

## Moroccan EFL Teachers' Beliefs about the Potential Contribution of Multilingualism to the L3 English Classroom: To What Extent Is Multilingualism an Asset to L3 English Learners?

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### Abstract

*The current study set out to investigate Moroccan English language teachers' educational beliefs about the potential of multilingualism for the L3 English classroom. Utilizing a mixed-method approach of investigation, this study employs two instruments to collect data: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. An online questionnaire was completed by 169 teacher informants who participated in this study, 20 of whom were selected for the semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Findings revealed that teacher participants generally exhibited partial/moderate awareness of the usefulness of multilingualism to the L3 English classroom as they held moderate positive educational beliefs about its potential for fostering their multilingual learners' L3 English. Hence, this study suggests that Moroccan L3 English teachers be encouraged to take maximum advantage of their students' multilingualism in a way that is beneficial to their L3 English learners. Teacher education has a significant role in positively shaping L3 English teachers' educational beliefs in that respect.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In multilingual contexts, as in the case of Morocco, L3 or additional learning appears to be an ever-growing phenomenon that has begun to attract more and more attention. In this regard, for over a decade or so, several researchers in the field of Third or Additional Language Acquisition have been arguing and calling for this field to be recognized as an independent field in language acquisition since it is significantly different from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (see for example Cenoz, 2003; Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, 2001a, 2001b,

2001c, 2001d; Jessner, 1999, 2008). The theories developed in SLA and the findings and recommendations accordingly yielded and drawn from this field provide insights into L2 didactics and pedagogical approaches to the teaching and learning of an L2 (Medgyes, 1983, 1992, 1994; Widowson, 2003, as cited in Gutiérrez Eugenio, 2017). Likewise, TLA advises educators and teachers of the pedagogical principles applied to L3 teaching and learning that is taking place in multilingual settings and enlightens them on the profiles of L3 teachers and L3 learners as key elements in this distinctive learning process (Hufeisen, 2005; Jessner, 2008).

A growing body of research on multilingualism has been devoted to the study of Third Language Acquisition (TLA) or additional language learning (L3 learning) in multilingual settings. In this respect, a complex interplay between different elements is believed to undergo the process of learning and using multiple languages in the minds of multilingual learners (L3 learners). According to the literature on L3 learning (Cenoz, 2003; Gibson & Hufeisen, 2002; Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Hufeisen & Neuner, 2004; Jessner, 1999, 2006, 2008; Neuner, 2004; Manno, 2004), the current mismatch between the actual teaching and learning of English in many parts of the world including Morocco and the multilingual pedagogical approach principles (which are based on research in TLA and multilingualism about L3 teaching and learning) “has the potential to importantly hinder [multilingual] students learning progress, depriving them from using tools [potentials of multilingualism] which could otherwise speed up, enhance and enrich the L3 learning process” (Gutiérrez Eugenio, 2017, p. 4).

In light of this, several recent studies which investigated the potential benefits of learners’ multilingualism on their cognitive abilities concluded that multilingualism (or plurilingualism as it is termed in some of these studies) appears to have a positive effect on the development of numerous cognitive aspects (cognitive advantages) in multilingual learners (Achar-Amankwaa et al., 2023; Chung-Fat-Yim et al., 2022; Costa et al., 2008; D’Angelo, 2021; Foursha-Stevenson and Nicoladis, 2011; Gonzalez-Barrero and Nadig, 2019; Iarocci et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2019; Marian and Shook, 2012; Miyake et al., 2018; Pot et al., 2018; Ratto et al., 2020; Romero and Uddin, 2021; Sharaan et al., 2021). The prevalent view in these studies is that multilingualism contributes to the enhancement of cognitive performance in multilinguals (Cappuzzo, 2024).

In what concerns teachers’ beliefs in multilingual settings, much research has been done in this respect. However, only a handful of works can be found in the literature that has approached L3 language teachers’ educational beliefs about multilingualism and multilingual pedagogy. In this vein, L3 teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism in L3 foreign language teaching and learning classrooms are remarkably scarce. As for the Moroccan multilingual context, research on the beliefs of L3 English teachers about multilingualism and its potential contribution to the L3 English classroom is significantly lacking as, up to the researchers’ best knowledge, this issue has not been explored yet from the Moroccan English language teachers’ perspective.

On that account, Moroccan L3 English teachers’ awareness of the potential of multilingualism (teachers’ and learners’ multilingualism) can be manifested in their educational beliefs. If the beliefs they hold towards the potential contribution of multilingualism to L3 English teaching and learning are negative, taking maximum advantage of the potential of multilingualism in the Moroccan L3 English classroom would not be possible based on the recommendations from TLA. Hence, effective and efficient teaching and learning of L3 English in the Moroccan multilingual context would not be eventually attained.

In view of this, the current study is motivated by the lack of knowledge in the area of Moroccan L3 English teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism. The originality of this study lies in the fact that it provides a novel investigation of Moroccan L3 English teachers’ educational beliefs about the potential contribution of multilingualism to the Moroccan multilingual L3 English classroom. The findings of this investigation would describe for the first time the Moroccan L3 English teachers’ beliefs about the issue under scrutiny, which will lay the groundwork for future studies on this area of research.

In this context, this study is conducted to investigate Moroccan English language teachers' educational beliefs about the potential contribution of multilingualism to the L3 English classroom. More specifically, this study intends to investigate whether multilingualism is an asset or hindrance to the L3 English classroom by assessing Moroccan English language teachers' level of awareness, through their educational beliefs, of the potential of multilingualism concerning L3 English learners. To attain this objective, the researchers in this paper focused on answering the following research question: *What are the educational beliefs of Moroccan English language teachers about the potential contribution of multilingualism to L3 English learners in Moroccan L3 English (EFL) classrooms?*

The current study is expected to make several key contributions to the field of language teacher education in Morocco. The findings and recommendations from this study could contribute to enlightening Moroccan decision-makers, stakeholders, language teacher trainers, pedagogical experts, language curriculum designers, and L3 English teachers on the potential usefulness of L3 English learners' multilingualism in the L3 English classroom.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. The L3 Classroom**

#### **2.1.1. L3 (Multilingual) Learners**

As a matter of fact, “relatively little research has focused on issues that are specific to learning or processing a third language (L3) or beyond” (Linck et al., 2015, p. 665). However, in the course of learning or acquiring a new language as is the case in third (or additional) language acquisition, bilinguals, and certainly also multilinguals, along with monolinguals are found to be different language learners as they are not equal footing (Cenoz, 2009). This, according to Cenoz (2009), could be due to the fact that the more languages an individual speaks, the easier it becomes for them to learn an additional language. In this respect, “different theoretical approaches and methodologies have been used when analyzing the effect of bilingualism [and multilingualism] on third language acquisition” (Cenoz, 2009, p. 147). With regard to this, findings from research on multilingual language processing in multilingual learning settings revealed that multilinguals have more advantages over monolinguals (see for example, Mägiste, 1984; Thomas, 1988). According to Haukås (2022), research from various fields indicates that a number of benefits are associated with multilingualism, such as increased cognitive flexibility and working memory (Antoniou 2019; Bialystok 2011; Mephram and Martinovic 2018; Monnier et al. 2021), increased metalinguistic awareness and better language learning skills (Jessner 2008; Kemp 2007), increased academic performance (Rutgers et al. 2021), and creativity (Fürst and Grin 2018, 2021; Kharkhurin 2012). This puts multilinguals one step ahead of monolinguals when they face the challenge of learning a new language (see Cenoz, 2009 and Cenoz, 2003b).

This being the case, “in contrast to monolinguals, bi- or multilinguals have a different knowledge of their L1, their L2, a different kind of language awareness and a different language processing system” (Jessner, 2008, p. 21). In other terms, this claim is supported by Cenoz (2009) who stated that bilinguals and multilinguals have access to at least two different linguistic systems which are at their disposal. These distinct language systems compass different sets of lexicons and diverse syntax, phonetics, pragmatic, and discourse properties. Furthermore, bilinguals and multilinguals possess more and different language learning experiences when compared to monolinguals, which in fact makes them more experienced language learners when involved in additional language learning. On this point, Cenoz (2009) points out that:

bilinguals are potentially aware of the process of acquiring a second language and this experience could have an impact on the acquisition of additional languages. In many cases, bilinguals are active users of the two languages they know and switch between languages according to the situation or the interlocutor. This experience in

communication is also different when comparing monolinguals and bilinguals because monolinguals do not have to switch languages. (p. 146)

In light of this, Jessner (2008) affirms this claim indicating that this new concept has been supported by a number of research studies that probed into the cognitive aspects of multilingualism in which various researchers came up to the conclusion that both bilinguals and multilinguals are found to be better language learners than monolinguals. The former being better language learners means that they exhibited better cognitive abilities such as better language awareness and improved language processing system over monolinguals when engaged in acquiring an additional language. Accordingly, various studies have been carried out to explore the impact of bilingualism and multilingualism on learners' language acquisition notably TLA (Cenoz, 1991; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Muñoz, 2000; Sagasta, 2003; Sanz, 1997). In what follows is a review of the main findings of some of these studies in which bilingual and multilingual learners outperformed monolinguals in the acquisition of L3 English.

According to Cenoz (2009), a number of laboratory studies reported interesting findings when comparing the completion of learning and cognitive learning processes among monolinguals and multilinguals. Generally, the findings from these studies supported the claim that multilinguals are superior to monolinguals in additional language learning. This superiority, as maintained by Cenoz, lies in three distinguishable features:

(1) multilinguals demonstrated greater flexibility in switching strategies according to the demand characteristics of the task; (2) they were more likely to modify strategies that were not effective in language learning and (3) they were more effective using implicit learning strategies. (p. 147)

Multilinguals' superiority at the expense of monolinguals in the areas aforementioned is attributed to their richer linguistic experience and more enhanced learning strategies (McLaughlin & Nayak, 1989; Nation & McLaughlin, 1986; Nayak et al., 1990). Similarly, in a study conducted by Mohanty (1994), the researcher drew a conclusion that bilingual learners and is certainly the case with multilingual learners "exercise . . . superiority in cognitive, linguistic, and academic performances" over monolingual learners (Mohanty, 1994, as cited in Chibaka, 2018, p.18). In more detail and as far as the *metalinguistic hypothesis* is concerned, Mohanty added that:

[a] series of studies involving the comparison of unilingual and balanced bilingual children, with respect to the *metalinguistic hypothesis* these studies show that the bilinguals outperform the unilinguals on a number of cognitive, linguistic, and metalinguistic tasks, even when the differences in intelligence were controlled. (Mohanty, 1994, as cited in Chibaka, 2018, p.18)

Bearing this in mind, the researcher's interpretation of the findings from that study alluded to the fact that the bilingual status was the variable that contributed to the excellent performance of the bilinguals over monolinguals.

In the same direction, Ricciardelli's (1993) study on cognitive-related advantages for bilinguals measured metalinguistic awareness, creativity, nonverbal abilities, and reading achievement using *proficiency testing* among Italian-English bilingual and Italian monolingual learners. Based on the researcher's findings, he concluded that "Results of comparison of performance on the measures of cognitive development indicate that students who demonstrated high proficiency in both English and Italian achieved higher scores on the creativity, metalinguistic awareness, and reading achievement tests" (Ricciardelli, 1993, as cited in Chibaka, 2018, p.19).

Other studies were carried out in Spain, mainly in the Basque country and Catalonia, in order to investigate the effect of bilingualism on TLA (Cenoz, 1991; Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Lasagabaster, 1998; Muñoz, 2000; Sagasta, 2003; Sanz, 1997). According to Jessner (2008),



all these studies reported that bilingual learners outperformed monolinguals in the acquisition of English. Similar research on Turkish and Moroccan immigrant learners with respect to learning English as an additional language (L3) was conducted by González (1998). He reported that the bilinguals exhibited superiority over monolinguals in his population. In Switzerland, Brohy (2001) carried out a research study comparing Romansch-German bilinguals with German monolinguals in the course of learning French. The conclusion drawn from the findings reported in this study showed that bilingual learners outperformed monolinguals in the acquisition of French.

In different contexts, other studies on the differences between bilinguals and monolinguals acquiring a third or additional language concluded that bilinguals obtained better results. To illustrate, in the USA, Thomas (1988) carried out a study with immigrants targeting the acquisition of French amongst bilingual English-Spanish speakers and monolingual English-speakers. Based on his findings, Thomas reported that bilingual learners significantly scored higher in French than their counterparts, monolinguals. In addition, bilingual learners obtaining better results while learning a third language is also reported by Clyne et al. (2004) in Australia. According to the researchers in this study, the L3 learners were observed to exhibit a better performance over L2 learners while acquiring Spanish or Greek as an additional language.

With due regard to the studies previously mentioned, Jessner (2008) indicates that the findings reported by these studies “seem to imply that the development of a ‘bilingual awareness’ (McCarthy 1994) or the application of a bilingual norm – instead of a monolingual norm (Herdina & Jessner 2002) – provides the necessary prerequisite for successful further language learning” (p. 30).

In sum, Cenoz (2003a, as cited in Jessner, 2008) notes that in general the majority of studies on learners’ general proficiency among monolinguals and bi-multilinguals in multiple language acquisition contexts allude to the fact that bilingualism and multilingualism have a positive impact on learners involved in third or additional language acquisition (L3 learning). This positive influence is bound to the bi-multilinguals’ metalinguistic awareness, language learning strategies, and communicative ability, especially in the case where the L3 language is typologically close to L1 and L2. From this perspective, linguistic awareness in multilingual is defined by Jessner (2008):

as an emergent property of multilingual proficiency and as consisting of at least two dimensions in the form of crosslinguistic awareness and metalinguistic awareness. Crosslinguistic awareness refers to the learner’s tacit and explicit awareness of the links between their language systems. (p. 30)

### **2.1.2. Teachers’ Beliefs about the Potential of Multilingualism for the L3 Classroom**

It is worth mentioning that several studies were conducted about teachers’ beliefs in multilingual contexts. However, research on L3 teachers’ beliefs about the contribution of multilingualism to L3 learning is scarce. In this context, according to Gutiérrez Eugenio (2017), “There have been several studies focusing on the beliefs of teachers in multilingual contexts across Europe, with only one study [referring to Haukås’ (2016) study] focused specifically on L3 teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism” (p. 64). Since, up to the researchers’ knowledge, no previous studies conducted on L3 English teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism in the L3 English classroom in the Moroccan multilingual context exist in the literature to date, this subsection will report findings from studies that constitute the only literature currently available with a focus on teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism in geographical spaces different from the one this current study belongs to.

To start with, De Angelis (2011) conducted a study through which she examined teachers’ beliefs about multilingualism in a bilingual context, a German-Italian region in the north of Italy. Based on the findings derived from her study, De Angelis indicated that a

considerable number of the informants in her study exhibited awareness of the cognitive advantages of being a bi-multilingual. Nevertheless, it seems, according to her, that the informants still hold outdated misconceptions about how multiple languages interact with each other in a multilingual's mind. In more detail, De Angeles notes that the teachers who participated in her survey seem to regard their students' L1s, mainly when different from the target language they are in the course of acquiring, as a factor that would delay or hinder the learning of the host language (the target language). This delay or hindrance could result from not only their L1s but also other languages the students know, which they consider as a main source of interference when acquiring a new language. In addition to this, De Angeles remarked that, on the whole, the teachers seemed to hold positive beliefs about their learners' bi-multilingual background (their previous knowledge of other languages); however, they took an opposing stance towards the idea of welcoming and making use of their learners' languages in their classroom language teaching and learning practices.

Based on these findings, De Angeles (2011) concludes by stating that specific training on multilingualism and TLA for L3 language teachers in general and those working with immigrant students in particular, as is the case in her study, is mandatory. In this respect, she recognizes the urgent need for further research on the most appropriate and most efficient way in which language teacher education could effectively train teachers to work with bi/multilingual students. Besides, she realizes that there is a need for further research exploring all the different factors that could possibly make teachers hold more positive views about multilingualism.

Moving to a different context, the study which was carried out by Griva and Chostelidou (2012) in Greece sought to examine, through semi-structured interviews, 86 primary and secondary EFL teachers' perceptions of multilingual competence development in the Greek educational system. The part of the study that is most relevant to the current study reported that secondary school EFL teachers seemed to consider multilingualism an important medium by which communicating in different cultural and linguistic contexts is possible more than primary teachers.

Another research which was conducted by Otwinowska (2014) in Poland included two studies on teachers' beliefs about multilingualism. In her first quantitative study, through questionnaires, Otwinowska investigated 233 Polish EFL teachers' plurilingual awareness regarding several variables. In her study, 'plurilingualism' and 'individual multilingualism' are used interchangeably by Otwinowska, who defined teachers' plurilingual awareness as "the ability to promote plurilingual (or multilingual) approaches in the language classroom" (p. 115). Amongst the conclusions that were drawn in her study and which seem to be partly relevant to the focus of this current study is that teachers with multilingual backgrounds showed more awareness of the potential importance of multilingualism than their bilingual counterparts. In addition to this, the researcher suggested that there seems to be a higher level of plurilingual (multilingual) awareness among in-service teachers than pre-service teachers.

Similarly, in her second qualitative study, Otwinowska (2014) probed five secondary EFL teachers' understanding and perception of both plurilingual awareness and plurilingual language teaching. Otwinowska reported that although the five teachers are aware of the fact that learners' knowledge of multiple languages helps and facilitates additional language acquisition, they still hold a very low level of awareness to almost no awareness of the importance of their learners' previously acquired languages, including their L1s. Practically speaking, Otwinowska reported that some teachers in her sample regard teachers' reliance on and use of other languages spoken by the students in the classroom as unprofessional practice. In contrast, other teachers reported that for the sake of facilitating their students' L3 learning, they encourage them to have recourse to their knowledge of and previous experience learning other languages.

One of the most relevant studies to the current study, although partially, is Haukås' (2016). Haukås conducted a study in Norway through which the researcher specifically examined the beliefs of Norwegian L3 teachers about multilingualism and the use of a

multilingual approach in the third (L3) language classroom. Haukås adopted a qualitative approach (qualitative content analysis) utilizing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with 12 teachers of Spanish, French, and German as an L3. Amongst the objectives Haukås set in her study is investigating the extent to which L3 teachers regard multilingualism as an asset to L3 language learning. Findings from Haukås' study provided interesting insights into L3 teachers' beliefs about the potential role multilingualism might play in the L3 language classroom. In this regard, one of the main findings that emerged from her study is that "The teachers view multilingualism as a potentially positive asset. Although they think that multilingualism has benefited their own language learning, they do not conclude that multilingualism is automatically an asset to students" (Haukås, 2016, p. 1). Accordingly, they stressed on the fact that students' knowledge of other languages rather than their L3 might not significantly contribute to enhancing their L3 learning process unless their awareness of their own multilingualism is encouraged and increased. On account of this, Haukås, through the findings from her research, alludes to the key role that L3 teachers might play in helping multilingual students (1) recognize their previous learning experience of other languages, (2) take advantage of their multilinguistic knowledge, and (3) be aware of their language learning potentials.

Another interesting finding from Haukås' (2016) research is that the L3 teachers who participated in her study seemed to similarly view L3 English learning and L2 English learning as two completely distinct learning processes. Hence, they seem not convinced about the usefulness of transferring students' L2 learning strategies for the sake of advancing their L3 English learning. Haukås clarifies this point by stating that:

The teachers claim to make frequent use of their students' linguistic knowledge of Norwegian and English when teaching the L3. However, the teachers rarely focus on the transfer of learning strategies because they believe that learning an L3 is completely different from learning a second language L2 English. (p. 1)

On account of this, Haukås (2016) concludes that "[L3] teachers clearly need sufficient training in a new approach [which she referred to as 'multilingual pedagogy'] before they can see how such an approach can enhance their students' [L3] learning" (p. 13). In this respect, according to Haukås, "Language teacher education plays a key role in training future teachers to implement a multilingual pedagogy" (p. 13). While a multilingual pedagogical approach to L3 learning and teaching would improve the effectiveness of L3 language learning (Neuner, 2004, 2009), L3 language teacher training programs would enhance L3 teachers' multilingual awareness in terms of theory and application (De Angelis, 2011; Jessner, 2008).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study seeks to answer the following research question: *What are the educational beliefs of Moroccan English language teachers about the potential contribution of multilingualism to L3 English learners in Moroccan L3 English (EFL) classrooms?* The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology –the sequential mixed-method design. Quantitative and qualitative research designs were adopted to provide deeper insights into the understanding of educational beliefs investigated in this study. The study's target population is Moroccan English language teachers in secondary education from which a sample was pulled. The sample consisted of 169 teacher informants who served as a source of data collection. Since it was difficult to have access to a larger sample size of the target population in this study, the informants were selected from accessible population using nonrandom sampling. This sampling approach made use of convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling methods for recruiting the informants with regard to the quantitative part of the study. With respect to the qualitative part of the study, 20 teacher informants were selected from the sample employing purposive sampling. To collect quantitative and qualitative data, this study deployed two research instruments: teacher questionnaires and teacher interviews. As for data analysis, a combination of quantitative and

qualitative approaches was used in the data analysis. Regarding questionnaire data, numerical data analysis (descriptive and inferential analyses) was performed through statistical procedures that made use of SPSS software (version 25.0). Interview data were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis. Findings from each analysis were converged and compared to yield complementary data.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Quantitative Analysis of the Questionnaire Findings

#### 4.1.1. Descriptive Analysis: L3 English Teachers' Educational Beliefs Regarding Multilingual Learners (L3 English Learners)

Section 3 of the questionnaire intended to examine Moroccan L3 English teachers' educational beliefs as regards various learning characteristics specific to L3 learners. In more detail, this section investigated the extent to which Moroccan L3 English teachers are aware of the potential advantages L3 learners have over bilinguals and monolinguals in L3 English learning contexts: Advantages due to knowledge of other languages (influence and use of other/foreign languages) and advantages due to experience learning other languages (aptitude and autonomy).

#### 4.1.2. Advantages due to Knowledge of Other Languages

Table 1 demonstrates the teacher informants' mean scores of agreement with items reflecting multilinguals' advantages over bilinguals and monolinguals in the L3 English classroom due to knowledge of other languages. The variable which is measured herein is the extent to which the teacher informants agree with, and so are aware of, the crosslinguistic interaction factor that lies in the influence and use of other languages, including interlinguistic comparisons and generating mistakes in the L3 English classroom which puts multilinguals in a favorable position vis-à-vis bilingual and monolingual learners. Accordingly, the findings indicate that the individual mean scores attributed to each of the seven items are above 2 (average). The mean scores range between 2,15 as the lowest (item 4) and 2,62 as the highest (item 3). The overall mean score is 2,43.

**Table 1: Teacher Informants' Mean Scores and Percentages of Agreement with Items Reflecting Multilinguals' Advantages due to Knowledge of Other Languages Over Bilinguals and Monolinguals in the L3 English Classroom**

Scale 1: Advantages due to knowledge of other languages: Influence and use of other languages						
In comparison with monolinguals and bilinguals, multilingual learners of L3 English tend (to) ...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score*
<b>Statement 3.</b> to compare English lexical items to those of other languages that they know.	7,1%	7,1%	17,2%	54,4%	14,2%	2,62
<b>Statement 4.</b> to make different mistakes.	7,7%	19,5%	27,2%	40,8%	4,7%	2,15
<b>Statement 7.</b> to use grammatical structures borrowed from other languages in their English.	8,9%	12,4%	22,5%	47,3%	8,9%	2,35
<b>Statement 9.</b> to confuse linguistic elements between languages including English.	10,7%	14,2%	25,4%	42,6%	7,1%	2,21
<b>Statement 12.</b> to ask for clarification in other languages that they know.	7,7%	10,1%	14,8%	54,4%	13,0%	2,55
<b>Statement 14.</b> to compare English grammar to the grammar of other languages.	6,5%	13,0%	14,8%	51,5%	14,2%	2,54
<b>Statement 17.</b> to make up new lexical items in English (correct or incorrect) based on their knowledge of other languages.	7,1%	8,9%	18,3%	50,9%	14,8%	2,57
Total mean score*						2,43

Note. \*Maximum = 4



***Advantages due to Experience Learning Other Languages***

Table 2 shows the teacher informants' individual mean scores of agreement with items reflecting multilinguals' advantages over bilinguals and monolinguals in the L3 English classroom due to experience learning other languages. The advantages herein are approached by measuring the teacher informants' level of agreement with the items reflecting the aspect of aptitude multilinguals have over bilinguals and monolinguals as a multilingualism factor due to the experience they accumulated learning other languages. According to the results in Table 2, all the items scored no less than 2, which is the average. The item with the lowest mean score is item 8 'to have a special ability to deduce the rules governing the English linguistic system' (2,49), whereas the item with the highest score is item 1 'to have a special aptitude for learning world languages like English, for example' (2,73). The total mean score of the teacher informant's agreement with all the five items reflecting the aptitude advantage multilinguals enjoy is 2,55.

**Table 2: Teacher Informants' Mean Scores and Percentages of Agreement with Items Reflecting Multilinguals' Advantages due to Experience Learning Other Languages Over Bilinguals and Monolinguals in the L3 English Classroom: Aptitude**

<b>Scale 2: Subscale 2/A: Advantages due to experience learning other languages: Aptitude</b>						
In comparison with monolinguals and bilinguals, multilingual learners of L3 English tend (to) ...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score*
<b>Statement 1.</b> to have a special aptitude for learning world languages like English, for example.	7,1%	5,9%	16,0%	49,1%	21,9%	2,73
<b>Statement 5.</b> to have an advanced practical knowledge of language learning processes.	5,3%	5,9%	29,0%	51,5%	8,3%	2,51
<b>Statement 8.</b> to have a special ability to deduce the rules governing the English linguistic system.	8,3%	4,7%	25,4%	53,3%	8,3%	2,49
<b>Statement 11.</b> to have more advanced cognitive skills for language learning.	6,5%	10,1%	18,3%	53,8%	11,2%	2,53
<b>Statement 15.</b> to have a greater sensitivity to recognize the grammatical functions of English words.	5,3%	10,7%	23,1%	50,9%	10,1%	2,50
Total mean score*						2,55

Note. \*Maximum = 4

Table 3 displays the teacher informants' individual mean scores of agreement with items reflecting multilinguals' advantages over bilinguals and monolinguals in the L3 English classroom due to experience learning other languages. In this regard, the aspect of autonomy as a multilingualism factor due to experience learning other languages that multilinguals have over bilinguals and monolinguals, which is reflected in the five items, is approached by measuring the teacher informants' agreement with those items. Based on the findings in Table 3, all the items scored higher than 2. While item 10 'to manage their own learning more efficiently' received the highest score (2,53), the lowest score (2,07) is attributed to item 13 'to depend less on the L3 English teacher'. The five items received an overall mean of 2,38 which is attributed to the teacher informants' level of agreement with the multilinguals' autonomy in the L3 English classroom.

**Table 3: Teacher Informants' Mean Scores and Percentages of Agreement with Items Reflecting Multilinguals' Advantages due to Experience Learning Other Languages Over Bilinguals and Monolinguals in the L3 English Classroom: Autonomy**

**Scale 2: Subscale 2/B: Advantages due to experience learning other languages: Autonomy**

In comparison with monolinguals and bilinguals, multilingual learners of L3 English tend (to) ...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score*
<b>Statement 2.</b> to be more autonomous (independent) learners.	6,5%	9,5%	27,8%	45,0%	11,2%	2,45
<b>Statement 6.</b> to evaluate more carefully the teacher's contribution to their learning.	5,9%	14,2%	32,0%	37,9%	10,1%	2,32
<b>Statement 10.</b> to manage their own learning more efficiently.	5,9%	10,1%	21,3%	50,3%	12,4%	2,53
<b>Statement 13.</b> to depend less on the L3 English teacher.	7,1%	20,7%	34,9%	32,5%	4,7%	2,07
<b>Statement 16.</b> to be more willing to take responsibility for their own English learning process.	5,9%	10,7%	24,3%	43,8%	15,4%	2,52
Total mean score*						2,38

Note. \*Maximum = 4

Table 4 shows the overall means of the teacher informants' agreement with the items in scale 1 (Advantages due to knowledge of other languages: Influence and use of other languages), scale 2/A (Advantages due to experience learning other languages: Aptitude), and scale 2/B (Advantages due to experience learning other languages: Autonomy). The total means indicate that the teacher informants hold similar moderate positive beliefs about the advantages that multilinguals have over bilinguals and monolinguals due to knowledge of and experience learning other languages. According to the results, while the latter (knowledge of other languages) leads to having multilinguals with more aptitude and autonomy due to multilingualism, the former (experience learning other languages) results in having multilinguals with influence and use of other languages (interlinguistic comparisons and mistakes due to crosslinguistic interaction factor) in the L3 English classroom.

**Table 4: Means for Scales 1 and 2**

Scales	Mean*
<b>Scale 1:</b> Advantages due to the knowledge of other languages: 'Influence and use of other languages'	2,43
<b>Scale 2:</b> Advantages due to experience learning other languages: 'Aptitude and autonomy'	2,47
<b>Subscale 2/A:</b> Advantages due to experience learning other languages: 'Aptitude'	2,55
<b>Subscale 2/B:</b> Advantages due to experience learning other languages: 'Autonomy'	2,38
<b>All scales</b> [Scale 1 and 2]	2,45

Note. \*Maximum = 4

These findings clearly indicate that the teacher informants generally hold positive beliefs but with a moderate level, about the benefits of multilingualism in the L3 English classroom. Based on this, the teacher informants showed a moderate level of awareness of the potential that multilingualism can bring into the L3 English classroom and so of the advantages that the L3 learners tend to have over their counterparts thanks to their knowledge of and experience learning other languages.

#### 4.1.3. Inferential Analysis: L3 English Teachers' Educational Beliefs Regarding Multilingual Learners (L3 English Learners)

Table 5 offers an overview of the total mean scores (with Standard Deviation) of all the scales (Section 3) previously mentioned in the descriptive analysis.

**Table 5**

*Means and Standard Deviation for all Scales in Section 3*

Descriptive Statistics
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***Moroccan EFL Teachers' Beliefs about the Potential Contribution of Multilingualism to the L3 English Classroom: To What Extent Is Multilingualism an Asset to L3 English Learners?***

Sections	Scales	Mean*	Standard Deviation
<b>Section 3: L3 Learners: L3 English teachers' beliefs regarding multilingual learners</b>	Scale 1: Advantages due to knowledge of other/foreign languages: 'Influence and use of other languages'	2,43	0,78
	Scale 2/A: Advantages due to experience learning other/foreign languages: 'Aptitude'	2,55	0,77
	Scale 2/B: Advantages due to experience learning other/foreign languages: 'Autonomy'	2,38	0,73

Note. \*Maximum = 4

Based on the paired-samples t-test that was conducted between scale 2A and scale 2B in 'section 3', the teacher informants answered significantly lower to scale 2B compared to scale 2A ( $p < .001$ ). This suggests that while the informants generally hold moderate positive beliefs about the advantages of aptitude and autonomy that multilinguals have over bilinguals and monolinguals due to experience learning other languages, their moderate level of awareness of the advantage of autonomy is significantly lower than their moderate level of awareness of the advantage of aptitude.

When conducting the paired-samples t-test between scale 1 and scale 2, the results showed no statistically significant difference in the mean values of the two scales, although scale 2 scored higher than scale 1 ( $p > .001$ ). This suggests that the informants hold, in a very similar way, moderate positive beliefs about the advantages that multilinguals have over bilinguals and monolinguals due to both knowledge of and experience learning other languages. This means that their level of awareness of the advantages that multilinguals enjoy thanks to their knowledge of other languages is almost the same as their level of awareness of the advantages that multilinguals enjoy due to their experience learning other languages (see Table 6).

**Table 6: T-test for Scales 1 and 2 and Scales 2A and 2B**

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Scale 1 Scale 2	-0,03736	0,64154	0,04935	-0,13479	0,06006	-0,757	168	0,450
Pair 2	Scale 2A Scale 2B	0,17278	0,42141	0,03242	0,10879	0,23678	5,330	168	0,000*

Note. \*Statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

On the basis of this, as regards the specific characteristics of the L3 English learners, it is worth mentioning that the teacher informants, in general, regarded the advantages due to both knowledge of and experience learning other/foreign languages that their multilingual learners possess over their counterparts, bilinguals and monolinguals, with a similar moderate level of awareness. These advantages put L3 learners ahead of L2 and L1 learners in the course of L3 English learning. However, there was a significant difference in the informants' level of awareness of how their L3 English learners might benefit from their experience learning other/foreign languages prior to their L3 English. Accordingly, the informants believe that thanks to this experience, multilinguals tend to have more readiness or quickness in learning (aptitude) than autonomy.

#### 4.2. Qualitative Analysis of The Interview Findings

The overall response to the question *'do you think that the more languages an individual speaks/knows, the easier it becomes for them to learn an additional language?'* was very positive amongst the twenty interview respondents. All the interviewees acknowledged the usefulness of L3 learners' multilingualism, previously acquired languages, in facilitating additional language learning. The interviewees believed that multilingualism positively impacts learners' cognitive and linguistic abilities skills and language learning strategies. Some believe that learners' multilingualism enriches and expands learners' vocabulary repertoire. Others thought that learners' previously acquired languages boost learners' linguistic awareness. Others noted that the more languages a learner knows, the more language learning strategies and techniques they get equipped with, and the more linguistic skills they develop. One of the interview participants stated: "I think so. I believe that when you learn your first foreign language, you develop skills, knowledge, techniques, and cognitive abilities that you did not have before, and these will make it easier for you to learn another language". Another interview respondent commented:

There are many reasons why I believe that the more languages an individual speaks, the easier it becomes for them to learn an additional language. First of all, many languages share a number of vocabulary items. Just a glimpse in the language dictionaries would prove that. In addition to this, it is obvious that when an individual learns more languages, he or she develops more skills, techniques, and strategies. For instance, a learner who is conversant with the skill of deconstructing words into roots and affixes would guess the meaning of new items as opposed to one who lacks this skill.

It is worthy of note that many interviewees stressed on the fact that learners' multilingualism makes it potentially easier for learners to learn additional languages, especially when their previously acquired languages and the additional language(s) belong to the same language family. According to these interviewees, when linguistic systems are similar, additional language learning takes place easily, smoothly, and faster. Talking about this issue, one of the interviewees said: "learners with many previously learned languages acquire and master strategies to learn new languages, especially if they belong to the same language family: Indo-European or Afro-Asiatic ones. When it comes to vocabulary, the lexical transfer increases". Another interviewee similarly commented, saying:

Learning other languages boosts one's cognitive and linguistic skills. Additionally, some language systems are quite similar, which makes it easy for the person to learn new languages, and even in the cases where the linguistic systems are different, the learner should benefit from the differences.

The interviewees were given a situation to reflect on in which they were to teach L3 English to three different types of learners: a multilingual learner who knows Amazigh, Moroccan Arabic, Standard Arabic, French, and Spanish, a bilingual learner who knows only Amazigh and Moroccan Arabic, and a monolingual learner who knows Amazigh or Moroccan Arabic only. Then, the interviewees were asked the following question: *'based on your teaching experience, do you think that the multilingual learner has more advantages over the other two learners, the bilingual one and the monolingual one, when facing the challenge of learning L3 English - as an additional language?'* In response to this question, all the interviewees affirmed that the multilingual learner is advantageous over the other two learners, notably the monolingual one when involved in L3 English learning. In this regard, a common view amongst the interviewees was that the multilingual learner is highly likely to have more potential such as richer linguistic repertoire, boosted cognitive skills and abilities, developed learning strategies and techniques, expanded multilingual awareness, and enhanced metalinguistic awareness or ability. To illustrate, one interviewee stated:



The multilingual learner has an advantage over the others, as I mentioned. The learner who has two pre-established linguistic systems which are adjacent in terms of language distance. This learner has developed certain skills and strategies which will make the task of learning English as an additional language easier.

Another interviewee commented:

Yes! I do think that the multilingual learner has more advantages over the other two learners when facing the challenge of learning L3 English. The linguistic backgrounds of the multilingual learners can serve as a bridge that helps them learn another foreign language. To illustrate, a multilingual learner can resort to his or her linguistic background to facilitate and consolidate his or her additional language learning or when facing learning challenges. For instance, through comparisons between the language they are learning and the languages they already know, learners develop insights into the nature of language and its mechanism.

Although there is a common agreement among the interview respondents that multilingual learners tend to have more cognitive and linguistic advantages over bilingual and monolingual learners, as it was mentioned earlier, few interviewees, however, took a cautious view in that respect. These interviewees insisted on the fact that learners' multilingual background per se is not enough to make multilingual learners more advantageous over bilingual and monolingual learners during additional language learning. According to these respondents, other contributive factors, such as the instruction methods, the learning environment, the typology of the background languages, and the level of proficiency and literacy in the previously acquired languages ought to be taken into account. The following excerpts from the interviews echo these views:

Yes, he surely would have an advantage simply because he has proven that he can go beyond his native language. It is, however, important to note that this ability and readiness to learn a new language is dependent on the teaching methods the teacher adopts as well as the student's motivation.

It is difficult to either say yes or no because it excludes other contributive factors to learning languages, such as motivation. As I explained in the first question, there is strong evidence in the literature that multilingual students/learners often do better at school than monolinguals. However, we should consider the social milieu, the personal aspirations, and the motivation of the learner, but more importantly, how strong their knowledge of the above-mentioned languages is.

I think the multilingual student has more advantages over others. His or her awareness of the other languages might make it easier for them to assimilate the structure and meaning of the English language. However, I do not think that Arabic and Amazigh will help students better master the structure of the language (English) because of their forms. But in the case of French, the situation will be different as both French and English have a lot of things in common (lexicon, sentence structure, etc.).

The interview respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or not with the following statement: *'multilingual learners, when compared to bilinguals and monolinguals, have a richer knowledge of different multiple language systems (their L1, L2, L3, etc.), different language processing systems, and richer linguistic learning experience. As a result, they have more language awareness, more metalinguistic awareness, more enhanced language learning strategies, and more cognitive-related advantages'*. The majority of the interview participants were unanimous in the view that multilinguals are ahead of bilinguals and monolinguals in relation to their cognitive and linguistic abilities (language and metalinguistic awareness and learning language strategies) due to their diverse multiple language systems and richer linguistic learning experiences. Commenting on this issue, one of the interview participants

said: “multilingual learners acquire expertise and knowledge related to language acquisition. They become trained, and their brains are wired in ways different to monolinguals. More languages can simply fit in their minds easily”. Another interviewee, when asked, agreed with the statement and backed up his point of view, saying:

Multilinguals are basically more apt to learn additional languages due to the reasons you [the researcher] mentioned. First, their previous experiences with language use and language learning help them develop a feel of the various linguistic components of language. For instance, they have richer vocabulary, and they can transfer linguistic knowledge backward or forward, which gives them more flexibility. The experience of learning languages is generally similar. So, the skills and strategies can be transferred as well. Finally, I would say that even research in neuroscience has proved that multilinguals’ brains are more wired to learn and more developed.

In one case, one respondent expressed her agreement with the statement and shared her personal experience as an L3 English teacher of a multilingual learner who was in the course of learning L3 English. This interviewee reported the fact that her multilingual learner showed better cognitive and linguistic abilities and skills and better learning strategies compared to other learners. On this point, the interviewee stated:

I perceive being multilingual more like a blessing than a curse, and I think there is adequate empirical evidence to believe so. I do not have any credits now. However, from my personal experience as an EFL teacher, I firmly believe that students trying to learn a language but already speak two or three have a massive advantage over others who do not. I had a student in a private school who was raised in Spain. She speaks Spanish and French fluently. I was her teacher of English. She was incredible compared to others when it came to learning English as an additional language [as an L3].

However, two interviewees voiced reservations about the statement, although they acknowledged that multilingual learners tend to have more cognitive-related advantages and perform better than bilinguals and monolinguals in additional language learning. For these interviewees, just the fact that multilinguals possess different multiple language systems and richer language learning experiences does not necessarily and automatically lead to the development of enhanced cognitive abilities and skills in their minds, as mentioned in the statement. According to these interviewees, other influencing factors should also be considered, such as teaching methods and motivation. The following extracts from the interviews illustrate these views:

Yes, because the degree to which a language learner masters the aforementioned competencies, for example, language awareness, metalinguistic awareness, enhanced learning strategies, and cognitive-related advantages, is what sets the learners apart. It is important, however, to stress the idea of readiness to be multilingual and being multilingual. Other factors, such as motivation, opportunity, methods, and policies, may hinder a person from being multilingual or not.

It is yes, but it is not a clear-cut yes. More research is needed to see whether what is suggested in the statement is true or not. What I mean is that it is not automatic. Just being multilingual does not automatically make learners aware of the intricacies of the workings of a language. I would like to believe so, but I need evidence. So, it is a yes but a cautious yes.

Overall, the findings from the interviews, as shown above, clearly indicate that the interviewees hold positive educational beliefs about the role that learners’ multilingual backgrounds could play in the process of additional language learning. Multilingual learners are regarded to have more cognitive-related advantages over bilinguals and monolinguals as they are believed to be more experienced language learners and have potentially developed more enhanced cognitive skills and learning strategies. Multilingualism is perceived to have a

potential role in rendering multilingual learners advantageous in the course of learning L3 English in the Moroccan multilingual educational context.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The quantitative findings from the current study demonstrate that the teacher informants showed a moderate level of awareness of the potential of multilingualism for L3 English learners. This indicates that the teacher informants are moderately aware of the cognitive-related advantages (e.g., influence and use of other languages, aptitude, and autonomy) that multilingual learners have over bilinguals and monolinguals. These advantages are due to multilinguals' extended knowledge of and experience learning other languages compared to their counterparts, notably monolinguals. Likewise, the qualitative findings have shown that multilingual learners are thought to be more experienced language learners and have developed more enhanced cognitive skills and learning strategies over bilinguals and monolinguals. Accordingly, from the perspective of the teacher informants in this study, multilingualism can potentially render multilinguals advantageous to L3 English learners in the Moroccan multilingual educational context.

These views are consistent with research on multilingualism showing that "Multilinguals differ from bilinguals and monolinguals in several respects" (Haukås, 2016, p. 1). In this regard, a number of studies, among many others, such as Bialystok (2011), Cenoz (2003a, 2003b), De Angelis (2007), and Jessner (2008) have shown that multilinguals exhibit enhanced superior metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities. For instance, the ability to make comparisons between different linguistic systems at their disposal and the ability to reflect on and draw upon appropriate learning strategies available for them. In a study conducted by Portolés and Martí (2020), the views that the teacher participants held towards the potential of multilingualism for learners were very positive, as they commonly and strongly agreed that being multilingual has cognitive advantages for learners. In fact, most of the participants in Portolés and Martí's research acknowledged the cognitive potentials and abilities that stem from being multilingual and viewed simultaneous multiple language acquisition as a learning process that is devoid of any harmful effects on the multilingual learners' linguistic competence. When comparing these results to the quantitative findings of the current study, it must be pointed out that a similar pattern of views, though moderately positive, was demonstrated by the teacher informants. In general, based on the findings yielded by the descriptive analysis, the informants acknowledged a set of linguistic and metacognitive advantages that multilingual learners have over bilinguals and monolinguals, such as '*cross-linguistic influence*', '*autonomy*', and namely '*aptitude*'. These linguistic and cognitive advantages are due to multilinguals' expanded knowledge of and richer experience learning other languages. In fact, the inferential analysis revealed that the informants' level of agreement with items referring to the aspect of '*aptitude*', as a metacognitive advantage that multilinguals tend to have due to their accumulated multi-language learning experience, was significant, as it was shown by the paired-samples t-test (see Table 6). The qualitative findings from the interviews in this study also revealed a similar pattern of beliefs on the part of the teacher participants. The interviewees commonly viewed multilinguals as learners who have richer linguistic repertoires, boosted cognitive skills and abilities, developed learning strategies, and expanded and enhanced multilingual and metalinguistic awareness. The following quote by one of the interviewees reflects this pattern of beliefs: "the multilingual learner has an advantage over the others [bilinguals and monolinguals] ...The learner who has two pre-established linguistic systems...has developed certain skills and strategies which will make the task of learning English as an additional language easier".

In accordance with the findings reported in the current study, a similar conclusion was reached by Lundberg (2019) in his research on teachers' educational beliefs about multilingualism. Lundberg concluded that "Overall, teachers' beliefs are rather welcoming towards multilingualism and multilingual students" (p. 266), as they regarded multilingualism

as beneficial for students and did not hold negative views of multilingual students. Similarly, as the quantitative findings in the current study showed, the teacher informants, in general terms, perceived multilingualism as a benefit and did not show any deficit-oriented views of multilinguals. Also, according to the qualitative findings, all the interviewees recognized the potential usefulness and utility of multilingualism for learners' additional language learning. One of the interviewees acknowledged how beneficial multilingualism could be for learners; he said: "I believe that when you learn your first foreign language, you develop skills, knowledge, techniques, and cognitive abilities that you did not have before, and these will make it easier for you to learn another language". In support of these findings, other studies conducted in different educational contexts in Europe yielded similar results. Studies carried out by De Angelis (2011) in Austria, Great Britain, and Italy, Griva & Chostelidou (2012) and Mitits (2018) in Greece, Heyder & Schädlich (2014) in Germany, Otwinowska (2014, 2017) in Poland, and Haukås (2016) in Norway altogether conclude that teachers' educational beliefs about multilingualism are welcoming. The teachers in these studies acknowledged the benefits of being multilingual in additional language learning settings.

The teacher informants in the current study, along with the studies aforementioned, reflected positive views towards multilingualism. On this point, multilinguals manifest signs of superior metalinguistic and metacognitive abilities over bilinguals and monolinguals due to the multilingualism factor according to the teachers. However, these findings do not support part of the results from Haukås' (2016) research in this area. In fact, the teacher participants in Haukås' (2016) did not uniformly agree that multilingualism is necessarily an asset to students just because it is regarded as a potentially positive asset by the teachers. In this respect, a consensus view among teachers participating in other studies (e.g., Bono & Stratilaki, 2009; De Angelis, 2011; Hufeisen & Marx, 2007; Moore, 2006; Singleton & Aronin, 2007; Swain, Lapkin, Rowen, & Hart, 1990) seems to be that multilingualism does not automatically boost additional language acquisition if the learners fail to see it as a useful resource at their disposal. In other words, multilingual learners need first to be aware of the potential of their multilingualism. Second, they need to be encouraged to resort to their knowledge of different linguistic systems and to make use of their experience learning languages (Moore, 2006).

In fact, in this study, similar views were expressed by a minority of teachers during the interviews. Although these teachers perceived learners' multilingualism as an asset, they voiced reservations in that regard. They could not agree with the idea that just because multilingual learners possess multiple language systems and richer language learning experiences, they are inclined to have more cognitive advantages and perform better than bilinguals and monolinguals in additional language learning. For these teachers, learners' multilingualism does not necessarily lead to the development of enhanced cognitive abilities and skills for the learners and, hence, does not automatically facilitate, assist, and enhance additional language learning. According to these teachers, other factors might impede any potential role of multilingualism in facilitating L3 learning, such as instruction methods, learners' motivation, the learning environment, the typology of the background languages, and learners' proficiency in these languages. The following excerpts from the interviews echo this cautious view. "It is not automatic. Just being multilingual does not automatically make learners aware of the intricacies of the workings of a language", said one of the interviewees. "We should consider the social milieu, the personal aspirations, and motivation of the learner, but importantly how strong their knowledge of the [previously acquired] languages is", stated another interviewee. "It is, however, important to note that this ability and readiness to learn a new language is dependent on the teaching methods the teacher adopts as well as the student's motivation", noted another interviewee.

Based on these findings and the conclusions from the current study, the latter suggests that unless Moroccan L3 English teachers regard multilingualism as an asset for their learners' L3 English learning, the cognitive and linguistic advantages that emerge from their learners' expanded knowledge of and richer experience learning other languages are unlikely to be made good use of in the L3 English classroom. Having teachers who just hold positive educational



beliefs about their learners' multilingualism is not sufficient. Thus, to make the most of what multilingualism can offer to both teachers and learners involved in the Moroccan L3 English learning setting, L3 English teachers should encourage their learners to draw upon diverse potentials provided by their multilingualism.

Additionally, this study suggests that encouraging Moroccan L3 English teachers to take maximum advantage of their L3 learners' multilingualism would be beneficial to their L3 English learning. This could be achieved if L3 English teachers are pedagogically encouraged to trigger their learners' awareness of the various potentials their multilingualism provides them with to facilitate and boost their L3 English learning. For example, learners' capability of resorting to their knowledge of different language systems and drawing upon their rich experience learning other languages. Therefore, multilinguals' metacognitive and linguistic advantages and abilities should be activated and rendered functioning. This could be possible if L3 English learners are encouraged to develop a certain high level of awareness of, for instance, their autonomy, aptitude, and cross-linguistic interactions. Hence, L3 English learners should be aware of the fact that these capabilities have great potential usefulness in enhancing their L3 English if they are brought into action during the learning process.

Finally, this study suggests that to raise Moroccan L3 English teachers' awareness of their L3 English students' multilingual metacognitive and linguistic advantages and abilities, language teacher education in Morocco has a significant role to play in this regard. It can change teachers' negative educational beliefs into positive ones and strengthen the current positive educational beliefs toward the potential of multilingualism for L3 English learners. In this respect, to bring change to the structure of the educational belief system of Moroccan L3 English teachers, prospective teachers should be introduced to the main concepts and theories in TLA, the aspects of multilingualism, and its potential effect on L3 English learning. Language teacher education and teacher training programmes ought to incorporate structured modules on TLA. Prospective L3 English teachers should also be exposed to TLA research findings on the positive impact of multilingualism on learners involved in additional language acquisition. Only then, teachers' awareness of multilingualism's potential in general and those of multilingual learners, in particular, will be enhanced. This enhanced awareness will, thus, enable Moroccan L3 English teachers to help and guide their students to become more reflective, more strategic, and more successful L3 English learners.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The primary aim of this study is to probe into the educational beliefs of Moroccan EFL teachers about the potential contribution of multilingualism to the L3 English classroom. The results of this study reveal that the teacher informants generally held moderate positive beliefs in the sense that they exhibited a moderate level of awareness of the importance and usefulness of multilingualism in the Moroccan L3 English classroom. In this respect, the potential role of multilingualism was perceived to be of moderate importance for L3 English learners (referring to the multilinguals' advantages due to knowledge of and experience learning other languages). In light of the findings aforementioned, the study suggests that Moroccan L3 English teachers' awareness of their students' multilingual metacognitive and linguistic advantages and abilities should be raised by introducing current and prospective L3 English teachers to the main concepts and theories in TLA and the aspects of multilingualism and its potential effect on additional language learning. Unless teacher education and teacher training programmes integrate structured modules on TLA in the training of prospective L3 English teachers and expose them to research findings from TLA on the potential positive impact of multilingualism on multilingual learners involved in additional language acquisition, L3 English teachers' awareness of the potentials of multilingual learners will not be enhanced. In this regard, L3 English teachers' awareness, if enhanced, will enable teachers to assist and guide their students to become more reflective, more strategic, and more successful L3 English learners. L3 English teachers should be trained on how to effectively trigger their L3 English learners' awareness of the various potentials their multilingualism provides them with, such as their

capability of resorting to their knowledge of different language systems and drawing upon their rich experience learning other languages to facilitate and boost their L3 English learning. This can be ensured through adopting specific training for L3 English teaching in language teacher education. Finally, teacher education for L3 English teachers ought to train teachers on how to help their multilingual learners take advantage of their metacognitive and linguistic advantages and abilities, such as autonomy, aptitude, and cross-linguistic interactions. Multilingual students are to be assisted to develop a higher level of awareness of these capabilities and potentials. The latter, if brought into action in the course of additional language acquisition, L3 English learning will likely be enhanced.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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