

# A Review of Research on Third Language Acquisition(TLA), Focusing on Multilingualism

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Kim, Jeung Deok. A Review of Research on TLA and Multilingualism. *The New Studies of English Language & Literature* 69 (2018): 83-102. In spite of the increased interest in third language acquisition (TLA) in recent years, the field is still at the beginning stage. Considering the more interconnected society and the need for learning additional languages, there is an urgent need for more research into third language learning process or multilingual acquisition process. The purpose of this current study is to review existing empirical research on multilingual acquisition, focusing on whether monolinguals or bilinguals/multilinguals show differences in the multilingual acquisition processes. Although contradictory results of these empirical studies reveal the complexity of TLA, the current study's review of TLA studies suggest two points to be considered in the third language learning process: the need for precisely defining bilingual-multilingual and for considering variables of typological similarity, language proficiency and age. However, the limited settings of the studies constrain their conclusions and limitations, thus requiring further studies in other contexts and backgrounds. (Sookmyung Women's University)

**Key words:** third language acquisition (TLA), bilingualism, multilingualism, second language acquisition (SLA), multilingual

## I. Introduction

The study of the interactions and influences across different languages has facilitated important research on second language acquisition (SLA). SLA studies have traditionally been conducted from a cognitive perspective, focusing on how an individual cognitively learns a second language (Lee, 2017). It was only after the 20th century that contextual aspects were included and considered in the SLA process (Firth & Wagner, 1997). In a word, factors not only related to an individual's

cognitive perspective, but also to the individual's social, contextual, sociocultural, psychological, and biological perspectives were regarded as significant in the second language learning process (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Lantolf, 2000; Swain & Deters, 2007; Zuengler & Cole, 2005; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). From this situation, as Lourdes Ortega (2010) terms it, "a bilingual turn" has now expanded the focus of SLA research into third language acquisition (TLA).

TLA was originally regarded as a part of the SLA field because it was simply understood as adding one more language onto SLA (Cenoz, 2000; Hammarberg, 2001; Del Puerto, 2007). However, it might just as easily be assumed that third language learning processes should include both the learner's first and second languages, as well as contextual factors related to each language, just as second language learning processes were beginning to consider both an individual's cognitive perspective in addition to contextual factors. In a word, TLA is a more complex and diverse process, and thus should be differentiated from SLA (Cenoz, 2000, 2003; Herdina & Jessner, 2000).

However, few empirical studies have been conducted in this field (Cenoz, Hufeisen, & Jessner, 2001). This is not surprising given that the first journal in the TLA field was launched in only 2004 (Mark & Hufeisen, 2004). Jessner (2008) considers the foci of L3 to be "multilingual vs. monolingual norms in multilingual contexts, language status and attitudes towards multilingualism, the complexity of L3 learning, effects of bilingualism on additional language learning, multilingual learning strategies, cross-linguistic influence, the complexity of multilingual education and multilingual schooling in different linguistic contexts" (as cited in Spellerberg, 2011, p. 157). More succinctly, TLA research can be summed up in two trends: studies on multilingualism and studies on the variables affecting the TLA process. While research on multilingualism is likely to focus on how the additional languages

learned affect further language learning, studies on TLA tend to focus on what kinds of variables possibly affect further language learning processes (Kim, 2017). The goal of the present study is to review TLA studies on multilingualism, focusing on whether and how previously learned languages affect further language learning. In particular, this research investigates the possible cognitive, lexical, pragmatic and morphological differences in the process of multilingual acquisition between monolinguals and bilinguals/multilinguals, as well as their performance on reading comprehension tasks. In today's globalized and inter-connected society, where the ability to acquire additional languages beyond one's first or second language is a highly regarded asset, the research that this study aims to summarize is especially urgent.

## **II. Defining Multilingual Acquisition and Research on Multilingualism**

On one hand, there are just two cases of SLA: learning L2 after L1 was acquired or learning L2 while learning L1 simultaneously. On the other hand, four cases of multilingual acquisition are possible in TLA, as Cenoz (2000) suggests:

1. L1 -> L2 -> L3
2. L1-> Lx/Ly
3. Lx/Ly -> L3
4. Lx/ Ly/ Lz

(Cenoz, 2000, p. 40)

According to Cenoz (2000), multilingual acquisition differs whether the acquisition is occurring consecutively or simultaneously. As shown above, the first case (1) lays out the consecutive acquisition of L1, L2, and L3

while the last case (4) shows the simultaneous acquisition of L1, L2, and L3. On the other hand, the second case (2) assumes the simultaneous acquisition of L2 and L3 after L1 acquisition, whereas the third case (3) supposes the simultaneous acquisition of L1 and L2 followed by L3 acquisition. Studies that focus on bilingualism/multilingualism are more interested in the differences between monolinguals and bilinguals/multilinguals. Thus, among Cenoz's (2003) four possibilities of TLA, the cases usually included in bilingualism/multilingualism studies belong to two categories: those learning three languages consecutively (1), and those learning L3 after acquiring two languages simultaneously (3). Next, through a survey of empirical studies, this study will explore the possible differences in L3 acquisition between monolinguals and bilinguals/multilinguals who fit these cases.

## **2.1 Differences between bilinguals and monolinguals regarding L3 acquisition**

### **2.1.1 Cognitive learning**

The cognitive aspect of language learning is concerned with "how to learn to learn a language" (Jessner, 1999, p. 201). From the cognitive viewpoint, bilingualism was emphasized as a negative influence on cognitively learning further languages before 1960. However, bilingualism has since been considered both a negative and positive influence on an individual's cognitive development (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994). In other words, perceptions toward how bilingualism affects cognitive development have changed since 1960. Consequently, there are many studies examining the cognitive advantages or disadvantages bilinguals obtain in learning to learn a language compared to their monolingual peers, as seen Cenoz and Valencia's (1994) and Sanz' (2000) studies.

Cenoz and Valencia (1994) investigated the influence of bilingualism

on learning the L3 of English in the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain). Basque is a language used in Spain and France. Even though the language was not publicly used in the area from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) to 1978, when “the Spanish Constitution ... recovered political autonomy,” the language is still used in the area and is currently used as a public language and as an instruction language in the Basque Autonomous Community (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994, p. 197). In spite of its prevalent use, it is undeniable that Spanish is the main language in the area. Therefore, bilingualism has been an issue in the area. Students who use Basque as an instruction language are considered bilinguals in this study because of the dominant status of Spanish. On the other hand, students getting instruction in Spanish are considered monolinguals. By controlling for factors other than bilingualism, English language achievement tests were conducted among 320 students (both bilinguals and monolinguals), covering four language skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Bilinguals outperformed monolinguals on the tests, thus demonstrating bilingualism’s positive influence on L3 learning. Other variables, such as intelligence, age, motivation, and language exposure, also independently played important roles in predicting English test results.

Another study examining the cognitive influence of bilingualism was Sanz’s (2000) study, which criticized Cenoz and Valencia’s (1994) study in that it did not distinguish between oral and written proficiency, nor between bilingualism and biliteracy. In Cenoz and Valencia’s study, all the bilingual students were not only proficient in L2 but also biliterate. Therefore, Sanz (2000) claimed that what caused the positive results on their English tests might not be bilingualism itself, but instead general language proficiency and biliteracy. In this sense, Sanz suggested distinguishing bilingualism from biliteracy. In Sanz’s (2000) study, the participants were all biliterate students, as in Cenoz and Valencia’s study.

Two private high schools in northern Spain were included in the study. From the schools, 124 bilinguals and 77 monolinguals living in a monolingual area were recruited and took English tests. Independent variables included were SES, age, gender, intelligence, exposure to English, motivation to learn English, and attitudes toward the British and U-S populations, as well their respective varieties of English. The results were consistent with Cenoz and Valencia's (1994) result – bilinguals again outperformed monolinguals in terms of their general proficiency in L3 English. Moreover, motivation and exposure had also a positive influence in predicting L3 test results, while intelligence and age did not have any influence. It might be said that this study replicated Cenoz and Valencia's (1994) results, but without including the instruction languages.

#### **2.1.1.1 Metalinguistic awareness**

Among the various aspects of the cognitive perspective, metalinguistic awareness is one frequently included in L3 studies. It refers to the ability “to focus on linguistic form and to switch focus between form and meaning” (Jessner, 2008, p. 277). Those who are metalinguistically aware are considered to develop “(a) divergent and creative thinking (e.g., wider variety of associations, original ideas); (b) interactional and/or pragmatic competence (cultural theorems of greeting, thanking, etc.); (c) communicative sensitivity and flexibility (language mode); and (d) translation skills that are considered a natural trait in the majority of multilinguals” (Jessner, 2008, p. 277). The more languages learners know, the more metalinguistic awareness they might have. In this sense, Thomas (1988) tried to examine the influence of metalinguistic awareness among bilinguals and monolinguals.

Thomas (1988) compared native English speakers with Spanish/English

bilinguals in learning French as an L3 in the United States. Participants—16 bilinguals and 10 monolinguals—were given a French vocabulary test, grammar test, and composition test. Outside factors were controlled for, such as socio-economic status, amount of exposure to French, difference in teachers, teaching methods, textbooks, and etc. The results were consistent with other studies that found bilingualism a positive influence on L3 acquisition. In French tests, bilinguals performed significantly better than their monolingual peers. In particular, bilinguals with formal training in L1 and L2 (biliterate bilinguals) outperformed bilinguals without formal training (monoliterate bilinguals) on the grammar test. This fact shows the significance of Sanz's (2000) concept of biliteracy. On the vocabulary test, there was no difference between the groups with or without formal training. When analyzing composition, biliterate bilinguals tended to produce less structural errors than monoliterate bilinguals and monolinguals. Thomas (1988) pointed out that different levels of metalinguistic awareness produced different results among these three groups, and thus metalinguistic awareness, or “student’s conscious knowledge of the rules and forms of language,” facilitated students’ performance (Thomas, 1988, p. 236). In other words, if students have conscious knowledge of more than one language, the more they are metalinguistic aware, thus facilitating L3 acquisition.

### **2.1.2 Lexical learning**

Another field of bilingualism studies concerns bilingualism’s impact on lexical learning. Keshavarz and Astaneh (2004) experimented with three groups in order to determine whether bilinguals performed better than monolinguals or not. Using a set of bilingual or monolingual participants who had similar demographic data, Keshavarz and Astaneh administered an L3 English vocabulary test, concluding that compared to

monolingualism, bilingualism was more effective for and gave individual more advantages with L3 acquisition. The researchers also indicated that when bilingual people learn their L1 and L2 orally and academically, they performed better than bilinguals who could only speak L1. The results confirmed Keshavarz and Astaneh's hypothesis that bilingualism positively affected L3 acquisition, especially vocabulary, and that the performance of bilinguals with oral and academic proficiency in L1 and L2 stood out in particular. The results concerning the positive influence of biliteracy in L1 and L2 stood out in particular. The results concerning the positive influence of biliteracy in L1 and L2 also supported Thomas' (1988) conclusions.

Klein (1995) was another researcher who examined the differences between monolingual and multilingual students concerning L3 acquisition, focusing on lexical learning and syntactic learning. In her experiment, she compared the different influences affecting language learning among monolingual and multilingual students, based primarily on "a Universal Grammar parameter-setting model of acquisition" (Klein, 1995, p. 419). In the model, it was assumed that regardless of how many times people set parameters, because of the existence of the innate language faculty (UG) and all the available parameters among monolinguals, their performance should not differ significantly from multilingual participants in acquiring target language structures, so long as other parameter-setting elements were equal. However, the rates of acquisition might be different depending on the degree of similarity between a previously learnt language and the target language parameter settings. With 15 native English speakers in the control group and an experimental group consisting of 17 monolingual and 15 multilingual students, Klein tested whether the multilingual students performed better than the monolingual students in acquiring lexical verbs and prepositional complements in "preposition-stranding constructions" (Klein, 1995, p.



450). She found that multilinguals performed better than monolinguals in learning other languages, particularly lexical learning, mapping, and setting parameters.

### **2.1.3 Pragmatic learning**

Concerning the advantages of bilinguals over monolinguals in language learning, very little research has been conducted in the area of pragmatic competence. In addition, there have been particularly few studies investigating beginners' pragmatic production. In this sense, Safont Jorda's (2003, 2005) and Koike and Palmiere's (2011) studies can provide insightful information as to how bilinguals show different tendencies in learning L3 pragmatics.

Safont Jorda (2003) examined the advantages of bilinguals in pragmatic production and metapragmatic awareness, especially through the form of request acts. Before the study, he defined pragmatic competence as "a constituent of the global construct of communicative competence," with reference to Bachman (1990) (as cited in Safont Jorda, 2003, p. 49). Both concepts of pragmatic competence and metapragmatic awareness allow individuals to use language appropriately in certain contexts. Based on these concepts, Safont Jorda (2003) considered how speakers' intentions were represented in the produced linguistic realizations, or pragmatic productions. One hundred sixty female undergraduate students, taking English courses as an L3, were chosen for this study. About 40% of participants attended bilingual programs, and the other 60% of participants attended monolingual programs. While bilinguals regarded Catalan as their mother tongue and Castilian as a L2, monolinguals regarded Castilian as their L1 and had never learnt or used Catalan. A Discourse Evaluation Test (DET), open Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and open role-play task were conducted in order to investigate

how participants reacted to certain situations. The results revealed that when facing recognition of pragmatic failure, bilinguals outperformed monolinguals by suggesting further alternatives or by justifying their comments. In addition, bilinguals could select more appropriate words for certain situations. The differences between monolinguals and bilinguals were also statistically significant and demonstrated a higher metapragmatic awareness among bilinguals over monolinguals as a facilitator in L3 acquisition.

In further research, Safont Jorda (2005) focused again on the pragmatic aspects of bilingualism and monolingualism when learning English as an L3 in the Valencian community in Spain, where the L1 is Catalan and the L2 is Castilian. Like his previous study (2003), this study also examined request acts, specifically focusing on the use of modifiers (“peripheral mitigation devices”). In the previous study, bilinguals used conventionally indirect forms of request more often than monolinguals when making requests (Safont Jorda, 2003). In this following study, Safont Jorda (2005) examined whether monolinguals’ use of modifications would be different from bilinguals’. There are two types of modifications; “internal modification of the request head (e.g. Could you possibly do pick me up after lunch?)” and “modifying the core externally (e.g. Could you do me a favour? I was wondering whether you could pick me up after lunch?)” (Safont Jorda, 2005, p. 89). An open role-play task of 10 prompts and an open DCT of 20 prompts were conducted with the same 160 female undergraduate students. The results indicated that bilinguals used many more modifiers and more diverse modifiers than their monolingual peers. When it comes to the number of modifiers used, intermediate learners used more than beginners. The results again demonstrated that bilinguals have advantages regarding the pragmatic aspects of language learning. Although Safont Jorda’s (2003, 2005) studies had some limitations, only targeting female students and focusing on a

specific type of language act, they could function as a bridge to further pragmatic research.

Similar to Safont Jorda's (2003, 2005) studies, Koike and Palmiere (2011) investigated the request speech act among Spanish-speaking students learning L3 Portuguese, paying special attention to how L1 or L2 pragmatic expressions are transferred into the L3. In a previous study, Koike and Flanzer (2004) examined students' pragmatic knowledge transfer from their L1 (English or Spanish) or L2 (Spanish) to Portuguese (L3) through a survey. These twenty-seven Portuguese learners revealed a relationship between Spanish bilingual culture and certain speech acts, such as vocatives, which enabling Native Spanish Heritage speakers to formulate specific forms more quickly. While this previous study focused on the transfer of pragmatic knowledge in the written modality, the more recent study focused on investigating the transfer of pragmatic knowledge in the oral modality. By comparing the results of both studies, Koike and Palmiere (2011) further examine the L3 pragmatic expression of requests in the oral and written modalities. The results reveal that learners have more difficulties in the written modality, contradicting the results of Safont Jorda (2005), in which written tasks elicit the use of more modifiers than oral tasks.

This research also presents clear evidence of transfer from previously acquired languages to newly learned ones. Native English speaking (NES) Portuguese learners frequently use "please" and "thank you" when requesting water. Also, Native Spanish Heritage speaking (NSH) Portuguese learners frequently use interrogative requests. Furthermore, the results clearly show that the more similar the previous language is to L3, regardless of whether it is L1 or L2, the more influence it has on the early stages of L3 learning. However, the study has a limitation in the task itself. It begins with the idea that there are only few studies examining beginners' pragmatic production. Even though the study targets

those at the beginner level and focuses on oral pragmatic production, in order to complete the task, the participants must have some reading ability in the L3. In other words, although measuring oral pragmatic production, the task requires reading ability-in the L3 that may be beyond the beginner level.

#### **2.1.4 Morphology learning**

Regarding morphological L3 acquisition, Leung (2006) explored patterns in how bilinguals and monolinguals learn regular and irregular forms of the past tense in Spanish as L2 or L3. Leung (2006) investigated the proficiency level of L2 as a factor affecting L3 acquisition. This study is based on the Dual Mechanism Model (DMM), in which “morphologically regular verbs (‘regulars’) are rule-based whereas morphologically irregular verbs (‘irregulars’) are listed individually in the mental lexicon” (Leung, 2006, p. 28). With the concept of DMM, this study focused on whether L1, L2, and L3 Spanish speakers showed similar patterns in acquiring Spanish verb morphology. Ten Chinese/English bilinguals and nine monolingual English native speakers were compared with 13 Spanish native speakers. The results showed that all three groups – Spanish native speakers, L2 Spanish learners, and L3 Spanish learners – were well aware of high frequency regular verbs. Spanish native speakers were even well aware of medium frequency regular verbs as well. Regarding irregular verbs, however, all Spanish learners demonstrated low accuracy rates, even regarding high and medium frequency irregular verbs, not to mention the low frequency irregular verbs. In short, the frequency of regular verbs and the irregular features of verbs influenced learners’ L3 acquisition.

However, there was not significant difference observed between monolinguals and bilinguals in learning the L3. It was thus assumed that

knowledge of English might have been causing the similar tendencies in both groups' awareness of Spanish past tense verbs. Therefore, an additional post-hoc study was conducted with 26 Chinese native speakers and 17 English native speakers with a written task concerning English verbs. Regardless of the status of English as an L1 or an L2, both groups displayed similar tendencies regarding the morphology of English verbs. In other words, an intermediate or advanced level of English proficiency caused these Chinese/English bilinguals to produce similar tendencies in morphological representation, like native English speakers. As a result, a morphological knowledge of English could explain why Chinese/English bilinguals and English monolinguals did not produce any differences in terms of a Spanish morphological representation task, indicating that English plays an important role in Spanish morphological acquisition. In the study, typologically similar languages were more influential in L3 acquisition than the question of mono/bilingualism.

### **2.1.5 Reading achievement**

Another area of research concerning bilingualism is the measurement of students' reading achievement. As shown in Van Gelderen et al.' (2003) and Modirkhamene's (2006) contradictory results, investigating the relationship between bilingualism, multilingualism and reading achievement is a very complicated process.

Van Gelderen et al.'s (2003) study began with the fact that many students had difficulties in following school curricula which were delivered in a language different from their home language. The authors examined how well bilinguals and monolinguals comprehended reading texts written in their L1, L2, or L3. Six variables were tested among 397 Dutch eight-grade students who indicated Dutch as their first or second language: Reading Proficiency, Vocabulary Knowledge, Grammatical Knowledge,

Metacognitive Knowledge, Speed of Lexical Access, and Speed of Sentence Comprehension. All the variables were tested in English or Dutch, except for Metacognitive Knowledge, which was only in Dutch. Reading Proficiency measured learners' general comprehension with multiple choice questions shown after short texts. Metacognitive Knowledge was collected through a questionnaire of 80 items, which asked participants' opinions about text characteristics and their reading/writing strategies with two possible answers: agree or do not agree. With the tests written in Dutch, the results contradicted those studies showing the advantages of bilingualism in learning languages. Monolingual Dutch students produced higher scores than bilingual peers in four out of five tests: Reading Proficiency, Vocabulary Knowledge, Grammatical Knowledge, and Speed of Sentence Comprehension. Except for the word recognition test, monolinguals outperformed bilingual peers. Similar results were also shown with the tests conducted in English, even though only two scores in Reading Proficiency and Sentence Verification were considered statistically significant. Except the word recognition test, monolinguals performed better than bilinguals, regardless if tests were conducted in Dutch or in English.

Further investigation was conducted in order to measure which variables influenced reading comprehension and how much those variables explained the level of reading comprehension. When measuring the correlation between reading comprehension and other independent variables, there were positive correlations between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge, grammatical knowledge and metacognitive knowledge with tests in Dutch. The regression weights of vocabulary knowledge and grammar knowledge showed a significant 'unique' contribution of those variables to reading comprehension. Only the speed of recognizing words or sentences was negatively correlated to reading comprehension with tests in Dutch. Similar results were also

examined with the tests in English. Except the speed of word and sentence recognition, all other variables were positively correlated with L2 or L3 English reading comprehension. However, because of the low weights of the speed variables, it was estimated that they had little power in predicting reading comprehension in Dutch or in English. It was interesting that metacognitive knowledge provided a significant unique contribution to reading comprehension in English as an L2 or an L3. However, there was no difference found between the monolingual and bilingual groups regarding the factors affecting reading comprehension.

Similarly, Modirghamene (2006) conducted research in order to examine the influence of bilingualism on acquiring reading comprehension proficiency among EFL students. Unlike the previous study, Modirghamene's (2006) study considered only the independent variable of bilingualism by controlling for other possible variables involved in reading comprehension. The participants consisted of 98 Iranian EFL university students who were given a questionnaire and a reading test. There were 56 Turkish/ Persian-language bilinguals and 42 Persian-only monolinguals included in the study. Reading comprehension was measured through the First Certificate in English (FCE) test. Contrary to the results of Van Gelderen et al.'s (2003) study, the results supported the idea that bilingualism presents advantages in increasing L3 reading comprehension.

### **III. Discussion and Closing Remarks**

This paper aimed to examine TLA studies concerned with multilingualism. Contradictory results among such studies illustrate the complexity of TLA. Even when dealing with the same aspects of language learning, differing results abound. However, this study's review

of TLA studies suggest two paths for further empirical research field: (1) the need for a precise definition of bilingual-multilingual, and (2) the need to consider variables of typological similarity, language proficiency and age.

Existing studies show that bilinguals need to be more precisely classified, such as to whether they are literate both in oral and written contexts, in investigating how bilinguals cognitively learn a L3 (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Sanz, 2000; Thomas, 1988), lexically learn a L3 (Keshavarz & Astaneh, 2004), and pragmatically learn a L3 (Safont Jorda, 2003, 2005). Overall, existing studies show that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals. In addition, bilinguals displaying biliteracy and academically biliterate bilinguals were more productive learners than bilinguals not displaying biliteracy as well as only orally biliterate bilinguals. In other words, varieties of bilingualism should be more precisely specified.

Additionally, other variables played an important role in investigating the possible influence of monolingualism or bilingualism on multilingual acquisition: typological similarity (Koike & Palmiere, 2011; Leung, 2006), language proficiency (Leung, 2006), and age (Modirkhamene, 2006; Van Gelderen et al., 2003). In the studies reviewed, there was a positive effect on the ability to learn additional languages when previously learned languages were typologically similar to the additional language. Furthermore, Leung's (2006) study demonstrated that there were no significant differences between the abilities of bilinguals and multilinguals to acquire a third language when they were already proficient in a typologically similar language. Thus, the variables of typological similarity and proficiency between previously learned languages and additional language should be also considered when investigating further language acquisition by monolinguals and bilinguals.

Lastly, age appeared as another variable which may help explain the



contradictory results in Van Gelderen et al's (2003) and Modirkhamene's (2006) studies on L3 learning. More specifically, both studies investigated the possible influence of monolingualism or bilingualism on L3 reading comprehension. Monolinguals outperformed bilinguals in the former study, while bilinguals outperformed monolinguals in the latter study. Because the former study targeted eighth grade students and the latter examined undergraduates, it might be suggested that a lack of cognitive development in the younger population weakened the influence of bilingualism on L3 learning. As shown via these studies and others reviewed in this paper, only after the mono/bilingualism factor is considered alongside other factors can TLA truly be examined.

When looking back at existing research in TLA, it seems that much further research is needed. First of all, most of the research is set in bilingual areas, specifically in Spain. There have not been many studies set in a monolingual community. As seen in one study dealing with a minority group, further research might be conducted comparing minority bilingual groups and bilingual groups in monolingual area. Many studies also concern only European languages. This opens one avenue for future research, perhaps involving relatively understudied languages in existing bilingualism/TLA research. Furthermore, there has still been little research in the area of phonology. Most TLA studies tend to focus on cognitive issues. It is true that bilinguals are more likely to do better than monolinguals in the cognitive aspects of TLA. However, including phonological aspect of learning, future TLA research might devote more research to these still unexplored areas in TLA. In addition, several models of multilingualism have been produced during the last two decades. More empirical data related to TLA is needed to test the validity of these models. In fact, studies positing variables that affect TLA have a quite short history overall, and much more research is still needed.

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Received: January 4, 2018

Revised: February 12, 2018

Accepted: February 19, 2018