

Book review

Processes in Third Language Acquisition. Björn Hammarberg (Ed.) (2009). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 184 pp., ISBN 978-0-7486-3511-5 (hardback).

This book brings together in a slightly edited format five previously published papers from 1993-2006, which reported the findings of a project at Stockholm University in Sweden that eventually became known as “Processes in Third Language Acquisition”. A preface and introduction were added, together with a sixth chapter and two useful appendices, the first of which contains a transcription key and the second two short data samples taken at different stages of the project. The book is aimed at students and researchers interested in second and third language acquisition, multilingualism and the human speaking process. In exploring crosslinguistic influence in a multilingual setting, it highlights the significance of prior L2 knowledge in L3 speaking performance.

The project is a case study of Swedish L3 acquisition by Sarah Williams (SW), a native English (L1) speaker, who grew up in England, studied French and German at university, and some Italian in Italy (L2s). She acquired near-native competence in German by spending 6 years in Germany for her PhD research. In taking up a job at Stockholm University in 1990, at the age of 28, she and the author (BH) made audio-recordings of their conversations held on 35 occasions for a period of two academic years. SW did not have any formal Swedish instruction and merely acquired the language in her everyday life and job. The result is a longitudinal language corpus consisting of the audio and phonetic transcription of SW’s evolving Swedish utterances in conversation with BH, including narration of wordless picture stories and topics concerning her everyday life and personal experiences. In addition, SW’s introspective comments during sessions were audio-recorded separately. Data analysis by BH and SW only took place once the whole corpus had been established, eventually focusing on patterns of crosslinguistic influence during the speaking process and SW’s acquisitional activities in a multilingual setting (p. viii).

The introduction briefly outlines the various practical, theoretical and empirical reasons for a third language perspective, prior to an insightful conceptual clarification of the terms L1, L2 and L3 and their use in the literature (pp. 4-7). As Hammarberg notes, the terms L1, L2, L3, L4, etc., may give the impression of a chronological, non-interrupted acquisition, which is not necessarily the case in reality, since multilingual acquisition may be simultaneous and intermittent, involving various language skills and proficiency levels. Hence, it may be better to proceed as follows:

A first language (L1) is any language acquired during infancy, and a *second language (L2)* any language encountered and acquired after infancy. [...] the term *third language (L3)* will be used for a

non-native language which is currently being used or acquired in a situation where the person already has a knowledge of one or more L2s besides one or more L1s. An L3 is thus a special case of the wider category of L2, and not necessarily language number three in order of acquisition. (p. 6)

A multilingual is then defined as “a person with a knowledge of three or more languages” (p. 6).

The first chapter, “A study of third language acquisition”, is an early project description. A brief discussion of the findings of previous studies on L1 and L2 influence on L3 involving Swedish is followed by an interesting section on the use of SW’s introspective comments on her Swedish learning attempts. Since these observations may have a subjective bias, appropriate steps must be taken to ensure their reliability (Poullisse et al., 1987). Hammarberg’s point is that the risk must be acknowledged, but such introspective data may contain valuable additional information to SW’s L3 utterances, even if validation through further research is required. The chapter then investigates the phonological influence of SW’s English L1 and German L2 on her Swedish L3 acquisition at the early stage, using several data samples and SW’s introspective comments, thus combining objective and subjective data. The preliminary findings suggest that SW’s L1, L2 and L3 phonological intuitions lead her to develop a “phonological filter” (p. 26) for identifying potential L2 items that may be appropriate in L3. However, this initial strategy of intentionally blocking an L1 in favour of an L2 to aid L3 speech production is dropped over time with increased L3 input and usage. Interestingly, non-intentional English L1 phonological influence reoccurs at a later stage. The success and failure of such intentional L1 blocking is also evidenced in two different reading tasks. In a read-after-me task, SW’s utterances show a stronger non-intentional English phonological L1 influence, whereas a German phonological L2 influence appears in a read-on-your-own task.

The long second chapter, “Language switches in L3 production: Implications for a polyglot speaking model”, deals with three issues: (1) the extent of L1 and L2 influence in various types of “non-adapted language switches” (p. 28); (2) the functional roles of L1 and L2 and their change over time; (3) the theoretical implications for human speech processing models. Non-adapted language switches are later defined as “such expressions in other languages, usually a word or a short sentence, as were not adapted phonologically or morphologically to the target language” (p. 105). These switches may be sociopsychologically motivated (code-switching, interlingual transfer), proficiency-related (communication strategy, lack of TL knowledge, thematic continuity), include meta comments (communication strategy, thematic discontinuity), as well as “non-intentional switches” (p. 29). Hammarberg then presents de Bot’s (1992) bilingual speech production model, incorporating Green’s (1986) three language activation levels, and assesses Poullisse and

Bongaerts' (1994) criticism of de Bot's model. The next section compares non-intentional language switches in L2 acquisition with those in L3 acquisition. Although such switches mainly occur for function words in both L2 and L3, most of them are due to L2 and not L1 influence. Seven types of non-adapted language switches are identified in the corpus of SW's Swedish L3 utterances. Six of these (EDIT, META COMMENT, META FRAME, EXPLICIT ELICIT INSERT, IMPLICIT ELICIT INSERT, NON-ELICIT INSERT) have a clear pragmatic purpose, but one is "Without Identified Pragmatic Purpose (WIPP)" (p. 44). The helpful addendum to this chapter addresses this categorisation in more detail.

The results show that both English L1 and German L2 non-adapted language switches occur in SW's Swedish L3 production, with a decrease over time. The clear majority of switches with a pragmatic purpose are English L1 switches, with all meta comment switches in English L1. The INSERT category includes several types of special English use, "anomalous English": slips of the tongue, German-based English, incorrect register or lexical item, and transfer of training (p. 50). Interestingly, 92 percent of all WIPP switches are in German L2. What are we to make of these results? First of all, they demonstrate the joint activation of L1 and L2 in L3 production, but with different functional roles. Whereas L1 has an instrumental role (as evidenced by all META switches occurring in English), L2 operates as a default supplier language at this early stage of L3 acquisition (evidenced by nearly all WIPP switches occurring in German). This role allocation depends on various factors. For the supplier role, Hammarberg mentions proficiency, typology, recency and L2 status, whereby "L2s appear more likely to be activated than the L1 as supplier language during the early stages of L3 acquisition" if the first three "are at a sufficient level" (p. 63). In SW's case, the reason may be twofold: (1) the different acquisition mechanism involved in L2 acquisition may be reactivated in L3 acquisition, and (2) her strategic decision to employ L2 as a "foreign language" and suppress L1 as "non-foreign". Hammarberg concludes that this has important implications for human speech production models. If de Bot's (1992) bilingual model is an improvement on Levelt's (1989) monolingual speech model, then the significant influence of L2 during the early stages of L3 speech production means that de Bot's model must be extended to a multilingual model, taking into account speakers mono-, bi- and multilingual "language modes" (Grosjean, 2001) and potential "multicompetence" (Cook, 1992) (p. 68).

The third chapter, "Re-setting the basis of articulation in the acquisition of new language: A third language case study", is a phonetic study which examines the difference in articulatory L1 and L2 settings in SW's Swedish L3 acquisition during earlier and later stages. The chapter begins with an overview of the different types of articulatory settings, how to study them and their relation to learning another language. The second section looks at the cross-language variation of settings in relation to English, German and Swedish found in the literature, before examining SW's L2 and L3 performance. To German native speakers, SW sounded

like a (near-)native German speaker, which provides evidence of a successful switch between English L1 and German L2 articulatory settings. In relation to SW's Swedish L3 speech production when reading a picture story, native Swedish speakers indicated a strong German influence at the earlier stages and a strong English influence later on. In order to determine any phonatory resetting, acoustic measurements and waveform perturbation measurements were taken, but proved inconclusive. The section then presents the reading task-based phonological difference mentioned earlier. The chapter ends with a discussion of the articulatory resetting process, arguing that in SW's case L1 settings work as a constraint and L2 settings as a temporary overriding coping strategy. For Hammarberg, this indicates a foreign language effect that is more due to German L2 status (recency and ease of use, high proficiency) than a passive typological similarity at phonological level (p. 83).

The fourth chapter, "The learner's word acquisition attempts in conversation", looks at SW's use of word elicitation as a communicative and learning strategy. Hammarberg is mainly interested in the pre- and post-reception phases of these "word elicitation units" (WEUs) (p. 88). In the pre-reception phase, nine different elicitation signals can be distinguished in SW's utterances, ranging from more to less explicit: language switches, overt questions (more explicit), pauses, pause fillers, iteration, gradual build-up (very implicit), but also self-repairs, turn interruptions, and metalinguistic question intonation. The WEUs in this phase have a particular structure, often combining both language switches, as convenient "shortcut strategies" (p. 92), and word construction attempts, which may involve more processing effort. At the reception point, the interlocutor (BH) provides or confirms a target word, through either a "simple response turn" or "a negotiating exchange" (p. 94). In the post-reception phase, SW acknowledges reception of the target word, asks for clarification and tries to secure retention through a "yes" answer, a citing repetition, a call for confirmation, questions about the target word, using the word functionally in a meaningful context, and/or re-using the word later in the same conversation. The high frequency of WEUs in the recorded conversations show her as a very active word elicitor, making effective use of communicative strategies. However, the long-term acquisition impact of these elicitation strategies is another matter and only a slight effect was found.

The fifth chapter, "Activation of L1 and L2 during production in L3: A comparison of two case studies", compares SW's case with that of EE, who has a similar language profile (German L1, English/Swahili L2, Swedish L3), but a different acquisition history, growing up in a German-English bilingual environment and taking formal Swedish language classes. The chapter revisits the seven types of non-adapted language switches and the lexical transfer in hypothetical word constructions that appear in WEUs. The pattern variation and distribution of language switches and lexical transfer are similar for SW and EE: the majority of

language switches (EDIT, META, INSERT) are into English and there is a predominant German influence on word construction, whereby the first is frequently combined with the second, but the reverse is absent. Interestingly, WIPP switches occur in German L2 for SW, but in English L2 for EE. Discussing these findings against the background of de Bot's (2004) revised model, Hammarberg suggests that both L1 and L2 have a certain default activation level in SW's and EE's L3 speech production, but at different stages. The instrumental and supplier roles of the background languages change over time with increasing L3 proficiency and both SW and EE move from a trilingual mode to a monolingual mode, deactivating the use of L1s and L2s in L3 speech production. Six factors may explain the regular activation of English in an instrumental role for both SW (L1) and EE (L2): mutual access of English speakers and interlocutor(s); adopting a bi-/trilingual mode; learners' proficiency in the target language; personal identification; the status of the language in questions as a contact language; and established practice of language choice. Potential explanatory factors for the different supplier roles of languages for SW (German L2) and EE (English L2) are numerous, involving proficiency in background languages, recency of use, perceived typology, and L2 status, to name but a few. The different L2 use in WIPP switches by SW (German) and EE (English) may be explained by the L2 status factor mattering more to SW. Her choice to rely more on German than English in her Swedish L3 acquisition process may result from being raised in a monolingual rather than a bilingual environment. In this way, the L2 status factor may differ significantly for individuals, influencing L2 use as a supplier language in L3 acquisition.

The final chapter, "The factor 'perceived crosslinguistic similarity' in third language production: How does it work?", recapitulates various interacting factors in relation to L1 and L2 activation in L3 production (i.e. language related factors (L3 similarity, L2 status), experience (proficiency, natural acquisition, recency of use, active use), age and emotional attitudes), before zooming in on crosslinguistic similarity. Hammarberg carefully reminds us of the difference between perceived and actual typological similarity, before showing how SW uses lexical inventions in the form of hypothetical word constructions to evaluate and employ perceived crosslinguistic similarity to maximum effect as a learning strategy. First of all, such similarity is significant in selecting German L2 as a default supplier language in her Swedish L3 speech production, in that she assumes a far-reaching similarity between Swedish and German lexicons, one which surpasses their actual similarity. Such overgeneralisation changes with increased L3 proficiency and is adjusted through interlocutor feedback, self-monitoring and self-repair. Secondly, in the process of L3 speech formulation, SW decides not to rely on international words and English, i.e. any potential perceived similarity with English L1, but instead uses Germanic-derived words, even if this results in more complicated word constructions. Finally, SW's case shows that perceived crosslinguistic similarity in hypothetical word construction

operates at conceptual and lemma level, as well as form level, amply illustrated by the various examples in this chapter.

To conclude, this volume is a valuable resource for the study of multilingual acquisition. It provides an insight into the different roles and effects of prior languages in L3 acquisition in a proactive multilingual adult learner, the use of language switches and hypothetical word construction as learning strategies, while underlining the significance of perceived crosslinguistic similarity. The chapters provide sufficient data samples, are well-referenced, and make a balanced use of tables and diagrams. Terminology is always clearly defined, such as the helpful definitions for L1, L2 and L3 in the introduction. Finally, the book succeeds in showing that any model of human speech production should proceed from a multilingual perspective, taking into account speakers' different language modes.

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