Novelty Journals

ISSN 2394-9686

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning
Vol. 11, Issue 6, pp: (34-43), Month: November - December 2024, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

The Occurrence of Language Transfer in Third Language Acquisition: Evidence from Word Order Acquisition by Thai Learners of Chinese

Duan Ran

School of Education, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, Guangdong, China

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14275922

Published Date: 04-December-2024

Abstract: **With the continuous development of global society, the acquisition of second and even multiple languages has become commonplace, leading to the rapid advancement of third language acquisition (TLA) research. This study investigates the acquisition process and phenomena of language transfer among learners whose L1 is Thai, L2 is English, and L3 is Chinese, using word order acquisition in Chinese as the focal point. Through qualitative research, it is revealed that learners compare linguistic features across the three languages to identify similarities and differences, forming an overall perception of linguistic distance, which informs their transfer choices. In acquiring Chinese word order, L1 transfer plays a dominant role, with learners demonstrating a general resistance to L2 (English) transfer. The influence of L2 is mainly observed in lexical transfer. These findings diverge from the dominant theoretical perspectives in current syntactic transfer models for TLA. Additionally, the foreign language learning experiences and strategies accumulated during L2 acquisition promote learners' metalinguistic awareness, further facilitating their Chinese acquisition.**

Keywords: **Third Language Acquisition, Transfer, Thai Learners, Word Order.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Language transfer has consistently been a focal point in language acquisition research. As early as the 1950s, Lado proposed in the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis that transfer issues arise during second language acquisition (Liu, 2000). With the increasing prevalence of multilingual phenomena and multilingual education, research on third language acquisition (TLA) has gradually developed. Scholars have recognized that transfer issues in TLA may be even more complex. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the second language (hereinafter L2) significantly impacts target language learning, sometimes even surpassing the influence of the first language (Hammarberg, 2001; De Angelis & Selinker, 2001; Bardel & Falk, 2007). Generative grammarians, focusing on syntactic transfer, have proposed models such as the *Cumulative Enhancement Model* (Flynn et al., 2004), *The Scalpel Model* (hereinafter SM) (Slabakova, 2017), *The Linguistic Proximity Model* (hereinafter LPM) (Westergaard et al., 2017), and *The Typological Primacy Model* (hereinafter TPM) (Rothman & Amaro, 2010). These models generally confirm that the first language is not the sole source of transfer; languages learned after the first language also influence the acquisition of the target language. Both SM and LPM assert that TLA involves mastering linguistic features individually, where learners transfer specific features from previously acquired languages that are similar to the target language. Transfer occurs when a particular feature in the third language input aligns closely with a feature in a previously learned language. Conversely, TPM posits that all previously learned languages can theoretically contribute to the initial state of TLA. However, to avoid redundancy and reduce cognitive costs, learners' internal language acquisition mechanisms make holistic judgments about structural similarities between languages, transferring the language perceived as closest in overall distance without comparing and transferring individual features.

Over recent decades, research on Chinese acquisition has flourished. Much of this research views Chinese as a second language and uses theories such as interlanguage and universal grammar to examine transfer effects and acquisition patterns (Wang & Liang, 2022). However, as research has deepened, scholars have increasingly recognized that most learners in international Chinese education, particularly those from Asia (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2019), have already been exposed to, learned, or even mastered one or more foreign languages before studying Chinese. Consequently, verifying the impact of L2 transfer, typically English, has become a research focus, though findings remain inconsistent. For instance, studies by Na Ranong and Leung (2009) and Wang Sheng (2018) on learners with Thai as L1 and English as L2 suggest that L1 remains a dominant influence in Chinese acquisition, with minimal impact from L2. However, investigations by Wang Xiaoting (2018) and Jin Lina (2020) on Korean learners reveal that despite the closer linguistic distance between Chinese and Korean, learners still exhibit more influence from L2 (English) during acquisition. Studies by Hu Hongyan (2020) and Wei Siwen (2021) on Ukrainian and Japanese learners suggest that L2 (English) indeed influences Chinese acquisition, with both L1 and L2 jointly affecting the process. Overall, the issue of L2 (commonly English) transfer in Chinese acquisition from a TLA perspective still requires further evidence. Therefore, this study focuses on word order acquisition as a case study and selects Thai learners of Chinese as a third language as research subjects. Using qualitative research methods, the study explores the mechanisms of language transfer during acquisition to enrich perspectives on Chinese acquisition research, provide evidence for TLA theories, and advance discussions in this field.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed background questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data collection tools. The background questionnaire gathered information on learners' gender, age, language acquisition sequence and duration, and language proficiency. Following the methods of Wang (2018) and Park (2020), semi-structured interviews were used to obtain introspective data from learners, providing an in-depth understanding of transfer mechanisms during the third language acquisition (Wang, 2018; Park, 2020).

2.1 Interview Content

Research on second language acquisition (SLA) and third language acquisition (TLA) has consistently emphasized that similarities and differences between the source language and the target language significantly influence transfer (Liu, 2000; Hammarberg, 2001). SM and LPM further suggest that TLA involves acquiring linguistic features individually. To ensure clarity in interview content, we adopted the typological word order comparison approach (Dryer, 1992), referencing works by Liu Yuehua et al. (2019), Pei Xiaorui and Bo Wenze (2018), and Zhang Daozhen (2019). A detailed comparison of word order in Chinese, English, and Thai revealed three primary patterns of similarity and difference among the languages, as summarized in Table 1:

A. Similarity between L1 and L2 but different from L3: For example, locative adverbials and predicate verbs, as well as relative clauses and head nouns.

B. Similarity between L2 and L3 but different from L1: For instance, double-object sentences.

C. No similarity among L1, L2, and L3: For example, the positioning of "quantifiers, demonstratives + verb phrases" or subject-predicate phrases used as modifiers relative to head nouns.

Based on these patterns, we structured the interview around four grammatical features of word order. Combined with sample sentences, we discussed these features with the learners. The interview outline focused on the following five aspects:

(1). Awareness and behavior related to comparing the three languages.

(2). Major challenges in learning Chinese and their causes.

(3). Perception of transfer effects from Thai and English.

(4). The influence of prior language learning experiences on Chinese learning.

(5). Reflections on the word order acquisition process for the four grammatical features.

Novelty Journals

ISSN 2394-9686

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning
Vol. 11, Issue 6, pp: (34-43), Month: November - December 2024, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

Table 1: Comparison of Word Order Across Chinese, English, and Thai

No.	Chinese Grammatical Feature	Similarities and Differences Among Chinese, English, and Thai	English Feature Example	Thai Feature Example
1	Subject relative clause + head noun (Level 3)	Chinese--English/Thai	Head noun + subject relative clause Example: *The student who is presenting the paper*	Head noun + subject relative clause Example: ***นักเรียนที่กำลังอ่านเรื่อง*** (学生-的-宣读-论文)
2	Quantifiers, demonstratives + verb phrase or subject-predicate phrase + head noun (Level 4)	Chinese--English--Thai	Quantifiers, demonstratives + head noun + verb phrase or subject-predicate phrase Example: *A student who is learning Chinese*	Head noun + verb phrase or subject-predicate phrase + quantifiers, demonstratives Example: ***นักเรียนหนึ่งคนที่กำลังเรียนภาษาจีน*** (学生-一个-的-正在-学汉语-一个)
3	"Preposition + location" phrase + predicate verb Prepositions: *在* (*at*, Level 1), *从* (*from*, Level 2) Example: *在学校门口等车* (*Waiting for the bus in front of the school*)	Chinese--English/Thai	Predicate verb + "preposition + location" phrase Example: *Wait for the bus in front of the school*	Predicate verb + "preposition + location" phrase Example: ***รอรถที่ประภาคโรงเรียน*** (等车-在-前门-学校)
4	Double-object sentences: "Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object" (Level 2) Example: *妈妈给我一本书* (*Mother gives me a book*)	Chinese/English--Thai	Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object Example: *Mother gives me a book*	Subject + verb + direct object + indirect object Example: ***แม่ให้หนังสือฉัน*** (妈妈-给-书-我)

Notes: The levels of Chinese grammatical features are based on *Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Education*. A forward slash ("/") indicates that two languages share similar word order for the given grammatical feature, while a double dash ("--") indicates a difference in word order between the two languages.

2.2 Interview Participants

The participants were selected through convenience sampling and consisted of 18 learners with Thai as their L1, English as their L2, and Chinese as their L3. They were drawn from five institutions: South China University of Technology, Jinan University, Guangxi Normal University, Sichuan International Studies University, Chumphon International Thai-Chinese School, and the Chinese Academy of the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The group included 9 male (50%) and 9 female (50%) participants, with an average age of 20.19 years (SD = 2.35). Their Chinese proficiency ranged from HSK3 to HSK6.

English proficiency was categorized into high and low levels based on participants' provided certifications. The average length of English learning was 14.75 years (SD = 2.99), while the average length of Chinese learning was 4.81 years (SD = 2.90). This indicates that most participants began learning English in primary school but did not start learning Chinese until middle or high school. The majority of participants acquired foreign languages through formal school education, with a smaller proportion learning through private tutoring or studying abroad. Detailed participant information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Detailed Information of Interview Participants

Name	Gender	Age	English Proficiency	Chinese Proficiency	Years of English Learning	Years of Chinese Learning
CYF	Male	25	Low	HSK6	22	11
WJY	Male	20	High	HSK5	13	7
KYW	Male	22	Low	HSK6	19	7
SZ	Male	18	Low	HSK3	14	1
WQS	Female	21	High	HSK5	16	5
CXH	Female	17	Low	HSK5	10	1
YLL	Female	23	High	HSK6	17	7
YY	Female	22	Low	HSK4	15	6
YKJ	Male	17	Low	HSK5	13	1
LL	Female	21	Low	HSK4	14	5
XLF	Female	22	High	HSK4	17	6
WKL	Male	19	High	HSK5	16	7
LML	Female	22	Low	HSK5	15	7
CLX	Male	18	High	HSK4	11	3
PA	Female	19	Low	HSK3	12	2
CWK	Male	17	Low	HSK3	12	1

Notes: Participants provided a variety of English proficiency test results, including O-NET (Thailand's national university entrance exam), TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS. The classification of English proficiency into high and low levels was based on official explanations and score thresholds for these tests: TOEFL scores of 72 or higher, TOEIC scores of 550 or higher, IELTS scores of 6.0 or higher, and O-NET scores of 48 or higher.

2.3 Data Processing

The interviews were conducted via online video calls. A total of 18 interviews yielded over 1,500 minutes of recorded conversations, which were transcribed into over 61,000 words of interview data. The transcripts were labeled based on participants' background information. The coding format was structured as "Participant's Initials - Chinese Proficiency - English Proficiency". Chinese proficiency levels were marked as "M" for HSK3-4 and "H" for HSK5-6, while English proficiency levels were marked as "2" for high and "1" for low.

The data analysis followed the grounded theory methodology (Chen, 1999), which includes steps such as initial logging, identifying and categorizing concepts, developing a coding system, comparing relationships among categories, and analyzing core categories. NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software was used for data analysis, with sentences or conversational turns as the unit of analysis.

To ensure coding consistency and enhance reliability, 20% of the data (four interviews) was randomly selected for independent coding by a second researcher following the same coding scheme (Xu & Li, 2021). NVivo 12's "Coding Comparison" feature was used to calculate the Cohen's Kappa coefficient for the four samples, resulting in an initial value of 0.65. The two researchers then carefully reviewed the differences in coding, discussed and reconciled disagreements, and re-coded the original four samples. After adjustments, the Kappa coefficient improved to 0.76, indicating high coding reliability (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The finalized first-, second-, and third-level codes, along with coding data, are shown in Table 3.

Novelty Journals

ISSN 2394-9686

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning
Vol. 11, Issue 6, pp: (34-43), Month: November - December 2024, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

Table 3: Hierarchical Coding Results for Word Order Transfer Analysis

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Tertiary Code	File Count	Reference Count
Word Order Comparison	Chinese-Thai Comparison	Overall perception of similarities and differences	18	94
		Comparison of grammatical forms	18	77
		Comparison of learning difficulties	16	66
	Chinese-English Comparison	Overall perception of similarities and differences	18	89
		Comparison of grammatical forms	18	81
		Comparison of learning difficulties	14	55
	Focus Points	Focus on similarities	18	67
		Focus on differences	5	18
Overall Perception of Word Order Transfer	Thai Transfer	Positive influence	17	143
		Negative interference	12	56
		Denial of English transfer	15	117
	English Transfer	Code-switching	12	65
		Lexical transfer	13	112
	Specific Grammar Points	Locative adverbials and predicate verbs	0	0
		Relative clauses and head nouns	0	0
		Double-object sentences	0	0
		Quantifiers/demonstratives + phrases or clauses	0	0
		Conceptual understanding	10	45
		Learning strategies	13	78
		Psychological preparation	15	82
		Awareness of interference and support	16	93
Specific Grammar Analysis	Thai Transfer	Locative adverbials and predicate verbs	18	214
		Double-object sentences	18	183
	English Transfer	Locative adverbials and predicate verbs	0	0
		Relative clauses and head nouns	0	0
		Double-object sentences	0	0
		Quantifiers/demonstratives + phrases or clauses	0	0

Notes: File Count refers to the number of participant interviews in which a given code was applied. Reference Count refers to the total instances coded within NVivo, using a sentence or conversational turn as the unit of analysis.

III. RESULTS ANALYSIS

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms underlying language transfer in third language acquisition (TLA). By examining the interplay between Thai (L1), English (L2), and Chinese (L3), the results highlight the complexity of linguistic influence, showcasing how learners dynamically navigate cross-linguistic similarities and differences. This section systematically presents the main themes emerging from the qualitative data, offering insights into the learners' transfer patterns and their implications for TLA theory.

Novelty Journals

ISSN 2394-9686

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning
Vol. 11, Issue 6, pp: (34-43), Month: November - December 2024, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

3.1 Awareness of Cross-Language Comp

Regardless of their proficiency in Chinese or English, TLA learners consistently compared L3 (Chinese) word order with that of L1 (Thai) and L2 (English). The comparisons focused on three aspects: overall similarity, grammatical representation, and learning difficulty.

Most learners clearly recognized differences between Chinese and Thai word order but considered them minor. Within the multilingual system of Chinese, English, and Thai, they concluded that Chinese and Thai word order was generally similar. In contrast, English, due to its distinct grammatical rules such as inflectional morphology, was perceived as being significantly different in word order from both Chinese and Thai.

Interview Excerpts:

□*"Of course, I compare Chinese and Thai… I think the word order is very similar. For example, take '了' [le]. If I say '我吃完了' [I have finished eating], in Thai it is 'ฉันกินเสร็จแล้ว,' also using '了' at the end. It's the same, very simple… There are some differences, but just a little".* (YLL-H-2)

□*"English word order is very different. I've compared it, and it's just too different… English has so many tenses, like 'do/did/done,' and that's very hard to learn. Chinese doesn't have those, which I think is great".* (XLF-M-2)

3.2 Dominance of Thai Transfer in Chinese Word Order Acquisition

In acquiring Chinese word order, learners perceived many similarities between Thai and Chinese, which facilitated transfer. Differences only caused interference during the initial stages of learning. Over time, learners mastered the characteristics of Chinese word order and were able to distinguish between Chinese and Thai structures.

Interview Excerpts:

□*"Some grammar can be translated directly, following the same order. It's understandable this way. The word order is the same, and it helps me learn Chinese… There might be some influence, but I can't really pinpoint it".* (CXH-H-1)

□*"(Chinese and Thai word order) are different in some places. At first, it was a little confusing. For example, '漂亮的老师' [beautiful teacher], in Thai, it's said as 'อาจารย์ ที่น่ารัก,' where 'beautiful' comes at the end. Initially, I made mistakes, but later I remembered that it needs to be reversed, and now I'm used to it".* (CYF-H-1)

When it came to the influence of English transfer, learners had consistent views. Sixteen participants explicitly denied any significant impact of English word order on their acquisition of Chinese. This perspective was particularly strong among learners with low English proficiency; 10 such participants firmly stated that English had no influence on their Chinese word order learning. In contrast, learners with higher English proficiency were more ambivalent, with 7 participants unable to clearly confirm whether English transfer occurred. As their Chinese proficiency improved, learners increasingly reported relying solely on Chinese without using structures from other languages.

Interview Excerpts:

□*"No, no (impact from English word order). I can't. My English isn't good, and I haven't used it for a long time. I think it's just Thai (that influences me)".* (LL-M-1)

□*"I think (English word order) doesn't have an influence. They're completely different. English grammar is not the same".* (LML-H-1)

□*"Maybe, in some places it might be similar, and it could help, but I'm not sure".* (LMY-H-2)

□*"There might have been some influence at the beginning, but now that my Chinese is better, I just use Chinese to learn Chinese".* (WQS-H-2)

An analysis of the four grammatical patterns (as described earlier) revealed clear attitudes among learners:

(1). Pattern A: Despite similarities between Thai and English word order for certain grammatical points, learners attributed errors primarily to their L1 (Thai) rather than English.

(2). Pattern B: In acquiring double-object sentences, learners denied any significant role of English, even though Chinese and English share similarities in this structure.

(3). Pattern C: For grammatical structures where all three languages differ, learners continued to deny English's influence. Errors were attributed to their L1 or confusion caused by overgeneralizing target language rules. Even when learners produced word order similar to English—e.g., "quantifiers, demonstratives + head noun + verb phrase or subject-predicate phrase"—they still perceived the influence as stemming from their L1.

These findings suggest that learners develop a keen sensitivity to linguistic distance among the three languages through comparative analysis. At the grammatical level, they perceived English to differ substantially from both Thai and Chinese. This psychological perception of linguistic distance led learners to largely block transfer from L2 (English) while heavily relying on L1 (Thai) for Chinese word order acquisition.

3.3 English Transfer Primarily Obser

While Thai transfer dominates Chinese word order acquisition, the interview data unexpectedly revealed that all 18 learners perceived English as having a significant impact on their acquisition of Chinese. Analysis of the interviews identified several aspects of English influence:

(1). Code-switching to L2 due to communication difficulties.

(2). Using English as a medium to better understand and memorize vocabulary.

(3). Relying on English to bridge lexical gaps or differences between L1 (Thai) and L3 (Chinese).

(4). Consciously or unconsciously translating from L2 (English) to L3 (Chinese) during expression or comprehension.**

The most prominent influence was in the area of vocabulary learning, with 14 respondents explicitly stating that English facilitated their acquisition of Chinese vocabulary. Based on their accounts, the use of English during Chinese vocabulary learning could be summarized as follows:

(1). When certain Chinese words were translated into Thai and felt “odd” or “unclear”, learners referred to English explanations to understand the meanings.

(2). When a single Chinese word corresponded to multiple Thai words, learners consulted English equivalents or explanations for clarification.

(3). When certain Chinese words lacked direct equivalents in Thai, learners used English translations or explanations to fill the gaps.

These findings suggest that learners adopted English as a tool for understanding and memorizing Chinese vocabulary, using their existing English knowledge and skills to make the process more efficient. Through cross-linguistic comparisons, learners increasingly realized that English could help them acquire Chinese vocabulary more effectively. This strategy, however, has received little attention in prior research on second language learning strategies (Jiang, 2000; Wu, 2007).

Additionally, 12 participants explicitly indicated that English helped them better understand the meanings of Chinese words. This aspect warrants attention. Previous research on TLA vocabulary acquisition suggests that learners rely on finding and utilizing similarities between L3 vocabulary and their existing vocabulary knowledge to acquire L3 words. Learners aim to integrate L3 vocabulary into their existing lexicon with minimal redundancy, a process known as the "parasitic learning strategy" (Ecke, 2001). Similar to word order acquisition, learners tend to focus on cross-linguistic similarities and leverage them to achieve more efficient target language learning.

3.4 Metalinguistic Awareness in the Acquisition Process

Metalinguistic awareness refers to a conscious understanding of language itself, including attention to linguistic forms and the application of linguistic units (Liang & Chen, 2013). Research on TLA suggests that multilingual acquisition helps learners accumulate language learning experiences, fostering the development of metalinguistic awareness, which in turn

promotes their multilingual proficiency (Park, 2020). Multilingual learners often exhibit advantages in acquiring the target language, particularly in areas such as phonology, syntax, vocabulary, and pragmatic awareness (Kemp, 2001; Zeng, 2010).

In the interviews, 16 participants explicitly stated that their prior language learning experiences significantly facilitated their acquisition of Chinese. This influence was reflected in the following aspects:

(1). Conceptual knowledge gained from learning English, such as understanding grammatical elements like "subject" and "verb", which made learning Chinese easier.

(2). Effective learning strategies used in English acquisition, which were carried over to Chinese learning.

(3). A heightened sensitivity to cross-linguistic interference and the ability to leverage positive factors across languages.

Regardless of their proficiency levels, learners' rich and long-term experiences in learning English provided valuable resources for Chinese acquisition. By engaging in frequent cross-linguistic comparisons, learners developed an acute awareness of similarities among multilingual systems that facilitated L3 learning while remaining vigilant to potential interference.

Interview Excerpts:

- *"While learning Chinese, I feel I have a deeper understanding of language itself, and I've learned methods for studying foreign languages. I think this would make it easier for me to go back and improve my English".* (CXH-H-1)

- *"I start by identifying the subject, verb, and object, then look at the rest. I already knew these methods when I was learning English. The strategies should be universal".* (WQS-H-2)

- *"After learning English, I feel I know what a sentence should have, especially in sentence construction. I know that a sentence must have a verb and a subject".* (PA-M-1)

- *"When learning Chinese, I can use English to help me, but when learning English, I couldn't do the same... However, I do use some methods I learned from studying English. Language learning is quite similar across the board".* (XLF-M-2)

IV. CONCLUSION

Most foreign learners of Chinese have already studied one or more foreign languages, meaning that Chinese language instruction often occurs in tri- or multilingual contexts. Therefore, research on Chinese acquisition must account not only for the influence of learners' first language (L1) but also for the effects of other previously acquired languages. This qualitative study, based on interviews with Thai learners of Chinese, explored new evidence of language transfer and revealed the following findings:

(1). Transfer is not determined solely by linguistic proximity. Contrary to the Typological Primacy Model (TPM), learners do not fully transfer the language that is structurally closest to the target language. Similarly, unlike the Scalpel Model (SM) and Linguistic Proximity Model (LPM), learners do not meticulously compare and transfer individual linguistic features. Instead, they analyze Chinese, English, and Thai separately across different linguistic dimensions to identify similarities and differences, aiming to find transferable elements that aid Chinese acquisition.

(2). L1 transfer dominates word order acquisition. Across the three patterns of grammatical similarity and difference, L1 (Thai) consistently plays the dominant role in transfer. Regardless of proficiency levels, learners exhibit a clear resistance to L2 (English) transfer. By comparing grammatical structures, learners judge Thai to be more linguistically similar to Chinese and rely heavily on Thai for transfer during word order acquisition.

(3). English transfer primarily manifests in lexical acquisition. Most learners utilize English to comprehend and memorize Chinese vocabulary, leveraging their existing knowledge of English to facilitate vocabulary acquisition. This reliance on English emerges as a learning strategy, with English functioning as a tool to simplify and optimize Chinese vocabulary learning.

(4). Metalinguistic awareness from English learning supports Chinese acquisition. Learners' experiences with English provide them with foundational concepts (e.g., "subject", "verb") and effective learning strategies that they apply to Chinese. These experiences also sharpen their sensitivity to cross-linguistic interference and enable them to make better use of

positive transfer. The foundation established in second language (L2) acquisition becomes an invaluable resource in third language (L3) learning, allowing learners to better integrate their knowledge of L1 and L2 into L3 acquisition.

The theoretical perspective of TLA encourages us to re-evaluate issues in Chinese acquisition. A deeper understanding of how L1 and L2 influence Chinese learning can enhance our ability to predict, understand, and address learners' errors, providing a clearer view of the mechanisms underlying acquisition. However, this study focuses solely on Thai learners and their acquisition of Chinese word order. Future research is needed to validate these findings across different language combinations and other dimensions of language acquisition.

REFERENCES

[1] Bardel, C., & Falk, Y. (2007). The role of the second language in third language acquisition: The case of Germanic syntax. Second Language Research, 23(4), 459–484.

[2] Chen, X. (1999). Thoughts and methods of grounded theory. Educational Research and Experimentation, (6), 58–63, 73.

[3] De Angelis, G., & Selinker, L. (2001). Interlanguage transfer and competing linguistic systems in the multilingual mind. In J. Cenoz, B. Hufeisen, & U. Jessner (Eds.), Cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives (pp. 42–58). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[4] Dryer, M. S. (1992). The Greenbergian word order correlations. Language, 68(1), 81–138.

[5] Ecke, P. (2001). Lexical retrieval in a third language: Evidence from errors and tip-of-the-tongue states. In J. Cenoz, B. Hufeisen, & U. Jessner (Eds.), Cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives (pp. 90–114). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[6] Flynn, S., Foley, C., & Vinnitskaya, I. (2004). The Cumulative-Enhancement Model for language acquisition: Comparing adults' and children's patterns of development in first, second, and third language acquisition of relative clauses. International Journal of Multilingualism, 1(1), 3–16.

[7] Hammarberg, B. (2001). Roles of L1 and L2 in L3 production and acquisition. In J. Cenoz, B. Hufeisen, & U. Jessner (Eds.), Cross-linguistic influence in third language acquisition: Psycholinguistic perspectives (pp. 21–41). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

[8] Hu, H. (2020). Cross-linguistic influence of L2 (English) proficiency on vocabulary acquisition of L3 (Chinese) beginners (Master's thesis, Jilin University, Changchun, China).

[9] Jiang, X. (2000). A preliminary study on Chinese as a second language learning strategies. Language Teaching and Research, (1), 61–68.

[10] Jin, L. (2020). Transfer phenomena of Korean (L1) and English (L2) prepositional phrases in the acquisition of Chinese (L3) by Korean learners (Master's thesis, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China)..

[11] Kemp, C. (2001). Metalinguistic awareness in multilinguals: Implicit and explicit grammatical awareness and its relationship with language experience and language attainment (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK).

[12] Liang, L., & Chen, B. (2013). The influence of metalinguistic awareness on second language acquisition and its interaction with other factors. Foreign Language Teaching Theory and Practice, (2), 21–22.

[13] Liu, X. (2000). Introduction to the pedagogy of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Beijing: Beijing Language and Culture University Press.

[14] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2019). Statistics on the number of international students in China. Retrieved from https://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/201904/t20190412_377692.html.

[15] Na Ranong, S., & Leung, Y.-K. I. (2009). Null objects in L1 Thai–L2 English–L3 Chinese: An empiricist take on a theoretical problem. In Y.-K. I. Leung (Ed.), Third language acquisition and universal grammar (pp. 162–191). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

[16] O'Connor, C., & Joffe, H. (2020). Intercoder reliability in qualitative research: Debates and practical guidelines. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19, 1–13.

[17] Park, J. (2020). The influence of English as a second language on grammatical acquisition by Korean beginner learners of Chinese (Master's thesis, Qingdao University, Qingdao, China).

[18] Rothman, J., & Amaro, J. C. (2010). What variables condition syntactic transfer? A look at the L3 initial state. Second Language Research, 26(2), 189–218.

[19] Slabakova, R. (2017). The scalpel model of third language acquisition. International Journal of Bilingualism, 21(6), 651–665.

[20] Wang, J., & Liang, L. (2022). A study on the perception of monophthong /u/ from the perspective of third language acquisition: Evidence from Japanese, English, and Chinese learners. International Chinese Education (Chinese and English), (3), 90–91.

[21] Wang, S. (2012). Reflections on the theory of native language negative transfer based on the theory of third language acquisition: A case study of phonetic errors in Chinese by Thai students. Journal of Yunnan Normal University (Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language Edition), (2), 7–9.

[22] Wang, X. (2018). The influence of the second language on third language acquisition (Master's thesis, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China).

[23] Wei, S. (2021). Phonetic transfer in Chinese as a third language acquisition (Doctoral dissertation, Jilin University, Changchun, China).

[24] Westergaard, M., Mitrofanova, N., Mykhaylyk, R., & Rodina, Y. (2017). Crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of a third language: The linguistic proximity model. International Journal of Bilingualism, 21(6), 666–682.

[25] Westergaard, M., Mitrofanova, N., Mykhaylyk, R., & Rodina, Y. (2017). Crosslinguistic influence in the acquisition of a third language: The linguistic proximity model. International Journal of Bilingualism, 21(6), 666–682.

[26] Xu, J., & Li, G. (2021). A review of research on second language grammatical competence abroad (1981–2020): A study based on qualitative analysis software Nvivo. Foreign Language Teaching Theory and Practice, (4), 36–37.

[27] Zeng, L. (2010). The development of metalinguistic awareness in Miao students during third language acquisition (Doctoral dissertation, Southwest University, Chongqing, China).