The present study explores the acquisition of the Arabic language as a second or third foreign language. The study took place in the United States of America, and the participants are English native speakers. Its aim is to investigate whether learning Spanish as a second language would help L1 English speakers learning Arabic as a third language outperform L1 English speakers, who are learning Arabic as a second language. Conversely, learning Arabic as a second language with an English background might impede the process of acquisition, because of the differences between the two languages. The issues have important pedagogical implications, but the low number of participants and analyses require additional study.

**Key words:** bilingual, monolingual, second language acquisition, third language acquisition, participants, Arabic, Spanish and learners