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NOTES

* An earlier version of this paper was read at the first symposium on ESP in Iraq, organized by Mosul University in March, 1988. The valuable suggestions made by my two colleagues, Professor Yowell Y. Aziz and Dr Ameen H. Al-Bamerni, have led to the revision of this paper.

1– B.Sc. holders are aware of this outcome. For instance, top graduates who intend to pursue their higher studies abroad seek the help of teachers at the English Language and Translation Departments to write letters and/or fill application forms for them.

2– M.Sc. applicants to medical and engineering courses are taken to have considerable command at English. Because this assumption is not always true, the directors of higher studies in Iraqi universities tended to be language purists, be it English or Arabic, for some years. This is why quality of language in the already supervised theses was officially assessed and refined by an external language advisor before the oral examination took place. Although this procedure ceased in the early 1990, yet it is very much at work commercially.

3– In 1987, 22 M.Sc. students were referred to me by the College of Medicine to sit for a qualifying examination in English. With the exception of four extremely poor essays, performance in writing confirms my claim at this stage. Also, their paragraphing is relatively the same as Khalid's. But more principled research in this area is still required.

in ESP is used as teaching stuff, there will be more motivation. This should eventually help them get rid of their pitfalls, polish their style and, above all, organize their written materials.

CONCLUSION

Having corrected and assessed the English language of over thirty M.Sc. theses at various scientific fields, I feel that the ILs of my two subjects generally represent the ESP of postgraduate students at the University. This generalization should not be interpreted as having lost "sight of the forest because each tree is interesting" (Lightbown 1984:350). The two theses of the subjects were referred to me for assessment rather than for carrying out research into the nature of their language. This is why I do not take them as "biased samples" (Long and Sato 1984: 257). Admittedly, variations in writing performance do exist, not only across academic contexts, but also within any one context. Therefore, what we need at present is what Selinker has repeatedly been mentioning in several places: "longitudinal" research into more ILs. Snow-ball work at various academic disciplines should ultimately enable us to talk about and, consequently, contribute to linguistic theory (cf. Selinker 1984).

This paper has shown that variations in the writing performance of members of two different academic institutions with slightly different backgrounds at advanced stages are not too large. Both subjects have displayed more control over 'topic' than 'linguistic structures'. This explains why semantic 'errors' are very much less noticeable than the syntactic ones. For fear of too much transfer from the mother tongue, there must be a compromise between the two types of control in ESP courses.

Transfer is evident in both texts, but its measurement is a difficult task. It gets more intricate when bilingualism is involved. This applies to fossilization as well. It is not only when the properties of the native language (s) combine with the properties of the target language to form a neutral system which ought to be persistently and consistently used by the learner that one can talk of proper fossilization. Systematic transfer, which is not clear in the two texts, can also be characterized as fossilization. Moreover, if any IL can probably have a well-defined set of rules, a systematic misapplication of any of such rules by the learner can qualify as fossilization. Further research into these problems will help us understand more about language learning.

pare his Arabic/ʔilli ma waadha / with the Syriac equivalent /ʔid leela mbuy-anta/ 'which not clear' as being used for both plural and singular refer-ences. Sa'ad could have provided the likely candidates such as a case' or 'a state' before the relative pronoun in order to settle the problem .But this interpretation would obviously clash with that to be given to the cla-use: 'which depend mostly.......", unless the transfer of syntactic plural/singular non–distinction is given credit.

One can say that Sa'ad is more aware of relativization semantically than syntactically. In the second paragraph, he could have provided either'which were' or a mere comma before "kept" or parenthesized "kept.. hours". Yet the message is clear; for 'change in time' certainly goes with 'variation in temperature'. What is important here is that Sa'ad has the knowledge of deleting a relative pronoun followed by verb 'to be'. As this transform-ation is peculiar to both Arabic and Syriac, transfer is absent. It might then be said that this is a fossilized structure. Yet, as inconsistencies app-ear in his thesis, one tends to classify this 'error' and the like as incidental or local which can largely result from too much involvement in the topic.

In an interview with Sa'ad, I found out that he has a very good con-trol over his topic. Like Khalid, he understands what he reads in English but expresses the anxiety of not being able to communicate oral messages without appealing to codeswitching.

More differences and similarities between the ILs of the two subjects can be drawn. Although Sa'ad has one spelling mistake vs. Khalid's two mistakes, the correlation between both is markedly high. The two seem to suffer from fairly insufficient knowledge in the orthographical tactics of English. Also, what roughly distinguishes an engineeriagwriting from a medical one is that the former has the characteristics of fewer and leng-thier paragraphs than the latter, an issue which would be of particular interest in pragmatics. Generally speaking, Sa'sd's IL can be judged to be more native–like English than Khalid's IL. Sa'ad has more control over the basics of English than Khalid although the latter has a relatively longer experience with English. Despite this, one may conclude that such students can equally and to a large extent communicate their main ideas to the English audience in the respective fields. But if better projficieny is sought, they will'need to have a remedial coure, one that must be based on a cognitive approach, e.g. Rudzka–Ostyn (1985). If their own writing

In the following extract, Sa'ad writes about variations in friction and temperature in silos.

> Due to the repeation of high number of tests required, one have to expect some changes in the frictional properties of wheat particles and the internal surface of the model, which is not clear for dynamic conditions as it is for static conditions, which depend mostly on those properties. The dynamic action depends on dynamic properties of the model, and the signal given and their interactions.
>
> Temperature variations will affect the modulus of elasticity of the perspex material. Experiments to verify this phenomenon in different constant temperatures kept unchanged for 24 hours, are carried out to determine the modulus of elasticity using the same procedure discussed previously. The results show (Fig. 4.12), a reduction of 0.7% of the modulus of elasticity for each one degree centigrade increase in temperature.

Sa'ad seems to be more conscious of careful paragraphing than Khalid, not only in this particular sample but, indeed, throughout his whole thesis. This text has two paragraphs, each of which is restricted to one unique theme. The first is about frictional properties, and the second on variations in temperature. Here, one wonders if variability in the sense of paragraphing has anything to do with the nature of differing academic contexts. I tentatively assume that there could be some degree of correlation between field of study and organization of written material. Khalid, for example, is a physician who, unlike Sa'ad, being a structural engineer, is in the habit of writing brief medical reports on patients and prescriptions which require item--listing rather than detailed description. However, I leave the question open for further investigation (3).

The problem of supplying appropriate subject–verb agreement syntactically is noticeable only in the first paragraph. For example, "one- have ...is semantically correct, but it would be considered grammatically an error (cf. Corder 1973: 278). In "which is not clear... as it is...", Sa'ad refers anaphorically to the state of "changes" rather than to "some changes". This would be a clear case of mental anaphora which might be due, most probably, to simultaneous influence from his two native languages. Com-

patients died there before diagnosis being made and some patie-
nts were refferred to other centers, however it gives some idea
about the distribution of the disease among different ethnic gro-
ups that resides the Northern part of Iraq.

A quick look at the text will reveal to the reader that, apart from
other things, there is something dangling in the middle: the 'paragraphs'
Paragraphs 2 and 3 could have been included in paragraph 1, since his key
to well–developed and coherent talk is "Fig 4". This also applies to par-
graphs 4 and 5 which appear to constitute a single piece of discourse.

Grammatically, Khalid does not seem to have been applying the
rules of English appropriately and consistently. For instance, he fails to
provide proper subject–verb agreement twice in his first paragraph and
three times in the last one . Yet here and elsewhere in the thesis approp-
riate agreement is noticeable. I wonder, then, if we can interpret this,
and several other phenomena that will follow, in terms of "co–existent sys-
tems" (cf. Selinker 1984: 333). It seems to me that he has developed a
chaotic system of inconsistencies, one which cannot be clearly defined.
Khalid's IL may, however, be characterized as being made up of an ama-
lgamation of at least three systems, viz. English, Arabic and Anglo–Arabic.
This triad is certainly the outcome of having more control over topic, cou-
pled with mental translation, than over the target linguistic structures and
mechanism. The tendency to abolish sentence boundary, viz. using a comma
before "really" and "however", lends some support to my claim. Although
this particular aspect does not affect comprehensibility, one is led to believe
that 'transfer' is bi–directional, i.e. the influence either comes from spoken
English or spoken and/or written Arabic, in which case 'fossilization'
seems very much at stake in the end. But taking this along with his failure
to punctuate properly in several other places would put me in a position
to declare that this phenomenon is obvious "transfer' from Arabic.

In an interview with Khalid, he honestly blames himself for being too
much involved in communicating information and ignoring, though unco-
nsciously, the linguistic structures and organization of the text. One impor-
tant aspect of Khalid's overall IL is his capability of conveying oral mess-
ages with the help of Arabic. This seems to derive from his capability of
comprehending materials in his own field which must, in my view, be
explained in terms of mental translation into Arabic.

using general and ESP have developed Khalid's IL . Similarly, the enginee-
ing subject, Sa'ad, has been building up his IL for sixteen years, two
years less at the B.Sc. level (2).

DESCRIPTION

What follows is a description and comparison of two authentic
excerpts from two theses, the first of which is medical, dealing with
child leukaemia, and the second is engineering, examining the structural
properties of soils. Both theses required field and laboratory work. The two
texts have been intentionally chosen from the 'Discussion' chapters, since
elsewhere in the body of each thesis too many quotations are embedded.
Although each sample speaks for itself, I shall demonstrate the main areas
of differences and similarity, at least for reasons that have to do with
the question of 'transfer' and 'fossilization'.

The 'paragraphs' below are by khalid who writes about the varia-
bles associated with his tabulated cases of leukaemia:

Fig 4 shows the distribution of age and sex for those 51
cases which were grouped as acute leukaemia (AL) without
subdividing them into lymphoid or myeloid subtypes because
of the lack of Cytochemical reports, really most of these cases
were acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) as their complete
blood picture, follow up records and response to therapy
suggests.

Fig 4 shows 70% of (AL) cases were seen in the first 6 years
of age with a peak incidence at 4–5 years. Male to female ratio
was 2.6:1.

This age and sex distribution of AL in Fig 4 was similar
to that of ALL in fig 2.

In fig 5 we added AL to ALL cases making the total number
of 112 with age and sex distribution similar to either AL
or ALL separately.

70.5% of cases occurred in the first 6 years of age with
a peak incidence at 3–5 years and male to female ratio of 1. 9:1 .

Fig 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 describes the geographical distribu-
tion of the registered cases of childhood leukaemia. At the begi-
ning it should be clear that these figures does not represent the
incidence of the disease in these geographical areas because some

nalized. Practically, the identification of the likely fossilized patterns in a given performance remains extremely difficult, especially when the res- earcher is confronted with unsystematic or dubious transfer and/or unsys- tematic errors that have nothing to do with influence from the mother tongue.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILES

Comparative IL studies which aim at finding out variations, inclu- ding possible areas of 'transfer' and 'fossilization', require fairly detailed backgrounds for any two or more subjects at whatever stage and age of learning. IL can, therefore, be defined as the outcome of accumulated learning experience.

Khalid, 29, is a native speaker of Arabic who received his education in the city of Mosul. Sa'ad, two years younger, is a native speaker of both Arabic and Syriac, a modern patois of Aramaic, but had all his schooling in a rural area, 25 kilometers from the city of Mosul. It is often held, at least in this part of the world, that it is a privilege for one to have his educ- ation in the city rather than in the village. Yet, as is universally acknow- ledged, individual differences do exist even within any one area. Also, Kha- lid's father, now a retired teacher of English, used to help his son with language problems during his eight years of pre-university intensive language learning. Sa'ad's parents are uneducated, and he has never received any private tuition in English. Both of them have been guided by the traditional/direct method of teaching at pre-university stage. This period of learning is by no means free from "an authoritarian air, where avoidance of error is crucial" (Deckert 1987: 17). They seem to have benefited, with varying degrees, from an ESP course, structurally oriented with some translation into Arabic, during their first year at the University. Yet all tea- ching up to this point is more of what could be tested, not of a sort which aims "to evaluate those skills that are important for learners to develop" (Savignon 1987: 21).

In addition to examination-oriented language courses, Khalid, a medical student, has since the end of the ninth year of learning English been receiving and using ESP for five more years. Followed by a two-year interruption in the army, where only English medical terms are used, communication in ESP has resumed for another two years at the Postgra- duate level. Added up, eighteen years of formal and informal learning and

Partial Outcomes of Academic Domain-Specific Interlanguage Use

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INTRODUCTION(*)

Accepting Selinker's view about the study of interlanguage (IL) in regard to ESP (1984), I shall examine partial performance of two top M. Sc. students at Mosul University, Iraq. This study does not seem to lend support to his claim that control over topic, rather than linguistic structures, must come first in the teaching of ESP (cf. Selinker 1986). As will be demonstrated below, I tend to be much more for doing away with priorities than taking a counter stand. This position is confirmed by two interviews with the subjects. The two subjects who have been experiencing a considerable number of "approximative systems" (Nemser 1974: 56) at successive stages of learning both general English and ESP are themselves aware of 'topic' and 'structure'. The claim is nothing new; it has so often been expressed (and put into practice for over quarter of a century at the University) that in ESP courses, teaching comprehension comes first, grammar second and, finally, speech. No wonder, this strategy is also favoured by the learners who would like to find themselves understand what they read, the result of which is poorly written and spoken English (1).

The aim of this paper, however, is not to challenge Selinker's priorities. As there is no doubt that variations in IL across academic contexts do exist, any choice that ought to be made between 'topic and linguistic structures' can only be determined in terms of local rather than global variations. I am primarily concerned with showing such variations in IL at a very advanced stage of learning and using English. Relevant to this domain will be the question of 'transfer' and 'fossilization'(cf. Selinker 1984; 1986; Selinker and Douglas 1986). Transfer, which is still a controversial issue despite the relatively enormous research into it (cf. Kellerman 1984; Wode 1984, among many others) presents a serious problem, particularly when bilingualism is involved. It is not an easy task to identify and measure areas of transfer from L1 and /or L2 in the ILs of learners. What is more problematic is the drawing of proper demarcation between 'transfer' and 'fossilization'. Theoretically, it can be said that fossilization would be more obvious at advanced stages of learning, where it can be assumed that the IL patterns have to a large extent been inter-

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