A Comparison of English and Persian Oral and Written Performances in Syntax

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Abstract: *This contrastive study investigated similarities and particularly differences between English and Persian in the area of syntax to find if the basic sentence patterns formulated by former studies suffice or we need more ones or even some modifications. The subjects recruited in this study were fifty advance male and female learners of English who were studying English in the researcher's classes as their foreign language. The instruments of the study were (a) classroom compositions and (b) data obtained through conversations among learners during the classes Compositions and conversations were on different topics and themes in English. Data were obtained from at least 150 compositions and through various conversations during 20 sessions. All the problematic areas in syntax were explored and matched with the most problematic basic sentence patterns offered by Yarmohammadi (1995) in terms of sentential meaning and they were juxtaposed, compared, and contrasted with their Persian counterparts and at later stages syntactic rules were utilized as common bases. Then, the areas of major learning difficulties were predicted and specified. Also the researcher faced some new patterns which were problematic due to the interference of Persian influence.*

Keywords: English syntax, Persian syntax, sentence pattern

Introduction

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Yarmohammadi (1995) conducted the contrastive analysis of English and Persian in the areas of syntax, morphology and phonology. In the present study, the researcher also wants to take the strong version of this study just in the area of syntax to find whether based on her samples taken from real compositions and conversations of participants, the basic sentence patterns formulated by Yarmohammadi (1995) suffice or we need more ones or even some modifications. The purpose is to shed light on similarities and differences particularly the latter between two linguistic systems and predict the problematic areas and possible learning difficulties so that we can apply the findings pedagogically.

Significance of the study

Contrastive linguistics has undergone a lot of upheavals, flourishing when structural linguistics was dominant and direct application of theory to practice was the primary goal in linguistics. Later, experimental research contradicted the structuralists' predictions. From 1970s onward,

contrastive analysis was revived with a new look to see a common ground for comparison between languages (Krzeszowski, 1990). He believes that contrastive linguistics is used with reference to the whole field of cross-language comparisons with a tendency to focus on those instances when theory or methodology of comparisons comes into play. Also he added that "contrastive analysis is often used interchangeably, but there is a tendency to restrict its scope of reference to comparison proper (p.11).

" Contrastive analysis" (CA), or contrastive linguistics, as Fisiak (1981) defines, is" a subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them" (p.1). Fallahi (1991) also believes CA is a branch of linguistics that brings two language systems together, sets them against each other, and seeks to define similarities and differences between them. Krzeszowski (1990) also says contrastive linguistics is an area of linguistics in which a linguistic theory is applied to a comparative description of two or more languages which need not to be genetically or typologically related since typological linguistics focuses on cluster of languages united by some common feature or features, while contrastive linguistics focuses on pairs of languages and explores similarities as well as differences between them (p 9-10).As Yarmohammadi (1995) has stated, Iranian students after many years of studying English in an EFL context during school and university days, still have difficulty in contrasting basic English sentences. They have errors in many areas of syntax and morphology. The data collected and analyzed by Jafarpur (1973 cited in Yarmohammadi, 1995) reveals "systematic" errors of various kinds. Here by "systematic" we mean "predictable" i.e. errors for which reasons can be provided for their occurrences. If errors are predictable then specific causes can be discovered and formulated. This shows that the learner's mother language habits might tempt him to follow the patterns of his source language (Yarmohammadi, 1995 p.16). In other words, he believes the source language might interfere with the target language. According to what has been said formal Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Error Analysis (EA) have over the last two decades suffered such misunderstanding as being in fundamental opposition. However this paper involves a contrastive study of some syntactic areas of English and Persian. The analysis is then corroborated by an error analysis survey and aims to show that CA and EA can be used in direct complementation to achieve formidable predictive explanatory power of errors that may arise in, and characterize the learner's interlanguage (Coder, 1981: 62). We are justified to compare and contrast languages to determine their similarities and differences to account for some of the deviances observed. So this study will be an attempt to contribute to the contrastive analysis of Persian and English with regard to one major domain: syntax and with the help of EA. Therefore, based on the samples taken from real compositions and conversations of participants, the following research question is posed:

- Do the basic sentence patterns formulated by Yarmohammadi (1995) suffice; or we need further patterns or even some modifications?

Review of the Related Literature

There are a number of studies carried out and taxonomies presented in the field of contrastive analysis or contrastive linguistics. Therefore, the definitions of some taxonomies seem to be crucial. With regard to the first taxonomy contrastive studies are usually divided into theoretical and applied, each with a tradition of its own (Fisiak 1973, 1975).

Definition of Terms

Theoretical CA

According to Fisiak, theoretical contrastive studies are performed for their own sake and they are non-directional. This roughly means that theoretical contrastive studies

do not investigate how a given category present in language A is represented in anguage B … they look for the realization of a universal category X in both A and B (Fisiak et al. 1978: 10). Based on what Yarmohammadi (1995) defines, these studies are usually based on a particular theoretical framework e.g. structural, transformational or government and binding and the main purpose of such studies is to provide explanations for and develop insights into contrastive problems. Formulation of universal features and characteristics of different languages and general language acquisition principles will naturally be the by-products of such studies. Yarmohammadi (1995) believes that theoretical CA is the scientific study of languages. Thus, what models are adequate for comparing languages, how common bases are determined at different levels of analysis, what features are common in different languages, how each of these common features are realized, and how the actual contrastive analysis is carried out in different fields of linguistics such as phonology, lexicology, syntax, discourse, and sociolinguistics are the concern of theoretical CA. Here are some similar researches done recently in these areas:

In the area of syntax, Faghih (1997) did a CA of some 105 Persian substantives with their possible English equivalents. The CA revealed that in Persian there is no single word corresponding exactly to the English definite article *THE*. Finally, it was speculated that the acquisition of *THE* will constitute a problem for Iranian students. In this study, the theoretical justification of CA coupled with the Iranian educators' recognition of their students' frustration at learning the English definite article *THE* was the main concern.

An empirical contrastive analysis of 36 RAs, Research Articles, in English and 36 RAs in Spanish on business and economics written by native speakers of each language was carried out by Moreno (1997). In fact, the results showed that both language groups seemed to make Cause-Effect Intersentential Relations, CEIRs, explicit with similar frequency. In addition, they used

similar strategies for expressing CEISRs, as reflected in the amount of emphasis given to the causal relation, the basic mechanism of coherence used and the choice of peripheral or integrated signals. Moreover, those strategies appeared similarly distributed. The only differences across the two languages were shown in their tendencies towards verbal or nominal anaphoric and anaphoric-cum-cataphoric signals. Thus, overall, these results tended to suggested that it is the writing conventions of the RA genre, and not the peculiarities of Spanish and English writing cultures, that govern the rhetorical strategies preferred by writers to make the CEISR explicit and the frequency with which these are made explicit.

Another paper done by Pisanski Peterlin (2005) presented a contrastive analysis focusing on the differences in the use of two selected metatext categories, previews and reviews, in English and Slovene research articles. The analysis was based on the hypothesis that the use of the selected metatext categories is more restricted in Slovene academic writing than in English academic writing. Thirty-two research articles from the fields of mathematics and archaeology (16 in English and 16 in Slovene) were analyzed according to a set of criteria established in advance, and the quantitative results of the analysis were further examined statistically. The results showed that the number of occurrences of the selected metatext categories in the sample of English research articles was larger than in the sample of Slovene articles, although the difference in the use of the selected metatext categories was smaller between the two languages than between the two disciplines.

Applied CA

Fisiak et al. (1978) believes that applied contrastive studies are performed for the purpose of some application and he believes that these studies are directional. Moreover, Yarmohammadi (1995) has cited that these studies aim at making use of the theoretical contrastive analysis for some specific purposes, of which language pedagogy and translation are perhaps the clearest examples. He believes that theoretical studies are equally interested in similarities and differences while applied studies often concentrate on differences. Also applied contrastive analysis is the result of a proper selection or adjustment of the theoretical analysis (p. 20). Yarmohammadi (1995) mentions that the most important contribution of applied linguistics is pedagogical grammar, i.e. language description gear to the demands of teaching (p.21). He says that a special type of pedagogical grammar is contrastive pedagogical grammar. This is chiefly a process of contribution of contrastive linguistics for teaching purposes. Here are some similar studies conducted:

Samaie M., et al (2014) examined and compared the types and frequency of specific features of discourse, namely hedging employed by Persian and English native speakers in the introduction section of academic research articles in the field of literature. Research articles (RAs) published in national and international journals were randomly selected and analyzed through descriptive statistics in terms of frequency. Data analysis of introduction sections of English and Persian

literature RAs revealed that there was a difference between the choice of terms used as hedging devices in the articles written by English native authors and Persian native authors in terms of their type and frequency. The results of the study indicate that English native writers used modal auxiliaries, evidential main verbs, adjectives and nouns in RAs more frequently than their Persian native writers' counterparts. The larger number of hedges in English native speakers' corpus was an evidence for their familiarity with interactive feature of applied linguistics.

A study by Rahimi A. and Tafazoli D. (2014) examined a linguistic taxonomy of frequent syntactic-morphological errors in Iranian EFL writings in synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication. It also provides the most frequent and the least frequent errors among EFL students' writings in these two modes. The researchers conducted a research on EFL undergraduate university students' writings. After ranking and categorizing their erroneous structures, more errors were found in the synchronous mode of communication than in the asynchronous one. The results of the study show that, error in the use of articles is the most frequent syntactico-morphological error in synchronous mode of communication and error in distribution and use of verb groups is the least frequent error. In asynchronous mode of communication, error in the use of preposition is the most frequent syntactic morphological error; and wrong use of negative construction is the least frequent error.

Razi N.(2013) studied compliment responses (CR) among Australian English and Iranian Persian speakers within the framework proposed by Chen-Hsin Tang and Grace Qiao Zhang (2009). A series of written discourse completion tasks was given to a group of Iranian university students and then it was analyzed. The results showed that Iranian Persian speakers use fewer *Accept* strategies and more *Reject* and *Evade* strategies than their Australian counterparts.

Another study conducted by Behnam B., et.al (2012) was aiming to investigate giving condolences as a speech act across English and Persian via short messages. 30 Persian and 30 English short messages were encoded and analyzed. The coding was based on Elwood's (2004) semantic formula. The results indicated that there is a difference in the way people in these two cultures give their condolences. It is argued that Persian messages are more direct and short and signs of religious culture can be seen in them. On the other hand, English messages are mostly indirect, sympathetic, and apologetic. However, due to the small size of the sample, making safe conclusions is doubtful. Larger samples may lead to more valid results.

A paper was undertaken by Parvaresh V., et al (2012) to investigate the frequency and function of a group of pragmatic expressions known as general extenders (GEs) in Persian and to see if any transfer takes place from Persian into non-native English in an EFL context. The data included two corpora of informal conversations collected by the participants themselves. The data shows that, unlike in English, Persian GEs are not used to provide an intensifying effect in soliciting agreement. The non-native English corpus does not feature this function either. The findings also indicate that EFL learners do not tend to use the GE to establish solidarity. Besides,

the study shows how Persian GEs can be used to fulfill the two unique functions of expressing outrage and arousing curiosity. Finally, it is argued that first language norms influence the use of GEs by non-native speakers. The findings of this study revealed that, despite similarities between English and Persian, there were also some differences that were transferred to non-native English discourse.

A study by Eslamirasekh A. (2012) was conducted to find differences between American and Persian use of complaint strategies. Persian university students' utterances were collected and later coded in terms of seven major categories; namely, *opting out, no explicit reproach, indirect complaint, indirect accusation, direct complaint, request for repair and threat.* Findings showed that Persian complaint realizations are significantly different from those of Americans. Indirect complaint, and request for repair were discovered to be highly frequent in both Americans and Persians. However, Americans use these strategies more frequently than Persian speakers. The results indicated that the speech act of complaint was realized differently through following different socio-cultural norms.

Another study done by Makalela (2004) on an empirical study undertaken at the University of the North, South Africa, to test classroom personal observation and anecdotal evidence about the persistent gap between writing and spoken proficiencies among learners of English as a second language. A comparative and contrastive analysis of speech samples in the study showed a significant higher proportion of morpho-syntactyic nonstandard forms in the learners' written compositions and more nonstandard discourse forms in their oral presentations. As a result, it was argued that this gap might be minimized when learners' written inter-language variety was used productively as a means toward normative writing proficiency. Recommendations for remedial instruction in second-language writing pedagogy, within the framework of Cummins's (1979) conversational abilities and academic language proficiency, were offered for adaptation in comparable situations.

Another research conducted by Cuenca (2003) devoted to present a contrastive analysis of reformulation markers in English, Spanish, and Catalan. The study was based on the corpus of expository prose (mainly academic writing). The analysis showed coincidences in the sources of the markers and differences in the variety of forms expressing reformulation as well as in their frequency of use. It argued that the differences identified in the grammar of English vs. Spanish and Catalan can be associated with two distinctive styles for building academic writing.

A study was done by Espinoza (1997) in which English and Spanish passive voice patterns of the simple, continuous, and perfect tenses were contrasted to find non-corresponding elements to predict difficulties in the acquisition of English and Spanish as L2 for Spanish and English-native speakers, respectively. The analysis of such patterns showed that (a) there is a positive transfer between all the English and the literal (T1) Spanish passive counterparts analyzed and, consequently, they were predicted to be *easily acquired* by both learners; (b) perfect tense

patterns showed word-by-word matching in two out of three elements of the English and non-literal (T2) Spanish forms and, therefore, they were assumed to be of *intermediate difficulty* for both learners; (c) the English continuous patterns showed correspondence with just one of the three elements of the T2 Spanish equivalents and should be of *high difficulty* for both learners; and (d) no correspondence occurred between the English simple tenses and those of the T2 Spanish forms which also indicated *high difficulty* for these learners. In the end, it was suggested that much attention then should be paid to the amount of time devoted to the teaching of patterns indicated in (b), (c) and (d) as well as to teaching materials to reduce the non-correspondence effect and facilitate L2 acquisition.

Since the researcher has adopted the framework of Yarmohammadi (1995), the specific objectives assumed for a contrastive pedagogical grammar of English and Persian were as follows:

1. to provide information about grammatical facts of the English language needed for the desired proficiency of Persian levels at the given level.

2. to illustrate similarities and differences between the two linguistic systems involved, with special elaboration and emphasis on differences, and to provide examples;

3. to predict and specify some of the possible major learning difficulties of Iranian L2 learners of English and;

4. to apply the information obtained from 2 and 3 for selecting, ordering and grading the content of the pedagogical grammar and to provide suitable exercises for each component with appropriate size, shape and emphasis.

Another taxonomy was presented by Di Pietro (1971: 17-19) which has been cited in Krzeszowski (1990). He has divided contrastive studies into autonomous and generalized, on the one hand, and into taxonomic and operational, on the other. From the pedagogical point of view, autonomous contrastive studies have not been of much use in the area of language teaching, since neither the descriptive apparatus they employ nor the results which they yield, can be easily related to any psychological or pedagogical reality. On the other hand, operational models are extremely difficult, if at all possible, to construct since still not enough is known about both learners and grammars with relation to psychological reality. Also, Krzeszowski (1990) believes that Di Pietro's taxonomy could be augmented by generative models, i.e. such models generate equivalent constructions and sentences across languages and design appropriate structural description, including similarities and differences, to the enumerated equivalents.

According to Krzeszowski (1990), since his classification of contrastive studies is based on distinguishing various kinds of equivalence, it is appropriate to mention Külwein's typology of

equivalence, designed in connection with lexicological contrastive studies suited in the context of socio-semiotics (Külwein, 1983);

• Formal- based on linguistic structure;

• Derivational-semantic- connected with the depth of the derivation;

• Paraphrase procedure- which yields "regressum ad infinitum";

• Translation procedure- limited by truth conditions and culture-specific considerations; and

• Functional-communicative- involving "mental processes of cognition and associative connotative components" (Külwein 1983: 6).

However, this division suffers from some shortcomings (Krzeszowski, 1990). It is not based on a set of homogeneous criteria and does not mutually relate these various types of equivalence, nor does it suggest that there is a relationship. It also leaves out certain types of equivalence and does not relate the concept of equivalence to the concept of *tertium comarationis.* As both Yarmohammadi (1995) and Krzeszowski (1990) believe, all comparisons involve the basic assumption that the objects to be compared share something in common, against which differences can be stated. This platform of reference is called *tertium comarationis.* What they adopted for the contrastive analysis is executing a CA of classical type involving 4 steps in the framework taken by Yarmohammadi (1995), namely; description, juxtaposition, comparison, and prediction since his framework which also has been adopted by the writer of this paper is the **Strong Version of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis,** i.e. a version which holds that the degree of difficulty correlates with the intensity of the differences between the two structures in L1 and L2. On the other hand, Krzeszowski (1990) believes a classical contrastive analysis consists of three steps, not always clearly distinguishable in the analysis itself but always tacitly assumed: description, juxtaposition, comparison, i.e. contrastive analysis in the strict sense (Halliday et al. 1964: 113-114).

What Yarmohammadi (1995) has done in syntax juxtaposition is matching sentence patterns reflecting analogous sentential meaning and at later stages syntactic rules are utilized as common bases. Sentential meaning has to do with the relationships existing among the elements of a sentence. He defines a sentence pattern as a linear representation of a sentence expressed in terms of syntactic categories such as a noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), noun (N), etc. or in terms of syntactic functions such as subjects, predicators, objects, etc. Also he defines a basic sentence pattern as a pattern such that:

1. The syntactic function of the elements of the sentence is never repeated twice in the same pattern.

2. All the elements in the sentence with their lexical realizations are meant to be obligatory. No optional deletion is applied.

3. The order of the words in the pattern and intonation pattern are supposed to be the most neutral one.

He actually has done contrastive analysis of both syntax, phonology and morphology of English and Persian and the researcher has adopted the framework of syntax of these two languages. Fundamental concepts underlying an EA are classified below:

Errors vs. Mistakes

Corder (1981) defines mistakes as results of factors affecting performance in the L2 such as memory limitations, fatigue, emotional strain, etc. They are random and can easily be corrected by the learner when pointed out. Errors, however, are systematic, consistent and representative of the learner's state of inter-language at a given stage of learning. This can be explained in terms of the learner's psychological process. The study of errors, in this sense, is the primary motivation behind EA.

Error Analysis: Rules and Goals

CA originally evolved as an explanatory theory of learner's performance, whereas EA (as Corder, 1981 notes) has often concerned itself almost exclusively with the applied goal of correcting and eradicating errors. EA can, however, be used to complement CA. Contrastive studies require empirical validation, as when they are used alone, they can only derive support from the observation and intuition of the analyst. EA can experimentally confirm or disprove the findings of a CA, providing corroboration of any explanatory or predictive power. It should be noted that research has shown that just as a CA cannot predict or explain all errors as L1 interference, there are also those that do not surface overtly in EA (Corder 1981: 35.)

Method

Participants

The subjects recruited in this study are 50 advanced learners of English who are studying English in the researcher's class as their foreign language. They are both adult males and females with an age range of 19 to 26 years. All of them are native speakers of Farsi. The participants were placed in advanced proficiency level based on their scores in Oxford Placement Test.

Instruments

The instruments of the study are (a) classrooms compositions and (b) data obtained through conversations among learners during the classes. Compositions and are on different topics and themes in English.

Procedures

Data are obtained from at least 150 compositions and through various conversations during 20 sessions in the classes. All the problematic areas in syntax in both compositions and conversations were explored and matched with the most problematic basic sentence patterns designed by Yarmohammadi (1995) in terms of sentential meaning and they were juxtaposed, compared and contrasted with their Persian counterparts and at later stages syntactic rules were utilized as common bases. Then, the areas of major learning difficulties are predicted and specified. Also, the researcher faced some new patterns which were problematic as well due to the interference of Persian influence.

Results and Discussion

The researcher has assigned the students different compositions based on different topics and while correcting the errors in both the compositions and conversations, she faced repeated errors committed by her advanced learners whose foreign language is English. These errors are the most problematic patterns mentioned once by Yarmohammadi (1995). The researcher has found more examples of them to show and verify the influence of Persian as the first language of the learners plus some new patterns not mentioned by him. These patterns are listed here below:

NP   be   Adj

The air is polluted.

WC= Weather Condition

-PP1: Subject(hava (ye=N))   WC   Bud

/ hava ?alude ?ast./   weather polluted is

We predict: *The weather is polluted.

Here, we have a syntactic error. The type is inter-lingual which has its source in the native language of the learner. In Persian, we use "weather" for different corresponding words in English but the problem is that English makes finer distinctions which are not made in Persian. For example, in this case "air" is used with specific adjectives in specified contexts. So, we predict the above erroneous sentence.

-EP2: Subj   Event   Quality

Np   Verb   Adj   verbs= become, get, grow, turn, come, etc.

Ali   went   wild.

-PP2: Subj   Quality   Event (shodan)

Np   Adj   Verb

/ ?ali   vahshi   shod./   Ali wild became

We predict: *Ali became wild.

Again we have a syntactic and inter-lingual error. English has a variety of verbs of **becoming-group** mentioned above but in Persian for all of these verbs only we have one translation which in English means "become". So, we predict that learners in specific contexts where the use of specific verbs is permissible use just this verb.

EP3: Np1   Verb   Np2

John   hates   Jack.

PP3: Np1   PP (P. Obj)   Verb

/jan az jak tanafor darad./   John from Jack hates

We predict: *John hates from Jack.

This error is syntactic, inter-lingual, and under the influence of Persian. There are many cases in which we cannot observe any preposition in English while in Persian translation we need such a preposition, so we predict that our learners over-generalize the use of prepositions. Other examples collected are: enjoy from, achieve to, cause to, call to, go to home and discuss about, etc. which were mistakenly used instead of these verbs without the prepositions.

Ep4: Np1   Verb   P1 + NP2

I   depend   to my family.   P1$\neq$ P2

Np1   P2 + Np2   Verb

/man be xanevade?am vabaste?am./   I to family-my depend

We predict: *I depend to my family.

The type of the error is that of others mentioned in the above patterns. Other examples observed are: 'explain for', 'describe for', and 'believe to' instead of 'explain to ','describe to and believe in.

Ep5: Np1   be   Adj   P1 + Np2

   This answer is   acceptable   to me.   P1≠P2

PP5: NP1   P2 +NP2   Adj   budan

   /?in javab baraye man qabel-e qabul ?ast./ this answer for I acceptable is

We predict: *This answer is acceptable for me.

Here, a syntactic and inter-ingual error happened. In this case, the type of the prepositions which come with adjectives are different in the two languages and this will lead to some grammatical problems, so we predict that under the influence of the mother tongue that is Persian learners use inappropriate prepositions.

Now, there comes a list of new patterns found by the researcher. They were not mentioned by Yarmohammadi (1995).

EP6: NP1and I   Be   equi- subject   Equi-subjet= equivalent to the subject

    Ali and I   are   brothers.

PP6: I and NP1   equi-subject   Budan

   / man va ?ali baradar hastim./   I and Ali brother are

We predict: *I and Ali are brother.

As we can see here in this pattern, we faced 2 syntactic and interlingual errors. The first one is related to the choices that Iranian learners have in Persian, i.e. in PP6 we have 2 possibilities in the first place that is using "NP and I" or" I and NP". The second choice in English is not an acceptable form. The second error here is related to the countable nouns in English that take the inflectional suffix "s" but in Persian in some cases like here countable nouns are not infected, so we predict that under the influence of Persian learners may use the single form of a noun that should be inflected in English.

EP7: NP1   Relative- pro NP2   Verb   …

The man   that   I   saw …

PP7: NP1   Ke   NP2(Obj-pro) Verb   …

 /mardi   ke   ?ura   didam …/   man that him saw-I

We predict: *The man that I saw him …

As this is noticeable in English we are not allowed to use the object pronoun after the verb in a relative clause where the first NP is the main object but in Persian we may use or we may not. In the first case, then we will commit a syntactic error.

EP8: NP1   Relative-pro   NP2   ….

  The baby   whose   mother

PP8: NP1   Ke   NP2 –poss adj   ….

  /bace?i   ke   madar-ash /   The baby   that   mother-her/his

We predict: *The baby that her/his mother

Again, we encountered a syntactic and interlingual error with regard to the relative clauses of possession. In an erroneous sentence "whose" will be rendered to "that" which is followed by an additional possessive adjective.

EP9: When   Np1 or NP2   Verb   (Object-pro)

  When   Jack or his brother   visits   us   …

PP9: Vaqtike   NP1 or NP2   ?az-subj-pro   Verb

  /vaqtike   jak ya baradarash   ?az ma   didar mikonand   …/

When   Jack or his brother   from   we   visit

We predict: *When Jack or his brother visit from us …

Two syntactic and interlingual errors are committed here. The first one is due to the distinction that conjunction "or" makes, i.e. "or" requires the single form of the verb (third person) in English and the second error is related to the additional use of the pronoun" from" due to the interference of Persian, as it is shown above.

Adj   as   PP   Be

    I   am   so clever   as   he   is.

                     PP10: NP1   be NC of Adj-e   PP   budan

 /man   be zerangi-e   ?u   hastam./   I to celeverness of him am

We predict: *I am so clever as him.

Again, a syntactic and inter-lingual error happens. Here, we have the misuse of subject pronoun and object pronoun. Iranian learners of English, as a result of their native language, tend to use

object pronoun (him) instead of the subject pronoun. So we can predict the above ungrammatical sentence.

After studying the oral and written data obtained from the Iranian advanced learners of English, the researcher came to some dominant patterns repeated as syntactic and inter-lingual errors. Some of these patterns once were investigated by Yarmohammadi (1995) whose framework was adopted by the researcher and some other patterns were found by the researcher herself. So, in fact the answer to the research question is positive. They are all due the process of transfer where the speech habits from one language that is the learners' mother tongue are carried over to the target language that is English here. Therefore, as the result of this interference errors are generated and lead to a kind of English spoken by Persians, i.e. Penglish. So in this paper with the help of the EA we have conducted our CA. This includes the identification, description and determination of the source of the errors and the related patterns in both languages and then based on the strong version the description, juxtaposition, comparison, and prediction phases for these systematic errors have been done. The results show the strong influence of Persian as the learners' mother tongue in these areas. Indeed, the results in this paper are to some extent consistent with the results of other studies conducted in an EFL Iranian context (Samaie, et al, 2014; Razi, 2013; Behnam, et al, 2012; Parvaresh, et al, 2012, Eslamirasekh, 2012, and Faghih, 1997) in that all demonstrate the influence and interference of the Persian as the mother tongue on English as a foreign language. However, what has made this research rather a distinctive one is that here the contrastive analysis of Persian and English in the area of syntax has been done with the help of error analysis to meet the predictive potency of errors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in contrastive analysis of two or more languages we compare and contrast the specific areas; for example, here we have focused on syntax where we encountered some problematic areas under the influence of the source language. In the area of syntax, based on the researcher's samples taken from real compositions and conversations of the participants, the basic sentence patterns formulated by Yarmohammadi (1995) did not suffice and we needed more ones. The information about grammatical facts of the English language needed for the desired proficiency of Persian levels at the given level was provided and some of the possible major learning difficulties of Iranian L2 learners of English were predicted and specified. These studies have been complemented by the use of the error analysis and have brought some pedagogical implications mentioned bellow:

Pedagogical Implications

Teachers and learners of English as a foreign language as well as syllabus designers and materials producers have much to gain from the studies of CA and EA. They help the teachers to assess whatever they have taught and whatever the learners have learnt and make plans for the

future. If teachers understand that learners cannot achieve native speaker's competence directly, they would be ready to accept the varieties of language which their learners produce. These varieties may be different from the well-formed utterances found in the course book drills and texts. But a close study of the learners' English will provide the sort of data on which realistic perditions about learning and teaching can be based. When teachers realize the most problematic areas in learning a language, they would set more realistic goals for particular learning situations. Also they would be able to help the learners improve their competence and bring it as close to native competence as possible.

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