see Schumann (1978), it may be said that many of the omissions occurred in our date are mainly caused by this universal tendency and not by the learners' mother language. This will sharply decrease the role of L1 in the acquisition of the English as the Target Language (TL) of our subjects. Consequently, it is shown that negative transfer from Persian into English written productions is neither the only source of errors, nor the major one. "Misinformation" which is mostly related to the lexical aspects of the language acquisition is the most influential source of errors.

Therefore, according to our findings in this study, putting too much effort on comparing and contrasting the structural patterns of the two languages (L1/TL) will possibly retard the acquisition of the same items by language learners. In this respect, we suggest, the best option will be to invest more on the general/universal patterns/ principles of language acquisition; while, it may be more profitable to refer to the native language items when introducing the lexical patterns of the target language. Reference to vocabulary items borrowed from the target language, for instance, will of great help here.

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Appendix A: Sample test
In The Name of God
Headway 3, Final Exam

1. Compare eating customs in Britain with that in Iran.
2. How do you take a room at a hotel?
3. Suppose that you are going to describe Iran for a foreigner, what do you say? (history, places...)
4. Which one do you prefer for living? Village ot city? Why?
5. How do you give direction to your house from the Institute?
6. How do you describe Miss Shariati to others?
7. Which weather do you like? Why? What do you do in that kind of weather?
8. What do you know about Cathertine Destivelle?
9. What are you going to do in the future?

Table. 1. *A surface strategy taxonomy of errors:* *

Category	Description	Example
Omissions	The absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance	*She sleeping In Britain people eating
Additions	The presence of an item that must not appear in well-formed utterances	*We didn't went there She climbed from
Misinformations	The use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure	*The dog ated the chicken They eat tea
Misorderings	The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance	*What daddy is doing? She became better than the older members club.

Categories and starred examples have been taken from Dulay, Burt, and Krashen 1982, and all the other examples were produced by the informants of this study.

Table 2. *The frequency and percentage of each category in the total number of errors (total N: 1070):*

Category	Number	%
Omissions	285	26.64
Additions	173	16.17
Misinformations	530	49.53
Misordering	82	7.66

As shown in Table 2, from the total number of students' errors (1070), the majority of them are the result of "misinformations" that comprises 49.53% of all the errors. The smallest proportion of the errors was the result of "misordering". Then we differentiated between errors made based on the students' L1 and the other errors. Of the total number of errors, 320 were made as a result of negative transfer, which comprise only about 30% of the data. Errors were considered as transfer errors if their grammatical behavior showed similarities to Persian, being different from the English grammar. In this regard we followed Lock (1996) who introduced four levels of analysis for language: phonology, lexis, grammar, and semantics. Grammar, among the others, is analyzed into two aspects, 1) arrangement of words; and 2) structure of words and parts of speech, and four ranks: word, phrase, clause and sentence. Considering the above levels closely along with the knowledge of the two languages,

320 errors were found to be the result of the negative transfer in the students' written production.

Table 3. *The frequency and percentage of each category in the total number of errors made by negative transfer (320):*

Category	Number	% of all the errors	% of all NT errors
Omissions	145	13.55	45.31
Additions	115	10.75	35.94
Misinformations	31	2.90	9.69
Misorderings	29	2.71	9.06

In table 3, we present the distribution of these errors in the four categories: Omissions; Additions; Misinformations and Misorderings. As seen, more than 45% of these errors are classified as "Omissions", i.e., some grammatical items are missing from the sentence. Only 9% of the errors are due to "Misorderings". The second important category is "Additions" in which some foreign elements are incorporated into the sentences. "Misinformations" include only 9.7% of the data.

To sum up, it is shown that negative transfer from Persian into English written production is a source of errors, but not the only source of errors. It only accounts for less than one-third of all the errors and "Misinformations" are the biggest source of errors, more important than Negative Transfer.

Conclusions and Implications

Considering the total number of omissions in the data (26.64%) and the number of omissions due to Persian interference (13.55%), and having studies on Pidgin and Creole languages where arguments are made that there is a universal tendency to delete several functional categories from the speech of other language learners (e.g.,

that Chinese and Japanese produced far fewer ralative clauses than did the Persian and Arabic students. Then she went on saying that it was because of the difference between Chinese and Japanese on the one hand and English on the other. Schachter (1994) also did a study and considered presence of resumptive pronouns in the English interlanguage of Persian speakers as transfer. But Samar (1998) did the same study and showed the presence of resumptives accounted for only 4% of the data and concluded that it is not transfer. Their findings were different because of their different sources of the data: the former took from grammar prescriptive books but Samar took the data from the real situations.

Some alternatives to CA also emerged like George's mechanism of Cross-Association (1972) and Newmark and Reibel's Ignorant Hypothesis (1968, cited in James 1981) but with the emergence of Cognitivism and collapse of CA, the direction of the analysis reversed. CA gave way to Error Analysis (EA) which starts from errors. As it is cited inEllis (1994), it was not until the 1970s that EA became a recognized pate of applied Linguistics. Corder (1974) talks about the steps in EA research: collection of a sample; identification of errors; description of errors; explanation of errors; and evaluation of errors.

Classification of errors is another controversial issue because the experts do not see eye to eye on it. Corder (1974), for instance, introduced a framework for describing errors according to their systematicity. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) provided a surface strategy taxonomy of errors: omissions; additions; misinformations; and misorderings. Taylor (1986) classified the sources of errors as psycholinguistics; sociolinguistic;

epistemic; or in discourse. Dulay and Burt (1974) talked about different types of goofs.

Despite its shortcomings, EA is still alive and in the recent studies there is no mention of any of the methodological problems involved in EA (Ellis, 1994). It has made a great contribution to second language acquisition research. And some (e.g. Mirhassani, 2003) even believe that "CA with all its limitations is useful in teaching...".

Data and Method

To gather data, we follow Selinker (1972) and consider the vital notion that an empirical account of the actual usage is essential and "evidence should come from scientifically collected and analyzed empirical data." (Samar, 1998). Therefore, the data used in this study represent the writing of 40 Persian English learners ranging in age from 18 to 26 who are at pre-intermediate level.They were given a mid-term exam on 9 questions that all involved either description, explanation or discussion (The sample exam can be found in appendix A). All of the written production is read to find the errors (grammatical and lexical) and are coded and analyzed with the taxonomy of errors introduced by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). In the end, we show how many errors are the results of native language transfer and then contribution and percentage of each category in this regard is presented statistically and discussed followingly.

Data Analyses and Conclusion

After finding the errors in students' writings and coding them according to the categories, shown in table 1, the total number of errors (1070) and frequency of each category as well as the frequency of negative transfers are gauged (Table 2).

and then contribution and percentage of each category in this regard will be presented statistically and discussed followingly.

Review of the literature:

Foreign language teachers even from 2000 years ago were obsessed with the practical question that what the sources of learners' errors in their production were. They wrote contrastive observations about students' native language and the language they were learning as early as the schools of the ancient world (Kelly, 1969). Then the idea of the influence of native language on the second language acquisition was inspired by Jesperson (1912), Palmer (1917) and especially Fries (1945) who "subscribed to the behaviorist analysis of linguistic competence as a series of habits. Errors considered to be the result of transfer of L1 "habits" but the transfer of some habits are useful and some others harmful" (Lado, 1957).

Contrastive Analysis emerged and it was founded on the assumption that L2 learners will tend to transfer to their L2 utterances the formal features of L1 (James, 1981). Accordingly, learners, he state, are greatly influenced by their L1. If L1 and L2 match, learning will be facilitated and if they differ, learning will be impeded. In the first case, there is positive transfer and in the second, negative transfer.

The problem but starts with the notion of "transfer" itself. It has created vexing problems and turned to be a controversial notion. It means different things to different people. For Lado (1957) and Fries (1945) transfer is the imposition of native language information on an L2 utterance or sentence, but for Kellerman (1986) and Odlin (1989) it refers to cross-linguistic influence. Schachter (1983-1992) has considered all prior

linguistic knowledge including the imperfect knowledge a learner may have of the L2 as transfer and even she claims that transfer is not a process at all, but rather a constraint on the acquisition process(Gass, 1996). Odlin (1989) after discussing the problematic nature of transfer, has brought some observations about what transfer is not and concluded that "Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (p. 27). And then he stresses that it is only a working definition. And even recently, Pavlenko and Scott (2002) argued that transfer is not unidirectional but bidirectional and simultaneous that is shown by paradigmatic and syntagmatic categories. All this indicates that how much the notion is complex without any consensus.

According to their own assumption and in order to eradicate errors, contrastive analysts compared and contrasted L1 and L2 to find the similarities and differences and consequently predicted learner difficulty. In other words, the processes of CA involve providing insights into similarities and differences between languages; explaining and predicting problems in L2 learning and finally developing course materials for language teaching (Mirhassani, 2003). CA was successful in phonetics but because of its problems it is not practiced much, but it is still alive.

Evidence of analyses regarding Persian learners of English is scant. Strain (1968) has worked on a contrastive sketch of the Persian and English sound systems. Schachter (1974) examined the production of English ralative clauses by Persian, Arabic Chinese and Japanese students. She found

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen(1982) that focuses on four categories: Omissions, Additions, Misinformations, and Misorderings. After finding the errors and coding them, the frequency and percentage of each category are shown. Furthermore, to gauge the effect of "Negative Transfer" that is believed by Contrastive Analysis (CA) as the only source of errors, the frequency and percentage of each category in the total number of errors made by negative transfer are evidenced. Based upon data, it is shown that despite CA's claim, negative transfer accounts for only 30% of all the errors, less than one-third of the all errors and most of the errors are the result of "misinformations".

Key Words: Error Analysis; Contrastive Analysis; negative transfer; error; misinformation; addition; omission; misordering.

Introduction

Errors made by language learners in their production are so frequent that they have turned heads of so many specialists and language teachers especially who are at the front. More noticeably are the errors observed in learners' written production that are more eye-catching may be just because of non-transitory, let us say, permanent nature of writing. Even at upper-intermediate level, these errors do not disappear.

From the five to six decades before, it has been seriously questioned that "what are the sources of these errors?" In an attempt to find an answer to this question, a lot of voices(in disagreement) have been arisen: some consider just learner's native languages as the only source of errors(Contrastive Analysts), but some (Corder, 1975; Dulay and Burt, 1972) distinguish other possible sources. The former consider errors as evil signs of failure, but latter consider them significant and signs of learning(Richards, 1971; Jain, 1974). Regarding the role of native language in a second language context, there is not any consensus. As Gass(1996: P.317) says "[it] ... has been debated for over 2000 years." Some (Lado, 1957) consider native language as the primary source of errors and accordingly give the utter role to NL (the first extreme). On the other extreme, Dulay and Burt

(1974Ja) stand who give little role to NL. in Gass's words again, "in both cases, extreme positions were taken in that the native language was seen as having either a major or a minimal role in the learning on an L2" (p. 317).

While Contrastive Analysts started from the comparison and contrast of two languages and then went to prediction of errors, after the collapse of CA by the emergence of cognitivism, EA reversed the direction (starting from errors) and obviously it could give us a more complete picture of L2 learning. More careful studies on these errors, actually, are essential and of great value to find the sources of these errors in the production of Iranian English learners.

In pursuit of this goal, this paper elaborates on the errors made by some 40 Iranian English learners at pre-intermediate level in their written production and then analyzes them based upon taxonomy of errors introduced by Dulay, Burt and Krashen(1982).

An attempt is made to find all the errors (grammatical and lexical) and mark them with codes to gauge the effect of each category and its percentage. In the end, we will show how many errors are the results of native language transfer;
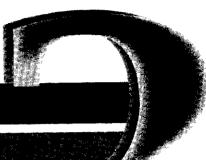
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Productions: A New Answer to
an Old Question?

چکیده

در گسترهٔ وسیع مطالعات، در مورد خطاهای زبان‌آموزان این سؤال که «منبع این خطاها چیست؟» همچنان به صورت مسأله‌ای بزرگ و نیز موضوعی مورد بحث مطرح است. این تحقیق به منظور بررسی دقیق سؤال و روشن شدن پاسخ آن به تجزیه و تحلیل خطاهای زبان‌آموزان ایرانی در نوشتارشان می‌پردازد. داده‌ها از نوشته‌های ۴۰ زبان‌آموز در سطح پیش از متوسطه (pre-intermediate) جمع‌آوری شده‌اند و سپس به طور علمی براساس طبقه‌بندی خطاها، که دولی برت و کراشن (۱۹۸۲) معرفی کرده‌اند، مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفته‌اند. این داده‌ها شامل چهار جنبه هستند: حذف، اضافه، عدم آگاهی و ترتیب نادرست.

پس از پیدا کردن خطاها و طبقه‌بندی آن‌ها، تناوب و درصد هر جنبه مشخص شد. ضمناً به منظور اندازه‌گیری تأثیر «انتقال منفی» که از نظر تحلیل مقابله‌ای تنها منبع خطاها محسوب می‌شود، تناوب و درصد هریک از جنبه‌های مطرح شده، در تعداد کل خطاها که نتیجه‌ی انتقال منفی است، نشان داده شده است. براساس داده‌ها مشخص شد که برخلاف اعتقاد تحلیل مقابله‌ای انتقال منفی تنها به ۳۰ درصد کل خطاها مربوط می‌شود که این مقدار از یک سوم کل خطاها کم‌تر است و بنابراین بیش‌تر خطاها ناشی از «عدم آگاهی» هستند.

کلید واژه‌ها : تحلیل خطاها؛ تحلیل مقابله‌ای؛ خطا؛ عدم آگاهی؛ اضافه؛ حذف؛ ترتیب نادرست

Abstract

In the ongoing study of language learners' errors, the question "what is the source?" has still remained a vexing problem and a controversial issue. To elaborate on the above question and put it in the picture, the objective of this paper is to do an Error Analysis of errors made by Iranian English learners in their written production. The data are collected empirically from written productions of some 40 learners at pre-intermediate level and then analyzed scientifically based upon taxonomy of errors introduced by