

# Cross-language influences in trilingual word processing

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One of the main questions in my research is in how far the languages of a bi- or multilingual interact during language processing. This can be studied on many different levels of processing (phonetic / orthographic, lexical, syntactic, semantic etc.). In this talk, I will focus on the word level and review the evidence on the extent to which the three languages known to a trilingual influence each other during lexical access, both in word comprehension and in word production. In particular, I will report on a) the role of cognates in trilingual word recognition, and b) a series of experiments in which we investigated whether it is the native language (L1) or a (fairly strong) foreign language (L2) that interferes most with word production in the weakest language of a trilingual (L3). While many trilinguals report the L2 to be the stronger source of interference, experimental evidence on this phenomenon had so far been missing. The obtained results help us to understand more about the structure of the trilingual lexicon, as, for instance, formalized in models of multilingual lexical access (de Bot, 2004).

De Bot, K. (2004). The Multilingual Lexicon: Modelling Selection and Control. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1(1), 17–32.