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L1 influence on Second Language Acquisition and Teaching

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Abstract

The effect of the first language (L1) on the acquisition of a second (L2) or additional language has been a long-debated issue in the area of second language acquisition, from early contrastivist approaches to current cognitive perspectives. In this paper we will review the main theoretical accounts of cross-linguistic influence focusing on recent perspectives, such as linguistic relativity, the multicompetence framework and cognitive linguistics/usage-based approaches. We will also point to the teaching implications, not only as regards the native vs. the non-native teacher but also the role of the L1 in classroom instruction and the elaboration of textbooks and teaching materials.

Keywords: L1 influence; Second Language Acquisition; Teaching; cross-linguistic influence; instruction;

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1. Introduction

The influence of one language on the learning of another has been a relevant object of study in the field of second language acquisition and is currently a key issue in the understanding of how languages are acquired. The focus of this paper is to offer an overview of the most relevant approaches to this topic, focusing on current perspectives in the field. This study is organised as follows: first the development of the term *transfer* and the early approaches to first language influence across languages are offered. Secondly current perspectives are explained, namely the multicompetence framework and linguistic relativity as well as the difference between conceptual transfer and thinking for speaking. Current cognitive linguistics/usage-based approaches are also offered. Finally, teaching implications including the role of the teacher (native versus non-native), the use of the L1 in the classroom and the elaboration of teaching materials are covered.

1.1 The term transfer

During the heyday of contrastive analysis (CA) the influence of the first language was thought to have a negative effect in the L2, therefore the term interference was used to refer to this phenomenon. This term is often used in Weinreich (1953). This was closely related to behaviourism, as established by Skinner (1957). During the 1950's and 60's the term transfer was used, which originated in psychology where it indicated any previous knowledge being applied to new knowledge. Odlin (1989) refers to it as the effect of any other language that has been previously acquired. Selinker (1972, 1992) also uses this term but in 1989 Kellerman and Sharwood-Smith started using the term cross-linguistic influence (CLI), which is now widely used in the field. It refers to the many ways in which the knowledge we have in one language can affect the understanding and use of another.

1.2 Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and the Creative Construction Hypothesis

CA has pedagogic origins, it was originally created to teach a L2. This trend follows the behaviourist view of language acquisition (although not all contrastivists were in fact behaviourists) where a stimulus produces a response and the relationship between both creates a habit. Interference happens when habits are transferred from the L1 to the L2. According to this, similar language patterns will lead to positive transfer and different language patterns will cause negative transfer. Wardaugh proposed a strong and a weak form for contrastive analysis. The strong form states that all errors can be predicted by identifying the differences between the L1 and the L2. The weak form is diagnostic, it identifies which errors are the result of interference. The main representative of CA is Lado (1957) although previous work has been done by Fries (1945) and Weinreich (1953). In fact the latter established the notion of "interlingual identifications" "when learners make the same what cannot be the same" (Weinreich, 1953). CA started to decline and Nemser (1971) summarises the main problems that lead to this. For instance, some of the errors that were predicted did not occur, therefore the predictions were ambiguous. Besides, languages cannot be compared as wholes and they are not static.

Error Analysis (EA) started to emerge as a reaction to the previous trend, CA. The traditional attitude to errors proposed by CA implied that learners had not mastered the L2 rules. However, it has been shown that not all errors were the result of interference from the L1. This trend provided a definition of error and the difference between error and mistake. Errors were not something to be avoided, on the contrary they help the teacher to know the students' progress, they also help the researcher to know how the language is acquired and they are useful for students to understand their development by learning and testing hypotheses. Moreover, this trend also provided a methodology to analyse errors which consisted of five steps: selection of the corpus, identification of the error, classification, explanation and evaluation. As happened to CA, EA was also criticized. According to Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977), the main points of criticism were the analysis of errors in isolation,

the proper classification of identified errors, statements of error frequency and the identification of errors in the corpus, which refers to the fact that they only analysed the errors, but not the non-errors, therefore errors were analysed in isolation. Another criticism emerged from the fact that sometimes it was difficult to classify where an error was in the structure and also to assign ambiguous errors to a specific cause. Frequency was another issue as it was difficult to distinguish points of difficulty in the L2 from those where errors occurred frequently.

Language transfer was minimized in the mentalist viewpoint represented by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) These authors define the Creative Construction Hypothesis (CCH) as:

“the subconscious process by which language learners gradually organize the language they hear, according to the rules they construct to understand and generate sentences. The form of the rules is determined by mental mechanisms responsible for human language acquisition and use. These mechanisms appear to be innate (1982).”

The CCH states that L2 users are all the same and L2 learning is a universal process. According to the CCH, the influence of the native language is disregarded as it is not considered to have much influence on the acquisition of another language. Moreover, for the CCH there is not much difference between first and second language acquisition. According to Dulay and Burt (1974), both L1 and L2 acquisition are guided by [creative construction](#). This means that every learner creates hypotheses about the patterns of the language which are being learnt. According to the CCH the learner has a specific type of innate mental organization and s/he adjusts the linguistic rules as s/he organizes the language being acquired and in L1 acquisition this process is guided by the particular form of the L1 system, as Dulay and Burt (1974) state. The evidence for this hypothesis comes from a series of morpheme-order studies. The main problem with the CCH is that they propose that the process of L1 and L2 acquisition is the same yet it is only presupposed but there is no evidence for that in their studies. Moreover, they find some evidence of transfer but offer no explanation for that.

1.3 The Interlanguage Hypothesis

In 1972 Selinker proposed the Interlanguage hypothesis (IL), which meant a turning-point in the field of SLA. According to Selinker, the IL shares features both with CCH and with CA. It has the psychological assumptions in common with CCH and with CA it shares the concept of language transfer. An IL is an independent system although it is related both to the L1 and the L2 by the perception of the learner. ILs have their own structure and contain new forms learners create. When we observe them from the perspective of the L2 they seem to contain deviated forms but from the perspective of the IL they are structures. An IL has two central cognitive processes, transfer and fossilization. Transfer is a central process with its own principles, it is selective as not everything is likely to be transferred. Transfer can also occur from the L2 to the L1, or from one IL to another, not only from the L1 to the L2. On the other hand, fossilization is a cessation of IL learning. A previous step to fossilization is stabilization, a temporary stage of getting stuck. Transfer and fossilization are connected in the *Multiple Effects Principle* (Selinker and Lakshmanan, 1992) which states that when two or more factors work together IL forms tend to be fossilized.

In 2013, 40 years of IL were celebrated with a conference at Teacher's College Columbia. The papers from the conference have been recently published in Han and Tarone (2014). As a possible post-IL effect, Selinker comments that without fossilization there would be no field of SLA. The phenomenon of getting stuck has already been noticed by some scholars such as Weinreich (1953) or Nemser, (1971), but, as Selinker (2014) states before its labelling as fossilization in IL there was no organized empirical work on it.

Since the 1950's a number of books have dealt with transfer but three stand out: Gass and Selinker (1983), which is a collection of 12 papers, both theoretical and empirical, mainly focused on transfer in

IL, an important paper being Selinker and Lakshmanan's. Odlin's (1989) book, which stands out as being the most complete regarding transfer literature and the recent book by Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008), who deal with the new developments that have taken place since the publication of Odlin's book. They deal with L2 users and with CLI as a psycholinguistic phenomenon. Two books complete the most up-to-date perspectives on CLI: Yu & Odlin (2015) and Alonso (2015). In the following section we will deal with recent approaches to CLI.

1.4 Recent approaches

Three main recent issues have emerged in the field of Second Language Acquisition, which also consider CLI: the multicompetence framework, the renewed interest in linguistic relativity and the development of conceptual transfer as well as its comparison with the thinking-for-speaking hypothesis.

1.4.1 The multicompetence framework

Multicompetence refers to the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind (Cook, 1994). The L2 user is seen as a whole person therefore this trend does not focus on the monolingual speaker as the ideal reference. Cook (2003) considers that there is evidence for multi-competence as a distinct state of mind. This author believes that L2 users differ from monolinguals in their knowledge of the L2, for example in the word associations they make. Advanced L2 users also differ from monolinguals in their knowledge of the L2, for instance in the issue of "ultimate" attainment. Besides, L2 users have a different metalinguistic awareness from those who only know an L2 in aspects such as the detection of anomalous sentences. L2 users also have different cognitive processes from monolinguals. On the other hand there is evidence of holistic multicompetence. The L1 and the L2 share the same mental lexicon, L2 users codeswitch from L1 to L2. L2 processing cannot be cut off from L2 and both languages are stored roughly in the same areas of the brain, as there is hemispheric lateralisation and the same sites. Moreover in academic circumstances the level of L2 proficiency is related to the level of L1 proficiency. There are studies which support the fact that knowing more than one language changes the L2 user's mind and as Coggins et al (2004) state knowing another language causes greater density of connections in the corpus callosum. Recent studies by Bialystock et al. (2014), Schweizer et al (2012), Craik et al. (2010) show that the cognitive effort which is required to manage two languages contributes to the "cognitive reserve", which accumulates when stimulating activities are undertaken, and it protects against Alzheimer's disease. Lifelong bilinguals which suffer from dementia show symptoms of the disease four years later than similar monolingual patients.

1.4.2 Linguistic relativity

The notion that thought is shaped by language is related to linguistic determinism (Whorf, 1956). The Whorfian view considered that thought and action are determined by language. If languages differ, their speakers will also differ in the way they perceive situations. This strong Whorfian perspective has been abandoned and a renewed interest in linguistic relativity has emerged. The studies of Levinson (1997), Lucy (1992) and Pedersen et al. (1998) support the evidence that the way we speak can affect the way we think. Bowerman (1996) has shown that languages differ in how they describe spatial relations. English makes a distinction between putting things in containers (apples in a bowl) and onto surfaces (apple on the table). Korean, on the other hand, makes a distinction between tight and loose relationships or attachment, thus "apple in bowl" requires the term "nehta", indicating loose containment, but "putting a letter in an envelope" requires "kitta", which indicates tight fit. This seems to support the idea that our native language may impose constraints on our spatial thinking. Languages also differ in their descriptions of time. A study by Boroditsky (2001) showed that Mandarin speakers think about time vertically even when they speak English, as they use vertical metaphors to

talk about time (Scott, 1989). Grammatical gender also tends to vary across languages. Languages with grammatical gender mark objects by means of articles, pronouns, often by modifying adjectives or verbs. The grammatical genders assigned to objects can influence the mental representation of objects.

From the point of view of linguistic relativity, Athanasopoulos (2009, 2011) conducted studies to observe if speakers of different languages think differently because they encode and use different concepts. The 2011s study was carried out in the domain of colour in Greek-English bilinguals and English monolinguals in order to show whether bilinguals who speak two languages that differ in grammatical and lexical categories "may shift their cognitive representation of those categories towards that of monolingual speakers of their second language " (p.83) The so-called "weak" version of the linguistic relativity hypothesis indicates that language directs attention to specific perceptual issues. Athanasopoulos states that if language-specific concepts direct attention to certain features then research on human cognition should deal with how attention is modulated in bilinguals. In the domain of colour, language influences colour categorisation. In his paper this author analyses whether cognitive representation of colour is affected by knowledge of two languages which differ in how they code the colour space. Twenty native speakers of Greek separated into two proficiency groups took part in the study in the first experiment. The stimuli consisted of 160 fully saturated Munsell colour chips, which varied in hue and lightness. 30 speakers of Greek who were bilingual in English took part in the second experiment. The stimuli were individual glossy Munsell chips. The two groups of subjects were bilinguals with languages differing in how they code the colour space. The results showed a shift in colour placement depending in the level of bilingualism and that they way bilinguals perceived "the distinction between their native colour categories depended on the availability of specific L1 and L2 colour terms in semantic memory, suggesting that semantic salience as well as similarities in surface linguistic form may account for bilingual cognitive behaviour in this case" (Athanasopoulos, 2011). This study shows that the area of bilingualism is ideal for testing the linguistic relativity hypothesis.

1.4.3 Conceptual transfer and thinking-for speaking

The Conceptual Transfer Hypothesis (CTH) focuses on the relationship between language and cognition, more specifically on the effects of the patterns of cognition of one language in the acquisition of another. The term conceptual transfer refers to the nature of conceptual representations, their accessibility and processing in perception and production (Jarvis, 1998; Pavlenko, 1998). As Jarvis (2007) states: "As a theoretical construct, conceptual transfer can be characterized as the hypothesis that certain instances of crosslinguistic influence in a person's use of one language originate from the conceptual knowledge and patterns of thought that the person has acquired as a speaker of another language" (2007) This hypothesis is referred to as the Conceptual Transfer Hypothesis. It has its roots in the work of Whorf (1940), Weinreich (1953), Lado, (1957) and Kaplan (1966). In the decades of the 1970's and 1980's research in cognitive science and the work of Rosch (1973), Levelt (1989) and von Stutterheim and Klein (1987), to name a few, helped to establish the groundwork for this hypothesis.

According to Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008), cross-linguistic influence can originate from either conceptual knowledge or processing. In fact, Jarvis (2007) has divided the CTH into concept and conceptualization transfer. The former refers to transfer related to the inventory of concepts in the learner's mind, either to lexicalized or grammaticised concepts and conceptualization transfer, which refers to the processing of that knowledge, more specifically, Jarvis refers to it as "Transfer arising from cross-linguistic differences in the ways L2 users process conceptual knowledge and form temporary representations in their working memory" (2007, p. 53). Jarvis and Pavlenko emphasize the difference between conceptual transfer and semantic transfer. Semantic transfer refers to the relationship between words and concepts, it can be applied to those cases where a polysemous word in a language can result in a non-target word in another. For example, the word "lengua" in Spanish can mean both *language* and *tongue*. Semantic transfer can lead L2 learners to produce a sentence

such as "I speak two tongues" instead of "I speak two languages". This does not mean that a learner is relating a concept of the L1 to the L2 but that s/he is transferring the meaning of the word in the L1 to the L2. According to Odlin (2005, 2008), we should also distinguish between meaning transfer and conceptual transfer. Meaning transfer refers to the influence from the semantics and pragmatics of the L1 on the L2. All conceptual transfer involves meaning transfer but not all meaning transfer involves conceptual transfer. From this perspective, conceptual transfer can be considered a subset of meaning transfer.

The renewed interest in linguistic relativity thanks to the work of Levinson (1997), Lucy (1992) and Pedersen et al. (1998) provided support for the notion that language can influence thought. The thinking for speaking hypothesis proposed by Slobin refers to it as a special kind of thinking which happens *on-line* in the process of speaking (1991). In his own words "Each native language has trained its speakers to pay different kinds of attention to events and experiences when talking about them. This training is carried out in childhood and is exceptionally resistant to restructuring in adult L2 acquisition" (Slobin, 1993). If we apply this hypothesis to SLA then, we have another way to thinking for speaking as Cadierno (2004, 2010) defends or learning to rethink for speaking, as Robinson and Ellis (2008) mention. Although conceptual transfer and thinking for speaking vary in their origins, the former was meant for the analysis of the L2 while the latter was originally formulated for L1 analysis, both of them seem to overlap at the processing level since the former is concerned with storage and processing and TFS deals with processing at the moment of verbalization. Therefore, TFS covers a broader domain, the L1 and L2, but a narrower scope since it deals with the speech-planning process, although in the analysis of gestures it also reflects what the speaker is thinking imaginatively.

The thinking for speaking hypothesis (TFS) proposed by Slobin (1996a) considers that language filters experiences into verbalized events and those verbalized events are constructed in the process of speaking. The thinking that is carried on-line in the process of speaking varies depending on the speaker's L1, therefore native speakers of typologically different languages exhibit different types of thinking for speaking. This notion implies a more cautious version of Whorf's (1956) linguistic relativity hypothesis. The main difference between linguistic relativity and TFS is, as Athanasopoulos and Bylund (2013) state that "the former focuses on effects of linguistic structure on non-verbal behaviour and conceptual representation, while the latter focuses on effects of linguistic structure on the cognitive processes involved in speech production". TFS also differs from the neo-relativist view of Lucy (1992, 1996) and Levinson (2003) who defend the influence of language on non-linguistic cognition. It can be argued that TFS implies a less deterministic view of linguistic diversity. According to Berman and Slobin (1994) the child learns particular ways of thinking for speaking when acquiring a native language; i.e., the child "learns to attend to particular aspects of experience and to relate them verbally in ways that are characteristic of that language" (Berman and Slobin, 1994, p. 611) considering that each language trains its speakers to pay different kinds of attention to specific details of events in the process of speaking. As Slobin (1996a) hypothesizes, this training in early childhood can make restructuring difficult in L2 acquisition. If TFS is applied to second language acquisition then learning a second language involves learning another way of thinking for speaking, as Cadierno (2004), Cadierno and Lund (2004) and Stam (1998) state. Learning a L2 involves paying attention to particular details of motion events and how they are expressed in the foreign language as well as learning "how the semantic components of motion events are mapped onto L2 surface forms" (Cadierno and Ruiz, 2006).

Thinking for speaking in the L2 therefore focuses on the thinking that takes place in the process of verbalization, understanding this term as relevant both to production and perception and to both written and oral modalities (cf. Slobin, 2000). As mentioned above, the CTH, as established by Jarvis (2007), makes a distinction between concept transfer, i.e. the storage of concepts, and conceptualization transfer, i.e. the processing. There seems to be a certain overlap in the phase of conceptualization transfer and the verbalization process in TFS, although obvious differences are also observed. Conceptual transfer is meant for the study of second languages while TFS was originally

proposed for the analysis of different L1s, but probably the most relevant distinction is that TFS deals most typically with processing at the moment of verbalization while conceptual transfer covers both processing and the inventory of different concepts. Therefore, TFS covers a broader domain, the L1 and L2, but a narrower scope since it deals with the speech-planning process, although in the analysis of gestures it also reflects what the speaker is thinking imagistically. As Jarvis (2010) acknowledges, the CTH covers a narrower domain, i.e. the L2 but a broader scope since it deals both with conceptual inventories and conceptualization processes. In contrast, Stam (p.c.) considers that TFS regarding the timing of the gesture may be more related to conceptualization transfer. It is at the level of conceptualization that both the CTH and TFS seem to overlap. Jarvis (p.c.) considers that there is a partial overlap between both hypotheses.

Although CLI regarding the relationship between language and cognition has been mainly analysed by the CTH, differences are made in the CLI literature between CTH, semantic transfer and meaning transfer, as proposed by Odlin (2005, 2008). They differ not only in their focus of study but also in the methodology followed for their analysis. According to Jarvis, the CTH needs language-performance data to support the idea that the differences in cognition between two languages influence the use the learner makes of the target language. In contrast, Odlin (2005, 2008, 2010) considers that non-verbal tasks are needed to show the effect of conceptual transfer. According to this author conceptual transfer can be considered a subset of meaning transfer. Therefore, studies such as Ijaz (1986) that consider meaning transfer in Urdu and German to affect the use of spatial prepositions in English can only provide evidence of meaning transfer rather than conceptual transfer since a cloze-test is a linguistic task and therefore cannot provide evidence of conceptual transfer. As a result what is evidence for conceptual transfer for Ijaz is in fact evidence of meaning transfer for Odlin.

On other hand, linguistic relativity uses non-verbal, non-linguistic tasks, such as memory tasks, similarity judgements or sorting tasks. In its turn, TFS uses verbal data as it focuses mainly on the process of verbalization, however it should be mentioned that Slobin (2003) considers that TFS does not only cover the process of verbalization. In fact there are a number of studies that focus on speech and gesture (Brown and Gullberg, 2008; Gullberg, 2011; Stam, 2006) although the process of verbalization has been the most widely investigated. As Athanasopoulos and Bylund (2013) mention most studies have focused on the organisation of information in discourse yet few examine the cognitive aspects of speech production and the 'thinking' should not be restricted to a matter of information structure.

We agree with Odlin (2005, 2008) that at least one non-linguistic task should be necessary to determine that cross-linguistic influence at the level of concepts exists. To detect whether language transfer takes place linguistic performance data are needed, however linguistic data alone cannot reflect whether conceptual transfer is involved. In fact, non-verbal tasks alone could be used to determine whether transfer at the level of concepts exists, although only verbal tasks seem to be able to give evidence of whether linguistic transfer actually takes place. Therefore, non-linguistic tasks can give evidence of the effects of language use on non-linguistic cognition while linguistic tasks provide evidence of language transfer.

1.4.4 Cognitive linguistics and usage-based approaches

Cognitive linguistics (CL) as a discipline goes back to 1990 when the journal *Cognitive Linguistics* was first published. It seeks to explain how language interfaces with conceptual structure. Within this framework usage-based theories state that we learn constructions when communicating (Barlow and Kemmer, 2000, Hopper, 1998), therefore language is learned from usage. Form-meaning mappings constituting the grammar of a language are called "usage-based", as Langacker states:

Substantial importance is given to the actual use of the linguistic system and a speaker's knowledge of its use; the grammar is held responsible for a speaker's knowledge of the full

range of linguistic conventions, regardless of whether those conventions can be subsumed under more general statements (Langacker, 1987)

Cognitive linguistics pedagogy focuses on classroom teaching based on the procedures of CL. In recent years we have witnessed an increase in the number of studies devoted to second language learning from a cognitive linguistics perspective (Achard and Niemeier, 2004; De Knop et al. 2010; Robinson and Ellis, 2008; Ellis and Cadierno, 2009). For example, Achard (2008) focuses on the teaching of grammar based on the tenets and principles of cognitive grammar where the instructor can focus on the meaning of grammatical constructions and from a methodological point of view grammar can be taught similarly to lexical items in congruence with current trends such as content-based or task-based teaching. Besides, the learner is placed at the centre of the communicative act. According to this view, learners must be exposed to actual real examples of language use so as to learn to use specific constructions. In linguistic production construal is a central issue. It has been described as “The relationship between a speaker (or hearer) and a situation that he conceptualizes and portrays” (Langacker, 1987) or human’s ability to take different perspectives on a scene or event (Tyler, 2008). The instructor must provide guidelines that train students to choose the L2 construal but in a study conducted with two groups of learners, Danish and Spanish and three groups of native speakers, Danish, English and Spanish, Alonso et al. (forthcoming) state that, like the native English speakers, the Danish learners also provided multiple construals for some items yet the Spanish learners differed significantly from the native English speakers in nine items. With regard to whether the spatial construals of Danish and Spanish learners would differ from each other. The study deals with the acquisition of the prepositions in, on and at. The results show that the Danish learners’ prepositional choices were very similar to those of the native English speakers, whereas the Spanish learners’ choices were not. As regards whether the learners’ prepositional choices and preferences in L2 English reflect the patterns of spatial construal in their L1s, the findings suggest a strong role for L1 influence in the spatial construals of advanced foreign-language learners of English. The pedagogical implications of this study suggest that the spatial configurations of English should be taught to students who are acquiring English as a Second Language, especially in the case of Spanish learners as they move from a single category in their L1 to multiple categories in the L2. CL can provide students with explanations where the various meanings of a particular preposition are connected in systematic ways, in terms of related meaning networks (i.e., polysemy networks), such as the studies by Tyler (2012b) and Tyler and Evans (2001, 2004) indicate.

2. Teaching implications

2.1 Teachers

In the early approach of CA the influence of the L1 was considered to be the cause of most of the difficulties that students experience when they are acquiring an L2, for this reason a comparison of the two languages was carried out so as to see what aspects of the languages should be emphasized. In the interlanguage this perspective was discarded as an IL is highly individual and it is an independent system where transfer occupies a central role. In the current multicompetence framework the use of the L1 in the classroom is not conceived as a negative issue. In other words, the L1 is not the enemy, teachers should use it as it can facilitate positive transfer and it can also help internalize new concepts. In fact, cross-linguistic comparisons can help the learner to become aware of differences in L1-L2 patterns. The L1 is present in the students' minds, therefore it cannot be switched off while students are in the classroom. As Cook (1999) claims, it can help classroom goals to be achieved more efficiently and it can be used in different ways in the classroom. It can be helpful as a metalanguage for the teaching of grammar and in the teaching of vocabulary it can help convey the meanings of words or sentences. The L1 can also help in classroom management, such as in giving instructions for different activities. At the level of testing it can be a useful tool to assess vocabulary. Moreover, it is beneficial not only for the teacher but also for the students as they cause it as part of the learning

activity and within classroom activities.

2.1.1 Native versus non-native teachers

Teachers have an important role in the process of second language learning. For many years it was considered that native teachers were the role model to be followed, yet during the 1990's research began to turn its attention towards non-native speakers (Medgyes, 1994; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Braine, 1999; Cook, 1999; Liu, 1999; Modiano, 1999). If we stem from a different perspective of the L2 user, then a non-native teacher is an L2 user who has acquired another language while a native teacher is not. Cook (1999) considers that the non-native teacher can present a role model for the students as s/he can codeswitch to the students' own language when necessary. The only advantage that non-native teachers show is a greater facility in the target language, but only if we consider the native teacher as a native speaker not as an L2 user. Llurda (2005) conducted a study among non-native speaking students' practicum supervisors, who have experience in observing both native teachers and non-native teachers at work. The aim of the study was to obtain evidence of external assessment of these two groups of students' practice teaching and also of their language skills. Thirty departments or schools participated in the study and a questionnaire regarding the students' practice teaching was used as the research instrument. All the questions involved different aspects of the students' practice teaching. The results indicated that only in language awareness were native speakers (NSs) reported to do better. As regards fluency and grammar the results were similar in both groups. In the comparison between NSs and non-native speakers (NNSs) teaching performance, the majority of NNSs (72%) was equal to NSs but most NNs would be recommended to teach at beginner and low-intermediate levels. With respect to the relationship between language proficiency and teaching skills 44% of respondents reported that both teaching skills and language proficiency affected success. The results indicate that language proficiency is a necessary condition for NNs teachers. Apparently, if this is achieved, no difference is observed between Ns and NNs.

2.2 Teaching materials and textbooks

Recent advances in the understanding of multicompetence, linguistic relativity and usage-based approaches have implications for second language learning and teaching. As has been mentioned above, these advances show implications for teachers and they also point to the need of training both for pre-service and in-service teachers so that they gain a better understanding of the role of CLI. As regards implications for teaching materials, a good account can be found in Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008). These authors suggest using translation equivalents, such as *ser* and *estar* in Spanish versus *to be* in English so that students can examine the difference in L1-L2-mediated conceptual categories in different contexts and this can also enhance their intercultural competence, which is one of the aims the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages promotes (Council of Europe, 2011). Another related classroom activity is the use of categorization exercises by means of pictures or objects that learners must put together according to the partial translation equivalent to be used. Jarvis and Pavlenko also recommend distributed learning where teachers and also textbooks should present the same topics more than once and in different formats and language levels.

In recent years we have also witnessed an increase in the number of studies devoted to second language learning from a cognitive linguistics perspective (Robinson and Ellis, 2008, Ellis and Cadierno, 2009). Some focus on applying cognitive grammar to the second language classroom (Bielak and Pawlak, 2013; De Knop et al. 2010; Achard and Niemeier, 2004). They try to find alternative ways to introduce grammar and vocabulary in the classroom, most studies attempt at understanding how the L2 cognitive system works, and how it differs from the learner's first language.

3. Conclusion

Interest in CLI has been pervasive in SLA from early contrastivist approaches to current cognitive

perspectives. The influence that the previously acquired languages exert on the acquisition of the second still has a long way to go, but recent advances have improved our understanding of the field. Conceptual transfer has increased our knowledge of the effect of similarities and differences in conceptual categories which reflect lexical and grammatical categories of the L1 and the L2. Recent interest in linguistic relativity has paved the way to the analysis of the relationship between cognition and language and the effects of language on non-linguistic cognition. In its turn, the multicompetence framework has put the L2 user in the centre of the learning process where CLI is one of the central relationships between languages in the L2 user's mind. Finally, a key implication of current research is the need to train both Ns and NNs to become successful teachers. It is advisable that in-training teachers benefit from the advances in SLA research and that both researchers and teachers should establish a closer connection so that the findings of current research can be implemented in the classroom.

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