

The motivational effects of cross-linguistic awareness: Developing third language pedagogies to address the negative impact of the L2 on the L3 self-concept

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Introduction

The last fifteen years have seen a burgeoning research interest in multilingualism witnessed, for example, by the founding in 2003 of the *International Association of Multilingualism*, the establishment of the *International Journal of Multilingualism* in 2004, and the publication of a series of important monographs (De Angelis, 2007; Jessner, 2006) and anthologies (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000; Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, 2001; De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011; Hammarberg, 2009). As Hammarberg (2009) explains, the reasons for the rapid increase in interest in multilingualism and third language acquisition (TLA) are threefold. First, there is the recent yet nevertheless fundamental recognition that humans are “potentially multilingual by nature and that multilingualism is the normal state of linguistic competence” (Hammarberg, 2009, p. 2; see also Aronin & Singelton, 2008). This recognition has generated a number of areas of theoretical enquiry including the intentionality of language choice, the influences that the different languages have on one another and the individual’s relative levels of competence in different languages. A second set of reasons involves the complexity of L3 acquisition. Researchers working in the multilingual/TLA fields argue that mono- or bilingual

perspectives fail to do justice to the complex processes involved in multilingual acquisition and that research designs fail to take account of the multifaceted and complex nature of the language systems of multilingual speakers (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000; Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Jessner, 2008a). This has led to the development of a number of models of multilingual acquisition such as Green's (1998) activation/inhibition model, Grosjean's (1998, 2001) language mode hypothesis, De Bot's (1992) bilingual model, Clyne's (2003) plurilingual processing model, Hufeisen's factor model (Hufeisen, 1998; Hufeisen & Marx, 2007) and Herdina and Jessner's (2002) Dynamic Model of Multilingualism. The third set of reasons is practical. Not only has increasing human mobility given rise to more widespread multilingualism, but the integral role of English in processes of globalization (Phillipson, 2003, 2009) means that in many ethnolinguistic groups, speakers who were once bilingual are now trilingual (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000). Additionally, as a result of the reframing of English as a basic educational skill, as opposed to a foreign language (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), millions of school students, in addition to their native language(s), are now learning English in their early years of school *and* a second foreign language later on in secondary education.

Like other emerging fields of inquiry, TLA research has been primarily driven by theoretical concerns. Even though local educational dilemmas – for example bilinguals' acquisition of a third language in places such as Finland, the Netherlands, Austria and the Basque and Catalonian regions of Spain – may have generated an initial interest in multilingualism, it is only recently that scholars in the field have attempted to synthesize the results of research into educationally-oriented frameworks and to draw up agendas for third language learning practice (Jessner, 2008b). Rooted in the pioneering work of scholars such as Ringbom (1987), who was able to show that students learning English as an L3 outperformed those learning it as an L2, and the rejection of the behaviourist-influenced 'separation-is-best' argument of Contrastive Hypothesis-era linguistics (Jessner, 2008b), the basic assumption of multilingual

pedagogy is that in learning a third language, the activation of the learner's other non-native languages is highly beneficial. Consequently teachers are advised to encourage students to make active use of their knowledge of the L2 in developing L3 skills (Jessner, 2008b).

The active role of other non-native languages in TL development is the hallmark of multilingualism. As De Angelis and Dewaele (2011) point out, a range of studies in fields such as phonology, morphology, syntax and pragmatics have all provided evidence of the positive effects of crosslinguistic influence on L3 acquisition. However, when it comes to the impact of cognitive and affective factors on acquisition processes, even though a number of the TLA models developed – e.g. Herdina and Jessner's (2002) Dynamic Model of Multilingualism and Hufeisen's (1998; Hufeisen & Marx, 2007) Factor Model – include cognitive/affective dimensions, the investigation of these factors remains a largely uncharted area. One reason is that, in common with other branches of 'mainstream' SLA, individual difference researchers have so far been slow to embrace the developments taking place within the multilingual paradigm (De Angelis, 2007). Drawing on recent work on L3 motivation (Henry, 2010, 2011a, 2012) the purpose of this paper is therefore to contribute to the emerging pedagogy of third language acquisition (Jessner, 2008b) by offering insights into the potentially negative impact that cross-referencing with the L2 can have on L3 motivation, and the ways in which such effects can be countered.

The psycholinguistics of TLA

In her recent state-of-the-art article in *Language Teaching* Jessner (2008b) identifies two defining areas of multilingual research; the effects of bilingualism on additional language learning and the study of crosslinguistic influence. As a range of studies have demonstrated (e.g. Brophy, 2001; Munoz, 2000; Lasagabaster, 1998; Ringbom, 1987; Thomas, 1998), the positive effects of bilingualism on third language acquisition are attributed to multilingual

learners' development of metalinguistic and crosslinguistic awareness (Cenoz, 2003; Jessner, 2006, 2008a).ⁱ While *metalinguistic awareness* involves “the ability to focus attention on language as an object in itself or to think abstractly about language and, consequently, to play with or manipulate language” (Jessner 2006, p. 42)ⁱⁱ, *crosslinguistic awareness* is the learner's awareness of specific links, commonalities and connections between their different language systems (Jessner, 2006). While both forms of awareness stem from the multilingual learner's previous experiences of learning a second language(s), whereas metalinguistic awareness is a general skill developed in particular by multilinguals, crosslinguistic awareness involves the ability to discern similarities and differences between different languages. The deployment of crosslinguistic skills means thus that the learner is actively engaged in cross-referencing between the TL and other non-native languages activated as resources in learning. These processes, as I will argue, have implications for motivation.

Crosslinguistic awareness

Crosslinguistic awareness involves the awareness – tacit or explicit (Jessner, 2006) – of the interactions between different languages in the L3 learning process and the *influence* they have on one another. Crosslinguistic influence (CLI) has formed the primary focus of multilingual research (Jessner, 2006) and in the last twenty years there has been a steady increase in studies examining different aspects of CLI (De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011). The study of CLI has its roots in the research carried out by Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986) into the phenomena of language transfer, interference and ‘borrowing’ from the learner's native language to the target language (De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011; Jessner, 2006, 2008b). Subsequently researchers working in the multilingual paradigm have extended these theories to the consideration of the role of the learner's other non-native languages in TL learning. In particular, it has been argued that while transfer and interference form useful points of departure, they are too narrowly conceived to properly account for the multiple

between-language interactions at play in third language acquisition. As De Angelis and Dewaele (2011, p. viii) explain, the study of CLI has undergone a radical transformation in that rather than focusing on the interaction effects of one language on another, it is now seen as encompassing “all language knowledge in the mind”.

Of particular interest in current CLI research is the identification and study of factors likely to stimulate the interactions between different languages in the learner’s mind. These factors, which in TLA processes are operative simultaneously, include typological/psychotypological similarity, cultural similarity, level of proficiency, recency of use and the status of the learner’s non-native languages (De Angelis & Dewaele, 2011; Hammarberg, 2009; Williams & Hammarberg, 1998). Of these factors two – psychotypology and L2 status – are regarded as central in predicting the nature of CLI processes (Sanchez, 2011; Singelton & Ó’Laoire, 2006). Psychotypology is the learner’s perception of the typological closeness or distance between languages (Kellerman, 1983) and is important because transfer – not only positive but also negative – is likely to result from the learner’s judgment about similarities between L_x and L_y (Odlin, 1989). While psychotypology, particularly in additive learning contexts (see e.g. Cenoz, 2003; Jessner, 2008), is regarded as a particularly important aspect of the CLI-derived learning benefits that multilinguals are claimed to possess, it can also have negative effects in that assumptions may be made about similarities that don’t in fact exist (Sanchez, 2011). The second factor regarded as particularly important is L2 status. In TLA, L2 status refers to the general tendency of learners to activate the L2 rather than the L1 (Leung, 2007). In a range of TLA studies from different cultural contexts and for different language combinations – for reviews see De Angelis & Dewaele (2011) and Jessner, (2006) – a consistent finding is that, rather than the L1, greater use is made of the L2.

As can be imagined, in some TLA situations psychotypology and L2 status might point in different directions. In particular, debate has concerned cases where the L1 and the L3 are

psychotypologically similar, such as for example where the L1 and the L3 are Romance languages and the L2 is a Germanic language. This issue has in recent years become an important focus of research with findings seeming to point to the greater importance of L2 status. For example Sanchez (2011), in a Catalanian context, found that “typological closeness between the L1s Spanish and Catalan and the L4 English and typological distance between the L3 German and all the other languages in the area examined cannot discourage L3 activation and interlanguage transfer”. Similarly Bono (2011), in a sample of L1 French university students learning Spanish as an L3/L4 (with many having German as an L2), found that typologically less similar L2 English and L3 German occurred more frequently in CLI than the learners’ typologically more similar native tongue. Both authors conclude that L2 status would therefore seem to override psychotypological proximity. Furthermore, for English – a global lingua franca, basic educational skill and necessary social literacy that enjoys a special status in many learners’ linguistic and cultural repertoires – Bono (2011, p. 45) makes the point that “familiarity may take precedence over proximity”. However, in the absence of studies that attempt wide-ranging comparisons of psychotypology and L2 status where the relative impact of each is properly accounted for – thus dealing with the problem of the confounding of the two factors – firm conclusions cannot yet be drawn.

The use of linguistic resources: Background/ supporter languages and the enhanced multilingual monitor

Linked to the study of CLI, the particular roles played by the learner’s other non-native languages in TL production has been studied, amongst others, by Hammarberg (2009) and Jessner (2006, 2008a). In his in-depth case study of an adult learner of L3 Swedish (L1 =English, L2= German), Hammarberg (2009) investigated the different roles in speech production of his subject’s *background languages*. His findings revealed that an activated background language can have two fundamentally different roles in production; an

instrumental role or a supplier role. In an instrumental role a background language functions as a means of managing ongoing communication and clarifying, translating and making comments. In a supplier role, the background language provides linguistic material for speech production. In particular Hammarberg (2009) found that his subject had a strong preference for her L2 (German) as the main supplier language. Like Hammarberg, Jessner (2006, 2008a), who prefers the term *supporter* instead of 'background' language, also recognizes the function of other non-native languages in providing the multilingual learner with linguistic input in situations where, in the face of communicative demands, knowledge of the L3 is in some sense deficient.

In her Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Jessner, 2006, 2008a) Jessner has developed a theoretical explanation of the ways in which the learner manages different linguistic resources. Identifying in situations of multilingual learning/production a central executive function that she calls the *enhanced multilingual monitor*, she describes how the multilingual speaker is able to keep track of and evaluate various sources of input from supporter languages. As she explains, the enhanced multilingual monitor has three specific functions:

1. It fulfils common monitoring functions (i.e. reducing the number of performance errors, correcting misunderstandings and developing and applying conversational strategies)
2. It draws on common resources in the use of more than one language system
3. It keeps the systems apart by checking for possible disruptive transfer phenomena and eliminating them, thereby fulfilling a separator and cross-checker function. The multilingual individual habitually transfers elements from one language to another and forms rules according to commonalities and differences in her or his languages.

Thus the enhanced multilingual monitor encompasses, respectively, metacognitive, metalinguistic and crosslinguistic functions. It is though with regard to this later *crosslinguistic* function where elements of one language are habitually transferred to another that implications for motivation may arise. However, before considering the effects on motivation of systematic cross-referencing between the L3 and the L2, I will first consider the pedagogy of third language learning currently emerging as a consequence of research into CLI.

An emerging pedagogy of third language learning

Despite the fact that around the globe growing numbers of young people are learning third and fourth languages in instructed settings, comprehensive pedagogies of TLA have yet to be developed. So far, the proposals for changes in educational practice to meet these new demands can be divided into two broad categories; one that is structural and involves curriculum design and planning, and another that has a focus on classroom pedagogy. With regard to curricular design, calls have been made for a common curriculum for all languages where the teaching of different languages is integrated thematically and common multilingual modules are established (Hufeisen, 2005). Another proposal has been to more closely integrate plurilingual and pluricultural competence as twin pillars in the development of lifelong language skills (Moore, 2006). However, whilst it is possible to detect traces of a common curriculum for languages in formulations of intent in curricula and syllabus documentsⁱⁱⁱ, the fact remains that other than isolated examples of teaching across languages, little impact has been made on the norm of the separate teaching of separate foreign languages.

When it comes to classroom pedagogies, four areas of innovation can be identified (Jessner, 2008b). First, there is a growing understanding that since learning a third language differs from learning a second language, teachers need to take account of the fact that L3 students *do not start from scratch*. Thus, when students embark on the process of learning a third, or indeed a fourth or fifth language, teachers need to make them aware of “the existing potential for competencies in other languages” (Jessner, 2008b, p. 39). Referring to ideas developed by Hufeisen (2005), Jessner explains how third language teaching needs to integrate the experiences, strategies and skills developed in previous language learning into the student’s L3/L4 learning blueprint. Consequently the development of skills involving comparison and inference needs to be actively encouraged and included as a basic part of third language teaching. Linked to this, a second proposal for a pedagogy of third language learning is to encourage students to *search for similarities*. Given the extent of research findings showing how learners utilize other non-native languages in third language learning, students need to be given practical support in developing approaches that involve the active cross-referencing between the TL and other languages as a means of discovering similarities (Jessner, 1999; 2008b). Not only should teachers be on the lookout for situations where profitable comparisons can be made, but producers of learning materials also need to exploit such opportunities at the task level. A third area of pedagogical development is *teaching across languages*. Citing work carried out by Hufeisen and her associates (Dentler, Hufeisen & Lindemann, 2000; Hufeisen, 1994; Hufeisen & Lindemann, 1998), Jessner describes approaches to the teaching of German that involve the systematic use of English as a didactic tool. For example, she cites a study by Köberle (1998) who based her teaching of L4 Czech on the students’ prior knowledge of English and Russian and encouraged students to exploit similarities. Finally, Jessner (1999) has argued that forms of *strategy training* that exploit and concretize students’ implicit strategy use in informal/naturalistic language learning settings

should be made a part of instructed learning. In her overview Jessner (2008b) cites a number of studies (Schmid, 1993, 1995; Spöttl, 2001) where students have profited from strategy training of this sort.

In reviewing the emerging pedagogy of third language learning, Jessner (2008b) recognizes not only that more research is needed, but that the findings of research so far conducted need to be properly implemented in teaching practice, particularly in terms of developing learners' crosslinguistic awareness. Most importantly, she calls for the linking together of classroom-instructed languages as a means of fully exploiting the linguistic resources students bring with them to the L3/L4 classroom (Jessner, 2008b).

Summing up, it would be fair to say that the implications for third language pedagogy emerging from multilingual research have, not surprisingly, focused on *linguistic* aspects of the learning process. Nevertheless, in that the ambition of multilingual researchers is to affect a paradigm change in which TLA becomes the norm, not the exception (Aronin & Singelton, 2008), and that models of multilingual acquisition such as Hufeisen's (1998) Herdina and Jessner's (2002) explicitly acknowledge the importance of social, cognitive and affective factors, pedagogies of third language learning need to be expanded to take proper account of such phenomena. Because motivation has been identified as a specific problem in TLA, especially in situations where the L2 is a high status language (Glaser, 2005; Krumm, 2004; Phillipson, 2008), it is important that pedagogies of third language acquisition address the issue. In particular, teachers need to be provided with knowledge about the challenges L3 students face when the L2 is a socially dominant and/or global language, and ways in which they can help them maintain motivation.

Motivation and the effects of crosslinguistic comparisons

Despite the large numbers of students worldwide who learn third languages and the recognition of the particular motivational challenges this involves, up until recently few motivation researchers have been concerned with L3s. However, following the recent paradigm shift in the conceptualization of the affective element of motivation from an external identification with a group or community of TL speakers to one where the locus of motivated behaviour derives from an internal ‘self-as-future-language-speaker/user’ identification, studies with a focus on L3 motivation have now begun to appear (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Henry, 2010, 2011a).

In the L2 Motivational Self System developed by Dörnyei (2005; 2009) the concept of the *Ideal L2 Self* is the central feature. The ideal L2 self is a particular type of *possible self*, that is to say a representation of the self in future situations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Motivation is generated by the learner’s desire to reduce the gap between her/his current L2-speaking/using self, and the L2-speaking/using self desired in the future (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009).

Counterbalancing this *ideal* version of the self is a *feared* self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The feared self functions in a way that propels behaviour away from an undesired outcome and, as Dörnyei (2009) explains, motivational intensity will be optimal when both the *ideal* and the *feared* selves are functional. While in an L2 context a feared self would be becoming someone unable to communicate in a non-native language, in a multilingual context it would be becoming a person able to communicate only in the mother tongue and one additional language. The second component in Dörnyei’s model is the *Ought-to L2 Self*. This encompasses the attributes the person believes she/he ought to possess in order to meet social expectations and to avoid negative consequences of ‘not measuring up’ (Dörnyei, 2009). Examples here might, for example, include not wanting to do badly on a test or not wanting to be regarded as communicatively less competent than one’s peers. Consequently the Ought-to L2 self is likely to be less internalized than the Ideal L2 self.

As Markus and Nurius (1986) make clear, the individual possesses a range of different domain-specific possible selves. Of this array of possible selves, not all will have a motivational impact all of the time. Instead, it is only possible selves that have been triggered by a particular situation and are contextually salient that, at any particular instance in time, will be active in cognition, generating and directing motivated behaviour. Cognitively-active possible selves are grouped together in what Markus and Nurius (1986) term the current or ‘working’ self-concept, the composition of which fluctuates continuously as a result of changes in the surrounding context.

It is generally recognized that learners face competing demands on cognitive resources and competing directions in which effortful behaviour can be channelled (Oyserman, 2007). Consequently when the individual is faced with more than one demand in a similar domain – such as learning more than one foreign language – competition for finite learning resources is likely to take place. Thus, in generating the motivation to achieve desired future states, *possible selves* compete with one another (Oyserman, 2007; Oyserman & James, 2009). In a multilingual context this means that in a situation where the learner is engaged in the simultaneous learning/acquisition of more than one foreign language, the degree to which her/his ideal language-speaking/using selves are in harmony with one another is likely to be of great importance in terms of the distribution of effort. If, for example, the learner sees her-/himself as a future multilingual speaker, interacting and conversing in *both* foreign languages, the ideal L2 and L3 selves are likely to complement one another. However, if this person sees themselves as someone who will more likely interact and converse in just one of the languages, it is likely, as Oyserman and James (2009) suggest, that competition for resources will occur.

In that English, the first foreign language students usually learn in school, is increasingly present in the surrounding social environment, functioning as a crucial resource both for

current expressions of identity and future employability (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Henry, in press), for many learners a multilingual self-concept where L2- and L3-speaking/using selves are harmoniously aligned may be difficult to sustain. There is a risk that a dominant L2 English-speaking/using self-concept may gradually erode the vitality of an L3 language-speaking/using self less central to the learner's overall identity. This was specifically investigated by Henry (2010) who in a study of 101 Swedish upper secondary school students simultaneously learning both an L2 (English) and an L3 (French, German, Spanish) not only found that L3 (French, German, Spanish) self-concepts were negatively interpreted in relation to L2 English self-concepts, but also that a high degree of negative L3-to-L2 self-concept cross-referencing was associated with low L3 motivation. In a follow-up to this study Henry (2011a 2011b) interviewed a number of specially selected students (n=17) in order to investigate the ways in which, when engaged in L3 learning, they experienced situations when the L2 English-speaking/using self-concept became cognitively active. All but one recognized such situations. The students spoke of making comparisons between themselves as L3 and L2 speakers. While some students talked about how assessments of themselves as current and future L3 (German, French, Spanish) speakers/users and L2 (English) speakers/users had a negative impact on motivation, others talked about strategies they used to counteract the effects on motivation that could follow from such comparisons.

Purpose

In the emerging pedagogy of third language learning the development of crosslinguistic awareness is central. In supporting students' learning, teachers are encouraged to identify and exploit opportunities for crosslinguistic comparison and to help them maximise the benefits of crosslinguistic interaction (Jessner, 2008b). However, as studies of L3 motivation are

beginning to show (Henry, 2010, Henry, 2011a), between-language comparisons can be problematic in that, once cognitively invoked, supporter languages can trigger self-concept comparisons that can be motivationally detrimental. The aims of this study are therefore to consider (i) the effects of L2 English on motivation to learn L3 German and Spanish, (ii) the ways in which learners might deal with these effects, and (iii) what the responsibility of the teacher might be in terms of fostering counteractive strategic behaviours.

Method

Participants

The participants were 21 students (13 girls, 8 boys) in the penultimate year (grade 8) of secondary education at a medium-sized school in a small town in the west of Sweden. All of the students were learning English. Half were learning German (10 students) and half Spanish (11 students). At the time of the interviews in May 2010 the students had been learning English for 6 years and their respective foreign languages for nearly 3 years. Prior to the interviews informed consent was obtained from the students and their parents.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide. In the first part of the interview questions focused on students' attitudes to their L3, to the learning situation, opportunities for use and future aspirations. Thereafter questions were directed to detecting examples of crosslinguistic awareness in productive and receptive skills. Follow-up questions focused on whether self-concept comparisons might be triggered as a consequence of searches for linguistic similarities. Prior to the interviews the interview guide was piloted among a number of 8th grade students not participating in the study. The interviews were conducted in Swedish by trained native-speaking interviewers proficient, respectively, in English/Spanish

and English/German. The interviews were digitally recorded and verbatim transcripts were produced.

Method of analysis

In working with the data, an approach similar to that outlined by Smith and Eatough (2007) was adopted. The first stage involved reading through the transcripts several times and making notes of interesting features. In a second stage, the transcripts were re-read, this time with the aim of incorporating theoretical abstractions so as to transform the initial notes and ideas into relevant themes. In addition to different types of possible selves – ideal and ought-to L2/L3 selves – and types of self-knowledge (e.g. how I am as an L3 learner, how I am as a student), students' responses were also categorised in terms of the type of cognitive counteracting strategy (if any) they described. Finally, in a third stage, connections were made between these themes, meaning that a smaller number of central themes were generated.

When analysing the data, a phenomenological approach inspired by Ricoeur's (1970) notion of the 'double hermeneutic' and drawing on techniques associated with interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003) was employed. The double hermeneutic involves the combination of an empathic and a critical standpoint. Thus while trying to arrive at a point where the researcher's understanding is attuned as closely as possible to that of the participant, analysis also involves taking a step back and adopting a critical position.

Consequently the researcher's understanding may not necessarily be shared or indeed recognised by the individual. Here the empathic element involved finding out how the student experienced comparisons with English, while the critical element involved the use of possible selves theory (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Markus & Kunda, 1986; Markus & Nurius, 1986) to make sense of the participants' descriptions.

Results and discussion

Almost all of the students talked about how L1 Swedish and L2 English could be used as sources of help when difficulties were encountered in L3 German/Spanish. Although not all recognised situations where cross-referencing with English could extend beyond the search for linguistic similarities, the majority were familiar with making comparisons between how they could express themselves in German/Spanish and what they could do and say in English. Like the students interviewed by Henry (2011a), the responses of a number of the students interviewed here revealed the use of strategies to counteract negative effects stemming from comparisons of self-concepts. However, compared to Henry's (2011a) findings, where three of four interviewed students had developed ways of counteracting the potentially detrimental effects of negative self-concept comparisons, here only a third of the students appeared to be aware of the particular ways in which they responded to the influence of English in L3 learning. Given the small numbers of students involved in these qualitative studies, caution is needed when making comparisons. However it should also be noted that the sociocultural setting (the schools are in the same part of Sweden), point in time and the interview methodologies were all similar. However, unlike the current students, those in Henry's (2011a; 2011b) studies were enrolled on academically-oriented programs in their second year of upper secondary education. Thus not only are the current students younger, less experienced learners, they also represent a broader spectrum of ability and interest in learning a third language.

The strategies the students talked about were, in decreasing order of frequency, *(re)activating the Ideal L3 Self* (4 students), *switching off negative thoughts* (2 students), *invoking a feared self* (1 student), and *acting pragmatically* (1 student).

The (re)activation of the Ideal L3 Self

The strategy most frequently talked about involved the *(re)activation of the ideal L3 self*.

Following on from crosslinguistic comparisons in situations where language difficulties are encountered, comparisons of the relative vitality of L3 and L2 self-concepts seem, on occasion, to be made. In such situations pausing to think about why the activity is meaningful and reminding oneself about what currently expended effort can yield in the future appears to offer a renewed incentive to persevere with the task at hand. This is illustrated in the following extract where the interviewer and the student (boy, German) have been talking about comparisons between German and English in the context of working with grammar:

I: Does it ever happen that you think about English?

S: Yes, sometimes.

I: What sort of thoughts do you have?

S: If there are certain words that I don't know or something, so then I think 'how would I have conjugated this in English', but it's not often right.

I: OK, so does it ever happen when you compare that you think, no, this would have been easier in English?

S: YES!

I: So how does this make you feel? Frustrated? Or how do you think about it?

S: Well...I don't get frustrated, it's more like, you might as well get on with learning it so that you can [speak] this language later on

It would appear here that the potentially negative consequences for motivation stemming from the boy's negative comparison of his L3 German-speaking/using self with his L2 English-speaking equivalent are offset by a secondary recognition of a desire to become a future German speaker. Put another way, having been subjected to the challenge of the phenomenologically more robust L2 self, this boy reasserts the cognitive supremacy of his ideal L3-speaking/using self. For this boy there is a reason why he is learning German as, in another part of the interview, he talks for example about travelling abroad in the future and

how German can be important. Consequently the vision of being able to speak the language in the future seems to offset the momentary recognition of his currently inferior competence in relation to English.

When asked about how he handles situations where negative comparisons with English occur in Spanish lessons, another boy provides a similar response:

I: What do you do to get on with it?

S: You just have to try

I: Is there anything else? I need to do this because....?

S: I want to be able to speak Spanish and this [the task] has to be finished

Here though, in addition to wanting to be able to speak Spanish, this boy also emphasizes the importance of the executive motive of getting the job done; the task “has to be finished”. A third boy (learning German) responds in a similar way, but this time in a manner that is self-interrogatory:

S: You just have to think, why have I chosen German? Why do I want to learn this? By thinking about why this is so, then you can get yourself going again, when it’s like this. That’s why.

Unlike the two other boys who have a general idea about wanting to be future L3 speakers/users and are aware of the value of multilingual skills, this boy, in another part of the interview, tells how he has a dream of becoming a sports journalist and how he imagines himself speaking German as part of his job. In that he has an incentive to learn German and his German-speaking future-self seems to form an important part of his identity, the cognitive reactivation of the ideal L3 self in the face of the challenge from L2 English appears, more so

than for the other two, as a deliberate strategy aimed at refocusing his efforts in response to a temporary setback.

Switching off negative thoughts

Two of the students talk about a process that can be described as way of *switching off negative thoughts*. Aware of the potentially negative effect of comparisons with the L2 on L3 motivation, these students have developed ways of ‘blocking out’ or ‘switching off’ these thoughts. Here a girl learning Spanish explains how she ignores the potentially detrimental comparison with English and continues to search for the word she is looking for:

I: Does it ever happen that you think that it would have been easier if it had been in English?

S: Yes, it has. That’s how it is. But I keep trying anyway. It goes OK anyway.

I: mm

S: But it is much easier to do it in English, but ...

I: mm... but what do you do to keep yourself going? You seem to push these thoughts away?

S: YES. I try not to think about them, and then I just try to find the word, or look it up, or ask the teacher and try to get going again.

In a similar way, a boy learning German talks about comparisons with English as if they were a page on a computer screen that he simply closes with the click of an imaginary mouse:

I: Have you ever thought that it would be more fun to do it in English?

S: Sometimes, yes, it’s happened. But they [such thoughts] disappeared pretty quickly

I: They did? How did they go?

S: They just went. Click again. And then everything is OK

I: OK. So it wasn’t so hard to get rid of these thoughts then?

S: No

On the face of it, this type of response might seem fairly unsophisticated and perhaps not a strategy at all. However, as for example Oyserman (2007) has pointed out, in situations where cognitive demands conflict, self-regulation will mean having to prioritize and to focus attention and resources on a particular self-relevant focal goal to the relative neglect of others. In this sense, the active compartmentalization of self-concepts and the creation and maintenance of a distance or boundary between competing possible language-speaking/using selves can be seen as a form of self-regulation. Moreover, the insulation of the ideal L3 self against potentially damaging comparisons with English that take place concurrently with processes of cross-linguistic referencing with supporter languages represents a highly conscious approach to dealing with the problem of the competing L2 self in L3 learning.

Invoking a feared self

A third type of strategy, mentioned by a girl learning Spanish, involves *invoking a feared self*. As Markus and Nurius (1986) explain, the motivational potential of an ideal self is enhanced when, additionally, there is also an undesirable state in the same dimension or domain. In language learning motivation a feared self would involve not obtaining desired competence with the result that the individual fails to become a person with the envisioned language attributes and accompanying personal/social advantages. Here, when discussing how problems reading a text might be encountered, this girl reveals how her motivation to continue with the task stems from a fear of ending up in a boy-populated group not learning an additional foreign language:

I: What would you do if you were reading a text [in Spanish] and you didn't understand it or didn't understand some of the words?

S: Ask

I: Would you get a dictionary?

S: No. Ask the teacher or a friend.

- I: Have you ever thought that this would have been easier if it had been in English?
- S: Yes
- I: So what do you do when you think like this?
- S: I have to. There's no way I'm going to switch to Swedish/English where all the rowdy boys are.

In this situation her feared self of becoming an 'extra Swedish/English student' – and not remaining a 'language student' – seems to be invoked. Equally, not wanting to end up in this unattractive group, thereby avoiding the negative personal/social consequences that she seems to think would follow, can also be understood in terms of the operation of her Ought-to L3 self; motivation to persevere with Spanish is generated not primarily by a desire to learn the language, but rather by the desire to avoid a socially undesirable outcome.

Acting pragmatically – the ought self

Finally, one student (girl, Spanish) talks about the way that, when encountering negative comparisons with L2 English, she sometimes thinks beyond the immediate situation to the rewards that can be gained from learning Spanish and, at other times, that learning can sometimes be enjoyable.

- I: Have you yourself ever had thoughts like this?
- S: Yes
- I: So what do you do to keep yourself going?
- S: The others think that I am so good at Spanish and ask me all the time and so I say that it's great fun even though I don't actually think so.
- I: But how do you think to get yourself the willpower to do it?
- S: Sometimes I think about the grades and sometimes that it is fun.

In addition to the intrinsic motivation generated by the activity, this student's motivation to continue seems to be driven by her Ought-to L3 Self. Getting a good grade in Spanish which can in turn impact on her final grade-point average, is not as internalised as, for example, the desire to learn the L3 of the students in the '(re)activation of the ideal L3 self' category. Nevertheless, in that grades seem to be this girl's primary motivational driver, thinking about them and imagining herself with good results serves to counteract the negative effects of the comparison with her abilities in English.

Implications for an emerging L3 pedagogy

In the pedagogies of third language learning currently emerging, attention has primarily been directed to the linguistic aspects of the learning process. Given the importance of motivation in language learning, the demands of learning more than one instructed language and the fact that models of multilingual acquisition specifically recognize the impact of cognitive and affective factors, in TLA pedagogies it is important that proper account is taken of individual difference factors. Crosslinguistic influence is the hallmark of multilingualism and in pedagogies of L3 learning, crosslinguistic awareness has a central role to play (Cenoz & Jessner, 2009; Jessner, 2008b). As Jessner (2008b) makes clear, language teachers need to develop *multilingual skills* so that in their teaching they can identify points where languages intersect and where crosslinguistic influence is likely to be at play. They also need to develop *pedagogical skills* that can enable them to help students make the best use of supporter languages as a linguistic resource. However, in settings where the L2 has a high social status and/or extensive societal presence, it can in its supporter role have detrimental effects on motivation to learn a less prestigious and/or less commonly encountered L3. Thus while it is important for teachers of all foreign languages to work actively with students' motivation, this becomes particularly important for teachers of L3s in settings where the L2 has a higher

status. In the emerging pedagogy of third language learning, proper recognition needs to be given to this challenge.

First, teachers of L3s need to make students aware that the comparison of one language-speaking/using self-concept with another can follow whenever use is made of a supporter language. Of course, these types of comparison will not take place every time searches are made for lexical or grammatical similarities. Nevertheless, when explaining how students can make use of other languages as a resource, teachers need also to direct attention to how this type of cross-referencing can lead to negative and motivationally potentially damaging appraisals of the L3 self-concept in relation to a more vital and phenomenologically robust L2 self-concept.

As an integral part of instruction, and at the earliest possible stage, teachers of L3s need to introduce the concept of possible selves and encourage and support students in developing robust ideal selves. This, as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) have proposed, involves helping students to create plausible visions of an ideal L3 self, helping them to strengthen these visions through imagery enhancement and, on a regular basis, allowing them time to work on the fleshing out and contextualisation of such visions (see also Magid & Chan, 2011). In settings where the L2 is socially attractive and proficiency highly valued, working actively to provide students with the resources for developing and maintaining ideal L3-speaking/using selves will be of particular importance.

In conjunction with work done on ideal L3 self enhancement generally, teachers need in particular to support students in keeping focused on their ideal L3 self in the face of comparisons with the L2 self-concept, especially in situations where the L2 is consciously used as a linguistic resource. This is most important for high-prestige and socially omnipresent L2's such as English and when working with students who, like those in the

current study, are not aware of having developed their own strategies. Such work can take the form of encouraging students to remind themselves of why they want to be able to speak the language in the future, and about the type of person they want to be and type of things they want to do. For example if, like one of the young people interviewed here, the student's envisaged future occupation involves the perception of a need to speak/understand languages other than English, then invoking an image of a multilingual future self could function as an effective counterbalance.

For some students though, rather than wanting to become a future speaker/user of the language as part of a longer-term identity project, motivated behaviour may stem more from the less-internalised desire to avoid failure or to obtain good grades. While for such students a comparison of language-speaking/using self-concepts might not be as detrimental as for those whose motivation is generated more by the vision of an ideal language-speaking/using self, effortful behaviour may nevertheless be negatively affected. For these students pragmatic approaches may be more effective. Learning to ignore or, in the words of one of the current students, "click again" and 'switch off' the competing L2 self-concept may be a more rewarding strategy. Similarly an approach that involves reflection on the consequences of not getting on with the job at hand and what this might entail may, when invoked as a feared self, be more effective in counteracting the negative consequences that can flow when L2 and L3 self-concepts are compared.

In addition to the pedagogical innovations proposed here, the study also has implications for individual difference and TLA research. The research reported on represents one of very few individual difference studies with a focus on TLA. Given that multilingualism should be regarded as the linguistic norm (Singelton, & Aronin, 2007), it is imperative that ID researchers begin to move beyond the current "no difference" position (De Angelis, 2007). In the context of increasing multilingualism, failure to take account of the effects on studied

phenomena of other languages in the learner's repertoire will be increasingly problematic. At the same time, scholars working in the multilingual paradigm need to expand the scope of their enquiry to extend beyond a narrow focus on linguistic phenomena and to begin more properly to explore the cognitive and affective ID dimensions of TLA. Given that models such as Hufeisen's (1998; Hufeisen & Marx, 2007) Factor Model and Herdina and Jessner's (2002) Dynamic Model make explicit recognition of such factors, one of the next steps for multilingual research needs to be to begin the systematic investigation of ID phenomena in TLA.

Limitations and future research

It is important to remember that not only is this a small scale investigative study but, in trying to gain insights into highly situated cognitive processes, there is always a risk of leading participants in a particular direction, meaning that they might respond in ways they believe are expected of them (Dörnyei, 2007). Furthermore, although there is no reason to believe that the students here spoke anything other than candidly about their experiences of thinking about English when learning Spanish and German, the retrospective elicitation of cognitive responses is not ideal. Thus in future research a more situated approach where, for example, students are invited to talk through video-recorded sequences of classroom activities (where crosslinguistic awareness is anticipated) would be of value. Consequently the examples of strategy use emerging here need to be seen as initial pointers; further research from different cultural contexts, with different L2/L3 combinations and using different research methodologies will be needed before a properly comprehensive taxonomy of strategies can be created. Furthermore, as a means of assessing the efficacy of L2 counteracting strategies, intervention studies focusing on the effects on L3 motivation of strategy use would be necessary.

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ⁱ Bilingualism is regarded generally as having positive effects on language development, including additional (third) languages (Lasagabaster, 1998) and on general educational outcomes. However, it should be noted that in contexts of home language submersion – i.e. where the home language is ‘submersed’ by a societally dominant second language – bilingualism can have a negative effect, hindering the development of communicative competence in both languages and thus affecting school performance (Huguet and Llorca 2001, 268).

ⁱⁱ Malakoff (1992, p518) offers the following definition of the function of metalinguistic awareness: “Metalinguistic awareness allows the individual to step back from the comprehension or production of an utterance in order to consider the *linguistic form* and *structure* underlying the meaning of the utterance. Thus a metalinguistic task is one which requires the individual to think about the *linguistic nature* of the message: to attend to and reflect on the structural features of the language. To be metalinguistically aware, then, is to know how to approach and solve certain types of problems which themselves demand certain cognitive and linguistic skills.”

ⁱⁱⁱ In Sweden for example the new syllabi for both English and modern languages stresses the importance of plurilingual competence in a common formulation in the respective portal paragraphs “Languages form the

primary tool for thinking, communicating and learning. A knowledge of several languages can provide new perspectives on the surrounding world, increased opportunities for contacts, and greater understanding of different ways of life.”