

THE STUDY OF ERRORS MADE BY IRAINIAN STUDENTS MAJORING IN TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to analyze errors made by Iranian EFL students. This study specifically, considered comparative analysis of errors made by these learners. The subjects of this study were 30 undergraduate translation students, studying at Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj branch, and 30 undergraduate translation students studying at Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch. The subjects were asked to translate different predetermined Persian sentences into English. The researcher used Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) classifications model of error analysis for analyzing learners' errors. Next, a chi-square test was run by SPSS between two groups under the investigation in order to reject or support the hypotheses of the study. The results of this study indicate that interference from the learners' mother tongue is the core cause of errors confirming the major idea of strong version hypothesis. The main conclusion is that the materials developed for the two groups under the investigation should be different.

Keywords: error analysis, comparative strategy classification, Inter language.

INTRODUCTION

Error analysis is probably as old as language teaching in that language teachers have known and applied error analysis for various pedagogical purposes such as for providing diagnostic and remedial measures as well as feedback to the teacher about instructional materials and strategies. However, as a study that has grown out of a strong criticism of the limitations of the contrastive approach to second language learning difficulties and a research technique to provide empirical data for verifying and supplementing contrastive studies, error analysis is relatively new. In its new important role, error analysis has merged with studies in Inter language and had its scope broadened towards a psycholinguistic orientation concerned with evolving a theory of the learner's performance.

The problem of error in language learning has been approached in different ways. Basically there have been three different attitudes and approaches. There were the corrective attitudes which considered errors as bad and pernicious and the learner as ignorant of the correct form or falling short of the standard required. In this traditional approach error analysis was used as a practical means to determine difficulties in language learning situations for pedagogical purposes. Little of no attempt was made to study and analyze them with the aim of either seeing the patterns in the errors made or seeking the causes for them. Next, came the audio-lingual approach influence by the structural – behavioral paradigm which prevailed from the forties to the sixties. Closely related with the prevalent structural contrastive analysis, errors are seen to have a system which is traceable to first language interference resulting from the differences between the source and the target languages. Errors are now understood with reference to the grammar of the learner's source language. However, the attitude towards errors remains negative. They are viewed as bad habits which must be avoided and eradicated

through drill and overearnings of the correct form. Then the cognitive approach came to error analysis of the present time. Influenced by generative grammar, proponents of this approach consider errors as an essential step in the learning process.

Dulay & Burt (1974) maintain that we cannot learn without “goofin” and that error-making is evidence of the learning process and the strategies used by the learner. Errors are treated as exponents of the learner’s system and are now understood with reference to the provisional grammar that the learner constructs and develops. They are not viewed negatively as a pathological manifestation to be eradicated; rather, they are viewed as constructive features of second language learning.

Peiman Rahmani & Morad Bagherzadeh Kasmani (2012) maintain that main causes of learner’s errors are interference from their mother tongue and unfamiliarity with the target language structure.

There are two hypotheses to be analyzed in this study:

H1: There are statistical significant differences between Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation in comparative strategy classification including intralingual errors and interlingual errors.

H2: There are statistically significant differences between Kurdish and Persian translation students in comparative strategy classification of errors.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of two groups. The two groups are expected to represent the population of the study; that is, the Iranian translation students in the Islamic Azad University at Sanandaj and Tonekabon branch.

The first group of the study consisted of 30 Iranian undergraduate translation students that were selected from among the students studying at the Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj branch. The second group of the study consisted of 30 Iranian undergraduate translation students that were selected from among the students studying at the Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch. All subjects were almost 23-40 years old.

The reason for selecting the two groups is that one can obtain better information about the developmental stage that the learners go through.

Instrument

The instrument manifested in this study was a translation test. The subjects were exposed to some Persian sentences and asked to translate them into fluent English. The sentences were elicited from the thesis defended at Shiraz University of Iran the reliability of which has been confirmed. There were around 330 sentences, ninety nine of which has been randomly selected. And, the subjects were given abundant information about the rubric of the test.

Procedures

The administration of the translation test took place in the fall semester 2011 and spring semester 2012. The data was collected in 6-hour session and the participants were asked to perform on the translation test. The students’ linguistic errors were extracted from the translation test and calculated. These errors were categorized and analyzed according to the error analysis model presented by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). The present study categorized and analyzed errors based on the comparative strategy classification (CSC). Finally, the average type, frequency, and percentages of errors made by

Iranian translation students of English as a foreign language (EFL) were calculated. In order to determine whether the differences between the errors made by the two groups under the study are statistically significant or not, a qui-square test was run by SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

All errors extracted from the subjects were classified according to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) classification models of errors including intralingual and interlingual errors, and then they were analyzed.

For rejecting or supporting the first hypothesis, chi-square tests shown in the tables 1 and 2 below was run.

Table 1. The total results of chi- square test of interlingual errors in CSC

Interlingual Errors	Kurdish and Persian speaking students
Chi-Square	.000 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	1.000

The above table clearly indicates that there are statistically significant differences regarding the total number of errors between Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation in comparative strategy classification of interlingual errors since $\chi^2 = 0.000$ is less than 0.05 level of significance supporting the first hypothesis of this study.

Table 2. The total results of Chi-square test of intralingual errors in CSC

Intralingual Errors	Kurdish and Persian speaking students
Chi-Square	.000 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	1.000

The table2 also clearly indicates that there are statistically significant differences regarding the total number of errors between Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation in comparative strategy classification of intralingual errors since $\chi^2 = 0.000$ is less than 0.05 level of significance supporting the first hypothesis of this study.

For rejecting or supporting the second hypothesis, a chi- square test shown in the table 3 below was also conducted.

The total number of errors made by Kurdish and Persian speaking translation students was 1010 (55/55%) and 808 (44.44%), respectively.

Table 3. The total results of chi- square test of the total number of errors in CSC

Comparative strategy classification (CSC)	Kurdish and Persian speaking students
Chi-Square	.000 ^a
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	1.000

Table3 indicates that there are statistically significant differences regarding the total number of errors between Kurdish and Persian speaking translation learners in comparative strategy classification of

errors in that $\chi^2 = 0.000$ is less than 0.050 levels of significance supporting the second hypothesis of the study.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study indicate that there are statistically significant differences between Kurdish and Persian speaking students majoring in translation. Based on the results obtained via analyzing the data the main conclusion is that mother tongue interference can be the main cause of errors in foreign language learning, and hence confirming the “strong version” hypothesis of contrastive analysis, and that the materials developed for the two groups under study should be different.

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APPENDICES

(A sample of Farsi sentences and their English equivalents)

1. You cannot prove it. .1 تو نمی تونی ثابت کنی.
2. I cannot sit on the seat. .2 من نمی تونم روی صندلی بنشینم
3. I like to read this notebook very much. .3 من خیلی دوست دارم این دفتر یادداشت را بخوانم.
4. Who was busy in writing? .4 چه کسی در حال نوشتن بود؟
5. Zanko was studying. .5 زانکو داشت درس می خواند.