

### **Morpho-syntactic transfer in L3 acquisition**

This paper examines with two tests three transfer hypotheses in adult L3 acquisition: (1) Developmentally Moderated Transfer Hypothesis (DMTH) (e.g. Pienemann et al. 2005), where transfer is constraint by the learner's developmental stage; (2) Full L1 transfer theories (FT1) (e.g. Schwartz & Sprouse 1998), where L1 syntax constitutes the initial L3 state; and (3) Full L2 transfer theories (FT2) (e.g. Bardel & Falk 2007), where L2 blocks L1 transfer.

The hypotheses were tested on four proficiency groups of L3 German learners with Swedish L1 and English L2 (N=61). In the first test, an elicited imitation task examined the participants' ability to imitate sentences that are distinctive for the stages that German learners allegedly pass; SVO, \*ASV and AVS (Meisel et al. 1981, Pienemann 1998). DMTH predicts that the developmental order is reflected in the learners' ability to imitate sentences; FT1 predicts, beginners to imitate XVS better than \*XSV structures, because only XVS exists in Swedish. FT2 predicts beginners to be equally good at imitating \*XSV and SVO structures, because both are frequent in the learners' L2, English, and will therefore transfer to their L3. Results showed that beginners imitated SVO better than \*XSV sentences and \*XSV better than XVS sentences, which supported the DMTH hypothesis.

A second test, a communicative task, elicited German adjectives in attributive and predicative position. German adjectives only agree with the noun when in attributive position. Swedish has noun-adjective agreement in both attributive and predicative position and English has none. DMTH predicts German learners to produce attributive and predicative agreement consecutively. FT1 predicts predicative and attributive agreement to appear simultaneously and FT2 predicts that there will be no predicative agreement. The results supported the DMTH hypothesis. Beginners produced either none or attributive agreement. There were only few learners that produced noun-adjective agreement in predicative position. All of those produced agreeing adjectives in attributive position before. Taken together, the data from both tests strengthen a DMTH but not an FT1 or FT2 approach.