# CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS: AN INVESTIGATION OF ERROR ANALYSIS OF KURDISH AND PERSIAN SPEAKING STUDENTS MAJORING IN TRANSLATION (EFL)

**Peiman Rahmani[1], Morad Bagherzadeh Kasmani[2]**

Department of English Language
Islamic Azad University, [1]Tonekabon Branch & [2]Chalus Branch,
IRAN.
Peiman_rahmani2@yahoo.com,  kasmankola@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

*The present study is an attempt to analyze errors made by Persian and Kurdish speaking students majoring in translation of English as a foreign language (EFL).The subjects of this study were 60 undergraduate translation students studying at the Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch, and also 30 undergraduate translation students studying at the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj branch. The subjects were asked to translate different pre-determined Persian sentences into English. Then, after administration of the test Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) classifications model of error analysis for analyzing errors was used. Next, a chi-square test was run by SPSS software between two groups under the investigation, in order to reject or support the hypotheses of the study. The hypotheses in this study are: 1. the type, frequency, and percentage of errors of Kurdish and Persian speaking students of English are different: omission. 2. There are statistically significant differences between Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation in surface strategy classification (SSC) of errors: omission. The result of this study shows that interference from the learners' mother tongue is the main cause of errors, confirming the strong version hypothesis of contrastive analysis. The final conclusion is that the EFL materials developed for the two groups under study should be different.*

**Keywords:** Error Analysis, Contrastive Analysis, Surface Strategy Classification of Errors (SSC)

## INTRODUCTION

The last two decades of enthusiasm for contrastive analysis in foreign language teaching can be traced to Charles Fries who, in 1945, wrote:

The most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner.

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture, both productively when attempting to speak the language …and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand a language …as practiced by natives. …in comparison between native and foreign language lie's the key to ease or difficulty in foreign language learning (Lado, 1957).

More recently, Charles Ferguson (in Stockwell & Brown, 1965 p.v), Robert Politzer (1967), Leon Jakovits (1970) reiterate the importance of L1 interference in L2 learning.

In foreign language learning, error correction has become one of the important teaching processes. But actually, few teachers know a lot about error analysis and some related theories. They often take so negative attitudes toward errors that they could not tolerate any errors and tend to correct them as soon as they could find any. As a result, although they think they have been working hard enough and spend

much time and energy working on error correction, their effort is not effective and the students do not believe they have benefited a lot.

On the contrary, the students often feel upset, for they have found that there is a great gap between themselves and their teachers in dealing with errors and understanding of error correction. So, the present study helps Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation to tackle their errors and prevent from recomittance of them.

There are two hypotheses to be analyzed in this study:

**H1:** The type, frequency, and percentage of errors of Kurdish and Persian speaking students of English are different: omission.

**H2:** There are statistically significant differences between Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation in surface strategy classification (SSC) of errors: omission.

### REVIEW of LITERATURE

Mokerian (1986) conducted an error analysis at the University of Shiraz. The subjects in his study were 396 freshman students taking general English courses at Shiraz University in the winter of 1986. The students were asked to write compositions on the subjects "Why do you learn English?" The total number of sentences accumulated and studied was 2457, of which 755 were completely correct.1702 sentences were syntactically and morphologically erroneous. The results of Mokerians' study showed that 35.95% of the errors studied are ambiguous, 31.05% intralingual and 28.28% interlingual.

Sajjadi (1987) investigated the effects of three different tasks on the performances of a group of Iranian university freshman students at Shiraz University. A placement test was given to about 450 students. 39 students who scored almost similarly asked to perform the two task of 1) picture description 2) translation. He concludes that:

1. The number of styles produced by FL learners correlates with the number of tasks that they perform.
2. Learners identity accounts for what is labeled as sex-linked variation, i.e. males and female subjects score differently for the same task in the same setting.

In the study of language acquisition theory, error analysis occupies an important position. The first task of error analysis is to investigate errors and the second work is to classify errors. From a certain point of view ,the whole language acquisition theory is based on language and language errors investigating the basis on wrong classification, many researchers from the 60's began the study of language errors , and some experts (such as Krashen put the people involved in this work is called " error analysis exercise "(The Error Analysis Movements) .

In this "movement" the researchers have proposed several classification system, in practice, this classification systems gradually language academic recognition. In the present study, the obtained data will be explained based on surface strategy classification (SSC). These classifications of errors made by the learners are divided into the following four kinds of forms including: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982), the present specifically considered omission types of errors made by the learners.

### METHOD

The subjects of the present study were 30 undergraduate Persian speaking students majoring in translation studying at the Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch and 30 undergraduate Kurdish

speaking students majoring in translation studying at Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj branch. Their participation was voluntary and their answer would be treated confidentially and they were not paid for their participation.

**Material**

Persian sentences were randomly extracted from thesis defended at Shiraz University, the reliability of which has been confirmed, and the subjects were asked to translate them into English.

**Procedure**

The present study took place in the spring and fall semester 2011between undergraduate students majoring in translation. Before the distribution of the test, some useful test rubrics were given. Next, the researcher asked them to translate the Persian sentence into fluent English. It should be noted that, the participants were not allowed to use any kind of dictionaries. They were also allowed to leave at any time they wished to. Then, after the collection of the data, frequency of the learners' errors was counted. In addition, the researcher manipulates Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) classification model of errors in order to classify them. Finally, a chi-square test was run by SPSS software to find out whether the differences between the errors made by the two groups under the investigation are statistically significant or not.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1. The total results of the H2 omission errors in SSC**

| Omission | Kurdish and Persian speaking students (KPSS) |
|---|---|
| Chi-Square | .750[a] |
| Df | 6 |
| Sig | .993 |

After running the chi-square by SPSS software, the obtained $\chi^2$ was **0.750.** In comparison with **0.050** level of significance in behavioral science it obvious that there is no statistically significant differences concerning the total number of omission errors between Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation in surface strategy classification (SSC) of errors. So, the second hypothesis (H2) of the present study was rejected. (**P >0.050**)

H1 answer: Based on the obtained data in table 1 and 2 (See appendices) the frequency, type, and percentages of errors between Kurdish and Persian speaking translation students are different. So, the first hypothesis of this study was supported. It is worth mentioning that the only similarity between these groups is that these groups made omission error more than the other errors. This demonstrates the fact that these learners are not familiar with the application of preposition in the target language structure and mistakenly omit certain elements in the target language.

**DISSCUSION AND CONCLUSION**

The result of the hypotheses of the present study shows that there are no statistically significant differences between these two groups in omission part, in which these learners made such kinds of errors because of the unfamiliarity with the appropriate application of the target language preposition.

Second, the teachers should help students to become aware of the fact that there are some words which untranslatable and the best way to learn them is to ask a specialist to find their right equivalent in the target language. Third, the teachers should give an emphasis on the learners' errors indirectly, give them feedback and then correct them, and should employ the best strategy to tackle the learners' errors. Finally, different EFL materials should be developed for students with different language background.

## REFERENCES

Brown, H.D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (5<sup>th</sup>ed.). New York: Longman.

Brown, J.D. (1988). *Understanding research in second language learning: A teacher' Guide to statistics and research design.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, R. and Barkhuizen, G. (2009). *Analyzing learner language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fallahi, M. (1991). *Contrastive linguistics and analysis of errors, volume 1: The grammatical structure of English and Persian.* Tehran: Markaz Nashre-e-Daneshgahi.

James, Carl. Contrastive analysis. Longman, 1980.

Keshavarz, M.H. (1994). *Contrastive analysis and erroranalysis.* Tehran: Rahnama publications.

Keshavarz, M.H. (2010). *Contrastive analysis and error analysis.* Rahnama Press.

Richards, J. C. and Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Yarmohammadi, L. (2001). *A contrastive analysis of Persian and English.* Tehran: Payame Noor University Publication.

Yarmohammadi, L. (2002). *A contrastive analysis of Persian and English.* Tehran: Payame Noor University Press.

## APPENDICES

**Table 1 .The frequency, type, and percentage of *omission* errors made by *Kurdish speaking* translation students**

| SSC | Omission | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Types of errors** | Subject | Verb | Adjective | Preposition | Definite Article | Indefinite Article | Plural Markers | Third Person Singular |
| **Frequency** | 7 | 10 | 17 | 50 | 35 | 17 | 21 | 11 |
| **%** | 4.17% | 5.95% | 10.11% | 29.77% | 20.83% | 10.11% | 12.50% | 6.54% |
| **Sum** | 168 | | | | | | | |

**Table 2 .The frequency, type, and percentage of *omission* errors made by *Persian speaking* translation students**

| SSC | Omission | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Types of errors** | Subject | Verb | Adjective | Preposition | Definite Article | Indefinite Article | Plural Markers | Third Person Singular |
| **Frequency** | 17 | 10 | 21 | 81 | 39 | 33 | 18 | 16 |
| **%** | 7.23% | 4.25% | 8.93% | 34.46% | 16.59% | 14.04% | 7.65% | 6.80% |
| **Sum** | 235 | | | | | | | |

## Translation Test

### (A Sample of the Persian sentences and their English equivalent)

1.توپ را به سمت من انداخت.

2. روی پای من ایستا د.

3.   آب را به آرد اضافه کردم.

4.   سارو با برادرش آمد.

5.   هیوا از خونه تا اینجا پیاده آمد.

6.   شام را آوردند.

7.   کتاب را اینجا بیاور.

8.   از آنچه داری مقداری را به خبات ببخش.

9.   ما را به سنندج می برند.

10.   با سنگ و چوب راه آب را بستند.