

# Understanding multilingualism and foreign language development

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**Abstract:** The present paper reviews the literature on issues related to multilingualism and foreign language development. It starts with psychological factors involved in second language acquisition; then, it examines studies which looked into developmental aspects of language. It also reviews studies that compared second and foreign language development. Different cognitive factors implicated in learning additional languages are tackled. For instance, Lenneberg's hypothesis of a critical period in addition to other factor like language attitudes are all dealt with in this paper. There are two main objectives behind this review: first, it purports to examine the variables which have been focused on in the literature and the gaps, if any; second, it aims to provide a framework for the understanding of foreign language development. It also provides useful insights into the topic of language development in general.

Key words: Critical period, psychological factors, attitudes, language development, multilingualism, Vygotsky's constructivism.

### 3.1. Introduction

Globalization creates a dire need for citizens to be multilingual and multicultural in an increasingly interdependent world. Consequently, different educational systems emphasize the central role of learning additional languages. For instance, educational programs in many European countries promote the teaching/learning of additional languages (Jessner, 2008). As such, multilingualism and multi-literacy has become the norm rather than the exception.

This is even more so in developing countries where colonialism has enforced the use of the colonist's language as an official language (Wagner, 1993). Being part of the global landscape, a tourist venue, a country known for its linguistic diversity and pluralism in addition to its past as a French protectorate, Morocco is certainly not an exception. In point of fact, Morocco is land to a variety of languages and its educational system promotes the teaching/learning of many languages. For instance, learners start learning French as a second language as early as second grade in primary school; and starting from lower secondary school, they are required to embark on another (foreign) language. While students in some urban areas have to choose among English, German and Spanish, in most villages English is the only language available. In urban areas, too, however, English has the lion's share in students' preferences. In light of these transformations worldwide, the following study attempts to investigate the issue of proficiency development in foreign languages from different perspectives through reviewing the literature. Such an endeavour comes in the context of identifying the variables that come at play in proficiency development like cognitive factors, attitudes, age.

### 3.4. Psychological factors in second language acquisition

Acquiring a second language is different from acquiring the mother tongue. Not only do cognitive differences exist between young adults and developing children, but also a range

of different affective factors are at play which could be responsible for such differences and which could account for some of the difficulties older learners encounter in mastering a second language. According to Lenneberg (1967) and Bickerton (1981), there is a critical period beyond which easy acquisition of a second/foreign language becomes inaccessible. Therefore, the efforts of adolescents and young adults to acquire language beyond this period are thwarted. Strozer (1994) has investigated this line of reasoning and concluded that the course for second language acquisition becomes more difficult in adolescents and adults than in children and that brain plasticity is responsible for such asymmetry.

On the other hand, Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978) downplayed the role of the critical period contending that adolescents can be the fastest language learners in all areas except pronunciation. Such a line of reasoning could be justified using Piaget's stages of development (1970). Adolescents are in "formal operations" stage which is responsible for abstract logical reasoning. Using such developed abilities like analytical understanding and meta-linguistic awareness which this stage can afford them, adolescents could process language better than children who can only function in relatively concrete terms. Rubin (1975) supports this line of reasoning by stating that it is beyond dispute that cognitive factors, like verbal intelligence, phonological processing ability, and long-term memory capacity, which are more developed in adolescents than in children, do have a role in language learning.

Nevertheless, just as there are important cognitive factors in adolescents that can facilitate second/foreign language learning, there are other variables that can impede language learning (Krashen, 1972). These variables which are mainly psychological consist of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence (known as the affective filter in Krashen). They act as mediators between the linguistic input afforded by the educational setting and the student's capacity to learn the language. For the student to be fully engaged in leaning within a linguistically rich environment, relaxation, motivation and self-confidence are key elements that should be present. Hence, bolstering these traits is a requisite for successful language learning in adolescents and adult students particularly that second/foreign language learning requires that the individual assumes a new identity; and since identity is developed within a context of interaction, then the notion of self with what self-efficacy and confidence that "self" implies is at risk. To overcome this risk, competence in communicating with others is central to the individual's self-esteem.

### **3.5. Multi-lingualism**

#### **3.5.1. Third language development**

Investigating the proficiency development of English as a foreign language in Morocco can be considered to be situated within research of L3 development which is still a "very young" field (Jessner, 2008). Jessner (2008) citing Bialystok et al. (2004) says that recent research promotes bilingualism "as a kind of guarantee for lifetime cognitive advantages over monolinguals" (Jessner, 2008, p. 16). The phenomenon is more common in the world today than monolingualism (Hammarberg, 2010; Wei, 2008). Until recently, multilingualism has been subsumed under the category of bilingualism, and only lately did research into multilingualism witness an upsurge and an interest in categorizing it as a distinct research area. The recent interest marks a watershed in the history of multilingualism reflecting an awareness that it needs to be set apart from bilingualism.

While multilingualism is not a totally new phenomenon, as people have been learning languages since ancient times, it was negatively regarded. Jessner (2008), for instance, cites Saer (1923) and Weisgerber (1929) who claimed that the phenomenon negatively affected learners' intelligence and cognition. In late 1960's and 1970's, bi- and multilingualism was researched within the framework of contrastive analysis. Researchers investigated L1

influence on subsequently learnt languages. Their focus went mainly to the negative interference of L1 in L2 and L3. That view continued until the early 1990's when researchers started to be attentive to the cognitive advantages of multilingualism. Jessner (2008) cites several studies that compared monolinguals and bilinguals studying another language (Ringbom, 1987 & Thomas, 1988, for instance). All studies came to the same conclusion; namely, that bilinguals outperformed their monolingual counterparts, thereby lending support to the hypothesis that L2 helps L3 development.

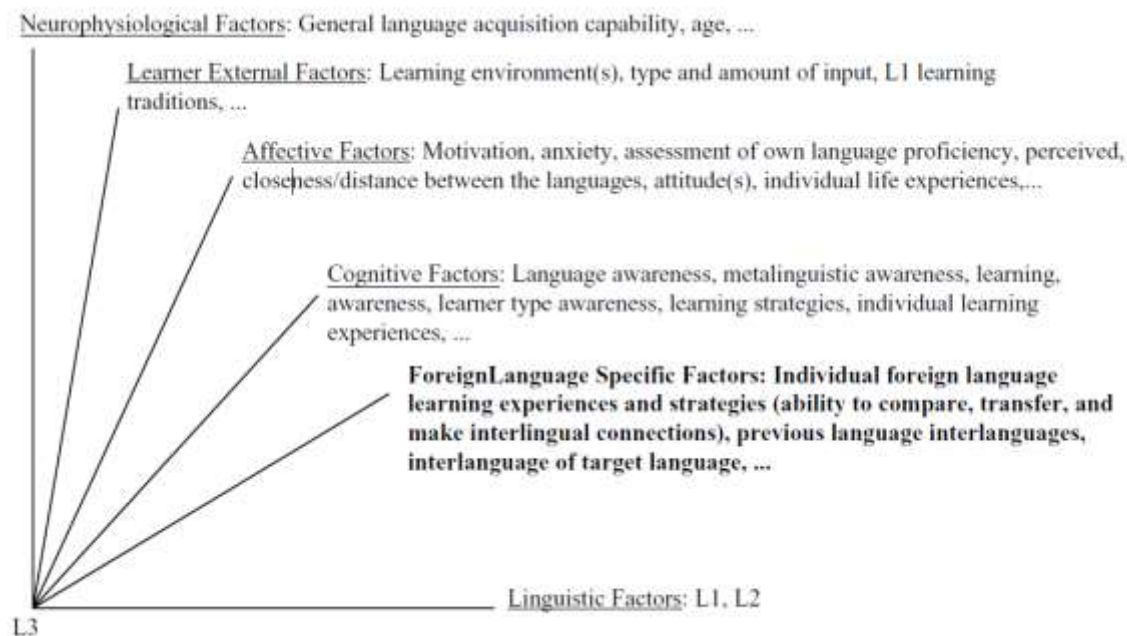
However, while second language acquisition researchers recognize that the processes involved in the acquisition of a second language are different from those involved in the acquisition of the mother tongue, few refer to the divergences between second language acquisition and foreign/third language acquisition. Many reduce the two phenomena to one identical process, a claim which may miss the unique processes at work in third language acquisition (Hammarberg, 2010).

Second language development is referred to as bilingualism. This stands in contrast to foreign/third language proficiency development which is referred to as trilingualism or multilingualism. Scrutinizing empirical research into the development of languages after the mother tongue suggests that it missed the uniqueness underlying the development of multilingual competencies, subsuming it in most cases under second language acquisition. For instance, Gass and Selinker (2008) defined second language acquisition as follows:

SLA refers to the process of learning another language after the native language has been learned. Sometimes the term refers to the learning of a third or fourth language. The important aspect is that SLA refers to the learning of a nonnative language after the learning of the native language. The second language is commonly referred to as the L2. As with the phrase "Second language," L2 can refer to any language learned after learning the L1, regardless of whether it is the second, third, fourth, or fifth language. (Gass and Selinker, 2008, p.7)

Research into L3 development is still in its infancy as it is only emerging. According to Jessner (2008), L3 researchers are only beginning to organize themselves in a category separate from L2 researchers. Consequently, they are having their own conferences, workshops and organizations. Notwithstanding its recency, some of the few studies which have been conducted and which are accessible do support the idea that L3 acquisition involves different processes (Cenoz & Jessner, 2009). Multilingual learners have at their disposal an array of sources that are not available to second language learners. They have, for instance, more developed metacognitive strategies (Cummins, 2007). Other factors which come at play in L3 acquisition are age, recency of exposure, superior cognitive capacity, attitudes and cross-linguistic interaction. Hufeisen and Marx (2007b) list additional factors, which exercise influence on the foreign language learning process, captured in the following model:

**Figure 4: Hufeisen & Marx's model of L3 learning (2007b, p. 314; cited in Jessner, 2008)**



The above-listed factors that come at play in learning a third language make L3 development a unique process, unlike that of L2. Where-as the L2 learner is a beginner who is experimenting with foreign language learning, the L3 learner is already an experienced learner with an array of skills, strategies and resources at hand. These factors act as a bridge that supports the L3 development, though they are not equally available for learners. According to Hufeisen (2007), each learner has some factors more predominant and influential than others in the learning situation.

### **3.5.2. Measuring and comparing L3 and L2 development**

In the context of measuring language development, Buysse and De Clercq (2014) claim that studies targeting language development should rely on “concrete realizations”; that is, what learners can do in their language productions. To that end, researchers have relied on cross-sectional corpora and calculated group means to capture developmental trajectories (Buysse & De Clercq, 2014). But these types of studies, in their opinions, do not represent learner development because they do not follow the same learners over a lengthy period of time. For that reason, there is a call recently for using longitudinal design as it is believed to more accurately represent and measure the development of language.

In this context, Scott (1988)'s overview of linguistic development between the ages of 9 and 19 is that changes appear very gradually. However, about one word per year is the rate of T-unit growth, and this rate is even higher in written texts than in spoken ones. A developmental schedule for syntactic structures is a much more difficult task for older children than it is for pre-school children. Scott also noted that clause length increases from five words per clause in fourth grade to eight words per clause in eighth grade, and that this clause length is even increased in case students wrote for a more remote audience than for an intimate one. Sharma (1980) notes that low intermediate learners achieve on average 9.31

words per T-unit and 6.44 words per clause. High intermediate learners, by comparison, achieve 9.86 words per T-unit and 6.97 words per clause.

In connection with this observed developmental trend, Cenoz and Jessner (2009) cite studies which conducted comparisons related to L3 development. These comparisons were made in three different ways:

1. Comparing the level of English proficiency between groups of learners who have had the same amount of exposure but started learning English at different ages.
2. Comparing the results obtained in the English proficiency tests by learners who were the same age but have received different amount of exposure.
3. Adopting a longitudinal perspective and comparing the progress made by learners in primary and secondary school. (p. 130-131)

So far as the first level of comparison is concerned, it turned out that older learners achieved higher oral and written proficiency than younger ones. The researchers cite another study by Munoz (2006) the results of which are in line with these findings. They attributed this finding to the cognitive maturity “that could help older children to do better because they have higher developed test-taking strategies” (p.131). The researchers have also provided the explanation that “the higher metalinguistic awareness associated with third language acquisition (Jessner 2006) is not observed in the early stages” (p. 131).

The second type of comparison was related to the analysis of the differences in English proficiency tests as obtained by learners of the same age but with different amount of exposure. Cognitive development is obviously not a factor here as learners are the same age. The results showed that “more of instruction has a positive effect on some tests of oral production but not in all the dimensions of English proficiency” (p. 131). The researchers attributed this finding to the quality of input to which the learners are exposed. However, they also claimed that learners are still in the first stages of learning the language and that some further advantages could be seen in comparisons in later stages.

The third type of comparison concerned investigating L3 development from a longitudinal perspective. The studies compared the progress made by primary and secondary school students. The results indicated that both groups made progress along the two years in which the measurements were taken. However, a detailed analysis showed that secondary school students made more progress than primary school students particularly in measures related to meta-linguistic awareness.

In another comparative study, Johansson (2009) investigated the developmental patterns of text production in four text types: spoken and written narrative texts, and spoken and written expository texts (n=316), produced by four age groups ranging from 10-year-olds to university students (n=79). The study followed a cross-sectional design and used various measures, mostly subsumed under T-units, to compare texts across age, genre and modality. Among the analytic measures she used were words per T-unit and clauses per T-unit, in addition to an analysis of lexical density and diversity in both speech and writing. The study indicated a major developmental trend occurring between the ages of 13 and 17. The older the student, the more developed the text in terms of words and clauses per T-unit. Other results also suggested that university students were more likely to fall back on strategies learned from writing in accomplishing a cognitively demanding spoken task. Similarly, knowledge and structures were found to be transferrable between both modalities and genres.

On the basis of a case study, Buysse and De Clercq (2014) constituted a multilingual corpus for comparing L2 French and English development over 4 years, first at the onset of secondary education and finally at the end of it in Flanders, Belgium. Foreign language education in French in Flanders typically starts in the fifth year of primary school, while

English is introduced in the first or second year of secondary school. Notwithstanding the discrepancy in terms of exposure, the official final attainment levels are identical for both languages. To investigate the phenomenon, the researchers relied on previously gathered data from two PhD projects which followed a cross-sectional design as they compared groups of learners at different levels starting from beginner and ending with advanced.

The researchers reported a higher accuracy level for English in terms of correct preposition use as well as general accuracy. In terms of correct verbal morphology, however, they reported that the participants scored a little higher in French. The researchers also observed that “from the first level onwards, scores are usually noticeably higher for English than they were for the same measure in French as an L2” (p. 736). The researchers attributed this difference in proficiency levels in the two languages to “the difference in status of and exposure to the languages in question, and to the different applicability of some of the measures involved (particularly the proportion of error-free clauses)” (p.736).

Another study by Lintunen and Mäkilä (2014) compared L2 English spoken with L2 written productions of 18 L1 Finnish upper secondary school students with focus on syntactic complexity. They used the T-unit (for written language) and AS-units (for spoken) as a method of analysis. They examined the ratio of coordinated structures and the measure of sentence complexity ratio which resulted in written language being significantly more complex than spoken language. The spoken production contained more coordination than the written production. However, switching to different measure units, the sentence (for written language) and the U-unit (utterance unit for spoken) did not produce a statistically significant difference. On the contrary, it was revealed that spoken language maybe closer to written language in its syntactic complexity. Therefore, the researchers recommended conducting further research to discover whether the differences in spoken and written learner language are primarily due to the nature of these modes or, rather, to the segmentation unit adopted in measuring complexity.

### **3.5.3. Third language acquisition in a bilingual context**

Studies about learning a third language in a bilingual context have produced evidence that bilingual literacy facilitates the acquisition of a third. For instance, Cenoz and Valencia (1994) compared bilinguals’ with monolinguals’ acquisition of a foreign language. Their participants were native speakers of Spanish in a Basque bilingual program with English as their L3. The study identified four different types of factors as independent variables (cognitive, social/psychological, educational and socio-structural) while overall language proficiency was the dependent variable. The main finding was that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals in terms of general language proficiency. The study also showed that the socio-linguistic situation has an impact on cognitive variables including intelligence and meta-linguistic awareness. The researchers concluded that bi-literacy predicts L3 achievement independently of all other factors.

In a different context, Muñoz (2000) investigated English language learning as an L3 by Spanish and Catalan speaking bilingual students. The students’ proficiency level in all three languages was measured through two Catalan tests, two Spanish tests and four English tests. The results pointed to the existence of a strong correlation between the scores of the tests in the three languages thereby lending support to the developmental interdependence hypothesis which states that proficiency in L1 and L2 would lead to competence in L3 as well.

Contributing to the same line of research, Sanz (2000) conducted a study in which she compared the acquisition of English as an L3 by Catalan/Spanish bilingual high school students with the acquisition of English by Spanish monolinguals. She collected data from 201 participants and submitted them to a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Similarly,

the results obtained from the study showed that bilingualism has a positive effect on the acquisition of an L3.

In another study, Safont (2005) addressed the question of the effect of bilingualism on students' pragmatic competence in L3. The study focused on the speech act of requesting as performed by monolingual Spanish speaking students and bilingual Catalan-Spanish students. The findings pointed to a heightened pragmatic awareness and pragmatic production on the part of bilinguals as compared to monolinguals. The results, therefore, provided further evidence that bilingualism facilitates third language proficiency development.

As the last study in this sub-section pointed out, multi-lingualism is associated with heightened pragmatic awareness. The latter is a subcomponent of meta-linguistic awareness which ensues from multi-lingualism. According to Cook (1995), "multi-competence encompasses the different linguistic knowledge and different mindset that multilinguals have compared to monolinguals." (Wojtowicz, 2006). Cook (2003, 2006) also argues that the multilingual learner is not simply a monolingual learner with some extra knowledge, but a learner who has a different knowledge of his/her L1, L2, "a different kind of language awareness and a different language processing system" (cited in Jessner, 2008, p.21).

Wojtowicz (2006) cites different studies which show that proficiency in two or more languages "can lead to higher levels of metalinguistic awareness, which aids the process of language acquisition" (p. 3). Additionally, "according to McLaughlin and Nayak (1989), this is precisely what makes the difference between an expert and a novice learner" (Wojtowicz, 2006, p. 3). This means that a learner learning a third language has become experienced and possesses a set of strategies that can help in the acquisition process. These strategies include but are not restricted to planning, learning how to learn and reflection on own learning.

In a similar vein, Lasagabaster (2000, as cited in Molnár, 2008) reported a higher correlation between competence in L2 and competence in English than between L1 and English. The researcher attributed this finding to the fact that L2 (Spanish) and L3 (English) are typologically closer to each other than L1 (Basque) and English. Students were assumed to transfer from the language that is perceived to be closer to the target language. However, there are also studies which show that even typologically distant languages promote meta-cognitive abilities.

Heightened meta-linguistic awareness does not seem to come only from L2, but also from L1 even if the latter is typologically distant. In this context, Angelis and Dewaele (2009) cite multiple studies in the 1980s which investigated if typologically distant languages also influenced foreign language learning and the role of language distance in triggering instances of transfer from non-native languages. Among the languages explored were Portuguese, English and Arabic (Schmidt & Frota 1986). These studies identified language similarity as a key factor for language transfer. However, they also "provided some evidence that transfer could come from languages distant from the target language, even when a language closer to the target was in the speaker's mind" (p. 67). Topics of relevance to cross-linguistic influence revealed the positive role of metalinguistic awareness in language learning. But "prior knowledge had to be actively used by the speaker" as well, thereby "bringing to the fore the interacting effects of instruction and prior knowledge in the language learning process" (p. 67).

Similarly, Molnár (2008) states that L3 learning is different from L2 learning since L3 learners have developed additional skills. These relate to meta-linguistic awareness which refers to "the awareness of the formal linguistic features of language in general and the ability to think abstractly about a language (Malakoff, 1992 cited in Safont Jorda, 2005)" (Molnár, 2008, p.2). The researcher also cites Gombert (1992) who defines metalinguistic activities as "activities of reflection on language and its use and the ability to intentionally monitor and plan methods of linguistic processing (p. 2). One of the benefits of bilingualism that feeds into

L3 development is the ability to use a wider variety of learning strategies. L3 learners can weigh these strategies and decide on the effective ones in learning their L3 thanks to their experience in learning languages.

According to Molnár (2008), even if students tend to borrow the language that is typologically more similar to L3, another criterion that should be taken account of is proficiency. Obviously, learners hardly transfer from a language they are not proficient in. In this context, researchers resort to Cummins developmental interdependence hypothesis (1978) to argue their point of view. This hypothesis suggests that a learner's competence in L2 is dependent on his/her L1 competence. Similarly, Cenoz (2000) posits that a learner's competence in L3 is dependent on his/her competence in L1 and L2. This means that high proficiency in L1 and L2 help in the process of acquiring an L3 because transfer will be made easier from one language to another.

Along the same line, Molnár (2008) investigated the effect of bilingualism on the acquisition of an L3. To this end, the researcher compared the English lexical competence of 200 high school students: 43 of whom were Hungarian monolingual, 97 were Hungarian-Romanian bilingual, and 60 Romanian monolingual students, all are learners of English as an L2 or L3. The researcher also explored whether learners of English as an L3 rely mainly on their L1 or whether they make use of their L2 knowledge as well in case L2 is typologically close to L3. While The Hungarian monolingual group served to compare the results of monolingual versus bilingual students, the Romanian monolingual group served to see if the possible differences in the scores of the monolingual and the bilingual Hungarian students were only due to bilingualism or to knowledge of Romanian as well. To research the questions, a vocabulary test was administered to the three groups.

The results showed that the Hungarian-Romanian bilingual group performed better than the Hungarian monolingual group, and that the Romanian monolingual group achieved the highest scores on account of the fact that Romanian is typologically close to English. This group got most cognates correct. These results confirm the hypothesis that bilingualism has a positive effect on L3 acquisition. Also confirmed was the supporting role of previously learnt languages particularly in areas of structural or semantic similarity. Where a previously learnt language was related to L3, such relatedness had more positive effect than bilingualism. Positive transfer can happen from L1 as well as from L2. The researcher, therefore, ended by recommending that "pointing out the transferable features from the previously learnt languages into the target language could help reduce the learning burden and accelerate the language acquisition process" (p.15).

#### **3.5.4. L2 and L3 development within Vygotsky's sociocultural framework**

Guerrero and Villamil (2000) investigated the effectiveness of peer collaboration on ESL writing revisions. They based their study on the theme of the ZPD and scaffolding. More specifically, the study explored the collaboration of two intermediate ESL students who interacted in order to revise a narrative text. The researchers used a micro-genetic approach to analyze the learners' interaction. Micro-genetic is a method that studies the same setting repeatedly in order to observe change in finer detail. Results of this study indicated that both learners were active during text revision shaping and developing their texts in a reciprocal and mutual way. It was concluded that scaffolding does not come only from an expert, but also from an equal when both are working inside their ZPD.

Cuevas et al (2002) researched the scaffolding role of diagrams in knowledge acquisition and meta-comprehension. Diagrams were found to facilitate the development of accurate mental models. They also significantly improved the instructional efficiency of the training as higher level of performance was achieved with less mental effort. The conclusion was that scaffolding served, for instance, by diagrams effectively improved participants' cognitive and metacognitive abilities. It also improved their meta-comprehension accuracy as



learners developed the ability to accurately monitor their comprehension. Low verbal ability participants were found to be the strongest beneficiaries.

In another study, Schwieter (2010) investigated the development of second language writing utilizing the sociocultural framework of the ZPD and scaffolding. Advanced English language learners of Spanish wrote four essays and edited each other's pieces of writing to create a professional magazine for an authentic audience. They also held feedback debriefing sessions among themselves and their instructor (the researcher himself). The finding was that these learners' essays developed through the revisions significantly according to the statistical analysis, thereby lending support to the concept that scaffolding students within the ZPD effectively develops second language writing skills.

Baleghizadeh, Memar and Memar (2010) compared different types of scaffolding: high-structured, low-structured, and non-structured scaffolding on the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. 114 students participated in the study. They were assigned to three groups, with each group receiving a different type of scaffolding. The findings revealed that the low-structured scaffolding group outperformed the other two groups. The researcher concluded that gradual help, a key mechanism of ZPD, is the most rewarding type of scaffolding.

Another study conducted within the sociocultural framework investigated the effect of scaffolding on EFL students' writing ability. More specifically, Riazi and Rezaii (2011) explored the difference between teacher- and peer-scaffolding in helping students improve their English texts. To meet this end, they assigned one group of university students to teacher-scaffolding and another group to peer-scaffolding in the process of revising their writings. The researchers administered a pre writing task and a post writing task to check writing improvements. T-test results showed teacher scaffolding to be more successful in improving students' writing. Results also showed that both the teacher and peers used many different scaffolding techniques, though the teacher used more such behaviours.

In another study based on the sociocultural theoretical framework, Abadikhah and Valipour (2014) examined the role of scaffolding in the process of internalization of linguistic knowledge. More specifically, the study explored the effect of expert scaffolding on the internalization of linguistic features by Iranian EFL elementary learners of English. To this end, a picture description task was administered to the participants as their pretest and posttest. Each elementary learner worked with an advanced learner forming an expert-novice pair. The results indicated that the advanced learners used several scaffolding techniques to help the elementary learners fill up their linguistic gaps collaboratively. Scaffolding, thus, was found to be an effective technique in raising students' awareness to the linguistic gaps in their knowledge and endeavoring to correct them subsequently.

### **3.6. Attitudes in foreign language learning**

Attitudes are an important affective factor in second and foreign language learning. They are a result of the cognitive development of the person, meaning that a small child has not yet developed attitudes. School age children, on the other hand, do have attitudes towards speakers of the language, the language itself, the culture and the traditions of the language, and the value of learning the language. Obviously, negative attitudes towards the target language can hinder language learning where-as positive attitudes can boost learning (Brown, 2007; Ellis, 1994). Therefore, investigating learners' attitudes is a worthwhile issue in language learning.

In this context, Ushida (2005) conducted a study in which she investigated the role of students' motivation and attitudes in second language (L2) study within an online language course context. The study was situated within a socio-educational framework (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) while learning contexts were based on Dörnyei's (1994) components of foreign language learning motivation. The findings indicated that students with positive attitudes studied regularly

and productively to take every opportunity to sharpen their language skills, thereby reinforcing the central role of students' motivation and attitudes in foreign language study. The findings also showed that teachers were responsible for creating a class culture that affected students' motivation and attitudes toward studying the L2, and hence the important role of the teachers in building positive attitudes and enhancing motivation.

In another study, Karahan (2007) addressed the issue of why most Turkish people cannot attain the desired level of proficiency in English in spite of being intensively exposed to it. The study examined the relationship between language attitudes towards the English language and its use in Turkey. The participants were 190 eighth grade students in a private primary school where English is intensively taught. The researcher used a questionnaire which asked students about their attitudes towards the English language and their attitudes towards the use of English in Turkish context. The findings indicated that although the participants were exposed to English in a school environment more frequently than other students at public schools, they have only mildly positive attitudes to English. Therefore, attitudes were found to be responsible for low achievement, with Spearman correlation coefficient supporting the idea that positive attitudes correlate with successful language learning.

In the same vein, Tahaineh and Daana (2013) investigated Jordanian students' motivation orientations and attitudes towards learning the target language and its community. A stratified random sample of 184 students majoring in English language and literature was surveyed using the attitude/motivation test battery. The findings showed strong positive relationship between students' attitudes towards the target language community and academic achievement. Therefore, the study reported some pedagogical implications that would help tap the students' motivation orientations and attitudes.

In the context of Morocco, Sbaihi (2001) investigated Moroccan learners' attitudes to English and found them to be positive. He administered a questionnaire to 120 Moroccan EFL learners, aged from 17 to 20, at Al Wahda secondary school, in Taounate. The analysis of the questionnaire results showed that the majority of Moroccan learners have positive attitudes towards English. The respondents stated that they liked English traditions, and that they thought that English would help them find a job easily. The researcher concluded that helping our students to develop a positive attitude towards English and English language learning is likely to result in good proficiency development of the language.

In a similar vein, Yearous (2012) conducted a study in which she investigated Moroccan high school students' attitudes to French and Arabization. The location of the research was Rabat, Morocco and the surrounding suburbs. The researcher interviewed 50 high school students about their views regarding the presence of French in Morocco and in the curriculum. Results indicated that the students thought that French continues to hold a significant linguistic presence in Morocco. The students also viewed French as a remnant of colonization, as well as a "bitter subject" to some Moroccans. This finding lends support not only to the idea that French is negatively viewed because of its colonial past in Morocco, but also to the fact that because of such attitudes, Moroccans find it a "bitter subject".

### **3.8. Summation**

The studies related to L2 and L3 development were reviewed in order to gain insight into implications of research findings, to glean recommendations for establishing correct teacher practices, and to identify gaps for future studies. What has been learnt is that current literature on L3 development is quite scanty. It has been learnt that studies which have investigated L3 development in the western countries, are quite few. Therefore, there is an urgent need for research into the nature of L3 particularly as compared to L2 development.

It has also been learnt from the literature review that the studies conducted so far in this context have considered a limited number of variables, sometimes no more than one. For

instance, some studies were restricted to the study of attitudes (Tahaineh & Daana, 2013 as a case in point). The need, thus, is for studies that try to capture the full spectrum of the issue of language development.

From a social constructivist perspective, the mother tongue and the second language can provide a useful scaffold for foreign language learners. English proficiency development is accelerated thanks to the mediating role of previously learnt languages. It is noteworthy that the mother tongue is not discarded in this mediation process particularly that research lends support to the idea that basic skills are transferrable even between typologically distant languages (Angelis & Dewaele, 2009).

In conclusion, this paper reviewed the literature relevant to foreign language development. It has been found out that more research in the area of L2 and L3 proficiency development is highly required particularly in Morocco.

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