



THE ROLE OF LEXICAL INTERFERENCE IN LEARNING LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

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Abstract. This article studies the phenomenon of lexical interference in language learning, exploring it from multiple academic perspectives, including linguistics, sociolinguistics, psychology, and psycholinguistics. Lexical interference, a crucial topic in translation studies, refers to the influence of one language's lexicon on another. This article also analyzes the nature of lexical interference, its underlying causes, and strategies for minimizing its impact during translation. Key concepts such as the violation of language norms, the emergence of new words, and the psychological mechanisms contributing to interference are explored.

Keywords: Lexical interference, translation, bilingualism, psycholinguistics, language norms, language learning, interference causes, linguistic obstacles.

INTRODUCTION

In bilingual or multilingual settings, interference between languages can lead to various distortions or innovations in language use. In translation, achieving an accurate and faithful transfer of meaning between languages is fundamental, but the challenge becomes more complex when one language's lexical structures begin to influence the other. This phenomenon is known as **lexical interference**, and it plays a significant role in the translation process.

A **complete translation** should be as close as possible to the original, maintaining both meaning and form. To achieve this, translators must overcome the barriers of **interference**, which often arise from the interaction of two languages in a bilingual context. The term “interference” originates from the Latin word “interferens,”



meaning "to intervene," and in this context, it refers to the intrusion of one language's elements into another, leading to deviations from standard usage. Interference is not limited to language structure but also extends to **lexical items**, which can distort the intended meaning during translation.

METHODS

Lexical interference refers to the influence of one language's vocabulary on another, leading to shifts in meaning, word choice, or usage. It is commonly seen in bilingual individuals who rely on their dominant language when speaking or translating. This interference can occur both consciously and unconsciously, often resulting in semantic changes or the introduction of new words that may not align with the norms of the target language.

The study of interference spans multiple disciplines:

- **Linguistics** explores the rules and systems governing language interaction.
- **Psycholinguistics** investigates the cognitive and psychological processes behind language interference.
- **Sociolinguistics** examines how social contexts and language communities influence linguistic behavior.

Psychologists suggest that interference arises from **barriers** or **obstacles** created when skills and abilities from one activity (such as language use) are transferred into another. When learning a second language, the interference often stems from the structures and vocabulary of the **first language** (L1) influencing the second language (L2).

Causes of Lexical Interference in Language Learning

Lexical interference can arise from a variety of factors, which can be broadly categorized as follows:



Linguistic Similarities and Differences

When two languages share similarities in structure, phonetics, or vocabulary, learners may be more prone to interference. For example, a bilingual speaker may mistakenly use a word from their first language when the second language lacks a direct equivalent. This phenomenon often leads to **false cognates**-words that look or sound similar in both languages but have different meanings.

Example: The word "magazine" in English may be interpreted as "shop" in some contexts due to interference from other languages.

Lexical Gaps or Deficiencies

Lexical gaps occur when the second language lacks an equivalent word or expression for a concept present in the first language. In such cases, learners might borrow words from the first language, leading to lexical interference. This is common in specialized fields, such as technology, medicine, or business, where new terms are frequently borrowed from dominant languages like English.

Example: In some languages, terms like "skyscraper" are created by adapting foreign words, such as the Russian term "небоскрёбы" (literally, "sky-reaching building").

Psycholinguistic Factors

Bilingual individuals often experience **cognitive interference** as their mental lexicons for both languages overlap. This can result in the incorrect application of words or expressions from one language when speaking or translating into another. These errors can arise due to **mental fatigue**, lack of fluency, or **over-reliance** on one language during speech production.

Cultural and Social Factors

In some cases, lexical interference reflects social and cultural factors. For example, as languages evolve, especially in globalized societies, new terms or concepts are introduced, often resulting in lexical borrowing. This is especially common in regions



where multiple languages are spoken, and speakers are influenced by social trends, media, or the language of power.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis show that lexical interference can be **positive** or **negative**, depending on whether the interaction between the languages leads to constructive or disruptive outcomes:

Positive Lexical Interference (Constructive)

This occurs when elements from one language enrich the vocabulary of another without causing confusion or distortion. An example is the adoption of loanwords that become integrated into the second language's lexicon and are widely understood by native speakers.

Negative Lexical Interference (Destructive)

This type of interference leads to errors or misunderstandings. It happens when a speaker uses a word incorrectly due to cross-linguistic influence. Such errors may occur when the meaning or form of a borrowed word diverges from its original meaning or when it fails to follow the grammatical rules of the target language.

Example: Using the word "*actual*" in English, which means "current" or "real," when trying to convey "*current*" in another language, where a different word may be used.

Strategies to Minimize Lexical Interference in Translation

Translators must be aware of the **interference risk** to ensure the quality of their translations. To reduce the negative impact of lexical interference, several strategies can be employed:

In-depth Knowledge of Both Languages

Mastery of both languages and their cultural contexts allows translators to identify when lexical interference is occurring and take steps to prevent it.



Using Equivalents or Paraphrasing

In cases where a direct translation is impossible, translators can use **equivalents** or **paraphrasing** to convey the meaning more accurately, avoiding word-for-word translation.

Contextual Analysis

Understanding the context in which a word or phrase is used is essential for choosing the correct translation. A context-based approach minimizes the likelihood of unintended interference from the source language.

Lexical Borrowing and Integration

In some cases, lexical interference can be positive, especially in fields like science or technology. Translators should be aware of the potential for borrowing terms and integrating them into the target language's lexicon without causing confusion.

CONCLUSION

Lexical interference remains an inherent challenge in bilingual contexts, particularly in translation. Whether it results from linguistic similarities, cognitive factors, or cultural influences, interference can distort meaning and complicate communication. However, by understanding the nature of interference and employing effective strategies, translators can mitigate its effects and produce more accurate, culturally appropriate translations. The phenomenon of lexical interference also highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of language, as it adapts to meet new communicative needs.

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