



RESEARCH ARTICLE

COMMON TRANSLATION MISTAKES IN ENGLISH TEACHING FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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ABSTRACT

Interaction between two languages, the native and the foreign language, results in the phenomenon known as interlanguage, which is the influence that the foreign language receives from the mother tongue and backwards. This influence can be positive or negative (Interference). This interlanguage research in the teaching process or in learning English, where Spanish is the mother tongue; and the particular identification of linguistic interferences in the English language for specific purposes in the career of Industrial Engineering at the Ecuadorian University, this identification constitutes the investigation objective. For its development, a guide for the interferences identification, the videos transcription and the translation of specialized texts were used as fundamental means. A sample was used with 30 students, which is the total number of students enrolled in the last level of an English career. The fundamental result was the identification, classification and analysis of linguistic interferences, information that worked as bases in the design of the necessary strategies to reduce the mistakes of interlanguage in the process of teaching and learning English in this career.

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning in foreign languages communication, constitutes today, a social need and a priority from multiple angles: personal, academic, scientific, professional, and cultural, where English language, as the most used for the dissemination of scientific - technical information through magazines, books and mainly on the Internet (Valdés Linares and others, 2010, García-Santillán and Escalera-Chávez, 2016). The development of bilingualism is very important as an agent of pluralization and tolerance, to respond to the fact of living in a globalized world that requires exchanges and internationalization in the diverse education, economy, medicine, technology environments, etc. (Rue Castaño and Wilburn Dieste, 2014). The communicative competence in English is valued as an instrument of exchange, not only professional but culturally relevant in the integral formation of the individual. This competence is not limited to the mastery of grammar rules, but also implies the ability to know how and when to use knowledge, that is, to know-how and to do-how (Pibaque Pionce et al., 2015). It is important to understand that the study of a foreign language, such as English, can also understand culture, beliefs, values, customs and others, and this, in turn allows better learning (Beltrán Arias, 2015).

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The fundamental role played by the acquisition of communicative skills in English language for the professional student development, their social relations and their integral formation, which works as support for cultural, academic, professional exchange, etc., is evident. In the study of languages there are still many challenges to overcome on the teaching and learning process, both in terms of the mother tongue and the foreign language. The language is alive and always changes, allowing us speaking in different ways (Rodríguez de Mesquita y Palacios, 2017). Nowadays, the originality and modernity of methods for the teaching of a second language is a function of the oral and communicative practice of the language, and the grammar exercise; for this reason, the study of norms and principles that regulate the structure and use of a language, as well as the grammar, that leads to the improvement in communication and to a deeper knowledge of the second language (Castaño Wheel and Wilburn Dieste, 2014). In the process of teaching and learning a second language, a phenomenon called linguistic transfer, emerges, which is nothing more than the system that the student of a second language (L2) constructs as he learns it, a system that is clearly influenced by his or her mother tongue (L1). The phenomenon of linguistic transfer is also known as Inter tongue or interlanguage, which consists in the transference of mother tongue's structures into the foreign language that can be positive or negative in the latter case called interference. This is a transitory phenomenon that disappears as you achieve greater mastery of the target

language (Buitriago and others, 2011). The interlanguage is characterized for being the student's own system and is related to individuals and not to communities. It moves between the system of the mother tongue and the target language system, is autonomous and is constantly evolving, since it is formed by successive stages of approach with the mother tongue (Rodríguez de Mesquita and Palacios 2017). Linguistic transfer can be positive, when it helps the language learning or negative when it leads to errors, this negative transfer is known as linguistic interference, which is a term that is used in didactic of the foreign language and in psycholinguistics to refer to the mistakes that are made during the expression in a second language, supposedly originated by contact with the mother tongue. For Muñoz Carrasco (2013), it implies that, independently of typological patterns of L1 and L2, the learner will tend to transfer the pattern between form and meaning from L1 to L2. In cases of similar typologies between L1 and L2, a positive transfer between the two languages will be expected, while in cases of different typologies between L1 and L2, a negative transfer (Interference) will happen. The most common errors of this interference are given when it comes to ordering and selecting words, articulating and pronouncing new sounds, harmoniously relating subject and verb, selecting grammatical time, articles and prepositions correctly. This is often caused by the lack of knowledge about the new lexical elements, syntactic and morphological structures and other phonetic and phonological aspects of the new language (Echeverría Arriaga, 2016, Guerrero Segura and Moreno Rodríguez, 2017).

The interference is phonic, when the pronunciation of the / r / for a Spanish speaker is difficult to perceive, distinguish and produce for the articulation mode of the sounds (retroflex in English and alveolar vibrant in Spanish). For example, "rrat" instead of rat, "rrock" instead of rock, and "rrose" instead of rose. It is lexical when familiar words of mother tongue are used in the new language because of its similarity in terms of writing and pronunciation. Example: false cognates have an almost identical morphological structure, but they have a different meaning. Some of these incorrect associations are: "exit" for "success", "carpet" for "folder", and "arm" for "weapon". It is of a syntactic nature when the indefinite article "a" or "an" are omitted in front of a trade or occupation. Example: "She is a teacher" (She is x teacher). This interference is easily detected in texts, sentences, and written sentences. In addition, the position of adjectives and nouns in both languages, their position in sentences differs greatly. Examples: She has a dress red (She has a red dress). It is of morphological character when the consonant "s" is added to form all the plurals of the nouns, without considering that in the English language there are countable and non-countable nouns, and regular and irregular ones. Example: Child - Childs, Woman - Womans, Foot - Foots.

Syntactic interferences can hinder the communicative function of a text to the point of distorting it. The text has to comply with a series of conventional characteristics of the target language, the challenge is to find the equivalences that create the same allusions in the target text as the source text, that is, to leave the same impression on readers of the target text than the source text (Sturm, 2016; Kanne, 2016). The interference is further accentuated when translating highly specialized documents and scientific texts. In science, the title of a work is the text unit that tries to fulfill different objectives, among them: to represent that work, to differentiate it from others, to

promote it, to integrate functional characteristics that have to do with the intention of the author and the reader, to describe synthetically the object of study or to present it in veiled form, etc. The highly specialized scientific titles belong to a horizontal discourse because both; its sender / author and its receiver / reader are peers, parity that is manifested in terms of the knowledge that both have on the same object of study (Soler, 2015). In pedagogical translation, interference becomes a teaching instrument, and is especially useful in the teaching of English for specific purposes, where the language is seen as a work tool adapted to different professional needs (Soto Almela, 2016). Interlanguage is one of the main challenges in the teaching and learning of L2, where the subject assimilates a new linguistic system and with it a new communication system. In this process, it is relevant to analyze the errors of students in the foreign language in use, specifically the writing of these, their frequencies and their causes, to establish the state of learning at the various linguistic levels: phonetic / phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, lexical, and thus be able to intervene (Buitriago and others 2011).

Nowadays, the originality and modernity of the methods for the teaching of a second language is a function of the oral and communicative practice of the language, and the exercise of grammar; for this reason, the study of the norms and principles that regulate the structure and use of a language, as well as the grammar, that leads to the improvement in communication and to a deeper knowledge of the second language (Castaño Wheel and Wilburn Dieste, 2014) is transcendental). To minimize the interference impact, it is necessary to identify them, which will allow the design of methodological strategies with the principles, criteria and procedures that shape the teacher's way of acting in relation to the programming, implementation and evaluation of the teaching-learning process, prioritizing students building his or her own learning (Arbona *et al.*, 2013; Zambrano Rosero and DiazVillarruel, 2017). Within the multiple strategies developed in the teaching of languages, translation is found, whose primary objective has been to facilitate the understanding of the lexicon learned in the meaning, but fundamentally the construction of grammatical structures. The first strategy used by an apprentice student of an L2 is unconsciously the translation, a mechanism that produces interference between L1 and L2 (Guevara Betancourt, 2015). The objective of this research is to identify linguistic interferences in the teaching of English for specific purposes in technical careers, which allows designing relevant strategies in their development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is of a qualitative approach, of descriptive type in which the identification of the interferences in the teaching and learning process was made in the selected sample, which is composed of the students that are registered in the three levels of technical English that are received in the seventh, eighth and ninth semester of Industrial Engineering career. The three levels were taken as a sample, taking as a fundamental criterion that at this level the linguistic interferences must be manifested less frequently due to having a greater knowledge of the L2. The instruments used as sources to identify linguistic interferences were the videos transcription and the specialized translation materials from Industrial Engineering career. To facilitate the identification of linguistic interferences, a guide was drawn up, it includes a synthesis of possible interferences, based on those reported in the

investigations that were carried out by Reyes Yañes (2006), Sturm (2016) and Zambrano Rosero and DíazVillarruel (2017). The following will show the items in the Guide to identify linguistic interferences:

Interferences at the syntactic level

- Syntactic tracing:
 - Transferring to the target language structure of a phrase or a syntactic construction.
 - Transferring all elements or the absence of elements of a phrase.
- Word order tracing:
 - Order transferring in which the words of the source language appear in a syntagmatic phrase or phrase.
- Scoring tracing:
 - Transferring to the target language of the typographical conventions that rules the source language.
- Order phrases Tracing:
 - Order Transferring in which the phrases that make up the sentence appear in the source language.
- Lexicon interferences:
 - The use of the virtual or potential meaning of a polysemy term and not the one that is tried to be explained in the text.
 - Incorrect use of prepositions.
 - Misuse (unusual or improper) of any of the elements of a lexical placement and that distorts the form or meaning of it.
- The use of false friends
- Omission and misuse of articles

The sample consisted of 90 students enrolled in the career and were divided in 30 per each level: 48 males and 42 females. Each student performed the same transcription and translation exercise of the selected materials. The results were analyzed in first order by the students in a co-evaluation applying the identification guide and presented in a workshop-type activity. Then, the research team made its intervention to obtain the results that are exposed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Guide application for identifying the interferences is shown in Fig. 1, where the relative frequency of each of the identified errors can be observed. Below there are some examples that illustrate the procedure and representative mistakes of the results of identification by interferences. Example: “Engineers are everywhere to build a house to run a company”. “Los ingenieros están en todas partes para construir una casa y correr una compañía”. In this case, a lexical trace is evidenced, the student was carried away by the knowledge of the translation of verbs as the best alternative, being the choice of the wrong meaning because run in this context is used to organize or direct something. Second, it can be noticed that it is translated “Los ingenieros” as “Engineers” but omitting the article in Spanish, when the correct thing is “the engineers”, this occurs because in English the article is omitted when the subject is not specific or when it is plural, but this doesn’t happen when it is written in Spanish, therefore it was taken from English, omitting the article. A better option would be: Engineers are everywhere to build a house to run a company. Example: Engineers must be critical yet creative; curious yet

capable as well as ready to handle this constantly changing world. Los ingenieros deben ser críticos pero creativos; curioso pero capaz; así como listo para manejar el mundo en constante cambio. Changing is translated literally as “cambiando”, but the use of this verb is because it is used as a verb of movement, action and position to indicate the continue activities, for such reason it is used as a “change” ... and “world” goes at the end because adjectives are used before than subjects.

An acceptable option: Engineers should be critical but creative; curious but capable, as well as ready to handle the ever-changing world.

Another option may be: Engineers must be critical but creative; curious but capable and ready to handle this ever-changing world.

As seen in fig.1, the most frequent errors are related to the syntactic tracing, word ordering and the omission of articles. In general, the results highlight a low level of knowledge of the standards and consequently the level of interference is high considering that they are studying the third English level with specific purposes, it is appreciated that they give greater importance to the related to achieving accuracy in the terms of the specialty rather than to the structures and norms in general of the language although less significant in quantities, the rest of the detected interferences should also be considered in any strategy that is designed to reduce the presence of interference in L2 learning. It is also important to emphasize that knowledge of the L1 system is a significant factor.

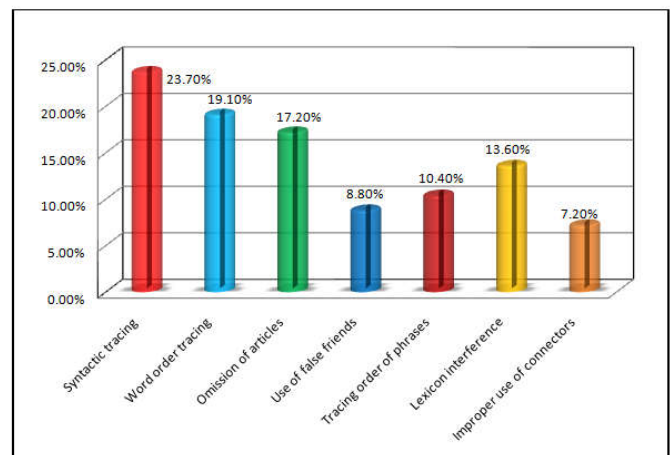


Figure 1. Relative frequency by types of linguistic interferences identified

These results coincide in good measure with those reported in the investigations carried out by Reyes Yañes (2006), Sturm (2016) and Zambrano Rosero and DíazVillarruel (2017), where they also highlight that one of the most frequent syntactic difficulties of Spanish speakers who are learning the English language is the discernment between the use or the omission of the definite and indefinite article. A significant percentage of people alters the order of the words without following the grammatical norms of the English language and use false friends. They also report errors in their research such as pluralizing the adjective, changing the position of the adjective, omitting the subject pronoun, using the subject pronoun instead of the object pronoun, which are recognized as interferences because they are unnecessary and incorrect transpositions of aspects of the mother tongue to the target language that transgresses the norm or custom of the target

language, which are also presented in the results of this research. The results evidences that the linguistic interferences identified in the teaching of English for specific purposes in the industrial engineering career of this institution that study the last level (III), basically it corresponds to those reported in the revised bibliography that refer to the teaching of English as a second language. Although linguistic interference is a phenomenon that is always presented in this process of learning an L2, it is considered that the level of these, represents a high number taking into account the knowledge that students must already possess to study in this level of English. Given these results, one should think about the contribution of other subjects in the career to contribute to the development of reading and writing skills, both in the mother tongue as well as the foreign one.

Conclusions

The interlanguage is always present and has an important role in the process of teaching and learning a new language, as is the student who makes analogies and associations between the linguistic systems of the mother tongue and the foreign language, in any of the activities that are developed during this process, in this case, English as a foreign language and Spanish as a mother tongue, but with the particularity of its study for specific purposes, where besides the interference of teaching in general, those of specialization are generated. accented in the senses and meanings of the terminology proper to the branch of knowledge. The most frequent interferences evidencing the results of the research are syntactic tracings, word order tracings, omission articles, omission and lexical interference, results that coincide to a large extent with those reported in the consulted bibliography. The study also shows that in the researched sample of the industrial engineering career, linguistic interference is present at undesirable levels, based on the knowledge that students of the L2 must already possess. The results that show the identification of the interferences served as a basis to design and propose strategies for the teaching and learning of L2, where among other elements are the incorporation of instructions about the lexical, syntactic and orthographic contrastive aspects of English and Spanish. Based on these results, it is recommended to extend the research to three levels that comprise the curriculum to achieve the necessary knowledge and skills in the language domain that will serve in the development of the activities of the profession.

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