## 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

	Proportion of learners	
Types of complex NP	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
2.		

## 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:

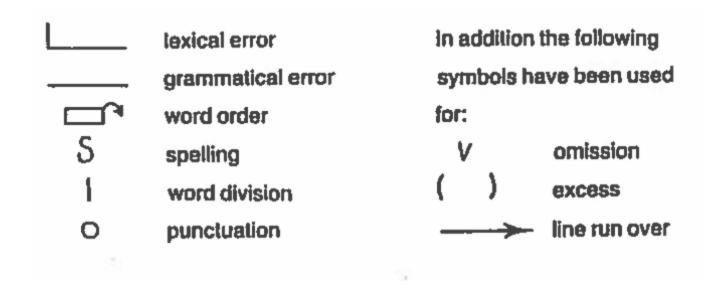
It is an advantage to have worked in the trade and I therefore intend to work a year in the job.

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



## Classification into linguistic categories

Text 22 MOSTLY THE POLICE AND THE ARMY - (THE) SOCIETY -WIN THE "GAME", BUT THE HIGH JACKERS ARE OFTEN get GETTING THE THINGS THEY WANT - FOR EXAMPLE SOME OF THEIR FRIENDS WHO ARE IN PRISON. SOMETIMES THE POLICE TRYING AN ATTACK AGAINST THE HIGH JACKED AEROPLANS AND BECAUSE OF THAT A LOT PEOPLE 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 innocent ORDER AN ATTACK BECAUSE SO MANY INESENT PEOPLE But CAN GET KILLED. BESIDES IT'S NECESSARY TO TRY TO VIOLENCE. ANOTHER THING THAT OFTEN MAKES. 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

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**

Interlanguage
aeroplans
some of their friends, who are in
prison
tells about
hardly wounded
the society
a lot people
sometimes are the police trying

decision to take for some "leader" bombattacks

Danish
(svæve)plan
nogle af deres venner, som er i
fængsel
fortæller om
hårdt såret
samfundet
en masse mennesker
nogle gange har politiet forsøgt
at ...
beslutning at tage for en "leder"
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	verb + preposition 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