BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

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LANGUAGE TRANSFER LEI STUDENTS EXPERIENCE

WHEN LEARNING FRENCH AS A THIRD LANGUAGE AT AN A2

LEVEL

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This thesis has been read by the members of the thesis committee of

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And it is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the

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DEDICATIONS

I would like to dedicate this project to the most important people in my life: my family. First, to my mother Cecilia Perez, who through her wise advice, has always known how to guide me. Likewise, to my father Juan Tieco, who since I remember, has given me an example of perseverance. To my sisters: Sandra, Sonia, and Adriana for sharing every moment of my life. To my boyfriend, Eduardo who has always encouraged and supported me since I met him. Finally, to my teachers from the Faculty of Languages for their efforts to train good English teachers.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores one of the problems that LEI students at the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla BUAP face regarding language transfer during the acquisition of French as a third language. Arising from this situation, three research questions are proposed with the objective to describe the learning process as well as the phenomenon of transfer in LEI students. To collect the data, observations were made of a group of nine students taking French level four at CELE.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the problem

According to Brice (2009), language transfer can be defined "as the influence that two or more languages have on each other". Brice (2009) claims that language transfer may occur in either direction. That is to say, the transfer from the first language to the second one and vice versa. However, Ellis (1994) refers to transfer as a strategy learners appeal to overcome the differences between two languages. Furthermore, it is essential to distinguish the two types of transfer: positive and negative (Brice, 2009). Thus, a positive transfer occurs when one language facilitates the learning of another language, whereas negative transfer or interference occurs when one language is not helping the learning of another language.

Littlewood (1994) provides an example of language transfer; between English as a first language and French as the second one. To begin with, he argues that in both languages, the same pattern *subject-verb-object* is used as in "*the dog eats the meat*" and "*le chien mange la viande*", English and French respectively, therefore, in that sentence, a case of positive transfer is presented because knowing the English structure may facilitate the learning of the French structure. Nevertheless, negative transfer may happen with the same sentences just by replacing the objects with pronouns as in "*the dog eats it*" which still follows the pattern but, that is no longer possible in French when replacing an object with a pronoun the previous pattern needs to be changed placing the object before the verb, being "*le chien la mange*" the correct sentence.

At the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, there are two programs to train students to become English or French teachers, Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés and Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Francés (LEI or LEF, respectively), all the students must learn a foreign language since it is required in the curricula (BUAP, 2009). Most of the students of LEI usually take French as a foreign language at the Centro de Lenguas (CELE) or the Centro de Autoacceso de Lenguas (CAALE). It has been noticed that when they study this language, because of the previous knowledge they have in English, they present problems at the moment of speaking since they sometimes say words or give the same pronunciation or even use English structures instead of French without noticing they are committing this transfer.

For instance, when students give personal information in French, they tend to use English structures such as "*I am twenty years old"* and "*Je suis vingt ans"*, applying the verb *to be* in both cases. Therefore, instead of using the same structure as in Spanish, expressing age with the verb to have, "*J'ai vingt ans"*, students get confused and do not realize this phenomenon which is no longer with the native language but with the second language, that is, English.

Investigating possible research about this topic, one was found about native Spanish speakers who transfer elements from English to learn German related to the stimulated recall. However, no study related to the problem of transferring students who have learnt English as a second language face when learning French as a third language or the strategies French teachers use to avoid this problem was found.

1.2 Research Questions.

The questions that will guide this research are the following:

1. How do LEI students learn French as a third language?

2. How do LEI students use their knowledge to learn French?

3. What kind of transfer do LEI students commit when learning French?

1.3 General objective

To describe the learning process of LEI students learning French level four at CELE and identify the phenomenon of transfer at the moment of speaking.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

1. To identify the phenomenon of transfer in LEI students learning French as a third language.

2. To analyze the positive transfer and interference presented in LEI students learning French as a third language when speaking.

3. To describe the type of transfer committed by LEI students.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In recent years, it has been noticed that learning a foreign language is essential to succeed within a professional context, and it is also significant for personal purposes. However, these days many people learn not only one foreign language but also two or even three. Therefore, each day the number of polyglots is increasing as well as the difficulties in acquiring another language. This research attempts to study the field of linguistic transfer and how it works on students who have already reached an

intermediate level of English as a second language and are trying to learn French. Despite the different families that these languages come from, it could be helpful for other students to identify the most common problems they might have to avoid them and recognize the positive transfer that they could use. It will also be useful for teachers to know about this topic and take advantage of it to know what to do when transfer occurs.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Since 2009 the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) has implemented the Modelo Universitario Minerva (MUM), which proposed as one of the requirements to obtain the bachelor's degree in the career, the certification of an A2 level in a second language according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in most cases English for all future graduate students. (BUAP, 2009). Then, the students can take the foreign language in the BUAP at the Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras (CELE) or the CAALE or outside the BUAP

In the Faculty of Languages, students from English Teaching career must certify English being their second language at least a B2 level only if they will obtain their degree by Titulacion Automática, and their third language at an A2 level, which is the requirement according to the MUM (BUAP, 2009).

However, there are some problems students face when learning two languages at the same time. That is why this researcher started to feel curious since the knowledge of the second language tended to affect the third one being sometimes

positive or negative transfer. Additionally, it is essential to mention that I could notice the same phenomenon with my classmates just by observing them when I was taking French courses. That is why I decided to study this field through observations because I was experiencing this phenomenon presented on several occasions.

Therefore, it would be beneficial for students and teachers to notice the transfer presented so that it can be used to facilitate the learning of the third language.

1.6 Methodology

The type of research that will be developed in this paper is qualitative because this kind of research seeks to explain processes and patterns of human behavior, and interactions that can be difficult to quantify. To obtain the results, the qualitative observation method will be employed, which enables the researcher to observe, interact and gain a rich picture of participants in their natural environment through the five senses. Besides, as the main instrument some formats specifically designed to get the data from the observations will be used.

Furthermore, the subjects for this research are nine LEI students who are in level four of French at CELE; which means that they learn French at an A2 level.

1.7 Key terms

Language transfer: refers to the cross-linguistic effect or influence two or more languages have on each other (Brice, 2009).

Interlanguage: is a system that the learner constructs from the input he has been exposed to (Selinker, 1992).

Contrastive analysis: stresses the influence of the mother tongue in learning a second language in phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic levels (Jie, 2008).

Interlanguage transfer: refers to the influence of the L2 over another. There must be more than two non - native languages, so that interlanguage transfer occurs (Gass, 2000).

Negative transfer: occurs when the first language and the second language systems do not match very well regarding structure and meaning (Alvarez, 2014).

Positive transfer: occurs when one language facilitates learning another language (Brice, 2009).

CHAPTER II: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to discuss relevant literature to the research questions. The first part lays out the definition of second language acquisition and some historical background. Afterwards, the definition of language transfer and some topics related to the topic are mentioned. Additionally, some processes and hypotheses that were developed by authors who started the investigations in the field of applied linguistics are discussed.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

According to Ellis (1994), the term "second language" refers to any other language different from the native one; for instance, Chinese, Italian or English can be the second language of someone learning them while their native language is German. Besides, Gass & Selinker (2000) affirm that during the 1960s, there was the notion of language as a habit; thus, second language learning (SLA) was seen as the development of a new set of habits. Additionally, Ellis (1994, p. 211) claims that "learners do not just learn a language but rather adopt a variety or varieties of that language", learning a second language (L2) was seen as a process of overcoming the native language habits to acquire the new habits presented in the target language (TL).

However, Corder (1977) considers that the first language (L1) does not have a clear role during the first stages of its development. Its influence is perceived later by observing the linguistic distance determining the speed at which L2 will be acquired. Corder also claims that the more similar the L1 and L2, the easier the second language will be acquired.

On the other hand, Chomsky (1960, cited in Larsen, 1991) points out that language acquisition is not a result of habit formation but rather rule formation. By observing children's errors, such as: "She doesn't wants to go" and "I eated it", Chomsky developed a theory which is about an innate predisposition that human beings have, to acquire the target language (TL) from the input to which they were exposed. Once that the learners have comprehended the rules from the native language (NL), they will start to produce utterances that consist of imitations, so the input received from the environment will take place. As revealed by Corder, who proposes that second language acquisition has to do with a general cognitive process where hypotheses are formulated.

These kinds of errors demonstrated that children were not using the input to which they were in touch. In the same way, it was found that second language learners committed similar errors that were not due to L1 interference. Thus, SLA was seen as a process of hypothesis where learners would apply them to produce target language utterances.

Furthermore, Lado (cited in Gass & Selinker 2000) claims that the problems arise with the features of the new language and primarily with the set created by the first language. Moreover, that can be noticed when students at a basic level try to translate to the second or third language the same sentence as it is produced in the first language.

2.1.1 Language Acquisition Device (LAD)

According to Sharwood (1994), language acquisition device is a term used for language mechanisms that allows a child to create L1 competence without analyzing

grammar or paying attention to the grammatical structures. Moreover, Chomsky (1975, cited in Klein,1986 p.6) argues that "any normal child that is exposed to the language data comes to know the grammar of his native language within an amazingly short time" and this language data in which the child is immersed helps to activate latent components of grammar. Chomsky also stated that all humans are born with the ability to learn a language to which they are exposed; therefore, a child's innate faculty will help him to acquire his native language effortlessly despite the complexity of the language. Later the child will improve some difficult structures and will master his native language using it effectively.

Hence, with the language acquisition device, the acquisition of the L1 happens without being aware of the process. One of the main questions still unanswered is if the second language learner has a subconscious LAD to be used when acquiring an L2 or if it could be reactivated at some point.

2.1.2 Borrowings

According to Corder (1977), borrowings happen when the students use elements of a language already known, most of the time, the first language to overcome the lack of knowledge in the target language. Although the learner can use the borrowings from any other language, it is frequently seen that the L1 is mainly used during the first stages of linguistic development.

2.1.3 Input and Output

Sharwood (1994) defines the input to the language data to which the learner is exposed. Similarly, Corder (1981) defines input as the language information available to the learner. Also, he gives an example saying that "input is, as it were,

the goods that are presented to the customer". On the other hand, Corder (1981, cited in Sharwood, 1994) presents the concept of intake making a difference between these two concepts, claiming that the part of input has been processed and has turned into knowledge and is currently used by the learner is called intake.

The input may contain evidence for or against a given assumption and the experiences of the target language. According to VanPatten & Williams (2007), when someone is learning a structure, even if the L1 and TL are almost the same, they understand that they define it as Input Processing (IP). This is a process where learners acquire language connecting or not particular forms with particular meanings. It covers since the learner is exposed to the input until creating a linguistic system that will allow the SL learner to communicate and be understood by others. Additionally, they claim that acquisition has to do with a process of comprehension. Therefore, they point out that "comprehension cannot guarantee acquisition and acquisition cannot happen if comprehension does not occur" (p. 115).

The output is defined as the learner´s performance, in other words, the speech and writing by someone learning an L2.

2.1.4 Fossilization

Selinker (1972, cited in Larsen, 1991) claims that one of the main characteristics of interlanguage is the phenomenon of fossilization presented when learners, no matter their age, stop the development of the linguistic items of the TL. Corder (1971, cited in Larsen, 1991) points out that fossilization happens when the learner realizes that his/ her IL is enough to communicate, so the interest to master the language wanes. Equally, Da Silva (1996) agrees, explaining that it occurs when a student considers

that his/her grammar and IL are sufficient to achieve communication with the native speakers of TL; consequently, his/her motivation to improve will disappear, occasioning the phenomenon of fossilization. However, Schachter (1998, cited in Han & Odlin, 2006) argues that the efforts made by adult L2 learners to acquire a high level commonly stay as an incomplete success. In the same way, Han & Odlin (2006) claim that foreign language learners reach a particular stage of learning and stabilize their learning process when that happens. In other words, fossilization is the end of the learning process, which often occurs due to the lack of motivation to improve, thanks to having good communication with a native speaker from the target language.

Besides, Littlewood (1994) distinguishes transitional from fossilized errors, claiming that transitional errors are those which eventually disappear as the learner progresses, and fossilized errors are those which do not disappear entirely. Surprisingly, Han & Odlin (2006) consider research on fossilization that shows that any L2 learner, no matter their age or level, can demonstrate a certain level of native-like competence and performance.

2.1.5 Bilingualism

Two types of bilingualism can be distinguished:

According to Klein (1990), compound bilingualism refers to two languages being learned in parallel, and no matter how different these languages are, they have some features in common. For instance, some syntactic rules may be similar. Many words may have equivalents in the other language, such as the word "chair" the learner knows that it has two phonological realizations or two ways to refer to it (tʃɛər) or (ʃɛz)

English and French respectively. Then, it is likely that the learner develops a system that contains information of the two languages, but at the moment of speaking, the learner chooses the one that best fits the communicative situation.

Contrarily, coordinate bilingualism refers to a person who acquires another language but not at the same time in addition to the first language. This person has first developed one system, and then he builds another one. Therefore, at the moment of speaking, the learner switches from one system to another, and if one of the languages is dominant, it could be possible that much of the dominant language has an effect over the other one. In this case, the less dominant language will be used at a superficial level of production or comprehension.

2.2 Language transfer

Brice (2009) claims that language transfer is the cross-linguistic effect or influence two or more languages have on each other, this transfer may occur in either direction, that is, between the first (native, L1) and second language (L2), or between the second and first language.

Furthermore, he emphasizes that there are two types of transfer, which are positive and negative. Brice (2009) argues that positive transfer occurs when one language facilitates learning another language, while negative transfer or interference occurs when one language is not helping the learning of another language. For instance, Littlewood (1994) provides an example of language transfer between an English person learning French being positive transfer the regular pattern "*subject-verb-*

object" as in "*the dog eats the meat*", which can be transferred directly into French as "*le chien mange la viande*".

On the other hand, interference can also be presented in both languages with the same sentences, and that occurs when in the same sentence the object is replaced with a pronoun as in "*the dog eats it*" this sentence still follows the structure mentioned above, but in French, it is no longer possible because the pronoun is usually placed before the verb as in "*le chien la mange*". Therefore, an L2 learner can get confused by following the first pattern and using it in the same way now, replacing the object "*le chien mange la*" as a case of negative transference or interference.

Nevertheless, there are three different views that can be studied when talking about language transfer: behaviorist, mentalist, and cognitive views.

2.2.1 Behaviorist view

The behaviorist view in language transfer relies on habit formation and the stimuli-response that is given to the learner. Selinker (1992) defines "Language Transfer" as the effect that a native language has on how a student speaks a specific target language. Language would be developed over time depending on the repeated responses given to the learner, which is by encouraging target-like and correcting non-target-like responses.

Indeed, there is a process of stimuli responses:

1. Implementation of language learning.

   Habit is a result of repetition. The more active and repeated responses to stimuli, the better because this would lead to language learning.

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2. Reinforcement of language learning.

   It is essential to reinforce language learning by encouraging target-like responses and correcting non-target-like responses.

3. Stimulation of language learning.

Some complex structures could be learnt by breaking them down and separating them into components of language. Swan (1997, cited in Kormos, 2006) claims that many conceptual and semantic transfer sources can be studied bit by bit to be acquired over time and stimulate language learning.

On the other hand, behaviorists advocate that there are some difficulties in language learning which greatly depend on the differences between the target language and the native language, and as a result, errors would be predicted by comparing differences. Odlin (1989, cited in Ellis 1994) claims "transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (p. 27). In other words, if two languages are identical or have many features in common, SLA will take place due to the positive transfer. On the contrary, if the two languages are not similar, negative transfer will inhibit and would not facilitate second language acquisition.

Nevertheless, some factors that impede SLA were not considered, such as learner's differences; therefore, predicting errors was not accurate.

2.2.2 Mentalist view of transfer

The mentalist view of language transfer is related to Innateness and Universal Grammar (UG) hypotheses by Chomsky (2004). The innateness hypothesis

believed that every human is born to learn a language and develop the fundamental principles of grammar. That is to say; children do not only copy the language where they are exposed, adults do not typically speak grammatically correct; therefore, children deduce rules, sometimes committing overgeneralizations. For instance, if a child listens to forms such as "worked" or "played" he will conclude that all the verbs need the ending "ed" to use them in the past tense, so this will lead to errors such as "eated" or "drinked". However, if a child grows in a typical linguistic environment, language acquisition will occur naturally, adopting it as a native language. Besides, according to the universal grammar hypothesis, all languages come from the same root, so children assume a set of similar rules in a language without any trouble. For example, in most languages, the word order in a sentence is Subject Verb Object (SVO), which is one of the first features that children adopt.

2.2.3 Cognitive view of transfer

According to Lanfeng (2010) the drawbacks of the mentalist view led to the cognitive view, which believed that learning a language requires the same cognitive systems such as: perception, memory, problem solving, etc. Besides, in cognitive view "It is generally acknowledged that typological similarity or difference cannot on its own serve as a predictor for transfer but interacts with other (linguistic) factors" (Faerch and Kasper, 1987, p. 121). In the late 1970s linguists focused on how and when learners used their native language; therefore, second language acquisition was about the factors that caused language transfer. Ellis (2000) proposes that there are six types of factors that would cause language transfer:

1. Transfer happens at different linguistic levels namely, phonology, syntax, discourse, pragmatics, etc.

2. Social factors have an impact on language transfer, for example, the influence of the learning environment.

3. Markedness of a certain language. Markedness can be applied in various fields of second language learning, such as phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax. It is defined as a phenomenon where marked structures or patterns can be transferred from the first language to the second language. According to Eckman (1977) "Those areas of the target language which differ from the native language and are more marked than the native language will be difficult. On the other hand, those areas of the target language which are different from the native language but are not more marked than the native language will not be difficult".

4. Prototypicality, the core meaning and the periphery meaning of a certain word.

5. Language distance psychotypology, namely, learners' perception of language distance between L1 and L2.

6. Some developmental factors limit interlanguage development.

2.2.4 Learning transfer

Schneider (2009) describes learning transfer as the capacity to apply acquired knowledge to new situations. According to him, there are three main concepts necessary to use knowledge in real life that play an essential role: knowledge integration, knowledge application, and knowledge use.

Besides, Schachter (1998, cited in Han & Odlin, 2006), claims that one of the first and important stages, when someone is learning an L2, is the development of different hypotheses, she argues that this set of hypotheses is called "the universe of hypotheses". However, these hypotheses will be changed or transformed as the learner improves in the target language. Therefore, the learning process will occur when a learner chooses a hypothesis to test against the input and prove whether they are correct or not. In other words, learners need to demonstrate the set of theories that they have created for themselves to succeed during the L2 acquisition. Schachter (1998), also notes that the L1 knowledge plays an important role in influencing the universe of hypotheses as well as the ones chosen to be tested.

2.3 Manifestations of transfer

According to Ellis (1994), language transfer can be presented in three different ways:

1. Facilitation

This manifestation of transfer occurs when there are similar features between the L1 and L2, they could be grammatical, as in the example previously related to word order in English and French. Besides, Ellis (1994) claims facilitation is developed during the early stages of L2 learning because learners try to find the similarities between their native language and their target language, and once that they have established these similarities, the learner will try to create a set of rules to understand the L2; known as the process of interlanguage. However, as the learner acquires new L2 rules, he will realize that the interlanguage created is no longer equivalent to

the L2, so what the learner will do is re-learn the correct target language rule and try to avoid or even abandon the interlanguage rules.

Consequently, Ellis (1994) suggests that if the L1 and L2 have some words in common, it would be helpful to provide learners with a list of cognates that will facilitate students their ability to learn vocabulary, and in this way, they will be encouraged since their native language, and the target language share some words.

2. Avoidance

It occurs when learners try to avoid using L2 structures, which are difficult because of the difference between their L1 and L2. To identify avoidance, Seliger (1989, cited in Ellis, 1994) claims that it is necessary to analyze a specific context where native speakers will use certain structures while L2 learners will not. Moreover, Kellerman (1992) proposes three types of avoidance:

Type 1. It is the minimum condition for avoidance, and it is presented when learners realize that there is a problem with the L2 and try to substitute it for a more accessible structure.

Type 2. A clear example of this type of avoidance is a free-flowing conversation where learners already know more complicated structures. Therefore, they do not use it.

Type 3. In this type of avoidance, learners already know the structure and how to use it; however, the learner's behavior will determine whether the structure is used or not.

3.Over-use

It can result from language transfer, and it is often presented when a particular grammatical structure is avoided during L2 acquisition because it is considered difficult for the learner. Also, it is a result of an intralingual process such as overgeneralization.

2.3.1 Negative Transfer

According to Alvarez (2014), the negative transfer occurs when the first language and the second language systems do not match very well regarding structure and meaning. Therefore, this may cause an inhibition rather than facilitating the learner's progress in acquiring a new language, which sometimes can cause some confusion or overwhelm in learners.

On the other hand, Bardovi (2017) claims that "only negative transfer presents teaching and learning challenges". Indeed, it is easy to transfer similarities between two languages and remember them because the TL presents structures or vocabulary that seems like the L1, but when these features are entirely different, it tends to get confused for most students who do not present positive transfer.

For instance, Schneider (2009) claims that native English speakers learning German as a second language often misuse and overuse the neutral German article "das" because nouns need to have grammatical gender in this language. In contrast, in English, it is not necessary to distinguish the nouns' gender. Therefore, native English speakers use the neutral article "das" in the same way as the English article "the" "das Tisch" (the table) instead of "der Tisch".

Later, Bardovi (2017) illustrates this process saying that native French speakers trying to learn English as their second language often commit errors placing an adverb between the verb and its direct object.

For example:

John takes <u>often</u> the subway.   ← Adverb after a verb as the French structure.

Jean prend <u>souvent</u> le métro.   ← Both adverbs are placed in the same order.

John <u>often</u> takes the subway.   ← Correct order of the adverb.

The sentences above are a clear example of negative transfer; French students face negative transfer since they use the same structure as in their L1. Consequently, this interference represents a challenge for both teachers and students. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, a transfer could happen in either direction. In other words, the transfer can also occur between native English speakers trying to learn French as a second language.

Littlewood (1994) provides two examples:

1.   Peux – je vous aider?   ← This sentence has the English order to make

a   question.

Je peux vous aider?   ← Correct sentence.

2.   Je suis fait mon devoir. ← Attempt to form "present continuous" tense in

English.

        Je suis en train de faire mon devoir. ← Correct sentence.

 Those sentences are some of the most common transfer errors committed by native

English speakers attempting to produce French sentences. However, according to

Littlewood (1994), there is a strategy to help students to overcome their interference.

Firstly, it is necessary to compare L1 and L2, in other words, apply a contrastive

analysis. Once the interferences are identified between the two languages, it will be

possible to predict issues that do not facilitate L2 acquisition, also called the

contrastive analysis hypothesis. Consequently, according to this hypothesis, he

states that techniques can be applied and proposes using an audio-lingual method

and exercises such as drilling to encourage students to learn an L2. Finally,

Littlewood (1994) argues that "the fact that a structure or sound has no equivalent in

the learner's mother tongue does not necessarily mean that it will be more difficult to

learn because of that" (p. 19).

2.3.2 Positive Transfer

Bardovi (2017) points out that the process of positive transfer could be an advantage

for vocabulary acquisition. She says that when there are similar words in the L1 and

TL the recognition of new words can be satisfactory while learning a new language.

According to Alvarez (2014), transferring vocabulary such as cognates can

accelerate the learning process as well as conceptualizing language knowledge; that is to say, using visuals or labels help students to identify new concepts.

Additionally, Karim and Nassaji (2013) claim that when attempting to practice the writing ability in the target language, the L1 knowledge can be used as a strategy to simplify the task. For instance, when it is necessary to write an essay, learners can utilize their L1 to plan and organize, making it more concise and straightforward.

However, some words seem to have the same meaning in two languages, but then it turns out they are entirely different, and those words are called false friends.

2.3.3 Limited or Partial Transfer

Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1996, cited in VanPatten & Benati, 2010) claim that transfer exists but, in some cases, it is limited or partial because learners transfer the lexicon and its syntactic properties, including relationships between words and phrases and their appropriate use and for that reason, it is predicted that learners will commit fewer errors about basic word order. However, learners may not transfer the functional features of language such as tense, person-number, and agreement.

2.3.4 Full Transfer

Schwartz & Sprouse (1996, cited in VanPatten & Benati, 2010) affirm that learners of a second language tend to assume (unconsciously) that the L2 is like the L1. Therefore, they start transferring the elements and all the properties of the first language to the second one. On the other hand, VanPatten & Benati (2010) claim that a learner of a second language begins the acquisition without making any

assumptions that the learner is "open" to the language. Therefore, the errors made by a learner would not necessarily reflect the influence of the L1.

2.3.5 Communication transfer

Communication transfer can be presented in both production and comprehension; according to Corder (1983), communication transfer results from the learner's need to comprehend or produce messages. Faerch and Kasper (1987) distinguish three types of production transfer:

1. Strategic transfer occurs when the learner does not pay attention to a specific problem or its solution, which may lead to the use of L1. That is to say; learners will appeal to their L1 knowledge when they feel that a specific word or phrase in the target language is used in the same way as their L1.

2. Subsidiary transfer is presented when learners do not realize either the production problem or the transferred L1 knowledge. Therefore, they will continue to do it, but later as students discover the target language, awareness of the misuse of L1 will take place.

3. Automatic transfer is related to aspects in the production process, and it is often presented when the learner uses a highly automatized L1 subroutine.

As Ringbom states (1992), the concept of transfer in comprehension induces a change in the learner's cognitive grammar, but the transfer in production can also contribute significantly to interlanguage development.

2.3.6 Phonological transfer

The phonological structure occurs when learners think that because there is a similar word in the TL to their L1, they can pronounce it in the same way, cognates are typically found in this situation. For instance, the word *interview* has the same meaning in English and French. However, the pronunciation does not, being (ɛ̃tɛʀvju) the French pronunciation and (ˈɪntəvjuː) the English one.

2.3.7 Transfer in Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the area that needs to be practiced over time, it requires time to be mastered and it is the part where most of the students have trouble. According to Bardovi (2017), there is a considerable language influence of L1 on TL. It is the learner's decision to try to overcome the habits of the TL to establish a new set of habits in the L1 that does not have features from the first language but just from the target language.

As Krashen and Terrell (1983) state, "the cure for interference is simply acquisition—pedagogy does not need to help the acquirer fight off the effects of the first language—it need only help the acquirer acquire the target language" (p. 41).

2.4 Cross-linguistic influence

According to Westergaard, Mitrofanova, Mykhaylyk, Rodina (2017), in recent years, there has been an increase in L3 acquisition studies, and one of the main questions to this situation is whether L1 and L2 affect the acquisition of the L3 knowing that L3 acquisition occurs in the presence of two potential sources of cross-linguistic influence. Consequently, Westergaard et al. (2017) argue that despite the

typological similarities between two languages, the bilinguals' behavior has a great difference, suggesting cross-linguistic influence from both previous languages.

2.4.1 Order of acquisition

It is believed that "the learner's native language is the main source of influence during the acquisition of an L3" (Westergaard et al., 2017 p.668). On the other hand, some studies found much more influence from L2 where languages are stored. For instance, L1 is implicitly acquired; therefore, it is stored in the procedural memory whereas L2 and L3 are learned in the same way, then they both are stored in the declarative memory.

2.4.2 The cumulative enhancement model

Flynn (2004; cited in Westergaard et al., 2017) claims that L3 is selective, and that transfer might come from L1 or L2. It is also suggested that language acquisition is gradual and cumulative, which means that the knowledge from previous languages can either have a part or no effect on L3 acquisition.

2.4.3 Typology-based models

It is argued that during the process of L3 acquisition, a learner makes comparisons of his L1 and L2 to see which language has more similarities with the L3 and once that the closer language is found use it as a facilitative strategy and transfer the grammar to the L3. Besides, Rotman (2013 cited in Westergaard et al. 2017) proposes that this process of comparisons is mainly done during the initial stages since the learner needs to be in contact with the three languages to choose.

2.5 Interlanguage

The concept of interlanguage emerged in 1972 with Selinker's work, but it is essential to mention that this concept was already defined years ago by other authors such as Corder (1967) and Nemser (1971) but using different terminology. In the case of Corder, who proposes that second language acquisition has to do with a general cognitive process where hypotheses are formulated. According to Selinker (1992) interlanguage is a system that the learner constructs from the input he has been exposed to. In the same way, Bonnet-Falandry, Durrons & Jones (2005) define *interlanguage* as a process that explains how L2 learners develop their ability to understand and produce utterances in a target language; moreover, they claim that the learner's capacity to create new things is seen through interlanguage because it possesses a certain degree of complexity.

Furthermore, interlanguage (IL) can also be defined as an intermediate system that learners create between the native language (NL) and the target language (TL). According to James (1998), "the TL speaker knows everything, and the foreign language learner is more or less ignorant. Interlanguage is, therefore, a product of ignorance. To compensate for their ignorance, learners produce this substitutive language" (p. 63). In other words, the lack of knowledge of the target language makes learners create a substitutive language or sometimes mix structures. However, this substitutive language can be helpful when both languages are similar in grammatical structures or vocabulary. Selinker (1992, p.18) claims "the structures which are similar will be easy to learn because they are transferred and may function satisfactorily in the foreign language".

For instance, when a student learns a second language, at the same time establishes an explanation about the characteristics and features of the target language; these explanations are based on data processes and are a type of personal hypothesis about the TL. Furthermore, this hypothesis is systematic, has coherence, and might be considered the student's grammar. However, Corder, one of the most persuasive in this branch of linguistics (1967, cited in Tarone, 2006), claims that second language learners do not start the acquisition of the second language with the aid of their native language whereas with a universal "built-syllabus" which is in charge of guiding them through the process during the development of their system or in other words "transitional competence".

Additionally, James (1998) conceptualizes interlanguage in two types; the first refers to the learner language's abstraction, such as the process and strategies that learners use when facing the target language. The other type refers to IL when it can be applied to refer to some concretizations of an underlying system. These can be separated in time; for example, IL1 develops after 100 hours of exposure, IL2 after 200 hours, et cetera.

Besides, he argues that the researcher who tries to study IL development will be forced to compare these successive stages.

Meanwhile, Tarone (2006) mentions that one characteristic of IL is that it fossilizes, which means that the learner stops the acquisition of the TL at a certain point. Whereas *Interlanguage* is systematic and dynamic. It is systematic because the rules are selected by the learners, and it is dynamic because the learner's

interlanguage is continuously shifting learners tend to make new rules according to the target language advance.

2.5.1 The phonology of interlanguage

According to Loup & Weinberger (1987), learning the syntax of a second language and mastering it can be possible and the vocabulary. However, he claims that the phonology of an L2 is not as easy to master. Besides, he points out that L2 learners must be intelligible to other speakers of that language to reach communication.

2.5.2 Interlanguage strategies

According to Sharwood (1994), the process of interlanguage is mostly presented when speakers try to produce spontaneously. Thus, it is necessary to have a series of strategies to develop to avoid this phenomenon. Coulter (1968, cited in Sharwood, 1994) affirms that IL commonly occurs when attempting to express ideas, so the first type of strategy has to do with solving problems in communication. For instance, Alvarez (2014) claims that it is necessary to give students extensive practice to improve the target language because skills across languages do not happen automatically.

The second type of strategy must do when learners try to commit aspects of L2 to memory. It can occur when a student finds it challenging to learn a grammatical structure, so he/she will force it into memory and later, the concept will be stored there.

2.5.3 Psycholinguistic processes

Selinker (1972, cited in Da Silva, 1996) claims that five main psycholinguistic processes are involved in the latent psychological structure during interlanguage development explained below.

1. Language transfer. It occurs when the rules and elements from the native language are usually presented in interlanguage. It is considered that language transfer is mainly developed during the first stages of second language acquisition.

2. Transference training. It results from procedures used when learning the native language, such as prior experience and many rules learned from textbooks.

3. Learning strategies of L2 occur when the interlanguage characteristics are presented due to a cognitive process used to learn an L2.

4. Communication strategies. They occur when interlanguage characteristics come from the resources used by the learner, who is looking to find a balance at the moment of communicating with a native speaker.

5. Overgeneralization. It is a result of a clear overgeneralization of TL rules and semantic features.

2.5.4 Sociolinguistic factors

Tarone (1982, cited in Ellis 1994) claims that each time a learner is paying attention and taking care about how he is producing in the target language, he is more likely to use their L1 and the interlanguage system. In the same way, Odlin (1989, cited in Ellis 1994) argues that negative transfer is more common in natural settings than in the classroom environment. For instance, he explains that in a classroom, the L1

may be seen as intrusive by all the learners whereas, in a natural setting, language mixing will be freely permitted, and consequently, its use will be encouraged.

2.6 Errors

Corder (1967, cited in Larsen, 1991) claims that errors are made by learners who have not yet mastered the rules of the L2; also, learners cannot correct an error because they reflect the current performance of L2. However, errors are explainable with the L1. In other words, errors can be seen as negative or positive interferences commonly produced due to the previous knowledge, which could be from the NL or the interlanguage system the student is applying. Besides, James (1998) points out that "learner's errors are a register of their current perspective on the TL". (p.7)

2.6.1 Mistakes

Non-systematic mistakes are common mistakes among native speakers. Furthermore, Corder (1967, cited in Larsen, 1991) argues that mistakes could be made by fatigue, excitement, et cetera, and consequently, can be self-corrected.

2.6.2 Error analysis

According to Corder (1967, cited in Larsen 1991), when linguistics was relatively new, it was of utmost importance to analyze errors and mistakes that students frequently committed to obtain a particular methodology to study SLA. Tarone (2006) takes into consideration errors by mentioning that the way errors were taken in the past was by gathering and analyzing the speech and writing of second language learners and the main goal when identifying and studying errors was to use them as a base for frameworks and didactic resources in the design of teaching materials.

Furthermore, Cook (1993; cited in James, 1998) claims that "error analysis is a methodology for dealing with data, rather than a theory of acquisition" (p.22). Besides, Gass & Selinker (2001) define *Error analysis* as "a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make".

One of the essential classifications and most accepted when creating theoretical frameworks is the following by Richards (1971, cited in Da Silva, 1996):

1. Interlingual errors. These can be identified as interferences from other known languages; they commonly come from the L1.

2. Intralingual errors. These are not interferences from other languages. Intralingual errors occur when using strategies of overgeneralizations and simplification, which are derived from the psycholinguistic processes within the L2 system.

3. Development errors. They are like the mistakes committed by children who acquire their L1; the main characteristic is that this error disappears during the acquisition process.

It is necessary to mention that researchers focused on learners' errors in the past, but they did not study what made them successful. However, Ellis (1992, cited in James, 1998) claims that learners should do error analysis instead of teachers because learners would be aware and able to recognize their errors and learn from them. Nevertheless, as Larsen (1991) points out, it was complicated to identify the source of an error and "there are other factors that may influence the process of acquisition such as innate principle of language, attitude, motivation, aptitude, age, other languages known…" (Gass & Selinker, 2001)

2.6.3 Interlingual versus Intralingual errors

As mentioned before, *Interlingual errors* are errors produced because of the influence of the NL, whereas *Intralingual errors* occur when learners try to make a new rule for the target language. Moreover, Corder (1967, cited in Larsen 1991), motivated learners to know more about errors, so many taxonomies were designed, like the following:

Table 1.

Error Taxonomy

Type of Error	Example	Explanation
Interlingual interference	*Is the book of my friend.*	The omission of the subject pronoun and the use "of the" possessive appear to be due to Spanish interference.
Intralingual overgeneralization	*I wonder where are you going.*	The speaker has perhaps overgeneralized the rule of the subject-auxiliary inversion and applied here to an embedded WH-question incorrectly.
Simplification (Redundancy reduction)	*I studied English for two year.*	The omission of the plural maker following the noun could be termed redundancy reduction as no information is lost, i.e. the cardinal number already signals plurality.
Communication-based	*The learner uses "airball" for balloon (word coinage, Tarone 1980).*	The learner incorrectly labels an object but successfully communicates a desired concept.

| Induced errors | *She cries as if the baby cries FOR "she cries as a baby". (Stenson 1974)* | The teacher had given the student a definition of as "as if" meaning "like" without explaining the necessary structural change. |

Note. This chart shows the different types of errors and their explanation suggested by different authors. Richards (1971), (George, 1972), (Selinker, 1992) and (Stenson 1974).

The first two types of errors are proposed by Richards (1971). *Interlingual errors* are the errors committed by the interference of the L1; the learner uses his native language rules when speaking in the target language. On the other hand, overgeneralizations are produced when the learner observes the different linguistic features as equal, establishing them as a rule.

The third type of error (George, 1972) is *simplification,* which occurs when the learner does not use the plural noun because he thinks that it is not necessarily due to the cardinal number expressing quantity.

The fourth kind of error is named communication-based errors (Selinker, 1992), which occur when there are words in the TL that are unknown for learners, so they tend to create new words, but the purpose to communicate is reached.

Finally, the last category of errors is suggested by Stenson (1974), induced errors that occur when in many cases, the teacher creates confusion on the student, so he mixes up a certain grammatical point, word, or structure.

2.7 Pronunciation

Kelly (2000) claims that adopting sounds from a foreign language becomes a little hard after childhood. Additionally, he says:

"There are two key problems with pronunciation teaching. Firstly, it tends to be neglected. Secondly, when it is not neglected, it tends to be reactive to a particular problem that has arisen in the classroom rather than being strategically planned" (p.13).

2.7.1 Phonetics

According to Kelly, phonetics is the study of how speech organs move to produce sounds.

2.7.2 Phonology

Kelly argues that phonology is the interpretation of sounds using symbols. He claims that studying English phonology has to do with vowels, consonants and suprasegmental. Later, he claims that the misuse of stress and intonation can cause problems when trying to communicate.

2.8 Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive analysis is defined by Gass and Selinker (2001) as comparing the rules of two languages. Similarly, Lado supports the idea claiming that learners need to transfer the culture and knowledge they have from their native language to the foreign language and culture when attempting to speak and listen to the target language.

This concept goes back to many years ago, when the American tradition emphasized language teaching and, by implication, language learning; at that time, contrastive analyses were mostly used to improve classroom materials. According to Larsen (1991), researchers from the 1940s to the 1960s were motivated to compare two languages to identify the points of similarity and difference between native and target languages believing that they could improve pedagogy by comparing and analyzing them. Likewise, contrastive analyses were mainly inspired significantly with statements of Charles Fries such as the following: "The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner" (p.9). Certainly, both authors agreed with materials design as the primary use of *Contrastive Analysis*.

Nevertheless, a recent definition says that "*Contrastive analysis* stresses the influence of the mother tongue in learning a second language in phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic levels" (Jie, 2008, p. 36). Similarly, James (1998) argues that it is helpful to compare the native language and target language features to use the procedure. For instance, verbs or vocabulary for apologizing, and then describe their forms and meaning to find the characteristics which made them similar and at the same time to find the ones different to obtain predictability in the process of learning a particular target language. He provides an example of a German speaker who says, "*You must not take off your hat*" when the intended sentence is "*You don't have to take off your hat*". These sentences are syntactically well-formed, but the understanding for both the speaker and the receiver is essential. The first statement is not wrong for the German speaker, but in English, the modal

verb "must not" is inappropriate in this context. The German speaker wants to suggest that the person does not have to take off his hat, and the modal verb that is used means prohibit or disallow. Therefore, even if the statements are syntactically correct, the meaning is not the same, resulting in an ambiguous sentence.

2.8.1 Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)

Later, Gass and Selinker explain the contrastive analysis hypothesis, which has to do with "the way of comparing languages to determine potential errors, to predict areas that will be either easy or difficult for learners". Moreover, Lado (1957) supports this hypothesis, arguing:

> "Languages differ significantly in form, meaning and distribution of their grammatical structures. Those similar structures will be easy to learn because they will be transferred and may function satisfactorily in the foreign language. Those different structures will be difficult because when transferred, they will not function satisfactorily in the foreign language and will, therefore, must be changed" (p.59).

Equally, Weinreich (1953) argues that if the difference between the native and the target languages is immense, the problem to learn the target language will be immense as well, and as a result, the negative transfer will occur. In the same way, Klein (1990) claims that the acquisition of a second language is largely determined by the structure of an earlier acquired language. However, if there are more similarities than differences, a positive transfer will occur. Moreover, when designing pedagogical materials, these two assumptions, according to Gass & Selinker (2000), were taken into consideration. The first theory claims that language analysis is a

habit, and language learning involves the adoption of a new set of habits, and the second one says that when learning a language, similarities can be readily ignored but what is essential is to learn the differences; therefore, difficulty can ease by making a contrast between differences and similarities.

However, Wardghaugh (1970, cited in James, 1998) points out that CAH should be seen as two existing versions; a "strong" version which is about predicting learning difficulty using contrastive analysis hypothesis, comparing the mother tongue and the target language. Furthermore, a "weak" version is about to explain or diagnose a set of errors resulting from interference.

The importance of contrastive analysis then is noticed if there are problems in the target language that could be anticipated, subsequently prevented, and finally, the formation of bad habits could be avoided.

2.8.2 Procedure to compare languages

According to According to Wallace and Schachter (1983), there is a set of steps to follow, which they describe as complex when comparing two languages:

1. Locate the best structural description of the languages involved.

Make a description of the form, meaning, and distribution of the structures in both languages, which should be accurate before further.

    2. Summarize in compact outline form all the structures.

The authors explain this point with the English language, arguing that it is necessary to describe the type of sentences in questions, statements, requests, calls, etc.

3. The actual comparison of the two language structures, pattern by pattern.

2.8.3 Transfer Analysis (TA)

According to James (1998), the term *transfer analysis* is most appropriate when talking about contrastive analysis and even cross-linguistic influence or language transfer can be convenient. For this author, the difference between contrastive and transfer analysis is that CA compares L1 with the target language, whereas transfer analysis compares interlanguage with L1. In other words, transfer analysis compares the system that learners build when learning a second language.

This research paper was reviewed, focusing on the topics about language transfer and the last topics, which were about how to compare languages and the contrastive analysis needed to identify the errors and mistakes committed by the participants.

CHAPTER III: THE METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used for this research. The instrument will be explained in detail as well as the participants their characteristics and the procedure followed to carry out this investigation.

3.1 Qualitative research

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research seeks to understand the meaning that some groups of people think from social or human problems. The type of research used is qualitative because this kind of research attempts to explain processes and patterns of human behavior, and interactions that can be difficult to quantify. The purpose of using qualitative research in this paper was to identify where the influence of one language over another is given, in this case, English on French while students are speaking, considering phonological, syntactic, and lexical transfer.

Furthermore, Creswell (2009) mentions that qualitative research takes place in natural settings, where human behavior and events occur. It is based on assumptions that are very different from quantitative and the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection rather than some inanimate mechanism. Researchers are more interested in understanding how things happen.

3.2 Qualitative observations

Observation is used in social sciences as a method to collect data about people, processes, and cultures, as revealed by Kawulich (2012). In qualitative observations, researchers collect data using their five senses: sight, smell, touch, hearing, and

taste. Besides, this method enables the researcher to observe, interact and gain a rich picture of participants in their natural environment. During this research the qualitative observation method was implemented

3.2.1 Characteristics and types of qualitative observation method

The following are characteristics of qualitative observation methods, Kawulich (2012), that differentiate it from other methods.

1. Inductive. The researcher is immersed in the investigation alongside the participants. New questions can be established as the study progresses
2. Naturalistic enquiry. This research method involves studying the participants in their natural environment.
3. Subjective. The results obtained from this method can vary from person to person, depending on their skills, education, and background.

The main types of qualitative observation include:

Direct observation. The researcher collects data about an object, phenomenon, or process without letting the participants know that they are under observation.

Case studies. The researcher examines the participants based on specific issues or contexts. This type of qualitative observation is used to prove a hypothesis or identify trends.

Researcher as participant. The researcher becomes a natural part of a group to better understand the people or phenomenon under study.

Interviews. The researcher asks the participants direct questions related to the study.

The role of this researcher was researcher as participant because I was most of the time treated as a student by the teacher and as a classmate by the students, having then interaction with the participants studied. It is essential to point out that participants already knew that they were part of the investigation.

3.3 The subjects

To carry out this research, there were nine students as subjects, five females and four males, who ranged from 20 to 24 years old. They took French classes (at level four, A2 according to the Common European Framework for Languages) at the Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras. Furthermore, as the main requirement to be participants, they were LEI students of the Faculty of Languages at BUAP who had already finished their target language five. It is necessary to mention that the participants studied French six hours per week divided into two hours for three days. The participants took French classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11 am to 1 pm. This researcher took the role of an observer as participant since at some point participants and the teacher treated me as part of the group since observations were done during the whole course.

3.4 The Instruments

This study was developed with a qualitative approach. To carry out this research, qualitative observations were done while students were taking French

classes, primarily focused on the speaking part and while students tried to produce in the third language (French), it was noticed some language transfer.

As the main instrument, three formats were used, specifically designed by the researcher to collect the data, and classify the transfer into syntactic, lexical, and phonological levels (Jie 2008).

Each format has a chart with columns. The first column of each skill was used to write the sentence, phrase, or word that the participants produced in the target language. The second column was for the English translation of the previous sentence or word. The third column was for the correct sentence or word in the target language. The two last columns were used to classify the participants that committed the transfer into male and female.

3.5 The Procedure

To carry out this research and determine the instrument, the literature review was analyzed. Based on that, the method and instrument were established: qualitative observations and three formats specifically designed to classify the interferences properly. Then, the instrument was implemented in a group of LEI students learning French at CELE, observations were done focusing on the influence of English on French related to phonology, morphology, and syntax through the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. Then, at the end of the observations the transfer found was processed and the data were analyzed to obtain the answers to the research questions.

3.6 Piloting

This study was conducted in a group of LEI students learning French at CELE. It is important to point out that at the beginning of the qualitative observations, in the piloting part, the instrument was only one format containing the syntactic, lexical, and phonological transfer, however the researcher realized that it was difficult to gather the interference in the same format, since each level requires different aspects to consider. Therefore, three formats were designed and implemented so that the transfer in each level was classified appropriately during the observations.

3.7 Data Analysis

This research aimed to find the language transfer that LEI students face from English to French during the speaking part. Consequently, it was implemented a Contrastive Analysis between the two languages, comparing the phonological, lexical, and syntactic levels as suggested by (Jie, 2008) to identify the influence of one language on another one. Therefore, the data analysis was made through the following steps:

Once the transfer was classified in charts, the data were analyzed. At the syntactic level there were found patterns or structures that students tended to use frequently.

Afterwards, it was necessary to compare English and French syntax, lexicon, and phonology to know what structures, vocabulary or pronunciation tended to be the most repetitive.

In this chapter, the type of research and method were described in detail as well as the subjects, the instrument used and the procedure. The next chapter shows the results from the methodology.

CHAPTER IV: THE RESULTS

The previous chapter explained the methodology followed to collect and interpret data; type of research, type of method, participants, and instruments to carry out this research.

In this chapter, the results obtained from such instruments are arranged. The analysis of language transfer, that is, the interference from one foreign language to another, in this case, from English to French presented in LEI students is shown.

Syntax, phonology, and vocabulary are the three main aspects where most of the transfer was identified, and it will be described in charts to make it more precise for the readers.

4.1 Observations

Observations were used as the main technique to obtain the results for this research and to identify the most common transfer that students have from English to French, classified into three parts. The transfer was divided into syntactic, phonological, and lexical, represented by charts where some elements were transferred from one language to another.

4.2 Syntactic transfer

The results from this observation strongly imply that the learning of a second language, in this case, French, is related to the structure of a prior acquired language, which is English (Klein,1990). In this chart, there are five columns. In the first one, there are phrases that participants attempted to produce in French, whereas in the second column, the translation can be observed, which seems to be

a literal English translation. Finally, the third column contains the correct way to express the phrases from the first column.

Table 2

Syntactic transfer

French	English	Correct sentence	Male	Female
Blanc vin	White wine	Vin blanc	X	X
Rock musique	Rock music	Musique rock		X
Prochaine semaine	Next week	Semaine prochaine		X
Elle a longs cheveux	She has long hair	Elle a les cheveux longs		X
Je souvent mange des pâtes	I frequently eat pasta	Je mange souvent des pâtes		X

Analyzing the first two columns, the same grammatical structure, adjective + *noun*, was used in both languages. For instance, *blanc vin* is the phrase that a participant produced in French and translated into English; *white wine*, the structure *adjective + noun* corresponds to the English language but not to French, being *noun + adjective* the correct structure in French. Therefore, it could be said that this participant was trying to produce in the target language while using the same structure of the language in which he already has a higher level.

Similarly, in the second, third, and fourth phrases, a similar syntactic error is presented. Participants tended to use the same English structure *adjective + noun* such as in *rock musique, prochaine semaine* and *longs cheveux* without realizing that they are translating literally and, in this way, having a negative transfer from English to French.

Adjective + noun

Blanc vin
Rock musique
Prochaine semaine

Correct in the English syntax but not in French.
"The prior acquired language".

Noun + adjective

Vin blanc
Musique rock
Semaine prochaine

Correct in the target language
"French"
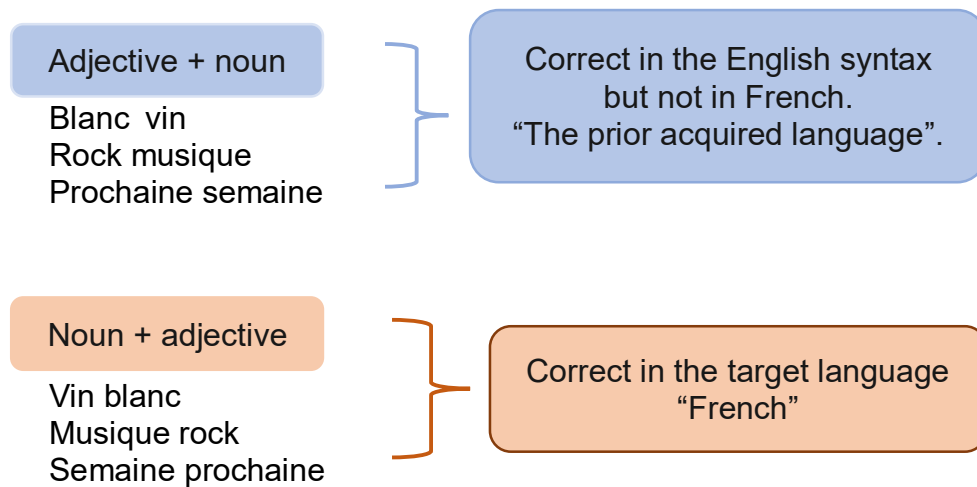
As illustrated in the charts above, students rely on their syntactical English knowledge, which is their second language, when learning French as a third language. On the other hand, Rotman (2013; cited in Westergaard et al., 2017) claims that a L3 learner makes comparisons between his L1 and L2 to see which language has more similarities to his L3 and transfer those similarities as a strategy to facilitate L3 learning. However, something interesting to point out is that even though Spanish is the students' first language and has more similarities than English to the target language; students do not use their first language, they rather use their second language to learn French.

Then, in the last sentence, there is a different grammar structure. Participants placed the adverb of time before the verb as it is normally done in English. For instance, the sentence *I frequently eat pasta* is syntactically correct in English. However, the same structure *Je souvent mange des pâtes* is not possible in French, being the phrase *Je mange souvent des pâtes* the correct one.

Therefore, markedness, which is a phenomenon where first language syntactical, phonological, or morphological aspects are more presented in second language learning and it is one of the factors that cause language transfer (Ellis, 2000), is presented in most of the participants at the syntactic level because most of the phrases produced by them present negative transfer or interference. Indeed, learners transfer the same grammatical English structures; *adjective+noun, adverb of time+verb.* Those are the structures that differ from French but learners have them as more marked, thus; learning to use the correct structures will be a little bit more difficult Eckman (1977).

4.3 Lexical transfer

The results from this observation indicate that because of the lack of knowledge in the target language, learners borrow vocabulary from the previous language, which usually occurs during the first stages of second language learning (Corder, 1977). In this chart, two columns can be noticed, in the first one, there are words in English that students used when they were speaking in French and they did not know the word in the target language, and in the second column, there are French words, which were appropriate to use at that moment when participants were speaking.

Table 3

Lexical transfer

English	French	Male	Female
Express	Exprimer		X
Projects	Projets	X	
Part	Partie	X	
Transcript	Transcription		X
Dance	Danser		X
Cry	Crier		X
Rest	Reposer	X	
Practice sport	Faire du sport	X	

It is important to point out that the first four words have a similar spelling in both languages. In this case, the words in English; *express, projects, part, transcript,* and *dance* seem almost the same in French; *exprimer, projets, partie, transcription* and *danser*. Additionally, those words have the same meaning being this a case of a positive transfer that participants implemented and took advantage of it to communicate. Clearly, the process of interlanguage is presented by learners through the similarities of both languages at the lexical level, learners tend to present one of the types of transfer, which is facilitation and try to establish rules or patterns

to follow (Eliis, 1994). At this point, it would be beneficial to provide learners a list of cognates to facilitate learners' ability to learn new vocabulary.

Nevertheless, the next diagram represents the two words in English; *cry* and *rest* have a similar spelling to the words in French; *crier* and *rester* but they do not mean the same, instead, their meaning is by far different; *shout* and *stay*, because they are false cognates, the words that participants may have used in French are *pleurer* and *se reposer,* which means *cry* and *rest* respectively.

cry	rest
crier	rester
shout	stay
pleurer	se reposer
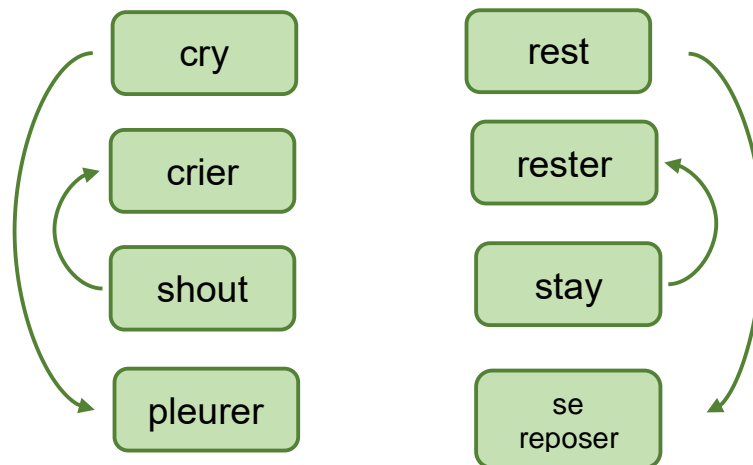
Therefore, it was noticed that because of the similar words in English and French, participants tended to use them to achieve communication. Nevertheless, the cognates can sometimes be adequate because they have the same meaning but sometimes, they are false cognates and do not fit in certain contexts. It can be noticed that the reason why students borrow some vocabulary from English, is because they have a higher level than French.

The English system has been developed first so it is the dominant language, whereas the French system is still in the process of development. Therefore, at the

moment of speaking the dominant language has an effect over the less dominant one (Klein, 1990).

4.4 Phonological transfer

The results from the phonological observation are consistent with the claim that learners try to find patterns or rules to follow to facilitate their learning process (Ellis, 1994) and that can be demonstrated when learners see that words have the same or similar spelling, they used the pronunciation of the language system they are familiarized with, which most of the time, was not the appropriate.

Same or similar spelling in English and French ≠ Same pronunciation in both languages

Avoidance
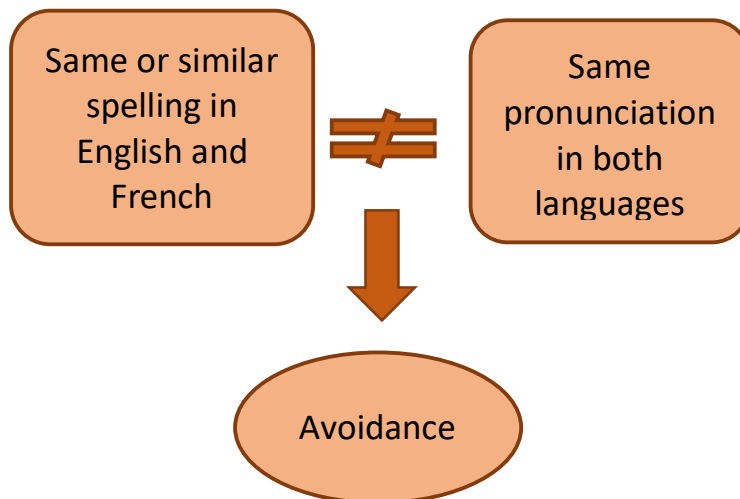
French phonology is characterized by its nasal sounds, which do not exist in English nor in Spanish. Thus, learners prefer to use English phonology as a well-acquainted system. Consequently, learners presented another type of manifestation of transfer: avoidance (Kellerman, 1992); and the reason why it is because they find French phonology as complex.

The first column of the chart shows French words and their pronunciation with phonetic symbols in the second column. Then, in the third and fourth columns, the

exact words are in English with their pronunciation. It can be noticed that the first

three words, *document, phrase,* and *change*, have the same spelling in both

languages. For this reason, when the participants were speaking in the target

language, they pronounced those words like in English. However, as the chart

shows, they are not pronounced in the same way. Most French words are

pronounced with nasal sounds and omitted by the participants and replaced with

English ones instead.

Table 4

Phonological transfer

French word	Phonetic transcript	English word	Phonetic transcript	Male	Female
Document	[dɔkymɑ̃]	Document	[ˈdɒkjumənt]	X	
Phrase	[fʀɑz]	Phrase	[ˈfreɪz]		X
Orange	[ɔʀɑ̃ʒ]	Orange	[ˈɒrɪndʒ]	X	
Changer	[ʃɑ̃ʒe]	Change	[ˈtʃeɪndʒ]	X	
Musicien	[myzisjɛ̃, jɛn]	Musician	[mjuːˈzɪʃᵊn]		X

The findings from this observation highlight those learners presented interference

from the dominant language, which is English, that is clearly a disadvantage when

trying to communicate (Kelly, 2000). Nevertheless, the results of this research

provide supporting evidence that transfer is presented in two different

manifestations, which are: facilitation of the structures and lexicon already known

and avoidance of the phonology that is difficult for learners (Ellis,1994). Finally, the present results are consistent with the claim that transfer happens at different linguistic levels (Ellis, 2000) phonological, syntactic, and lexical.
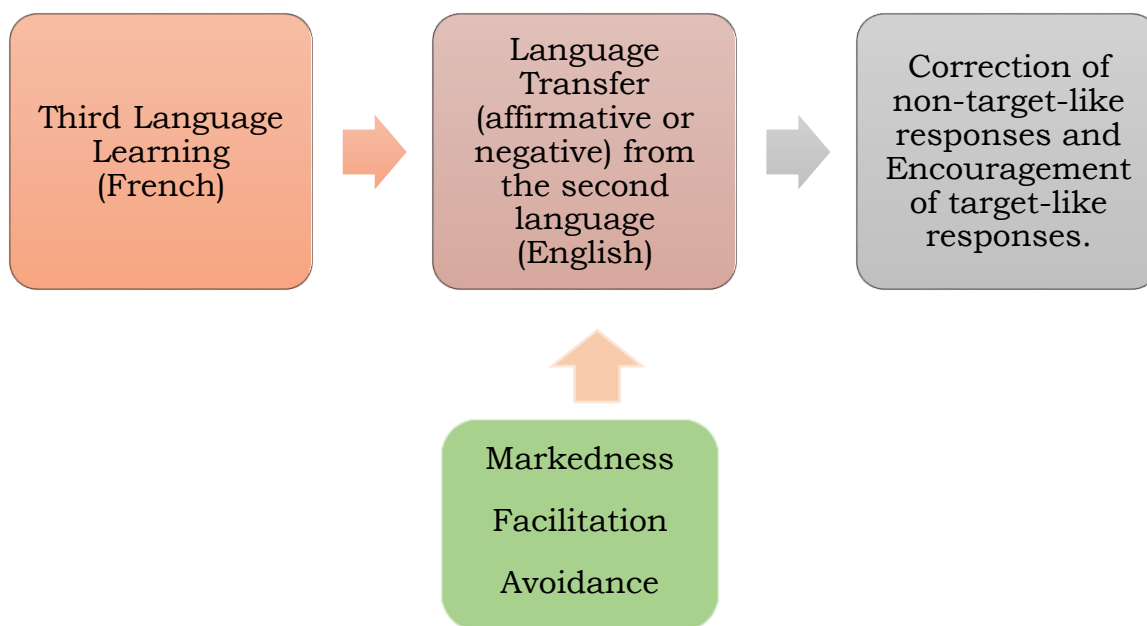
4.5 Influence of English knowledge on learners

The participants' first language is Spanish however, as revealed by the observations, their second language, English, has a major effect when students learn French as a third language. Besides, learners' first language was acquired in an implicit way; therefore, it is stored in the procedural memory (Westergaard et al., 2017 p.668). Nevertheless, English and French are learned in the same way, as foreign languages, so both are stored into the declarative memory. Consequently, students take the knowledge from the English language to learn French.

Indeed, English transfer, rather than Spanish transfer, was found in learners while applying the instrument for this research. Observations were divided into syntactical, lexical, and phonological and in each level and after a contrastive analysis of both languages, there was found transfer in the three parts. Most of the learners presented facilitation, markedness, and avoidance of English on French.

4.6 The process students follow to learn French as a third language

Language transfer occurs in the process of third language learning in LEI students learning French as a third language, it is caused by different factors and might be affirmative or negative. The next diagram depicts the process students follow to learn French based on the observations.

Third Language Learning (French) → Language Transfer (affirmative or negative) from the second language (English) → Correction of non-target-like responses and Encouragement of target-like responses.

Markedness / Facilitation / Avoidance

There are some factors that cause language transfer presented in students learning French as a third language; markedness, facilitation and avoidance from the previous language students have learned first, English.

In the first place, markedness was presented when students used the English syntax; there were some English structures students applied, such as *adjective+ noun,* that is a structure they have more marked or identified in English, so they use that pattern in their target language. Secondly, facilitation occurred when students used their English lexicon; to compensate the vocabulary that it is missing in French and in this case most of the words have a similar spelling in both languages and have the same meaning being this positive transfer. Finally, avoidance is another factor that took place at the phonological level, French is a language well-known for

its nasal sounds that do not exist in English, learners avoided difficult systems and replaced them for the ones they already know, which was the English phonology.

Certainly, in the process of third language learning LEI students need to be corrected by their teachers when producing non-target-like responses and at the same time it is essential to encourage target-like-responses. Another important aspect to be considered is that if teachers knew that their students already learned English as their second language, they would take advantage of their knowledge and overtime negative language transfer could be diminished.

This chapter explained the results from the observations as well as the analysis of language transfer considering different levels, syntax, phonology, and lexicon. Hence, the influence of English knowledge on learners and the process students follow to learn French as a third language were described.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter presents the conclusions and answers to the research questions proposed at the beginning of this paper. Besides, the implications and limitations of this research are explained. Finally, some recommendations and directions for further research of this study are considered.

5.1 Conclusions

The English level that students have can influence the acquisition of French as a third language. Alvarez (2014) defines negative transfer as occurring when the target language and the second language systems do not match very well regarding structure and meaning. Throughout the observations of nine LEI students taking French courses at CELE, negative transfer mainly was found, classified into syntax, phonology, and lexicon. In the case of syntax, it was noticed that when speaking in the target language, which in this case is French, students tended to borrow some structures from English. In other words, most of the students did a literal translation of English into French, presenting a negative transfer since both languages do not follow the same grammatical structures.

Contrarily, Bardovi (2017) points out that positive transfer could be an advantage for vocabulary acquisition. She says that because of the similarity in vocabulary in the L1 and TL the recognition of new words can be satisfactory while learning a new language. The subjects of this research presented positive transfer in lexicon since some words are spelt in the same way and have the same meaning in English and French. Then, while learners were speaking, they took advantage of those similarities to reach communication. However, not all the words spelt in the same

way in both languages have the same meaning. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the cognates and false cognates to use the correct word.

Additionally, students tended to give the same pronunciation to the words spelt in the same way, being this a case of negative transfer. Clearly, when students realized that many words in French were written almost in the same way as in English, they pronounced them similarly.

5.2 Research questions

The questions that guided this research were:

1. How do LEI students learn French as a third language?
2. How do LEI students use their knowledge to learn French?
3. What kind of transfer do LEI students commit when learning French?

5.2.1 Answer to the first research question

How do LEI students learn French as a third language?

According to the observations and instruments applied during this research paper, when learning French as a third language LEI students rely on their second language knowledge, English, rather than on their first language. Language transfer in LEI students is presented thorough different factors: facilitation, markedness, and avoidance. However, the correction of non-target-like responses and the encouragement of target-like responses as well as some activities where students use their cognitive system, such as, perception, problem solving, etc., may facilitate students' third language learning.

5.2.2 Answer to the second research question

How do LEI students use their knowledge to learn French?

The lack of knowledge in French makes students use the language they are familiarized with, English. At the lexical level, some words helped participants to overcome the lack of lexicon in the target language since they are spelt almost in the same way and have the same meaning in both languages facilitating students' third language learning. However, there are also false cognates, which students need to be aware of. Nevertheless, similar words have a very different pronunciation in each language, which leads students to have negative transfer in pronunciation. At the phonological level, learners facilitate their learning process by looking for patterns or rules to follow. For instance, students pronounce words that have a similar spelling in both languages using the English phonology and at the same time learners avoid difficult systems, French phonology. Finally, at the syntactical level, learners apply the knowledge from the prior acquired language, using the English word order, which is the structure they have as more marked or better familiarized with.

5.2.3 Answer to the third research question

What kind of transfer do LEI students commit when learning French?

The results obtained from this research showed that the participants analyzed in the study presented language transfer at the syntactic, lexical, and phonological levels. The transfer presented in syntax is all negative since students tend to use the English word order in French because of the markedness learners have from English as their second language.

However, in the lexical part, there is both positive and negative transfer. In other words, when participants attempted to speak, they used words that had similar spelling and the same meaning in both languages, which worked perfectly; but following this strategy led to false cognates. Therefore, one of the factors that cause language transfer took place; facilitation since learners compensate their lack of vocabulary using the words from their second language, facilitating then, their third language learning.

Lastly, when participants knew that a word in English and French had the exact or similar spelling and meaning, they took for granted that the pronunciation was the same, presenting negative transfer at the phonological level. Besides, most of the time learners did not prove if the way they pronounce was the correct one, avoiding the French phonology because they consider it as difficult.

5.3 Implications

Overall, the results of this research conclude that the most common transfer was presented at the moment of attempting to produce vocabulary in the target language. Besides, teachers may find it helpful to identify what the structures, words and pronunciation learners transfer form English to French and in this way, they could work on this transfer during speaking activities to reduce them.

5.4 Limitations of the study

Although this research has reached its aims, this work clearly had some limitations. Throughout the procedure of this research, some problems made the collection of

data slower. To begin with, when the instrument was being applied, the participants stopped attending classes. It would have been better if the participants had said that they were not available to participate in classes, mainly because they knew they would be subjects of a project. Therefore, it took time to look for another group of participants with the needed requirements. Furthermore, doing the observations with the other participants took a month and perhaps a bit more because of the holidays, the absences that students had and the canceled classes for the teacher's reasons.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

Some directions for further studies are described below:

- Future researchers should consider giving students techniques and strategies to overcome the transfer found in phonological, syntactic, and lexical levels and then check if there is a difference without strategies and with them.

- This work has revealed the transfer of English during the acquisition of French as a third language by LEI students. However, it can also be investigated on LEF students learning English as a third language.

- The study may provide more information if the observations are completed with the teachers' and students' perceptions towards the transfer presented.

- Further studies could also focus on comparing teachers' experiences towards the transfer of third language acquisition.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

Syntactic observation format

French	English	Correct sentence	Male	Female

Lexical observation format

English	French	Male	Female

Phonological observation format

French word	Phonetic transcript	English word	Phonetic transcript	Male	Female