Lexical Relations: Measuring the Proficiency of the Saudi EFL Learners and Analysing the Obstacles

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As teachers of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we are sometimes flabbergasted by the errors that the learners make in their English scripts. Apparently, there was no pattern to these errors. However, when the researcher observed the frequency of similar error over a few years of her experience as an EFL faculty for Saudi learners, the theory of Lexical Relations appeared to offer an answer. Therein also lies the genesis of the current study. In a positive development, the study did bring to light certain factors that directly played a role in the Saudi EFL learners' English errors. These have been presented in this paper with the hope that with the diagnosis in hand, it will be easier for the EFL teachers to find a solution to the dearth of English proficiency among the Saudi EFL learners.

Keywords: words, meanings, lexis, lexical relations, lexical choice

Introduction

Vocabulary is the collection of words that a person hears and reads throughout his/her life. In modern times, with a changing world order, study of vocabulary has become even more pertinent as the vocabulary of L1 plays a vital role in vocabulary acquisition and use in L2. Indeed it is a challenging area of study and research in ESL (English as a Second Language). McCarthy (1994) stated, "No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in a meaningful way" (p. 8). Sadly, however, vocabulary is taught randomly to the L2 speakers with no rules or restrictions to systematize it. Due to this, a necessity for the organization of lexical units has arisen and is also the subject of the current study.

Linguists found that the only way of classifying lexical units was in its relation to meaning, for there is no doubt that lexical units and meaning are bound together. One word can alter the meaning of two identical utterances, for example, "an *idea* hit me" and "a *man* hit me" are two utterances with the difference of one word that changes the meaning. At the same time, two totally different words can sometimes have the same meaning as in "the man *died*" and "the man *expired*".

This got many philosophers thinking and as a result, the first appearance of a theory that categorizes lexical units came up as the Lexical Field Theory. It propounded the structured-ness of a language, just like the grammar and phonology, and the idea that "the words of a language can be classified into sets which are related to conceptual fields and divide up semantic space or the semantic domain in a certain way" (Lehrer, 1974, p. 15) .

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Words in isolation have no meaning; it is only by the relationship with other words that meaning is derived. This relation between words is referred to by Buran (1975; mentioned in YANG et al., 2001, p. 50) as a "sense relation". Saeed (2003, p. 63) saw it as a "network", stating that a lexicon may have a number of relations with other lexicons and that it is not a matter of listing a word under a certain category. Furthermore, Saeed believed that "lexical relations are more common between lexicons in the same field" (p. 63). To illustrate, he cited the word "peak", "part of a mountain", is a synonym of "summit", "peak" and "part of a hat" and is a synonym of "visor".

The theory is also referred to as the "Lexical Semantic Field" or "Lexical Semantics" because it is based on the idea that it "is possible to identify within the vocabulary of a language particular sets of expression (lexical fields) covering particular areas of meaning (semantic fields)" (Singleton, 2000, pp. 66-67). According to the theory, words are categorized as sets and each word shares an aspect of meaning with the other words within the set (Singleton, 2000, pp. 66-67). For example,

Set 1 *Robin, parrot, pigeon, kingfisher*

They can be categorized under the category Bird. All the words within the bird set are related to each other by being flying animals. Thus, a certain core of meaning interrelates with words within a set. In the set above, the relation between "bird" and the other words of the set is a part—whole relation or what Lehrer (1974, p. 23) called a "class inclusion" and "this relationship is a taxonomic relationship". YANG and XU (2001, p. 50) introduced another type of relationship, a relation where there is no part and whole and where words cannot be classified under a "class inclusion". He gave the example of the following:

Set 2 *quiver, tremble, quake, shake, shiver*

Strictly, no word from the above can be a whole word or what YANG et al. (2001, p. 51) referred to as "cover word". However, YANG et al. considered "shake" the cover word because it is the most basic one. "Shake" is the only word that may be used to explain the rest of the set while the other words do not. Thus, "the most basic word or primitive of a semantic set is chosen as the cover word".

Statement of the Problem

There have been studies with focus on the phonological, morphological, and syntactic difficulties faced by EFL students, but the question of lexis has been a neglected one. Thus, while grammatical errors may be explained by the teachers and understood by the EFL learners, lexical errors that have an even more profound effect on communication need enquiry. This study focuses on lexical relations, by which we mean how meanings are realized in texts through the lexical choices. Appropriateness in this study refers to the positive contribution of a lexical unit to its context. It is the researcher's experience that Saudi EFL learners in third and fourth years of college often make inappropriate word choices resulting in erroneous sentences. This study is an attempt at measuring the extent of EFL students' competence in making appropriate lexical choices. The lexical relations discussed in the study are synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and collocation. Besides, the lexical misuses are, mainly because of intralingual factors, induced either by the incorrect application of rules or by students attempting to create an assumption concerning the target language.

Significance of the Study

(1) The present study is expected to be of value especially for applied linguists, text-book writers, syllabus designers, and teachers since it is going to highlight areas of difficulty in the learning of EFL learners;

(2) The area discussed has been neglected by researchers who have concentrated on grammatical aspects;

(3) The results may draw the attention of EFL teachers to the importance of the lexical aspect in the EFL class and it may also contribute to developing their level of communication;

(4) The importance of this study also lies in its identification of the difficulties in the use of vocabulary by third year and fourth year learners at Qassim University of and the extent to what these difficulties affect the collaborative process of communication;

(5) Stating the possible reasons that cause problems for Saudi EFL learners in the use of appropriate lexical relations.

Following are the objectives of this study:

(1) Investigating and identifying the difficulties Saudi EFL students face in using lexical relations, which results in the production of erroneous utterances and which affects the collaborative process of communication;

(2) Finding out the sources of errors, that is, the reasons behind the correct and incorrect use of appropriate lexical items (as synonyms, antonym, idioms, and collocations) in their written tasks;

(3) Analysing, comparing, and measuring the extent of Saudi EFL students' competence in making appropriate lexical choices within a given context;

(4) Suggesting remedial work for overcoming difficulties encountered in this linguistic area.

Research Questions

In this linguistics area, the test is designed to answer the following research questions:

(1) Are the third year and fourth year students (Qassim University in Saudi Arabia) whose major study is English able to use appropriate lexical items in relation to specific semantic relations within a given context?

(2) How variable is the students' performance when compared to each other or when compared across the four tests items?

(3) What are the sources of the errors? Are they attributed to negative transfer of L1 (interference) or are they L2 specific?

Literature Review

Researchers from 1940s to 1960s conducted contrastive analysis systematically comparing two languages or more to identify points of similarities and differences between specific native languages and target languages. These viewpoints were the tools that gave rise to what is known as the contrastive analysis hypothesis.

Applied linguists such as Lado (1957) among others believed that the difficulties that are faced by the learners of foreign language are mostly caused by the interference of L1 rules in acquiring L2. Further, that by finding the differences between L1 and L2 rules, the learners will be able to overcome the difficulties as then the error patterns may be predicted (Lado, 1957, p. 7).

With time, the Comparative Analysis (CA) hypothesis developed three versions. The first, or the strong version, considered the first language as the main obstacle in second language acquisition (YANG et al., 2001, p. 19). The second or "the weak version", in addition to the above, also stated that only through experiment can this be reached. The third, moderate version of Contrastive Analysis is based on the idea that if two languages are similar, there will not only be negative transfer but also positive transfer and the more alike the languages are, the more positive transfer takes place. Also, if the languages are dissimilar, there has to be a greater amount of learning of L2 rules and principles (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 75).

The shortcomings of CA led to the birth of Error Analysis (EA). Corder (1971) is considered the father of EA. Corder (1971, p. 167) said that it is "a learner's errors that provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using (i.e., has learned)". Brown (2000, p. 219) indicated that the main aim of EA is to observe, analyze, and classify errors to reveal the strategies learners employ while acquiring a second language. Errors committed by learners of foreign languages also provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learned or acquired. Corder (1971) classified the errors as errors of:

(1) Omission;

(2) Addition;

(3) Misinformation; and

(4) Misorderinformation.

In 1972, Corder came out with a more thorough classification in which he classified errors according to the linguistic domain they belong to, i.e., errors of orthography or phonology, morphology or syntax or vocabulary.

Brown (2000) held that errors can arise from certain sources. These are classified as the following four:

(1) Psycholinguistics: This covers the learner's knowledge of L2 and the difficulties which the learner has in using that knowledge. They are of two types, viz.:

    (1a) Transfer: Features of L1 are transferred to L2;

    (1b) Intra-lingual: The errors which occur within L2. This source of errors is divided into:

        (b1) Overgeneralization: to generalize one rule to more than one utterance;

        (b2) Ignorance of rule restrictions: a learner knows a rule but he is unaware of its restrictions;

        (b3) Incomplete application of rules: the learner only knows part of the rule, not all of it;

        (b4) False concept: The learner tries to hypothesize a rule which turns out to be incorrect.

(2) Sociolinguistic: These errors are caused by language use in social contexts;

(3) Epistemic: These errors are caused due to the learner's lack of knowledge of the word;

(4) Discourse: These are errors caused by improper organization of the text.

Second language learners often employ some other processes for language acquisition. We discuss here these processes as they are relevant to an understanding of EA.

(1) *Interlanguages*

This term was first introduced by Selinker (1972) to refer to the language produced by second language learners who are in the process of learning a language. *Interlanguage* is located on the "continuum" between the native language and the target language. Corder (1971) referred to *interlanguage* as "idiosyncratic dialects" and "transitional competence" while Nemser (1971) referred to it as "approximative systems" (as quoted in Brown, 2000, p. 220).

(2) Transfer (interlingual errors)

These errors occur due to the transfer of certain systems from L1 to L2; these systems usually block the progress in L2. "It is those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language" (Brown, 2000, p. 220).

(3) Semantic field theory

Lyons (1977) divided the relationships between the words within a set into two, following Saussure's famous dichotomy. One is called paradigmatic (substitutional) and the other syntagmatic (combinatorial). The former is concerned with synonyms, hyponyms, and antonyms and the latter with grammatical categories such as nouns and adjectives, verbs and adverbs, etc.

As these are found to occur very frequently among the subjects of this study, we discuss these in details.

(1) Substitutional Relations

a. Synonyms: Saeed (2003, p. 65) defined synonyms as "different phonological words which have the same or very similar meaning", for example, "couch" and "sofa". The word "couch" collocates with the word "casting" (casting couch) and "psychiatrist" (psychiatrist's couch), but it does not collocate with the word "bed". On the other hand, the word "sofa", which is a synonym of the word "couch", collocates with the word "bed" (sofa bed) but does not collocate with either "casting" or "psychiatrist";

b. Antonyms: Though antonyms refer to the relation of opposition between the meanings of words, i.e., "women" is the opposite of "man" and "hot" is the opposite of "cold", classifying words as opposites is not that easy; for if a person is not a "male" then they are most likely to be "female", but if the coffee is not "hot", it is not necessary for it to be "cold"; it can simply be "warm". Due to this obstacle, linguists have developed several types of antonyms (Saeed, 2003, p. 66). These are:

Simple antonyms: for example, *dead*/*alive* or *fail*/*pass*;

Gradable antonyms: for example, *short*/*tall*;

Reverse: for example, *you either pull a door or push it*, *you go up the stairs or you come down*;

Converses: for example, *Ahmed is Mohammad's employer* or *Mohammad is Ahmed's employee*.

(2) Combinatorial Relations

a. Idioms: McCarthy (1994, p. 6) defined idioms as a "large number of recurring fixed forms which consist of more than one word yet which are not syntactically the same as compounds". Wouden (1997, p. 8) referred to idioms as "relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the meaning of their component parts". Schmitt (1997, p. 47) stated that idioms can be divided into four types: non-compositional, e.g., "by and large", meaning "generally"; compositional, e.g., "kick the bucket" means "to die"; compositional and transparent, e.g., "break the ice" meaning "to get over an impasse"; quasi-metaphorical, for example, "my job is a jail" to imply severity of a job; "skating on thin ice" as an instance of a dangerous or risky undertaking;

b. Collocation: Collocation is a term that refers to the way in which some words are always used together or to a particular combination of words (Palmer, 1968, pp. 6-7). McCarthy (1995, p. 12) stated that "the relationship of collocation is fundamental in the study of vocabulary" and that there is not enough effort on teaching collocation, though it is "more disruptive in communication than grammatical errors". Carter (1988, p. 34) presented a thorough review of studies related to collocation, for example, Halliday and Sinclair (1966), gave the example of the words "strong" and "powerful"; if we want to distinguish these two words grammatically, it is not possible and their meaning is almost the same. The only differentiation between these two words is that of collocation, e.g., the words "strong" and "powerful" can be distinguished by the words they co-occur with (i.e., strong car and powerful tea). This co-occurrence is referred to by Halliday and Sinclair as "set", which "is a way of linking conceptually words which may not necessarily occur in the same text".

There is another aspect to the study of errors apart from those discussed here: the errors of Appropriateness or Lexical Error. An appropriate utterance is one whose form conveys a certain context. Any word used in a context must fit that context or at least not violate the rules of the situations. Lexical Appropriateness concerns the suitability of a lexical unit in expressing a meaning (Stubbs, 2002, p. 92). If a lexical unit fails to express the intended meaning, then the whole utterance is not adequate, thus, the lexical unit used is considered inappropriate. Linguists say that words should be used in relation to specific contexts of usage and that words carry unconscious information relating to their register, collocation, and frequency

(Singleton, 2000, p. 97). Certain words have lexical relations within a text like that of collocations, idioms, antonyms, and synonyms.

There is no doubt that lexical units play a great role in shaping the quality of second language acquisition but this importance is not well reflected in the size or type of research conducted on lexical errors. Richards (1980, p. 425) claimed that less attention has been paid to vocabulary than to other fields of language "such as grammatical competence, contrastive analysis, reading and writing". YANG et al. (2001, p. 28) related this neglect to Zughoul's (1991) factors. The first is the influence of the audio-lingual methods which are based on the belief that phonology and syntax are more important than lexis in the second language acquisition. A second factor is connected with the result of "teachers' and theorists' reactions against learners' over-exaggeration of vocabulary learning and the teachers' over-emphasis on structure construction" (pp. 45-60). The third factor, according to Zughoul (as mentioned in YANG et al., 2001, p. 29), is that vocabulary has only been used as a tool to facilitate the study of syntactic and phonological structural topics.

Methodology of the Current Study

This is a "quantitative" study based upon the use of multiple choice questions to collect data. McDonalds (2001, p. 83) stated that "multiple choice items are adaptable to all types of subject matters; their scoring is accurate and efficient".

Fifty-two third and fourth year Iraqi EFL students, all majoring in English at the Department of English Language and Literature in Baghdad were administered a four part English test to be completed in 45 minutes. Males and females were included in equal numbers and all the respondents fell in the age bracket of 19 to 20 years. To be in line with the condition of homogeneity of sample, students who failed at any stage will be excluded from the population.

The test was standardized to match other EFL tests conducted by international agencies. The test compromised 20 items, five each for synonyms, antonyms, collocations, and idioms. The aim of the test was to measure the respondents' ability to produce correct utterances using appropriate lexical forms. Following Corder's version of Error Analysis, an informal interview was also carried out after the test, inquiring the reason behind the students' choices.

Here is a note on the tests:

(1) Test of synonym choice: Consisted of five multiple choice synonymy questions in the form of multiple choice questions. The options include one right answer and three distractors that are all plausible in the sense that they all share some semantic property related to the correct answer, but only one shares the notion of contextual relevance along with the identicalness or close similarity of meaning. For example, in the item:

The <u>stem</u> of the bean plant was too thick to cut.

a. column   b. stalk   c. bark   d. trunk

(2) Test of antonym choice: Consisted of five multiple choice items testing students' knowledge and choice of antonyms. The distracters of the tests are all opposites, but only the correct answer fits as an antonymous substitution in the given context. For example:

Half these factories are <u>idle</u>.

a. active   b. lazy   c. fast   d. slow

(3) Test of idiomatic uses: In this test comprising five questions, the students were asked to choose out of the four options the one idiom that completes the sentence appropriately. The three distracters were possessed

words that may be linked to the context of the given utterances if idioms are looked upon by the students as individual words rather than the whole units. The distracters varied from non-compositional to compositional idioms to determine the method EFL students used to deal with idioms. For example:

He said he didn't want to have job, and sit in an office all day.

a. green belt   b. a pink slip   c. a white collar   d. a hot

(4) Test of collocation: Consisted of five multiple choice items testing students' knowledge of collocation. The students will be asked to choose out of four options the one word that co-occurs with other words within a given context. The distracters were mostly closely related to the correct answer: They are either synonyms, near synonyms, or words that connote with the correct answer, yet they do not form an appropriate collocation. For example:

Many _____ were raised in the meeting.

a. difficulties   b. ideas   c. questions   d. thoughts

Data Analysis

We now present an item wise analysis of the tests. The results are coded to denote the section along with the question number:

(1) For Question 1 of Synonym: S1 and so on;

(2) For Question 1 of Antonym: A1 and so on;

(3) For Question 1 of Idiom: I1 and so on;

(4) For Question 1 of Collocation: C1 and so on.

The correct option has been highlighted.

Table 1

Mean Score for Right Responses

	Question	a	b	c	d	% of correct response	Section mean score for right responses
S1	The stem of the bean plant was too thick to cut.	Column	**Stalk**	Bark	Trunk		
Responses	N=52	20	5	20	7	9.6%	
S2	Though born rich, the old man died in penury.	Slavery	Bankruptcy	**Poverty**	Tatters		
Responses	N=52	10	15	21	6	40.3%	
S3	Many modern diseases are a gift of the environment	Accidents	Illusions	Omen	**Illnesses**		
Responses	N=52	10	2	10	30	57.6%	
S4	The new structure obstructs our view of the lake.	Kills	bothers	Establishes	**Blocks**		
Responses	N=52	25	5	10	12	23%	
S5	Just when everyone lost hope, the sick man dramatically rose from his bed.	Disastrously	Radically	Suddenly	**Unexpectedly**		
Responses	N=52	16	0	14	22	42.3%	18
A1	Half these factories are idle.	**Active**	Lazy	Fast	Slow		
Responses	N=52	23	13	3	13	44.2%	
A2	Ever since suffering losses, he has become cautious in his business.	Carefree	**callous**	careful	Cheerful		
Responses	N=52	13	12	20	7	23%	

(table 1 continued)

	Question	a	b	c	d	% of correct response	Section mean score for right responses
A3	They gifted him a <u>coarse</u> cloth for his uniform.	**Fine**	Homemade	printed	Stiched		
Responses	N=52	22	2	23	5	42.3%	
A4	The boys turned <u>pale</u> on seeing the headmaster.	**Rosy**	black	cheeky	yellow		
Responses	N=52	16	9	20	7	30.7%	
A5	The new amusement park has a <u>fabulous</u> ride as an added attraction.	**Silly**	famous	cheap	Dangerous		
Responses	N=52	6	30	12	4	11.5%	13.8
I1	He said he didn't want to have _____ job, and sit in an office all day.	green belt	a pink slip	**a white collar**	a hot		
Responses	N=52	2	13	14	23	26.9%	
I2	While all her cousins sang well, Elisa was the only _____.	Greyhound	wolf	wild cat	**black sheep**		
Responses	N=52	3	12	30	7	13.4%	
I3	The Manager will not raise his voice as he has many _____ in his cupboard.	Files	secrets	**skeletons**	bugs		
Responses	N=52	35	10	3	4	5.7%	
I4	My new expensive MG car makes everyone jealous but it is a _____ for me!	Treasure	charmed horse	Rhinoceros	**white elephant**		
Responses	N=52	30	13	3	6	11.5%	
I5	The new restaurant has a long menu on offer, but it is always _____.	Joneses' choice	**Hobson's choice**	Jackson's choice	Ericson's choice		
Responses	N=52	4	7	19	22	13.4%	7.4
C1	Many _____ were raised in the meeting.	difficulties	ideas	**questions**	thoughts		
Responses	N=52	15	19	11	7	21.1%	
C2	As soon as the news of hurricane _____, the city emptied of people.	Came	arrived	**Broke**	heard		
Responses	N=52	26	14	2	10	3.8%	
C3	I was requested by the interviewers to _____ a seat before the session began.	**Take**	give	Offer	accept		
Responses	N=52	10	30	12	0	21.1%	
C4	The customer tried to reach the courier company for the missing parcel, but they simply _____.	were quiet	kept quiet	**sat quiet**	went quiet		
Responses	N=52	22	3	23	4	44.2%	
C5	Though the function started late, our event was _____ on time.	**Bang**	absolutely	punctually	really		
Responses	N=52	2	25	11	14	3.8%	9.8

Interpretation of Data

We chose to focus on the most opted for response and interview the respondents on the reason for their choice.

Twenty respondents each opted for "column" or "bark" in place of "stalk" to S1. They all reported that their decision was influenced by L1.

Twenty one respondents chose the right option "penury" for S2 and reported having exposure to the word earlier in their class.

Thirty respondents chose the right option "illnesses" for S3 as they knew the word from prior information of L2.

For S4, twenty five respondents chose the wrong option "kills" owing to L1 influence.

Twenty two respondents chose the correct option for S5 by choosing "unexpectedly" and reported that they knew the word from their EFL class where "drama" was equated to "unexpectedness" by the teacher.

The Mean Score of Right Answers for the Synonyms Section Came to 18

A1 was answered correctly by 23 respondents by choosing "active" as the answer. They arrived at the answer by deduction, as they knew the meaning of the other three options offered.

Twenty respondents answered A2 incorrectly by choosing the synonym "careful" instead of the antonym "callous" which was an unknown word to them.

A3 was answered incorrectly by a majority at 23 with "printed" being the choice. The reason for the choice was L1 interference.

Associative meaning "cheek(y)" was chosen as the answer for A4 by 20 respondents.

A5 was the question most incorrectly answered in the section on Antonyms with 30 respondents opting for the wrong answer "famous" as it seemed closest to the word to be replaced in the question.

The Mean Score of Right Answers for the Antonyms Section Was Lesser Than the Synonyms Section at 13.8

Twenty three respondents opted for the wrong option "a hot" while answering, a very high number I1. The reason for this selection was ignorance of the L2 options cited and also, familiarity only with "cat" as an animal.

Similarly, to I2 of 30 respondents chose the wrong answer "wild cat". The reason for choosing this was cited as L1 interference.

For I3, instead of choosing the connotative meaning "skeletons", as many as 35 respondents went with the logical answer "files". The respondents cited ignorance of the idiom as the reason for the choice. This was also the most incorrectly answered question in the section on Idioms.

I4 was wrongly answered as "treasure" by 30 respondents and the reason for this choice was cited as transference of knowledge from L1.

"Ericson's Choice" was chosen as the answer by 32 respondents in response to I5 and was closely followed at 19 by another wrong option, "Jackson's Choice". For both the respondents reported that they have limited knowledge of L2.

The mean score of right answers for the Idioms section was lesser than the previous two sections at 7.4. This was one of the two sections most poorly scored by the respondents. While answering C1, instead of the

collecative option "questions", 19 respondents opted for "ideas" and on enquiry reported that they were ignorant of the right usage.

Similarly, 26 respondents went with the obvious and not collocative option of "came" instead of "broke", again citing ignorance and limited knowledge of L2 as the reason for the choice.

C3 was the most wrongly answered in the section with as many as 30 respondents opting for "give" in place of the right choice "take" again due to ignorance of the collocative use.

C4 had an almost equal number going for the right answer "sat quiet" at 23 and "were quiet" at 22. However, the respondents were equally ignorant of the collocation and randomly chose an option that "appeared" right.

To C5, 25 respondents chose the wrong option "absolutely" in place of the collocative "bang" and reported that they were not aware of such a usage.

The mean score of right answers for the Collocations section showed a slight improvement over Idioms but was still low at an alarming 9.8. Thus, we conclude that Idiomatic and Collocative usage were the two most severely sections of the test.

We present graphically the reasons cited for the highest frequencies of the options chosen.
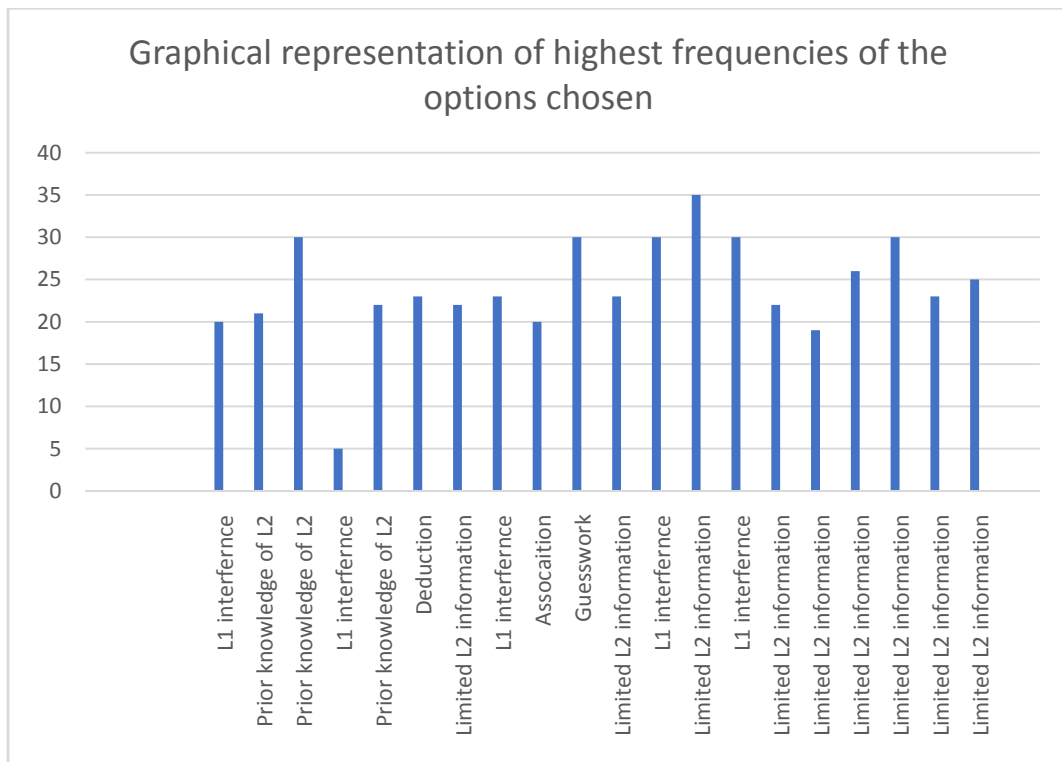

Figure 1. Graphical representation of highest frequencies of the options chosen.

Conclusion

Please look at the depiction below:

Pie chart depicting at a glance the share of each factor governing choice of options in the English Test.
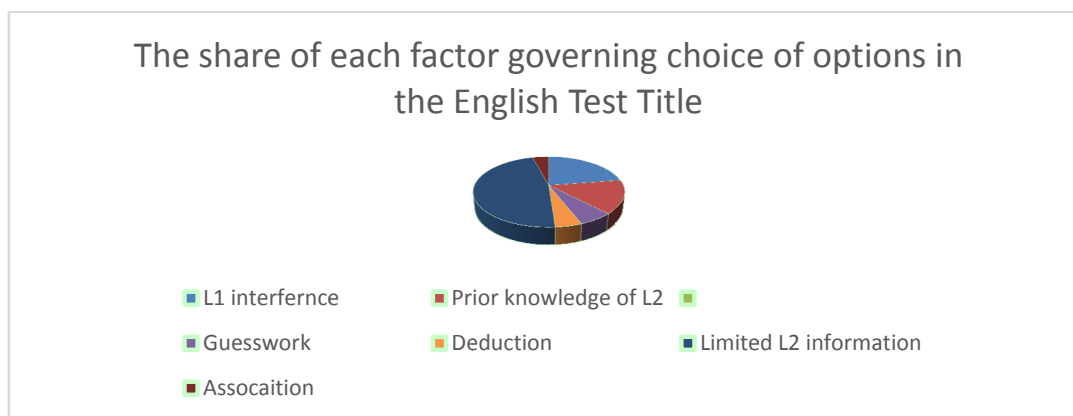

Figure 2. The share of each factor governing choice of options in the English test title.

The representation clearly indicates that Limited L2 Information at 47% and L1 Interference at 23% are the two governing factors that take the lion's share in the choices made by the learners. In decreasing order, these are followed by Prior Knowledge of L2 at 15%, Guesswork at 6%, Deduction at 5%, and Association at 4%. Based on these conclusive findings, the researcher now puts forward the recommendations.

Recommendations

(1) Second or foreign language acquisition being as challenging as it is, trained and qualified "specialists" who clearly demonstrate a high competence need be employed;

(2) Burns and Richard (2009) defined second language teacher professionalism as "a selectively combined set of disciplinary-based knowledge, ethical principles, and time-and place-specific work practices" (p. 112). We need to evaluate out faculty on this touchstone;

(3) The faculty must be proficient in the target language and for this, should be mandated to appear for international English language proficiency tests and reproduce high scores;

(4) The current translation approach to EFL teaching must be dropped completely and learners are encouraged to learn English in an all-inclusive environment that also familiarizes them with the cultural connotations of the language rather than train them in a "foreign language";

(5) Burns and Richards (2009, p. 127) said that research has shown that teachers need more than mere academic knowledge of the language by integrating a larger number of relevant factors to help the learners be proficient in the target language;

(6) The departments of EFL need to be sensitive to the fact that learners will vary in the approach they adopt for L2 acquisition. A variety of strategies should be employed within the ambit of not-using-grammar-translation for better language acquisition;

(7) Interlanguage development may be allowed as an initial stage in English acquisition;

(8) Teachers should be aware that all L2 learners are liable to make errors and errors are also a step towards language acquisition. Some of these errors, however, may be traced to L1 while others may be universal. Hence, the learners need not be treated as pariahs when they make errors.

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