Title: Cross-Linguistic Influences between Czech, French, and Spanish in the Acquisition of Grammatical Gender of Nouns

Keywords: language; transfer; acquisition; noun; gender

Abstract:

This paper, designed as a conference talk, aims to synthesize findings from ongoing research on language contacts between French, Spanish, and Czech. It focuses on analysing positive and negative *language transfers* or *cross-linguistic influences* (e.g., Odlin, 2003). Attention is paid to interlinguistic transfers (i.e., the positive and negative influences of a learner's L1, or other languages previously acquired or being acquired, on the acquisition of the L2/L3) as well as to intralinguistic transfers (i.e., influences within the L2/L3 that arise from the teaching-learning process itself) in the assignment of grammatical gender to nouns of different etymologies (e.g., *papillon (m) / mariposa (f) / motýl (m); poêle (f) / sartén (f) / pánev (f); beurre (m) / mantequilla (f) / máslo (n)*). This study investigates the morpho-phonological and orthographic form of tested nouns and their impact on learners' gender assignment. It will deal with lexical gender assignment, determined by the inherent gender of the word itself, morphological gender assignment, based on the form or structure of the word, and syntactic gender assignment, tied to agreement mechanisms.

Previous research has shown that linguistic influences are nuanced and complex and that foreign language acquisition is shaped by numerous other factors such as the learner's linguistic portfolio, prior learning experience, personal and social motivation, the context of learning, etc. This study will also explore how learners' outcomes are influenced, for example, by the format of the experimental task.

Following a theoretical introduction to this issue that highlights the typological differences between the three languages and clarifies the terminology used, a summary of the experimental task results will be presented, with a focus on selected aspects. This task targets learners in secondary and, particularly, higher education, specifically native speakers of Czech, French, and Spanish who have been learning either French or Spanish as a foreign language. To refine data analysis, each group will be subdivided into two subgroups based on the duration of foreign language learning (L2/L3):

a) learners who have been learning the foreign language for six months to five years,

b) learners who have been learning the foreign language for at least six years.

This study aims to answer the following questions: What characteristic errors do native speakers of the L1 make in grammatical gender assignment when learning the L2/L3? What are their causes? Conversely, which linguistic phenomena do they acquire more easily, and why?

The results of the experimental task will be compared and correlated with findings from previous studies (e.g., White et al., 2004; Sabourin et al., 2006; Jamet, 2009 and 2013; Ellis et al., 2012; Alarcón, 2014; Edmonds, 2019; Dedková, 2023).

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