

Preface

This volume consists of a selection of papers analysing the phenomenon of language transfer which results from language contact in bilingual and multilingual language acquisition and learning contexts. The major focus of the volume is on the lexical level of language transfer.

In the first instance, it returns to the debate surrounding the definition of language transfer and contact in Part 1 entitled Language Contact and Language Transfer Revisited – where some of the more theoretical aspects of the subject are discussed.

The first part includes a discussion on the ambiguity of the term ‘transfer’ itself, beyond its meaning as a psycholinguistic concept. Then the relations between language contact and language learning are discussed. This part also includes an original view of contrastive analysis and a discussion on the importance of cross-linguistic similarity in foreign language learning.

The volume then seeks to illuminate the theoretical discussion by presenting a corpus of data and its analysis at various levels of lexical competence (e.g. formulaic language, collocations, idioms, etc.), which are the product of research findings in various contexts of language use.

Part 2, entitled Language Contact Observed, consists of papers that are corpus based. They present the transfer processes in discourse organisation, the transfer of genre and the use of collocations by language learners as a result of language contact. The theoretical issues of language contact are also present in connection with a study on drug-related loans in Polish and a semantic equivalence study of the international term ‘discussion’.

Part 3 is Lexical Transfer in Language Processing. It consists of five papers. Two empirical works use translation tasks to study interference as a result of L2 acquisition and interference during lexical search processes in L1, L2 and L3. Two others report early L2 acquisition of lexis, concentrating on code-mixing and the role of instructional input in early L2 lexical development. The main theoretical element of the part is the article on lexical transfer which argues that the traditional concept of cross-lexical transfer still remains valid.

The last part, Lexical Transfer in Fixed Expressions, is the methodological continuation of the previous part. It deals with the acquisition and

processing of L2 idioms, phrasal verbs, fixed phrases, collocations, and figurative expressions. The elicitation techniques used by the authors were translation and comprehension tasks. One study deals with translating L1 idioms into L2. Most of the data shows the variety of techniques employed to translate the fixed expressions, including transfer strategies.

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