influence negotiation of meaning?

The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. Lack of language competence permits interference from cross-linguistic transfer and cultural influence in negotiation.
2. Item transfers including lexis, syntax, and pragmatics model negotiation when interpreting utterances.
3. Negotiation of meaning is influenced by linguistic transfers and cultural interferences from underlying knowledge.

Research Methods Adult subjects are observed over eight 90-minute English lessons, interviewed, and re-observed after a quasi-experiment. This determines rates and frequencies of phenomena to conceptualize elements of negotiating meaning through cross-linguistic and cultural interferences

To study this phenomenon, adult learners are observed over an eight-week period. They will be interviewed and then re-observed after a quasi-experiment. This can determine the frequency of occurrences to conceptualize elements of negotiation influenced by cross-linguistic and cultural interferences.

The overarching goal is to define and understand the role cross-cultural transfers play in negotiating meaning for these English language learners. This will lay the foundation for deeper insights into how the process of negotiation is shaped for this learner population.

Literature Review

This phase aims at introducing the concepts of discourse, discourse analysis and negotiation of meaning through possible cross-linguistic transfers. Here we try to link the elements within the phenomenon being investigated by referencing the background and the context that allowed for the existence of such a structure.

1) Discourse and Text: An Exploration of Interactive Communication

Discourse refers to the act of communicating meaning between interlocutors and is interactive, while a text is the codification of a message into spoken or written language and is passive without interactivity. Some theorists use the terms "discourse" and "text" interchangeably, implying they are synonymous concepts, with the key difference being that discourse is interactive due to communication between parties, while a text is passive without interaction. (Hawthorn, 1992)

2) Classroom Discourse Analysis: A Micro-Ethnographic Perspective

Classroom discourse analysis can be described as the process by which the language-in-use is contextualized in order to be examined. The discourse that happens inside the classroom can be subjected to multiple affecting variables that might bring off different changes and transpositions during the interaction. Rymes, B. (2015). The analysis is conducted in a manner suggesting that the classroom is treated as micro-ethnography. Drawing from that we proceed into to viewing classroom discourse analysis as ethnography of communication that focuses on both the personal, Cultural and linguistic background of learners as an agent of influence while negotiating meaning (Bloome, D., Carter, S. P., Christian, B. M., Otto, S., & Shuart-Faris, N., 2005).

Classroom discourse analysis views the target language as structured patterns and units that carry both culture and meaning (Coulthard, 2014). The language serves as a medium, object, and objective of learning. As an object, it refers to examples and illustrations given to learners. As an objective, it refers to the final

aim of developing productive and receptive language skills through information exchange and knowledge acquisition (Coulthard, 2014).

3) Negotiating Meaning in Language Learning: The Role of Classroom Discourse

Teachers and learners negotiate meaning in the classroom to employ the target language as a subject and means of communication, clarifying concepts and ideas (Cook, 2015). This allows the language to link learners' existing linguistic skills to new concepts. Language carries both meaning and culture (Ngũgĩ, 1986; Choudhury, 2014). Cultural transmission occurs through classroom language learning. Comparative analysis focusing on similarities between the target language and learners' mother tongue helps learning by reinvesting existing linguistic resources (Ruzhekova-Rogozherova, 2014). Contrastive analysis can develop learner awareness, noticing ability, and language aptitude, helping to overcome motivational and belief-based difficulties (Ruzhekova-Rogozherova, 2014; Schmidt, 2012).

4) Intercultural Discourse Analysis: Bridging Communication Gaps

Intercultural discourse analysis seeks to optimize communication between interlocutors by eliminating misunderstandings (Holliday et al., 2021). This can occur through a lingua franca negotiated according to cultural and linguistic backgrounds, or by mastering another party's language (Canagarajah, 2007).

In EFL classrooms, competent English teachers have native-speaker level communicative abilities and facilitate cultural transmission of the target language, eliminating cultural boundaries (Byram, 1997). Here, English acts not only as a subject but carries Anglo-Saxon "cultures" (plural used deliberately due to American exceptionalism).

Varonis and Gass' (1985) model for analyzing negotiation of meaning contains four elements: the trigger starting miscommunication; the indicator expressing confusion; the response aiming to resolve confusion; and the reaction confirming understanding.

This model was developed to analyze and address misunderstandings between native and non-native speakers in research (Varonis & Gass, 1985). Teachers' linguistic competences are considered equal to native speakers' (as mentioned earlier).

5) Language and Culture: Interplay in Language Acquisition

Cultural concepts carried through a language are historically and socially constructed within its geographical area (Kachru & Smith, 2008). Native or proficient speakers perform acts embedding this culture, which may confuse learners despite socio-cultural awareness.

Familiarity with the target culture notably impacts language acquisition (Kachru & Smith, 2008). Aspects conveyed through writing or speech stem from non-material culture like religion, morality and social norms, as well as material artifacts representing human creations within a social context (Dant, 1999; Smelser & Baltes, 2001).

Language can be viewed anthropologically as a socially molded artifact shaping human interaction and evolving through contact (Smelser & Baltes, 2001). In EFL classrooms, the target language's cultural context is transposed to an environment where the dominant language presumably differs linguistically, representing a distant culture from the target language's origins.

6) Linguistic Distance and Language Learning: The Role of Cognates

Cognates between closely related languages facilitate learning due to their high ratio of "good" to "false"

cognates (Ringbom, 2006). This shows the positive influence cognates can have. Meaning can be negotiated between speakers of closely related Scandinavian languages due to their linguistic similarities, unlike Finnish which is from a different family (Otwinowska, 2015). This demonstrates the role of linguistic distance. Beginners rely on cognates to acquire phonological, morphological and syntactic patterns of the L2 (Ringbom, 2006). Cognates thus serve as an initial foundation. Learning English is easier for Swedish than Finnish speakers since English and Swedish are Germanic (Otwinowska, 2015). This supports the impact of typological similarity on ease of acquisition.

Phonological, grammatical and lexical transfers occur from L1 to L2 (Kellerman & Sharwood Smith, 1986; Dechert & Raupach, 1989; Ringbom, 1987; Odlin, 1989). Phonological transfers are visible in learner speech and accent. Contrastive analysis can predict errors and guide learning (Ringbom, 1987; Odlin, 1989). This validated the usefulness of contrastive analysis. Positive L2 to L3 transfers are possible if the languages are similar, as from Russian to Polish (Mehlhorn, 2007). This showed interlanguage transfers are not unidirectional. Correct pronunciation facilitates negotiating meaning in the classroom with teacher guidance (Cook, 2015). Comprehensibility aids communication. Together, these sources provide a comprehensive overview of the key issues around language transfer and negotiating meaning in second language acquisition.

7) Phonological and Structural Transfers in Second Language Acquisition:

The main concern of this investigation is to examine the role of cross-linguistic transfers and cultural interferences in negotiating meaning for adult English language learners in Algeria (Jessner, 1999). Previous research has found that proximity between a learner's first language (L1) and the target language can cause both negative and positive transfers (Beenstock et al., 2001). Negative interference may happen due to false cognates, while proximity also promotes and facilitates learning by leveraging closer cognate meanings (Ringbom, 1987).

Research has shown it is typically easier for Swedes to learn English than Finns due to the Germanic roots shared between English and Swedish, whereas Finnish is part of the unrelated Uralic language family. Additionally, typological similarity between the L1 and L2 has been shown to aid structural understanding (Odlin, 1989).

At the phonological level, transfers from the L1 system are evident in learners' accents and knowing which errors are likely to help guide learners (Mehlhorn, 2007). Structural transfers also inevitably occur after learning lexical items, with universal structures common across unrelated languages easing the transfer process (Ringbom, 1987).

8) Cultural Influences on Second Language Learning:

Culturally, learners interpret new concepts based on their own environment, which can lead to clashes (Karmiloff-Smith, 1981). Cultural awareness is important for negotiating meaning and allowing learners to actively participate rather than passively receive knowledge. Adults also have greater autonomy, responsibility and maturity than children in learning (Maturity reflects completion of mental/emotional development).

9) Learners' Use of L1 and Cultural Background in Conceptualizing New Ideas:

Learners draw on their L1 and cultural background to make sense of new concepts through contrastive analysis and deductive analogy (Odlin, 1989). Cultural perception shapes accurate communication by developing abilities to encode and decode messages within their socio-geographical context. A case study

found learners who preferred using their native language (Arabic) negotiated meanings better.

10) Language Proximity and Structural Transfers:

Research has demonstrated that typological similarity between the L1 and L2 aids basic structural understanding (Odlin, 1989). Structural transfers occur after learning lexical items, guided by common structures across languages (Ringbom, 2006).

11) Positive and Negative Transfers at Different Language Levels:

Positive and negative transfers occur at all language levels, with phonological transfers influencing learners' accents (Mehlhorn, 2007). Typological proximity facilitates learning through structural similarities between Scandinavian languages (Ringbom, 2006). Structural items common across unrelated languages can positively transfer through functional similarity.

12) Lexical, Structural, and Pragmatic Language Transfer in Second Language Acquisition:

Language transfer plays an important role in second language acquisition. Transfer can take place at the lexical, structural and pragmatic levels between a learner's first language (L1) and the target language (Odlin, 1989).

13) Morphological Proximity and Positive/Negative Transfers:

Morphological proximity between cognate words in the L1 and L2 can lead to errors from false friends, but also facilitates vocabulary learning through closer meanings. Then, both positive and negative transfers is showcased, though traditionally the focus has been more on negatives; attitudes are shifting to acknowledge positives as well. The idea is that distant target languages pose higher risks of negative transfer due to unrelated cognates, while related languages favor positive transfer through closer cognate meanings (Ringbom, 2006). Negotiating meaning relies on familiarity with phonological patterns gained through positive L1-L2 transfers to develop target language pronunciation (Mehlhorn, 2007).

Learners use their cultural background deductively to negotiate new meanings through contrastive analysis and analogy. Besides, typological similarity between languages eases basic structural understanding through functional similarity (Odlin, 1989). Then, Cultural perception influences accurate communication development in encoding and decoding target language messages in context (Karmiloff-Smith, 1981). Instructors prompt and model rather than just transmit knowledge to guide learners' developing target language systems.

14) Language Proximity and Negotiating Meaning:

Language proximity influenced L2 Hebrew proficiency for immigrants based on L1 (Arabic stronger than French) (Beenstock et al., 2001). Novice language learners often transfer lexical items from their native language to the target language when they see an opportunity, due to perceived similarities in meaning. On top of that, Cultural correspondences play a role in deciding if a cognate is transferred due to closeness of meaning; deceptive cognates can cause interference if the meaning has diverged. Later research did not find clear evidence that pragmatic transfers (e.g. cultural behaviors) were always positively or negatively correlated when transferring between L1 and L2 (Ringbom, 1987).

15) Facilitating Transfer for Target Language Comprehension:

Ringbom (1987) proposes that transfer occurs at the item, procedural, and overall levels, developing with increased L2 proficiency. Facilitating transfer at different levels aids L2 comprehension by linking new

concepts to existing L1 knowledge. Also, structures examination of transfer at the item, procedural and overall levels diachronically as proficiency increases. Novice L2 learners are inclined to transfer whenever they perceive opportunities based on surface similarities between the L1 and L2. Cultural correspondences also play a major role in deciding if cognate transfer occurs due to closeness of connotation (Ringbom, 2006).

16) Transfer Levels and the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis:

In negotiating meaning, learners can find common structural patterns between languages to guide transfer of grammar skills (Ringbom, 2006). This helps link concepts between languages, and differentiate between BICS and more time-intensive development of CALP. Researchers such as Ringbom (2006), also examined pragmatic transfer reflection sociocultural norms and proficiency. While their findings varied, this literature establishes levels of transfer as a framework for understanding cross-linguistic influence in SLA.

This passage examines theories and frameworks surrounding the phenomenon of cross-linguistic transfer between a learner's first language (L1) and second language (L2). It discusses concepts that help explain how and why transfer occurs at different levels, including lexical, structural and pragmatic transfer.

A central theory discussed is linguistic interdependence hypothesis, which proposes that the L1 and L2 share an underlying common proficiency system represented by interconnected "icebergs" This diagram depicts how lexical items representing the same academic concepts are carried cognitively from L1 to L2 within this system. Within the common proficiency system, negotiation of meaning acts as a bridge connecting and facilitating transfer of negotiated concepts between languages.

Novice L2 learners are inclined to transfer whenever they see opportunities based on similarities to their L1 repertoire (Ringbom, 2006). The passage provided context for understanding empirical research on cross-linguistic influence.

Research Design

This step outlines the mixed methods approach used to study negotiation of meaning through cross-linguistic transfer and cultural interference in adult EFL learning. The overarching goal was to develop a conceptual understanding of the relationship between learners' negotiation strategies and the influences of their native languages and cultures.

A mixed methods design was employed using qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to provide a comprehensive picture. Triangulation of multiple data sources validated findings.

1) Sample and Data Collection:

The current investigation process targets Ten adult EFL learners, aged between 18 and 35, actively participated in the study. Their native language was Algerian Arabic, forming a diverse group with varying degrees of proficiency in additional languages.

Both naturalistic and experimental data were gathered through classroom observations, testing sessions, and interviews conducted over multiple sessions. Classroom observations involved directly observing participants during eight 90-minute English language lessons. Detailed field notes were taken to record instances of negotiation strategies and cross-linguistic influences. Additionally, two testing sessions were conducted using cultural references relevant to participants' native languages and cultures in order to induce negotiation behaviors and observe patterns of cross-linguistic transfer. Semi-structured interviews were also used to gather self-reported data from participants on their language use during negotiation episodes, preferences for certain languages, and factors influencing their strategy choices. A quasi-experiment

involving a designed test lesson provided additional induced negotiation episodes.

Systematic tools were used to capture rich data on negotiation interactions and participant perspectives. Observation grids were used to track the frequency and rate of various negotiation phenomena observed in classroom sessions. Audio recordings captured extracts of negotiation episodes and discussions for subsequent discourse analysis. Interview protocols provided guidance for interviews with participants on their negotiation strategies and language choices during lessons.

Analyzing of Data

This study employed a mixed methods approach to investigate the negotiation of meaning through cross-linguistic transfer and cultural interference in adult EFL learning, aiming to develop a conceptual understanding of the relationship between learners' negotiation strategies and the influences of their native languages and cultures. The research design utilized qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, with the triangulation of multiple data sources to validate findings. Naturalistic and experimental data were gathered through classroom observations, testing sessions, and interviews conducted over multiple sessions.

Classroom observations involved directly observing participants during eight 90-minute English language lessons, with detailed field notes taken to record instances of negotiation strategies and cross-linguistic influences. Additionally, two testing sessions were conducted using cultural references relevant to participants' native languages and cultures to induce negotiation behaviors and observe patterns of cross-linguistic transfer. Semi-structured interviews were also used to gather self-reported data from participants on their language use during negotiation episodes, preferences for certain languages, and factors influencing their strategy choices. A quasi-experiment involving a designed test lesson provided additional induced negotiation episodes. Systematic tools were employed to capture rich data on negotiation interactions and participant perspectives. Observation grids were used to track the frequency and rate of various negotiation phenomena observed in classroom sessions.

Audio recordings captured extracts of negotiation episodes and discussions for subsequent discourse analysis. Interview protocols provided guidance for interviews with participants on their negotiation strategies and language choices during lessons. In summary, the study utilized a mixed methods design, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, triangulation of multiple data sources, and systematic tools such as observation grids, audio recordings, and interview protocols to comprehensively analyze the negotiation of meaning in adult EFL learning.

FINDINGS/RESULTS

Analysis of the Observation

Here all the sessions are analyzed and interpreted as one entity, focusing on the nature of the discourse held by the act of negotiating meaning through the analysis of transfers.

During the first two sessions of discourse observation we noted that negotiating meaning through task based activities that use authentic materials allow for cultural/pragmatic interferences as a way to relate the learners' background and their repertoires to the concept being negotiated, inputs are understood and acquired through the negotiation of the concepts that reflect the connotations behind them, These tasks act as training programs that condition the learners competences bringing them closer to their main objective which is to develop their competences in the target language. In order to understand the pragmatics of the target language learners are trained according to possible situations they may encounter in real life. This seems to be meant to optimize their proficiency in the target language.

Transfers from real life experiences were observed surfacing when the teacher discussed how to order food in a restaurant, a similar incident was noticed when the teacher was training the learners on how to book a hotel room. The learners were highly interactive when the authentic real life situations were used as tasks this can be due to the fact that these situations can be projected on their experiences where we can say that these situations are universal in their nature as they can be found in almost every culture nowadays.

Learners' ability to negotiate meaning in the target language independently from negative transfers was observed to develop when the learners became more aware of the systems that guide the target language. This awareness enforces the familiarity with the target language allowing the learner to somehow break-free from having to resort to the mother tongue or the previously acquired languages, once knowledge about the systems that govern the target language was developed the subjects were noticed to make less errors in producing the simple item to item syntaxes as if the grammatical knowledge trickled down and covered the previously knowledge about the language systems.

When negotiating meaning psychological factors have been observed to affect the negotiation process, these factors ranged from stressed to anxiety they can be developed and investigated independently as a separate theme in negotiating meaning in a classroom setting.

The procedural transfers on the macro level in negotiating meaning using English were observed to diminish when learners gained more proficiency, learners appeared to have developed a tendency to rely on the pattern systems of English slowly moving away from the negative interferences of the systems of French and the systems of the low variety of Arabic. This could be due to the prolonged contact between the subjects and the target language that lead them to gain familiarity and awareness of the grammar in the target language it could also be caused the learners willingness to improve their proficiency that acted as a catalyst in breaking away from the over reliance on the previously acquired languages.

Lexical transfers grew more complex when the learners' proficiency level developed, the subjects became more critical in employing transfers this can explain the drop in the negotiations at certain stages of the observation.

The critical lexical transfer corresponded with the learners' new tendency to be selective when transferring concepts from their mother tongue or from L2, subject one, four, ten and seven seemed to develop faster in terms of mastering negotiating meaning with few errors, their competences seemed to be explained by their proficiency in French and how they invested their underlying knowledge in learning the target language. The training for them was more successful in terms of being able to communicate discuss and negotiate concepts using English alone.

Phonological interferences were noticed to be predominantly transferred from French and Arabic (L) to English when negotiating meaning as most students used the speaking patterns in the variety they use in the oral communication. These interferences can be addressed by using a contrastive analysis of learning English in an Algerian setting this can determine the errors in the speaking patterns and from that teachers can develop a method that would allow them to overcome these negative interferences.

Observation of Negotiations Using Arabic (L): Frequency and Rate Analysis

Due to the large distance between Arabic and English the number of lexical cross linguistic interferences was limited except for few occasions where the transfers happened between French calque within the low variety of the Arabic spoken in Algeria and English, however since most learners were noticed translating the communication while trying to negotiate meaning directly from their MT to the target language incidents of pragmatic and procedural transfers were noticed. These transfers usually employed the cultural

referencing as way to understand the pragmatics within target language while procedural transfers were syntactic in their nature as learners used the patterns found in the Algerian variety in communicating the inquiry in English. Negative phonological interferences after using the low variety when negotiating meaning were recorded as some students tended to pronounce “T” as “ط” (tʰ) when switching from Arabic to English. The rate of using the low variety in negotiating meaning were affected by the following factors that included the nature of the subject being discussed and their underlying knowledge about it, the accessibility and difficulty of presented concepts, alongside the learners’ incentives and motivations in understanding the negotiated appellations.

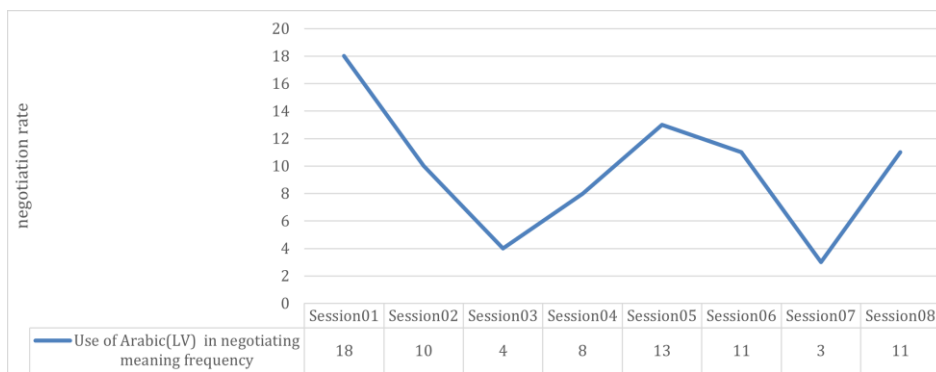


Fig.1: Negotiation of meaning using Arabic Language

Observation of Negotiations using High Arabic:

Direct Translation Strategies Observation data showed many learners directly translating between their L1 and English during negotiations. This led to pragmatic and procedural transfers employing cultural referencing and syntactic patterns from learners’ L1 varieties.

Factors Influencing L1 Use. The rate of using learners’ L1 varieties was influenced by discussion topics, underlying knowledge, and accessibility of concepts. Classical Arabic Use Classical Arabic was rarely observed but was used to discuss abstract concepts difficult to express in other varieties due to lexical limitations. An example debated the meaning of life in Classical Arabic. Few lexical transfers occurred between Arabic and English due to linguistic distance. Some phonological interferences were noted in English pronunciation.

Pragmatic Transfers and Culture Associating religious concepts like “God” with the Arabic word “Allah” showed pragmatic transfers. Overall, data interpretation aims to understand how negotiation strategies interconnect with cross-linguistic influences from learners’ language repertoires and socio-cultural backgrounds in EFL meaning

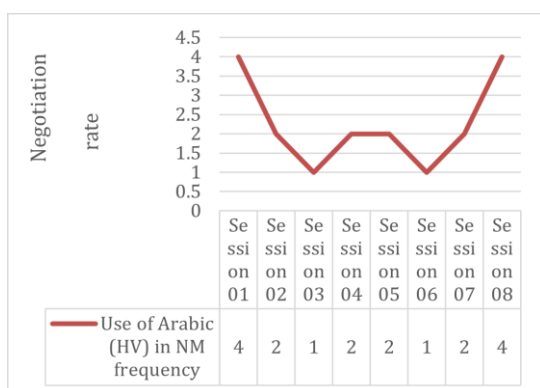


Fig2.Negotiation of Meaning using Arabic H

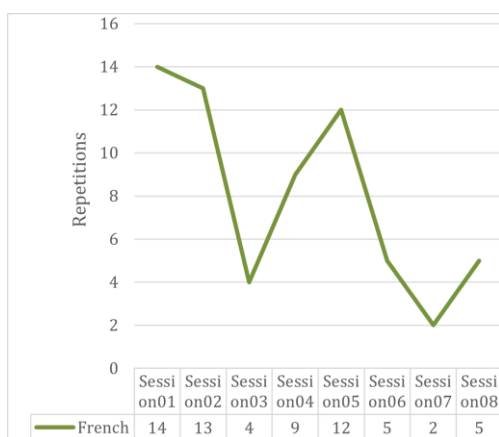
Observation of Negotiations Using French: Frequency and Rate Analysis:

The role of French Proficiency Learners proficient in French were better able to positively transfer cognates and deduce topic meanings due to the close linguistic relationship between French and English. Relating concepts to L2 French allowed some to predict upcoming lesson topics, demonstrating positive cross-linguistic influence. French Use in Negotiations French was used on average 8 times per session, totaling 64 negotiations. It was primarily employed to clarify unfamiliar concepts not linked to learners’ L1s. Outcomes of French Mediation

Higher French users made fewer errors in English production and developed proficiency faster. Subject 10’s prediction of an “upcoming cruise ship” lesson from the French term “croisière” exemplifies how French facilitated negotiation and understanding of English topics. Influence on Acquisition This suggests positive transfer from L2 French to L3 English acquisition through their close linguistic relationship and language contact.

Some negative transfers occurred but were relatively infrequent compared to the overall benefits of L2 mediation observed.

In conclusion, findings consistently demonstrated that French proficiency positively mediated negotiation, transfer and development of English proficiency for these learners through cross-linguistic influences between the two languages.



Graph 3. Negotiation of Meaning using French

Observation of Negotiations using English: Frequency and Rate Analysis:

When negotiating in English, learners demonstrated lexical, pragmatic and procedural interference from their primary languages of Arabic and French. Dual impact of French mediation and interference was beneficial for vocabulary but also resulted in errors by applying grammatical rules from L2s. This duality reflects the complex interplay between languages. Concerning of the influence of prior instruction, some errors stemmed from over-reliance on simple English syntax taught earlier. However, it was difficult to isolate the precise source of errors between L1 interference and developing proficiency. Initial L1 understanding shapes output complex sentences seemed influenced by the patterns of learners’ L2s used to initially comprehend concepts. Example of Syntactic Transfer The utterance “this is the yours, take it” cohesively exemplifies French syntactic influence. Learners’ self-reports corroborate reliance on L2 structures when producing errors, connecting findings across data sources.

In summary, a cohesive analysis of cross-linguistic influences suggests French facilitated vocabulary while grammatical errors reflected negative transfer from L2 procedural and syntactic rules during English

negotiations requiring scaffold support.

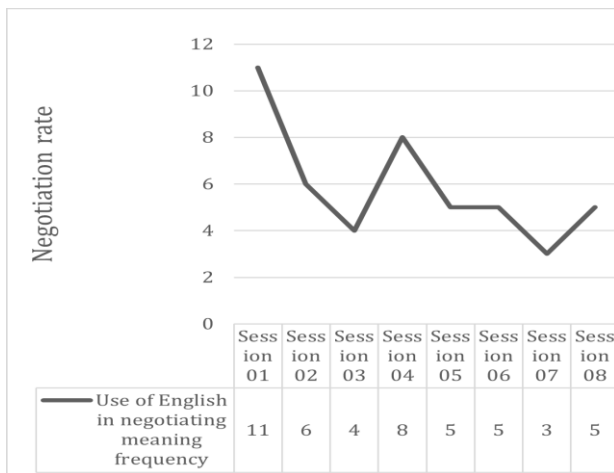


Fig 4. Negotiation of Meaning using English

Observation of Negotiations of Meaning: Frequency and Rate Analysis:

Over the course of eight observation sessions totaling sixteen hours, 204 negotiations of unfamiliar concepts were documented. Learners most frequently negotiated meanings using their primary languages: The Low Arabic variety was employed 75 times, followed by 64 negotiations in French. Standard Arabic was utilized 47 times, while the minority High Arabic variety saw only 18 negotiations.

As previously noted, code-switching between languages during negotiations was triggered by various linguistic and cultural factors. This analysis focuses on negotiations from the perspective of cross-linguistic transfers and cultural influences through learners’ assimilation and interpretation of new ideas.

The high frequency of negotiations in Low Arabic and French indicates learners tended to draw upon their existing linguistic resources when acquiring English. By negotiating unfamiliar concepts in their stronger languages, learners were able to leverage underlying vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and cultural schemas to facilitate comprehension of ideas in the target language. Learners’ preferred languages, particularly Low Arabic and French, served supported negotiations aiding the development of English proficiency.

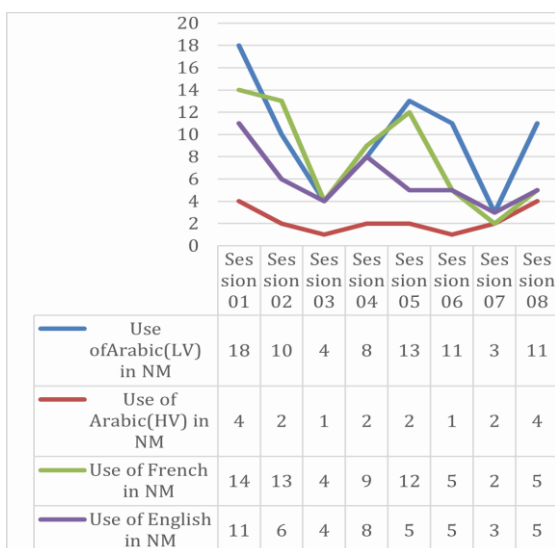


Fig 5. Negotiation of meaning using the four varieties

Analysis of the Interview

This section analyzes findings regarding the relationship between EFL learners' self-perceptions of English proficiency and their observed language learning behaviors and strategies. A survey first elicited learners' own assessments of their abilities.

1) Language Learners' Perceptions and Strategies:

The survey revealed that nearly half (44%) viewed their English skills as low in proficiency, while a third (33%) rated themselves as average. Only a minority (22%) felt their abilities were sufficient for basic communication. These self-reported perceptions provided insight into learners' mindsets entering the study. Observations of negotiation sessions then allowed comparing learners' perceptions with their actual displayed strategies. A clear pattern emerged where those rating their English higher were more likely to employ their L2 French skills to negotiate meanings. Qualitative analysis suggested these learners viewed French as a tool to transfer knowledge and build their developing English. They appeared to actively approach language learning as an interrelated process between connected languages.

Furthermore, learners with higher perceived proficiency were recorded practicing English both within and outside of class time. This finding indicates they were consciously reinforcing their skills through authentic target language use. The active practice of English negotiation, mediation through French, and extra-curricular usage demonstrates strategic learning behaviors. In contrast, learners reporting lower English self-efficacy were less familiar with French as a secondary language according to observation notes. They seemed less comfortable alternating between languages to strengthen proficiency. This suggests they may have lacked awareness of cross-linguistic mediation techniques as a learning approach. Overall, clear correlations emerged between EFL learners' self-perceived abilities and their observable language learning strategies. Those more confident in English skills engaged more proactively with both French and English transfer. Learners reporting lower proficiency appeared less familiar with such cross-linguistic mediation for development. This relationship provides meaningful insights into how mindsets shape learning processes.

2) The Impact of L2 Proficiency on L3 Acquisition:

This element examined how proficiency in a second language (L2) impacts the acquisition of English as a third language (L3). It found that the learners demonstrated varying levels of proficiency in their L2 of French or other languages such as Spanish. A direct positive relationship was observed between L2 proficiency and the ability to learn English – those with higher L2 proficiency, such as the fluent Spanish speaker, showed greater success acquiring English concepts and vocabulary. This indicates L2 proficiency plays a pivotal role in facilitating L3 acquisition. When negotiating meanings between languages, the highly proficient Spanish speaker appeared more likely to make productive connections between cognates and grammatical structures in a way that supported their English learning, with few observed instances of negative transfers that could hinder progress.

In general, learners with higher L2 abilities, such as being able to successfully apply linguistic rules and transfer understandings between closely related languages, demonstrated an enhanced capacity to integrate their existing language knowledge to facilitate English acquisition with minimal errors. This underscores the significance of a solid L2 foundation – it allows learners to leverage their existing language skills to incorporate new languages like English through beneficial transfers rather than difficulties from negative transfers.

3) Language Preferences and Negotiation of Concepts:

This section examined how learners' self-reported language preferences from a survey correlate with their

ability to negotiate unfamiliar concepts in English as a target language. The survey found those preferring the higher-proficiency Arabic dialect (H) reported being better equipped to relate concepts without direct translations in their dialect compared to those preferring the lower-proficiency Arabic dialect (L), who indicated having fewer opportunities to develop English competency. The four learners preferring French associated cognates between the closely-related French and English on the survey aids growth of their language skills.

Additionally, those claiming an English preference on the survey were informally observed practicing negotiations of meaning in English with peers during breaks, further cultivating skills in the target language. In summary, a preference for a language more similar to English, such as French, as indicated on the survey facilitated making connections between cognates and developing target language competency versus a less similar preference like the lower-proficiency Arabic dialect. One's self-reported linguistic preferences from the survey thus correlated with their perceived capacity to negotiate unfamiliar concepts in English.

4) The Role of Language in Conceptualization and Understanding:

Language plays a pivotal role in how we conceptualize and understand the world. This analysis examines whether one's preferred language acts as a facilitating agent or barrier in the learning process. Evidence from the provided information suggests learners' preferred language does impact their ability to negotiate meaning and acquire new concepts. All learners claimed their chosen language helped them better comprehend debated expressions.

Naturally, concepts can be interpreted differently depending on one's underlying linguistic knowledge. The preferred language variety was seen to affect how learners conceived of discussed utterances, as each language embeds elements of its associated culture. As language both conveys and is shaped by culture, inspecting learners' understandings revealed varied interpretations of the same concept reflecting their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Those preferring languages more closely related to the target language, such as French speakers, were better equipped to relate new ideas to prior knowledge through associations between cognates.

On the other hand, learners preferring languages less similar, like a lower proficiency Arabic dialect, encountered more difficulties in negotiation. The evidence indicates one's preferred language does serve as either a facilitating agent or barrier in the learning process. By embedding aspects of culture, it impacts how learners conceptualize discussions and the interpretations they bring. Those with preferences closer linguistically and culturally to the target language benefit from stronger concept associations, while more distant preferences may introduce additional challenges. Overall, the analysis suggests the language one prefers to use during learning can significantly shape comprehension and acquisition of new concepts.

5) Language Preference and Negotiation Abilities:

Language preference is a complex phenomenon shaped by an individual's linguistic experiences and cultural background. This analysis seeks to understand the relationship between the preferences learners described and their actual abilities when negotiating meaning in English. While reported preferences provided insight, deeper examination revealed lingering influences that complicated independent target language use. The study aimed to gain qualitative self-reports on language capacity to organize individual responses. However, statistical analysis was not possible due to each learner representing a unique case. By categorizing answers into a yes/no table, common themes could be identified, such as varying perceptions of ability based on proficiency. This approach effectively synthesized diverse opinions regarding skills development over time. While preferences were described, further scrutiny indicated communications remained embedded in native frameworks.

When deconstructing responses, it became apparent most could not fully dissociate from prior languages due to strong first language and cultural influences. Some learners even felt their chosen processing languages hindered independent negotiations without negative transfers. This suggested reported preferences did not necessarily correlate with actual independence in the target language. The specific causes of such lingering interference remained ambiguous, leaving unanswered if age, proficiency, or other factors interfered most. More research is needed to clarify the relationship between stated inclinations and capacities for autonomous English use free from first language mediation. The study was limited in fully analyzing the preference construct due to each learner's uniqueness preventing generalizable conclusions. In conclusion, language learners' experiences are shaped by complex interplay between individual backgrounds and linguistic repertoires. While preferences provide insight, true independence involves overcoming powerful first language influences. Greater understanding of how these factors intersect is still needed to comprehend reported language abilities during negotiations of meaning.

6) Cultural Familiarity in Language Negotiation:

Cultural familiarity plays an important role in how learners negotiate unfamiliar concepts in a new language. This study observed learners discussing Western topics in English, finding those with direct cultural exposure demonstrated stronger engagement and comprehension compared to their less experienced peers. Two learners lacking any familiarity with Western culture were rarely seen actively taking part in negotiations. Their apparent lack of cultural schema to connect new ideas to appeared to hinder meaningful participation. However, other participants displayed varying degrees of prior knowledge gained through diverse avenues. One student who lived in France possessed immersive cultural understanding beyond superficial levels. Their embedded experiences living abroad instilled complex cultural learning difficult to attain otherwise. Others developed interest and knowledge through literary studies of French and Spanish works, facilitating topic relatability. Their academic specializations cultivated familiarity with cultural references and themes encountered.

Moreover, even general perceptions from media like TV and music seemed to benefit some learners by providing initial cultural exposure that peers entirely lacking did not have. This appeared to influence their ability to engage with discussions centered around Western cultural norms and traditions. In summary, direct experiences living as a cultural insider or indirect learning through literary interests and academic focus areas enhanced familiarity with the target language culture. This cultural schema supported learners' negotiations by giving contextual relevance to relate unfamiliar concepts. Those without any prior cultural contact struggled engaging meaningfully. Overall, the findings suggest cultural exposure through diverse avenues positively impacts language discussions by providing essential cultural learning that schema-based understanding relies on. The more immersed the experience, the stronger the scaffolding gained to comprehend new ideas in context.

7) Linguistic Proficiency and Conceptualization:

The ability to associate new concepts with one's native language plays an important role in negotiating meaning in a foreign tongue. As indicated in the responses, those more proficient in languages and knowledgeable about foreign cultures exhibited sophisticated thought when conceptualizing cultural ideas through mother tongue. They engaged actively in discussions. In contrast, two learners who struggled making connections to their first language tended to rely on Arabic dialects closer to their own background rather than targeting English. Similarly, the less proficient French speaker with little intercultural exposure negotiated meanings using familiar languages instead of taking risks in the L2. This suggests linguistic and cultural familiarity influences strategy selection. Paragraph 3: Responses also provided insights into retention abilities. For most, negotiations supported memorization through repetition and practice over time.

Prior familiarity with concepts in another language aided recall.

However, one required frequent revision. Common strategies included repetition, daily usage, writing concepts, and building on existing skills. Learners also displayed preferences in negotiating cultural references. Some aimed for impartial understanding while others selected approaches fitting their socialization, such as potential negative views of foreign cultures. Associations and projections from their own backgrounds guided interpretations. Translation, cultural linking, and analogizing between languages optimized understanding.

In conclusion, learners drew on diverse strategies when grappling with culture-embedded ideas, reflecting the impact of their social and linguistic backgrounds. Comfort associating concepts with one's mother tongue and cultural knowledge facilitated active participation and complex thought. Those less familiar relied more on familiar languages and required support like translation. Individual factors influenced approach selection and retention abilities.

Quasi-Experimental Exploration of Negotiation Strategies and Language Transfers in English Language Learners' Proficiency Development"

This quasi-experimental study observed 12 English language learners negotiating meaning through task-based activities using authentic materials. Learners represented a range of first language backgrounds and proficiency levels in English and other languages. They participated in weekly one-hour sessions in 6 months that incorporated tasks simulating real-life scenarios.

Data was collected through observations of learner interactions during tasks, recordings, and analyses of language samples. Negotiations were analyzed to identify strategies used and transfers occurring from other languages. Comparisons were made between learners based on factors like L1, L2 proficiency, cultural exposure, and time spent in the study. This experimental design allowed for a nuanced examination of how negotiation skills and reliance on transfers evolved as proficiency developed. Initially, learners struggled relating new concepts without prior knowledge, requiring full negotiations. However, prolonged exposure developing awareness of English systems through tasks decreased errors in simple syntax production over time. Grammatical knowledge transferred across languages. Certain individuals like Subjects 1, 4, 10 and 7 appeared to negotiate more successfully, likely due to higher French proficiency and effective use of underlying linguistic resources.

As the study progressed, learners drew less on their L1/L2 systems and more on developing understandings of English. Lexical transfers grew more sophisticated, and procedural transfers diminished. Cultural references were negotiated using strategies like association-making.

This quasi-experimental research design provided a comprehensive framework for analyzing how negotiation strategies and reliance on transfers change as proficiency increases through prolonged exposure to meaningful, contextualized input. The insights have implications for optimizing instructional methods and curricula design in various learning contexts. Continued experimental studies could further validate these findings.

Discussion

Findings of this study provide valuable insights into the processes of negotiation and transfer that occur during foreign language learning. Some key points for discussion include:

Linguistic Distance – The degree of distance between the L1/L2s and the target language appears to impact the difficulty of negotiation and reliance on transfers. More closely related languages facilitated easier

negotiation with French, while Arabic introduced greater challenges due to larger differences from English.

Developing Competence – As learners' competence in the target language systems increased over time, they were able to negotiate meanings independently rather than relying on transfers. This suggests internalization of patterns can reduce cross-linguistic interference.

Individual Differences – Factors like other language proficiency played a role, with French skills strengthening negotiation abilities. Future research should examine how additional learner variables influence the process.

Pedagogical Implications – The findings provide guidance for language teaching, such as employing negotiation activities, leveraging cognate awareness, addressing phonological errors, and considering individual backgrounds. **Additional Research** – Further studies with larger and more diverse samples could help generalize the findings. Longitudinal designs would offer insight into developmental changes over time. More variables should be examined to deepen understanding of the complex interplay during negotiation.

In conclusion, this research contributes to our knowledge of the dynamic mechanisms by which foreign language learning occurs through negotiation and strategic use of linguistic resources. While limitations exist, the insights can help optimize pedagogy and inform additional investigation of this important topic.

CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that negotiating unfamiliar concepts triggers transfers from existing linguistic knowledge to fill gaps. Lexical, procedural, pragmatic and phonological transfers occurred to varying degrees, with both positive and negative influences observed. Negotiation between closely related languages like French-English facilitated understanding with minimal errors, however reliance on the more distantly related Arabic introduced greater challenges due to larger linguistic and cultural differences to English. Lexical transfers not only filled gaps but allowed critical assessment of vocabulary through comparison of cognates, aiding retention of new concepts, while pragmatic transfers sometimes distorted meanings when connecting to personal cultural norms.

Over time, learners negotiated meanings independently with fewer transfers as awareness of target language systems developed, with stronger proficiency in a language like French facilitating this process. Psychological factors like anxiety also impacted some learners' abilities, warranting separate investigation, while phonological transfers primarily originated from French and Arabic speech patterns.

Overall, negotiation bridged gaps in competence and knowledge through discussions reinforcing existing resources, with cultural and linguistic backgrounds shaping interpretations depending on source language pragmatics. Meanings are constructed within specific languages, so other language pragmatics could affect encoding/decoding, however critical thinking helped learners optimize positive transfers and overcome reliance on simplicity. Insights from this ecological study of negotiation characteristics and transfers could inform approaches to leverage these processes to enhance foreign language acquisition, with additional factors also potentially influencing the process and deserving further exploration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this study: Design authentic tasks simulating real-world scenarios to develop pragmatic competencies through cultural transfers from learners' backgrounds while incorporating negotiation activities that leverage transfers between closely related languages like French and English to minimize errors when introducing new concepts by allowing learners

to draw meaningful connections to existing linguistic resources. Provide contrastive analysis of the target language compared to languages such as French, English and Arabic(L) that share phonological systems to help identify error-prone areas and guide focused instruction aiming to reduce negative transfers.

Then, Encouraging critical thinking through activities comparing cognates and analyzing vocabulary gaps in order to optimize lexical transfers and reinforce retention of new terms. Raise awareness of differences in language pragmatics to avoid distortions from pragmatic transfers by explicitly teaching socio-cultural meanings to support accurate encoding and decoding.

One is also should consider individual learner differences such as other language proficiencies that influence the negotiation process and differentiate instruction accordingly. Conduct further research on additional factors influencing negotiation and transfers to enhance understanding of this complex foreign language learning mechanism. Leverage the ecological insights from this study to inform pedagogical approaches that strategically employ negotiation and transfers through prolonged exposure to the target language via varied negotiation activities helping to internalize patterns and diminish reliance on other language systems over time.

REFERENCES

1. Beenstock, M., Chiswick, B. R., & Repetto, G. L. (2001). The effect of linguistic distance and country of origin on immigrant language skills: Application to Israel. *International Migration*.
2. Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
3. Canagarajah, S. (2007). *Lingua franca English, multilingual communities, and language acquisition*. The modern language journal.
4. Cook, G. (2015). *Language play, language learning: Exploring second language learning environments*. Oxford University Press.
5. Cook, J. (2015). *Negotiation for meaning and feedback among language learners*. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(2), 250.
6. Coulthard, M. (2014). *Language in Education: An Introduction*. Routledge.
7. Dant, T. (1999). *Material culture in the social world*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
8. Holliday, A., Hyde, M., & Kullman, J. (2021). *Intercultural communication: An advanced resource book for students*.
9. Jarvis, S., & Odlin, T. (2000). *Morphological type, spatial reference, and language transfer*. *Studies in second language acquisition*, 22(4), 535-556.
10. Jessner, U. (1999). *Crosslinguistic interference in second language acquisition: A study of adult Algerian learners of English*. Peter Lang
11. Jessner, U. (1999). *Metalinguistic awareness in multilinguals: Cognitive aspects of third language learning*. *Language Awareness*. [DOI: 10.1080/09658416.1999.9976695]
12. Kachru, Y., & Smith, L. E. (2008). *Cultures, contexts, and world Englishes*.
13. Karmiloff-Smith, A. (1981). *A Functional Approach to Child Language: A Study of Determiners and Reference (Vol. 24)*. Cambridge University Press.
14. Kellerman, E. (1995). *Crosslinguistic influence: Transfer to nowhere*. *Annual review of applied linguistics*, 15, 125-150.
15. Mehlhorn, G. (2007). *From Russian to Polish: Positive transfer in third language acquisition*. In *16th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, Saarbrücken (Vol. 17451748)*.
16. Odlin, T. (1989). *Language Transfer: Cross-linguistic Influence in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press.
17. Otwinowska, A. (2015). *Cognate vocabulary in language acquisition and use*. *Multilingual Matters*.
18. Pavlenko, A., & Blackledge, A. (2004). *Introduction: New theoretical approaches to the study of negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*.

19. Ringbom, H. (1987). *The role of the first language in foreign language learning (Vol. 34)*. Multilingual Matters Limited.
20. Ruzhekova-Rogozherova, B. (2014). *Contrastive Teaching, Comparative Teaching and Language Awareness Enhancement. Analysis of a Contrastive and Comparative Teaching Linguistic Experiment*.
21. Rymes, B. (2015). *Classroom discourse analysis: A tool for critical reflection*.