

The Influence of L2 on the Syntactic Processing of L1 by Arab EFL Learners

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Abstract

By approaching syntactic processing through the Competition Model research paradigm, the present study examines how Arab university students assign the subject to the sentence of their mother-tongue (Arabic). The question of this study, therefore, is whether the advanced EFL learners processing of L1 syntax differs from that of EFL beginners in some respect. The subjects of the study (Ss) were 72 Saudi university students, adults belonging to either a 'mono-lingual' university group (36 students) or to a 'bilingual' university group (36 students) majoring in English language.

Overall, bilingual Ss displayed better performance as compared to their monolingual peers. Although, there were no significant effects for word order, other significant effects such as animacy have shown up primarily in NVN sentences in the performance of the bilingual Ss. When the two sentences have animate nouns, our bilingual Ss scored significantly higher on both VNN and NNV. This result shows that bilingual Ss used the benefit of their knowledge of the L2 to better process these sentences. The bilingual Ss showed more preference only for N1 subjective in VNN than did the monolingual group, when we speak about case ending factor. This demonstrates that bilingual Ss show greater preference for a cue than the monolingual Ss. The overall results indicate that the differences between the performance of both the monolingual and bilingual Ss were mainly due to the overall changed state of the L2 users (i.e. their multicompetence).

Introduction

It is commonly believed that the first language (L1) has an effect on the second language (L2). An English native speaker, for example, can tell whether someone is French or Arab after few words of English. Second language acquisition (SLA) literature has shown extensive research on how the learning and use of an L2 is affected by the L1, whether conceived as contrastive analysis, transfer, crosslinguistic influence, resetting of parameters or in many other ways. Recently, researchers have begun testing the hypothesis that the second language influences the first or what sometimes is called 'reverse' or 'backward' transfer (see for example: Cook, 2000; Kecskes & Papp, 2000; Grosjean, 2001; Joribio, 2001; Van Hell & Dijkstra, 2002; Noor, 2007). In fact, a recent book by Vivian Cook (2003) has been devoted only to show the effects of L2 on L1.

The Effect of L2 on L1

SLA literature has shown that the first language of bilinguals differs from their monolingual peers in diverse ways. Kecskes (1998), for example has found beneficial effects on the development and use of mother tongue skills with regard to structural well-formedness in Hungarian students of modern languages. Balcom (1995) found different acceptability judgments of French passive sentences in Francophone speakers who did or did not know English. Hungarian children who know English use measurably more complex sentences in their L1 than those who do not (Kecskes & Papp, 2000). Bialystok (2001) maintains that L2 user¹ children have more precocious metalinguistic skills than their monolingual peers. Moreover, Caldas and Boudreaux (1999); Thomas, et al. (1993); and Hakuta (1986) found a correlation of bilingual proficiency with higher scores on standardized tests and tests of both

¹ L2 user term becomes more widely used in SLA literature more than L2 learner who is usually compared with native speakers of the target language. SLA researches maintain that "the L2 user is a person in his or her own right not an imitation of someone else. (For more discussion, see Cook, 1997; 2003:1-6; Grosjean, 1989).

verbal and nonverbal intelligence. In addition, a Louisiana study showed that regardless of race, gender or academic level, students taking foreign language classes did better in the English section of the Louisiana Basic Skills Test than those who did not, Dumas (1999). Garfinkel and Tabor (1991), also found that children in elementary foreign language programs outperformed their monolingual peers in the acquisition of basic skills. Marcos (1998) concluded that learning a second language in an elementary school usually enhances a child's learning ability in English. Moreover, Yelland et al., (1993) maintain that English children who are taught Italian for an hour a week read English better than those who are not. Murphy and Pine (2003), also revealed that their bilingual children represented the knowledge of language more explicitly than the monolinguals of the same age.

In a study modeling Japanese and Vietnamese EFL learners, Cummins et al. (1984) found that their subjects' academic-, cognitive-, and literacy-related skills in English were strongly predicted by variables, one of these variables being L1 academic proficiency. Cummins (1991a, 1991b) also showed that considerable transfer from one language to another is possible, given sufficient exposure and motivation for learning. Cohen (2000) found that direct writing might have been the most effective choice for some learners when they were under time pressure. Thirty-nine intermediate learners of French performed two essay-writing tasks: writing directly into French as well as writing in L1 (English) and then translating into French. The results demonstrated that two-thirds of the students did better on the direct writing task across all rating scales while one-third did better on the translated task. More specifically, the raters found no significant differences in the grammatical scales across the two types of writing. However, differences did emerge in the scales for expression, transitions, and clauses. Retrospective verbal report data from the students indicated that they were often thinking through English (their L1) when writing in French (their second language). This suggests that the writing tasks were not necessarily distinct in nature.

Significance of the study

The present study aims to add to these studies by approaching syntactic processing through the Competition Model research paradigm (Bates & MacWhinney, 1981). It looks at how Arab EFL learners of the university level assign the subject to the sentence of their mother-tongue (Arabic¹). In other words, this study will investigate whether there are differences in the first language (Arabic) of the EFL beginners and L2 users who know another language (advanced EFL learners).

Competition Model Research Paradigm

In the Competition Model (Bates & MacWhinney, 1981), the processing of sentences is based on the weight given to competition factors in a particular language. The standard example is to decide which noun is the subject² in the sentence. This depends on the varying balance between cues in different languages. For example, English is based on a subject-verb-object (SVO) structure. The subject usually comes initially in the sentence. *John* is the subject in the sentence, *John hates smoking*, mainly because it comes before the verb *hates* and the object *smoking*: word order is the main cue in English. However, *John* does not only come initially in the sentence but is also animate, nominative and is in agreement with the verb, all of which could be more vital cues than word order in other languages.

The cues whose weighting varies between English and Arabic languages are:

Word order:

The subject has to stand in a definite position in a sentence: say, first in SVO languages such as English (*John likes coffee*) or second in VSO languages such as Arabic *yuhibbu joun alqahwata* (likes John the coffee). In English, the subject always precedes the object. Thus, speakers of English identify *John* as the subject in the sentence: *John likes coffee*, because it is the first N (noun). The subject in Arabic usually precedes the object as is demonstrated in the example above. However, in a few cases in Arabic, the object precedes the subject:

¹ "Arabic" in this study refers to Modern Standard Arabic.

² The Subject is the doer of the action.

- *yuḥibbu(V) -l qahwata(O) joun(S)*
likes (V) coffee (O) John (S)
- *assallata(O) alkuratu(S) taḍrib(V)*
the basket(O) the ball(S) hit(V)

This reordering may mainly be due to some stylistic matters, e.g. to show the importance of a particular word in the sentence.

Animacy:

The subject has to be animate rather than inanimate in so many languages. So, in a sentence such as *coffee likes John*, speakers of languages with strong animacy cues like English, prefer the animate second N *John* as the subject in their equivalent L1 sentences. Arabic also has strong animacy cues. There are some cases, however, where the subject can be inanimate:

almarāḍu(S) yamna?āu(V) muhammadan(O) mina-lḥuḍu:r
Illness (S) prevents (V) Mohammad (O) from coming

Case:

The subject in Arabic has to be in the subjective (nominative) case, as in *ḥusa:mu(S) ?aṭāāma(V) -l hirra(O)* (Husam (S) fed (V) the cat (O)). Subjective case sign in Arabic is (*ḍammah*)¹. The example above shows that the S (Husam) is in (*ḍammah*; .."u") mode. In languages with strong case cues (such as Arabic), speakers choose the N which is in the *ḍammah* mode, thus overriding the order and agreement cues, in a sentence such as *qatala(V) al?asada(O) ?arrija:lu(S)* (killed (V) the lion (O) the men (S)) where the second N *?arrija:lu* (the men), which is in the *ḍammah* mode (.."u"), is the subject and the first N *al?asada* (the lion), which is in the *fatḥa*² mode ("a"), is the object. English uses case minimally for deciding the subject with regard to pronoun *I/me, they/them*, etc. For example, *They despise them*.

Agreement:

The subject may agree with the verb in number, whether plural or singular, *John likes coffee* versus *Men like coffee*. In Arabic, the subject agrees with the verb in number and gender: (a) masculine singular *alwaladu yalāabu* (the boy plays), (b) feminine singular *albintu talāabu* (the girl plays), (c) masculine dual *alwalada:ni yalāaba:ni* (the (two) boys play), (d) feminine dual *albinta:ni talāaba:ni* (the (two) girls play), (e) masculine plural *al?awla:du yalāabu:na* (the boys play), (f) feminine plural *albana:tu yalāabna* (the girls play).

As the examples show, finding the subject of the sentence is not a matter of either/or but of the relative strength of particular cues. While English may be dominated by word order, there are still enough traces of agreement and case to enable us to identify the subjects in: *Where the bee sucks there suck I* or *In my beginning is my end*. While word order is also one of the cues specifying the subject in the sentence in Arabic case, however, is the most important one. The subject in Arabic, therefore must be in the *ḍammah* mode no matter where it occurs in the sentence, i.e. preceding or following the verb.

SLA and the Competition Model

L2 research in the Competition Model has looked at the extent to which the L2 weightings for the subject cues carry over those from the L1. Harrington (1987), for example, found that Japanese L2 learners adopted the English reliance on word order in Noun-Verb-Noun (NVN) English sentences, but not in VNN or NNV sentences, and preferred animate subjects as much in English as in Japanese. Hence, their processing of the L2 (English) has moved

¹ *ḍammah* ضمة, "is written like a miniature *waw* above the letter, as *ḍ du*. This is pronounced like the *u* in "bull" (Haywood and Nahmad, 1965:8).

² *fatḥa* فتحة, is indicated by a small diagonal stroke above the consonant, as *ḍ da*. This vowel is the neutral *a* sound as in "Frenchman", or like the *u* in "nun". On no account should it pronounced as the *a* in "man" (ibid).

some way towards the weightings of the language in question but is still heavily influenced by their L1 Japanese. Cooreman (1987) found a lesser reliance on word order and a greater reliance on agreement by Dutch learners of English than the native English speakers. Other research has shown the importance of animacy for English and Turkish learners of Dutch (Issidorides & Hulstijn, 1992) and morphology for Dutch learners of English (McDonald, 1987).

Research regarding the effects of the L2 on the L1 is less extensive. Liu, Bates and Li (1992) found some 'backward' transfer in Chinese speakers learning English in the United States, affected non-monotonically by age and family use. Su (2001) discovered that advanced Chinese learners of English used the same strategies in both languages. Their Chinese processes were influenced by English, though this was not true of lower-level learners, nor of English speakers learning Chinese.

Cook *et al* (2003a) made an experiment using the classic Competition Model (Bates & MacWhinney, 1981) on three groups of learners of English of different native languages (Japanese, Spanish, & Greek) to test the hypothesis that 'L2 users would be influenced by the cues of the L2 in the processing of their L1'. These learners were divided into two groups: a monolingual group with little English and a bilingual university group studying English. Four cues: word order, animacy, case and number were tested. The study revealed that when there was no difference in animacy, Spanish bilinguals tended to prefer the N1 less in NVN sentences than the monolinguals. When both nouns are animate, Greek bilinguals prefer N1 less in NVN and more in NNV. When the N1 is subjective, they prefer it less in VNN. When the N2 is subjective, they prefer N1 more in VNN.

The results also showed that the word order cue did not have a significant effect on the performance of the Japanese bilinguals. Other significant effects, such as animacy, may have shown up in the principles of NVN sentences. The number effect clearly applies more or less across the board for all the three word orders.

Study Design

The study aims at running a version of the classic Competition Model experiment (Bates & MacWhinney, 1981) on the Arabic language. Two groups of students studying at Taibah University (TU), Almadinah Almunawwarah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, were tested. One group was studying English as a second/foreign language, the other was not. Since it is hard to find students with zero level English, the researcher decided to standardize the 'minus L2 factor or beginner learners of English' as minimal rather than zero level English. The 'plus L2 factor, or advanced learners of English', were English major students at the university.

Sample Sentences

Seventy two sentences were developed as study materials. They consisted of three elements, two Noun Phrases (Ns) and one Verb Phrase (V). The following are Arabic examples¹ used in the experiment. The factors tested were:

Word order

Three word orders were tested:

(a) NVN: *alḥuṣa:nu yasbiqul-ḥima:ra*
the horse precede the donkey
The horse precedes the donkey.

(b) VNN: *tatbaâu-duja:jatu- addi:ka*
follows the chicken the cock
The chicken follows the cock.

¹ Arabic examples are written here by using IPA (International Phonetic Alphabets), then literal translation into English of the original Arabic example followed by the accepted English translation.

- (c) NNV: *aḥḥi?bu al?asada ha:jama*
the wolf, the lion attacked
 The wolf, the lion attacked.

Animacy

Three possibilities for animacy were tested varying the combination of animate and inanimate Ns:

- (a) N1 (animate) /V/ N2 (inanimate):
muni:run yra:qibu-nnju:ma
Muneer watches the stars
 Muneer watches the stars.

- (b) N1 (inanimate) /V/ N2 (animate):
aSSajaratu saqaṭat ala-l-kalba
the tree fell on the dog
 The tree fell on the dog.

- (c) N1 (animate) /V/ N2 (animate):
alkalbu yaSumu-alqetta
the dog sniffs the cat
 The dog sniffs the cat.

Case

Since Arabic is a case language, the subject must be in *ḍammah* (*u*) mode no matter where the subject stands in the sentence, i.e. precedes or follows the verb:

- (a) N1 (subject): *al?asadu(N1) qatala-l(V) fi:la(N2)*
the lion(N1) killed(V) the elephant(N2)
 The lion killed the elephant.

The first noun *al?asadu* (the lion), which is in the *ḍammah* mode (*u*), stands as the subject.

- (b) N2 (subject): *alfi:la, qatala al?asadu*
the elephant, killed the lion
 The elephant, the lion killed.

Here, the subject stands as the second noun in the sentence. The Arabic native speaker can easily identify the subject from the *ḍammah* mode (*u*) of the noun irrespective of its position in the sentence.

Subjects

The subjects (72 Saudi university students - 38 male and 34 female). were adults 19 to 22 years old belonging either to a 'mono-lingual' university group (36 students) with little English or to a 'bilingual' university group (36 students) majoring in English language.

Method

Subjects in each group were instructed to read the sentences of the study and underline the subject, i.e. the doer of the action, in each sentence. It was also clearly stated that there was only one subject in two nouns in each sentence. They were asked not to worry even if the sentences seemed odd. They were also asked to focus on the task and avoid talking to each other. The subjects were tested in groups in a quiet classroom environment.

Discussion of the Results

The results compare the performance of the 'monolingual' and 'bilingual' groups of subjects in terms of the percentage of responses choosing the first N rather than the second N as subject, as is standard in the Competition Model Paradigm. Determining whether the response is appropriate, depends on the specific cue being tested. The results are presented

in graphs in terms of the three word orders from left to right (NVN, VNN, NNV) again as a standard in the paradigm. The groups were referred to as bilinguals and monolinguals for convenience, though as defined above they were strictly speaking maximal and minimal bilinguals.

Word order

The results given in Figure 1 below show no significant difference between the monolingual and bilingual groups. Both groups scored very high and the L2 seems to have no effect on the word-order factor.

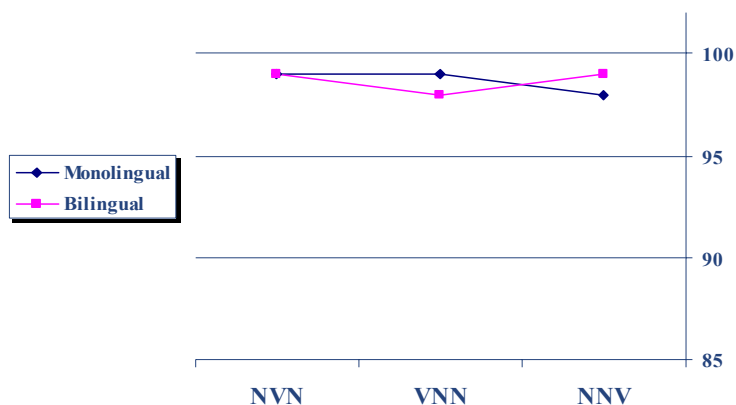


Figure 1: Word Order

Arabic is in fact, a case language. Case-ending is the first choice for the language users to identify the subject and object in a sentence. The second choice is the context. Word-order comes last.

Animacy

The results for the Animacy need to be divided into three categories: depending on whether the N1 and the N2 have different animacy or both N1 and N2 are animate, all with singular Ns and a singular Verb.

(1) N1(animate)/N2(inanimate)

The results given in Figure 2 below shows that the bilingual Ss score higher than their monolingual peers for animate N1s in all three word orders, significantly so for NVN (68% versus 52%, *t*-test, d.f. 2.8, *p*<0.05). In other words, bilingual Ss show greater preference for a cue than the monolingual Ss.

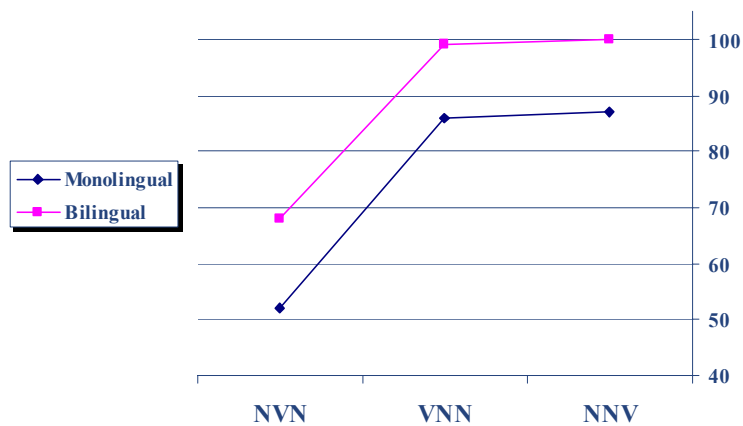


Figure 2: ANIMACY (1): N1(animate)/N2 (inanimate)

This result may mainly be due to the idea that our bilingual Ss used the benefit of their knowledge of the L2 to better process the sentences of this word order, i.e. NVN, than the monolingual.

(2) *N1(inanimate)/N2(animate)*

Both, monolingual and bilingual groups score high in the test items. No preference for any particular word order was shown by both groups.

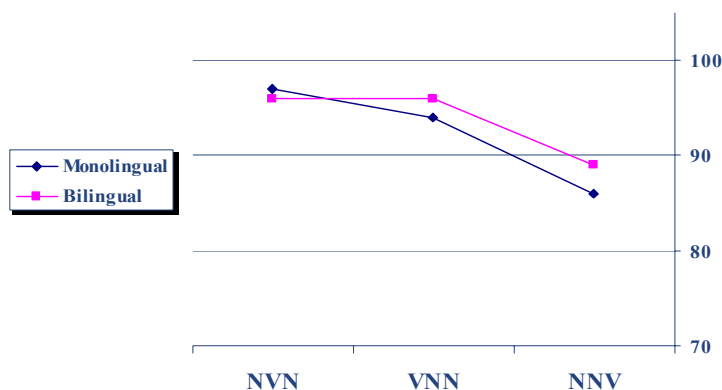


Figure 3: ANIMACY (2): N1(inanimate)/N2 (animate)

(3) *N1(animate)/N2(animate)*

When both Ns are animate, both Ss groups score high for N1 in the NVN word order comparing to other orders particularly NNV (97% versus 78%). This result is significant (t -test, d.f. 2.85, $p < 0.05$). Here the tendency from both groups towards what is familiar to them in Arabic, i.e. NVN is revealed very clearly in the following results.

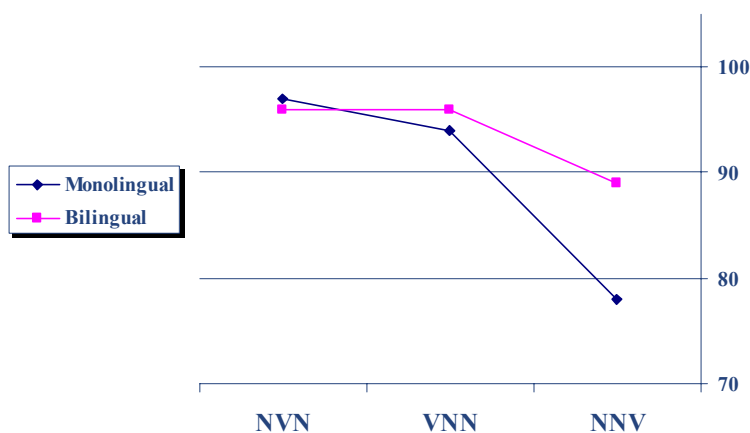


Figure 4: ANIMACY (3): N1(animate)/N2 (animate)

Figure 4 above shows also that bilingual Ss used the benefit of the knowledge of the L2 and better administered the sentences of both word orders, VNN and NNV than in the monolingual Ss. However, the results are not significant.

Case

The results for case are divided into two categories depending on whether N1 or N2 was marked as Subject.

(1) *N1(subject)*

"*al?asadu qatalal fi:la*" The lion killed the elephant (SVO)

The first noun "*alʔasadu*" (the lion), which is in the *ḍammah* mode (*u*), stands as the subject.

The results show some interesting findings. Bilingual Ss attained higher scores than the monolingual ones in the VNN. The difference here is significant (98% versus 85%, *t*-test, d.f. 4.45 $p < 0.01$ in favour of bilingual). This demonstrates that bilingual Ss show greater preference for a cue than their monolingual peers.

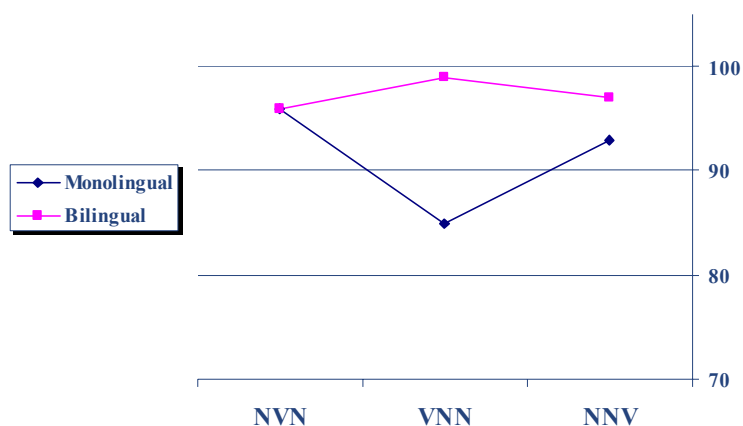


Figure 5: CASE: N1(subject)

(2) N2(subject)

"*alfi:la qatala alʔasadu*"

The lion killed the elephant (OVS)

Here, the subject "*alʔasadu*" (the lion) occurs as the second noun in the sentence. The Arabic native speaker can easily identify the subject from the *ḍammah* mode (*u*) is attached to the noun irrespective of its position in the sentence. The first noun (N1) in this sentence "*alfi:la*" (the elephant) plays the object role although it occurs initially in the sentence, but it is recognized through its case ending (*alfathā: .."a"*)¹.

The results show that bilingual Ss performed better than monolingual ones in both NVN and VNN word orders (97% versus 90% for NVN and 95% versus 88% for VNN). None of these results were significant.

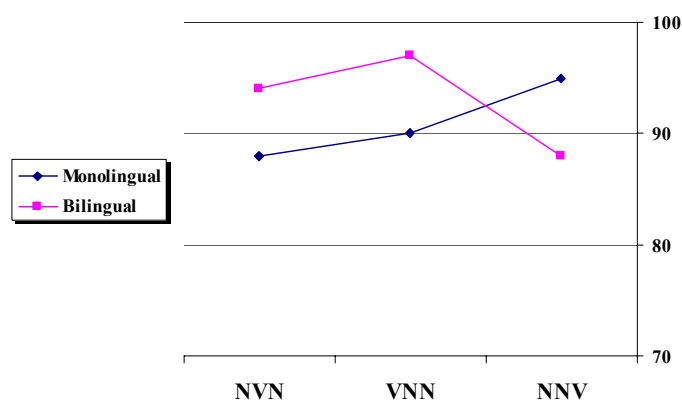


Figure 6: CASE: N2(subject)

¹ *alfathā* (*a*) is usually the case ending of the object in the sentence.

Conclusions

Results from this research have revealed some interesting findings. Overall, bilingual Ss displayed better performance as compared to monolingual peers. Although, there were no significant effects for word order, other significant effects such as animacy have shown up primarily in NVN sentences in the performance of the bilingual Ss. When the two sentences have animate nouns, our bilingual Ss scored significantly higher on both VNN and NNV. The last result shows that bilingual Ss used the benefit of their knowledge of the L2 to better process these sentences.

The bilingual Ss showed more preference only for N1 subjective in VNN than did the monolingual group, in case factor. This demonstrates that bilingual Ss show greater preference for a cue than the monolingual Ss.

The overall results indicate that the differences between the performance of both the monolingual and bilingual Ss were mainly due to the overall changed state of the L2 user (i.e. their multicompetence).

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APPENDIX The test

Name

الاسم:

Instructions:

تعليمات:

الرجاء اختيار الفاعل في الجمل التالية مع الأخذ في الاعتبار أن الفاعل هو أحد الأسمين في الجملة.

'Please underline the subject in the following sentences bearing in mind that the subject must be ONE of the two nouns that are actually in the sentence'.

Word-Order

- (a) NVN:
- (1) خالد رمى الفأس
ḵalid rama alf?asa
Khalid threw ax
 Khalid threw the ax.
- (2) فاتن تقود السيارة
faten taqu:du assyarata
Faten drives the car
 Faten drives the car.
- (3) راشد كتب: غسان
raSida katab " ḡassa:n"
rashid wrote "ghassan"
 Rashid wrote "Ghassan".

- (4) الحصانُ يسبقُ الحمار
alḥusa:nu yasbiqū alḥima:ra
the horse precede the donkey
 The horse runs faster than the donkey.
- (b) VNN:
- (1) تحمي الدجاجة الحمامة
taḥmi- duja:jatu alḥama:mah
protect the chicken the pigeon
 The chicken protects the pigeon.
- (2) يسابق محمودُ صالح
yusa:biqū maḥmu:dun ṣaleh
race Mahmoud Saleh
 Mahmoud races Saleh
- (3) يصارعُ طلالٌ عمر
yuṣa:râu ṭala:lun âumar
fight talal umar
 Talal fights Umar.
- (4) أكل الصقرُ النسْر
?akala-lṣaqrū-l nasr
eat the falcon the eagle
 The falcon eats the eagle
- (c) NNV:
- (1) الذئبُ الأسدَ هاجم
Aḥe?ba al?asadu ha:jam
the wolf the lion attacked
 The wolf, the lion attacked.
- (2) القطة الإوزة طاربت
alqiṭata al?ewizatu ṭa:radat
the cat the swan chased
 The cat, the swan chased.
- (3) السلةُ الكرة تضرب
assallata alkuratu taḍrib
the basket the ball hit
 The basket, the ball hit.
- (4) الأوراقُ الرياحُ تسابق
al?awara:qa alriyaḥu tusa:biq
the leaves the winds racing
 Leaves, the winds race.

Animacy

1) N1 (animate) / N2 (inanimate)

- NVN: (1) محمود يراقب الصحن اللاقط
mahmu:d yura:qibu-ṣaḥan alla:qiṭ
mahmoud watch the satellite dish
 Mahmoud is watching the satellite dish.
- (2) تركي يغسل القميص
turki yaqhsilu-l qami:ṣ
turki wash his shirt
 Turki washes his shirt.

(3) العصفور يسابق الريح
alʔsfu:ru yusa:biqu-l ri:h
the bird precede the wind
The bird precedes the wind.

(4) القرذ يتسلق الغصن
alqirdu ytasallaqu alghusn
the monkey climb the branch
The monkey climbs the branch.

VNN: (1) تأكلُ العنزَةُ الحشيشَ
taʔkulu-l āanzatu-l ħaSi:S
eat the goat the grass
The goat eats the grass.

(2) تطارد الهرة الكرة
tuḡa:ridu alhirratu-l kurata
turki wash his shirt
Turki washes his shirt.

(3) يزور سالم نيويورك
yazu:ru sa:lim niuyurk
visit salim new york
Salim visits New York.

(4) يدخل الرئيس معركة الانتخابات
yadḡulu-l raʔi:sa mārakata-l ʔintiḡaba:t
get in the president campaign election
The president will start his election campaign.

NNV: (1) سالم الكتاب يستهويه
sa:lim alkita:bu yastahwi:h
salim the book like it
Salim likes the book.

(2) منيرُ القطارَ يسبق
muni:ru-l qita:ra yasbiq
Muneer the train precede
Muneer precedes the train.

(3) القطة الشبكية تلتقط
alqitata alSabakatu taltaqiḡ
the cat the net catch
The net catches the cat.

(4) بلالُ الشجرَ يستأنس
bila:lun aSSajara yastaʔnis
belal the trees pleased
Belal is pleased with the trees.

2) N1 (inanimate) / N2 (animate)

NVN: (1) الحاجزُ يمنعُ محمدَ من التقدّم
alħa:jizu yamnaâu muhammadan mina-ttaqadum
the fence prevent muhammad from preceding
The fence prevents Muhammad from preceding.

- (2) المسابقة تُبرز صالح للجمهور
almusa:baqatu tubrizu salih liljamhu:r
the competition excel saleh to the audience
 The competition excels Saleh to the audience .
- (3) الأشجار تمد الحيوان بالظل والغذاء
al?Sja:ru tamudu-l hayawana be?ili wa-lgi?ha:?
the trees provide the animal with shadow and food
 The trees provide the animals with shadow and food.
- (4) البنايات المهجورة تؤوي الطيور الهائمة
albina:ya:tu-l mahju:ratu tu?wi- tuyura- lha:?ima
the trees abandoned lodge the birds the wandering
 The abandoned trees lodge abandoned birds.

- VNN: (1) ترعى المؤسسة موظفيها
tarâa-l mu?asasatu mu?af:ih
maintain the establishment employees it
 The establishment maintains its employees.
- (2) تتعبُ الرياحُ الطيور
tutâibu-riya:ña-?iyu:r
tired make the winds the birds
 The winds make the birds tired.
- (3) يزورُ المرضُ ناهد
Yazu:ru-l marađu na:hid
visit disease nahid
 The disease visits Nahid.
- (4) يدخل الرئيس معركة الانتخابات
yadqulu-arra?:i:sa maarakata-l ?inti?kaba:t
inter the president battle the election
 The president enters the election battle.

- NNV: (1) الدراجة ماجد يركب
addarajatu majidun yarkab
the bicycle majid ride
 Majid rides the bicycle.
- (2) الكوخ أحمد يبني
Alku:ka ?ahmedun yabni:
the hut ahmed build
 Ahmed is building the hut.
- (3) السجادة المهندسُ يفضل
assuja:data almuhandisu ufađil
the carpet the engineers prefer
 The engineer prefers the carpet.
- (4) الشتاء مريم فيه تنزوج
aSSita:?a maryamu feehi tatazauaj
the winter marry in it married
 In Winter, Marry gets married.

3) N1 (animate) / N2 (animate)

- NVN: (1) حسامٌ يطعم خالد
husa:mun yu?áimu kalid

husam feed khalid
Husam feeds Khalid.

(2) محمدٌ يسبق سالم
muhammadun yasbiq salim
muhammad precede salim
Muhammad precedes Salim.

(3) خديجة تنتظر منال في المكتب
ḵadi:ǰatu tantatīru mana:la fi-l maktab
khadeeja wait manal in the office
Khadeeja is waiting for Manal in the office.

(4) الحمامة تطارد العصفورة
alḥamamatu tuḡaridu-l ʔasfu:rah
the pigeon follow the bird
The pigeon follows the bird.

NVN: (1) تطعمُ الهرة الفأرة
tuḡāimu-l hirratu-l faʔra
feed the cat the mouse
The cat feeds the mouse.

(2) يسبقُ طلال مصطفى
yasbiq ʔala:lun muṣṭafa
precede talal mustafa
Talal precedes Mustafa.

(3) يترك صالح خالد لأجل المحاضرة
yatruku ṣaliḥun ḵa:lid liʔajli-l muḥa:ḡara
leave saleh khalid for the lecture
Saleh leaves Khalid for the lecture.

(4) يسحب الأسد النمر من قدميه
yasḥabu-l alʔasadu alnemra min qadamayh
pull the lion the tiger from feet its
The lion pulls the tiger from its feet.

NNV: (1) محمودٌ الفهد يستهويه
mahmu:dun alfahda yastahweeh
mahmud the leopard fond of
Mahmud is fond of the leopard.

(2) وجدانُ الهرة تلاعبها
wejda:nu-l herrata tula:áibuha
wejdan the cat play with it
Wejdan plays with the cat.

(3) رائد حسام يسبق
ra:ʔidu ḥusa:man yasbiq
raed husam precede
Raed precedes Husam.

(4) سالم عبيد يعلم
salimun áubaidan yuáalim
salim aubaid teach
Salim teaches Aubaid.

Case

N1 (subject)

- NVN: (1) جمعةٌ يخيظ الثوب
jumáatu yaqīṭu-Ṭawb
jumaa sew the garment
Juma'a is sewing the garment.
- (2) سلوى تنتظر ناهد
salwa tantatīru na:hid
salwa wait nahid
Salwa is waiting for Nahid.
- (3) الحصانُ يسبق الحمار
alḥuṣa:nu yasbiq-u-ḥima:r
the horse precede the donkey
The horse precedes the donkey.
- (4) نديمٌ يتحدث مع هاشم
nadi:mu ytaḥadaṬu maáa ha:Sim
nadeem speak with hashimh
Nadeem is speaking with Hashim.
- VNN: (1) تحمي الدجاجة الحمامة
taḥmi-duja:jatu-l ḥama:mah
protect the chicken the pigeon
Protects the chicken the pigeon.
- (2) يسابقُ محمود صالح
yusa:biqu maḥmu:dun ṣa:lih
racing mahmood salih
Mahmood is racing Salih.
- (3) يصارعُ طلال عمر
yuṣa:ri?u ṭala:lun umar
wrestling Talal Umar
Talal is wrestling Umar.
- (4) هزمَ الصقر النسر
hazama-ṣaqru-l nasra
defeated the hawk the eagle
The hawk defeated the eagle.
- NNV: (1) الذئبُ الأسد هاجم
aḥḥi?bu-l ?asada ha:jam
the wolf the lion attacked
The wolf attacked the lion.
- (2) القطّة الإوزة طاردة
alqiṭatu-l ?awizata ṭa:radat
the cat the swan chased
The cat chased the swan.
- (3) الولد الكرة يضرب
alwaladu-l kurata yaḍrib
the boy the ball hit
The boy hit the ball.

- (4) السيارات الرياح تسابق
assayya:ratu- rriya:ħa tusa:biq
the cars the wind race
The cars are racing the wind.

N2 (subject)

- NVN: (1) السلة تضرب الكرة
assallata tađribu-l kurat
basket hit the ball
The basket the ball hits.
- (2) البحث تُلقى سحر
albaħθa tulqi saħar
the paper present sahar
Sahar presents the paper.
- (3) البيض يسقط من رزان
albaida yasquṭu min raza:n
the eggs fall from razant
The eggs fall from Razan.
- (4) التفاحة حسام يأكل
attufaħata ħusa:mun ya?kul
the apple husam eat
The apple Husam eats.
- VNN: (1) تحمي الدجاجة الحمامة
taħmi-duja:jatu-l ħama:mah
protect the chicken the pigeon
Protects the chicken the pigeon.
- (2) يسابق محمود صالح
yusa:biq maħmu:dun śa:lih
racing mahmood salih
Mahmood is racing Salih.
- (3) يصارع طلال عمر
yuśa:ri?u řala:lun umar
wrestling Talal Umar
Talal is wrestling Umar.
- (4) هزم الصقر النسر
hazama-śaqr-u-l nasra
defeated the hawk the eagle
The hawk defeated the eagle.
- NNV: (1) الدراجة السيارة تسبق
adarra:jata assayyaratu tasbiq
the bicycle the car precede
The bicycle the car precedes.
- (2) العنزة الهرة طاردة
alāanzata alhuratu řa:radat
the goat the cat chased
The cat chased the goat.

(3) البطة الدجاجة تنقر
albaṭata adduja:jatu tanqur
the duck the chicken peck
The chicken pecks the duck.

(4) النمر الفهد هزم
annimra alfahdu hazam
the tiger the leopard defeated
The leopard defeated the leopard.