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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHNICITY, CLI AND ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH AS L3

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Abstract

Due to the great importance of the English language nowadays, Israeli educational authorities have established a goal of reaching the highest achievable standards of excellence for teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language in Israeli schools. In order to achieve this aim, various factors have to be taken into consideration. The current paper is a fragment of the study which aimed to identify diverse factors, linguistic as well as non-linguistic, that predict acquisition of English as L3 by bilingual children of the immigrants from the FSU in Israel. This paper seeks to present and discuss the relationship between CLI, learners' ethnicity and L3 acquisition. Both bilingual learners of English as L3 (*n=32*), between ages 11-12, born to the immigrants from the FSU in Israel and their parents (*n=32*), took part in this investigation. The L3 acquisition was measured by the means of grades achieved in the English proficiency test (mean = 90, Sd = 7.7). The relationship between CLI, ethnicity and L3 acquisition was analysed by multiple linear regression model (r2 = 0.433 F = 11.08 df = 2 Sig.< 0.001). Both factors, CLI and ethnicity, were found as significant predictors of L3 acquisition. The higher score in English test was found in L3 Jewish learners as opposed to their Non-Jewish peers, with a low percent of Total Transfer Errors.

Keywords: L3 acquisition, ethnicity, CLI, English, bilingual.

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1. Introduction

The development of technologies, great mobility as well as social and cultural growth, have promoted English as the lingua franca used in various areas of human life (Cenoz, 2004; Ellinger, 2000). In today's era of globalization, English is very often seen as a predictor of social and economic success (Yuko, 2013) which in turn enhances learning of English as the main international language throughout the world for personal and communicational purposes (Ellinger, 2000; Kernerman, 1994; Yuko, 2013). Also in Israel, where English is used in areas such as tourism, business, technology, media and academy, to name only some (Ellinger, 2000; Haim, 2014; Shohamy, 2014), it is taught as a foreign language (FL) in most Israeli schools from third to twelfth grade (Shohamy, 2014). In order to reach the highest standards in FL education in Israel (Ministry of Education, 2013), diverse factors have to be taken into consideration whereas one of them is learners' characteristics (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

This paper is an excerpt of the study which aimed to identify factors that promote acquisition of English as L3 learnt in a formal setting in Israeli schools by bilingual children born to the immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU). While the larger-scale investigation intended to examine correlation between various factors and L3 acquisition, this paper aims to present and discuss only the relationship between ethnicity, CLI and L3 acquisition.

1.1. Factors Promoting L2 and L3 Acquisition

Previous studies conducted both in Israel (Abu Rabia, 1996; Ellinger, 2000; Haim, 2014) and elsewhere (Cenoz, 2001, 2003a, 2004; De Angelis, 2015; Dörnyei, 2003; Hammarberg, 2010; Lightbown & Spada, 1999, among others) identified various factors that promote acquisition of L2 and L3. However, no absolute convention regarding factors that play the most decisive role in acquisition of languages learnt subsequently to L1, has been reached yet. For instance, it was found that parental attitudes, parental involvement in children's FL education (Sung & Padilla, 1998) and parental education (De Angelis, 2015) contribute to L3 learning. As if focusing on the studies conducted in Israel, it was established that factors such as learners' cultural background (Abu Rabia, 1996) and learners' ethnolinguistic identity (Ellinger, 2000) have an impact on L3 learning. Moreover, demographic, linguistic and social-psychological variables (Haim, 2014) can predict acquisition of a target language, i.e., either L2 or L3, on the whole, or at the very least, might have a positive impact on certain aspects of language learning e.g., reading comprehension skills (Abu Rabia, 1996) and academic performance in the L3 (Haim, 2014).

With regard to linguistic variables, knowledge of previously acquired languages has a strong effect on additional language learning (Bialystok, 2001; Bialystok, Craik, Green, & Gollan, 2009). To be more specific, bilingualism was found to be an advantageous factor in L3 acquisition as it predicts "better general proficiency in English irrespective of other factors, such as intelligence, age, exposure or motivation" (Mesaros, 2008, p. 6). Furthermore, bilingual learners who have a rich linguistic background may rely on their knowledge of previously acquired languages in the process of L3 learning (Herdina & Jessner, 2002). Also, they are capable of applying improved learning strategies in addition to their cognitive flexibility and high metalinguistic awareness which they have developed while learning additional non-native languages (Cenoz, 2000, 2003a; Hammarberg, 2010). Further, the fact that languages interact with each other as in the instances of cross-linguistic influence (CLI), can also affect L3 acquisition (Cenoz, 2001; Hammarberg,

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2001; Slabakova, 2016; Westergaard, Mitrofanova, Mykhaylyk, & Rodina, 2017). However, the beneficial impact of bilingualism on L3 language acquisition was noticed only in general aspects of L3 proficiency as opposed to the more particular facets of language learning (Cenoz, 2003a).

Some of the previous studies also explored different combinations of non-linguistic and linguistic variables that contribute to L3 learning. For example, the combination of parental education and L2 exposure (De Angelis, 2015); demographic and social-psychological factors combined with linguistic variables (Haim, 2014) to name only some.

1.2. Language and Ethnic Identity

Multiple studies in the field of FL learning have examined a relationship between identity and language in multilingual settings while taking varied approaches (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), e.g., a *sociopsychological* approach which is based upon Tajfel's *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). In accordance with this view, one's self-concept is based upon emotionally significant membership within a certain social group whereas there is an inseparable connection between language and ethnic identity (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). One of the most prominent theories explaining this relationship is the *Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory* (ELIT) proposed by Giles and Byrne (1982). This theory, which is also drawn upon *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 2004) as well as upon subjective ethnolinguistic vitality (Bourhis, Giles, & Rosenthal, 1981), points out that language is a medium which allows members of one ethnic group to vary from members of all other linguistic groups thus playing a role of "a salient marker of ethnic identity and group membership" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 4). Also, as the same person might concurrently belong to several groups, only through the use of a language one can establish his/her affiliation to any specific group at any particular moment (Ellinger, 2000). For instance, in Israel, the country inhabited by representatives of different ethnic groups and cultures due to the massive immigration as well as country's historical setting, the vast majority of people speak Hebrew, state's official language, yet heritage languages which form an inseparable feature of ethnic identity (Ben-Rafael, 1994), are used in the home and close community. Thus, most of Israelis simultaneously become members of at least two distinctive groups and language performs as a means for achieving this "psychological distinctiveness" (Ellinger, 2000, p. 293). Interestingly, a strong feeling of belonging to a certain group determines the extent of acquisition of the majority language (Ellinger, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). It can be exemplified quite vividly by a linguistic behaviour of the immigrants from the FSU in Israel who most frequently see themselves as "Russians", retain Russian language as an inseparable part of their "Russian" identity and as a result find it difficult to achieve high proficiency in Hebrew, country's main language (Giles & Byrne, 1982; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

Despite the fact that some immigrants fear to lose their ethnic identity once they embrace a new culture and language, this anxiety has little to do with L3 acquisition of English since this language is learnt for pragmatic purposes such as international communication and does not threaten the main state's language (Fishman, Cooper, & Conard, 1977). Moreover, inasmuch English is viewed as a "status symbol, a power asset, and a boundary marker" (Ben-Rafael, 1994, p. 188), most Israelis, including immigrants, have positive attitudes both towards the language and English-speaking people (Ellinger, 2000). Furthermore, unlike changes caused to one's self-identity by L2 acquisition, L3 learning does not anticipate any alternation in the identity of L3 learners, thus is not viewed as a threat (Ellinger, 2000). In addition, "a

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learner's ethnolinguistic (group) and ethnic/language (personal) identity" (Ellinger, 2000, p. 297) contribute to success of FL learning. In this view, learners' ethnolinguistic identity might facilitate acquisition of English which is taught as a FL in Israel. Also, leaners who have previously acquired a number of languages prior to learning a FL, exhibit a lower level of foreign language anxiety (FLA) since they are "more confident in their ability to overcome communicative difficulties" (Dewaele & Stavans, 2014, p. 204), hence, demonstrating impressive results in L3 learning.

Nevertheless, before exploring any further a connection between ethnicity and FL acquisition, we should try to clarify the concept of the former. Ellinger (2000) claims that ethnic identity is the notion that cannot be easily defined as while it might refer to one's individual orientation toward his ethnic origins, it could be also used to denote one's race or culture and might have a rather negative connotation due to certain historical events (Fishman, 2010). Ben-Rafael (1994) maintains that ethnicity "refers to the social diversity accounted for cultural factors" (p.24) which is usually induced by immigration, demographic changes, national assimilation, religious proselytism, etc. In a country such as Israel, it becomes even more difficult to establish what this concept stands for as Israel is inhabited not only by immigrants that come from various backgrounds, but also by the natives of these lands who belong to distinct ethnic groups and vary from each other through language, ethnic identity and culture (Ben-Rafael, 1994). In other words, a language not only takes a significant part in communication within a particular group, but also stands for ethnic unity of all group members. Moreover, in Israel, the Hebrew language plays a pivotal role in "defining modern Israeli identity" (Spolsky, 1996) even though many immigrants retain clear linguistic traces of their origin.

For the purpose of the study in general and this paper in particular, it has been decided to use the term '*ethnicity*' to address participants' identification with a particular cultural group, i.e., Jewish or Non-Jewish, without any attachment to their religious affiliation. The term *'ethnolinguistic identity'* is used to refer to students' connection to their origin and mother tongue of their parents (Ellinger, 2000).

1.3. CLI and L3 Acquisition

Cross-linguistic influence (CLI) is closely related to acquisition of languages by bilingual learners (Cenoz, 2001; Tremblay, 2006; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010). Typically, this term is used to describe "the influence of a person's knowledge of one language on that person's knowledge or use of another language" (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010, p. 49). It is an internal phenomenon (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010, p. 49) which is caused by interaction between different languages in the mind of bilingual and multilingual speakers (Cenoz, 2001; Hammarberg, 2001; Slabakova, 2016; Ringbom, 2001; Tremblay, 2006). The concept was initially proposed by Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986) as an inclusive term for describing varied phenomena connected to the relationships between languages such as transfer, interference, avoidance, borrowing, etc. in second language acquisition (SLA), yet today it is frequently used alongside the term *transfer* in the context of both L2 and L3 acquisition (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010).

The phenomena of CLI has been explored and discussed in the context of L3 acquisition (Cenoz, 2001; Hammarberg, 2001; Slabakova, 2016; Westergaard et al., 2017;) and numerous factors for its occurrence were established. Previous findings suggest that multilingual speakers are capable of using two or more languages and their choice of language is affected by such factors as linguistic typology, L2 status, language proficiency, recency of acquisition and language mode (Cenoz, 2001, 2003b). In addition, learners

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might use different languages, either L1 or/and L2, for different purposes as was reported by Hammarberg (2001) whose multilingual subject with English as L1 and German as L2, used English for seeking help from her interlocutor (interactional strategy), whereas German occurred in her speech without any pragmatic purpose, thus proving to be "the default supplier for transfer lapses" (Cenoz, 2003b, p. 4). Also, Cenoz (2001, 2003c) in her study of Spanish/Basque bilinguals, found that Basque was the principle source language applied in the cases of interactional strategies (intentional switches) while Spanish was used in the instance of transfer lapses (non-intentional switches) in the oral production of English as L3.

While taking into consideration factors that affect CLI and thus promote L3 learning, we cannot ignore Ellinger's (2000) claim that learners' ethnic as well as ethnolinguistic identity might have a great impact on acquisition of a target language. This type of relationship can be seen in a preference of one language over another which might affect the process of L3 learning.

1.4. The Israeli Case

Israel is a Middle Eastern democratic country with a population of 8,793,000 people, inhabited by Jews (6,556,000), Arabs (1,837,000) and additional minority groups such as the Druze, the Bedouins and the Circassians (totally 426,000) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Today, almost 40% of the country's population consists of the veteran and new immigrants from the FSU, North and South America, Europe and Africa (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). With the establishment of the state, both Hebrew and Arabic[1] languages were declared as official languages of Israel, while English, which had been already present as one of the three official languages in Palestine alongside with Hebrew and Arabic due to the British mandatory rule (Or & Shohamy, 2017), was deprived of its official status. The additional languages brought along by Jewish immigrants from various countries around the globe, created "a unique lingual-cultural laboratory" (Stavans & Narkiss, 2004, p. 140). In spite of the great variety of heritage languages, also today Hebrew is the main official language which is used in all areas of Israeli life and by representatives of all ethnolinguistic groups. Until recently, Hebrew has been seen "as one of the major cornerstones for establishing a cohesive Israeli society" (Inbar-Lourie, 2011, p. 82). The official monolingual language policy was adopted soon after the establishment of the state and all immigrants were highly encouraged to abandon their heritage language in favour of the country's official language and quick integration into Israeli society fostering Jewish identity in every possible way, which in some cases resulted in loss of the mother tongue and even its complete disappearance (Abu Rabia, 1996; Inbar-Lourie, 2011). The desire to fortify Israeli identity by the means of the Hebrew language could be partially explained by ethnolinguistic identity theory as Hebrew language enabled to distinguish the Jewish citizens of the country from representatives of non-Jewish groups living within the country as well as abroad (Ellinger, 2000).

1.5. Immigrants from the FSU in Israel

The largest ethnic group, over one million people, living in Israel is the one of the immigrants from the FSU (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Even though Israel is the Jewish state, not all of these

[1] According to the Basic Law Proposal on July 19, 2018, Israel was declared as the Nation-State of the Jewish People with Hebrew as the only official language.

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immigrants are of a Jewish origin, i.e., according to the population registry from 2014, 27 % of the immigrants from the FSU reported themselves as not-belonging to any specific religion and 1% reported themselves as Christians (Shafes, 2016). Those numbers are especially significant in the context of a strong ethnic identity as Non-Jewish immigrants form an additional ethnic subgroup with regards to their nationality or/and religion. Further, for the Non-Jewish immigrants, the sense of identity that should link them to the new country and its population, might differ from the identity shared by the Jewish immigrants and other members of Israeli society (Ben-Rafael, Olshtain, & Geijst, 1997).

As most of the immigrants from the FSU were not driven by Zionism, but by the aspiration to upgrade their living conditions, they are typically characterized by any lack of affinity to their Jewish roots and Zionist ideas (Ben-Rafael, 1994; Ben-Rafael et al., 1997). Instead, they strongly identify with the Russian culture and language which has become an inseparable part of their ethnic identity (Ben-Rafael, 1994). They are prone to creating separate groups in order to maintain their cultural and linguistic roots and to transfer their heritage to the next generations (Ben-Rafael, 1994). Paradoxically enough, they also aspire to be integrated within the host society (Ben-Rafael et al., 1997). Yet, the tendency for distinct groups formation alongside with extremely weak connection to Jewish culture (Ben-Rafael, 1994), very often hinder the process of assimilation in a new country (Ben-Rafael et al., 1997). Frequently, whereas undergoing a process of Hebraization, these immigrants do not wish to lose the Russian language, therefore, becoming bilingual "with a clear tendency to draw the line between the public sphere and the family" (Ben-Rafael, 1994, p. 148), yet are quite capable of alternating between two cultures.

2. Problem Statement

Despite multiple studies in the field of L3 acquisition, there is no definite answer to the question which factors promote L3 acquisition by young bilingual learners as it might be conditioned to certain linguistic, cultural and social-psychological variables.

3. Research Questions

The research question this paper aspires to provide an answer to is: "To what extent does the ethnic identity affect the L3 acquisition?" It was hypothesized that a difference will be found between students from the Jewish families and students from the Non-Jewish families regarding the L3 acquisition.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the larger-scale study, this paper is a fragment of, was to understand which factors contribute to acquisition of English as L3 learnt in a formal educational context by bilingual children from the families of the Russian speaking immigrants in Israel.

5. Research Methods

In order to explore factors that predict L3 acquisition, a mixed-methods design which allows for a mixture of diverse methods at different stages of the investigation and provides a more solid data, was

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employed (Creswell, 2009). Hence, the instruments used for collecting the required data were adopted from both a quantitative research, i.e., a questionnaire and tests, as well as a qualitative study, namely, audio- and video recordings of the wordless picture story.

6. Findings

The final sample of the study comprised bilingual children *(n=32)* and their parents *(n=32)*. The major portion of demographic and linguistic data were self-reported by the adult participants. Most parents self-reported as being Jewish (75%) born in the FSU (97%). Children reported that Russian is spoken in 53% of the families from the sample, 13% speak Hebrew as the main language and 34% use a combination of Russian and Hebrew for the interactional purposes in the home.

The English test score was used as an indicator of the English language acquisition. The test scores are relatively high. An average score is 90 (SD = 7.7). The distribution of scores is presented below in Figure 01.

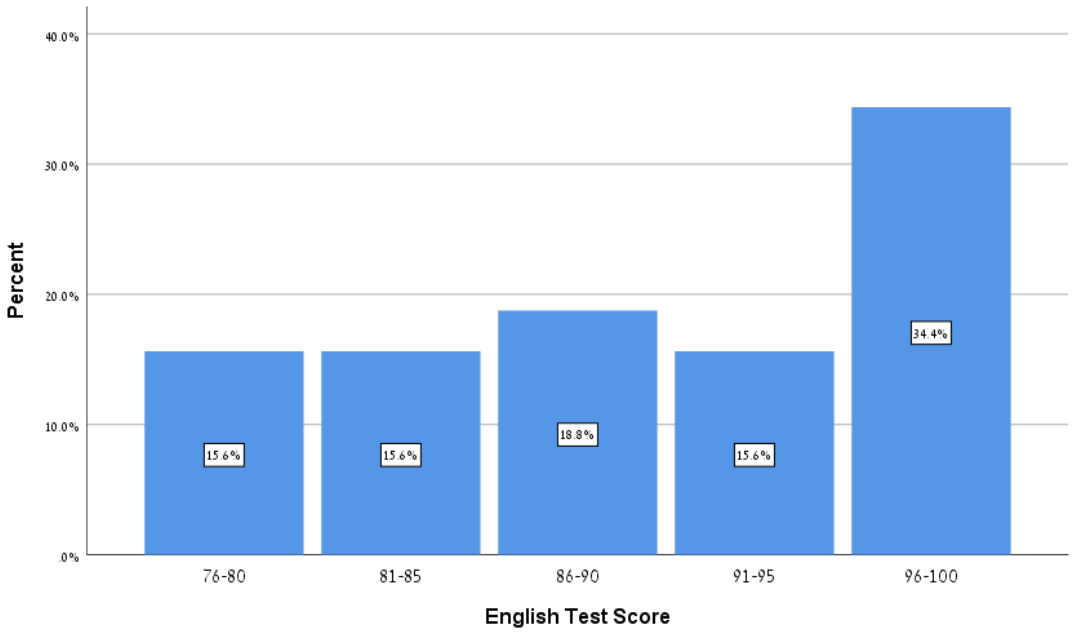

Figure 01. The distribution of the English test score

A univariate analysis was performed to examine a relationship between ethnicity and L3 acquisition measured by the means of the English proficiency test score. The difference between 24 Jewish and 8 Non-Jewish students was tested by employing a t-test for two independent groups. The average score for the Jewish learners was 91.4 (Sd = 7.83) and the average score for the Non-Jewish learners was 86.7 (Sd = 6.56). Despite the significant difference between the averages, the distinction between the scores of two groups was found statistically insignificant (t = 1.51 df = 30 Sig = 0.141).

A difference between 17 learners reporting that Russian is the main language spoken in the home, 4 learners who reported that Hebrew is the main home language and 11 learners claiming to speak both languages in the home, was tested by performing the ANOVA test. The mean scores in all three groups are very similar (89 to 90.7) and the difference is statistically insignificant (F = 0.083 df = 2.29 sig = 0.921).

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The statistical conclusion based on the univariate analysis did not confirm the hypothesis of this study and no connection between ethnicity and the acquisition of English as L3 was found.

However, during further statistical investigation, it was found that CLI is a variable that is influenced by ethnicity (see Table 01) and is closely related to the English test score (see Table 02).

Table 01. The relationship between ethnicity and CLI

	Ethnic Identity	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**Sig.**
Total Transfer Errors	Jewish	24	7.37%	3.00%	0.36	0.717
	Non-Jewish	8	6.89%	3.81%		
Lexical Transfer from Russian	Jewish	24	7.39%	11.04%	-2.8	0.023
	Non-Jewish	8	51.50%	43.25%		
Lexical Transfer from Hebrew	Jewish	24	92.60%	11.04%	2.8	0.023
	Non-Jewish	8	48.49%	43.25%		
Total Lexical Transfer	Jewish	24	77.76%	17.71%	-2.2	0.031
	Non-Jewish	8	92.97%	11.48%		
Syntactic Transfer from Russian	Jewish	24	3.53%	11.05%	-0.701	0.502
	Non-Jewish	8	12.50%	35.35%		
Syntactic Transfer from Hebrew	Jewish	24	75.63%	41.10%	2.13	0.041
	Non-Jewish	8	37.50%	51.75%		
Total Syntactic Transfer	Jewish	24	22.23%	17.71%	2.26	0.031
	Non-Jewish	8	7.02%	11.48%		
Interactional Strategies from Russian	Jewish	24	13.71%	32.19%	-3.31	0.002
	Non-Jewish	8	59.03%	37.34%		
Interactional Strategies from Hebrew	Jewish	24	38.77%	23.99%	-0.2	0.836
	Non-Jewish	8	41.09%	36.05%		
Transfer Lapses from Russian	Jewish	24	19.15%	37.93%	0.42	0.670
	Non-Jewish	8	15.34%	12.69%		
Transfer Lapses from Hebrew	Jewish	24	23.92%	26.40%	1.22	0.229
	Non-Jewish	8	10.79%	25.47%		
Total Transfer Lapses	Jewish	24	7.37%	3.00%	0.36	0.717
	Non-Jewish	8	6.89%	3.81%		

The results presented in Table 01 indicate that both Jewish and Non-Jewish learners make almost the same number of total transfer errors, yet Jewish learners tend to transfer more lexical items from Hebrew as opposed to their Non-Jewish peers who tend to transfer more lexical items from Russian. Also, Non-Jewish learners perform more lexical transfers from both Russian and Hebrew than their Jewish counterparts. In addition, Jewish learners perform more syntactic transfer errors from Hebrew, whereas Non-Jewish learners make more syntactic transfer errors from Russian. Further, Non-Jewish learners use Russian for interactional strategies more often than their Jewish peers, while Jewish learners use Hebrew for interactional strategies slightly less often than the Non-Jewish learners. As for the transfer lapses from Russian, the difference between two groups of learners is insignificant, however transfer lapses from Hebrew is more frequent among Jewish learners.

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Table 02. Correlation coefficient between the English test score and the CLI

Total Transfer from Russian and Hebrew	Correlation Coefficient	-.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
Lexical Transfer from Russian	Correlation Coefficient	-.382*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031
Lexical Transfer from Hebrew	Correlation Coefficient	.382*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031
Total Lexical Transfer	Correlation Coefficient	-.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.607
Syntactic Transfer from Russian	Correlation Coefficient	-.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.929
Syntactic Transfer from Hebrew	Correlation Coefficient	.130
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.478
Total Syntactic Transfer	Correlation Coefficient	.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.607
Interactional Strategies from Russian	Correlation Coefficient	-.268
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.138
Interactional Strategies from Hebrew	Correlation Coefficient	-.211
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.246
Transfer Lapses from Russian	Correlation Coefficient	-.313
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.082
Transfer Lapses from Hebrew	Correlation Coefficient	-.377*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034

The data from the findings presented in Table 02 indicate that total percent of transfer errors are negatively correlated with the English test score. Lexical transfer from Russian is negatively correlated with the English test score unlike lexical transfer from Hebrew which is positively correlated with the English test score.

The statistical correlation between CLI and ethnicity and the statistical correlation between CLI and the English test score were the basis for a multivariate analysis used to predict acquisition of English as L3. The relationship between various aspects of CLI, ethnicity and L3 acquisition was analysed by employing a multiple linear regression model ($R^2 = 0.433$ $F = 11.08$ $df = 2$ $Sig. < 0.001$). Both factors, CLI and ethnicity, were found as significant predictors of L3 acquisition. The higher score in the English test was found among the L3 Jewish learners with a lower percent of total transfer errors from both Russian and Hebrew as opposed to their Non-Jewish peers (Figure 02).

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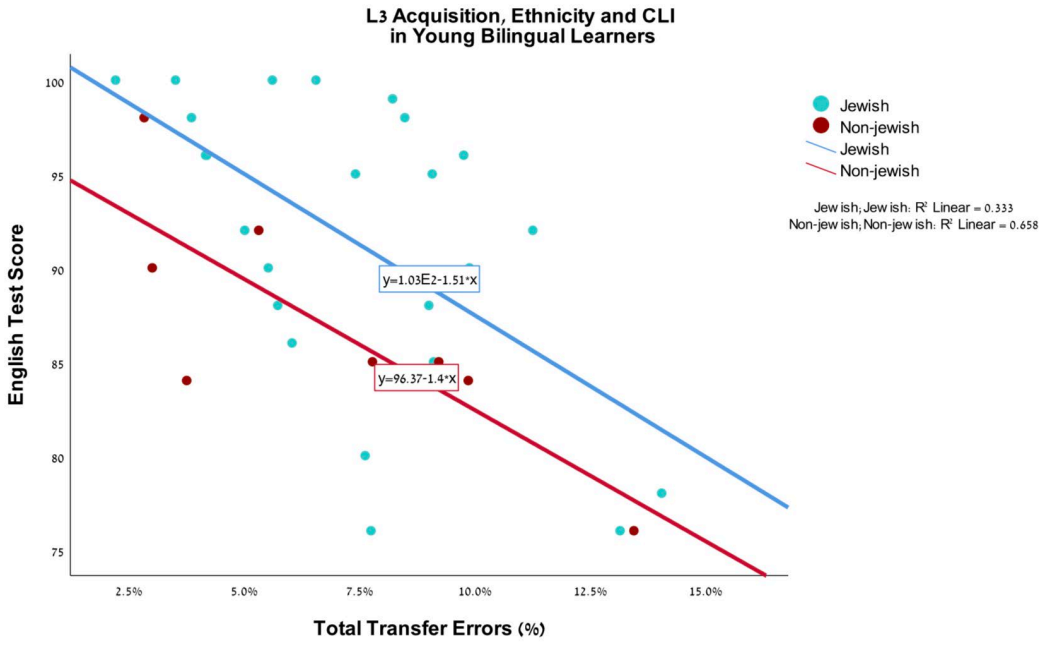

Figure 02. L3 Acquisition, Ethnicity and CLI

7. Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicate that both Russian and Hebrew languages are used as default suppliers for overall lexical transfer, but while Jewish learners use Hebrew as the source language, Non-Jewish learners employ Russian for this purpose. The difference between two groups regarding the choice of a default language designates that Hebrew language appears to be part of Jewish learners' ethnolinguistic identity while Russian language is inseparable constituent of Non-Jewish children's linguistic and cultural identity. This idea is compatible with Ellinger's (2000) claim that one's ethnolinguistic identity determines preference of one language over another. Nevertheless, it has been taken into consideration that a choice of a supplier language can be conditioned to the learners' belief that Hebrew and English (in the case of Jewish learners) or Russian and English (in the case of the Non-Jewish ones) are typologically close languages as they share certain cognates (Ringbom, 2001). Also, while in the case of Jewish learners lexical transfer from Hebrew has a positive impact on learning of English, in the case of the Non-Jewish learners its impact is negative. This finding is compatible with the one made by Westergaard et al. (2017) who claim for both a facilitative and non-facilitative impact of all previously acquired languages due to the "linguistic proximity at an abstract level" (p.677).

In addition, it was found that less proficient English learners tend to make more transfer lapses errors. This finding corresponds with the evidence obtained from the earlier studies which maintain that the less proficient L3 learners tend to transfer more items from their L1 and L2 and the situation changes as learners become more proficient in L3 (Cenoz, 2001; Hammarberg, 2001; Ringbom, 2001).

In conclusion, Jewish learners tend to produce more errors while relying on Hebrew as their source language while errors made by Non-Jewish learners are affected by Russian. This finding is consistent with Spolsky's (1996) assertion that one's ethnic identity defines the choice of the main source language.

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