

Máster en lingüística aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés
como lengua extranjera (MLAEILE)

Departamento de Filología Inglesa
Universidad de Jaén

Master Thesis

**Pros and cons of using translation
with plurilingual young and adult learners**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AML – Adult Multilingual Learner

CLT – Communicative Language Teaching

CLIL – Communicative Language Integrated Learning

CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CPH – Critical Period Hypothesis

CPH - Critical Period Hypothesis

CCT - Creative Construction Theory

DMM - Dynamic Model of Multilingualism

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ESL – English as a Second Language

FL – Foreign Language

G1 – Children Group

G2 – Adult Group

GTM – Grammar Translation Method

L – Language

L1 – Mother Tongue

L2 – Second Language

L3 – Third Language

Ls – Languages

LA – Language Acquisition

P5 – Parvulario 5

S – Student

SDL - Self-directed Learning

SL – Second Language

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

SLM - Speech Learning Model

TL – Target Language

YML – Young Multilingual Learner

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of multilingualism in educational contexts of the past and present. The purpose of this research is to investigate the pros and cons of the use of translation with plurilingual young and adult learners. To accomplish this objective, the theoretical framework (section 4), first of all, looks into the findings of other researchers concerning the role of L1 and the feasibility of using of translation with children and adults. The aspects of age influence and multilingualism as a phenomenon are also discussed. The research part (section 6) encompasses the study of two groups of students, one composed of adults (6 learners) and another composed of children (20 learners), both groups consisting of monolingual and multilingual learners; and the study of two multilingual individuals, an adult and a child. In case of the groups, the study focuses on the students' reaction to instruction given first in FL (English) and then repeated in the L1(s) of the learner(s), some of them being multilingual. In case of the multilingual individuals, the study pays attention to the exposure to L1s and the role played by each of the languages known depending on the context it is used in. In the first stage, the students of two groups were observed and the teachers were requested to fill up questionnaires. Accordingly, the individuals, both an adult and a child, were observed. Certain speech production samples of a multilingual adult and a multilingual child were audio-recorded by the members of their family. In the second, data regarding the students' reactions and the individuals' exposure to L1s were gathered.

The findings of this research let us think that, in educational context of a bilingual English school, the use of translation with the young learners is not encouraging and effective, but may even be an inhibiting factor in the learning process of both, monolingual and multilingual students. We also conclude that the adults in the FL school, who had become multilinguals during puberty, react better to the instruction repeated in one of their L1s, while those who became multilinguals at the age of 3 show no reaction at all. With that, we have the data about multilingual individuals, an adult and a child, as regards their daily contextual use of L1s and FLs, which can be valuable for the educators and parents who deal with multilinguals.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo explora el papel desempeñado por el multilingüismo en los contextos educativos del pasado y del presente. El propósito de esta investigación es analizar las ventajas y desventajas del uso de la traducción en alumnos plurilingües, tanto jóvenes como mayores. Para responder al mismo, el marco teórico (sección 4), en primer lugar, indaga el papel de la lengua materna y analiza los estudios de otros investigadores con respecto a la traducción en niños y adultos. También se discuten aspectos tales como la influencia de la edad y el multilingüismo en cuanto fenómeno. La investigación propiamente dicha abarca el estudio de dos grupos de alumnos: 6 estudiantes adultos y 20 niños, ambos grupos formados por alumnos monolingües y multilingües; y por dos individuos multilingües: un adulto y un niño. En el caso de los grupos, el estudio se centra en la reacción de los alumnos a la instrucción del profesor proporcionada en primer lugar en lengua extranjera (inglés), y luego repetida en la(s) lengua(s) materna(s) en el caso de los multilingües. En el caso de las personas multilingües, el estudio presta especial atención a la exposición a las lenguas maternas y a la función que cada idioma cumple dependiendo del contexto en el que se utiliza. En una primera etapa, se observaron los dos grupos de alumnos y se solicitó a los profesores completar cuestionarios. Del mismo modo, se analizaron individualmente al adulto y al niño. Algunas muestras de la producción oral del adulto y del niño multilingües fueron grabadas por miembros de sus familias. En una segunda etapa, se recogieron datos sobre las reacciones de los individuos y su exposición a las lenguas maternas.

Los resultados de esta investigación nos permiten interpretar que, en el contexto educativo de una escuela bilingüe de inglés, el uso de la traducción con los alumnos jóvenes no resulta estimulante ni eficaz, e incluso impide el proceso de aprendizaje, en general, tanto para los alumnos monolingües como para los multilingües. Concluimos, asimismo, que en la escuela de idiomas, los adultos que se hicieron multilingües durante su pubertad reaccionan mejor a la repetición de la instrucción en una de sus lenguas maternas, mientras los que son multilingües desde los 3 años de edad no muestran ninguna reacción. Respecto a los individuos multilingües, contamos con los datos del adulto y del niño, precisamente sobre el uso cotidiano de lenguas maternas y lengua extranjera en el contexto correspondiente. Esta información puede resultar importante y útil para los educadores y padres que tienen contacto con alumnos/personas multilingües independientemente de su edad.

LIST OF KEYWORDS

Associative series, affective filter, bidirectional transfer, bilingualism, brain plasticity, code-mixing, communicative competence, communicative language teaching, communicative language integrated learning, creative construction theory, critical period hypothesis, cross-linguistic transfer, dynamic model of multilingualism, grammar-translation method, interlanguage, interlingualism, language transfer, monolingualism, multilingualism, multiculturalism, neurofunctional modules, plurilingualism, plurilingual competence, pluricultural competence, self-directed learning, speech learning model, translation.

Intercultural bindings come easier to kids who are multilingual because
through their openness and their contact with the cultures,
they are more informed and pathetic,
and that makes them better citizens.

Dr. Edwin Gerard

(Citizens of the World: The Multilingual Child and Adult, online posting, 23/07/2013)

1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper aims at studying the contribution made by multilingualism to the teaching and learning of the English language. The investigation is focused on the influence of the use of translation on young and adult learners. My own motivation comes from my pedagogical experience in teaching English language to young and adult monolingual and multilingual learners, as well as from my parental observation of a multilingual child.

To explore the influence of the use of translation in educational context, we should first refer to the essence of translation. Cook (2001: 200) asserts that "translation as a teaching technique is a different matter from translation as a goal of language teaching". In fact, translation as a technique, which teachers may use, implies the ability to complete the following three steps appropriately, to greater or lesser extent. The dependent variable here is the stage of linguistic and sociocultural proficiency of the students (González Davies and Scott-Tennent 2009).

1. Understand the message and effect of the verbal and visual source text (words, expressions, texts etc.).
2. Convey the message and effect appropriately to the target community.
3. Apply appropriate translation strategies according to the degree of familiarity with problem-solving and spotting skills.

Practitioners of and researchers in translation agree that translation can be defined as "a dynamic process of communication" (Hatim and Mason 1990: 62). That means translation is not an exact transference from one language to another, contrary to what the Grammar-Translation method states. Of course, exercises with just the instruction "Read and translate", but with no previous reflection and little or no context, no explanation and no training in the difficulties and possibilities of translation, are not meaningful to the learner and, therefore, do not promote progress in learning. Such exercises can only produce mistranslations, blueprint versions and literal renderings that have nothing to do with real communication (González Davies and Scott-Tennent 2009). Professional or real translation, one that may positively influence the teaching context, is a creative and dynamic activity bounding languages and cultures which always uses specific transference skills and strategies (Pym 2003). Such translation in FL classroom would involve authentic communication and could be considered a meaningful communicative procedure, far from Grammar-Translation relic of the past educational system.

Before going on any further, a distinction should be made between such terms as *monolingualism*, *bilingualism*, *multilingualism* and *plurilingualism* in order to avoid any confusion afterwards, as we are going to refer frequently to all of them in this project; (see section 4.4.2).

Monolingualism refers to the active knowledge of only one language, though perhaps a passive knowledge of others (Richards and Schmidt 2002). The individual has access to just one linguistic code as a means of social communication.

Bilingualism is the opposite. According to Hamers and Blanc's - (2000: 6) definition, it is access to "more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication". He adds that "the degree of access will vary depending on a number of dimensions which are psychological, cognitive, psycholinguistic, social psychological, sociological, sociolinguistic, sociocultural and linguistic".

Multilingualism is "the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one 'variety of language' i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group whether it is formally recognized as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual speaking only their own variety" (Council of Europe 2007: 8).

Finally, *plurilingualism* refers to people who speak languages. It is the opposite of *monolingualism*. In the Council of Europe (2001: 168) we can say that plurilingualism is "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures". The same document explains that "this is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw".

Despite this difference in meaning, in the present study, I will use both terms, *plurilingualism* and *multilingualism* indistinctly, for convenience.

The role of bilingualism in Second Language (L2 henceforth) Teaching and Learning has been the subject of much debate and controversy (Hakuta 1986; Lambert 1990; Cook 2001; Jarvis 2011; Homel, Palij & Aaronson 2014). However, very little has been written about plurilingualism in young and adult learners, which is nowadays gradually becoming a common tendency, related to the local context, and more specifically, the context of Catalonia (Spain). In the present study, we attempt to redefine the use of the mother tongue (L1 henceforth) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in a way that will not reduce students' communicative ability, but rather assist in the teaching and learning process. The use of translation is often discussed as regards different aspects of teaching, but rarely in relation to multilingual students. This is the reason why I decided to examine the feasibility of

using translation with multilingual and monolingual learners, that is, I wanted to look into its effectiveness or non-effectiveness with a very particular group of students.

Therefore, this research study compares how plurilingualism and monolingualism help or hinder in Foreign Language (FL) teaching. It seeks to understand the practical value of multilingualism within a classroom syllabus and in language teaching institutions. Our premise is that the young learners' knowledge of one or more other languages is relevant for their acquisition of regular school subjects, specifically *English*, and that knowing two or more languages is relevant for the adult learners' general development and successful application of the knowledge of foreign languages at their workplace or in their social life. Consequently, my research project bases its theoretical background on current studies in bilingualism and plurilingualism, FL acquisition, the Translation Method, the use of translation in EFL classroom, and particular aspects of FL acquisition by young and adult learners.

1.1. METHODOLOGY

For this purpose, we have employed a qualitative and interpretative research design involving three elements: 1) questionnaires, 2) classroom observations and 3) semi-structured interviews.

Questionnaires. A total of 20 questionnaires were distributed among the adult learners of English and five among the EFL teachers. The young learners were not given questionnaires.

Observation.

- a. Classroom observation: One adult class was observed. Also, the young learners were observed and the observations subsequently analyzed. Because of their early age, we believe that the use of observation is sufficient.
- b. External observation:

Semi-structured interviews: the teacher of an adult class was interviewed. The young learners' teacher was questioned and the answers were saved and analyzed. Additionally, in order to obtain a full picture of the participants under investigation, there were also one adult and one child whose behaviors were observed and studied in non-school context.

It is pertinent at this stage to present a brief summary of the observations and analyses performed. Objectively, the general situation is as follows:

1. Monolingual adult FL learners react better to the teacher's instruction in their L1.
2. The reaction of multilingual FL adults is less marked, though still positive.
3. Monolingual young FL learners show interest in the use of L1 by the teacher.
4. Multilingual young FL learners consider the use of L1 by the teacher ineffective, as it obviously breaks the learning process, because the data perceived in FL (we risk presuming) are processed separately, without other languages taking part.
5. When the individual multilingual adult learner spoke in the FL (English) she frequently applies language code-switching, probably, feeling the need to translate from one L to another, which normally takes time.
6. When the individual multilingual young learner spoke in the FL (English), he proved to be fluent and native-like, and the use of vocabulary, grammatical patterns and stylistic registers corresponded to the level of mental development he is supposed to have at the age of 6. He does not resort to translation or search for meaning, though he generally does when he needs to find the solution to a problem. It is the notion not found in one language, not the word that is searched for in other languages.

The study shows that plurilingualism, like bilingualism, does not reduce students' communicative ability. On the contrary, it could even assist in the teaching-learning process. It clarifies some misconceptions that have troubled FL teachers for years, namely, whether they should use L1 together with L2 when there is a need for it and whether the often-mentioned principle of "no L1 in the classroom" is justifiable. It will help make more people acknowledge the role of using other languages in the English language classes. Overall, the broader and richer the language background, the more sophisticated and developed the students' insights are and that appears to be relevant for TEFL.

This master's thesis consists of 5 sections which incorporate the critical theoretical view together with my personal attitude towards some of the aspects relevant for the investigation process. Thus, the place of translation in the current educational paradigm is discussed in chapter 4, in which the idea of its general feasibility in the FL teaching process is suggested. Plurilingualism is characterized and analyzed within the cultural and educational contexts of the students. First, in sections 4.5 and 4.6, young and adult learners were compared considering the age factor in relation to the EFL acquisition. Later, in section 4.7 and subsection 4.7.1, their

plurilingualism is examined, revealing similarities and differences, and, consequently, perspectives of more successful FL learning. Third, we also attempt to globalize the issue of plurilingualism and look at it from the point of view of the multilingual approach in European education.

The findings of the study are, in general, that the use of translation is still valid within the classroom framework and contributes to EFL learning, though, only for a certain group of students. Plurilingualism, in turn, can be fruitful for teaching as it serves as a facilitating mechanism in learning FLs.

2. ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE TOPIC

The topic of the project is relevant since it focuses on a particular group of learners with whom teachers of FLs frequently come in contact with in their everyday educational context. Besides, the tendency to globalization and the fact that the boundaries between countries, especially in Europe, are getting more and more blurred means that plurilingual workers are increasingly demanded by the labor market and, consequently, that there is an obvious need for teachers to be able to deal with such plurilingual learners by resorting to adequate methodologies.

My personal interest in the topic is dictated by three reasons. First, I am a foreigner, a native Russian speaker, who resides permanently in Spain (Catalonia). Additionally, possessing a philological degree, I work as a teacher of English and Russian and as an English/ Spanish/ Chinese/ Russian translator and interpreter. Circumstantially, I deal with at least five different languages on a daily basis. I assume this plurilingualism greatly influences my personality. These are, therefore, the reasons for my curiosity to study in what particular way a multilingual environment affects a plurilingual individual like me, whether it is a positive or negative influence, or both.

Secondly, I am the mother of a child who has been plurilingual since birth. His native languages are Russian, Spanish and Catalan. He is also fluent in English, which is the main language in his school. It is interesting for me to observe how the child deals with several native languages and check, whether these different languages assist or hinder his learning of a FL (English). I also wonder if this plurilingualism contributes to his personal development, specifically, as regards memorization processes and creativity.

Thirdly, it would be useful to apply the results reached in the study to my teaching context, since I normally deal with plurilingual learners and the use of translation is frequently questioned.

3. OBJECTIVES

The aims of the study are the following:

1. To analyze the differences in teaching young and adult learners (see section 4.7: 50; and 4.7.1: 51-56).
2. To analyze the characteristics of plurilingualism (see section 4.4: 18).
3. To examine the effect of plurilingualism on young and adult learners (see section 4.4: 20-44).
4. To analyze the role of translation in foreign language teaching context (see section 4.1: 11).
5. To compare young and adult learners as regards the use of L1 (see section 4.3: 16).
6. To examine the feasibility of using translation with plurilingual learners (see section 6: 61-77).
7. To analyze if there exists any relationship between the plurilingualism of young and adult learners and the use of the translation in the English teaching context (see section 7: 79-85).

The specific objectives are:

1. To analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the use of translation within a particular plurilingual context (see section 6: 61-77).
2. To establish whether using translation influences young and adult plurilingual learners differently (see section 7: 79-85).

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 TEACHING THROUGH TRANSLATION. TRANSLATION AND ITS PLACE IN DIFFERENT HISTORICAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Among other matters, translation has always been an important instrument in terms of communication between people, since the linguistic system of every language is made up of number of complex subsystems which can and must be decoded in order to engage in a successful communicative act. Moreover, translation can presumably assist in FL acquisition if a learner refers to his/her L1 when studying specific aspects of FL. Oxford (1990) stresses the fact that translation converts the expression of the target language into that of the native language, or the reverse. Likewise, Lin (2008) defines translation as expressing the sense of words or text in another language. On the basis of these definitions, we may assume that EFL learners perceive translation as a transfer between the first (L1) and the second (L2) languages.

Some studies have proved that, when the transfer from L1 to L2 occurs, deviant forms (errors) appear, but this is bad in itself. The errors which learners make are part of the normal process of language learning, as is clearly shown by the learner's intermediate language or *interlanguage* (Ortega 2009: 32). Ortega posits that L1 may impact L2 acquisition negatively or positively by slowing down or accelerating the rate of acquisition (2009: 35). For instance, if L1 and L2 are typologically similar, a faster rate of acquisition is more likely to occur than otherwise.

It worth mentioning that translation can be a useful technique in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), since it acts on the level of socio-cultural interactions. CLT is regarded as an approach to language teaching (Richards & Rodgers 2001) based on the theory that the primary function of language use is communication and its main objective is to develop communicative competence in learners (Hymes 1971). Communicative competence, in turn, is the ability to interpret social behaviors correctly and to act in an appropriate manner. Thus, to communicate competently the learner must be involved actively in the production of the target language (Canale and Swain 1980).

As Stibbard (1994: 9) claims, "translation is a natural, useful and essentially communicative activity, which general learners of the language will have to perform, whether or not they have had any formal training as translators or interpreters". In this connection, translation can be considered an everyday instrument of communication and, consequently, it is possible to implement it in the EFL classroom daily, since the entire teaching/learning process is focused on the learners' communicative use of FL.

However, most researchers, such as Larsen-Freeman (2000), among others, believe that, to profit from the translation in the EFL class, it should be used in a balanced and purposeful way.

Furthermore, translation can be a facilitative positive learning strategy in FL acquisition. But it is first necessary to explain what we mean by “learning strategies”. The term refers to specific behaviors employed by learners in order to make the process easier, quicker, more pleasant and more efficient (Oxford 1990). Learners normally employ both direct learning strategies, such as memory, cognitive and compensation strategies, and indirect strategies, which manage learning behaviors, such as metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

First, I am going to deal with translation from the point of view of direct strategies. Translation can be associated with memory strategy. Many students resort to translation in an attempt to remember the meanings of English words and phrases. In fact, with limited English proficiency, translation is the only effective way to acquire vocabulary in L2. Therefore, translation can be used intelligently in order to increase the number of words the students learn (Prince 1996).

Translation can be also considered a cognitive learning strategy (Oxford 1990). Learners receive, process and transfer the FL by making use of their knowledge of the mother tongue. Because they resort to their native language, learners are able to analyze and comprehend complex structures of the FL.

As far as compensation strategies are concerned, the learners use translation in order to compensate for their insufficient knowledge of a particular issue in L2 and to get their task/assignment in L2 done.

Let us now turn to translation from the point of view of indirect strategies. First, as regards metacognitive strategies, they are generally used to plan and monitor learning and evaluate learning efficacy. We may speak about translation as a metacognitive strategy but only if a learner demonstrates an advanced level of FL proficiency.

Translation can also be considered as one of the *affective* strategies, since it can lower or reduce foreign language learning anxiety. EFL learners normally feel anxious and fearful when speaking English. In order to control this anxiety, they consciously resort to their L1 when planning what they are going to say and then they express it by means of translating into L2 (Wenden 1986). In fact, the translation helps to neutralize the learners’ negative emotions.

Likewise, translation has much to do with social strategies, because it promotes cooperation between learners and, consequently, it improves the necessary learning outcomes.

For this reason, we may conclude that the role of translation in foreign language learning is manifold and, above all, auxiliary, as it promotes learners' development of reading and writing skills and can be a source of vocabulary.

4.2 THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

By the end of the 19th century, in different countries and in different educational and cultural contexts, translation was an important tool for teaching and assessing language competence. Gradually, due to the reform movement initiated in 1880, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was rejected and new methods emerged. The GTM failed because it was extremely focused on memorizing rules and vocabulary. It was replaced by new more progressive methods: in the late 18th century and early 19th century the Direct Method (also known as Reform Method) was developed and later the Audiolingual Method emerged in the late 1950s. Furthermore, in the 1970s and – 1980s, the four Humanistic Approaches (Communicative Language Learning; The Silent Way; Suggestopaedia; Total Physical Response) were developed, which meant that the principles of the GMT in FL teaching were not acceptable anymore.

In the GTM still popular in Europe until the mid-20th century, the main goal students were focused on was mastering reading and writing skills in the FL. To achieve this goal teachers resorted to memorization of grammar rules and bilingual vocabulary lists, explicit presentation of grammar rules, and translation of sentences out of context. The primary role was accuracy (Nunan 1999) and the use of the target language (TL) in the classroom was limited. The result was the absence of communicative skills necessary to use the FL outside the classroom. Most students found “the conceptual leap from the classroom to genuine communication outside the classroom” a very difficult one (Nunan 1999: 73). The negative consequences and the growing demand for learners’ oral competence in the mid-20th century led to changing the use of translation in the classroom: “translation should be avoided, although the native language could be used in order to explain new words or to check comprehension” (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 10).

Gradually, FL teaching focused its attention more on the active use of the FL in the language classroom and the students seemed to stop being dependent on their native language for instruction. Instead, the students’ L1 was replaced by instruction in the FL. Actually, the methods that followed, the Direct Method and Situational Language Teaching (developed in the 1930s – 1960s and based on the structuralist - view of language) effectively eliminated the students’ L1 from the classroom.

Many authors establish a direct relationship between *grammar* and *translation*. Maley (1989: 1), in his introduction to Duff’s book “Translation”, points out that “translation has long languished as a poor relation in the family of language teaching techniques” and complains that “it has been denigrated as 'uncommunicative,' 'boring,' 'pointless,' 'difficult,' 'irrelevant' and the like, and has suffered from too close an

association with its cousin, grammar, along with its cousins literature, dictation, vocabulary, reading aloud, etc. it has been pushed into the methodological room". Therefore, in recent decades, translation has played a secondary negatively-marked role. However, its popularity seems to be coming back: in the current "post-communicative" period (Ur 1996: 7) of EFL teaching, the principle of "teaching eclecticism" (Swan 1985b: 87), also known as *integrated approach*, is very much promoted. This principle or approach means the teacher tends to apply a combination of teaching methods. Preference is given to the process of learning rather than to its results and the learner's individual learning styles are taken into account. Regarding the use of translation, some learners need to relate the L2 lexis and structures to their L1 equivalents. This also gives them the opportunity to compare similarities and contrast differences. The learning process might really become richer if students become aware of the non-parallel nature of languages, since translation allows thinking comparatively. The latter is useful as many students decide to learn English in order to use it later in their working environment. In the case of teachers, an ability to translate into the L1 of the learners can offer a convenient and efficient way out of difficult situation during a lesson. Learning target language equivalents to L1 key phrases can be an extremely effective way of building up a good working vocabulary (Harmer 2001).

4.3 THE ROLE OF L1 IN L2 ACQUISITION

This section resumes the discussion started in the previous section, where the role of translation in the learning process was addressed. To ascertain whether the use of translation really makes sense within the FL teaching context, we will examine in more detail the role of L1 in L2 acquisition.

For a long time researchers and practitioners have debated about whether the students' native language should be included or excluded in teaching. As Prodromou (2000: 1) argues, "we have for a long time treated the mother tongue as a 'taboo' subject, a source of embarrassment and, on the part of teachers, a recognition of their failure to teach properly, i.e. using "only English".

It is still a controversial issue. Therefore, one of the aims of this research study is to investigate the positive characteristics of L1 that can enable teachers to find an effective way to use the learners' L1 in their L2 teaching practice. Actually, in the communicative classroom, translation into the target language emphasizes a recently-taught item and reinforces awareness of the structural, conceptual and sociolinguistic differences between the native and target languages (Atkinson 1987). The activity itself is not communicative, but aims at improving accuracy of the newly learned structures. In other words, the use of mother tongue is a normal psycholinguistic process which facilitates L2 production and provides the necessary conditions for learners to initiate and encourage verbal interaction with each other (Brooks and Donato 1994, in Cook 2001). In a more global sense, I believe, the use of L1 in class may "lead not only to the improvement of existing teaching methods, but also to innovations in methodology" (Cook 2001: 189).

Most teachers of English keep on using L1 because they are aware of the fact that teaching children in their L1 gives them two things: knowledge and literacy. The knowledge that children obtain through their L1 helps make the English they hear and read more comprehensible. That is, "literacy developed in the primary language transfers to the second [simply because] we learn to read by reading that is, by making sense of what is on the page" (Smith 1994: 55).

Many authors believe that maximum L2-exposure is essential for the learners and that L1 can be used alongside L2 as a complement. In this regard, Turnbull (2001: 153) states that maximizing target language use does not and should not mean that it is harmful for the teacher to use the L1. Similarly, Stern (1992: 285) claims that "the use of L1 and target language should be seen as complementary, depending on the characteristics and stages of the language learning process".

So far we have dealt with the general positive aspects of using translation. It is pertinent now to look into specific implementations. L1 can be put to various uses in the L2 classroom: classroom management, language analysis, presentation of grammar rules, discussion of cross-cultural issues, giving instructions or prompts, explanation of errors, and checking comprehension (Auerbach 1993). Likewise, Cook (1999) asserts that using the L1 as a classroom tool allows teachers to convey the meaning of English words, explain grammar and organize the class, and it allows students to use it as part of their collaborative learning and to apply individual strategies. Considering translation in classroom as a separate skill, we may assume that it is also useful for testing at all levels and for developing communicative competence (Levenston 1985). What is more, when translation becomes an activity, it is not a passive activity, but a communicative one in itself.

The interrelation between learners' L1 and L2 regarding errors is another pertinent issue. Some studies have proved that the difficulties and errors in FL learning are not necessarily a consequence of L1 interference. For example, Dulay and Burt (1973) analyzed the sources of errors among native-Spanish-speaking children learning English and discovered that the errors caused by L1 interference make up a mere 3%, while 85% of them were actual developmental in nature, that is, they are errors that happen during the process of language learning regardless of learners' L1.

However, overuse of L1 will naturally reduce the amount of exposure to L2. For this reason, an attempt should be made to keep a balance between L1 and L2 use. In this regard, Turnbull (2001) affirms that, although it is efficient to make a quick switch to the L1 to ensure, for instance, that students understand a difficult grammar concept or an unknown word, it is crucial for teachers to use the target language as much as possible in contexts in which students spend only short periods of time in class, and when they have little contact with the target language outside the classroom.

In my view, holding extreme positions for and against translation in the EFL classroom is absolutely useless. We should adopt a reasonable balanced approach, in which the L1 is used by the teachers only to facilitate foreign language acquisition.

Besides, in the present EFL educational situation, the role of accuracy compared that of fluency is neglected. However, in order to promote successful language learning, they should be used both integrally.

I assume that the interrelation between L1 and L2 and its influence on the learning process are determined by different factors and learners' characteristics. The following sections are devoted to an important phenomenon, plurilingualism, which can be hardly called a learner's characteristic, although it definitely influences FL acquisition. Whether it is positive or negative will be discussed in further chapters.

4.4 PLURILINGUALISM

4.4.1. Plurilingualism and social development in learners

The world we live in nowadays is multilingual and multicultural. This is evident. However, some researchers, like John Canning, for example, have claimed that while Western countries are monolingual, Third World countries are multilingual, full of languages and dialects (Canning 2004). This claim seems to be supported by the economic situation in the Western world and the general well-being of the people living there, who do not feel any necessity for a plurilingual environment, thus preserving their homogeneous speech communities.

However, I cannot fully agree with this claim. Canning (2004) fails to consider the role of immigrants and tourists, who make Western countries plurilingual *de facto*. Immigrants and tourists are major “promoters” of foreign language use in foreign countries. Of course, the popularity of a foreign language in a country is related to different political, economic and socio-cultural aspects. However, the number of tourists frequently visiting a country and the number of immigrants at present living and working in a country influence directly the local people’s wish to study languages. In fact, all the countries in the West have multilingual characteristics. One clear example is Spain, a country characterized by its diversity of official languages. If we go back in history and also look at the current economic situation of the country, we can discover a close connection between the well-developed Spanish tourism sector (almost 57 million international visitors in 2011), the large number of immigrants employed in different industries (almost 2,7 in 2005) and the growing demand for studying the foreign languages that are mother tongues of these tourists and immigrants. Therefore, with a constant flow of people moving from one region/country to another, multilingualism is a natural phenomenon. We may even generalize and presume that all national entities are multilingual, even those that call themselves homogeneous (Beacco and Byram 2003, in Bernaus *et al.* 2007: 10).

It should be noted that the development of multilingualism on the national level is often accompanied by political and economic demands. This demand may be “positive” or “negative”. Negative demand may be illustrated by the case of the Catalan language, whose use as an official language was prohibited under Franco’s dictatorship (1939-1975). During that long period, the Catalan language was politically and economically discriminated against. This discrimination had the effect of bringing up a growing interest in studying Catalan. Positive demand can be illustrated by the way the

English language was introduced in schools and promoted at workplaces in Norway in the 1960s as a result of the fact that oil was discovered in the North Sea. Naturally, the industry required as many engineers as possible from different countries who had already experience in oil production. Thus, English served as an official language since few people in the world speak Norwegian. Besides, from a practical point of view, communication was faster and more convenient in English so that the whole oil production process functioned efficiently. In simple words, foreigners coming to Norway were not expected to study the Norwegian language since it might slow down business processes. Nowadays, in Norway there is a common understanding that multilingualism is useful and serves for the successful running of different social institutions, and English along with French and German is the main foreign language in the country.

Today, European countries are characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as by exchanges between languages and cultures. This is encouraged actively by the Council of Europe, which sees as one of its main objectives the development of a “plurilingual and pluricultural competence” in the individual. In the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001: 168), plurilingual and pluricultural competence is defined as “the language communication and cultural interaction skills of a social player who, at various levels, masters several languages and has experience of several cultures”. In fact, nowadays, human beings depend on communication with other individuals, including people of other languages and cultures. It is highly important to be exposed to interaction with foreigners. Globally, that is the aim of any language teaching process: to transform a language into an active means of communication that promotes openness and access to others (Brown 2000).

4.4.2. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism

The *CEFR* clarifies the meaning of the terms *pluricultural*, *multicultural* and *intercultural*. However, to understand the meaning of these terms we should first refer to other terms of *plurilingualism*, *multilingualism* and *interlingualism*.

Plurilingualism refers to languages from the point of view of those who speak them. It is the opposite of *monolingualism*. Plurilingualism is “the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures” (Council of Europe 2001: 168). What is more, “this is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw” (Council of Europe 2001: 168).

Multilingualism refers to “the presence in a geographical area, large or small, of more than one ‘variety of language’ i.e. the mode of speaking of a social group whether it is formally recognized as a language or not; in such an area individuals may be monolingual speaking only their own variety” (Council of Europe 2007: 8).

As for *interlingualism*, the notion is similar to *societal bilingualism*, - as it means inter-group relations facilitated by coexisting languages (Pool and Fettes 1998). The *Interlingualism* is about using two or more languages from the perspective of the individual. In other words, it means that languages coexist in the mind and the world of people at whatever level of proficiency, circumstances and purposes.

Thus, the terms *pluricultural*, *multicultural* and *intercultural* supposedly correlate with the terms *plurilingualism*, *multilingualism* and *interlingualism*. Let us identify in what way it occurs, first of all by giving key definitions.

Pluriculturalism is an approach to the self and to others as complex human beings who act and react from the perspective of multiple identifications. In this case, identity or identities are the by-products of experiences in different cultures. As a result, multiple identifications create a unique personality. It is based on multiple- identity, on one’s belonging to multiple groups with different degrees of identification (Trujillo Sáez 2005).

Multiculturalism, in turn, is the cultural diversity of communities and the policies that promote this diversity. As a descriptive term, *multiculturalism* often refers to just cultural diversity and the demographic make-up of a specific place, sometimes at the organizational level, e.g., schools, businesses, neighborhoods, cities, or nations (Bloor 2010).

The term *interculturalism* refers to cross-cultural dialogue and challenges self-segregation tendencies within cultures. It goes beyond just “a passive acceptance of a multicultural fact of multiple cultures effectively existing in a society and instead promotes dialogue and interaction between cultures” (Penas and López Sáenz 2006: 15).

On the basis of these definitions, we may see that the notions of *plurilingualism* and *pluriculturalism* both deal with the learner's personal features as they appear in a communicative situation. The terms *multilingualism* and *multiculturalism* are used to describe the contexts in which languages and cultures come in contact. Comparatively, the term *interculturality* is used to describe the context of a communicative situation in which people interact and apply a set of communicative strategies for that interaction.

Nowadays, practically all EFL teaching curricula attempt to integrate the culture of the foreign language studied. This is surely related to the phenomenon of globalization that characterizes the present society. Over the past 25 years, because of the speedy development of high technologies and progress in science, the world has sought ways to erase linguistic and cultural borders between countries (Graddol 2006).

The plurilingual approach in education somehow reflects this general movement in today's society. In what way does it occur? I believe that each particular learner gains a lot of experience by learning foreign languages and, consequently, by integrating the culture of those foreign languages into his/her life. This experience is necessarily unique, since a learner is an individual characterized by a number of features peculiar only to him/her. That is, by “assimilating” a new culture, a learner processes and adapts it through his/her own - let us call it - “personality filter” and, as a result, in the course of time, a new person emerges. I would describe him/her as an individual who is well prepared for surviving in an increasingly globalized society, because he/she commands several FLs and is familiar with different cultures. What is more, knowing many languages allows him/her to use, manipulate and profit from the knowledge of the associated culture(s). Therefore, knowing many languages helps to erase cultural borders, enabling the learners to self-develop and, consequently, to develop the society we live in. In this way, the languages the learner knows interrelate and interact. As is explained in Council of Europe (2007), the learner “does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact”.

It is necessary here to define the term *communicative competence*. In linguistics, it refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology, as well as to social knowledge about how and when to use utterances

appropriately. Dell Hymes studied the notion of *communicative competence* from the ethnographic point of view and claimed that it included “communicative form and function in integral relation to each other” (1966: 128). It is exactly what teachers’ efforts are focused on. In other words, it is the objective we try to achieve by practicing FL in class. Of course, when dealing with several FLs, it would be ideal if a teacher were able to develop (cultivate) plurilingual competence in learners, which means the ability to communicate in several languages, without discriminating any one of them. But the latter requires that the teachers be plurilingual which today is rather an exception than a rule.

Apparently, we can place the term *communicative competence* next to the terms *plurilingual-* and *pluricultural competence* since “plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures” (Council of Europe 2007: 168).

In comparison with *communicative competence*, the *pluricultural competence*, is a more general, broader term, of which *plurilingual competence* is a constituent part. By learning FLs, a person can access not only one single culture, but various cultures, consisting of compulsory indispensable components, at the national, regional and social levels. These constituent parts do not simply coexist, but “are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence” (Council of Europe 2007: 168).

In general, the culture represents a continuous interaction between the nation and the individual. From this point of view, many researchers have discussed culture and its components. For instance, Bernaus (2007) relates *multiculturalism* to three visions of diversity: culture as nation state (if we speak about a multicultural society with different nationalities involved), culture as religion (when different religions are involved) or culture as ethnic groupings (when different ethnic groups are involved). Collier (1994: 38-39) proposes that other definitions of culture should be considered, such as “culture as age”, “culture as gender”, “culture as profession”, “culture as “ability/disability”. Both authors’ views make sense, when talking about plurilingualism, as all the cultural components mentioned are important and influential in terms of an individual’s language and plurilingual competence.

There, all in all, we face situational, personal and societal definitions. At present, *interculturality* is, undoubtedly, the key notion in language teaching, it being language and culture interconnected. One does not exist apart from another. For this reason, the

FL learner and teacher should be aware of all three cultural levels: multicultural, pluricultural and intercultural.

4.4.3. Plurilingualism and the brain

During the first half of the 20th century there was a common belief in neurolinguistics that bilingual children were predisposed to experience linguistic disadvantages or, even worse, a developmental delay.

The psychological studies on the relation between bilingualism and cognitive abilities began in the early 1920s and were based on psychometric tests of intelligence. Initially, the tests were meant to check whether bilinguals were at a disadvantage linguistically. However, since the measurement of intelligence strongly depends on verbal abilities, psychologists began doubting about the general validity of such tests for bilingual children. So, the fair assessment of the intellectual abilities and potential of bilinguals was questioned. In general, the majority of studies found that bilinguals were linguistically deficient in comparison to their monolingual counterparts. For example, Carrow (1957) discovered deficient articulation; Saer (1924) pointed out their lower standards in written composition and grammatical correctness; and a considerably reduced vocabulary was noticed by Barke & Williams (1938). The most remarkable finding was that bilinguals suffered from a so-called "language handicap" (Darsy 1953). The language handicap of bilinguals was interpreted as a linguistic confusion that deeply affected children's intellectual development and academic performance. However, the problem with most studies conducted before 1960s was that the investigation on the effects of bilingualism on children's intelligence failed to consider group differences in social and economic status. In view of the inconsistency in the abovementioned studies, we can presume that none of the results can be easily interpreted.

In 1962, Peal and Lambert opened a new era in bilingualism studies. They conducted a study (1962) comparing bilingual and monolingual children on various measures of intelligence and achievement. At the time, their findings were groundbreaking: unlike what many child psychologists had believed until then, they did not find any evidence proving that bilingual children suffered from intellectual deficiency. In fact, bilinguals showed either equivalent or superior results than their monolingual counterparts. The analysis of test scores permitted the researchers to conclude that bilinguals were superior to monolinguals in concept formation and in tasks that required a certain mental or symbolic flexibility. Bilinguals had a more diversified pattern of abilities than their monolingual classmates (Peal and Lambert 1962). For this reason, the authors defended bilingualism arguing that it produced no negative effect on the intellectual development of a young learner.

Peal and Lambert's (1962) view of "childhood bilingualism" was quite progressive and became popular among educators and psychologists. Later, they were the first to justify the need to organize bilingual educational programs. During the late 1960s and 1970s, Peal and Lambert's followers, who were experts in a variety of related disciplines, including education, psychology, psycholinguistics and sciences which dealt with neural processes, conducted further research on cognitive development. Their new findings revealed the positive consequences of bilingualism. A number of researchers (e.g., Torrance, Wu, Gowan and Aliotti 1970, Bain 1974 and Ricciardelli 1992, among others) discovered that bilingual children and monolingual children have different cognitive systems. Learning, speaking and using two languages may affect fundamental aspects of cognitive and neural development. That may influence the way those systems learn and represent information (see Bialystok 1999, Bialystok and Martin 2004, and Mechelli *et al.* 2004).

The positive effects of bilingualism are better represented in executive function (or self-control) tasks. Executive function (or self-control) tasks are those that require the child to inhibit preferred patterns of responding, for example, doing a task in a new way rather than an old way (Luria 1966, Mischel, Shoda and Rodriguez 1989, Zelazo and Frye 1998, Kochanska, Murray and Harlan 2000 and Beaver & Wright 2007). Classroom success is achieved through the performance of these executive function tasks. When the performance faces difficulties, attentional and conduct disorders in children may occur (Barkley 1997 and Friedman *et al.* 2007).

As a matter of fact, the interest of researchers was focused on the role that executive function plays in school activities such as planning, organizing, maintaining a selective attention, and inhibitory control in cognitive and social development (Dempster 1992, Carlson and Moses 2001 and Blair & Razza 2007). In this case, "Inhibitory control means that the development of the ability to cognitively represent hierarchical rule structures (if - then) provides the basis for advances in executive function and self-regulation in early childhood" (Blair and Razza 2007: 649). What was discovered was surprising: children who speak more than one language seem to demonstrate an executive control which is developmentally more advanced. The unknown figures are still the mechanism involved and the kind of bilingualism that stimulate increased executive control. New research in cognitive neuroscience seems to prove the above ideas. As far as we know, self-control is usually regarded as a mechanism that deters a person from doing something. Therefore, one may assume that self-control and the neural pathways supporting it can be reinforced by practice. If

this is really so, we may hypothesize that children speaking two languages and regularly shifting between them must learn to inhibit the words in one language to speak the other language. There are other assumptions that follow from these ones. For example, there is an assumption that brain is able to mix the FLs, which an individual commands. Also, whether all the languages an individual knows remain active and accessible while one language is used is still not clear (Brysbaert 1998 and Gollan & Kroll 2001). If an individual's other languages do remain active, then it could be posited that bilingualism performs a function of an effective training for inhibitory processes.

To summarize, there exists a common tendency today to speak about bilingualism as phenomenon that produces positive cognitive effects. What is interesting for me is to understand how these cognitive effects affect the neurological structure of the brain. In this connection we need to view the brain in a holistic way. To our knowledge, neurons constitute the basic elements of the brain. One of their essential features is that they are organized in circuits, within which information is continuously exchanged. Jackson (1958) proposed a hierarchical organization of cerebral functions. He underlined lower structures of the brain, which control basic functions (respiration, sleep, etc.) and higher structures, where voluntary functions, including language aspects, are organized. In the second half of the 20th century Luria (1973) assumed that language is organized into different subcomponents (articulation, naming, phonemic analysis, etc.) that are situated in separate areas of the brain. The activation of a cognitive function depends on the coordinated activity of numerous cortical centers (regions of the cerebral cortex trained for specific operations). These hypotheses were further developed into a neurofunctional model of language organization at three levels: (1) the higher level of the so-called "extended system of language", which comprise underlying systems; (2) the intermediate level made up of various subsystems (verbal production, word comprehension, reading, writing, etc.); and (3) the lower system, consisting of numerous neurofunctional modules (modules for phonation, articulation, etc.); see Fabbro (1999: 69). To put it simply, the billions of neurons that come in all shapes and perform all sorts of functions are not anatomically isolated and independent. On the contrary, they tend to become organized in modules that remain connected to other neuronal modules all over the brain. These modules organize themselves in nuclei and layers so as to be able to perform precise tasks, but the neurons are not static and move constantly. Thus, the interaction between the neurofunctional modules taking place in L1 may also occur with L2. In case of bilinguals, perhaps, there is a close interconnectivity between the languages they

master. However, we are not going to discuss this question in great detail, since it refers more to a specific area of neurolinguistics in which we cannot claim expertise.

4.4.4. Multilingualism and creativity

There is an assumption that multilingualism is closely related to an individual's creative thinking. Let us first of all define the notion of *creative thinking*. This term refers to both, the capacity to blend or synthesize to present suggestions, images, or experience in unique ways, and the expertise of thinking, responding and dealing in a creative way characterized by a higher level of development, risk-taking and divergent thinking. So far, very little attention has been paid to the potential impact of multilingual practice on an individual's creative potential. Anatoliy Kharkhurin (2012) investigated the influence of the foreign languages a person masters upon his/her creativity. The study was divided in two parts. The first part discussed the outcomes of the historiometric research into eminent creative individuals in various linguistic and sociocultural communities. The second part dealt with the findings of the psychometric research regarding the creative performance of bilingual and monolingual individuals. Both children and adults behaviors were analyzed. The investigation was based on the assumption that, if multilingualism has an impact on creative abilities, then those individuals who speak more than one language should demonstrate greater performance on the creativity tests when compared to their monolingual counterparts. The studies with bilingual children indicated that bilingualism facilitates an individual's creative potential. Consequently, speaking multiple languages extends one's cognitive capacities. That is, multilingual practices may strengthen certain cognitive mechanisms, which in turn may increase one's creative potential (Kharkhurin 2012). Therefore, the facilitating effect of speaking multiple languages on an individual's cognition may also manifest in their enhanced creative performance.

However, multilingualism-creativity relation has still not been studied outside a laboratory setting. The real-life creative accomplishments of multilingual individuals have not been tested. Besides, globally we cannot make optimistic assumptions as regards creativity in multilingual countries, like Canada, for example, because, even though most Canadians are multilingual, they do not show an overall higher level of creativity as compared to monolingual countries.

In the teaching context many theoreticians and teaching who consider that multilingualism promotes a fruitful learning atmosphere where multilingual learners do feel self-confident, less confused or scared, and can profit from their special linguistic abilities. The study titled *Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity* (Council of Europe, 2009) underlines the following positive features of multilingualism as having

influential on the learner's creativity. As a matter of fact, multilingualism greatly affects learners' personality by fostering a number of mental abilities:

- Creativity.
- Problem-solving.
- Information-processing.
- Capacity to focus.
- Interpersonal communication skills.
- Age-related mental deterioration.
- Cognition processes.

4.4.5. Is learning a developing process?

In the above discussion of the interrelation between multilingualism and creativity, we somehow touched upon the issue of the influence of FL acquisition on the learners' development. To confirm whether learning is a developing process or not, we must first refer to two basic philosophical concepts: *deduction* and *induction* (see S. Boezio n.a.). Assumptions may be reached by reasoning either from the general to the particular (deductive method) or from the particular to the general (inductive method).

It has been an opinion that children (and adults too) learn the world through an inductive process (Holland *et al.* 1986), that is, after encountering a sufficient number of similar cases, children make inferences and conclude that something is arranged in that particular way. This conclusion is the result of step-by-step-formed concepts and judgments. Practically, since birth, children construct suppositions and that is a gradual way of understanding the world around them. Then, with the new information coming to their experience, they revise these theories, clarifying and improving unclear suppositions.

As we can see, older individuals, for example, may learn more effectively than younger ones because they base their learning on the greater knowledge and experience they have gained through life. However, we should not forget that a great number of factors influence the ability of a learner, whether young or adult, to learn successfully. For instance, a learner's individual characteristics have to be counted for.

The relationship between age and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has long been one of the most interesting pedagogical issues. As regards language acquisition, explaining the difference between young and adult learners, we cannot take one side and say unambiguously that young learners have advantages over adult ones or vice versa. While adults have an advantage over children, insofar as they possess more life-experience and knowledge, children perform better in memorization processes, for example, or in building fast *associative series* (the chain of concepts or definitions in which the appearance of the following part of the chain takes place due to the memory recalling the previous part with which it is somehow connected).

Children perform better than adults at informal and outside-the-school language learning, while adults have the upper hand when it comes to formal instructional settings. This difference between both types of learners leads to a variation in the language acquired. This distinction in L2 acquisition has led linguists and psychologists to investigate into the reasons for these differences and the various implications of such difference.

Teachers are often asked about Language Acquisition (LA) and about the optimal age to start learning a language. Is language acquisition biologically determined? Is there an optimal age for language acquisition? Before we can answer these questions, we must refer to a study conducted by Penfield and Roberts (1959), which revealed interesting brain abilities in children. The study demonstrated that they could recover language functions after injury in the brain's speech areas. The brain's plasticity played a crucial role by enabling "the healthy hemisphere to take over language function, when the other half is injured" (Penfield and Roberts 1959). However, adults were rarely predisposed to that. These researchers proved that the brain plasticity found in children was one of the reasons why children found it easier to learn than adults. The researchers were able to establish the optimal age for the acquisition of a new language as between 4 and 10 years.

However, we believe that it is not only children that experience brain plasticity, but also adults. This may seem contradictory to what has been just said before. Nevertheless, it makes sense in the context of multilingualism and its hypothetically positive influence on learners. I am going to prove this claim in the following paragraph.

We can hypothesize that bilingual children aged between 4 and 10 years possess a highly plastic brain and that, when they become adults, they will not lose this plasticity. The reason for this is that their FLs develop as parallel linguistic systems, and that having these systems will allow them to acquire additional FLs effectively. However, is it possible to predict how the parallel language systems will develop because of the inevitable interaction between the systems/languages? If the interaction is positive, will it accelerate the acquisition of a new FL? I would give an affirmative answer for the last question, but another important aspect is not considered here, precisely, the origin of a new FL. I suppose that the acquisition of German and Chinese by a multilingual learner, who already speaks Italian, Spanish and French, will be different, if only because German belongs to the Indo-European language family, to which Italian, Spanish and French also belong to, while the Chinese belongs to the unrelated Sino-Tibetan language family.

Going back to monolingual young learners, we should refer to Lennenberg (1967:176) and his *biological factor* hypothesis as regards the critical period. He assumed that there is a link between the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and *lateralization* (the division into two hemispheres (left and right) of the human brain, each specializing in certain mental processes).

According to the theory, during the critical period (from 2 to 10 years) children can learn a second language easily and naturally, but beyond that period, learning a second language will not be easy. Moreover, according to Lennenberg (1967), after the age of ten, learners are unable to gain native-like command in a FL because, after the puberty period, they lose the plasticity necessary for natural language acquisition and, consequently, they will need more conscious and laborious efforts to acquire a FL.

Undoubtedly, Lennenberg's views met with criticism from other psychologists and linguists. For instance, Krashen (1975) considered that the link between the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and lateralization proposed by Lennenberg is ungrounded. Kinsbourne (1975) had doubts about the brain lateralizing from birth. The evidence that puberty is accompanied by changes in the brain was strongly criticized because many adolescents and adults do acquire a high level of proficiency in L2. The criticism was based on the idea that the learners do not lose the capacity for natural acquisition.

As a result, in the course of subsequent investigations on the influence of brain lateralization upon the ability to acquire a L2, Seliger (1978: 11) advanced the "Multiple Critical Period Hypothesis", which claims that there is a continual process of specialization of some language functions in specific areas of the brain, a process which may continue through an individual's whole life. This process is not connected with specific age periods. The critical periods are successive by nature and overlap each other. Besides, he also postulates that each process is responsible for a different language function. It was generally assumed that there are different critical periods for different parts of language, for example, phonology and syntax (Seliger 1978 and Long 1990). This is proved by the fact that adult learners show more progress in vocabulary acquisition than in pronunciation patterns. However, there was also an assumption that not for all parts of language a critical period takes place. Thus, Scovel (1988) proposed that there is only a critical period for the acquisition of the pronunciation of L2 since pronunciation is "the only aspect of language performance that has a neuromuscular basis", requires "neuromotor involvement", and is related to "physical reality" (Scovel 1988: 101). He believed that learners who start to learn L2 after the age of 12 will be unable ever to reach a native speaker's level of performance in language and will be "easily identified as non-native speakers of that language" (Scovel 1988: 185). However, it is worth remembering that Scovel accepted the possibility of there being "superexceptional" FL learners to which the critical period constraints did not seem to apply.

What remains unclear is the common assumption that children are better language learners in all language features. Is this really true? The answer to this question requires looking into a huge number of young and adult learners before drawing any final conclusions. However, some facts seem to be obvious. For example, very young children, between 3 and 10 years of age, are "quick" learners and are often called "sponges". The metaphor illustrates the way children perceive new information coming from the external world, including the information coded in FL: they seem to absorb linguistic patterns without analyzing them. The analysis is a process that takes place later, when their system of concepts about the world around them is formed. Normally, this analytical process is developed by the age of 10. For example, a 4-year-old child first acquires the expression *to be tired* not in its "infinitive form" (like many adults do), but directly in conjugated forms: "I'm tired", "he's tired", "John's tired". What is peculiar about this is that this child does not perform a complicated linguistic analysis previous to production, as adults normally do. That is, adults think about the infinitive form "to be tired" and conclude that it is a set expression used to denote a person's impermanent physical state and that, for this reason the verb "to be" plus the verb in Past Participle form "tired" are used. They may also reach the general conclusion that, in English, many human states are also expressed with the verb "to be" followed by a Past Participle. Going back to young learners, they too will probably come to the same conclusion, but it will be at later stages of their personal development. Therefore, the question is whether it is better to "absorb" first and "analyze" later, or *vice versa*? We believe that "absorption" takes place first and then comes the analysis. Because children build associations, some patterns do not really need to be processed consciously at the early stages of FL acquisition. Children find graphic and sound similarities between words and structures and, by establishing links between them, they produce an output. Accordingly, by mastering the expression "I'm tired", they probably associate it with the form "I'm sick" or "I'm happy", without being aware of or thinking about the recurrence of the verb "to be" in phrases denoting a state of mind.

However, this ability does not prevent errors when forming new phrases. In this context, it is important to mention that the attitude to mistakes in adults and children is also different. Younger children are less worried about mistakes, since they are less aware of language forms and the possibility of making mistakes in these forms. Also, once they focus on the message, mistakes do not concern them greatly. Both, adults and children make mistakes. However, in children the switch from the mistake to the right variant happens faster than in adults. It may occur due to the fact that children do not analyze deeply the mistake made. They simply replace the wrong version with the right one and the right version soon becomes a habit. As for the adults, they tend to

analyze in detail the reason for making the mistake, which may slow down the process of further perception of new information in the FL. Additionally, it seems that the children's ability to draw analogies, mentioned above as regards SLA, produces a positive influence on them. It is vivid not only in terms of comparison of different forms within a certain language, but also when we deal with multilingualism and an intention to use the right form by comparing certain structures from several foreign languages. As a matter of fact, these cross-lingual analogies occur more automatically with children than with adults, although in a less conscious way.

We have discussed the critical age for SLA and brain plasticity. We have also touched upon the differences in children's and adult's perception of FL phenomena. The assumption that children are better language learners in all language features needs to be contextualized and presented in the light of specialized literature.

As regards research related to the learners' puberty period, mention must be made of Mark Patkowski (1980). He studied foreign children living in the United States and found that those who had studied English before puberty were able to achieve full, native-like command. However, those who studied it after puberty did not reach such a good level of achievement. Nevertheless, the results cannot be considered valid if only the age factor is taken into account. Other factors are also important. Among them, the duration of the FL learning process or/and the length of residence in a FL country, the usual language of interaction with parents and the socio-cultural environment the child is exposed to during the learning period.

Another study tested adults and children in different language aspects. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) conducted a research project which included children and adults of different ages. A variety of language features, such as pronunciation, auditory discrimination, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension, were tested and analyzed. The subjects were given a test within six months of their arrival in the United States and a second test six months after beginning school. The date of arrival and the language input were similar. The results showed that adults learned most language features faster than children. Pronunciation was an exception, since children acquired it faster than adults. However, this study should be taken with precaution, as the speed of acquisition cannot be considered a predominating characteristic when describing the differences between young and adult learners. Learning quickly does not mean learning properly. Further studies, therefore, should be conducted to examine whether the results are stable and whether the subjects show the same tendency regarding the language features previously tested.

The differences in SLA between children and adults discovered by Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) were also investigated by Bailey, Madden and Krashen

(1974), who focused on the question whether L2 development in both child and adult learning goes through the same stages. The researchers found that learners go through the same stages in language learning whether they are adults or children. In fact, students learning a second language move through five predictable stages: Pre-production, Early Production, Speech Emergence, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced Fluency (Krashen and Terrell 1983). How quickly students progress through the stages depends on many factors, including level of formal education, family background, and length of time spent in the country. I dare assume that children pass from one stage to another in SLA more quickly than adults, especially when they live in the L2 country. Children keep on growing and the entire process of their identity is not finished yet. Engaging in acts of communication with classmates and friends is of great importance for them, because they help to accelerate the speed at which they learn unconsciously in their attempt to acquire FL as soon as possible and facilitates communication. Adults, on the contrary, do not prioritize communication in FL over other possibilities. Undoubtedly, the final objective of the learning process for them is to be able to communicate in FL, but it is less important than a job performance or family well-being and everyday problems which demand from adults to devote a lot of their free time. Still, individuals learning a SL use the same acquisition processes as in L1 from the moment they are exposed to the new language, whatever their age. They reach similar stages of development to those in L1 acquisition, making the same types of grammatical errors as young children, and picking up chunks of language without knowing precisely what each word means (Collier 1998). The process of SLA is not linear: it is more like a zigzag process (Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle 1978). Language mastery occurs gradually until a student gets the morpheme right in more and more contexts. Then, finally, the subtleties of particular structures (spelling variations, pronunciation contexts and exceptions) become a subconscious part of the learner's language system. Therefore, acquisition occurs when a learner is exposed to the correct use of the structure over time in various linguistic contexts that are meaningful to the individual.

In general, research has not definitely proven to date that changes in the brain at puberty prevent adult learners from reaching a high level of proficiency. On the contrary, it seems that the final result in SLA is affected by other factors beside age. Among the plethora of factors we can underline the following: biology, mother tongue, intelligence, learning surroundings, learning strategies, emotions and motivation. If we take, for example, the 9-year-old learners, we will note that they have to deal with complex, decontextualized language and with challenging content, and the pressure under which they are put is really high. The curriculum standards are different from

those of earlier levels. The relationship between students in micro-groups becomes more competitive and, consequently, each learner "struggles" for his/her own sake. Frequently, during the language learning process, the classmates laugh at each other when making mistakes. All these issues contribute to foster a considerably unpleasant emotional atmosphere, which is not stimulating for SLA during the puberty period. That is, the puberty changes themselves do not hinder learning, but other influencing factors, mentioned above, do.

I would like to dwell on the emotional aspect, which I consider crucial in language learning, and more particularly on what is meant by the term *affective filter*, first used by Stephen Krashen (1985). He states that the environmental pressures create an emotional barrier that may prevent adolescent or adult learners from acquiring language in a natural, unselfconscious way. This barrier he calls the *affective filter*. Following Krashen's logic, we may presume that adult learners and teenagers acquiring a SL experience difficulties due to this affective filter, which is more significant than the physical maturity of the brain. Students are usually anxious about the way they look in front of the group and the older a student is, the more he/she is concerned about it. Therefore, when performing tasks, older learners are afraid of classroom oral discussions, making mistakes or drawing attention to themselves. On the contrary, young children do not seem to care about these external circumstances, though, from the beginning, they are immersed in an English environment which is supposed to permit a low "affective filter" by default, since nobody judges or makes categorical conclusions.

4.5. PLURILINGUALISM AND YOUNG LEARNERS

The world we live in is increasingly becoming diversified and multilingual. Naturally, the changes concern not only adults obliged to adapt to the new standards at their workplaces, but also children who must go through the process of linguistic accommodation brought about by the presence of one or more foreign languages in their surrounding environment. Frequently, both parents and children are overwhelmed by the strong linguistic demands of modern society. What are these demands? In the globalized world we presently live in, it seems that the best option for children is to study as many FLs as possible, since multilingualism brings certain opportunities. Precisely, the knowledge of FLs after one leaves school is instrumental in getting education abroad, which is a step forward in any career. Besides, children, as well as adults, are obliged to perform successfully in internet-related technologies. If one's FL abilities are limited, one may hardly become an advanced user of Internet, which means being unable to benefit from its multiple services. Generally speaking, the knowledge of FLs gives unlimited access to the labor market, education, entertainment and communication. The linguistic demands of modern society may seem stressful to parents, but rather they should just be informative for them and for teachers too. As regards parents, they should be able to provide an appropriate psychological climate at home to reduce the pressure on their children. Perhaps, FLs should not be treated as a stressful obligation, but rather they should be associated with a pleasant everyday routine in which parents are expected to support their children. As regards teachers, they should be able to search for the methods in teaching FLs that match the present state of linguistic demand in society and, in particular, that take into consideration the children's vision of reality.

In today's society, parents are focused on their children growing up with one or more FLs and this influences the way parents and children interact. Unfortunately, the parents' expectations do not always guide children positively; in some contexts, they can be even psychologically harmful.

Section 4.5 will deal with a number of different aspects having to do with bilingualism. Subsection 4.5.1 will attempt to answer a question whether a bilingual environment in a modern society is a necessity or a conscious choice. Through the analysis of the literature, we will discuss the parents' actions and the place of bilingualism in today's global world. We will also look into popular myths of bilingualism and the general positive and negative aspects of bilingualism.

4.5.1. A bilingual environment: a necessity or a conscious choice?

We have often come across the claim that parents choose a bilingual environment for children, including a city where many nationalities live and a bilingual school, but this is not always true. Certainly, parents do play a crucial role in their children's development by choosing the right socio-cultural surrounding for them, but young children growing up bilingually are, for the most part, doing so because there is no way that they can grow up monolingually (Tokuhama–Espinosa 2001). Let us consider the following example. A Russian family moves to Spain and their child is born in Spain. The child uses Spanish to communicate daily with monolingual people (classmates, tutors) at school, on the playground, in the shops, etc. At the same time, he/she uses or is exposed to Russian when interacting with his/her parents. What is the role of his/her parents in this situation? Did they choose this bilingual reality for their child? Absolutely not. It is only because they have immigrated to Spain that the child finds him/herself in a context where he/she has to socialize in different languages, that is, to become bilingual.

In fact, over the past 25 years, the value of learning additional FLs has increased and this can be considered a result of globalization in many spheres of our lives. For instance, the development of new technologies, the Internet and electronic communication devices have made global communication easy and commonplace. Those who know multiple languages are somehow privileged by their being able to access the unlimited resources offered by the Internet. The globalization of the world's economies and businesses shows that countries are interdependent and interconnected and that gives enormous opportunities for international travel, work, and interaction (for scientists and professionals, for example).

It is claimed that English is the dominant global language of business, science, and tourism and that there are more second languages speakers of English than native speakers (Crystal, 2003). As a result, those who speak English can benefit from globalization. However, there are other languages that may also claim to be global: Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

Nevertheless, as regards the education of children being raised bilingually, we always deal with both positive and negatives sides: on the one hand obvious professional, personal, and social advantages in the long run; on the one hand, fears and pessimism. Let us refer to the negative side, the fears. They are often founded on

four myths: (1) the myth of the monolingual brain; (2) the myth of time-on-task; (3) the myth of bilingualism and language impairment; and (4) the myth of minority language children (Beardsmore 2003). These myths are important as they are frequently crucial to make decisions about raising and educating children bilingually. In this paper we will not discuss the myth of bilingualism and language impairment, as it concerns children with language learning difficulties. Indeed, they are often thought to be poor candidates for dual language learning on the assumption that learning two languages at the same time will put them at greater risk of language impairment than learning one. However, language disorders and their possible genetic reasons deserve thorough medical explanations, which fall outside the scope of this essay.

The myth of the monolingual brain has existed for a long time (see section 4.4.3). Parents are often concerned that children whose parents speak different languages will become confused and will not be able to separate the two languages. Parents may fear that this hypothetical confusion will lead to a delayed or incomplete development. Supporters of this myth think that in order to reduce the burden of dual language learning and the possibility of confusion, children should be provided with explicit markers of separate languages. Normally, parents play the role of these markers, following the rule “One parent – one language”, according to which each parent should use only his/her native language with the child.

In fact, to justify the evidence of language confusion parents often speak about code-mixing in their children. Bilingual code-mixing is the use of features of both languages in the same utterance or stretch of conversation. The mixed features could be phonological (sounds), lexical (words), morpho-syntactic (word endings, word-order, or function words) or pragmatic (conversational). Under the assumption that the brain is basically monolingual, it follows that children will mix up their languages when they talk.

Concerning the issue of simultaneous acquisition of two languages and language confusion in children, different researchers have suggested that children exposed to two languages from birth go through an initial stage when their two languages are fused. For example, Volterra and Taeschner (1978) argued that children initially have fused lexical and morpho-syntactic systems, a stage that is followed in development by one with separate lexicons, but fused grammars. In fact children mix lexical items and that means that words from the two languages are not perceived as belonging to two different speech systems, but to one. Only by the third year of life, it is argued, do dual language learners possess separate lexical and morpho-syntactic systems. It is only by the age of 3 that dual language learners are truly bilingual.

However, recent research on simultaneous bilingual acquisition is a different story. It sees bilingual acquisition as natural as monolingual acquisition that does not give an additional burden for children in comparison to the challenges that children meet learning one language. Researchers have examined how the first language of bilingual learners develops with respect to the acquisition of phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. Children learning a variety of language combinations have been the object of many studies, including French and English (for example, Paradis and Genesee 1996), German and French (Meisel 1990) and Norwegian and English (Lanza 1997). Their findings show that, contrary to the myth of the monolingual brain, young bilingual children acquire the language-specific properties of each language early in their development and that these properties correspond to those of monolingual children same age. Therefore, bilingual children seem to have the same rates of lexical and morpho-syntactic development as monolingual children, at least in their dominant language. Also, the findings prove that most young speakers who have grown up bilingual are more proficient in one language than the other, which is probably related to each child's relative exposure to each language.

Generally, young bilingual children are highly competent communicatively. Numerous researchers have found that even bilingual children in the one- and early two-word stages of development are able to use their languages differentially and appropriately with other speakers, for example, with parents who habitually speak different languages with them and even with strangers (Nicoladis and Genesee 1996). Comeau, Genesee and Mendelson (2007) also thought that young bilingual children can manage the use of their two languages effectively. They found that bilingual children under 3 were able to modify their choice of language when their interlocutor expressed lack of comprehension and requested clarification when the child used the language the interlocutor did not prefer.

To give a personal example, when my bilingual son was 3 years old, he was able to talk in three languages (Spanish, Catalan and Russian) with adult interlocutors, depending on the situational context. Interestingly, he simply switched from one language to another with a speed of a click. When, at the age of 3 the English language was added to his everyday routine, he did not express any evident sign of discomfort. It was simply an extra language that did not produce any confusion or burden to other languages.

This personal example and the scientific evidence found in the literature reviewed seem to prove the falsehood of the myth of the monolingual brain.

Most parents and educators are familiar with another common belief about learning in general, and language learning in particular, namely, that the more time spent learning something, the greater one's competence. The educational system nowadays is still based on this belief, on the importance of so-called "time-on-task". The problem is that in many public and private schools the priority among subjects is given to such fundamental disciplines as mathematics or geography and not to FLs. Languages are regarded as less important than reading, writing, and arithmetic.

I believe that language is not a science that can be confined within a limited number of pages in books. It is a living phenomenon found everywhere, especially today in the new technological era when people's lives happen not only in the real, physical world, but also in a virtual space. So, a new question arises. If languages accompany us through our lives and exist beyond the educational institutions were they are taught is it really expedient to devote extra time to them in these institutions?

I do not think that educators and parents should not feel over-concerned about the lack of extra hours for English or any other FL. It is obvious that in our everyday routine the transfer of knowledge and skills frequently occurs. This happens in all aspects of life, at work performing certain tasks, in communicative acts at home or in some friends' company, and it is natural so that we do not notice it. We can assume this also takes place in language learning. There is growing research evidence that certain kinds of language skills are transferable from one language to another in second language learners (see Cummins 1981 and Riches & Genesee 2006). The best examples of this are skills related to reading.

A great deal of recent research on the acquisition of reading skills in a second language has shown that students who have well-developed decoding skills in one language can transfer those very skills to the other language (August and Shanahan 2006). Similarly, students with well-developed skills for reading longer material, such as stories and academic textbooks, can transfer those same skills to another language, provided they know the oral form of that language. Even pre-literacy skills, such as phonological awareness or knowledge of letter-sound correspondences, can transfer across languages. As Cummins (1981) stated, there is developmental interdependence in the acquisition of skills related to academic uses of language.

The subsequent findings pointed out an additional factor, namely, the quality of learning environment, which complements the relationship between time-on-task and language outcomes.

The next myth is about minority language students. It is widely believed that children who speak a minority language at home should begin to learn and use the majority language as quickly as possible if they want to succeed in school and to

integrate into mainstream culture (Cummins 2000, August and Shanahan 2006). Often minority language parents (if both speak the same language at home) face the dilemma: whether to focus on the majority language, even though they may lack full competence in it (Cummins 2000) and restrict the use of minority language at home, or else to keep the minority language even at the perceived cost of their children falling behind their mates in the majority language. Which solution makes more sense? None, since both options - I would say - come from misunderstanding of what bilingualism really is. To my mind, bilingual children do not have to choose between languages and favor one to the detriment of the other. If both languages are active, that is, if both are used, they will develop alongside and there will be progress in both, regardless of the environment they are used in.

As Fillmore (1991) said, minority language parents may not be able to form close affective attachments with their children or to exercise full parental responsibilities if they are struggling to use a language they do not master. In fact, the competence in a minority language is not necessarily a burden on minority language students' acquisition of academic language and literacy skills in English as a second language.

Recent research on the acquisition of literacy skills by minority language students provide compelling evidence that cross-linguistic interactions between minority language students' home language and English facilitate the acquisition of literacy skills, especially reading in English (August and Shanahan 2006 and Genesee *et al.* 2006). According to these studies, there are positive correlations between certain components of reading English as a SL and minority language students' competence in the mother tongue: phonological processing (and especially phonological awareness), word and pseudo-word decoding, higher order vocabulary, reading comprehension, and certain oral language skills.

Minority language students often draw on skills and knowledge linked to the home language to perform literacy tasks in English. Probably, this is the way gaps are filled in their English competence prior to full mastery of the language (Riches and Genesee 2006).

My personal example proves this idea. My 6-year old child frequently resorts to Russian, the minority language, to perform writing exercises in English. Interestingly, when he does not remember a letter/word in English, he writes it in Russian, which is visually similar to the one in English, and this is how that forgotten English word is evoked in his memory. This mechanism has not been studied in my son as a subject and, as far as I am informed, it has not been studied in the literature I have consulted. It might be related to visual memory and the associations a child builds around each word.

Overall, the findings on simultaneous language acquisition have significant implications for parents, educators, and other professionals who work with dual language learners. Learning two languages is as natural as learning one and, if children are provided with the right learning environment, most of them can acquire two languages simultaneously at the same rate and in the same way as monolingual children.

Responsible parents who are concerned for their children to be raised bilingually should ensure that they get adequate, continuous and regular exposure to both languages, so that both may fully be acquired. When it comes to planning the children's language learning environment, special consideration should be given to minority languages. It is advisable to provide more exposure to minority than majority languages at home in order to minimize the lack of exposure to these languages in the community at large.

Also, it should be considered that code-mixing in bilingual children is not a sign of confusion or difficulty at learning two languages. Code-mixing is in fact a resource that children use to fill in gaps in their developing languages. Moreover, when young bilinguals code-mix, it is grammatical competence that they exhibit rather than confusion, as has been initially hypothesized. Therefore, parents, educators and other professionals need not worry when children code mix nor need they attempt to stop bilingual children from code-mixing. Bilingual children growing up in communities where their two languages tend to be used separately will learn to use their two languages separately or to code-mix when socially appropriate. It should be expected that bilingual children, like bilingual adults, will code- mix when conversing with other bilinguals.

Parents who do not speak the majority language should be encouraged to continue to use the home language with their children and, particularly, to use the home language to help their children develop basic skills as regards literacy and academic language competence.

We may add that public schools should provide bilingual education for students from large ethnolinguistic minority groups in order to enhance their bilingual competence. This would certainly have a positive effect not only on minority language students, but on the country itself by training bilingual, bicultural students who will be able to compete more successfully in the global marketplace.

4.6. PLURILINGUALISM AND ADULT LEARNERS

Today we can all witness that the plurilingualism is becoming one of the main priorities in modern society. Schools are gradually moving towards plurilingual education and foreign language schools are also focusing their efforts on providing students willing to master FLs with suitable language courses. In many cases, they even enlarge the variety of languages offered by adding those which are becoming popular and seem to be useful in that particular country and region. For example, in Catalonia, or more specifically, in the provinces of Barcelona and Girona, there is an increasing demand of Russian-speaking workers. So, the government, local authorities and private language schools are reacting to this demand by opening new Russian language courses.

Adult learners are those interested and highly motivated to learn FLs. Firstly, they realize a general positive effect of learning processes on individual's development which continues to more or less extend through the whole life (Vygotsky 1978). Secondly, the majority of adult students are oriented on career progression, which is hardly possible without having a good command of a FL. More importantly, employers today prefer candidates who know more than one FL, that is, plurilingual adults are more demanded than their monolingual counterparts.

On top of this, it seems necessary to look into plurilingual adults with greater detail and check, if there are any pitfalls that should be taken into account. Given that comparison is a good method to study a phenomenon, in the following sections we will compare adult learners with children learners, discussing their shared and unshared features and we will see if there exist any fundamental obstacles for adults in FL acquisition.

For now, let us refer to the question which has always interested researchers and is relevant for us at this stage, that is, the mutual influence of multiple languages in a learner.

Undoubtedly, we cannot readily declare that one language does influence another or does not. This will not provide us with a full picture. Instead, first we should focus on the factors that affect such influence. Among these factors (social position, duration of the acquisition stage, family, communities and workplace environments), there is one that may determine the extent to which one language may influence another: the learner's age. The influence is naturally characterized as mutual, due to the constant interrelation between both languages. And we can assume that the influence of L2 on L1 and also of L1 upon L2 in a child learner may differ from that in an adult learner, since children and adults learn languages differently. Concerning

mutual language influence and for a defense of this claim (see Jarvis and Pavlenko 2002, 2008), among other researchers.

As a matter of fact, in our research on multilingualism we have come across the terms *crosslinguistic influence* and *transfer*. These terms are used to describe the often unconscious (though potentially conscious) cognitive process of applying elements of the knowledge of previously learned languages when using a later acquired language.

Odlin (1989: 27) offered the following definition of *transfer* “the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired”.

Older studies from the 1950s and 1960s (Richards 1971, Kim 1989, cited in Lee 2001, and Brown 1994) were based on the behaviorist approach, which claimed that old habits formed when learning the L1 would influence the way in which new habits were learnt in the L2. These studies tended to view transfer as a negative influence in the process of language learning, often investigating it rather as an independent variable that had an impact on processes other than bilingualism. All errors were attributed to transfer or, more precisely, to negative L1 transfer or interference. However, the innatist approach, initiated by Chomsky (1959), demonstrated that not all errors result from the negative influence of the L1.

The contrastive analysis played an important role in terms of comparison of L1 with L2. Its purpose was supposed to be identifying structural differences between L1 and L2 and predicting interference errors. Cross-linguistic differences were equated with difficulty of learning; difficulties in lexical acquisition were attributed to differences in the semantic or structural patterns of lexical items in L1 and L2; see in this respect Celce-Murcia (1985) and Ellis (1985).

Proponents of the Creative Construction Theory (CCT) in the 1970s and 1980s (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982) claimed that the role of L1 in L2 acquisition was minimal. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s it became apparent that it was wrong to underestimate the influence of L1, and from the 1990s on the influence of L1 on L2 acquisition again became an important research area. In SLA research today the effect of the mother tongue (L1) is considered to be one of the most important factors affecting SL acquisition; see Harley (1995), Swan (1997) and Jarvis and Pavlenko (2002).

More recent studies have explored crosslinguistic influence as “the primary process and dependent variable, as well as its interaction with other linguistic and extra-linguistic independent factors” (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008: 5).

A recent research paper by Jarvis and Pavlenko (2002) claims a point of view different from the traditional approach to transfer in SLA, where transfer is investigated as the unidirectional influence (L1 on L2) of native (or other language) knowledge on the acquisition and use of a SL. The objects of study were 22 Russian L2 users of English, who learned English at post-puberty after living in the USA for 3 to 8 years.

The results of the analysis of their oral narratives showed that transfer can be bidirectional, that is, it may influence an individual’s use of both the L1 and L2. Besides, there was an assumption that bidirectional transfer (L1 > L2; L2 > L1) can be simultaneous or synchronic. In fact, the narratives collected in Russian and English demonstrate that crosslinguistic influence works both ways in the oral production of these L2 users: while Russian continues to influence their English, their English has begun to influence their Russian as well. The study also called attention to the factors that may influence the directionality and amount of transfer in these L2 users.

The chief factor was “the person’s language proficiency in both the source and recipient languages” (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008: 197), but there were another five factors - directly or indirectly related to language proficiency, namely, age, length, frequency and intensity of language exposure, length of residence, general level of proficiency, and number and order of acquired languages.

I would like now to look into the age factor, which, according to Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) is relevant for adult learners, on which we are focused in this section, because it may affect the occurrence of transfer from L1 to L2 and vice versa.

So far, what has been discovered about the differences between younger and older learners with respect to transfer is that, in the direction L1 > L2, older learners appear to exhibit more transfer than younger learners in the area of phonology (Flege 1981, Flege, Schirru and MacKay 2003, and Singleton and Ryan 2004: 122-125). At the same time, in the areas of lexis and morphology, there is no such evidence. In the direction L2 > L3 and L3 > L2, older learners tend to exhibit more transfer than younger learners in the area of lexis (Cenoz *et al.* 2001), but this seems to depend on how similar the L2 and L3 are. In the direction L2 > L1, older L2 users exhibit less transfer

than younger L2 users and this is obvious in the area of phonology (Flege, Yeni-Komshian and Liu 1999).

Flege proposed a Speech Learning Model (SLM), which states that “the L1 and L2 phonetic systems reside in the same phonological space and can exert a mutual influence on each other” (Guion et al. 2000: 206). In this model what is important is the age of acquisition, because it indicates how well the L1 is established when the L1 and L2 begin interacting.

MacKay and Flege (2004) investigated the effects of age of arrival in the L2 country on L2 speech rate. It was found that early bilinguals, who arrived in the USA between the ages of 2 and 13, formed shorter sentence in the L2 than in the L1, whereas late bilinguals, though who arrived at the age of 15 or later, showed the opposite result. The researchers found the expected result: the interference from the dominant language slows a person’s processing and production of the weaker language.

Today most of the relevant research on the relationship between age and transfer has been made only in the area of phonology. It is probable that future studies will search for similar relationship in other areas of language use. However, we should keep in mind that the effects of age may not be the same in every subsequent linguistic system due to the moderating influence of educational and social variables, which interact with age, but have varying levels of impact on different areas of language use (Odlin 2003: 471).

Another relevant factor for our object of discussion - adult plurilingual learners, is the influence of the workplace. In fact, the workplace may influence how L2 affects L1. If the L1 is the language spoken in the workplace, even if it is not the dominant language of the community, this influence would decrease the effect of L2 on L1. On the contrary, if the language in the workplace is English (possibly L2 here), the influence of L2 on L1 will obviously take place. In this case, if a non-native speaker wants and can perform his/her job adequately, he/she usually masters English to perfection with or without any external support (Kinberg and Serdyukov 2003).

As regards the effects produced of L2 upon L1, it is worth mentioning Pavlenko’s (2000) *possible constraints on L2 influence* in adult learners. She proposes that L2 influence operates under 10 specific constraints which are divided into three clusters: (a) individual factors (learners' age and onset of L2 learning, learners' goals and language attitudes, language proficiency and individual differences), (b) sociolinguistic factors (learning context, language exposure and language prestige), and (c) linguistic

and psycholinguistic factors (language level, typological similarity and developmental factors) (Pavlenko 2000: 196). Let us concentrate in turn on each constraint.

1. Learners' age and onset of L2 learning: any learner may be affected by L2 influence, but it will be more visible in younger learners (Kecskes and Papp 2000).
2. Learners' goals and language attitudes: L2 influence will be most evident in a learner who tries to become a fully integrated member of his/her L2 communities and who culturally identifies with the members of that community (Major 1993 and Pavlenko 1998).
3. Language proficiency: L2 effects will be most visible in learners with high levels of L2 fluency and proficiency (Tao and Thompson 1991 and Van Hell 1998).
4. Individual differences: L2 effects may also be subject to a number of individual differences, such as phonetic mimicry ability (Major 1993) or input sensitivity (Sharwood Smith 1989).
5. Learning context: L2 influence will be most relevant in an L2 environment where a learner actively interacts with the members of the L2 community (Major 1993 and Jarvis and Pavlenko 2002).
6. Length and amount of language exposure: L2 influence will be most significant in a speaker with a high amount of past and present intensive exposure to L2 and low exposure to L1 speech (Major 1993 and Stoessel 2000).
7. Language prestige: The shift may be most pronounced toward a more valued language (Poplack, Sankoff and Miller 1988).
8. Language level: L2 influence may be most notable in phonology and in the lexicon in the form of lexical borrowing and semantic extension (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2002).
9. Typological similarity: language distance (real or perceived), typological proximity and structural similarity also could affect L2 influence on L1; just like L1 transfer, L2 influence may be weakened or strengthened by any of these typological factors (Kecskes and Papp 2000).
10. Developmental factors: these are less studied, but are equally important for, "as L1 transfer interacts with interlanguage development, L2 influence interacts with both L2 development and L1 attrition, at times leading to restructuring of the acoustic-phonetic, semantic, or conceptual space" (Pavlenko 2000: 198).

It would be really useful to investigate the phenomenon of linguistic transfer and, in general, the influence of one language on another if more languages than just L1 and L2 are included. For instance, the study of the interaction between L1, L2, L3 and L4 and the place of transfer would be interesting, but so far seems to be a complicated research task, since each new language that an individual masters is a different linguistic system. We may study the effect of L2 on L1 and be sure of certain characteristics, but, at the same time, when studying the influence of L3 on L1 and trying to draw comparative parallels, we may very well come to the conclusion that the influence is too distant. Therefore, the whole study would demand a thorough research approach.

In fact, multi-language acquisition is a complex dynamic process that is not easy to analyze. For now, I can surmise that, for a successful L2, L3, L4 etc. acquisition and the activation of a crosslinguistic transfer between the FLs, there exists one factor which should be definitely accounted for, namely, the learner's linguistic background and, more specifically, his/her metalinguistic knowledge and metalinguistic awareness. Jessner (2008: 275) describes the importance of *metalinguistic knowledge* in his Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (DMM): "the ability to focus on linguistic form and to switch focus between form and meaning". He further explains that this knowledge is "made up of a set of skills or abilities that the multilingual user develops owing to his/her prior linguistic and metacognitive knowledge" (sic). The concept of *metalinguistic awareness* is related to the use of communication strategies, communicative sensitivity, crosslinguistic awareness and sometimes even translation skills; see Cenoz (2003) too.

Some researchers on multilingualism suggest that certain qualitative differences between monolingual, bilingual and trilingual acquisition can be ascribed to different levels of metalinguistic awareness. Namely, L3 acquisition generally involves an increased level of metalinguistic awareness, even higher than in bilingual or L2 acquisition (Peal and Lambert 1962 and Jessner 2008). In addition, the presence of metalinguistic knowledge/awareness in bilingual or L2 acquisition has beneficial effects on trilingual acquisition (Herdina and Jessner 2002).

Therefore, when dealing with FL acquisition, particularly in adult learners, all the aspects discussed above should be paid attention to, including metalinguistic knowledge/awareness.

4.7. GENERAL DIFFERENCES IN TEACHING YOUNG, ADOLESCENT AND ADULT LEARNERS

It has been suggested that the learning process functions in the same way all through one's entire life (Kendler and Kendler 1969). A long time has elapsed since then and numerous studies have been written on learning theories which contradict this statement. I tend to agree with this criticism, because a person's entire life is not a uniform set of actions and behavioral responses, but rather consists of different phases, each one of which is characterized in a specific way. Following *The Theory of Psychosocial Development* (Erikson 1950), the most general phases are: childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Considering that an individual passes through certain physiological and psychological changes at each phase, that his/her adult reaction towards surrounding phenomena is not obligatorily the same as it had been in childhood, for instance, it would be logical to assume that the learning processes on each stage are different. Therefore, FL acquisition must also function differently for children, adolescents and adults. In what follows, I am going to discuss the particular features of each group.

4.7.1. Age Factor in SLA

We know that among the multiple factors that affect SLA, age is the most dominant one, but sometimes even stronger factors play more important role, such as personal motivation, anxiety, input and output skills, settings and time commitment (Robertson 2002). For late learners, their age-related decline is much more variable and is markedly different from one individual to another. Generally, because of their greater memory storage and the greater capability of their conceptual system, adult learners may learn faster and more efficiently in some aspects in SLA.

According to a number of studies (Ausubel 1964, Schumann 1978, Swain 1981, Harley 1986, Lightbown and Spada 1993, among others) the correlation between age and L2 attainment is generally negative, the maximum age for native-like achievement in L2 being 15 years approximately. Definitely, there are potential advantages in an early start to SLA, particularly, when the instruction is well-designed for young learners. However, there also exist age-related effects also reflects involving differences in affective, sociocultural and input variables.

Indeed, children, adolescents and adults show neurological, cognitive and psychological differences in SLA. Children are generally considered to be better learners, while adolescents and adults have developed cognitive and self-discipline skills that enable them to acquire a larger volume of comprehensible input within the

same exposure time period. At the same time, adolescents and adults may be negatively influenced by the other factors in SLA.

Let us discuss in turn and more precisely the age factor influence in children, adolescents and adults as regards the learning process.

Most children are not consciously interested in language for its own sake and direct their interest towards things that are easy for them to understand. They want to participate in the social life around them and this social activity helps them to learn FLs. The knowledge of a word's pronunciation enables children to include the word in their speaking vocabulary. That is how they achieve communicative confidence. According to Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development Stages (in Ginsburg and Opper 1979), in the absence of abnormal developmental disorders, children process languages through sensory experience, and intelligence develops by way of motor actions.

Children are more field-dependent. In general they learn well when they are active and when an action is channeled into an enjoyable game. Frequently, they want to devote much time and make an effort in playing it (Ur 1996b).

Is the state of affairs in adolescents the same? To answer this question we should refer to Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development Stages, which says that in the adolescent stage thinking becomes more formalized and more related to abstractions. Adolescents want to be responsible for their own lives, expressing their personal opinion about the educational process they are involved in (Ur 1996b).

The learning process is strongly influenced by spontaneous emotions and feelings of self-consciousness, about how the individual appears, what image he/she produces and how the people around perceive it. This can result in anxiety. Adolescents are categorical in judgments. They want to know the one right way and ignore all other possibilities. As they grow older, they begin to realize that good learning demands effort. At this stage, motivation and commitment to learning are becoming conscious decisions made by the student.

Ultimately, there are adult learners, who stay at the final stage of cognitive development, according to the theory. It is generally assumed that adult language learners do not have full mastery of language structures, though in many ways adults are superior to children as learners, since they have greater cognitive maturity, better learning strategies and study habits, better focus and goal orientation, a longer attention span, the ability to make a greater variety of associations, and better short-term memory (Hammerly 1991).

According to the biological hypothesis, also known as Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), adult language learners are less likely to reach native mastery. Adults are characterized, first of all, by years of experience so that they store huge blocks of

information. They have well-established values, beliefs and opinions and can relate new knowledge and information to previously learned information and experiences. They also value their self-dignity and need to be self-directing. In most language learning situations, they tend to feel embarrassed precisely because they fully realize their true level of language master, especially when it does not correspond the level they are trying to achieve ultimately. The embarrassment may result in stress and lead to the sense of frustration, which in turn leads to the fear of expressing oneself.

Individual differences among people increase with age (Lightbown and Spada 1993). Usually adults want to immediately apply the new information or skills learnt in real-life situations and to deal with urgent problems, and they definitely refuse to learn useless patterns, those they will never use in real life context.

Knowles (1980) attempted to summarize the differences in the way adults and children learn and, in order to distinguish both groups of learners, he used the concept of *andragogy* (“the art and science of helping adults learn”), contrasting it with *pedagogy* (“the art and science of teaching children”). He made a number of assumptions about adult learners, summarized in following list:

1. An adult learner moves from dependency to increasing self-directedness as he/she matures and can direct his/her own learning.
2. He/She draws on his/her accumulated reservoir of life experiences to aid learning.
3. He/She is ready to learn when assuming new social or life roles.
4. He/She is problem-centered and wants to apply new learning immediately.
5. He/She is motivated to learn by internal, rather than external, factors.

One of the key concepts in Knowles' vision of adult learners is *Self-directed Learning* (SDL). SDL is a “process in which individuals take the initiative, without the help of others”, in planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences (Knowles 1975).

Approximately 70 percent of adult learning is self-directed and about 90 percent of all adults conduct at least one self-directed learning project a year (Cross 1981). Essentially, SDL is an informal process that primarily takes place outside the classroom.

In SDL, the subject of learning is important, that is, it is the learner that makes the decisions about content, methods, resources and evaluation. In other words, individuals take responsibility for their own learning process by determining their needs, setting goals, identifying resources and evaluating the outcomes. Adults with low-level literacy skills who may lack independence, confidence, internal motivation or resources

may experience difficulties with SDL. In this respect, Brookfield (1985) points out that not all learners prefer the self-directed option and that many adults involved in SDL also take part in more formal educational programs, such as teacher-directed courses.

So far we have seen features of adult learning not found in younger learners, but children and adults have two things in common in learning a SL: imitative learning and meaningful learning.

The first similarity is to use both children and adults of imitation to learn SL. Because adults have experience in comprehensive learning, they know how to imitate *surface structure* (in generative grammar it is the structure of a well-formed phrase or sentence in a language, as opposed to its underlying abstract representation). Therefore, they pay more attention to grammar and surface features. Adults tend to imitate native speakers by reading books and watching movies. They imitate the idioms, accent and the pronunciation used by the native speakers. By reading books, they imitate the structure of the sentence. Do children apply the same methods? No, on the contrary, children pay more attention to the meaning of the utterance. For them, what is important is to deliver the message to the person they are talking to. In this sense, it is quite natural that they do not pay much attention to the grammar or vocabulary used. Children learn by imitating the people around them, including parents and teachers. They will imitate the way those people say something to deliver a message.

The second feature common to both children and adults is the application of meaningful learning. Adults are able to relate their experience or previous knowledge to the SL they are learning, precisely because they have *cognitive framework*, a system that helps to interpret information and experience they got into a reasonable judgment (Weick 2001). Due to this characteristic, adult learners are capable of transferring the knowledge of their L1 to help them learning a L2 or relating the new learning materials to what they already know. In fact, children do the same, they also relate their previous knowledge and experience to learning process, though it almost always happens unconsciously and the amount of knowledge and experience is much less than that of adults.

Children are claimed to be rote learners (those who apply mechanical or habitual repetition of something to be learned) who use aimless repetition and mimicking. However, by using imitation to learn, children do engage in contextual and purposeful activities. In fact, rote learning produces a positive “timebomb” effect on the whole SLA process. That is, by using imitation to learn a SL, children acquire and store items and information in an *established conceptual hierarchy* (Feinstein 2006: 184).

Such items and information are preserved in their memory and, in the course of time, they form broad cognitive structures that are subject to a natural cognitive process called *systematic forgetting* (Brown 1972). Through this systematic forgetting or *cognitive pruning* they eliminate unnecessary clutters from thus allowing the more important aspects to fill in their cognitive gaps. Interestingly, some of the minor aspects learned gradually lose their value and identity in their own right and become subsumed into a single larger aspect or structure. The small aspects are thus pruned out and the larger aspect assumes the role of all the small aspects combined together. So, according to these procedures a person systematically "forgets" certain cognitive material in order to enhance learning.

These broad cognitive structures that are kept in the learner's memory in what we may call a *deactivated block* play a crucial role when learning new items or processing new information. When they are recalled, when the old data are needed, these cognitive structures are activated and trigger comparison and contrastive analysis mechanisms. These mechanisms in turn produce new meaningful knowledge that will also be kept in the learners' memory, that is, in their conceptual hierarchies.

Speaking about similarities and differences of children and adult learners, I would like to focus on the general advantages of early SLA and of late SLA.

In early childhood, learners rarely become bilingual consciously. It is a natural experience. One of the reasons for that are the neuromuscular mechanisms which are only active until to the age of 12. Due to these mechanisms language aspects such as pronunciation and intonation can be acquired more easily during childhood. Another possible explanation of children's accent-free pronunciation in FL is that they have an increased capability for imitation which lasts till puberty.

Another factor that we should take into consideration is children's flexibility, spontaneity and tolerance to new experiences. Children adore communicating with people and are not afraid to make mistakes. If they miss important vocabulary, they compensate it by using non-verbal means of communication and *onomatopoeic words*. Besides, by the age of 8, children do not fully realize the existence of other ethnic and cultural groups, each of which may speak a different language, unknown to him/her.

The memory capacity factor can be also considered as an advantage in early language learning. While adult learners are able to store complex forms taken from the L1 or L2 input, children's internal data base will rather consist of smaller pieces, which seem to provide them with greater mind flexibility and, consequently, quicker reaction or response. Newport (1991) puts forward the *Less-is-More Hypothesis*, according to which "the cognitive limitations of the young child during the time of language learning

may [...] provide a computational advantage for the acquisition of language” (Newport 1991: 125).

As for late (after puberty) SL acquisition and its advantages, the main question which linguists, psychologists and teachers have been trying to answer for decades is whether it is possible to reach a proficiency level equivalent to that of a native speaker. In what follows, we attempt to answer this question.

Admittedly, adult learners have the advantage of cognitive maturity and experience of the general language system. Since language learning is an accumulative process that allows us to build on already existing knowledge (our mother tongues or other FLs), adults seem to enjoy more advantageous learning conditions than children do. Also, in comparison with children, adults can acquire grammatical rules, morphological and syntactic, more easily (Dimroth 2002).

Finally, adult FL acquisition is greatly facilitated by their motivation to learn a FL. An adult is a language learner with a certain interest. His/Her reasons may range from the weaker, like education, social prestige and profession, to the stronger, such as social integration, in case of immigrants, for example.

Summing up, we may conclude that there are advantages and disadvantages in SLA in adulthood and childhood. It is true that all learners perceive a language learning process differently and in a specific individual manner and that the most influential in this process is the learner’s personality and talent. However, age remains one of the determining factors.

From a pedagogical point of view, I believe it would be advisable to promote language learning in early childhood, because the younger the learner is, the more he/she can profit from the neuromuscular supporting language learning and the more native-like his/her level of language proficiency will be, spending less time and making less effort to reach that goal. We should not forget either about other issues such as personal cognitive development, increased communication abilities, tolerant attitude towards foreign cultures and, of course, improved articulation skills, all of which influence language learning at early age.

In principle, adults too can reach an excellent language level. Adult language learning can be effective, provided the learner is highly motivated, expresses a positive attitude to a FL and is placed in ideal learning situations.

As for children, having great age advantage over adults, they should be guided correctly by parents and teachers in order to profit from this advantage, using the young brain capacity most effectively and without losing quickly passing time.

5. METHODOLOGY

The initial research question for this master's thesis was –whether the use of translation has any effect on the acquisition of a foreign language (English) by plurilingual young and adult learners; see section 3: 9.

I hypothesized that the use of translation has a relatively positive effect on the linguistic accuracy of plurilingual adult learners and a neutral effect on plurilingual young learners; see section 3: 9.

In order to answer the initial question and confirm or reject the initial hypothesis, I have designed an action research project. The methodological procedure for this purpose consisted in gathering relevant data from different sources, from academic syllabi and from the social (natural) environment. I examined four groups of learners (see sections 6.1-4 for further detail on each group):

- A Group of 20 six-year-old multilingual and monolingual young learners in the same class (11 multilingual; 9 monolingual).
- A Group of 6 25-35-year-old multilingual adult learners in the same class.
- A single 6-year-old multilingual learner in a social environment (out of school: family, relatives and friends).
- A single 35-year-old multilingual learner (at home, workplace, public places).

I would first like to explain why mono- and multilingual learners are compared, since our main objective is to investigate on the influence of the use of translation. I believe that by comparing both types of learners, monolingual and multilingual, we will be able to determine the similarities and differences in their perception of their FL (English) and of their L1(s). Comparison will help us check their reaction on the translation use, whether they find it helpful, harmful or inconsequential. I hope to shed light on the importance of L1 in SLA for monolingual adult learners. As for multilinguals, it seems hardly possible to distinguish in most multilingual young learners whether there is one main native language. Instead, all of the languages they speak seem to be mother tongues. This may be due to their early full exposure to several languages. For this reason, I face the dilemma of which language should be considered as their L1, that is, which language should be chosen for the activities involving translation when teaching the FL, that is, English. Taking into account that, within the group of multilingual young learners, the native languages are different and are presumably equally important and active in use, I decided to choose Spanish as one of their L1s. All the children from this group, multilingual and monolingual, speak Spanish fluently.

As regards the research method applied in this project, I have used a hybrid approach, that is, both qualitative and quantitative data-collection methods.

First, I have observed the two class groups and the two individuals for four weeks. The data from the observation of the student groups have been taken by the students' regular teachers and those of the two individuals by the child's parents and by a friend of the adult learner, respectively.

As regards the languages spoken, the class of young learners consisted of 20 children, eleven of which are multilingual speakers of Catalan, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. The language combinations include: 1) Catalan/Spanish/Russian, 2) Catalan/Spanish/French, 3) Spanish/French/Japanese, 4) Spanish/German/Russian, 5) Catalan/Spanish/Danish/Dutch, and 6) Spanish/French/German; the remaining 9 children are Catalan monolinguals, who do understand oral Spanish but do not speak.

In the group of adult learners, there is a diversity of languages within the class. All six students are foreigners who have been living in Spain (Catalonia) for at least ten years. They have all used four languages since childhood or have started using them in puberty. Their language combinations are: Catalan / German / Russian / Spanish. The participants in the adult group are given questionnaires to indicate this information. Finally, having obtained the information from both groups, we made a comparative analysis of them.

The type of data recorded during the observation of the children was basically their reactions to oral instructions in English (FL) by their teachers. More specifically, what was recorded was whether their reaction was better, worse or the same? The instruction was given only in English or in English first, and then repeated in the learners' mother tongue. I decided the "common" L1 would be Spanish.

As regards the two individual learners, they were observed in their everyday natural environment. The analysis focuses on the interaction of an adult learner with friends, a family (spouse and children) and colleagues; and on that of a child learner with parents and friends. I was mainly interested in finding out four things:

- How often the adult learner would resort to her native language (first language among several foreign languages) daily and how often the child learner resorted to his L1; and whether it was possible to identify his L1 out of all the other Ls he speaks.
- Whether there was a language dominating other languages in both individuals.

- Whether there was any mixing of languages in both individuals. An issue that demands a more detailed examination.
- Whether resorting to L1 gives both learners any advantage in different spheres of life or not.

The data gathered from the observation enabled us to draw a comparative analysis of what effects using translation produces on young and adult learners, whether multilingual or monolingual.

It should be mentioned that the research has been conducted with consent of the directory of the school and particularly of the teachers involved, given that the complete anonymity of the participants (teachers and children) is preserved. The name of the school should be also kept anonymous.

6. STUDY

As was mentioned before, the subjects of the study were categorized in four different groups. At this stage, I have analyzed the perception of FL, in our case, of English, and of L1 or L1s, in the two GROUPS, G1 (children) and G2 (adults). Then, I plan to figure out whether the reaction of these learners when using translation can be considered as helpful, harmful or of no consequence.

For data collection purposes I have used a 5-point-scale system, where index 1 means the least positive reaction and index 5 corresponds to the most positive reaction; index 0 indicates absence of reaction; index -1 means the least negative reaction; and index -5 means the most negative reaction. The process variable here is “time”.

By “reaction” I mean –the expression of the attitude toward the use of L1 (for monolinguals) or L1s (for multilinguals).

A “positive reaction” is one in which the learners manifest their liking, better understanding and willingness to act at -the teacher’s instructions. Contrariwise, a “negative reaction” means that the learners do not like, understand (as it is their L1/L1s) or do not express a desire to act at return to the teacher’s instructions. The scale helps to see the spectrum of the reaction. By “index 0”, I mean that the instructions given in L1/L1s do not contribute to a better understanding of the instructions or do not encourage learners to react, but at the same time, they in the short term do not provoke negative attitude toward the activities performed in class and, in general, do not break the learning process in learners. That is, in the short term perspective, “index 0” shows that the instructions given in L1/L1s produce no effect on the learners.

This remainder of this section contains a short description of each group highlighting the characteristic features of each group that are significant for the whole study.

6.1 GROUP 1

The first group (GROUP 1 or G1), consists of 20 6-year-old learners, studying in a private English bilingual school located in Girona (Catalonia, Spain), of which 11 are multilingual speakers and 9 were monolinguals (Catalan being their native language).

The multilingual children are 4 boys and 7 girls and the monolingual children there are 6 boys and 3 girls. All the children, multilingual and monolingual, were born in Spain. The native languages of the multilingual students are: Catalan, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. The language combinations include: Catalan/Spanish/Russian, Catalan/Spanish/French, Spanish/French/Japanese, Spanish/German/Russian, Catalan/Spanish/Danish/Dutch, and Spanish/French/German. As said, the native language of the monolingual speakers is Catalan.

The school chosen for the study is a private non-funded educational institution, offering a bilingual education. The main language in which all the subjects are taught is English. The teaching contents follow the Spanish Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOE), which governs imparted follows the LOE's (Legal Obligatory Education) which governs the Spanish non-university educational levels Infant, Primary, Secondary and Baccalaureate. The children observed belong to the level "Parvulario" 5 (P5), that is, third" year of Primary Education, the level class "Infant 3", corresponding to "Level 3" in the United Kingdom.

As regards the vehicular language, all the subjects at this level are taught in English, except for two hours devoted to Catalan language per day. The language of communication between the children, both monolingual and multilingual, outside the classroom (that is, at breaks, in the school yard, etc.) is Catalan. This is so because the school is located in Catalonia, where Catalan is one of the official languages. However, during the rest of the time spent in the classroom, the young learners use only English to communicate between them and with the teacher. It should be noted that, in this particular school, - Spanish is taught only in "Primaria", that is from 6-7-year-old, corresponding to the Spanish class "Parvulario" 6 (P6) up to 17-year-old inclusive, corresponding to Bachillerato.

In order to encourage language acquisition, the school uses a system of immersion into the English language, and for this purpose the class teacher is always a native English speaker. So, the general English teacher of G1 (mathematics, reading/writing, creative modeling etc.) is a native English speaker. There are also three Spanish/Catalan-speaking teachers: the teacher of Catalan language; physical trainer; and the swimming instructor. For this particular project, we sought the participation of the general English teacher and the teacher of Catalan. The school applies a CLIL (Communicative Language integrated Learning) approach.

One of the objectives of the school is based on adapting children to different situations and on encouraging them to be active and autonomous. This is supposed to work by means of stimulating the children's development, their initiative to learn and by focusing on their creativity. And one of the principal objectives of the centre is the

development of language skills. The educational goals are complemented by the development of physical, cognitive, social, adaptational and emotional skills.

In the present study, we present our analysis of the data gathered during the Mathematics lesson, which lasts approximately thirty minutes and is normally taught in English. The data about the group was collected using a quantitative approach through the observation of the learners' reaction, to their teacher's instructions. In order to contribute to my research, the teacher repeated each of the instructions given to the children: they were given in English first and then repeated in Catalan.

The teacher collected data by using a grid, which they filled in. They punctuated the learners' reaction on a 10-point scale, which is divided into two parts by index 0: the first part – goes from -1 down to -5 (the strongest negative reaction), while the second one – goes from +1 up to +5 (strongest positive reaction). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the data for each learner. All 20 subjects of the study are numbered. The 9 monolingual learners are assigned numbers from 1 to 9, and the 11 multilingual learners are numbered from 10 to 20. We can see how, in most cases, the children's reaction changed gradually depending on the specific minute at which the data was recorded. In general, it is noticeable that both groups, monolinguals and multilinguals, react better at the beginning of the class than at the end. Thus, the indices of monolinguals show that their reaction becomes worse and worse as the class moves on. For example, subjects 3 and 8 demonstrate quite opposite reactions at minutes 5 and 25 of the 30-minute lesson: their indices range from 3 to -4 (subject 3) and from 2 to -4 (subject 8). As for multilinguals, their indices for minutes 5, 10 and 15 remain unchanged, but those for minutes 20, 25 and 30 become more negative.

The reason for such a polar attitude in the case of monolinguals and the change from neutral to negative in the case of multilinguals suggests that, primarily, in both cases, by the end of the class the children are tired and less able to perform rapid and effective switches between L1/L1s (Catalan) and L2/FL (English).

At the beginning of the lesson, the monolinguals perceive instructions repeated in Catalan positively. However, since all of them have been studying at the bilingual English school for the third year, they have already got used to instructions normally given only in English in all subjects except classes of Catalan. Therefore, during the lesson, it turns out that L1 is useless and even becomes distracting. It seems that they find it hard to switch from English to Catalan and *vice versa* and that, by the end of the lesson, they are too exhausted to be able to do the switch rapidly and with pleasure.

In comparison, all 11 multilinguals, from the very beginning of the lesson, manifest no need in the switch to Catalan for the instruction, even though it is one of

their L1s. Most of the children ignore the repetition in Catalan. They simply start doing what the teacher first asks them to do in English. With that, at the end of the lesson they feel rather tired and start expressing annoyance by the repetition in two languages, as if it is boring for them and not helpful at all. They start distracting as their monolingual counterparts do.

To sum up, by the end of the lesson both groups first feel tired, distracted by the use of L1. They seem to have lost concentration and they show more or less negative reaction to instructions given in English and then repeated in Catalan.

Interestingly, the teachers noticed that, by the end of the class, both groups of learners show a greater degree of tiredness than they do the students in another Mathematics class where instructions are repeated only in English. The teachers assumed that this was possibly due to the repetition of the instruction in another language (Catalan), that is, presumably the instruction repeated in Catalan adversely affects the learners' attention and their further performance.

Table 1. Reaction of Group 1 subjects to instructions in English and Catalan.

Time intervals in the class (duration in minutes)	Monolingual learners (9 children)									Multilingual learners (11 children)											
	Learners numbered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1-5		1	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6-10		1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11-15		-1	0	-2	0	-1	-1	-2	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16-20		-3	-3	-4	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-1	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	0
21-25		-3	-3	-4	-4	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
26-30		-4	-3	-4	-5	-4	-4	-4	-4	-4	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-3	-3	-2	-3	-2	-2

6.2 Group 2

The second group, called (Group 2 or G2) consisted of six foreign multilingual learners, aged between 25 and 35 years, who come to the foreign language school to learn or improve English for communicative purposes. The main goal of studying English for all six members of this group is to be able to use it at their workplace in the tourism sector. The school chosen for the study is a private institution located in Barcelona (Catalonia). It offers language courses for adults and children of all ages. The FLs taught are Catalan, Chinese, English, French, Japanese, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

The school applies a Communicative Approach. One of the principal objectives of this school is the development of communicative skills in FL through the cultural integration of learners. More precisely, the learners get acquainted with cultural

aspects of the country the language of which they study and the FL is the tool used to make these aspects more intelligible. Besides, because the cultural component is a priority of the school, when employing FL teachers, preference is given to candidates that are multilingual candidates or fluent in several FLs, other than their own native L1.

I would like to explain the difference between the terms ***native*** command and ***fluency***.

The term *native* language is synonymous to the term *mother tongue*, so that both are frequently used interchangeably. A native speaker's native language is his/her L1. This usually means that the language a speaker used most in his/her youth and, therefore, it is the language used when thinking. A native speaker is more than just *fluent* — he/she correctly and easily uses his/her L1. Additionally, a distinguishing feature of a native speaker is his/her mastering of the accent, idioms, colloquialisms, and cultural realities of the language.

As regards the term *fluency*, according to the CEFRL classification for language proficiency, it corresponds to level C2, which describes a proficient user. The CEFRL explains that a fluent speaker “can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read; can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation; can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations” (Council of Europe 2001: 5).

All Group 2 subjects have a CEFRL B2 level of English. They have lived in Spain (Catalonia) for approximately ten years. Each of them speaks the following languages: Catalan, German, Russian and Spanish. Four of these learners have a native command in all four languages since early childhood (age 3-6), when they were brought to Spain from Germany by their immigrant family. They began studying Catalan in a Spanish primary school at the age of 3 and, later, Spanish at the age of 6, as local children born in Catalonia normally do. As for the acquisition of German and Russian, the learners have known these languages since birth, because their parents were Russian and German immigrants. The other two members have a native command of Russian, since they were born in Russia and lived there till the age of ten. They started learning Catalan, German and Spanish as teenagers (age 12-15) in Spanish secondary schools and in extra private FL schools.

I have observed the students in both a formal (at the lesson) and informal (out of class) environment. My observations indicate that the four students who started to learn the four languages in early childhood use all of them fluently for interaction with partners, showing no preference for one language or another. However, the other two students, who started learning Catalan, German and Spanish at the age of 12, prefer to

use Russian as their language of communication, even though they experience no difficulties when they have to use the other languages with their classmates.

Their teacher in the private language school is a native English speaker with a good command, equal to a CEFRL C2 of Catalan, German and Spanish, but who knows no Russian at all.

Data collection for this group was done in two ways. First, the members were asked to fill in interview-like questionnaires. Secondly, by having their teacher record his observation of their reaction. As was done with Group 1, Group 2 was analyzed in the light of their reaction to instructions given not only in English, but in Catalan, Spanish or German as well. Russian, of course, could not be used since the teacher did not know it.

Data collection took place over first two weeks after the Christmas holidays. It took 14 days to implement this phase, 1 time per lesson. All six students were present in class. The topic discussed in class is “Music and its role in the today’s world”. The lessons lasted for an hour and a half. Subject 1, 2, 3 and 4 reactions show a 0 index, of reactions which means during two weeks of observation they showed no reaction, positive nor negative, over those two weeks. Subjects S5 and S6 reacted positively to the teacher’s repetition of instructions and showed 1 and 2 indices. The data collected were compared and the results are shown in Table 2, where only the average index is presented.

Table 2. Reaction of Group 2 subjects to the instructions in Catalan, German and Spanish.

Multilingual students (S) (4) They have spoken Catalan, German, Russian and Spanish since age three.				Multilingual students (S) (2) They have spoken Catalan, German and Spanish since age twelve. Russian is their mother tongue.	
S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
0	0	0	0	1	2

It must be noted that the index recorded for Subject 6 corresponds to his reaction not to prompts given not by the teacher, but to those given by Subject 5 in Russian when she had difficulties in understanding the English instruction.

6.3 Young Multilingual Learner

The young multilingual learner (YML) is an almost 6-year-old boy, fluent in Catalan, English, Russian and Spanish. He was born and lives in Catalonia (Spain). At the age of 3 he started attending school. The subject’s parents are immigrants from

Russia. The YML studies in private English school in Barcelona. The subject was examined in a natural environment, that is, out of school.

The approach employed was quantitative measurement through observation. Observation took place over a period of two weeks and was conducted in public places, like parks, playgrounds, restaurants, sports facilities and at home. The observers collecting data were the subject's parents.

The subject speaks four languages, but uses them in different contexts.

- Catalan is the language he uses to communicate with friends in and out of school, in public places. However, so far, he has not been exposed to TV or radio in Catalan at all). This was a conscious choice of the parents, who decided that more free time should be given to Spanish than to Catalan, because in school in Catalonia, Catalan must be taught since the age of 3 while Spanish can only be taught since the age of 6. Besides, the subject is exposed to Catalan daily since he uses it in communication with classmates.
- English is the language he uses at school to communicate with teachers (native English speakers) and with some of the multilingual classmates who have a native command of English.
- Russian is his family language which he uses to communicate with his parents and sister.
- Spanish is used when reading books, playing video games, listening to music on the radio and watching TV.

Normally, the subject is exposed to all four languages every day, since he goes to school, visits parks and playgrounds, goes to public places, watches movies & cartoons, and communicates with his friends and parents.

Table 3 illustrates the extent to which the learner is exposed to each language daily we present. A typical day divided into time periods, from 7 am (time the learner wakes up) until 10 pm (time the learner goes to sleep). The variables included are the languages and the time indices. The data represent the child's schedule, which does not change during the whole academic year, and his daily exposure to languages from Monday to Friday, that is, on the days that the subject also goes to school.

Table 3. YML's daily exposure to languages

Variables		Languages			
Location	Time	English	Russian	Spanish	Catalan
Home	7.00		X		
Home	8.00			X	X
School	9.00	X			X
School	10.00	X			X
School	11.00	X			X
School	12.00	X			X
School	13.00	X			X
School	14.00	X			X
School	15.00	X			X
School	16.00	X			X
School	17.00	X			X
School	18.00		X	X	
Home	19.00		X	X	
Home	20.00		X	X	
Home	21.00		X	X	
Home	22.00		X	X	

Table 3 shows that the subject's use of language in different contexts and daily sequence of language use. I was interested to observe how the subject switches between languages, whether he refers to a certain language that helps him with other languages, that is, whether he uses translation. Since parent acted as interactors and observers at the same time, I decided to collect the data by recording the subject's conversations with friends, parents and strangers (the latter, in public places). The parents observed their child interacting with friends and unfamiliar children and adults and recorded the conversations. The child was not aware that he was being recorded. Subsequently, the data collected were conveyed to a descriptive table (see Table 4) and then analyzed.

Table 4. YML's use of languages in various contexts

Contexts	Catalan	English	Russian	Spanish
Home: speaking with parents	Joking with parents (code-switching to Russian: individual words)	_____	Speaking with parents	_____
Home: reading books; watching TV; listening to the radio; playing video games	Reading school books	Watching TV cartoons (there is a TV option to switch to the Spanish language, which the subject uses everyday for the duration of 30-40 minutes); listening to music; reading school books; also expresses general interest in reading extra material in English. Daily spends 30 minutes on auto-reading of tales, stories and poems	Watching TV cartoons, reading to himself; listening to his parents read to him.	Watching TV cartoons (there is a TV option to switch to the English language, which the subject uses everyday for the duration of 30-40 minutes).
Public places: speaking with friends in playgrounds and parks.	Speaking with friends and playmates	Speaking with friends/playmates, who do not know Catalan (not infrequent in a tourist zone).	Speaking with friends and other children or adults (very rarely).	Speaking with other children (very rarely).
Other public places: speaking in shops and restaurants.	Speaking to everybody.	Speaking with tourists, who do not know Catalan (code-switching from English to Russian to translate for mother). ¹	Speaking with tourists unwillingly, since, in his opinion, they are not very friendly with him.	Speaking with strangers (rarely).
Sports club while playing tennis	Speaking with teammates and tutors.	_____	_____	_____

¹ Because he is sure she does not understand English.

In what follows we analyze the use of languages made by the subject, according to Table 4. As regards Catalan, it may seem at first sight that the subject does not use it for communicative purposes at home. He does not express initiative to speak Catalan with his parents. However, having a native command of it, he frequently uses a mixture of Catalan and Russian to make fun with parents. We may affirm that, though he uses Catalan to communicate with parents, this communication is more entertaining than informative. Yet, because the subject has a daily 1-hour class of Catalan, he has homework to do in Catalan, for which he uses the reading and writing skills. However, at home the child shows no interest in reading anything else in Catalan. In public places and when playing tennis (once a week) the subject speaks Catalan.

As regards English, the subject does not use it at all at home or in the tennis club for communicative purposes. He watches cartoons and likes it very much to switch from English to Spanish and *vice versa*, showing no preference of either of these languages over the other. He also prefers listening to the music in English as they do at school. The reading and writing skills are also practiced at home, as part of homework. The subject expresses general interest in extra reading in English. He is strongly motivated to produce a positive impression on the teachers by improving his reading. In public places in this tourist area, the subject has no problem to switch to English from Catalan if a child or an adult does not understand him in Catalan. He does it readily and quickly. Interestingly when speaking in English, the child begins translating in a consecutive manner to his mother from English to Russian, for he is convinced she does not understand oral English, even if he knows that she can speak English, as she usually assists him with homework in English.

The child uses Russian basically for communication with parents. His parents speak with him only in this language - their mother tongue. With friends, other children and adults he rarely resorts to Russian, probably because, in the area where he lives, the number of people speaking Russian fluently or having a native command of it is small. The child watches cartoons in Russian, the same ones that he watches in Spanish or English. He refuses to watch Russian cartoons with a national character and spirit, as, judging by his words, their plot is boring and he does not understand most of the realities. The same cultural gap is noticed when the subject comments the books originally written by Russian authors. The child is interested in reading in Russian, but he is demotivated by misunderstanding of certain cultural features and human characteristics of the main heroes. The subject is able to read to himself in

Russian and his parents also read to him in this language. He reads in Russian more correctly and faster than he does in Catalan, for example.

As for Russian, as was mentioned earlier, the child translates to his mother from English into Russian and he also code-switches to Russian to interact with Russian tourists, though unwillingly. The subject explains that strangers speaking Russian are always (as he perceives it) unfriendly with him. Perhaps, the subject, being exposed to several languages, and hence to the different cultures which these languages reflect, is now able to compare the behavior of people coming from various countries, to analyze them and make his simple but logical conclusions, even though he was too young, 5 years old when the observation was made.

Finally, Spanish is the one language that is not actively used by the subject. For instance, at home and in tennis club it is not used at all. In public places the subject rarely speaks Spanish with other children or adults. At the moment, the only time when the child resorts to this language is when watching cartoons. That is, by the way, his main source of new vocabulary. Probably, the situation will change when the child starts studying it in a Spanish primary school, which is to happen next year. He is really motivated to study it at school.

Overall, the subject is fluent in three languages: Catalan, English and Russian. As for Spanish, he speaks it, but he needs to practise it more. Evidently, the number of exposure hours to Spanish is small particularly when compared to English, a language that the subject is exposed to regularly from 9 am to 5 pm (Monday to Friday).

It should be noted that the data in Table 4 reflect the subject's use of languages from Monday to Sunday, that is, on the days that the subject goes to school, and when during his days off (Saturday and Sunday). On school days the data was collected approximately from 7 to 8 am before school and from 7 to 10 pm after school (see Table 3 for a detailed schedule: 69).

Table 4 summarizes the data collected over two weeks. This period of time was the only possible option accepted by the parents, due to the inconvenience caused by the duty to collect the data daily on their working days.

6.4 Adult Multilingual Learner

The adult multilingual learner (AML) was observed by applying a quantitative approach in an out-of-classroom context. The observers collecting data were the

husband of the research subject and myself. The procedure this time lasted for four weeks (in February). We agreed with the subject on this period of time, as she was less busy in that month. During that period, the subject's use of languages was examined in different environments: at home (interaction with family), at the workplace (interaction with colleagues) and at public places (interaction with friends and strangers). The subject is a 35-year-old Danish woman, married to a Dutchman, who has two children and works in her own tourist bar located in Barcelona (Catalonia). She has been living in Spain for the last fifteen years. The subject speaks six languages, but uses them in different contexts:

- Danish (mother tongue): it is used to speak with parents, children and friends.
- Dutch (her husband's native language): it is listened to passively by the subject, since it is used by her husband to communicate with their children.
- English (learnt at school in Denmark): it is commonly used to interact with customers at the workplace and is the only language used to speak with her husband.
- French (learnt at the age of 25 while working in Spain): it is used to speak with customers and tourists.
- German (learnt at school at the age of 10 while living in Denmark): it is used to speak with customers and tourists.
- Spanish (Spain's official language and one of Catalonia's co-official language): it is used for internet purposes, watching TV, speaking with colleagues and friends.

Interestingly, this person consciously refuses to learn Catalan, even though it is commonly used in Catalonia and even prevails over Spanish (e.g., official documents are written only in Catalan). The subject says that she does not want to learn a language that is spoken only in Catalonia and Andorra (some 7.7 million speakers).

Table 5 illustrates the extent to which this adult is exposed to each language daily. It is divided into time periods, from 6.30 a.m. (the wake-up moment) till 23.30 p.m. (the moment to go to bed), showing how much time per day the subject uses her six languages. It should be noted, the data represented in the Table 5 were taken from Monday till Friday (the schedule the subject is available for observation).

Table 5. AML – daily exposure to languages

Variables		Languages					
Location	Time	Danish	Dutch	German	French	English	Spanish
Home	6.30	X	X			X	
Home	7.30	X	X			X	
Work	8.30			X	X	X	X
Work	9.30			X	X	X	X
Work	10.30			X	X	X	X
Work	11.30			X	X	X	X
Work	12.30			X	X	X	X
Break	13.30					X	X
Break	14.30					X	X
Work	15.30			X	X	X	X
Work	16.30			X	X	X	X
Work	17.30			X	X	X	X
Home	18.30	X	X			X	
Home	19.30	X	X			X	
Public place (restaurant)	20.30					X	X
Home	21.30	X	X			X	
Home	22.30					X	
Home	23.30					X	

Again I was interested in observing the subject's use of her six languages in different contexts, how she switches between them, whether she resorts to one in particular, which helps other languages function properly, that is, whether she uses translation. Besides, I decided to collect the data by recording the subject's conversations with friends, colleagues and strangers, and with her husband and children. The subject's husband was asked to observe and record her interacting with friends, colleagues, strangers and her children. Again, because her husband could make objective observations the use of a recorder was decided. The data were conveyed to a descriptive table (see Table 6) and then analyzed.

Table 6. AML's use of languages in various contexts

Languages	Contexts				
	Home: speaking with her children	Home: speaking with her husband	Home: reading; watching TV, listening to the radio, using the Internet	Workplace: speaking with colleagues and clients	Public places: speaking with friends and other people
Danish	Speaking with children	_____	Uses frequently: all four skills	Speaking with clients from Denmark (rarely)	Rarely uses
Dutch	Passive listening when children and father speak	Passive listening when children and father speak	_____	Rarely uses to understand Dutch colleagues' talking	_____
English	_____	Speaking with her husband	Uses frequently: all four skills	Speaking with customers	Speaking with Scandinavian friends living in Spain and with tourists in general
French	_____	_____	_____	Speaking with customers	Speaking with tourists in general
German	_____	_____	_____	Speaking with customers	Speaking with tourists in general
Spanish	_____	_____	Watching TV, using the Internet	Speaking with colleagues	Speaking with friends and other Spanish-speaking people

Table 6 shows that the subject's use of Danish takes place almost exclusively at home. She resorts to it to communicate with her 2- and 4-year-old children, with whom it is the only language she uses. The children have not yet started to answer to her in Danish, probably because they are still too young or because their exposition to Danish is too limited. Their mother is the only person that speaks Danish to them. Their Danish grandparents cannot be taken into consideration as they seldom come to visit the children. Sometimes the subject has an opportunity to speak her mother tongue with clients from Denmark in the bar where she works or in public places such as children playgrounds, which she frequently visits with her husband and children.

As regards Dutch, it is used rather in a receptive than a productive way, that is, the subject uses it not to communicate, but to understand what message other

members of her family want to convey. She needs to know what her husband (whose L1 is Dutch) and her children are talking about. However, the subject never produces any speech in Dutch. It seems she is quite satisfied with this kind of passive listening. Sometimes, she needs Dutch to speak with her colleagues, but this interaction usually happens in such a way that the colleague utters a sentence in Dutch and the subject responds in English. Neither interlocutor ever switches to the other, yet they never experience any misunderstanding. The subject's listening comprehension is perfect and her Dutch interlocutor's comprehension of English is also brilliant (English is one of his L1s). Both feel comfortable speaking English (the subject) and Dutch (the subject's interlocutor). Therefore, even though both interlocutors do not speak same language, their communication can be considered successful.

As far as the use of English is concerned, it is evident from Table 6 that the only context in which the subject does not use it is at home with children. She wants her children to speak her L1 (Danish), which is why she never speaks any other languages with them. Besides, since she realizes the importance of English for her children, she plans to send them to bilingual English school. When that happens, the subject will probably use English with her children to help them with homework, which is normally given in English.

The subject's active use of English at home is limited to speaking with her Dutch husband. Interestingly, the subject never interacts with her husband in the same way as she does with her Dutch colleague, though the couple's L1s are the same, Danish and Dutch. According to the subject, English with each other was a conscious choice they made so that their children would grow up listening to English from birth. Additionally, the subject is a consumer of English mass media. English is the language she daily speaks with clients in the bar she works in. It is also the language of active use for interaction with Scandinavian friends living in Spain.

As regards French and German, they are languages used by the subject in a similar way: no use at all at home, neither with children or husband but at her workplace, they are frequently used to communicate with clients. At public places, they are the languages that she uses the most to interact with tourists from French- and German-speaking countries.

The subject never uses Spanish with her children and husband, but she very often watches TV programs in Spanish and is an active user of Internet in Spanish. At the workplace, she willingly switches to Spanish to communicate with colleagues and in public places this is actually the only language she can speak with Spanish-speaking friends and people.

Overall, I have noticed that the subject is more fluent in three languages: Danish, English and Spanish. The subject speaks these languages, that is, uses them orally for interaction. At the same time, the subject's use of Dutch is also frequent; still, it seems to me, we cannot speak about the subject's fluency in Dutch, since she never produces any speech in this language, though she always demonstrates perfect listening comprehension, as we have already mentioned before.

It is worth noting that, occasionally, the subject resorts to Danish, her L1, to translate complex phrases from Spanish, but these lexical or grammar patterns never refer to the area of her expertise, that is, they have nothing to do with the bar business. It is always when political, legal or medical terminology crops up in the conversation.

It should be noted that the data represented in Table 6 were taken from Monday to Friday, that is, on the days the subject was available for observation. For more detail on the subject's schedule, see Table 5: 74.

Table 6 summarizes the data collected over a period of four weeks. The observation took place in February as that was the only period of time available because of her husband's daily business engagements. It was the husband who was supposed to collect data regularly.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

GROUP 1 (G1)

The data analysis conducted permits to draw a comparative examination of two types of learners: multilingual and monolingual. Since the time variable was included in the process, we will also refer to it when presenting the results.

*Monolinguals.*²

- **Minutes 1-5.** During the first five minutes of the lesson, six monolingual learners showed an index 1, corresponding to a little positive reaction to teacher's instructions given first in English and then repeated in Catalan (the monolingual learners' L1). In comparison only three monolinguals (subjects 2, 3 and 8) showed much better reaction to instructions repeated in Catalan, equal to Indices 2 and 3.
- **Minutes 6-10.** During the second interval, the situation gradually began changing. The monolinguals (subjects 2, 3 and 8), who had been given indices 2 and 3 in interval 1, now reacted worse, with indices changed from 2 to 1 and from 3 to 2. The six monolinguals previously having index 1 continued did not change their reaction.
- **Minutes 11-15.** By minute 15 the negative tendency increased and the indices of all the learners began changing towards a *negative reaction*.
- **Minutes 16-20.** Minute 20 showed that the decline tendency increased even more. All the subjects have a -3 index, except for subject 3, who has a -4 index. The reaction of subjects 2 and 4 changed drastically from 0 (minutes 10-15) to -3 (minutes 16-20), which indicates their strong *negative reaction* to instructions being repeated in Catalan.
- **Minutes 21-25.** At minute 25, the tendency remained unchanged: subjects 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 show a -3 index. However, subject 3 continues at -4. Subject 4 is the only learner whose reaction keeps on changing negatively, from -3 to -4.

² See Table 1.

- Minutes 26-30. By the end of the lesson, the indices of all the monolingual subjects dropped by 1 point down from the previous result, except for subjects 2 and 3, whose indices remained unchanged.

Thus, almost the entire first half of the lesson showed a negative tendency. By the middle of the lesson, the negative reaction began increasing. Undoubtedly, at the beginning of the lesson, the monolinguals perceive the instruction repeated in Catalan positively, that is, Catalan helped. However, all the learners got used to the instruction normally being given only in English, as they had been studying at the bilingual English school for the third year. The only subject which is being taught not in English is Catalan. In this connection, during the lesson, it comes evident that L1 serves for nothing and even acts as a distracting factor. There is an impression that the switch from English to Catalan and vice versa is not an easy action for them. By the end of the lesson it results in tiredness. The subjects are too exhausted to be able to do the switch rapidly and with pleasure.

Multilinguals:

As regards the multilingual learners, the index remained unchanged at 0 (neutral) for the first 15-minutes of the lesson. However, in the middle of the lesson (minutes 16-20), we can observe a negative tendency: six out of eleven learners began reacting negatively, showing a -1 index. The remaining five subjects show neutral reaction (0). Starting from minute 21 until the end of the lesson at minute 30, the reaction of all multilingual subjects change either from 0 to -2 or from -1 to -2, or even to -3 in the case of subjects 15, 16, 18.

In fact, the multilingual subjects react to instructions given in English, that is, if they are not distracted by somebody or something, they are immediately ready to perform the task which the instruction tells them to perform. Over the first half of the lesson they simply ignore the repetition of instructions in Catalan, but in the second half, due to the general tiredness, they find the repetition irritating. On the other days, the subjects showed the same tendency of increasing negative reaction. The repetition did not even help understand the English instruction better. It seems that repetition in Catalan is counterproductive for the multilingual children because it breaks their learning process.

What is the significance of these indices? In global terms, the results seem to show that both monolingual and multilingual young learners react differently to instructions first given in English and then repeated in Catalan.

As regards the monolingual children in particular, the data show that in the initial minutes of the lesson (first 10 minutes) students were active, ready to participate in tasks, hyper-attentive to the teacher's instructions (given by using words, mimics and gestures). Besides, since the topic was new and unfamiliar to the children, some repetition of the instruction in L1 was naturally supportive. Consequently, the results show a positive reaction. However, from minute 15 onwards, the reaction of the subjects gradually dropped, since most were probably getting tired and the teacher's repetition of the instruction in L1, instead of giving it only in L2, confused the learners and slowed down their reaction and finally the learning process in general. The reason may be that English is not really the final objective of the learning process, but the vehicular language for another objective. Nearly all the school subjects are taught in English only, so that English is not considered as a foreign language, but serves as an instrument used to learn other subjects. For example, mathematics is taught in English.

As regards the multilingual subjects, at first their reaction is neutral and they do not demonstrate any improvement, possibly because for them the instruction repeated in Catalan does not really help. The reaction in the second half of the lesson proves the repetition in Catalan is not helpful, but rather distracting, in spite of the fact that Catalan is one of L1s for this group of learners.

It is evident that, in the given education context, Catalan does not play any dominating role in the learning process of multilinguals, though it is present, in communication with classmates out of class and during the lessons of Catalan. Therefore, it cannot directly facilitate reaction to an instruction given in English. This observation shows that the multilingual children seem to apply the knowledge of other languages to solve mathematical problems. What does that mean? When performing a certain mathematical task, the multilinguals who found it difficult to find the right solution began speaking aloud in their other L1 languages in turn and quickly found the solution rapidly, more rapidly than their monolingual classmates. For example, when the task was to add five and nine, multilingual individuals, feeling unable to find the solution in English, resorted orally to other languages. They repeated the task in Russian, Dutch or in any other of their languages and found the right solution. In comparison with multilingual classmates, the monolingual students were not that fast in giving results, though the solutions to the mathematical tasks were correct. They could either solve the problems directly in English or refer to their L1 (Catalan).

GROUP 2 (G2)

As for the results obtained with the G2, we see that the four multilingual subjects (those who have used four different languages since early childhood) demonstrate a neutral reaction (zero index) to the teacher's repeating the instruction in Spanish, Catalan or German. It seems that repetition does not contribute to a better understanding of the instruction first given in English. This may be because, when students command four different languages, they feel very comfortable with another new FL (English in this case). However, this reason may only be considered as hypothetical because we have observed only multilingual speakers. To prove the assumption, the reaction of multilingual students should be compared to that of monolingual students, with the same level of English.

We posit that the diversity of languages actively used by students allows them to perceive English as simply one additional language, parallel to the others. Thereby, the repetition of the instruction, first in English and then in one of the other learners' mother tongues, seems absolutely useless with these particular students. As regards the multilingual students who have spoken Russian since they were born and Spanish, Catalan and German since puberty, we observe that subject 5 shows a little more positive reaction (index 1) to the instruction given in English and then in German. Evidently, one of this subject's FLs, German, which she had spoken since puberty, helped her to understand better the instruction in English, the FL she is learning at present. As for subject 6, he shows an even more positive reaction (index 2). We suppose that this is because the prompt was given to him by his partner in his native language, Russian, which clearly contributed to a better comprehension of the instruction first given in English.

At the same time, as regards the process of memorizing, we have also found that the group made up by subjects 1, 2, 3 and 4 was better than the group made up by subjects 5 and 6. However, we consider that this is just a coincidence, a side effect of multilingualism, since there is no strong evidence to prove the contrary. In fact, there are a number of factors that influence the processes of memorizing, such as the age of the students, their motivation, the learning strategies applied, the physical and mental state of development of learners and the general learning environment. As regards this last factor, we should pay special attention to Krashen's (1985) "affective filter", that is, to the learners' emotional background, which always produces strong positive or negative effect on them. Therefore, a student's affective filter may influence the cognitive processes involved in the acquisition of FL, including the memorization process.

YOUNG MULTILINGUAL LEARNER (YML)

My original intention was to investigate how frequently he makes use of his languages (Catalan, English, Russian and Spanish), whether there is a predominating language and whether there is any interference between languages and confusion in their usage. We expected that there would exist an overlapping of languages, because the learner is exposed to them at the same time. The child has been immersed in the three languages since birth and the fourth language (English) was added when he went to the compulsory school at the age of three.

However, as a matter of fact, interference or confusion does not take place. The subject uses the different languages he knows according to the environment that the language corresponds to.

As for the English language, in particular, we should underline that he speaks it with the teacher because he got used to it. The interaction in English is a habitual state of affairs and seems quite natural to use for communication in the academic context. The same reasoning applies to the subject's other three languages: Catalan, Russian and Spanish. The child uses each language with different people in different contexts.

We are informed by the parents of the subject that, at the very beginning, that is, between the ages of one and two and a half, there was a definite confusion between the three languages he used then (Catalan, Russian and Spanish). This confusion is probably closely related to the stage of development of the child's psychomotor functions, when his body and mind experienced many changes because of the growing processes. Sense of physical and cognitive development between the ages of one and two and a half is very intensive. I suppose, the subject was just unable to differentiate languages he was exposed to. He did understand the message conveyed through these languages, but as yet was unable to respond orally in an appropriate way. However, by the age of three, his physical and cognitive faculties were sufficiently developed to perceive and, at the same time, to react to the message conveyed in his L1s. Besides, the languages stopped interfering each other. Normally, by the age of three each language seems to exist as an autonomous system (see sections 4.4.3: 26-27; and 4.4.5: 31) and, in the absence of any obvious developmental disorders, the systems of languages do not interfere with each other to produce linguistic chaos.

Our observation of this subject proves that each language used by the subject exists and develops as a separate linguistic system (See section 4.4.5). However, there are certain factors which might influence the functioning of one or more linguistic systems. A language is like a living organism which keeps on changing and evolving throughout life. Under the pressure of such factors as age, the social environment, the workplace, the general motivation to continue using all the languages to the full, the subject may use one of the languages to a lesser extent than the others, or he/she may stop using it completely. There is no guarantee, if he/she decides to retake it again sometime later, that he/she will manage to restore the same level of fluency he had had before. But what seems to be clear is that unless some kind of temporary or chronic brain disorder occurs, the L1s which a speaker commands will function as separate linguistic systems.

It turns out that the subject does not normally resort to translation in his daily life (out of school context), except for the situations in which he becomes a sort of consecutive interpreter. In fact, it only occurs in places where there are always many English-speaking tourists does he need to switch from Catalan, Russian or Spanish to English to communicate with foreigners. So, as soon as he is speaking English, he switches to Russian for the purpose of translating to his mother, if he is accompanied by her. In other cases, when the subject's parents try to translate a message from one of his L1s to another, the subject gets irritated or simply fails to understand the purpose of this translation. Incidentally, the child sometimes expresses interest in other FLs he does not command and either asks his parents to translate from an unknown language into one of his L1s or from one of his L1s into a FL.

ADULT MULTILINGUAL LEARNER (AML)

The subject under study never demonstrated any confusion between her six languages. Also being used to operating in all these languages daily, she seems not to care about a word or a concept she may forget in one language. It is likely that when the subject forgets a word, she unconsciously resorts to the mechanism of "linguistic substitution", and immediately finds the equivalent of the forgotten word in one of the other languages. It happens automatically. But the search for a word in another language does not produce any further confusion. It is worth noting that, once the equivalent is found in another language, the original "forgotten" word quickly comes to her, as if using the other language would restore a momentary gap in memory in the other language. Another interesting fact is that this subject also code-switches from one language to another very quickly, depending on the immediate situation. For

example, at work, when she is dealing with clients of different nationalities at the same time and has to communicate with them successfully, she has to be quick changing from one language to another.

Nonetheless, the subject is aware about her different levels of command of the languages she knows: she believes that it is hardly possible to master all the languages at the same level, unless one is a professional linguist. However, objectively, the language proficiency of the subject cannot be questioned. She commands five languages (Danish, English, French, German and Spanish) at a native like level, corresponding to a C2 (CEFR level), but her level of command of Dutch cannot be described as native-like or even fluent. The fact remains that in Dutch the subject demonstrates an excellent level in the receptive skills (reading and listening), but she never uses the productive skills, that is, she neither writes nor speaks in Dutch. Therefore, one cannot say that her command of the Dutch language is proficient.

8. CONCLUSIONS

I hypothesize that resorting to translation with multilingual learners does not promote language acquisition. Monolinguals hang upon L1 as a fundamental base and this is natural. Adults, we tend to assume, need to use translation since it enables easier and faster acquisition of L2. However, multilingual students, because they use more than one or two languages daily, do not need to refer to any particular mother tongue constantly to be able to progress. Monolingual children in turn are more flexible in terms of the use of translation. The younger the child the less he needs to resort to translation to his/her L1. The age factor and the brain plasticity of a learner are crucial (see section 4.4.5: 30-36).

At the same time, our study shows the existence of positive interconnections between languages (see section 4.4.5: 30-36). Our research Group 1 (multilingual learners) demonstrated prominent cognitive abilities when dealing with mathematical problems (adding simple numbers). I believe that the brain, when searching for a solution, resorts automatically to different languages, if available. Indeed, the availability of several tongues seems to be a great advantage if compared to the cognitive model of a monolingual student. Overall, it is possible to claim that multilingualism improves the functioning of brain and, it would be interesting to explore thoroughly the relationship between multilingualism and cognitive abilities in young and adult learners (see section 4.4.3: 24-27). However, it would be risky to say that it influences each individual positively, because there are a huge number of co-factors that may cancel out the positive influence.

Likewise, it would be useful to broaden the research by studying the similarities and differences in language learning between young and adult students. This would probably help to follow the stages of cognitive development a young learner passes through at different age, starting at the age of 3 when, as a result, his/her perception of a foreign language changes into an adult learner's perception.

The practical implication of our research results in global terms deals with the change of the multilingual students' position or perspective in social and educational contexts. If teachers had more data about the particular qualities of multilingual learners, they would be able to take this information into account in their classroom procedures (subjects' contents). Their choice of activities would probably be determined by the presence or absence of multilingual students in the class. Besides, a

re-evaluation of the multilingual learners' role in the educational process may positively affect monolingual learners as well. Precisely, in mathematics class, if we accept that multilingual children are better solving mathematical problems, a claim borne out by our study (see section 7: 79), the teacher may introduce a certain type of activities (games, quizzes, etc.) with student groups consisting of multilingual and monolingual individuals. Because children, as a general rule, like competitions and eagerly agree to participate in games that aim at developing logical thinking, the mono- and multi-lingual students of our study could be expected to interact and this collaboration would probably produce a positive effect on the monolingual students' thinking processes, accelerating them, as they will try to catch up with the multilinguals.

When I embarked on this research, I intended to draft a practical guide for teachers and suggest a series of translation-based activities designed especially for the groups of students, young and/or adult, multilingual and/or monolingual, which have been observed in the course of this research. However, as a result of the comparative analysis conducted, I have come to the conclusion that, within the educational context in which the learners of both groups are immersed, these activities would not contribute to a more effective teaching and learning process. In fact, the materials design should aim at assisting young and adult students in an ESL context and at helping the teachers to complement their regular course books. In our case, I consider the materials design to be useless. There are several arguments for that. First, as regards the bilingual school, translation activities are not provided in the curriculum. English is not a separate subject and is not an objective of study in this school. It is a means by which subjects are taught and learnt as if the school is located in England and English is a native language of all the students. From the very first day children, Spanish, Catalan or foreigners, are involved in this policy in a natural way, no matter at what age they start studying in this school. This rule excludes the necessity of resorting to translation. The second argument deals with the age of students. The age of children observed is 6 years. The teachers in this school consider that at this age children are distinguished by flexible perception of new information and fast memorization, whatever L1, L1s or FL this information is given to them. Therefore, children are capable of assimilating information without additional resorting to L1 by means of translation use.

As regards the foreign language school, in which multilingual adults were observed, I also think the use of translation would be confusing. The teacher of this group informed me about their academic performance. In fact, all six students make

progress in studying English. Their perception of new information is adequate and they have no problems with memorization processes. In this sense, probably, their multilingualism affects positively. So, I doubt, at this stage of FL acquisition the use of translation would be feasible.

The present study was initiated also with a view to preparing some sort of theoretical guide-book for the parents of multilingual children. It is a fact that parents do worry about early multilingualism and its possible negative impact on their children's development, but at the same time, they feel that they should learn as many languages as possible. In this study I have tried to explain a number of theoretical aspects of multilingualism and I have also discussed real cases of multilingualism through the analysis of two groups of students (a mixed group of multilingual and monolingual children and a mono-group of only multilingual learners) and of two multilingual individuals, a child and an adult. This diversity of subjects selected for study was meant to support the parents of multilingual children and give them a full picture of multilingual behavior. This study will allow parents to learn about the characteristic features of multilingual children and compare them with those of monolingual children or multilingual adults. I expect that all the information given in this work will enable them to make the right decisions concerning the upbringing and education of their multilingual children, so that they will not hinder but promote their further linguistic development, which is, by the way, is of paramount importance in today's globalized society, where multilingual individuals are expected and needed in all the sectors of activity

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