Lexical transfer in a longitudinal study

Yevheniia Hasai

Introduction

- Germany has become a linguistically diverse and multilingual country (Meyer 2008)
- the total population three years ago is around 81.7 million, approximately 19.3 million people with a migrant background, 23% of the total population (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018: 34f)
- typically, heritage language speakers are unbalanced bilinguals; they are more proficient in their dominant (majority) language and less proficient in their heritage language (Montrul 2016: 42-44)

Lexical Cross-Linguistic Transfer

- transfer of form and transfer of meaning (Ringbom 1987): lexical (formal) and lexicemic (semantic) transfer (Jarvis 2009)
- this distinction is considered to be vague (Lindqvist 2010: 141)
- both form- and meaning-based transfer may be active at the same time (Bardel 2015: 117)

Meaning-Based Transfer

- semantic extension (Bardel 2015; Lindqvist 2010; Ringbom 1987)
- loan translation (Bardel 2015; Lindqvist 2010; Ringbom 1987)

Form-Based Transfer

- code-switch (Bardel & Lindqvist 2007; Dewaele 1998; Lindqvist 2009)
- hybrids, blends, word construction attempts (Bardel & Lindqvist 2007; Bardel 2015)
- cognate (deceptive cognate/false friend, true cognate, indirect cognate) (Bardel 2015; Hall et al. 2009; Ringbom 2007)

Lexical Transfer Classification Scheme
(from Rahbari, Lorenz & Siemund 2019)

- Semantic transfer: search the cheese and buy as many cheese as you like (from GER viel ‘much/many’, from RUS много ‘much/many’)
- Loan translation: ... and for the drive with the train... (from GER fahren mit ‘drive/ride with’)

Form-based transfer

INTEGRATION
- Yes – orthographic: eier (from GER Eier ‘eggs’)
- Yes – morphological: Tellern (from GER Teller ‘plates’)
- No: Wurst (GER ‘sausage’)

MOTIVATION
- Yes – false cognate: cook (from GER kochen ‘boil’)
- Yes – real cognate: sugar (from GER Zucker, TUR şeker ‘sugar’)
- No: Gabel (GER ‘fork’)

ORTHOGRAPHIC CONVENTION
- Capitalization: Coffee, Train, Table
- Joint spelling: supermarketbag
- Grapheme replacement: χλυ, υτο

MEZ Project


Project coordination: Ingrid Gogolin
Pis: Christoph Gabriel, Michel Knigge, Marion Krauss, Peter Siemund

Learner Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of texts</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>M4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of word tokens</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of lexical transfer tokens</td>
<td>17065</td>
<td>16096</td>
<td>19347</td>
<td>14729</td>
<td>67247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Overview of the study

Research Questions

1) Do the bilingual learners transfer from the majority language (German) and the heritage language (Russian/Turkish) or just from one?

2) Are there differences between the three groups?

3) Are there developmental changes in the use of lexical transfer within a time span of two years?

Results

Study

Language Group | School year 7 | School year 9
---|---|---
GER | 20 | 20
German-Russian | 20 | 20
German-Turkish | 20 | 20
Total | 60 | 60

Table 1: Participants of the study

Discussion & Conclusion

- The bilingual learners use lexical borrowings (predominantly) from the majority language (German):
  - Dominant language transfer
  - Typological similarity
- Use of German in the English language classroom
  - Some cases: German-Russian (24%) or German-Turkish (14%)
  - Only heritage language – less than 1%
- There is a developmental progress in the use of lexical transfer
- No shift from form-based to meaning-based lexical transfer (as suggested by Lindqvist 2010)
- Grade, school type and measuring point are the significant variables

Table 3: Regression Model: grade, school type & measuring point are the significant variables