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EDITORIAL

Third language acquisition in the Nordic context

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The second issue of volume 49 (2026) of the *Nordic Journal of Linguistics* will be a special issue dedicated to theoretical, empirical, and methodological work on the acquisition of a third language (L3) in the Nordic context. The issue will be edited by Guro Busterud, Anne Dahl and Kjersti Faldet Listhaug.

A defining characteristic of the human species is our capacity for learning language, and, importantly, for learning more than one language in the course of our lives. There is growing awareness of the ubiquitousness of multilingualism, and in language acquisition research there is an increasing number of studies devoted to the study of how humans learn more than two languages. The study of L3 acquisition is concerned with the acquisition of a new linguistic system in an already bi- or multilingual mind. This includes situations of acquisition of a third language in speakers of two or more first languages (L1s) as well as acquisition of a second or more additional language (L3/L*n*).

Traditionally, the distinction between a second language (L2) and an L3/L*n* has not been at the forefront in research about the acquisition of the societal language for newcomers to a linguistic community. However, in a Nordic context, this distinction is particularly relevant in light of the ubiquitousness of English as a second language: many immigrants to the Nordic countries already speak at least a native language and English before learning the societal language. The same is the case for those learning a Nordic language as a foreign language. Moreover, the populations of most of the Nordic countries typically speak English in addition to their native language(s) before learning any other additional languages such as the traditional foreign languages. Finally, English is increasingly learned as an L3/L*n* by individuals who already speak more than one (native or non-native) language. Finally, depending on country and specific geographical area, other languages may also be obligatory in education.

Main areas studied in L3 research have been cross-linguistic influence (CLI) or transfer from previously acquired languages, particularly in the field of syntax and

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morphology, in the lexicon, and also within phonology (Cabrelli Amaro et al. 2012, Angelovska & Hahn 2017, Cabrelli et al. 2023). Questions addressed include factors that affect CLI/transfer as well as the directionality of transfer. An important body of research has addressed theoretical questions pertaining to the source of transfer, such as typological similarity and language status (Hermas 2010, Bardel & Falk 2012, Rothman 2015), as well as the question of wholesale vs. property-based CLI/transfer (Slabakova 2017, Westergaard et al. 2017). Recent work has emphasized methodological approaches to the theoretical questions within the field, and the need for a more varied methodological approach to help further our understanding of L3/L*n* acquisition (Puig-Mayenco et al. 2020, Westergaard et al. 2023). Moreover, questions addressing the dynamic nature of multilingual language learning have gained importance (de Bot & Jaensch 2015).

In this *NJL* special issue, we invite contributions on L3/L*n* acquisition in the Nordic context and/or involving Nordic languages. We welcome studies of different linguistic domains, learning contexts, target languages, and learner populations, and with varied methodologies.

The deadline for submissions is 1 October 2025. Peer review will take place during winter 2025 and spring 2026. All submissions should be made through *NJL*'s ScholarOne/Manuscript Central site https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/njl. Prior to submission, authors should consult the Journal's Instructions for Contributors, at https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nordic-journal-of-linguistics/information/instructions-contributors, and follow those guidelines for manuscript formatting. Please contact Guro Busterud (guro.busterud@iln.uio.no) if you have any questions about this special issue.

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