

# Learner language and language learning Ch. 18

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Some methods of analysis

# Glossary

- IL = **Interlanguage**
- L1 = **Native** language
- L2 = **Secondary** language
- Orthographic = the **conventional spellings** of a language; Greek roots ortho, meaning correct, and graphos, meaning writing.
- Syntactic = the **rules of constructing writing** eg. sentences etc.
- Lexical = vocabulary, words, or morphemes of a language
- Morphological = The **study of words** and how they are formed. E.g roots, affixes and suffixes

# What is this text?

- Insight into IL studies
- Examples of performance analysis
- Examples of Error correction

# What is this text **NOT**

- A detailed guide on how to correct students essays
- A realistic way of working with **scientifically correct** error classification

# Performance analysis

- Frequency of conjunctions
- Complexity

means that *the beautiful lake* and *the paper I lost on the train* are both complex NPs, whereas *that rhinoceros* is not. Table 15 gives the result for NPs in subject position (excluding embedded NPs like *the train* in the example just quoted).

Table 15: Proportion of learners using complex NPs of different types

Types of complex NP	Proportion of learners	
	Grade 8	Grade 3gs
head + 1 postmodifier	100 %	100 %
1 premodifier + head	67 %	100 %
premodifier + head + postmodifier	50 %	73 %
2 premodifiers + head	25 %	9 %
head + 2 postmodifiers	17 %	36 %
others	8 %	36 %
	(N = 12, total sum of NPs = 436)	(N = 11, total sum of NPs = 700)

Table 14: Frequency of conjunctions in essays written by twelve 1gs learners

	Frequency	
	Total number	%
AND	117	37,38
THAT	39	12,46
BUT	38	12,14
OR	35	11,18
IF	22	7,02
BECAUSE	17	5,43
WHEN	13	4,15
AS	7	2,23
SO	5	1,59
BEACOURS	4	1,27
THAN	4	1,27
BEFORE	2	0,63
EITHER	2	0,63
EXEPT	2	0,63
A	1	0,31
BECAUS	1	0,31
EVENTHOUGH	1	0,31
TO	1	0,31
UNTIL	1	0,31
WHILE	1	0,31
	313	99,67

# Error analysis

- Identification
- Classification into linguistic categories
- Classification according to the causes of the errors

# Identification

- Use the norms of the target language
- Even **native speakers** of a language **may not agree**

# Example (tolerance testing)

One of the learner language sentences was as follows:

It is good if you have been out working in the trade, therefore I will a year in a house.

This was interpreted by three of the British informants as follows:

It is an advantage to have worked in the trade and I therefore intend to work a year in the job.







It is good if you have been out working in a job so I'll do that for a year at home.

It is good if you have been out working in the trade, and therefore I will spend a year with a firm.




It is probable that the Danish learner was in fact contemplating spending a year working as an au pair, that "trade" is a lexical error and the "a year in a house" is a literal, word-for-word translation from Danish.



# Classification into linguistic categories

	lexical error
	grammatical error
	word order
	spelling
	word division
	punctuation

In addition the following  
symbols have been used  
for:

	omission
	excess
	line run over

# Classification into linguistic categories

Text 22<sup>3</sup>

MOSTLY THE POLICE AND THE ARMY -(THE) SOCIETY -

highjackers

WIN THE "GAME", BUT THE HIGH|JACKERS ARE OFTEN →

get

GETTING THE THINGS THEY WANT - FOR EXAMPLE SOME

OF THEIR FRIENDS<sub>0</sub> WHO ARE IN PRISON. SOMETIMES

try

ARE THE POLICE TRYING AN ATTACK AGAINST THE HIGH| →

highjacked aeroplanes

of

JACKED AEROPLANE AND BECAUSE OF THAT A LOT<sub>1</sub> PEOPLE

highjackers

GET KILLED BY HIGH|JACKERS, WHO WANT TO DEFEND

THEMSELVES. IT'S VERY OFTEN A VERY IMPORTANT DE-

CISION TO TAKE FOR SOME "LEADER" WHEN HE HAS TO

impart

CISION TO TAKE FOR SOME "LEADER" WHEN HE HAS TO  
*innocent*  
ORDER AN ATTACK BECAUSE SO MANY INESSENT PEOPLE  
*But*  
CAN GET KILLED. BESIDES IT'S NECESSARY TO TRY TO  
*kills*  
STOP THE VIOLENCE. ANOTHER THING THAT OFTEN MAKES  
*a lot of people bomb attacks*  
A LOT PEOPLE DIE IS BOMB ATTACKS. IT'S A VERY COM-  
*especially Every*  
MON THING IN IRELAND - ESPECIAL IN BELFAST. THE  
*day the news reports on fresh cases of*  
DAILY NEWS TELLS ABOUT NEW BOMBS PLACED IN CARS  
  
AND HOUSES. YESTERDAY A BOMB WAS PLACED IN A RE-  
  
STAURANT AND MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND  
*badly*  
ABOUT 20 WERE HARDLY WOUNDED.

# Classification into linguistic categories

# Classification into linguistic categories

## *Lexical errors:*

- verbs: tells about, make ... die
- adjectives: new
- adverbs: hardly
- conjunctions: besides

## *Grammatical errors:*

- noun phrase: the society, a lot people
- verb phrase: are getting, are trying
- adverbial phrase: especial
- word order: sometimes are the police trying, decision to take for some "leader"

## *Orthographical errors:*

- spelling: aeroplans, inesent
- word division: high jackers, high jacked, bombattacks

## *Punctuation errors:*

- comma before restrictive relative clause: some of their friends, who are in prison.

# Classification on the basis of Cause

<i>Interlanguage</i>	<i>Danish</i>
aeroplans	(svæve)plan
some of their friends, who are in prison	nogle af deres venner, som er i fængsel
tells about	fortæller om
hardly wounded	hårdt såret
the society	samfundet
a lot people	en masse mennesker
sometimes are the police trying	nogle gange har politiet forsøgt at ...
decision to take for some "leader"	beslutning at tage for en "leder"
bombattacks	bombeangreb

These errors amount to less than half of the total number of errors originally identified. The other psycholinguistic process, IL generalization, can account for virtually all the errors in the text, including those having formal translation equivalents in Danish. Some of these are listed in figure 18.

IL performance	IL rule	example
tells about	verb + preposition	talk about
the society	determiner + noun	the army
a lot people	determiner + quantifier + noun	a few people
hardly (wounded)	adjective + ly = adverb	badly wounded

*Fig. 18: Examples of IL generalization*