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Crosslinguistic Influence as an Outcome of Arabic-French Bilingualism among Algerian Learners of English at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre, Tlemcen University

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Abstract

This research aimed to scrutinise, in the light of models in the field of third language acquisition, the impact of Arabic-French bilingualism and crosslinguistic influence on learning English as a third language among Algerian learners. It also sought to determine the factors that may motivate the occurrence of crosslinguistic influence from one of the background languages. To achieve such objectives, data were collected from Arabic-French bilingual learners of English at the intensive language teaching centre at the University of Tlemcen, using a triangulation of research tools; namely questionnaires, test, and semi-structured interviews. Results indicated that bilingualism affects learning English both positively and negatively as participants reported their recourse to the shared similarities between French and English to understand English, but were at the same time faced with the issue of negative crosslinguistic influence from both Arabic and French. In addition, both proficiency level in English and the typological similarities between French and English proved to be the main factors leading to the occurrence of crosslinguistic influence.

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List of Acronyms

CEM	Cumulative Enhancement Model
CLI	Cross-Linguistic Influence
LPM	Linguistic Proximity Model
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TLA	Third Language Acquisition
TPM	Typological Primacy Model

General Introduction

General Introduction

Within the context of current globalisation, there has been an increasing spread of multilingual communities where more foreign languages are learnt and used. For this reason, researchers have focused on studying the process by which languages after the mother tongue are learnt. While much research has been done on second language acquisition, third language acquisition (henceforth TLA) was understudied by earlier linguists mainly because it was not distinguished from the former discipline. It was until the 1980s that TLA could stand as an independent field of research, taking into consideration that the presence of two languages in the learner's linguistic repertoire may affect the process of learning a third one. In fact, the interaction between the learners' background languages and the third language being learnt may result in many linguistic phenomena, among which cross-linguistic influence (hereafter CLI) is the most controversial and studied issue within the field of TLA. The focus of research has been directed to identifying the source of linguistic influence, as well as the factors that may lead to such influence.

The linguistic situation of Algeria represents a good instance of a bilingual speech community where in addition to Arabic and French, English is taught as a third language. Thus, Algerian Arabic-French bilingual learners of English, the current studied case, are expected to be influenced by the present bilingualism in their speech community in the sense that they rely on their background languages to learn English. Therefore, the main problem to consider is whether Arabic-French bilingualism in Algeria affects learning English as a third language.

The main reason behind choosing the present linguistic phenomenon for investigation is the lack of research done on this area. Most studies on the issue of learning English as a third language in the Algerian bilingual setting were presumably limited only to examining the effects of either Arabic or French on learning English, without taking into account the factors that may lead to CLI. In the Algerian context, questions regarding which of the background languages (Arabic and French) is the source of linguistic influence and which of the factors proposed in the TLA research

literature trigger CLI have not yet been addressed. Therefore, the present study examines CLI and the factors triggering such influence among Algerian learners of English. By addressing these research gaps, the present study can contribute to the field of TLA and bilingualism in general and enrich the research literature on the Algerian context in particular. The main purposes of the present study are:

➢ To investigate the impact of Arabic-French bilingualism and CLI on learning English as a third language in the Algerian educational context;

➢ To identify the source of linguistic influence;

➢ To define the factors leading to CLI when learning English.

Accordingly, the present study aspires to answer the following questions:

1. How does Arabic-French bilingualism affect learning English as a third language among Algerian learners?

2. Which of the background languages (Arabic or French) constitutes the main source of CLI?

3. What are the main factors responsible for the occurrence of CLI among Algerian Arabic-French bilingual learners of English?

These questions led to formulate the following hypotheses:

1. Arabic-French bilingualism facilitates the process of learning English as a third language in Algeria.

2. Because of the typological similarity between French and English, CLI occurs more from French.

3. (Psycho)typology and the learners' level of proficiency are predicted to trigger CLI among Algerian bilingual learners of English.

In order to test the validity of the aforementioned hypotheses, a set of quantitative and qualitative research instruments have been utilised, namely a questionnaire, a test comprising a translation task, and a semi-structured interview. These are conducted with Arabic-French bilingual learners of English at the Intensive Language Teaching Centre at Tlemcen University (CEIL).

As for the structure of the present dissertation, it consists of two interrelated chapters. The first one serves as the theoretical foundation of the study, while the second is concerned with the practical work. The first chapter is two-fold. It begins with defining the main concepts relevant to the study. After that, the types of CLI, the most prominent models explaining this phenomenon in TLA, as well as the factors triggering such a phenomenon are presented. The second part discusses the Algerian linguistic situation and sheds light on the existing languages. Then, it proceeds to analyse the language contact resulting phenomena as well as the historical factors that have led Algeria to be a bilingual speech community.

The second chapter is also divided into two parts. The first one deals with the research methodology. It displays the research design, the sample population and the data collection instruments, each with its objective and design. The second part is devoted to data analysis and interpretation. Its aim is to analyse and interpret the gathered data and to provide answers to the aforementioned research questions.

CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

With the widespread use of more than two languages in many countries, especially within the educational systems, there has been an increasing interest in the study of learning languages beyond the second one. This interest has led to the emergence of a new field of research, namely TLA.

The present chapter starts by providing an overview of the relevant literature about the field, including its emergence and definitions. This is, then, followed with reviewing the main aspects of bi/multilingualism, with more focus on the mental representation of the multilingual's languages and the impact of bilingualism on TLA. Moreover, the recent increasing interest in the field of TLA has led to its division into many sub-areas of investigation. In this chapter, emphasis will be put on the phenomenon of CLI, its types, the factors responsible for its occurrence, as well as the different models explaining such a phenomenon. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the Algerian linguistic situation.

1.2 Emergence of TLA

The relevance of research on foreign language learning has increased in recent years as multilingualism has become a breakthrough to operate in the current world. This has been motivated by a number of factors (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998, p. vii). Indeed, with the rise of mobility and immigration, more and more people are required to learn two or more languages besides their mother tongue. At the same time, given the global state of the world, it has become necessary for most countries to incorporate foreign languages in their educational system, particularly English due to its spread as a lingua franca. Despite this, TLA has been less investigated compared to second language acquisition (henceforth SLA) (De Angelis, 2007). The reason behind this might be attributed to the lack of a clear distinction between the two processes. While it seems a truism that the co-existence of many languages in the learner's linguistic repertoire may affect the process of learning a new one, this

additional knowledge has been taken for granted to the extent that some researchers included learners of a third language in their studies on SLA, without any reference to the languages that these learners might know (De Angelis, 2007). Many scholars use SLA as an umbrella term covering all instances of non-native acquisition, arguing that "learning a third language is […] learning just another second language" (Singh & Carroll, 1979, qtd. in De Angelis, 2007, p. 5). Accordingly, any language following the mother tongue is learnt in the same way. Undeniably, SLA and TLA are interrelated since they both deal with the acquisition of a non-native language. Yet, if it is accepted that SLA differs from first language acquisition because of the availability of a previously acquired language in the learner's linguistic repertoire; then, there is no reason to assume that SLA and TLA are the same, since as Jessner (2006, p.14) points out "the process of learning [SLA] and the product of having learnt a second language [bilingualism] can potentially exert influence on the acquisition of a third language". This means that not only the number of languages involved, but rather the process of learning a second language itself may play a significant role in TLA.

Thus, in response to the vast increase in multilingualism on the one hand, and the continual debate around the distinction between SLA and TLA on the other, TLA is no longer regarded as merely an extension of SLA but rather as a unique instance of language acquisition worth-studying as a field on its own.

1.3 Towards a Definition of TLA

Despite the emergence of TLA as a separate field of research in the 1980s, there has been no agreement on its definition (Liu, 2022). This is due to the complexity, resulting from the co-existence of at least three languages in the learner's linguistic repertoire and also to the diverse ways in which these languages are learnt (Jessner, 2006). This is further complicated by the fact that TLA lies at the intersection of SLA and bilingualism and, therefore, it is also related to the ways through which the second language was acquired (Jessner, 2006). Such interdisciplinarity leads to raise questions with regard to what counts as a third

language. According to Cenoz (2013, p.71), TLA is defined as "the acquisition of a language that is different from the first and the second and is acquired after them". From this definition, it follows that the third language is classified in terms of chronological order of acquisition. While this definition distinguishes between SLA and TLA, it fails to take into consideration the diverse ways through which a third language can be learnt. It is common, for instance, for children growing-up in bilingual families to acquire two languages simultaneously and then learn a third language at school. In other situations, two non-native languages are learnt at the same time after the mother tongue. Moreover, Hammarberg (2009) also criticises defining a third language in terms of chronological order of acquisition since this implies learning a third language in the literal sense, while in fact TLA refers to the acquisition of any language beyond the second one. He states that a third language is defined as "a non-native language which is currently being acquired in a situation where the person already has knowledge of one or more L2s" (qtd. in Peek, 2009, p.87). This statement is supported by De Angelis (2007) who used the term '*Third or Additional Language Acquisition'* to refer to any language learnt after the second one. Besides, different terms have been proposed to refer to the field of TLA, including 'Multiple Language Acquisition', 'Multilingual Acquisition', and 'Third or Additional Language Acquisition'. Based on a comprehensive study of these terms, De Angelis (2007) prefers the term 'Third or Additional Language Acquisition' since according to her 'Multiple Language Acquisition' is limited to only a specific case of TLA whereby the three languages are learnt simultaneously, while 'Multilingual Acquisition' refers more to the learner rather than the field itself.

On the basis of the different conditions under which a third language can be learnt, Cenoz (2000, as cited in Jessner, 2006) sets out an extended definition of TLA in terms of routes of learning:

- The acquisition of three languages at the same time;
- The sequential learning of three languages;
- The simultaneous learning of two non-native languages after the mother tongue;

- Learning a third language by simultaneous bilinguals.

Such a categorisation of TLA according to the different routes of learning is wide enough to include different contexts in which a third language is learnt. Given the context of the present study, TLA is defined in terms of order of acquisition as the sequential learning of a third language.

1.4 Bi/Multilingualism

Bilingualism and multilingualism, as frequent linguistic phenomena, have been defined in different ways. While some scholars (e.g. De Groot, 2011) make a clear distinction between the two phenomena, others (e.g. Grosjean, 2012; Myers-Scotton, 2006) have used the terms interchangeably to refer to all speakers of more than a language. Besides, the term bilingualism itself has been defined from different perspectives, ranging from the maximal view of bilingualism as "the native-like control of two languages" (Bloomfield, 1933, p. 56) to the less sophisticated view which qualifies even those speakers with basal competence as bilinguals. Focusing on language proficiency rather than social use, these views fail to take into account the different types of bilingualism. In fact, individuals may become bilingual due to different reasons and they may learn and use their languages in different contexts, which may lead them, in turn, to develop different levels of fluency in their languages. Therefore, a number of definitions have been provided, leading to the classification of bilinguals into different types, according to different dimensions (see section 1.7.3.2).

Given the focus of the present study on TLA, and particularly on CLI which is a byproduct of the interactions between the bilingual's languages, it is necessary to consider the way in which languages are represented in the bilingual mind and how they interact with one another when learning a third language. Thus, in this section, the main aspects of the mental representation of the bilingual's languages are presented.

1.4.1 Mental Representation of the Multilingual's Languages

The main issue concerning the mental representation of languages is whether they are separated or integrated in the bilingual's mind. Different perspectives have been raised to answer such a question, providing evidence for both separate and shared hypotheses.

1.4.1.1 Shared and Separate System Hypotheses

The shared system hypothesis, also referred to as the interdependence hypothesis was first proposed by Kolers (1963) to refer to the integration of languages in the bilingual's mind. This hypothesis contends that the bilingual's languages are not 'mentally compartmentalized', but rather form only one linguistic system (De Groot, 2011). In fact, the feat of mixing and switching between languages is considered as a clear indication of the bilinguals' inability to separate their languages (De Groot, 2011). In the case of TLA, evidence from studies on CLI have also confirmed the shared system hypothesis. Indeed, the fact that bilingual learners of a third language can make utterances formed of combined features from the background languages and the third language clearly demonstrates the bilingual's possession of a single linguistic system consisting of all their languages. In contrast, the separate system hypothesis holds that the bilingual's languages have separate storages. This is demonstrated in the bilinguals' ability to keep their languages apart, using only one language in each context (Neuser, 2017). This is further supported by evidence from bilingual aphasia studies which have shown that bilingual aphasic patients recover their languages separately (Neuser, 2017).

These contradictory views concerning the mental representation of the bilingual's languages have led to the claim that languages "may be partly integrated and partly separated" (De Angelis, 2007, p. 99). In this regard, Paradis' (1987) subset hypothesis provides evidence for both hypotheses. It holds that the multilingual's languages belong to a single system, but the individual constituents of each language are separated under different subsets. Paradis (1987) further elaborates on his hypothesis, claiming that the multilingual's languages mental representation may

vary according to different levels of proficiency (Neuser, 2017). Thus, learners at the early stages of learning are expected to have interconnected languages, while they shift towards two independent linguistic systems as their proficiency increases. Furthermore, the mental representation of the bilingual's languages also depends on the typological distance between them. That is, typologically related languages are more interconnected in the mental lexicon than distant ones.

1.4.1.2 Fractional vs. Holistic View of Bilingualism

The fractional and holistic views of bilingualism were originally proposed by the psycholinguist Grosjean (1992) to refer to the two different perspectives from which the bilingual is defined. The fractional, also called the monolingual view considers bilingualism as an ideal state in which the bilingual's languages are considered as two distinct systems and proficiency in each language is evaluated in terms of monolingual standards (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998). According to this view, the bilingual's competence in the two languages is compared to that of monolingual native speakers of the same languages, without taking into consideration the particularities of bilingualism. Grosjean (1992) strongly criticised this fractional view, arguing that bilinguals exhibit unique skills, different from those of monolinguals, that enable them to use each of their languages efficiently in different contexts depending on their communicative needs. He suggested instead a holistic perspective which takes into account the dynamic nature of bilingualism and considers the bilingual's mind as "an integrated whole whose competencies do not exist in separation but are part of an intact system" (De Angelis, 2007, p. 14).

1.4.2 Impact of Bilingualism on TLA

In spite of the early contempt of bilingualism and its association with negative outcomes on the individual's cognitive and intellectual development, subsequent research studies, such as that of Peal and Lambert (1962) have revealed that bilinguals "showed more mental flexibility" (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 340) and outperformed

their monolingual peers. This has motivated further research on the advantage that knowing two languages might have.

In view of TLA, most research studies[1] have confirmed the positive effects of bilingualism on learning an additional language and found that bilinguals surpassed monolinguals. In particular, it has been shown that bilingual learners of a third language show more metalinguistic awareness and exhibit a larger range of learning strategies, as a result of their wider linguistic repertoire compared to monolinguals (Cenoz, 2013). The fact that bilinguals have two languages at their disposal when learning a third one makes them develop a metalinguistic awareness about language structures. In other words, while monolinguals start as beginners, bilingual learners of a third language already have a foreign language learning experience. Consequently, they gain a kind of expertise which, in turn, enables them to choose more efficient strategies when learning a new language.

1.5 Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI): A By-product of Multilingualism

When learning a third language, bilinguals tend to rely on structures from their previously acquired languages, resulting in the occurrence of CLI. This phenomenon is among the main outcomes of bilingualism that has attracted much research in the field of TLA. With its roots in behaviourist psychology and SLA, it has traditionally been referred to as 'language transfer'.[2]

Previously, transfer was seen as a sign of ignorance and limited linguistic and cognitive abilities (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008) and, therefore, inappropriate and unworthy of serious study. It was until the 1950s after the pioneering work of Weinreich (1953) that it came to be realised that 'language transfer' is not simply a

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[1] Many studies have confirmed the positive outcomes of bilingualism on TLA, some of which are cited in Cenoz (2013), such as (1) Nation & McLaughlin's (1986;1989) laboratory investigations with artificial languages, (2) Bild and Swain's (1989) study comparing between English monolingual and bilingual immigrant children learning French as a third language, and (3) Cenoz & Valencia's (1994) study on learning English by Catalan-Spanish bilinguals.

[2] Throughout the present work, the terms transfer and CLI are used interchangeably.

matter of lack of knowledge in the target language, but rather "an unavoidable feature of language learning and use", deserving systematic research from various perspectives (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p.3). Since then, different terms have been used to describe this phenomenon, with each term having distinct definitions. Weinreich (1953) was the pioneer to describe the phenomenon systematically, using the term 'interference' to refer to negative transfer that results in learning difficulties and errors. According to him, transfer is the result of 'interlingual identification' by which the learner perceives a linguistic feature as similar in different languages (Weinreich, 1953). Lado's (1957) contrastive analysis hypothesis has also defined transfer as a process of transferring learnt features in one language to another based on linguistic similarities and differences.

Even though these studies on transfer have focused only on its negative aspects, they can still be considered as the pioneering works which paved the way for further research on CLI. However, with the emergence of TLA, the conception of transfer came to be criticised by subsequent researchers as being limited to only the effects of the first on the second language, failing to take into account the other possible ways of influence resulting from the interaction between languages. In fact, given the co-existence of at least three languages in the learner's linguistic repertoire, transfer can occur not merely from the first language (forward CLI) but also from the second to third language (lateral CLI). As a response to these limitations, Kellerman and Sharwood-Smith (1986) proposed the term 'Crosslinguistic Influence' to refer to "the interplay between earlier and later acquired languages", including phenomena such as "transfer, interference, avoidance, borrowing, and L2 related aspects of language loss" (qtd. in Forsyth, 2014, p. 431). That is, the neutral term of CLI emphasises the idea that all languages may influence each other in different ways.

1.5.1 Types of CLI

CLI in TLA is a phenomenon that may manifest in varying ways. In this regard, Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) have categorised CLI according to different dimensions.

i. Types of CLI according to its Outcome

CLI can be classified according to whether it has a positive or negative effect. Traditionally, most research has studied CLI from a structural approach, focusing only on negative transfer that results in the occurrence of errors (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). More recently, research started to acknowledge the positive effects of transfer, particularly when the languages involved are typologically similar.

ii. CLI according to Level of Intentionality

CLI can be either conscious or unconscious. The former type refers to the intentional use of a feature from the previously acquired languages in the third language as a compensatory strategy to fill in linguistic gaps, whereas unconscious CLI occurs unintentionally as a result of erroneously transferring items from the previous languages to the third one.

iii. CLI according to the Linguistic Level

CLI can also be classified according to the linguistic level in which it manifests, namely phonological, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic CLI. At the lexical level, it can be further classified into different types. Ringbom (1987) offered a distinction between formal and semantic lexical CLI (Jarvis, 2015). While formal CLI occurs at the level of the word form, semantic CLI is meaning-based. These are presented along with examples in table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Types of Lexical CLI

Types of Lexical CLI	*Definitions and Examples*[3]
Borrowing	Transfer of a word from a background language with no modification.

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[3] All examples are taken from Ringbom (1987) as cited in (Jarvis, 2015, p. 106-113).

	e.g. "then _nog_ one" (Dutch nog = English another).
Foreignising	Transfer of an adapted word according to the third language orthographic rules.
	e.g. "I would be _luckly_" (Swedish lucklig = English happy).
Misspelling	Transfer of a word's spelling from one language to another.
	e.g. _beter_ from Dutch 'beter' instead of 'better' in English.
Lexeme matching	Transfer of a word that has the same form in two languages but a different meaning.
	e.g. "Many _offers_ of violence do not have enough courage to speak about it" (Swedish offer = victim in English).
Semantic extension	Extending the meaning of a polysemous word from one language to another.
	e.g. "He bit himself in the _language_" (from Finnish _kieli_ = both _tongue_ and _language_ in English).
Direct translations	Transfer of an erroneous meaning based on literal translation of a compound word.
	e.g. '_young-man_' to mean bachelor (Swedish ungkarl = bachelor in English).

The meaning of borrowing has a different connotation from that implied in sociolinguistic research. While in sociolinguistics the term borrowing refers to loan words which are generally part of the language, in this context borrowing is used to refer to a particular kind of lexical formal CLI that frequently occurs during the first

stages of foreign language learning as a result of the learner's lack of lexical knowledge (Neuser, 2017).

As learners become more aware of the target language rules, they may make 'guesses' about the existence of a word form in the third language, leading to the production of foreingisings (Neuser, 2017). Such types of CLI refer to the adaptation of a word from a background language according to the third language orthographic rules. Another common sort of lexical formal CLI is spelling interference. Such type of transfer frequently occurs in cases when a word has the same meaning in both languages, but a slightly different form.

Concerning semantic CLI, there are three types. Among these, lexeme matching commonly occurs in the case of false friends that share similar form in both languages, yet have distinct meanings.

A further type of CLI is semantic extension, whereby the meaning of a polysemous word in a previously learnt language is extended to a similar word in the third language that actually does not have that meaning.

The last type of semantic CLI is direct translations which refer to the literal translation of a compound word from a background language to the third one, resulting in the erroneous use of a word meaning.

1.5.2 Factors Triggering CLI

While in SLA, CLI can come only from the first language; the third language can be influenced by either the first, the second or both of them. The predominance of a language as source of CLI depends on a number of factors, including (psycho)typological distance, level of proficiency, and recency or amount of exposure.

1.5.2.1 Language Distance

Language distance is one of the main factors determining the source of CLI, that has been referred to in the literature using different terms, namely 'psychotypology', 'typological proximity' or 'crosslinguistic similarity' (Jarvis and Pavlenko, 2008, p. 176). The main assumption is that despite the fact that CLI may occur even between languages that are genetically unrelated, studies on CLI in TLA have reported that it is more likely to come from the most similar language. In fact, it is widely acknowledged that having a similar language facilitates the process of learning a third one. In a study comparing between the frequency of errors in two translation tasks from Arabic and French into English, Hanafi (2014) found less errors from the French version. He concluded that French has a positive role in learning English as a third language in Algeria. Similarly, Negadi (2015) found that the typological similarity between French and English facilitates English texts' comprehension among Algerian learners. Within the same Algerian context, but using a different language combination, Sadouki (2020) also reported CLI from English, the most typologically related language in learning German.

However, Kellerman (1983) proposed the term 'psychotypology', asserting that "not everything that looks transferable is [in fact] transferable" (as cited in Wang, 2013, p. 100). This means that not only the similarities between languages that lead to CLI, but rather the learner's own perception of how similar languages are. While the two terms are often used interchangeably since they both relate to the degree of similarities and differences between languages, they may affect CLI differently. In this regard, Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008, p. 178) offered a distinction between objective and subjective similarity, stating that while the former can define the result of CLI whether positive or negative, the latter determines the amount of transfer from a background language. In a similar vein, Ringbom and Jarvis (2009) also emphasised the distinction between actual and assumed similarities, arguing that learners may perceive the similarities between their languages differently and that assumed similarities lead to the occurrence of CLI more than actual distance. Referring to Ringbom's (1987) earlier study on learning English by Swedish-Finnish bilinguals,

they reported that learners' perceptions of similarity between Swedish and English have led to more influence from Swedish in their English written productions.

1.5.2.2 Level of Proficiency

Another factor that has been reported to have an effect on the choice of the source language of CLI is the level of proficiency in either the third or the other languages involved. It is generally assumed that learners at the beginning stages of TLA i.e., when their level is still low, tend to transfer more often than when reaching a higher level of proficiency. In a study on the role of proficiency on the occurrence of CLI, Sánchez (2014) found that incompetent learners tend to transfer more often than their highly competent peers. However, contrary to this general assumption evidence from other studies have indicated that CLI may last even at highly proficient levels (De Angelis, 2007).

Concerning background language proficiency, the main concern has been how proficient learners should be in a previously learnt language for it to influence the third one (De Angelis, 2007). Some researchers (e.g. Tremblay, 2006; Williams & Hammarberg, 1998) posit that learners require a certain level in the second language for it to affect the third one, stating that transfer occurs from the language with the highest proficiency level. This is justified by the fact that learners with low proficiency in a background language have limited vocabulary which may, in turn, minimize the amount of CLI from that language (Neuser, 2017). Others (e.g. De Angelis, 1999) have found in their studies that transfer can come from any language regardless of the level of proficiency even if it is not fully learnt.

Still others (e.g. Bardel & Lindqvist, 2007) have reported a relationship between the proficiency level of background languages and that of the third language. That is, when the third language is at low level, then transfer comes from the language with the lowest level of proficiency.

1.5.2.3 Recency

In contrast to other factors, recency has been understudied and defined differently by different researchers. Some authors (e.g. Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008; Neuser, 2017) have used the term to refer to the extent to which the most recently learnt language influences the use of a third one. In other words, the last language learnt before the third one would be the source of CLI. It has also been defined in terms of the amount of exposure to a particular language. In this sense, linguistic influence is supposed to occur more from the mostly used language, for instance, at home or as a medium of instruction at school.

1.5.3 Models of CLI in TLA

Several models have been proposed in an attempt to explain the ways in which previous linguistic knowledge influences adult TLA at different stages and using different language combinations, among which are the cumulative enhancement, the L2 status factor, the typological primacy, and the linguistic proximity models. These differ from each other with respect to their predictions on the source of CLI, its outcome i.e. whether facilitative or non-facilitative, as well as the extent to which CLI occurs from a particular language i.e. whether CLI occurs fully from only one language or property-by–property from both languages. These models will be tested at the practical part of the present study in order to know which model best applies to the Algerian context.

Many studies on CLI in TLA have shown that the native language is the sole source of CLI. In his study on learning English by Arabic-French bilinguals in Morocco, Hermas (2014) reported CLI instances only from Arabic which is the learners' first language. This is mainly attributed to the fact that the native language is the language used most commonly. However, there exist counter-evidence to this hypothesis which proves that CLI does in fact occur from languages other than the first.

1.5.3.1 Cumulative-Enhancement Model (CEM)

Based on their study on learning English as a third language by Kazakh-Russian bilinguals, Flynn et al. (2004) proposed the CEM which maintains that language learning is a cumulative process by which all the learner's previously acquired languages have a similar role in TLA (Wang, 2013). This means that transfer can come from both the native tongue and the second learnt language. In an attempt to test whether typology is the only factor behind CLI, the authors compared the production of relative clauses of Kazakh learners of English to earlier studies on Spanish and Japanese learners of English as a second language. They argue that since both Kazakh and Japanese share the same grammatical structure of relative clauses, then Kazakh learners of English are expected to transfer from their first language as Japanese learners of English did. However, this was not the case. Despite the similarities between Kazakh and Japanese with regard to the structure of relative clauses, results showed that Kazakh learners transferred from their second language Russian. Based on these results, Flynn et al (2004) concluded that CLI can come from any previously acquired language as long as it enhances learning the third one (Wang, 2013). In other words, according to the CEM only positive transfer is possible.

1.5.3.2 L2 Status Factor Model

Inspired by Williams and Hammarberg's (1998) study which suggests the possibility of CLI from the second language, and partly in opposition to the 'Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis' which states that transfer is more likely to come from the first language, Bardel and Falk (2007) proposed the L2 status factor model. Its basic premise is that among all the prior languages, the second language is the main source of CLI in TLA. This is evidenced in their study on the placement of negation comparing two different groups of learners with different background languages learning either Swedish or Dutch as a third language. The results of their study revealed that most influence resulted from the second language in all groups of learners despite the typological similarity between some of the first

languages and the third one. Thus, unlike the CEM, according to which the two languages are transferable, in the L2 status factor model the second language serves as the main source of CLI since according to Bardel and Falk (2007, p.480), "the L2 acts like a filter making the L1 inaccessible". This is attributed, according to them, to the similarity between the second and third languages as both of them are non-native. They explained this with reference to Paradis' (1994; 2009) distinction between declarative and procedural memory according to which native and non-native languages are processed differently (Bardel & Falk, 2012).

1.5.3.3 Typological Primacy Model (TPM)

The model has been proposed by Rothman (2010) who conducted a study comparing Italian-English and English-Spanish bilingual learners of Spanish or Portuguese as a third language respectively. His results were consistent with the CEM in that they both support the idea that CLI is possible from both the first and second language. However, the two models differ in that the TPM predicts the complete occurrence of CLI from only one previous language based on typological similarity between languages and it does not neglect the possibility of non-facilitative CLI (Rothman, 2013).

1.5.3.4 Linguistic Proximity Model (LPM)

Westergaard *et al.* (2016) carried out a study with three groups of learners of English, including Norwegian-Russian bilinguals, Norwegian monolinguals, and Russian monolinguals. Their study revealed that while the bilinguals surpassed the Norwegian monolinguals, they attained less than Russian monolinguals. This shows the non-facilitative effects of Norwegian. The proximity model posits the possibility of CLI from all previously acquired languages, allowing for both positive and negative CLI. Yet, unlike the TPM, this one argues against the idea of complete or full transfer from one language, arguing instead for structure-by-structure CLI. The model further maintains that not only the general typological similarity, but rather the

degree of proximity between specific linguistic features is what determines the source of CLI (Westergaard et al., 2016).

1.6 Multilingual Education and Translanguaging

In bilingual and multilingual countries where more than a language come into contact, the educational policy generally adopts bilingual education programmes in their schools. Multilingual education is defined as the use of two or more languages in education (Garcia & Lin, 2017). As such, teaching a third or foreign language as a subject is not considered as a case of multilingual education.

The two types of education differ in that multilingual education refers to the use of languages as media of instruction through which content is delivered, whereas foreign language teaching is concerned with teaching a language as a subject. In most contexts, foreign language teaching has been traditionally based on monolingual perspectives wherein the target language is exclusively used as a medium of instruction, excluding the use of any other language in order to prevent interference problems (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). More recently, however, even foreign language teaching programmes started to adopt the use of diverse languages in the foreign language classroom. This practice is referred to as translanguaging, originally proposed by the Welsh scholar Williams (1994) to refer to a pedagogical approach to foreign language learning and teaching that takes into consideration the multilingual learners' whole repertoire, permitting them to use their languages in the classroom to express their ideas, improve their understanding, and maximize their learning as a whole. In other words, information is transmitted through one language and then discussed and explained through another. In the same vein, Cummins (2017) has also refuted the monolingual principle which forbids the use of learners' background languages when learning a foreign language, arguing that the students' languages cannot be segregated in classroom as they are cognitively integrated through a common underlying proficiency. He calls for a 'teaching for transfer approach' that takes into consideration the social context where the foreign language is taught.

This practice has been used in different ways. On the basis of their studies on CLI in TLA, Cenoz and Gorter (2021) proposed a stronger form of translanguaging called 'pedagogical translanguaging' to include a range of planned activities which enable learners to compare their languages crosslinguistically at different levels with the aim of promoting their metalinguistic awareness about the similarities and differences between languages.

1.7 The Algerian Linguistic Situation

1.7.1 Language Contact in Algeria

Algeria is a multilingual country characterised by the co-existence of many linguistic varieties, namely MSA, Dialectal Arabic, Berber varieties, French and recently English. This linguistic diversity is attributed to the historical events that the country went through. In fact, Algeria has experienced many foreign invasions that brought great changes in all aspects, including: social; economic; educational and linguistic. At the linguistic level, the French colonisation was the driving force which led to the spread of French, resulting in bilingualism. At the time, the French language has been imposed trying to replace Arabic in all domains, particularly at schools. This position continued to exist even after independence despite the arabisation process as the French language remained the first foreign language of the country used along Arabic on a daily basis. This is attested in the Algerians' speech which is characterised with Arabic-French code switching and code mixing. In this section, the different existing language phenomena are discussed.

1.7.2 Diglossia

The term '*diglossia*' was introduced by the sociolinguist Charles Ferguson (1959) to refer to situations in which two varieties of the same language are used in a complementary distribution throughout a speech community. He explicated it with reference to four speech communities, including the Arab World, Haiti, German-speaking Switzerland and Greece. According to Ferguson (1959), each of these

languages has got a low variety used in informal settings and a high variety employed in more formal situations with a slight overlap between them.

In the case of the Algerian context, it represents a clear diglossic situation where Algerian Arabic and MSA are used for different functions. MSA is a highly codified and written variety associated with formal contexts and is learnt at school, while Dialectal varieties of Algerian Arabic are employed in daily interactions and naturally acquired as a mother tongue.

The term has been later on extended by Fishman (1967) to cover situations where the two varieties do not necessarily belong to the same language but can rather be genetically unrelated languages as long as they have a functional distribution. That is, each language serves particular functions that the other does not. From this, it follows that the Algerian country also represents a case of extended diglossia as French is the high variety used in formal contexts, for instance, at higher education while Algerian Arabic or Berber varieties in some regions as low varieties.

1.7.3 Bilingualism

Bilingualism can be studied from two different perspectives, namely the macro-sociolinguistic and the micro-sociolinguistic levels, according to which a distinction between societal and individual bilingualism is made.

1.7.3.1 Societal Bilingualism

At the macro-level, a speech community can be either officially recognised as bilingual i.e. 'de jure bilingualism' or a de facto bilingual community where two or more languages are socially used with no official approval in the constitution (Mackey, 1967). In the case of Algeria, it represents an instance of both types. It is considered as a *de jure* bilingual state as both Arabic and Berber are officially identified as national and official languages of the country, while at the same time it is a *de facto* multilingual country where French, though politically regarded as a foreign language is actually from a linguistic point of view a second language

regularly used by most Algerians. This results in different forms of bilingualism, among which Arabic-French, Arabic-Berber and French-Berber. While Arabic-French bilingualism is frequently found, particularly in Northern urban areas, the latter forms of bilingualism are restricted to only some regions of Algeria.

1.7.3.2 Individual Bilinguality

At the individual level, the degree of bilingualism differs in terms of a number of dimensions according to which the bilingual individual can be classified, including the language skills i.e. proficiency in both languages as well as the age at which the second language was acquired/learnt. Accordingly, bilinguals can be categorised into:

- Balanced or unbalanced;
- Active or passive;
- Early or late bilinguals.

a. Balanced vs. Unbalanced Bilinguals

Bilingual individuals are qualified as balanced only in case they have an equally perfect competence in both languages. In contrast, those who possess a stronger command in a language over the other are considered as unbalanced bilinguals. Algerian speakers are categorised among unbalanced bilinguals since they are generally more proficient in Arabic, with different levels of competence in French.

b. Active vs. Passive Bilinguals

Based on the receptive and productive skills in the second language, individual bilinguals can be either active or passive, depending on a number of factors, such as the level of education, occupation, and age. Active bilinguals are those who are able to speak and understand a second language, whereas passive bilinguals concern those who can only understand but are not able to speak fluently. The Algerian sociolinguistic reality shows the existence of both types. Educated Algerians, for instance, are more active than illiterate old ones who are passive in French.

c. Early or Late Bilinguals

Early bilingualism concerns situations in which the two languages are acquired early in childhood either simultaneously or sequentially after the partial acquisition of the first language. By contrast, late bilinguals are those whose second language is learnt in adulthood with the first language already fully acquired. Most of Algerians are regarded as late or sequential bilinguals since French is learnt after Arabic has already been acquired.

1.7.4 Languages in Education and their Typological Relationships

The Algerian linguistic diversity is much noticed in the education system in which many languages are used. Benrabah (2007) describes the development of Algerian language-in-education policies in terms of three phases. Up until its independence, the Algerian educational system was dominated by the French language used as the medium of instruction at all levels. Even after independence and despite the government efforts to arabise the country, French still plays an important role in education as it is the medium of instruction at higher education in all scientific and technical fields. It is also introduced as a compulsory subject, starting from the third grade in primary schools. As for English, it is considered as the third language of the country (British council, 1984).[4] Due to its global status, it has started to gain ground in the Algerian community. This is attested in the many attempts that were made by the government to replace French with English (Manseur, 2019). The first attempt goes back to the 1990s when it was implemented as an option along French. More recently, the Algerian government has implemented a new decree that involves English at primary school but this time not as an option but rather as a compulsory subject taught to all pupils in the third year at primary school.

Despite this multilingual diversity, the Algerian education system adopts a traditional approach to teaching rather than a bilingual one since classes are mainly

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[4] As cited in (Belmihoub, 2018).

held through Arabic while the other foreign languages, including French and English are taught as separate subjects. Since typology is one of the variables of this study, it is relevant to consider the typological relationship between the languages involved, namely Arabic, French, and English.

The three languages belong to different language families. Arabic is part of a Semitic language group. It has a different script, writing system, and is a right-branching language i.e. it is written from right to left. It also has different morpho-syntactic rules. Yet, an important aspect of the Arabic language is that it has gone through a modernisation process, as it has borrowed a number of terms from other languages, especially French and English.

French and English, on the other hand, are both Indo-European languages. While English is a descendant of the Proto-Germanic languages and French a Latin-based Romance language, they can still be considered as typologically related languages. This is mainly due to the contact between the two languages during the Norman invasion which had a considerable linguistic impact on the development of the English language. The relatedness of French to English is attested in the number of words with Latin origins within the English vocabulary and also the shared grammatical rules and structures between the two languages.

In sum, given the similarities between French and English and confronted to the fact that Algerian bilinguals have already learnt French, it can be said that they may use this knowledge as a basis for learning English.

1.8 Conclusion

In view of the literature reviewed in this chapter, it is clear that the multilingual's previous linguistic knowledge may play a significant role while learning a third language. This chapter has exposed a general overview of the concepts relevant to the field of TLA, with much focus on the phenomenon of CLI and the role of bilingualism on TLA. It has also presented the different models of CLI and tackled the issue of multilingual education and translanguaging in the third

language classroom, emphasising the importance of taking into account the learner's whole linguistic repertoire when teaching a third language. In general, the aim of this chapter is to set up the background for the present case study on the Algerian context.

CHAPTER TWO: FIELD WORK STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. It begins with outlining the methodology, including the research design, the sample population, and the data collection tools used to collect the data. Then, it proceeds to analysing and interpreting the results in order to answer the research questions and hypotheses.

2.2 Research Design

While conducting any research study, it is necessary to select the appropriate research design. A research design is an outlined plan that includes the different steps to conduct a research study. There are different types of research designs, and the selection of one design over another is based on the research strategy or method adopted and the data collection tools that will be used.

Different research methods are used in accordance with the different types of research questions, among which the survey, ethnography, and case studies. To limit the scope of the present study, the case study method has been adopted. Such a method, though it can also be used in quantitative research, is often referred to as one of the qualitative research methods. Unlike other research strategies, the case study design aims at providing more detailed and realistic descriptions about the studied phenomenon through focusing on a single case in its real context, relying on a variety of tools. In the context of language learning, case study method is used to provide a more "holistic description of language learning and use [among a particular group of learners] within their learning setting" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 171). The case study can be either descriptive, explanatory or exploratory.

- Descriptive case study is used for the sake of describing a phenomenon;
- Explanatory case study deals with the question *why* in order to find out the reasons behind a particular phenomenon;
- Exploratory case study focuses on the study of a problem with the intention of improving the existing situation.

Besides describing the extent to which Arabic-French bilingualism affects learning English, the present study also explains the factors responsible for the occurrence of CLI. Therefore, this study is a descriptive explanatory research. Moreover, a study can be either quantitative or qualitative depending on the research questions and the type of data required in the study. While the former relies on the use of numbers and statistics, the latter is mainly based on description. The present study adopts a mixed-methods design which combines both quantitative and qualitative data, using a triangulation of research tools.

2.2.1 Sample Population

For the sake of conducting the fieldwork study, a sample has been selected from the target population of Algerian adult bilingual learners of English. The chosen sample includes two groups of learners who are all Arabic-French bilinguals to different extents sharing approximately the same English learning experience at formal education and taking a course of English as a third language at the intensive language teaching centre (CEIL)[5] at Tlemcen university. These were selected randomly using stratified probability-sampling paradigm. The stratified sampling was followed on purpose since the third research question requires a comparison between two different levels of proficiency in order to check whether CLI is constant along the learning process. The total number of informants included 60 learners (30 in each group).[6] The size of the sample also varied according to the research tool used. While the questionnaire and the test were administered to all the sample population, the interview was conducted with only some learners.

2.2.2 Data Collection Instruments

To collect data, a set of quantitative and qualitative research tools have been used, namely: a questionnaire; a test and a semi-structured interview. These have been

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[5] Centre d'Enseignement Intensif des Langues (Extensive Language Teaching Centre).

[6] Pre-intermediate (A2) and high-intermediate (B2) learners.

selected according to the research questions of the present study, as shown in the following table:

Table 2.1 Research Instruments Used according to the Research Questions.

Question	Instrument
1. How does Arabic-French bilingualism affect learning English as a third language in Algeria?	Questionnaire+ Interview+ Test
2. Which of the background languages constitutes the source of CLI?	Test (Translation task)
3. What are the main factors responsible for the occurrence of CLI?	Questionnaire and Test

The fact that each research tool has its positive as well as negative aspects necessitates the use of multiple research instruments, i.e. triangulation. This is meant to provide more valid and reliable results and to corroborate the findings. In this section, the research tools used and the procedures followed in the data collection phase are presented.

2.2.2.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are among the most commonly used tools in language learning research, for their versatility and effectiveness (Dornyei, 2010). That is, they enable researchers to collect larger amounts of data about different topics, in a short time and in different contexts. In this study, the questionnaire was designed in order to collect data about learners' linguistic background, their English learning experience, their perceptions about the impact of Arabic-French bilingualism on learning English as well as the factors triggering CLI.

Concerning its format, it starts with an opening introduction in which the research topic is introduced and the purpose of the study is explained. Besides, three

other sections were included. The first one mainly aimed at eliciting data about learners' general information, their linguistic background and their level of proficiency in their background languages. The second section included items that were meant to determine learners' perceptions on the distance between English, Arabic and French and the main reasons that may lead them to transfer from other languages. The final section was added to collect information about whether French as a typologically related language plays any role in learning English. The items of this section were in a way related to the interview questions so they were basically used as a cross-verification of the results.

As for the procedure, after constructing the questions, they were given to an expert teacher for evaluation and any items that were considered to be ambiguous or irrelevant were rephrased or entirely removed. Then, a pilot questionnaire was administered to seven learners of English from the same centre but who were not included in the main study in order to check whether the questions were understood. Then, sixty questionnaires were distributed to two groups of learners along with the test. Participants were given enough time to answer the questionnaires before handing them back. Taking into account the learners' level (A2) and that questionnaires were originally constructed in English, the teacher translated the questions into Arabic in order to ensure that all learners understand the questions properly and, thus, answer them appropriately.

2.2.2.2 Test: Translation Task

There exist different types of tests depending on what they measure, among which achievement, aptitude, performance, and diagnosis tests (Cohen et al, 2018). In this study, the test was designed in order to answer the second research question which aims at identifying the source of CLI, through a translation task. The task was to give participants a text in Arabic which they were asked to translate into English. The main objective of this task was to find out from which language learners transfer more. The translated texts were analysed and instances of CLI were identified based on learners' errors.

2.2.2.3 Semi-structured Interviews

The interview is another research instrument that can be used to elicit data directly from the informants through the use of a conversation. Interviews can especially be useful in cases when the researcher wants to elicit information about unobservable phenomena, such as attitudes and perceptions (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173). The interactive nature of the interview also gives the possibility to provide any clarifying questions which may occur only during the interview. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. The choice of one type over another depends on the nature of the topic as well as the type of data needed for the research. In fact, while the structured interview takes the form of a verbal questionnaire, in which a set of pre-planned questions are orally addressed to all participants, the semi-structured interview is less rigid as it relies on a pre-determined list of questions only as a guide, without necessarily having to follow the same order or wording (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The unstructured interview, on the other hand, takes the form of a natural conversation, eliciting only qualitative data.

In the present study, a semi-structured interview was held with students of English at the intensive language teaching centre, with the aim of getting more insights into their perceptions about the way in which Arabic-French bilingualism affects their English learning. It was conducted at the end of the data collection phase, for getting more explanations about the results of the test. Since most previous research studies have reported that the impact of bilingualism is more noticeable at the beginning stages of third language learning, only beginner (A2) English learners were interviewed. After collecting the questionnaire and the tests, eight students were requested to participate in individual interviews. All the interviews took place in the language centre where they usually have their English language class-sessions and they were held using dialectal Arabic as the respondents preferred this variety claiming that this is the variety they express themselves through most freely. In order to report their answers, audio-recording was used, of course after asking for their consent.

2.3 Data Analysis

In this section, the results obtained through the different research instruments, namely the questionnaire, the test, and the interviews are to be analysed and, then, interpreted. These findings are organised in terms of the three research instruments. First, the findings from the questionnaire and interviews will be analysed in order to answer the first research question which addresses the extent to which Arabic-French bilingualism may affect learning English as a third language. Then, the source of CLI will be identified by analysing learners' translations.

2.3.1 Questionnaire Analysis

The obtained data from the questionnaire are analysed quantitatively and discussed in the following section.

- **English Learning Experience**

The results are summarised in the following chart.
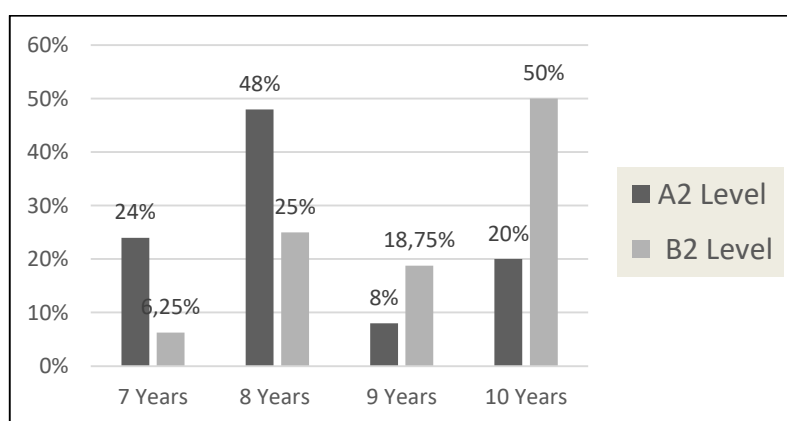
Figure 2.1 Participants' English Learning Experience

The quantitative analysis revealed that participants share approximately the same learning experience which varies from 7 to 10 years.

- **Learners' Self-evaluation of Arabic and French Competence**

While proficiency in English has been objectively determined since the groups of learners involved in this study had to sit for a placement test at the beginning of their course, proficiency in Arabic and French was measured only through self-evaluation. The aim of these two questions is to evaluate learners' competence in their background languages on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from excellent to poor since the level of proficiency in background languages is considered as a variable that may predict the source of CLI. Table 2.3 presents learners' self-evaluation[7] of their proficiency in both Arabic and French.

Table 2.2 Learners' Self-evaluation of Arabic and French Competence

	Excellent	**Good**	**Average**	**Poor**
Arabic	49,15 %	44,07 %	6,78 %	0 %
French	10 %	45 %	35 %	10 %

From the table above, it appears that the majority of learners have a good or excellent command of Arabic, only 6,78% rate their level as average, while none of the participants evaluate their level as poor. Concerning French competence, the analysis shows quite different results. While (45%) of participants evaluate their level as good, only 10% consider themselves to be excellent in French, a considerable proportion of participants (35%) rate their level as average, and 10% as poor.

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[7] The analysis of learners' self-evaluation from both groups was not stratified as there were no statistical differences between them in terms of background languages' competence.

- **Learners' Perceptions about Language Distance between Arabic, French, and English**
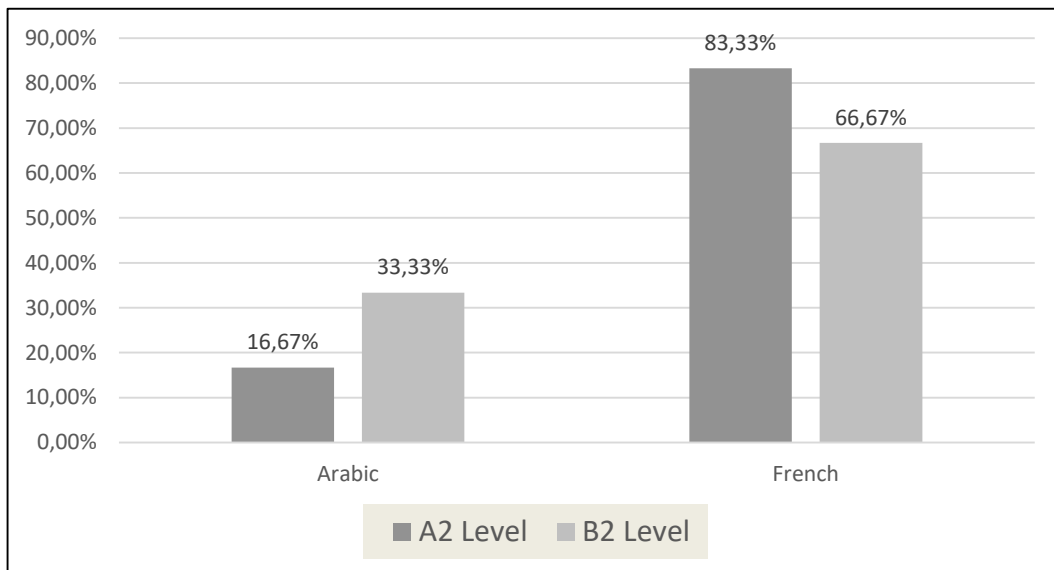
Figure 2.2 Learners' Perceptions about Language Distance between Arabic, French and English

This question seeks to know which of the background languages (Arabic or French) is perceived as more similar to English in general terms as it has been proved that learners' perceptions of language similarities do not always coincide with the actual language distance. The results revealed that most students perceive French to be more similar to English than Arabic. This indicates that psychotypology and typology match in this context.

- **Learners' Language Choice of Translation**
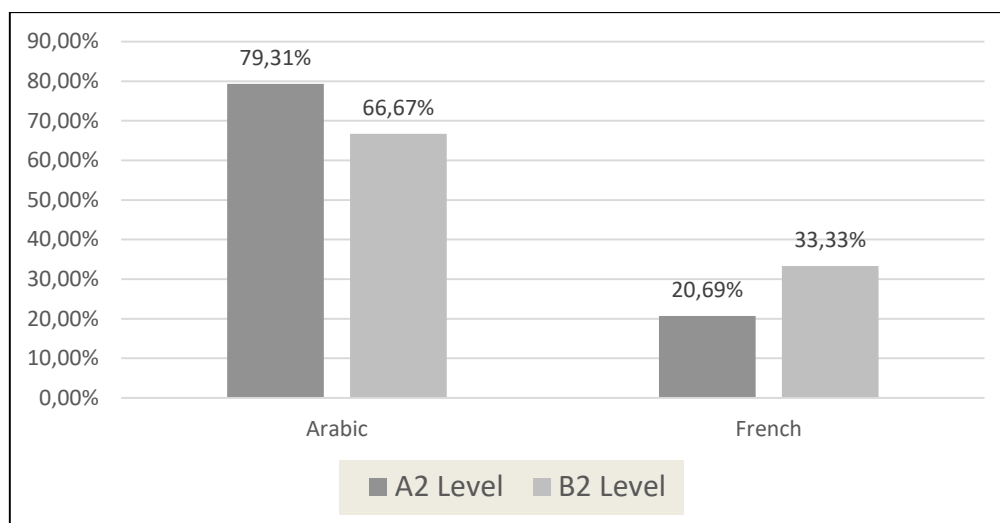
Figure 2.3 Learners' Language Choice of Translation

The question aims to elicit indirectly information about the role of French on learning English. From the analysis, it appears that while most learners preferred to translate into Arabic for attitudinal reasons, a considerable number of participants chose to translate into French attributing their choice to the ease, resulting from the similarities between French and English.

- **Reasons behind CLI**

When asking learners to provide the reasons that may lead them to transfer from another background language, there were no statistical differences between the two levels of proficiency. In other words, both groups of learners (A2 and B2) attributed the linguistic issue of CLI to their low level of proficiency and typological similarities between French and English, as graphically presented in figure 2.4
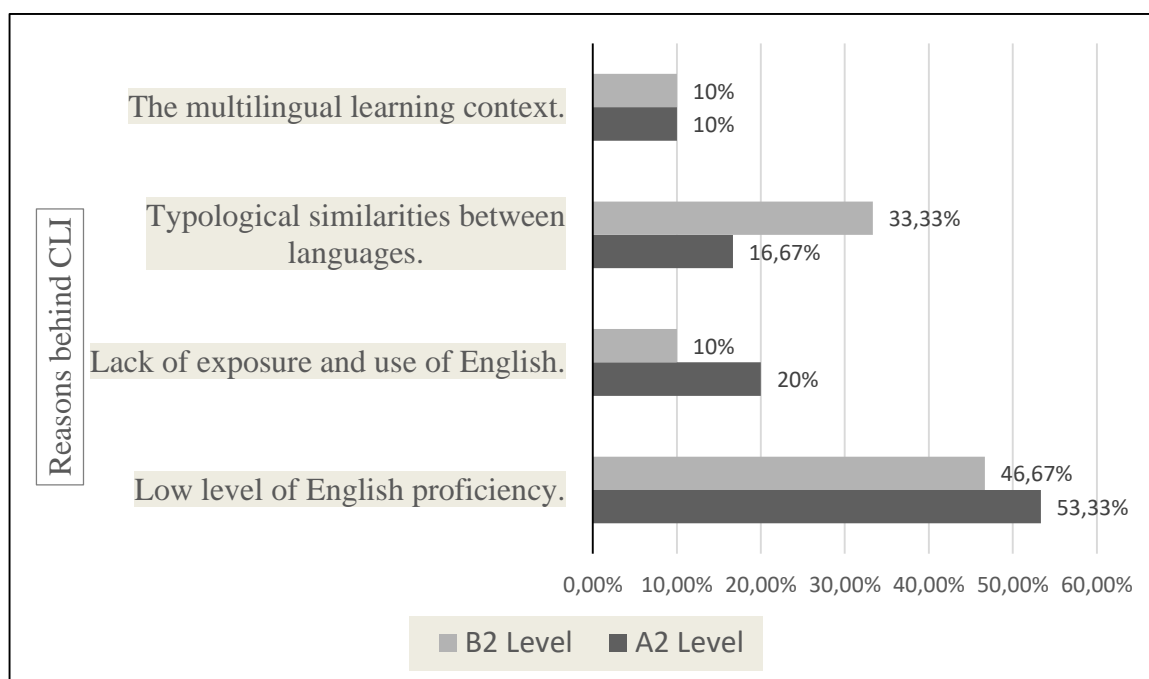
Figure 2.4 Main Reasons behind CLI

The results show that most learners (50%) link the linguistic issue of transfer with their low level of proficiency, followed by typological similarities between languages (25%), then (15%) link it to the lack of exposure or use of English, and only (10%) attributed CLI to the multilingual learning context.

- **Learners' Perceptions on the Role of French on Learning English**

This section is made-up of only three items which were all meant to determine learners' perceptions about the role of French as a typologically similar language in learning English. Learners were asked to give their opinions on a five point-Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The results are summarised in figure 2.5, presented below.

French does not help in learning English.

The similarities between French and English facilitate learning English.

The previous experience of learning a foreign language (French)makes learning English faster and easier.

SA A N D SD
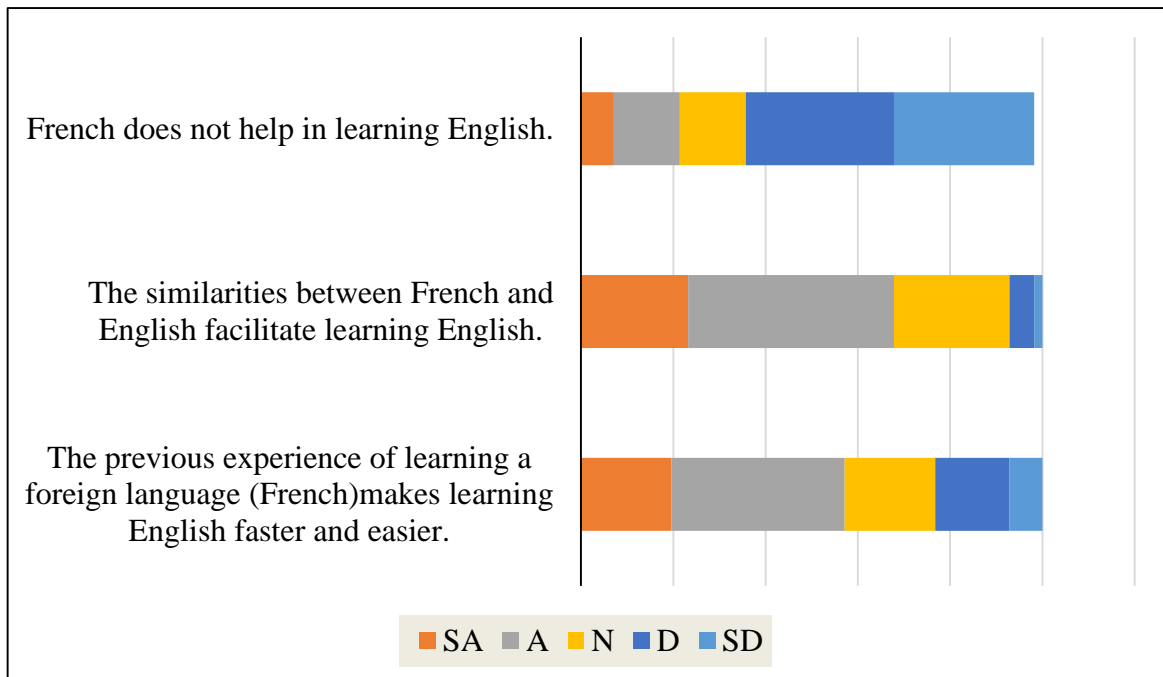
Figure 2.5 Learners' Perceptions about the Role of French on Learning English

The results showed that French, as a typologically similar language learnt prior to English facilitates learning the latter. The same results are presented in table 2.3 showing the distribution of answers of both A2 and B2 groups.

Table 2.3 Distribution of Participants' Responses about the Role of French on Learning English

Item	Group	N		Frequency of answers				
		Valid	Missing	SA	A	N	D	SD
a. The previous experience of learning a foreign language (French) makes learning English easier and faster.	A2	29	1	3	14	2	8	2
	B2	27	3	8	7	9	1	2
	Total	56	4	11	21	11	9	4
b. Similarities between French and English facilitate learning English.	A2	27	3	7	11	6	2	1
	B2	29	1	4	16	8	1	0
	Total	56	4	13	25	14	3	1
c. French does not help in learning English.	A2	27	3	3	4	4	7	9
	B2	29	1	1	4	4	11	9
	Total	56	4	4	8	8	18	18

Table 2.3 indicates that a considerable number of respondents agreed on the fact that the previous experience of learning French makes learning English easier and faster. Data also demonstrate that the majority of learners confirmed the facilitating role of the shared similarities between French and English. Item b was approved by more than two thirds (or 67,86 %) of learners, while only one participant disagreed with the same statement. Out of all participants, (62,5 %) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with item c which states that "French does not help in learning English".

2.3.2 Test's Results Analysis

The test was used to answer the second research question which aims at identifying the source of CLI at different levels of proficiency. In order to do this, the translated texts were analysed in search for instances where CLI could occur. These were identified based on learners' errors and, then, were compared between the two groups of learners.

Transfer instances are often identified based on the explicit deviations from the target language rules in learners' productions. However, it is not always obvious whether the emerging error is a case of CLI or merely a developmental error resulting from learners' lack of knowledge. In this regard, Jarvis ans Pavlenko (2008, p. 41-47) suggests three criteria for the identification of CLI instances, namely:

- Intra-group homogeneity: the tendency for an error to occur along the productions of a group of learners sharing the same background languages.
- Inter-group heterogeneity: is used when learners involved do not share the same background languages and, thus, instances of CLI are not homogenous in all learners' productions.
- Crosslinguistic performance congruity: the ability to link the observed erroneous feature to one of the previously acquired languages.

Accordingly, in this study CLI has been identified based on the first and third criteria since all participants involved in this study are Arabic-French bilingual learners of English. That is, in order for an error to be identified as an instance of CLI, the following criteria have been followed:

- After identifying an error, the erroneous feature has to be related to either Arabic or French.
- The instance has to be consistent i.e. it must appear in a number of translations.

In addition, since the present study relies on a written translation task, only syntactic and lexical types of CLI are considered. The analysis of the test's results revealed that CLI tends to occur from both Arabic and French depending on the

linguistic level and learners' competence in English. The proportion of CLI from both Arabic and French are presented in table 2.4

Table 2.4 Proportion of CLI Instances in Learners' Translations.

Group	Syntactic CLI from Arabic	Lexical CLI from French	Mean Percentage
A2 Level	23,33%	60%	41,67%
B2 Level	3,33%	50%	26,67%

When analysing the source of CLI, it was noticed that while learners tend to transfer syntactic features from their first language Arabic, they relied more on their second language (French) at the lexical level. The results also suggest that CLI from Arabic decreases with an increase in proficiency (no CLI from Arabic was identified in B2 learners' translations, except 3,33% or 1 instance), indicating that it is mainly due to learners' low level of proficiency and unawareness about the structural contrasts between Arabic and English. However, there were no significant differences between the two groups of learners with respect to the percentage of lexical CLI from French. That is, despite having reached a high intermediate B2 level, learners were still inclined to transfer lexically from their second language (French). This clearly indicates that CLI is not merely the result of learners' low level of proficiency but also due to typological similarities between French and English. Table 2.5 presents instances of CLI encountered in learners' translations.

Table 2.5 CLI Instances Identified in Learners' Written Translations.

Types of CLI		Examples
Form-based lexical CLI	Borrowing	*Developpement
	Foreignising	*Cycle from 'siècle' *Eir from 'ère' *Epoc from 'époque'
	Misspelling	Caracterise, industriel, marqued, systeme
Meaning-based CLI	Lexeme matching	*The <u>actual</u> society which we live in today.
Syntactic CLI	The use of resumptive pronouns in relative clauses.	*The society which we live in (<u>it</u>) today.
	Auxiliary drop in passive voice.	*This period characterized by development.
	Ordinal-adjective placement.	*In the <u>half first</u> of the century.

- **Syntactic CLI:**

   In addition to CLI from French, some instances of syntactic transfer from Arabic were also observed among A2 learners, such as the use of the resumptive pronoun in relative clauses (example 1), the auxiliary drop from the passive voice (example 2), and the misplacement of ordinal adjectives in some cases, as shown in the following examples:

(1) *The society which we live in <u>it</u> today.

(The society where we live today)

While French and English share the same grammatical structure in relation to relative clauses, Arabic differs from them in that it requires the insertion of a resumptive pronoun that refers back to the antecedent. In example (1), it seems that learners have transferred this grammatical rule from Arabic into English leading to redundancy and negative transfer. This might be due to the fact that this feature is marked in Arabic making it harder to avoid or as Slabakova (2016) points out it might be due to the lack of comprehensive input and negative evidence required for learners to notice the differences between Arabic and English structures.

(2) *This period characterised by development.

   (This period is characterised by development)

Unlike English and French, the passive form in Arabic does not involve a (copular) auxiliary which may lead to CLI.

(3) *In the half first of the century

   (In the first half of the century)

Ordinal adjective-placement is congruent between French and English, but different in Arabic which is the source of CLI in this case. While in French and English ordinal adjectives generally precede the noun they modify, in Arabic they always take a post-nominal position. These crosslinguistic differences are summarised in table 2.6

Table 2.6 Crosslinguistic Differences between Arabic, French, and English.

Features	Arabic	French	English
The use of resumptive pronoun in relative clauses.	+	-	-
Copula or auxiliary drop	+	-	-
Ordinal adjective-placement	Post-nominal	Pre-nominal	Pre-nominal

2.3.3 Interview Analysis

The interview has been used in order to gain insights into learners' self-reported opinions and perceptions about the impact of bilingualism on their English learning. The main themes emerging from learners' responses have been identified and, then, analysed and discussed in relation to the research questions and hypotheses, using content analysis.

Theme 1: Learners' Opinions about the Effect of Arabic-French Bilingualism on Learning English

1. In your opinion, have Arabic and French affected your learning of English?

As for the first question which addresses whether Arabic and French affect learning English, learners' answers varied. The majority of respondents (6 out of 8) have denied the effects from previous languages. However, two others revealed different attitudes towards the impact of bilingualism on English. While one of them reported a positive influence, the other asserted that she experienced some kind of 'confusion', especially from French. When the latter was asked to justify her response, she linked that to her low level of French. This in a way shows that the impact of bilingualism is related to learners' level of French so that when they have a higher proficiency in French, it will be easier for them to learn English.

Theme 2: Learners' Awareness about CLI

In questions 2 and 3, respondents were asked whether they rely on structures from Arabic and/or French or not and whether they face any kind of interference between their languages. The aim here was to check if learners are aware of the linguistic phenomenon of CLI. All the asked interviewees affirmed that they often rely on French vocabulary, but not on Arabic when learning English. They linked their reliance on French to the fact that the two languages share many similar words.

3.Have you ever experienced interference from Arabic and/or French?

Most respondents asserted they did not experience any kind of interference from Arabic or French except for one respondent who referred to the issue of false friends. In view of the test's results which showed interference from both Arabic and French, these learners' claims reflect their unawareness about the possibility of CLI and the differences between their languages.

Theme 3: The Role of the Similarities between French and English on Learning English as a Third Language

4. Has the previous experience of learning French affected your learning of English? If so, in what way(s)?

Most informants (6 out of 8) acknowledged the positive effects that their previous experience of learning a foreign language has on their English learning, except two of them who declared that it made it even harder.

5.Do you think that the similarities between French and English facilitate learning English?

Regarding this question, all the asked interviewees with no exception acknowledged the facilitating role of the similarities between French and English. In particular, they all agreed on the fact that orthographically similar words to French were easier to learn and remember. They further added that due to these similarities, even if they do not know the meaning of an English word they encounter, they can still guess it. When they were asked to give other examples apart from similar words, learners on their part did not specify any particular grammatical rules. The following excerpts from some interviews show learners' perceptions about the facilitating role of French on learning English.

(1) "Yes, some words in English look like those in French, so when you know the word in French, it becomes easier to learn it in English"

(2) "Because of the presence of French in the society, the majority of us learn English through French".

6. **Do you think that it would be different to learn English without having learnt French first or would it be the same?**

The last question of the interview aims to verify whether respondents would learn English in the same way as a second language. This question is in a way related to the previous question since it also aims at knowing the facilitating role of French and whether they would learn English in the same way if they supposedly had learnt it as a second language without having learnt French first. While a respondent claimed that it would be harder as according to him "French accelerates learning English", the others' responses have shown a kind of discrepancy with their answers to previous questions in the sense that even those who reported positive effects of French on English learning, they showed a kind of preference for learning English before French asserting that it would be even easier. When asked to justify their answers, they explained with reference to the idea that learning a foreign language earlier makes it easier and faster regardless of the presence of other similar languages or not.

2.4 Data Interpretation

In this section, the data obtained from the different research instruments are interpreted with reference to the existing literature and theories in the field of TLA so as to provide answers to the research questions and hypotheses of the present study.

2.4.1 Impact of Arabic-French Bilingualism on Learning English

Concerning the first research question, the findings revealed an intermingled impact of Arabic-French bilingualism on learning English as a third language in the sense that it may result in both facilitating effects as well as negative CLI. Learners' self-reported perceptions in both the interviews and the questionnaire have testified their ability to take advantage of their background knowledge when learning English, particularly of French due to its similarities with English. Table 2.3 in addition to the

interviews' results indicate that the majority of learners viewed French as a language facilitator permitting them to fill in comprehension gaps and make inferences about the meaning of English words based on the similarities between the two languages. Only a limited number of participants did not approve of any benefits and these are the same who reported both in the questionnaire and interviews to have a low level in French. This suggests that the level of proficiency in French might play a significant role since an increased competence in the latter implies a higher degree of bilingualism and metalinguistic awareness which may serve as a basis for learning an additional language. These results can be explained with reference to Cummins' (1976; 1979) Interdependence and Threshold Hypotheses which speculate that increased levels of proficiency in a background language may facilitate learning a subsequent one. Yet, the data collected from the translation task make it clear that this reliance on French does not always lead to facilitation, but may also cause negative transfer. This is manifested in learners' translations which showed a number of CLI instances. Such findings lead to the conclusion that Arabic-French bilingualism can be facilitative, but may also result in negative CLI. Therefore, the first hypothesis which assumes that Arabic-French bilingualism facilitates learning English among Algerian learners is only partly confirmed.

2.4.2 Source of CLI

Regarding the source of CLI, the analysis of the test's results revealed that it does not necessarily come only from one language, but rather different languages may intervene at different levels during the production of English. This might be explained on the ground of the holistic principle that all languages are interconnected in the mental lexicon. The data also illustrated a kind of disassociation between different linguistic levels since the source of CLI was not the same at the lexical and syntactic levels. While more transfer occurred from French at the lexical level, Arabic also exerted some influence at the syntactic level, though to a lesser extent. Moreover, a comparison between the test's results at the two proficiency levels demonstrates that while at beginning stages of English learning, CLI occurred from

both Arabic and French, more advanced learners (B2) tend to transfer only lexically from French. This is attributed to the increased level of proficiency in English and, hence, a more developed linguistic awareness about the differences between Arabic and English structures with regard to relative clauses, passive form, and ordinal adjective-placement. The fact that transfer from French persisted even at more proficient levels is a clear indication of the effect of typological similarities. The analysis of the source of CLI can also be explained in the light of four models of CLI.

- **The Source of CLI within the CEM**

The CEM predicts that CLI will occur from both languages property-by-property. However, such a model suggests that CLI cannot occur unless it facilitates learning. Accordingly, only positive transfer is possible, otherwise it will not occur. The data obtained in the present study provides counter-evidence to this model in that many instances of negative CLI were identified.

- **The Source of CLI within the L2 Status Factor Model**

According to this model, the second language is always the source of CLI regardless of the studied language constellation. The data in this study yield instances of CLI from learners' first language (Arabic) which leads to refute the validity of this model on this context.

- **The source of CLI according to the TPM and LPM**

According to these models, the source of CLI is primarily predicted by the typological and structural similarities between languages indicating that transfer comes only from typologically related languages. Accordingly, in the present case, French would normally be the source of CLI. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the number of transferred items from French exceeds that from Arabic, yet morphosyntactic CLI which was basically the level tested in most of these models

has been found to come instead only from Arabic. These results confirm Hermas' (2014) findings giving evidence for morphosyntactic CLI from Arabic among Moroccan Arabic-French bilingual learners of English.

In sum, based on the obtained results, none of the proposed models can adequately explain or predict which background language may constitute the main source of CLI. As shown in the results of the present study, languages may intervene in different ways, at different linguistic levels, and this may vary in accordance with learners' different levels of proficiency and the factors involved in a particular learning context.

2.4.3 Main Factors Responsible for the Occurrence of CLI

As for the third hypothesis which concerns the factors behind CLI, it is stated that the occurrence of CLI from a particular language depends on a number of factors, among which learners' level of proficiency, typological similarities between the languages involved, and the amount or frequency of use of each language. Once asking learners about the reasons behind CLI, the majority linked this linguistic issue to their low level of proficiency and typological similarities between French and English. This was also manifested in their English productions in which less transfer occurred from Arabic among advanced learners, while lexical transfer from French was consistent even at high intermediate levels. The fact that CLI from French persisted even at higher levels is a clear indication of the effect of typological similarities. Therefore, the results obtained indicate that indeed learners' level of English proficiency as well as the typological similarities between French and English are the main influencing factors leading to the occurrence of CLI, which leads to confirm the third hypothesis.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with the practical part of the study in which the methodological design was described and the data gathered were analysed and interpreted in the light of models and theories of TLA. The discussion of the results obtained led to the conclusion that Arabic-French bilingualism indeed affects learning English as a third language among Algerian learners. In fact, it is considered by many learners as an asset in their learning process, particularly in a situation where they are already predisposed with French, a typologically related language. Nevertheless, while this role of bilingualism has become common knowledge, learners are still faced with the issue of negative CLI, a phenomenon mainly driven by their low level of English proficiency as well as typological similarities between French and English. From a pedagogic perspective, these results suggest a shift into more contextualized teaching practices which concord with the Algerian sociolinguistic context.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Bilinguals often draw on their background knowledge when they come to learn a new language. This is particularly true in bilingual contexts like the Algerian one, in which some of the languages in contact are typologically similar. The present study has probed the extent to which Arabic-French bilingualism and CLI affect learning English as a third language. The aim was to answer the following questions:

1. How does Arabic-French bilingualism affect learning English as a third language in Algeria?
2. Which of the background languages (Arabic or French) constitutes the main source of CLI?
3. What are the main factors responsible for the occurrence of CLI among Algerian learners of English?

The present work has begun with a theoretical chapter wherein the relevant concepts and models to bilingualism and TLA have been introduced and, then, projected on the Algerian context, while the second one has dealt with the research methodology and the empirical study which relied on the mixed-methods approach, using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a test.

The quantitative and qualitative analyses of the obtained data have confirmed the generally acknowledged beneficial effects of bilingualism on third language learning. Yet, the results of the test have revealed that the majority of participants fell in the trap of negative transfer from either Arabic or French. This might be due as the interviews yield to learners' lack of metalinguistic awareness about the possibility of CLI and the divergences between their languages. On the basis of the linguistic assumption that the positive outcomes of bilingualism are related to, as Cenoz (2013) notes, the developed metalinguistic awareness, it may be assumed that teachers and language planners need to consider which pedagogical approaches or tasks may bring about such developed metalinguistic awareness. In this regard, Bono (2011) calls for the necessity to work on linguistic awareness in order for learners to take advantage of their bilingualism. Additionally, recent studies make it clear that learners naturally

draw on their background knowledge and go through a silent process of making comparisons between their languages (Jessner 2008b). Therefore, it becomes necessary to make explicit those silent processes through explicitly discussing and comparing the features shared between languages as well as the differences that may lead to interference. These approaches to foreign language teaching have actually been adopted in some European contexts, such as that of the 'EuroCom' project which aims at helping learners of European languages to learn additional related languages through transferring their linguistic knowledge (Jessner, 2008b). Based on his Interdependence Hypothesis, Cummins (2017) also proposed a different pedagogical approach for transfer that relates language syllabuses to each other and takes into consideration the setting in which the third language is taught as well as the linguistic distance between the languages involved in a particular context. In a bilingual setting where English is taught after French, a typologically similar language, adopting such a comparative-crosslinguistic approach to teaching foreign languages, as proposed by Cummins (2017), permits learners to develop metalinguistic awareness and to gain time in their learning.

The present study was constrained by many limitations. The first concerns the nature of the topic investigated itself. The phenomenon of CLI is a complex process which may manifest at different linguistic levels and is governed by a variety of factors. Therefore, it was not possible to investigate all these aspects in a single research. In fact, the translation task used could cover only some linguistic levels. Besides, relying on learners' perceptions to measure the impact of bilingualism on learning English seems to touch the reliability of the findings as learners do not always reveal their true perceptions. However, this was the only possible option to measure the positive influence of bilingualism. Another limitation relates to the choice of the sample population. The study targeted learners at the intensive language teaching centre. This sample was chosen on purpose since learners' level of proficiency in this institution is objectively measured through placement tests which enables, in turn, to verify the impact of bilingualism and CLI along the learning process. Yet, learning a language in such institutions differs from that of the school system in that these courses are of short-term and that learners are generally adults

taking language courses for different purposes. Thus, the findings of the present study fit only the context of extra-language courses and cannot be generalised to learning English in other contexts. Further research adopting a different methodology and examining the possibility of using a crosslinguistic approach to teaching foreign languages in the context of public schools is encouraged in order to get a more comprehensive view about the way Arabic-French bilingualism affects learning English. This will in turn inform the didactics of foreign languages in the Algerian context, particularly with the recent decree of the simultaneous introduction of English along French at primary schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A   **Questionnaire**

Dear participant,

The following questionnaire is part of a master 2 research aiming at investigating the impact of Arabic-French bilingualism and crosslinguistic influence on learning English as a third language in Algeria. You are kindly requested to answer these questions.

Section I:

Please tick where appropriate

1. Have you studied any other language(s) apart from French and English?

Yes ☐   No ☐   If yes, please mention them --

2. How long have you been learning English? ……………years

3. How do you evaluate your level in Arabic:

Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Average ☐   Poor ☐

4. How do you evaluate your level in French:

Excellent ☐   Good ☐   Average ☐   Poor ☐

5. Have you taken a French-language learning course: Yes ☐   No ☐

Section II: Language Distance

6. Which language do you perceive as more similar to English?

    Arabic ☐   French ☐

7. If you're given a translation task in English, which language would you prefer to translate to?

    Arabic ☐   French ☐   Why? --

---------------------------------- --

8. According to your experience as a language learner, what are the reasons that lead to crosslinguistic influence?

☐ a. Your low level of proficiency in English

☐ b. Lack of exposure and use of English

☐ c. Typological similarity between languages

☐ d. The multilingual learning context

☐ e. Other, please specify --

Section III:

(SA=strongly agree, A=agree, N=neutral, D=disagree, SD= strongly disagree)

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. The previous experience of learning a foreign language (French) makes learning English easier and faster.					
10. The similarities between French and English facilitate learning English.					
11. French does not help in learning English.					

Thank you.

The following test aims at investigating the source of crosslinguistic influence among Algerian Arabic-French bilingual learners of English. You are kindly requested to translate the following text from Arabic into English. This is completely anonymous as you do not have to write your name on it.

<u>Text:</u>

عصر المعلومات

إنّ المجتمع الحالي الّذي نعيشه اليوم يتّسم بأنّه عصر المعلومات، و هو ما يلي العصر الصّناعي الّذي ميّز تطوّر المجتمع في النّصف الأوّل من هذا القرن، و خاصّة في الدّول المتقدّمة. و هذه المرحلة المتطوّرة للتّغيير الإجتماعي تتّصف بتغيير في الأساليب و الأنماط المؤثّرة على النّمو الإقتصادي. فالمجتمع في الحقبة التي تلي المرحلة الصّناعية يتّصف بأنّ النّمو الإقتصادي فيه يعتمد على التّوسّع في اقتصاد الخدمات المبنيّة أساسا على نظم المعلومات بتكنولوجيّاتها المتقدّمة.

Appendix C   **Interview**

1. In your opinion, have Arabic and French affected your learning of English?
2. Do you rely on structures or vocabulary from Arabic and/or French while learning English?
3. Has the previous experience of learning French affected your learning of English? If so, in what way(s)?
4. Do you think that the similarities between French and English facilitate the process of learning English? Could you give some examples in which French has helped you to learn English?
5. Have you ever experienced interference from your previously acquired languages (Arabic and/or French)?
6. Do you think that it would be different to learn English without having learnt French first or would it be the same?