



**BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA**

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**Multilingualism: Learning German as a third language  
for LEI students**

A thesis submitted to the Facultad de Lenguas For the  
degree of: **Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés**

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MULTILINGUALISM: LEARNING GERMAN AS A THIRD  
LANGUAGE FOR LEI STUDENTS

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## DEDICATIONS

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

In agreement to De Angelis (2008) nowadays, the learning of foreign languages further than the native one has become primordial for a large number of languages learners. As a matter of fact , in many parts of the world the typical learner is no longer a learner of a second language, currently, several people is acquiring a third or other foreign languages for instance a L4 or an L5 due to increasing demands and needs for our society to be more competent in professional, business and educational areas.

In the first place this project shows a particular educational interest of researcher in third language (L3) learning which highlights the new areas of research in relation to language acquisition. Secondly, it pretends to foster teachers and future learner generations to contribute to the study of this promising area which goes beyond second language acquisition.

In line with Cenoz (2013) third language acquisition (L3) refers to a language learned chronologically after the L1 and L2 or after the two first languages in the case of early bilinguals. It should be taken into account third language acquisition, sometimes it is used as synonymous for multilingualism but in a strict sense it means the acquisition of a third language and multilingualism is a much wider term that does not necessarily refers to acquisition. In spite of L3 acquisition is a relatively new area of research it has spread in recent years and it is reflected in a number of monographs, special issues and edited volumes published recently on diverse aspects of third language acquisition (Safont, M. 2005; De Angelis, G. 2007; Aronin and Hufeisen, B. 2009; Leung 2009; Lindqvist, C. and Bartel, C. 2010). For instance, in 2004 *a specialized Journal named “the international journal of Multilingualism”* made its

appearance. Other activities related are carried out by the international Association of Multilingualism, The Bi- annual conference on third language acquisition and the International Conference on third language acquisition and Multilingualism.

This qualitative research takes place at the Faculty of Languages BUAP, where LEI “Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Ingles” students learn a third language in this case German. Thus, the information obtained based on the interaction and perception of participants about the third language help in large extent to interpret and develop this work.

### **1.1 Significance of Study**

In the first place, this research shows a personal interest which is reflected in this project. It pretends to highlight the learning process a third foreign language which may present a major challenge in its acquisition such as more complexity and interesting than English. It attempts to show the learning of German language in CELE “Centro de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras” for LEI students. Furthermore, it will analyze the influence of certain factors such as motivation, age, context transfer, previous knowledge (L1 and L2) that facilitate or hinder the acquisition and production of this foreign language. In this way, it also pretends to promote the study and interest on the learning of further languages at the Faculty of languages taking into consideration the lack of research in this area which presents new opportunities for those with a greater vision further than common research on second language acquisition.

## **1.2 Theoretical Context of the Research**

According to Bardel and Falk (2007) in the last two decades, studies have shown that the acquisition of a foreign language is qualitatively different to (L1) first language acquisition and that acquisition of a second language (L2) presents also differences to subsequent foreign languages (L3) since a L2 has already been acquired for the L3 learners, this knowledge carries out a role in the acquisition of other foreign languages as stated (Hufeisen, 1998; Cenoz and Jessner, 2000; Cenoz, 2001; 2003). Some scholars as Williams and Hufeisen (1998) and Hammarberg (2001) have proposed that among languages, L1 and L2 known by the learners, it is possible that L2 has an impact on the process of third language acquisition.

In line with Cenoz (2003) there is a diversity of factors which are entailed in the L3 acquisition as the context in which each of the languages were acquired, the age of acquisition and the area of use of each language. On the basis of these factors, bilingualism may or may not facilitate third language acquisition.

## **1.3 Research aims**

This research project has the following aims that are presented as follow.

Identify L3 learning process.

Explore the perceptions of students about learning a L3.

Identify the factors which are affecting students in the L3 learning process.

#### **1.4 Purpose**

The purpose of this case study, will be to describe multilingualism: learning German as a third language for the LEI students at the Faculty of Languages. At this stage in the research, multilingualism: learning German as a third language, will be defined such as the foreign language learning process with regards to the influence and similarities of a second language and the development of this third language.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study has two research questions which guided the data collection and analysis.

1. What are the factors that impact the learning process a third language of LEI students at the Faculty of Languages?
2. How the second language influences the acquisition of a third language of LEI students?

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Multilingualism

According to De Angelis (2008) there are reasons for the increase of interest in multilingualism and multilingual education, among these reasons are the understanding of the importance of language learning for communication and business, and the awareness to value of minority languages for a balanced and healthy society. It is more notable the support of government and educational institutions for multilingualism, and the knowledge of foreign languages is advanced and recognized as an advantage for individuals. As Lasagabaster and Huguet claimed (2007) in a multicultural society, language learning may be very beneficial to foster tolerance, help people join in public life and mitigate racism and xenophobia.

In line with Cenoz and Genesse (1998) currently, several people are multilingual and use more than two languages in their everyday life. These languages have different statuses as majority and minority languages inside a community and internationally and some of them are used mainly in the private domain whereas other are used primarily in public domains as work or school in relation to Safont (2005). It should bear in mind that multilingualism is not exceptional but more frequent than may be commonly thought. As a matter of fact, Eduards (1994) points out, nowadays, multilingualism or bilingualism is a normal and common necessity for the majority in the world.

Safont (2005) states that there is an increasing need for individual multilingualism owing to increasing communications among diverse places of the world and the need to be proficient in languages of broader communication. The interest to support and revival minority languages are in use is creating situations in which more

than two languages co- exist and become necessary in everyday communication, the languages of the community and a language of broader communication. While learning of second and foreign languages in school has been related with a high status and the hallmark of a well-educated individual background, the growing recognition and the use of world languages so as minority languages is making multilingualism a desired educational aim for several individuals in many communities around the world.

Furthermore, the term second language acquisition is often used to refer to the acquisition of non-native languages after the first language without making difference between the acquisition of a second language and multilingual acquisition which is the acquisition of foreign languages. In the same way, the extensive research on the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development shows little attention to the effects of bilingualism on multilingualism. However, multilingual acquisition shows some relevant differences when compared to second language acquisition because the previous experience of acquiring a language after the L1 and the findings of this experience, bilingualism, may influence the process of acquiring a third foreign language.

In line with Tucker (1998) through available data, it can be stated that there are many more bilingual or multilingual people around the world than monolingual individuals. Furthermore, a great number of children throughout the world have been, and continue to be educated via a L2 or a later- acquired language at least for some part of their official education than the number of children educated exclusively in L1. In several places of the world, bilingualism or multilingualism and innovative approaches to education which entail the use of two or more languages that constitute the normal everyday experience.

As Cenoz and Genesee stated (1998) the final result of the acquisition' process of several foreign languages is multilingualism. Moreover, Jessner argued (1997) in her discussion on linguistic variability individuals, considers multilingualism as a variant of bilingualism. She writes primarily from a second language acquisition and bilingualism view and looks beyond learners acquiring third or fourth languages, and for this setting she uses the term multilingualism. Regarding this terminology, Hoffman (2001) claims that there are not clear delimitations between bilingualism and multilingualism. In respect to trilingualism is clear the number of languages involved but obviously shares certain characteristics with both bilingualism and multilingualism but at the same time retaining own features.

In line with Davidiak (2010) the term multilingualism presents the notion that multiple languages are entailed strictly speaking. Nevertheless, bilingualism and trilingualism are subtypes of multilingualism owing to that each entails more than one language, two in the case of bilingualism and three in the case of trilingualism. Cenoz and Genesee, (1998) despite this multilingualism and multilingualism acquisition have widespread beyond recognized bilingual and multilingual communities but also all over the world.

Multilingual acquisition which is presented as the process of acquiring numerous foreign languages and multilingualism is considered as the final result of this process, they do not have received enough attention in scientific research in comparison to second language acquisition and bilingualism. As a matter of fact, multilingualism and multilingualism acquisition are usually assumed as simple variations of second language acquisition and bilingualism. According to Smith (1994) L2 acquisition is often used as a cover term to address any language another than L1 not taking into account the type of learning environment and the number of other foreign languages

known by learners. Cenoz and Genesee claim (1998) that multilingual acquisition and multilingualism are complex phenomena because they associate all the processes and factors entailed with L2 acquisition and bilingualism as unique and more complex factors and effects related with the interactions that are possible among the several languages being learned and in the learning processes of them. Multilingual acquisition and multilingualism are also complex as bilingual acquisition and bilingualism because they may occur simultaneously successively and formally through instruction or in a natural way, outside school, and in childhood, adolescence or adulthood. “The sociocultural status of each language along with the languages’ respective roles and functions in society can implicate additional complexities. Also, multilingualism may characterize individuals or whole societies” (Cenoz and Genesee, 1998 p.9).

## **2.2 The influence of L2 on L3 acquisition**

According to Safont (2005) it considers L3 acquisition a unique phenomenon which deserves to be considered as a subfield within the widespread area of applied linguistics. Moreover, it should be studied in the similar way as other subfields which has a close relationship with the case of L2 acquisition. As Cenoz stated (2001) L2 acquisition and bilingualism research that show findings that facilitate and affect our understanding in the development of third language acquisition. Safont (2005) shows that the distinction between L2 and L3 acquisition processes will establish the issue of the complexity attributed to the acquisition of L3. Furthermore, it presents the idea that L3 acquisition entails those factors affecting L2 acquisition and also those effects deriving from interaction between those languages known by third language learner who is also a bilingual speaker.

As regards L3 acquisition some scholars such as Fouser (1995) Jessner (1999) it present a degree of terminological and conceptual confusion in relation to L3

acquisition. In general terms, L3 acquisition involves those languages learned after a second one, which may entail a third, fourth or fifth language. However, this conceptualization implies a series of different backgrounds of the second or foreign language and learning situations that would address not only to L3 but also to bilingual even multilingual acquisition. Bearing this view in mind, terms such as bilingualism, trilingualism or multilingualism would refer to the same phenomenon.

In relation to Herdina and Jessner (2000) show a clear distinction of the terminology currently used in studies of the L3 acquisition. They assume multilingualism as a varied phenomenon entailing monolingualism and bilingualism as possible forms, but pointing out primarily to those languages learned after a second one. In this sense, bilinguals may not be identified with multilinguals. Furthermore, representative characteristics of L3 acquisition are presented which may imply a relevant change in traditional language learning paradigms. These features entail (1) non-linearity (2) language maintenance, (3) individual variation, (4) interdependence. Non-linearity is one of the main features of the L3 acquisition in an attempt to distinguish this process from that involved in acquiring an L2. As a matter of fact, language competence is a gradual process whereby learners acquire a certain proficiency degree after some period of training. Nunan (in Safont, 2005) says that this process may be encouraged or attrited by several internal and external factors affecting to learners. Besides, this process is always viewed as linear by L2 researchers without bearing in mind whether is conscious or unconscious, fast or slow, motivating or demotivating.

Safont (2005) states that the retardation phase may explain the language attrition in the L2 or L3 of learners and it also seems to affirm non-linearity as a defining characteristic. Bearing in mind that language learning carries out a broad variety of both

psychological and physical situations, and the fact that the constant use a foreign language is a requirement to facilitate its acquisition. It is not surprising that learners left to use that language could find it difficult to resort to their previously acquired knowledge after a certain period of time.

Herdina and Jessner (in Safont, 2005) assume the opposite process to language growth as the gradual language attrition. Also, the lack of supporting of a language system occurs in an adaptive process by which it adjusts the language proficiency to meet the speaker's perceived communicative needs. Herdina and Jessner (in Safont, 2005) point out that a language requires not only to be learned but also to be supported otherwise it may present the opposite process to language supporting and growth that is to say, the language attrition or decay. It should be noted, the rate language attrition may depend on certain elements as available resources providing authentic input and possibilities for output, competition among existing linguistic systems, and age and duration of language supporting.

In this idea Safont (2005) shows us the identification of language supporting as a second defining characteristic of L3 acquisition. Learners have to effort to support their competence level in the languages known to them. The learning of more languages by an individual requires more effort for their supporting. Hence, time is just one possible cause of language attrition, also it should consider that language learning, specifically in foreign language settings, requires to be learned but also needs to be supported. Most of third languages are foreign as it is the case of English in several European communities and due to the lack of opportunities for real practice; it may present the language attrition. For instance, Spain where learners of English complain that they spend years learning the language and do not achieve to improve a large extent. As a matter of fact, it seems as though their English level becomes somehow

fossilized after some period of no use or because they do not receive enough input and this is not high quality input.

In line with Safont (2005) attrition phenomenon can be also linked to individual features of learner, which present another defining characteristic of L3 acquisition. It presents the idea that a wide range of factors might influence learners while learning a L3, thus, analyzing internal factors in isolation may facilitate their study, but at the same time, it may present an incorrect idea of what really occurs in the learning process. As regards Alcón (in Safont, 2005) these variables should be considered from the point of view of their relation. Besides, it is considered that their interaction will possess a complex nature. Nevertheless, the findings focused in this relation might show the development and progression of the linguistic system being learned. Bearing these ideas in mind, Safont (2005) stated that L3 development might be noted from a dynamic perspective, including variation and interaction among its defining characteristics and influencing factors.

The interaction of specific characteristics in L3 acquisition may be examined by focusing on the existing relationships among those known by learners. This interdependence that characterize the L3 learning leads us to assume learners' first, second and third languages as a complete linguistic system, which they command simultaneously. As a matter of fact, it is more logical consider languages known by a multilingual individual as whole unit than view them as separate entities that develop in isolation.

In view of this, Safont (2005) argues that multilingualism may not be interpreted as a mere quantitative change in the languages known by bilingual learners. A foreign language may affect the whole linguistic system of the learner, whereas creating new links and relationships. The overall system is restructured and new abilities and learning

techniques rise from learners' prior language learning experience. As a matter of fact, it may be stated that we are facing a qualitative rather than quantitative linguistic change in L3 acquisition.

Bearing all the ideas in mind presented above, it may be considered that L3 acquisition is a complex phenomenon implying certain defining characteristics that is to say, non-linearity, language supporting and attrition, internal factors, interaction and linguistic interdependence. As regards such complexity is the idea that multilingualism should be analyzed from a dynamic view, and should also be consistent with a holistic perspective of bilingualism. The L3 learner has a unique linguistic system which is influenced by the often change of those relationships being established among the languages entailed. As pointed out by several scholars (Cenoz, 2000; 2003, Herdina and Jessner, 2000) in spite the specific features and complexity underlying L3 acquisition, it also shares certain characteristics with other similar language acquisition processes. Hence, two areas are related to L2 acquisition and bilingualism. As a matter of fact, research in these subfields has probably influenced some of the recent work of this beginning area, L3 acquisition.

Taking into account that this study concerns learners of L3, it is appropriate to consider the difference between L2 and L3 acquisition. According to Safont (2005) the multilingualism study is a neglected area within general field of language acquisition. In line with some scholars (Cenoz, 2003; Fouser, 1995) approaching language learning from a view different to second or foreign language is completely new. As a matter of fact, as Cenoz and Genesee regarded (1998) multilingual acquisition is frequently considered as a simple variation from bilingualism and L2 acquisition. In these cases Sharwood (1994) stated that L2 acquisition is used as a general term to point out any language other than the first one not taking into account the type of learning

environment and the number of other languages that the learner might know. On the other hand, Hufeisen (1998) Jessner (1999) claimed that it is necessary to distinguish L3 from L2 acquisition in order to explain what actually occurs in bilinguals' acquisition of a foreign language.

In relation to Safont (in Cenoz, 2000) points out the main differences between L2 and L3 or multilingual acquisition. These refer to: (1) the order in which languages are learned; (2) sociolinguistic features, and (3) psycholinguistic processes implied. In L2 acquisition, there are few possibilities of variation in regards to order of acquisition, either L2 is acquired after native language or the two languages are learned simultaneously, which may in turn lead to bilingualism. When more than two languages are entailed in the acquisition process, those possibilities for order variation increase to a large extent. The learning process of one language (e.g. L3) could be interrupted by another one (e.g. L4) during a long or short period of time due to external causes, for instance: living in a foreign country, travelling for business and the like or internal ones as learners' lack of interest or motivation.

The second difference between L2 and L3 acquisition concerns a set of contextual and linguistics factors that influence in L3 competence and performance. Cenoz (2000) subdivides such factors which are related to the setting where these languages are learned and used, together with the linguistic typology and the sociocultural status of the language entailed. The context of language use concerns that native language, L2 or L3 may be used in either a natural setting "being community language" or an instructional context" being in class" or in both settings. This would affect the process of L3 acquisition assuming that the quality and quantity of L3 input available to the learner will influence the development of his/her oral or written skills in target language.

The relationship between the languages being learned as regards linguistic typology present another factor affecting L3 acquisition. Languages typologically closer to the target language may facilitate its acquisition or favour code-mixing procedures. In the latter case, learners may borrow terms from those languages that are typologically closer to the target language. (Safont, 2005 p.19)

According to Hammarberg (1993) and Williams and Hammarberg (1998) cross-linguistic influence is noted as a main source for research in L3 use. They have especially centered on the role of native and second language in the production a L3 and findings from their studies seem to attribute a default supplier role to the L2 in cases where L2 and L3 are typologically closer. Nevertheless, there are instances where relationship between learners' L1 and L2 is closer than the one between their L2 and L3. In these instances, it is considered as a powerful factor than the use of L2 as default supplier.

Safont (2005) points out that L3 acquisition is also affected by another important factor such as the sociocultural context in which the languages are acquired and used. In most multilingual and bilingual societies, languages have different privileges, for instance: they are used in different way and for different purposes. As a matter of fact, it may notice diglossic societies where L2 is used in the media, for educational purposes and the like whereas inhabitants of these societies use native language and third language and L3 in everyday conversations, at work, with their families and the like.

As Cenoz argued (2000) psycholinguistic processes present the third factor influencing L3 acquisition. Some features can be shared between the simultaneous acquisition of more than two languages and the L2 processing. Nevertheless, the foreign language seems to complicate the internal cognitive processing by presenting the unique situation of language acquisition in line with Clyne (1997). In relation to Cenoz (2000)

the primarily research areas in this respect, have focused on early multilingualism, individual factors affecting L3 acquisition, the role of competence level in the native and second language in the acquisition a L3 and the influence of cross-linguistic in L3 acquisition. Nevertheless, it is necessary to carry out further research in order to account for the differences between L2 and L3 psycholinguistic processing. In so doing, we may identify those specific effects that particularly affect multilingual processing as Safont points out (2005).

In relation to the information presented in this section, the differences and similarities between L2 and L3 acquisition are presented and they have shown the complex nature of third and multilingual acquisition and the need for further studies on psycholinguistic processing in learning a L3. In doing this, bilingualism is considered as a key concept because of the present background of most L3 learners.

### **2.2.1 Bilingualism**

Davidiak (2010) argues that the terminology related with the acquisition of two or more languages has been completely varied. Hamers and Blanc (in Davidiak, 2010) illustrate bilingualism as the term frequently used to point out the ability of an individual to communicate in two languages.

According to Hoffman (2001) several bilingualism' definitions have been proposed which refer specifically to two languages but sometimes, some bilingualism aspects are equally used to two or more languages. Oksaar (in Hoffmann, 2001) notes bilingualism as the ability of an individual to use here and now two or more languages as a means of communication in most situations and switch from one language to the other if it is necessary.

As Safont addressed (2005) despite to bilingualism is a worldwide reality, it is currently difficult define this phenomenon in a right way.

Wei (2000) says that the term bilingual mainly refers the acquisition of two languages, nevertheless, it considers bilingualism as a relative concept, in fact, it concerns a complicated phenomenon that has not been clearly categorized. For this reason, it presents several interpretations and descriptions of a bilingual individual.

A bilingual speaker is someone who is able to function in two or more languages, either in monolingual or bilingual communities, in accordance with the sociocultural demands made of an individual.

According to Hoffman (1991) there are certain factors that should be taken into account in the investigation of bilingual speakers as described in the following table.

**Table 2.1 Factors in the bilingual research**

Language development.	It deals to the language attrition or maintenance considering the L1 or L2.
The order in which the languages has been acquired.	This makes reference to certain cases where languages are learned either simultaneously or successively in our childhood or adulthood.
The competence level attained in these languages	This factor points out that being bilingual does not necessarily mean having a perfect command of both languages. As a matter of fact, a wide degree of variation in attainment has been reported in literature.
Particular features of the situation	In which each language is used, that is to say with whom, when, and what language is

	employed the L1 or L2.
The attitudes towards the languages or towards to being bilingual	There are theories of L2 acquisition (Cenoz and Valencia, 1994; Crookall and Oxford, 1988; Dörnyei and Csizer, 1998; Gardner, 1985; Schumann, 1978) which consider that L2 processing might be affected by attitudes towards the language being learned or towards the learning situation.
Pressures due to social, motivational or psychological factors	According to Dörnyei (1994) diverse elements as features from the learners themselves, the language and the learner situation, also, teacher, the course and the context integrate the motivation
Environmental circumstances surrounding the bilingual speaker	In several minority language societies, bilingualism has been studied from a sociolinguistic perspective determining its use and conservation as reported by Auer (1997).
The degree of familiarity with the two cultures.	This makes reference whether or not the two languages known by a bilingual speaker belong to the culture where she/he is immersed is also regarded as a differential characteristic in her /his language development.

In line with Safont (2005) developing awareness of two different systems, acquiring their characteristics and learning to keep them apart, implies bilingual language acquisition. But also, being bilingual entails making chances between two

languages, following rules that are laid down by the environment or that the learner has decided by himself.

### **2.2.2 The learning process of a third language**

As Jessner reported (2008) the term L3 deals to a third language in the sense of the third language that the speaker has contacted during her/his lifetime. In the English-speaking research community, “TLA” the expression for third language acquisition expression is accepted although the term entails a variety of developmental patterns. Some scholars, particularly those with an educational or pedagogical background, use tertiary language when referring to the L3 learned. Usually, at least in the European setting the tertiary language refers to the second foreign language

In agreement with Safont (2005) L3 acquisition is not the same as L2 and it may not be noticed as the mere sum of linguistic systems. Bearing in mind, the bilingualism view presented before, it may be claimed that L3 acquisition entails increase the linguistic system of an individual both quantitatively and above all, qualitatively.

In consonance with Herdina and Jessner (2000) learning a L3 or foreign language implies the development of certain skills that refer to learning, management and support processes.

Language learning skills relate to cognitive aspects of language learning. As argued by some scholars (Hufeisen, 1998; Jessner, 1999) the development a foreign language will be facilitated owing to experience acquired of a previous learning process in a second or foreign language. As regards Herdina and Jessner (2000) present the language-management skills as the multilingual ability of balancing communicative requirements with language resources. Bearing this definition in mind, Safont (2005) reports that learning a foreign language helps to develop both internal processing

mechanics, and the use of this language. Finally, language supporting skills which entail a major effort on the part of multilingual individuals to support and develop the languages known by them.

Hufeisen (1998) Jessner (1999) show studies mainly those related to learning, seem to indicate that develop of a L3 is encouraged by knowing a L2. This idea also refers to the role of bilingualism in learning a L3. As Safont showed (2005) during the last 30 years research on bilingualism has pointed that certain advantages on terms of cognitive development are associated on bilingualism. In relation to Jessner (1997) in acquiring a third language, bilingual individuals have shown a cognitive superiority over monolinguals, it should be noted, this statement is presented in several studies (Bialystok, 1991; Hamers and Blanc, 1989; Lambert 1977). In line with Jessner (1997) emphasizes findings derived from measuring certain cognitive skills, that is to say, those of creative thinking and metalinguistic awareness.

As Safont reported (2005) multiple studies (Alvarez, 1984; Koulos, 1986; Ricciardelli, 1992) have shown that bilinguals have a higher degree of creative thinking that monolingual subjects. Creativity entails fluency in producing a broad range of ideas, flexibility in showing diverse types of ideas and originality in addressing uncommon thoughts in relation to Torrance (in Safont, 2005). Nevertheless, Lasagabaster (1997) argues that a new research requires to actually determinate a direct correlation between bilingualism and creativity in using a L3. In addition, Lasagabaster (1997) has studied the bilingualism effect on metalinguistic awareness in acquiring a L3. Metalinguistic awareness has been defined as the ability to think flexibly and abstractly about the language; it refers to an awareness of the formal linguistic characteristics of language and ability to reflect thereupon. Metalinguistic awareness allows the individual to step back from the comprehension or production of an utterance

to consider the linguistic form and structure underlying the utterance meaning. Lasagabaster's (1997) research shows certain results which point out an advantage for bilingual subjects over monolingual ones in acquiring a L3. On the basis of the findings of Lasagabaster's study; it may be assumed that bilingual subjects solve production or comprehension problems more efficiently than monolinguals do. As a matter of fact, metalinguistic awareness is regarded a key component in language learning and at the same time it may be considered as a crucial issue in L3 as Jessner pointed out (1999).

Jessner's studies (1997) also show the advantage of bilingual subjects over monolinguals bearing their interactional competence in mind, in other words, their ability to communicate with others, to perform and interpret communicative actions as regards the sociocultural and sociolinguistic norms of a particular speech community. As a matter of fact, a higher degree of development in pragmatic competence is shown on the part of bilinguals over monolingual speakers. However, it has been devoted very little research to investigate pragmatic competence of L3 learners.

### **2.2.3 Complexity and diversity of TLA**

In agreement with Hoffman (in Davidiak, 2010) trilingualism may refer to a number of situations where an individual has some competence level in three languages; the comprehension of each language may range from basic comprehension to native-like production, there may be a strongly established area of use for each language as "recurrent trilingualism" or one language or two of them may be gradually retreating since they are no longer needed "transient trilingualism". The acquisition order may also change from all three languages being acquired simultaneously to an individual being brought up in a bilingual situation or a monolingual being exposed to two new languages at the same time.

In most cases, multilingualism arises and is supported through contact and necessity according to Edwards (in Davidiak, 2010). In relation to Davidiak (2010) a combination of three languages carried out are present both a source of input in each language and a need for communication in each one of them.

Trilingualism cases may be subdivided across a continuum of four interrelated variables:

- a) The speakers' age at the time of the onset of first significant exposure
- b) The input that they receive (type, modality and quantity)
- c) Assessed proficiency in each language
- d) The acquisition order of languages

It should be noted, these four variables are not mutually independent by themselves, but there is a possibility. For instance, the age of onset may correlate closely to input whereby child learners can be expected to receive more naturalistic input in general than adult-onset multilingual learners, but such tendencies are far from absolute.

According to Hoffman (in Davidiak, 2010) there is another difference between transient trilingualism and recurrent trilingualism. Transient trilingualism arise when one of the three languages is functionally less important than the other two and become eventually forgotten, attrited to a greater or less extent even never totally learned, in this case the individual actually becomes a monolingual or bilingual speaker with a trilingual background. In relation to, recurrent trilingualism each of three languages has its own functions and associates to specific domain, thus each one is preserved and developed by the learner to a greater or less extent. It should be taken into account that

three languages are different to be similarly developed in every communication area. As regards Hoffman and Cruz-Ferreira (in Davidiak, 2010) one or even two of the three languages, although firmly established, it is probably to be used less than the other two or the most dominant one.

According to Cenoz (in Davidiak, 2010) L3 acquisition shows more temporal diversity than L2 acquisition. In L3 acquisition, it enhances the number of routes of acquisition. It describes at least four types of acquisition order as follows:

- a) Consecutive acquisition of L1, L2 and L3
- b) Simultaneous acquisition of L2 / L3 after learning the L1
- c) Simultaneous acquisition of L1 /L2 before learning the L3
- d) Simultaneous acquisition of L1 / L2 / L3 (This is a possibility, nevertheless rare)

As Jessner reported (2008) in multilingual acquisition, when the learner starts learning another language, the learning process is often interrupted. This process might be reserved by reactivating and start learning the L3 again. In contrast L2 acquisition, an enhancement in diversity in L3 acquisition carries out because of the possibility of interruption and restart of language learning. In addition, language learning may occur in naturalistic or instructed contexts or in a combination of both. In a setting of L3 acquisition the possibilities of combinations are enhanced, as described above.

The L3 acquisition complexity is also connected to individual or psycho-social factors in language learning. Several studies have shown in an L2 acquisition setting, the interplay between the several individual factors influencing the language learning process is complex (Dörnyei, 2005) thus, complexity of L3 acquisition is increased.

According to Davidiak (2010) pragmatic competence, metalinguistic awareness and languages processing capabilities are specific abilities and competences that seem to be increased because of existing bilingual experience. In case of trilingual individuals, “the experience of three different languages also results further enhanced awareness of the analysis and control components of processing in to enable the speaker to make the right choices and respond linguistically and communicatively adequate ways” In line with Hoffman (cited in Davidiak, 2010 p.13). As Davidiak argued (2010) trilingual individuals’ choices become potentially more numerous; hence, it can expected more cases of grammatically odd and pragmatically inappropriate usage. In general way, third language learners present less erroneous usage than second language learners. This means they possess a broad range of mediating social and psychological factors which reduce their choice.

The general argument presented and frequently challenged in most works on trilingualism is that L3 learners possess specific skills for language acquisition and use as compared to L2 learners. It has suggested in most studies on trilingualism when the circumstances are generally positive in promoting and maintaining all of the three languages known for L3 learner, bilingualism may be an important factor in developing third language competence.

### **2.3 Language transfer**

According to Davidiak (2010) the transfer of linguistic properties from a previously acquired language into one that is in the process of being acquired, is known as language transfer; in a trilingual context, it may refer to the transfer of characteristics from either of the two languages into the third one. Trilingual studies often consider language transfer as a learning strategy (Baker, 2001; Bialystok, 2001; Hoffman, 2001; Riccardelli, 1992; in Cenoz, 2003; Sanz, 2000) this view may be used to both child or

adult trilingualism, even bearing in mind that three languages may be significant differences, that adult transfer study may give bases for the child transfer study. As regards Baker (2001) from a functionalist view, transfer is perceived as descriptive properties and linguistic behaviors, and thus transfer can be seen as learning strategies.

In relation to Clyne's (1997) study, it presents language transfer and combinations of two languages as strategies for learning, as tools for language explanations, instead of describing them as a failure to use target forms correctly and, hence, as failed attempts at monolingual functioning in target language. Furthermore, it points out the relevance of language authority in linguistic choices. Whether native or second language are viewed as defamed variants and restricted to communication with family members of monolingual, or whether they are firmly established in the community together with the dominant languages and each have particular functions, is underlying in the languages distribution. Also, learner family atmosphere can influence in language supporting or language loss.

In line with Davidiak (2010) the implication of the existing studies on trilingual learners concerns trilingual language competence means broader experience in language learning; trilingual individuals are described as "expert" language learners. As noted by Klein (1995) bilingual learners of third language possess a major rate of acquisition and develop all the learning processes faster in third language learning. Hence, it may claim that there is a difference in the rate of acquisition, but in route between the learners of second and third language. Also, comparing the rate of acquisition, several researchers go further by claiming, contrary to Klein, that the speed is not the unique difference between the acquisition of the second and third language but also the manner of learning, third language learners create broader grammars which initially include ungrammatical sentences but allow them progress with major speed. According to

Hoffman (cited in Davidiak, 2010 p.21) “the ability to distinguish between three codes, assign linguistic items to distinct linguistic systems, and work out their relative distance from each other suggest specific competences which to be confirmed, need to be investigated”. Thus, third language learners pretend to use a broader variety of compensatory strategies, to be sensitive as regards pragmatic competence and acquire greater level resources than L2 learners. As Cenoz argued (2003) bilinguals use a broader variety of linguistic and mnemonic strategies and seem to be more flexible in their use than monolingual individuals. Hence, it may present both quantitative and qualitative differences between second and third language learning, the steep and route depending on the specific circumstances.

### **2.3.1 Cross-linguistic influences**

In relation to Angelovska and Hahn (2012) Cross-linguistic influences could be particularly important as they provide explanations about the different languages roles that the L3 language or foreign language acquisition process carry out. Studies (Ringbom, 1987; Singleton, 1987) propose that cross-linguistic transfer is influenced for language typology and linguistic distance. For a long time, the native language has primarily been as the source of transfer for the acquisition of foreign languages. Although its influence may not be neglected, it may not state that it inevitably and always remains as the primary dominant source. Some studies have proposed that other languages might be more dominant sources of transfer (e.g. Dewaele, 1998; Williams, and Hammarberg, 1998; Flynn, et al. 2004). As Falk and Bardel claimed (2010) there are a few studies pointing out the activation of previously acquired languages in L3 performance. Furthermore, some scholars as Hufeisen (1998), Cenoz and Jessner (2000), Cenoz (2001) and Hammarberg (2001) found that L3 learners acquire other foreign languages with the previously acquired knowledge a L2. On the other hand, in

accordance with Hoffman (2001) trilingual individuals are inclined to have more specific uses and functions of their languages.

It should be noted, that it is interesting and worth exploring the nature of the third language system but also, it is complex because two language systems have already been acquired.

### **2.3.2 Determiners for the transfer source in L3**

In line with Angelovska and Hahn (2012) it is necessary to take into account that it is still incomplete the understanding of what role the linguistic knowledge from the previously acquired languages carries out in the process of L3 or foreign language acquisition. Literature on multilingual acquisition has not found one determiner for cross-linguistic interference. As Williams and Hammarberg reported (1998) typology, L2 status, proficiency and recency are determiners that influence in the activation a language in L3 production. They reported that the prior language highlights on all the above mentioned determiners because they are the most influential factors in competing with the target language.

### **2.3.3 Language typology**

According to Angelovska and Hahn (2012) typology refers to language distance. Cenoz et al. (2001) stated that there is a stronger connection between the third and second language than between the third and first language, especially if the second and third language are typologically related. One of the most influential factors in the third language acquisition of lexis, is the typologically closeness as Cenoz claimed (in Angelovska and Hahn, 2012). Nevertheless, it may find differences between languages within the same language family group. For instance, although English is a Germanic language, it presents more influences from romance languages at the lexical level and

shares few similarities with the rest of the Germanic languages at the morpho-syntactic level.

In accordance to Angelovska and Hahn (2012) “the perceived language distance” is another important factor, as reported by De Angelis (2007) learners may perceive the distance that exist between languages, but, it may or may not correspond to the distance that really exists between them. Therefore, it can be possible that a prior language provides the structure which is required for the third language but it will be viewed by the third language learners as less typologically similar no matter if the previous and third language belong to a same or different families or not.

#### **2.3.4 The second language status**

According to Williams and Hammarberg (in Angelovska and Hahn, 2012) the second language is activated together with the L3 interlanguage in the initial stage of acquisition and over time this role is assumed by the third language itself. Based on “L2 status factor” from Hammarberg (2001) Bardel and Falk (in Angelovska and Hahn 2012) show that second language acts as a filter in third language acquisition, hindering the transfer of the first language. The second language status has primarily been determined in the vocabulary area where it has been considered this effect of the second language more influential than first language. Nevertheless, the second language influence in this domain should still be investigated especially if more advanced languages levels are related. In relation to Angelovska and Hahn (2012) studies have emerged concerning second language influences in the domain of syntax (Bardel and Falk, 2007; Flynn et al. 2004). Some of them showed that syntactic transfer of second language had no impact on third language acquisition (Bouvy, 2000; Dentler, 2000; Hakansson et al. 2002).

### **2.3.5 Language proficiency**

In line with Angelovska and Hahn (2012) the role of the second language proficiency in the acquisition a foreign language should not be decreased. As Williams and Hammarberg pointed out (1998) whether learners are competent in another language, the foreign language may carries out a complete different role than the mother language in the subsequent acquisition of a further language. In a study of Williams and Hammarberg (1998) the roles of the previous languages (English as first language and German as second language) were different in the acquisition of target language Swedish, for instance, English was used when asking clarifications and German was primarily using for creating interlanguage vocabulary. In line with Bardel (in Angelovska and Hahn, 2012) the activation of previously acquired languages is influenced for the second and third language proficiency level. Williams (1998) assigns similar associations between the competence level of the target and previous languages, for instance, a low proficiency in the target (L3) language activates a prior language with a low proficiency and in the case of high proficiency in third language, only a high second or first language will be activated. In a similar way, Bardel and Falk (in Angelovska and Hahn, 2012) claimed that learner needs to have a high proficiency in the second language in order to transfer syntactic structures from second to the third language.

### **2.4 German as a first, second and foreign language**

In relation to Darquennes and Nelde (2006) first, second and foreign language terms are interpreted here as follows: the notion "first language" refers to the first language that an individual acquires in a natural way, that is to say, outside of a formal setting and uses in daily life. The concept "second language" refers to the second language that somebody acquires in a natural context owing to migration or other sociological reasons

and that one starts be used in daily life. Foreign language refers to a language that is acquired in a formal setting, often in school and if at all uses primarily in restricted domains such as tourism and trade.

Turning to German, it is the L1 of most of the population of the countries and regions where German possess an official status (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Leichtenstein, Luxemburg, South Tyrol in Italy, and the German-speaking community in Belgium) and of part of the inhabitants belonging to a German community. (In Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Rumania and Hungary). German is the L2 of several migrants who live in countries or part of countries in which German possess an official status (e.g. The Turkish population in Germany) of several people belonging to an autochthonous minority in German (Sorbs, Danes) or Austria (Croats, Hungarians, Slovenes) or of individuals belonging to a German minority who acquired the majority language as a L1. German is a foreign language of those people who have acquired it around the world in a formal context but do not necessarily use it in daily life. In fact, it is occasionally used in tourist or business contexts.

As reported by Darquennes and Nelde (2006) problems are present when German attempts to provide exact figures as a L1 or foreign language. As a matter of fact, there are not reliable figures on the total number of individuals mastering German as a foreign language. Data are mostly limited to one generation of language learners at a specific time in history and thus do not take into account all individuals who acquired German in the course of their life and that are using it or able to use it. Moreover, it is difficult to have numbers that distinguish German as a L1 and as a L2. For instance, the available statistics do not provide a detail account of those migrants in Germany (whether they are returnees, late repatriates, resettles etc.) who have German as a L1 or L2 or the ones who do not possess any notion of it at all. In a similar way, it is not

possible to provide exact numbers for those members of German minority who either have German or the majority German as their L1 or L2.

#### **2.4.1 The importance of German in the recent world**

In line with Stender (2007) German has become a world language. For political, commercial and cultural relations. For Germany, the cultural and commercial policy abroad is an integral part of foreign policy. Among the main tasks of educational and cultural policy abroad, it is found the promotion of German. The German Language has a long history, its gradual development may highlight a fact that shows its most important function which is to unify the German-speakers and foster a sense of identity.

Recent figures of German-speakers around the world show for themselves that German is the first and second nearly 125 million of people and is one the most important languages in the world. In Europe, German is the native language over 100 million people in seven European countries as pointed out above, becoming the official language or official language at the regional level. Furthermore, as reposted Stender (2007) in the European Union, German is the third most important language of work after French and English which get the first place.

Currently, about 20 million people worldwide study German as a foreign language, about 120 000 teachers teach German in schools outside the German-speaking countries. As regards the publishing production worldwide in 2003, German Language occupied (12%) of the books published, worldwide the third position, behind the English (28%) and be practically the same level as the Chinese. On the Internet, the German language takes the second position behind the English and well ahead of the Japanese, Spanish and Chinese: more than 160 million web pages (almost 8% of world supply) are written in German.

When people speak about the English language, it is recognized its position in the world, as a global language. Nevertheless, we may consider the following phrase that explains briefly why the German language is acknowledged as a hallmark, In German it says: "English ist ein muss, Deutsch ein plus" namely "English is obligation, German is a hallmark".

After having explained the relevance of German language in the world the efforts that Germany makes to foster their language, it may mention the more important part, namely, the meaning of the bilateral relation between both Germany and Mexico countries.

As Stender addresses (2007) every year there are 25 000 German language learners in Mexico. A high figure, although it should be more. The Relations between Germany and Mexico are very dynamic and require individuals who really know to mediate and explain the mentality of each other in different situations, for instance:

- a) To develop political projects
- b) To negotiate agreements
- c) To coordinate academic and scientific exchanges for mutual benefit.

Furthermore, it is important to take into account the above owe to the following:

At globally level, German is the fourth most important trading partner of México. Within the European Union, Germany became the European trading partner number one. Moreover, there are other powerful reasons that are next:

- a) There are more than 900 German Companies in Mexico, responsible for 100 000 jobs and 5% of Mexican GDP (gross domestic product).

b) There are five German schools in Mexico among them, the Mexico City school the second largest with 3 300 learners.

c) There are several scholarship programs with about 150 places every year, which are not always used.

#### **2.4.2 The learning of German as foreign language in CELE at BUAP**

El Centro de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras “CELE” is located at the Faculty of Languages from BUAP “Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla”. CELE currently offers seven foreign languages at the university community: German, French, English, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese and Chinese. It should be noted that German, French and English are the most demanded languages for BUAP students.

German teaching in CELE consists of nine courses, each approximately 90hours-class, six hours per week. Each course develops the four skills: listening and reading comprehension, oral and written expression through the communicative approach method which integrates cultural aspects and socio-political organization from German-speaking countries: Germany, Belgium and Switzerland. The book used in the first four levels is Studio d A1 (Deutsch als Fremdsprache) and Studio d A2 for the next four levels.

The terminal purposes of the German courses are guided by the Common European Framework of References for Languages so it intends after five courses, learners achieve the A2 level at which they are able to communicate in an elemental way in situations of everyday life and carry out the certification test: ÖSD “Österreich Sprachdiplom” governed by the rules of the council of Europe. After the eight levels learners may certificate the B1 level which allows students cope with simple situations and professional of everyday life.

The German department currently consists of 11 professors, 7 Mexicans and 4 native-speakers. In addition to, CELE classrooms are equipped with a screen tape recorder and computer.

Finally, the objective of CELE is to provide the BUAP students with languages which increase their professional level through postgraduate courses abroad and international exchanges. Furthermore, learners may face in a better way the demands of this changing world.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to carry out this case study research. In order to get detailed information, a questionnaire and video recording were used as the main instruments to register participants' opinions, behaviors and interactions about a specific situation in classroom and learning German as L3. Therefore, this section highlights the features of participants, the setting, the instruments used in order to accomplish the purpose of this project and the procedure to obtain the findings.

#### **3.1 Case study approach**

In relation to the research approach, cases study methodology is used due to expected results are based on qualitative data.

In line with Stake (in Creswell, 2009) case study is a research strategy in which researcher examine in depth an event, program, activity, process or one or more individuals. It should be noticed, cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers get detail information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The study involved the participation LEI students taking a German course in CELE, the group chosen for this research was integrated by 6 Females and 4 Males whose ages range from 20 to 28 years old. During a period of fourth months, they took German classes three times per week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7 am to 9 am.

### 3.3 Instrument

Two instruments were applied to conduct this research paper; an interview and two video recordings.

The interview was administrated to collect data and know the participants' perceptions and interest about German as L3. This interview contained three questions: The first question was about the way that English has influenced in the learning of German, the second was related to the process of German learning, and another question was intended to know about the interference of both languages English and German in the LEI students.

**Table 3.1 Data analysis of interview**

The way English has influenced in the learning of German	The process of German learning	The interference of both languages English and German in the LEI students.
<p><b>Comments from students regarding this category:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* I think, German has been highly influenced by English because it has Similarities according to vocabulary.</li> <li>* I consider that the connection between each other, terms of syntax and morphology is a little similar.</li> <li>* English has taken a very important part of German language.</li> <li>* I have learned to associate words that are similar. And this aspect helped me to learn German.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments from students regarding this category:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The environment is an important factor to learn German</li> <li>* it has been easy with Support of English</li> <li>* German learning has not been easy for me, it is more complicated than English, because there are many grammar rules.</li> <li>* German learning has not been favorable due to lack of time to learn it properly and practice.</li> <li>* it has been a little bit hard because of rules, articles and vocabulary. Fortunately, my teacher is a great support for me to</li> </ul>	<p><b>Comments from students regarding this category:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* I had interference of both languages in the first German levels. I got confused with the some structures and vocabulary.</li> <li>* In grammar the interference is quite strong, when I have to say number in English I get confuse and I say them in German.</li> <li>* Interference happens very often, due to similarity of both languages and it causes that you get confuse at the moment to talk and write.</li> <li>* I have suffered interference in both languages, when I am taking classes and when I am doing oral exercises in German class.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* English makes easier my learning of German because in one or other way I am repeating a process that I made before.</li> <li>* Letting me relate vocabulary in both languages, the pronunciation of some words and similar structures.</li> <li>* English and German are similar in some aspects of the grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.</li> <li>* English has never Influenced my learning of German.</li> <li>* English facilitate my Learning of German due to the closeness that there is in both languages.</li> <li>* I think, it would be harder to learn German if I did not have the knowledge of English.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarify my doubts and resolve my mistakes.</li> <li>* At the beginning it was difficult to adapt myself to learn new structures. German has been a challenge for me which is also a motivation.</li> <li>* The German learning process has been very good because my teacher has taught me very well and I like so much this language and that is an advantage for acquiring it easier</li> <li>* A little bit difficult, I noticed that German has more structures than English so I need to learn more vocabulary and grammar.</li> <li>* German learning has been good for two important reason: the great motivation of my teacher and the like for this language make that my learning become easier.</li> <li>* It has been difficult because of the pronunciation and the different use the articles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Interference was more frequent from English to German because you think that learn a new language is the same process but you notice that a new language is a new world.</li> <li>* I consider the interference happens very often in both languages because they come from the same branch of languages.</li> <li>* I have frequently Interference from German to English because I practice and like more this language.</li> <li>* At the beginning of my first German course I used lots words in English in an unconsciously way.</li> <li>* I had interference in both languages but I consider this phenomenon positive because I can relate some structures and words and I have achieved a better understanding of German.</li> <li>* I have suffered interference a lots of times, mostly from English to German.</li> </ul>
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Two video recordings were made in a period of one hour and a half during two lessons of German and the results were transcribed in two tables. The group that was recorded was specifically selected owing to requirements and interest of this research. The purpose of video recordings is to get a real perspective about how third language is developed by students in class and the circumstances that the mother language “Spanish” or second language “English” is used in the German class.

**Table 3.2 Data analysis of first video record German class**

1 Stage	Teacher starts the lesson with a review of previous topic using a role play which encourage students' participation, promote a good atmosphere, the use their knowledge of the foreign Language and increase their skills in this language.
2 Stage	Teacher asks to students read a text of their book in order to answer some exercises and subsequently she checks the answers with students and clarifies doubts and the meaning of unknown words. Subsequently, teacher asks to students explain what they understood about the text owing to students must practice and get better their foreign language because they show difficulty to speak.
3 Stage	Teacher reads aloud the text in order to students identify the right pronunciation. After, she gives a worksheet to students in order to complete other activities that reinforce the information acquired in other classes. In addition, students read the exercises louder and compare answers with the group.
4 Stage	Finally, teacher asks to students to listen and read a conversation of their book. Thus, they can create a similar conversation in pairs and present it in front of the group.

**3.3 Data analysis of second video record German class**

1 Stage	Teacher starts with an activity where students have to describe a classmate and the others should guess who the person is. With this activity, students can relate previous topics and at the same time encourage the interaction among students.
2 Stage	Teacher explains a new topic but Also she relates previous information with the new one and facilitate the learning of this new topic, thus, students show a positive understanding.
	Teacher writes a set of exercises on the board and each student passes

3 Stage	and answers one exercise. After that, teacher provides students new vocabulary in order to they achieve a mayor comprehension of the exercises and the new topic. Furthermore, students work in teams in order to present a performance that they had been preparing in the previous days.
4 Stage	Finally, each team presents their performance which has as objective to develop their skills in this additional language and at the same time they may realize their strengths and weaknesses that facilitate or hinder their learning.

In relation to German learning and teaching in CELE, it was carried out a recorded observation of 22 students in a class of German at the four level. At the beginning of this course, learners made a brief introduction in which they mentioned their main reasons and goals in order to learn German as foreign language. These were some of them: to know a different culture, visit some German-speaking country, achieve large educational level, and get major job opportunities in our country or abroad. Through these observations I have taken into account three important aspects that influence in the German language acquisition.

In the first place, Teacher motivation which encouraged the learners in every activity that they realized so as the personal attention to every learner was notable at the moment to clear doubts, also the activities to improve the learning of German inside and outside classroom. Learners perceived the teacher interest, for that reason they struggled in large extent at the moment to participate (interaction between teacher-learners and learner- learner) in oral presentations, individual and group competence, it may be stated that it accomplished a better use of the course.

In line with Gass and Selinker (2001) motivation is a social psychological factor often used to explain differential success in learning an L2. This makes sense that

learners will learn another language faster and to achieve a greater degree whether they are motivated. Furthermore, it has provided statistical evidence through several studies which show that motivation seems to be the second strongest predictor of success, after aptitude as Skehan argued (1989).

Second instance, to analyze is the influence of L2 (English) to L3 (German). Learners made numerous comparisons between lexical and grammatical aspects in both languages but only few comparisons as regards to phonetic and orthographic aspects. Therefore, it may be assumed that knowledge of English did not hinder the German learning. It should be noted that both languages maintain certain similarities owing to they emerged from Germanic languages.

Some examples might be as follows:

English (L2)	German (L3)
My name is Peter	Mein name ist Peter
I come from Russia	Ich komme aus Russland
A Tradition	Eine Tradition

In relation to Cenoz (2013) L3 acquisition shares several characteristics but also important differences with L2 acquisition, because L3 learners already have at least two languages in their repertoire. L3 learners may use this wider repertoire when learning a L3. For instance, they may relate new vocabulary, new structures, or new ways of expressing communicative functions to the two languages that they already know, not just to one of them, as is the case of monolinguals. Individuals who have gone through the process of learning a L2 are also more experienced language learners and it is probably that they have developed certain skills and strategies for achieving the

language leaning task. These skills and strategies can be reactivated and adapted when it faces the task of learning a L3.

The third instance, in relation to the phonetics aspects, learners shown pronunciation difficulties when they read any text or communicate an idea, in the syntax context they also shown some complications but in less extend. For that reason, teacher included comprehension lectures, dialogs and expositions that relate topics of every unit (all these activities accomplished by learners) in order to foster and increase a large extent the use of the language and practice.

*“Thus, data obtained from studies of second language German vocabulary acquisition support the idea that reading can lead to incidental vocabulary learning; that incidental vocabulary learning can be strengthened by tasks that learners require to enhance their mental effort in relation to unknown words: that such tasks enhance the text comprehension of learners and both reading proficiency and incidental vocabulary learning are firmly correlated”* (Eckerth, Schramm, and Tschirner, 2009 p.49).

In agreement to Eckerth, Schramm, and Tschirner (2009) in general, the area of pronunciation is not attractive although pronunciation can be the strongest indicator of native or non-native speech, and may carry out a great role in how intelligible non-native speakers are. Generally, teachers present difficulty in order to teach pronunciation, especially prosodic characteristics, in spite of fact that the latter in particular are important in communicative encounters. As regards O’ brien (in Eckerth, Schramm and Tschirner, 2009) presents data that show the common assumption that pronunciation, especially prosodic characteristics, the best way to be learned is under immersion or studying abroad conditions.

### **3.4 Setting**

The project took place at Faculty of Languages at “BUAP” Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla in “CELE” Centro de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras. Faculty of Languages is located on 24 Norte no. 2003 in Puebla City. This institution manages different study plans as “LEI” Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés and LEF which are part of the curriculum since 2009, “LAEI” Licenciatura Abierta en la Enseñanza del Inglés, Cursos de Extension, “MEI” Maestria en Enseñanza del Ingles and CELE which is designed to give exclusively languages courses (English, French, German, etc.) to students and workers that belong to BUAP. The classroom 209 of this department was selected to carry out the German fourth class which was observed in order to develop this study.

### **3.5 Data collection procedure**

In this section it is described the procedure that the researcher followed to collect that required information. First of all, teacher and students permission was required in order to video record and get additional data. The purpose of this research was explained to the participants.

The second instrument was a designed interview with three specific questions which were clear and understandable for students. Finally, the interview was applied to students in a comfortable place. Students were willing to participate, they were cooperative and respectful. The data was collected and analyzed in order to be presented in figures and tables, this way the results are shown and described in order to draw conclusions.

### **3.6 Chapter conclusion**

During the analysis of data it is achieved to perceive important aspects that influenced in German language learning. Moreover, taking into account above it, it is perceived that German as a foreign language requires a major discipline, interest and even effort in the case of learners to accomplish a favorable acquisition in this language but also the motivation and commitment are underlined for a suitable teaching in the case of teachers. Thus, the research and learning of German as a third language presents a challenge owing is a young area that does not account with a large demand in our country but at the same time, it may be attractive on business settings and for the future language teachers generations.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Findings**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The results of the data collection and analysis are presented in this chapter as follows, it shows the findings obtained from the interview. Furthermore, these results are supported with the data gathered through video observations in order to complement the conclusions.

As a mentioned in previous chapter, a group from CELE at the Faculty of Languages was observed 10 students were selected randomly in order to be interviewed, answers were analyzed and interpreted with the graphics below.

#### **4.1 Research Questions**

It is important to bear in mind the research questions that served as a guide for the development of the instrument and achieve the purpose of the present study. The research questions are the following:

1. What are the factors that impact the learning process a third language of LEI students at the Faculty of Languages?
2. How the second language influences the acquisition of a third language of LEI students?

#### **4.2 Results of video recordings German class**

##### **4.2.1 First Video recording**

As regards this recording, it was observed students learning and practicing a foreign language through diverse activities that reinforce their previous knowledge and link

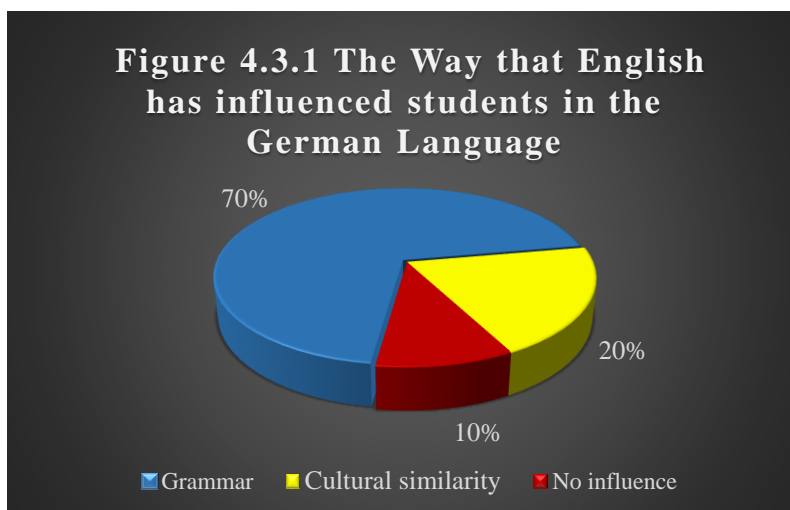
them with the new one. For instance, reading that help them to get their pronunciation and fluency better, translations text in order to acquire more vocabulary and achieve better comprehension. Furthermore, teacher motivation foster the participation between students and promote a comfortable environment in class.

#### 4.2.2 Second Video recording

It may be realized how teachers use the L1 more than L2 in order to facilitate the learning of students. Also, it was observed that students use L1 as L2 in order to achieve a major comprehension of topics to identify some similarities among languages.

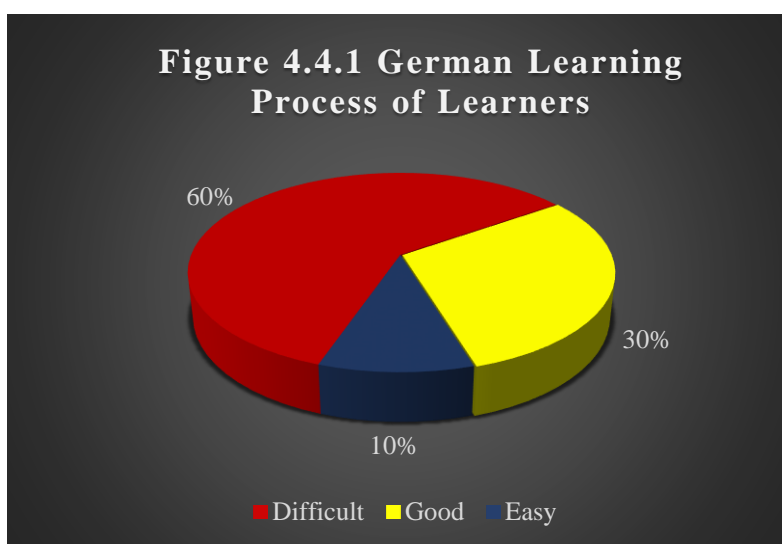
### 4.3 The way that English has influenced students in the German language learning

According to the first statement in the interview which deals with the way that English has influenced students in the German language learning, the figure 4.3.1 shows the following findings. Seven Participants stated that English has been a high and helpful resource during the process of learning German, this due to the fact that there are certain similarities between both languages for instance, in some grammatical structures and vocabulary, two students mentioned that English is an notable influence as this language belongs a branch of Germanic languages too. Only one participant assumed that English has never influenced in his/her German language learning.

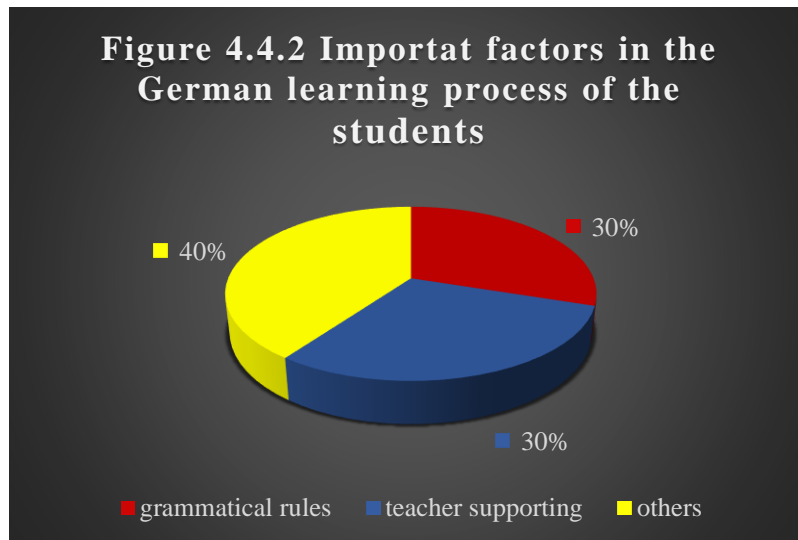


#### 4.4 The German learning process of learners

In relation to students' perception the figures 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 show the following results about the second statement in the questionnaire about German language learning process. In the first figure, six learners answered "difficult" owing to German is a language more complex than English, whereas three of them mentioned "good" taking into account factors as teacher supporting and the enthusiasm for this language and one student stated "easy" because English language proved to be a useful resource for German language acquisition.

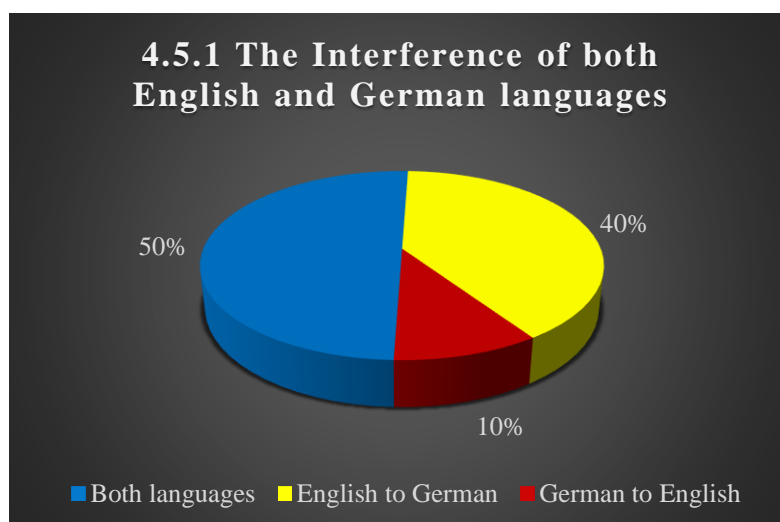


The second figure 4.4.2 shows the main factors that influence the German acquisition process of learners, the findings are the following: three participants answered "the grammatical rules" while three learners stated "teacher motivation and enthusiasm" and four students mentioned other factors such as environment, English supporting, lack of time and practice. It should be noticed the importance of these factors because they may facilitate or hinder the learning process of each student a different way.



#### 4.5 Interference of both English and German languages

The figure 4.5.1 shows the findings from third statement of the interview which deals with the interference that occurs from English to German or German to English. five participants noticed the interference in both languages, taking into account this phenomenon occurred very often in their first German learning levels, while four learners answered interference occurred a large extent from English to German and this phenomenon a lot of times got confused them, and one student experienced interference from German to English but this phenomenon was not negative. It should be noticed that the most common interference types that learners perceived were in talking, pronunciation and grammar.



## **4.6 Chapter conclusion**

Bearing the analysis in mind and answering the research questions, it was deduced that students had both positive and negative experiences in the different stages of their learning process. In relation to the German pronunciation, from the analysis it is evident that learners show a difficulty degree on basis grammatical rules and lexicon owing to English influence, they showed confusion and made mistakes at the moment to produce certain words that look similar between both languages, for instance: the German word “Was” which means “what” in English, students pronounced it as in English. It should be noticed that this phenomenon occurs in the first German levels because of the closeness that exists between both languages. This is what scholars mention as interference. It may be assumed that the teacher supporting was an important element for the students learning process. The activities that the teacher carried out; oral presentation, additional material, role plays, activities in group had as objective foster self-confidence of learners in order to achieve a major understanding and overcome difficulties in translation, pronunciation and production of this language.

Furthermore, findings suggest that students are aware about the way they learn a language in this case German and are able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses through practicing, dedication and motivation which help them to improve their skills and increase their language acquisition level.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter shows the results after having analyzed the data in the previous chapter, the results and their significance are included, next the research aims, subsequently a personal reflection presented in four perspectives A) The beginning of the research project B) the project development period c) The ending / write – up project period and d) personal changes that I have experienced as the results of this process. Furthermore, the limitations of the research and finally some suggestions for further research.

#### **5.1 Findings and Significance**

In lights of the results obtained in the previous chapter the process of learning a L3, the case of German, shows a certain complexity level for students owe to the differences in pronunciation, grammar and structure which are not related to the native language of the learners. There is a similarity between both German and English languages which is an advantage because students may link the existing knowledge with the new information in order to facilitate their learning process. Besides, the chapter four mentioned the factors which have an important role in the acquisition process due to the positive and negative affects depending on the perspectives and experiences of each learner.

#### **5.2 Research Aims**

As it established in chapter I, the main aims of this study are:

Identify L3 learning process.

Explore the perceptions of students about learning a L3.

Identify the factors which are affecting students in the L3 learning process.

First of all, thanks for the participants willingness, the majority of this research project seem to be achieved successfully and at the same time the aims were accomplished with their support. Participants answered all the interview questions appropriately, so most of the time they were the main suppliers of information; in some cases students provided important and interesting data which it was collected and analyzed and showed in detail the students' perceptions in relation to the learning complexity of a foreign language as case of German. It should be noticed this data enriched this work.

### **5.3 Reflection Account**

This part is very important for me because here I mention what I lived by doing this research. First of all, this is my first research which means a great challenge and experience; I had an idea for my research so I had to specify some issues that I did not have considered at the beginning. During the project development period, I established an order for my thesis, in the first chapter, I have to give a clear idea about what my topic was going to discuss, in the second chapter, I started looking for related literature or previous studies on the topic, but I really found little information about these issues and that was a great challenge for me. Fortunately, I could get journals which supported my ideas related to my topic and complete this research. I had the idea that writing a thesis was a tremendous task, but I realized that is not true, rather, it is a complex task that requires time and patience. In addition, we gain experience and knowledge through this process. Moreover, the interviews and conversations I had with the participants during this process I understood some things about their learning and at the same time I corroborated my ideas. All these things made this research a pleasant task in which I am really happy to be part of.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Research**

One possible limitation for this study was at the moment to apply the first interview to students because their answers did not match with the objectives of this research. Thus, I had to rework the questions which were more detailed in order to achieve and get the information required.

#### **5.5 Further Research**

Bearing in mind all the diverse aspects of this research. It is desired more people do this kind of study which could present a major interest from students and increase their personal, educational and professional development and foster their interest in the future of interesting investigations more than the typical second language case study of English. In this way, it is expected to be at the same level of developed countries

"English ist ein muss, Deutsch  
ein plus"

"English is obligation, German  
is a hallmark"

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