LANGUAGE TRANSFER IN NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AT HUE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: Based on the common reality of transferring word by word from Vietnamese to English of many B1 students in speaking skills, this research was carried out to analyze the cases of language transfer in speaking performance of B1 students in more detail and grouped them into different categories. This research also aimed to explore their perceptions of language transfer. The participants of this research were 83 non-English major students of B1 level at Hue University. The two main research instruments were language transfer case analysis and interviews. The findings showed that more than two-third of the interviewees transferred negatively from L1 to L2 in their speaking performance, which proved that this is a common phenomenon among B1 students. Much more than that, there were significant cases of language transfer detected in students' speaking performances which were categorized into 3 main linguistic aspects namely Syntax, Lexis and Discourse. Among these mentioned factors, Syntax was found the most problematic. "Preposition" and "to be" were the two subcategories that witnessed the highest frequency of language transfer cases. The analysis of the detected language transfer cases demonstrated differences in many aspects between English and Vietnamese. Through the interview, it could be found that students were unaware of their negative transfer, there are 5 reasons why they transferred and they acknowledged both the benefits and drawbacks of language transfer. And finally, some pedagogical implications were recommended to enhance the quality of speaking performance.

Keywords. Language transfer, non-English major students, speaking performance

1. Introduction

In the study of Ngo (2001), he pointed out the differences and contrasts between Vietnamese and English languages in many linguistic aspects, which led to difficulties that Vietnamese students have to encounter while learning English. It is the dissimilarities in the use of grammar and vocabulary between the two languages that have triggered the phenomenon of

language transfer among Vietnamese students in two productive skills namely writing skills and speaking skills. For example, Ngo (2001) indicated that Vietnamese has a number of tense markers (đã, đang, sẽ) unlike English in which each verb in a sentence must have a tense form (past, present or future). In Vietnamese, a tense marker is usually left out if there is a time expression in a sentence or if the tense is clear in the context. In those cases, a sentence with a tense marker may sound unnatural and should be omitted. This difference in verb tense can make a Vietnamese student convey the meaning of the sentence: "Hôm qua, tôi đi đến trường bằng xe đạp" by saying "Yesterday, I go to school by bicycle" instead of "Yesterday, I went to school by bicycle". Whereas this grammatically incorrect English sentence is still understandable by the native speakers, there are other forms of transferring from Vietnamese that the hearers can find it impossible to interpret. For instance, to convey the meaning of the sentence: "Tôi thích chụp ảnh bởi vì tôi ăn ảnh", a student might say: "I like taking photos because I eat photos" instead of "I like taking photos because I'm photogenic". If the foreigners listen to that utterance, they truly cannot figure out what that student says. They might find this saying ridiculous and bizarre, which causes hindrance or interruption in the communication process. The examples mentioned above are only several typical ones among thousands of cases of transferring from Vietnamese into English among students. Therefore, as an English teacher in charge of non-English major students from many member universities of Hue University, I realize the urgency and importance to carry out this research on language transfer to contribute to improving the speaking competence for students in general and help students realize the reality as well as emphasize the importance of using English in speaking skills properly in particular. Another decisive factor prompting us to do this research is that most of the studies on language transfer in Vietnam and in the world focus on writing and translation skills, while few of them emphasize speaking skills. As a result, I hope that my research will bring some useful information and results for others to further their studies on this aspect.

2. Literature review

2.1 Language transfer

2.1.1 Definition of language transfer

Over the past few years, language transfer has also received much attention and interest and has been intensively defined by numerous researchers. Faerch and Kasper (1987) argued that transfer was a mental and communicative process through which L2 learners develop their interlanguage skills by activating and using their previous linguistic knowledge. Odlin (1989) defined language transfer in his book: "Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired". Odlin further explained that the influence arose from a learner's conscious or unconscious judgment that something in the native language and

220

something in the target language were similar. Gass and Selinker (1994) also confirmed that "it is a term that was used extensively in the first half of the century and refers to the psychological process whereby prior learning is carried over into a new learning situation". Transfer is defined by Mayer and Wittrock (1996) as "the effect of knowledge that was learned in a previous situation (task A) on learning or performance in a new situation (task B)" (p. 48). Furthermore, Kasper (1996) identified the concept of transfer in second language acquisition by comparing the differences and similarities between the native and the foreign language. This knowledge can then be used to determine whether transfer has a negative or positive influence.

The aforementioned definitions of language transfer triggered new ones afterwards. Aside from the emphasis on the first language effect on second language learning, another definition focuses on the interactions between two languages. Chen (2006) asserted that the word transfer implies more than merely the impacts of the L1 on the L2, the L2 also impacts the L1. He also expanded the concepts of transfer. It is worth noting that academics in the field of SLA are continually updating the concept of transfer.

Among those definitions, this study adopted Kasper's (1996) definition as the operational definition, as it provides a clear conceptualization of transfer in second language acquisition through a comparative analysis of similarities and differences between the native language and the target language. His definition aligned well with the objectives of this study, particularly concerning the aspects of transfer that this research seeks to explore.

2.1.2 Linguistic aspects related to language transfer

For years, SLA researchers have been interested in transfer error, which occurs in all language components. Transfer errors have been verified in a range of language components, including phonology, syntax, lexis, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse (Sorace, 2003; White et al., 2009). This study only focuses on transfer errors in three components among the five of them namely lexical transfer, syntactic transfer and discourse transfer. These three aspects will be clarified in the next sub-sections based on the perceptions of previous researchers as well as some specific examples.

2.1.2.1 Lexical Transfer

Lexical transfer, regarded as the impact of lexical knowledge in one language on the use of a word in another, has received a lot of attention in SLA (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). There are two major kinds of lexical transfer, including transfer of form and transfer of meaning (De Angelis & Selinker, 2001). Transfer of form can be seen when L1 and L2 have similar word forms; the L2 learner tends to employ L1 words to replace L2 words. A lexical transfer error emerges when a word form in L1 is identical or very close to a word form in L2, but the meanings are different (Ringbom, 1987). Transfer of meanings, on the other hand, is related to loan translations or calques

which means a word or phrase borrowed from another language by literal, word-by-word. It is used by language learners from different language backgrounds to compensate for gaps in their target language. The act of creating loan translations or calques take place when compound words, idioms, and lexical collocations are translated or transferred word-by-word from L1 into L2. (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). For instance, to say "take medicine" (uống thuốc), Vietnamese students tend to transfer this collocation word by word into English and create a wrong phrase "drink medicine". "Expensive price" is another example of the lexical transfer since in Vietnamese people often say "giá đắt" but in English it has to be "high price". Therefore, students need to be aware of proper English collocations like these ones to avoid making errors relating to lexical transfer of meaning.

Because of the fact that there is almost no similarity between Vietnamese and English lexical form, the errors resulting from incorrect transfer of form are extremely rare, whereas the incorrect transfer of meaning happens more frequently between English and Vietnamese. Many words which can be used together in Vietnamese but cannot be combined in English. Lexical transfer is significantly less common in writing than it is in spoken activities, and most research admit this due to the low numbers of lexical transfer cases discovered in their investigations (Celaya & Naves, 2009). Writing a composition is not a spontaneous activity, and learners have ample time to organize their writing, consider the composition's content and form, recall L2 vocabulary from their memory, and edit their work (Gabrys-Barker, 2006).

2.1.2.2 Syntactic Transfer

Another linguistic aspect of transfer is concerned about syntax. Syntax refers to the grammatical structure which constitutes a sentence. Syntactic transfer, based on this concept, is the impact of L1 at the sentential level of an L2 sentence (Odlin, 1989). An investigation by Gass (1997) discovered that word arrangement in L2 was impacted by the differences of the word arrangement in L1. Helms-Park (2003) compared how Vietnamese ESL learners employ serial verb formations in English with Hindi-Urdu ESL learners. Vietnamese, as a language with roots that are not related to English, has structures which are not present in English. She supposed that Vietnamese ESL learners were more likely to use verb serialization although it was not an accepted form in English.

In Vietnamese, for example, a couple of verbs that describe the simultaneous action can be applied in one serial verb construction:

Tôi ném cốc vỡ

I throw glass break

"I threw the glass and it broke."

(Mikami 1981: 115 in Helms-Park 2003: 216)

In the classes that we have taught until now, we have witnessed many cases related to

222

syntactic transfer and these are two cases among them:

- Statement 1:

English: In my country have beach, seafood and have many food delicious

Vietnamese: Ở đất nước tôi có biển, hải sản và có nhiều thức ăn ngon

(Correct sentence: My country has beaches, seafoods and a lot of delicious foods)

- Statement 2:

English: Healthy help me live good than

Vietnamese: Khoẻ mạnh giúp tôi sống tốt hơn

(Correct sentence: Being healthy helps me live better)

Syntactic transfer error is more dominant among Vietnamese learners of English compared to lexical transfer. The study results by Pham (2016) related to negative mother tongue language transfer into writing indicated that syntactic errors produced by Vietnamese English learners were very common and had been shown in the aspects such as verb tenses, to be, preposition, subject – verb agreement, articles, voice, wrong word order, infinitive and gerund, and punctuation.

2.1.2.3 Discourse Transfer

The last linguistic aspect of transfer is discourse transfer, which is the utilization of some of the learner's L2 discourse patterns in a similar way that they are used in the learner's L1 (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Kasper (1992) assumed that discourse transfer was a cognitive activity in which learners used some discourse patterns in their L2 in the identical way they are used in their L1 and it concentrated on the learner's cognitive participation in choosing and creating L1-based discourse patterns in L2 contexts. The cognitive perspective stresses the connection between L2 input, learners' internal processing, and learners' output to determine the impacts of L1 knowledge on L2 acquisition. "Discourse transfer is a rule-governed cognitive process," according to Bartelt (1992, p. 113), in which the mother language's known rules are utilized as hypotheses in acquiring the L2. For example, in Vietnamese, there will be no problem if a student uses the same subject or noun in two adjacent clauses. Therefore, a student may say: "Some people think that playing video games is beneficial, while other people believe that it is harmful". However, there are many ways to avoid repetition in different situations in English. And in this case, students can replace "other people" by only "others" and it would be correct in terms of discourse in English.

3. Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are employed in this investigation which help to enhance the precision, the objectivity and the reliability of the final results.

3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study are 83 non-English major students attending the English courses at University of Foreign Languages, Hue University. They are from different member universities of Hue University and major in different fields. For this reason, most of them have not known one another before. They are both males and females in the age range of 18 to 22. They are from 2 classes of B1 level namely English B1 - Group 21 and English B1 - Group 42. The first group includes 40 students and the second one consists of 43 students. Their English proficiency is also mixed. Some of them are of high proficiency while others are of low proficiency. Their names are not revealed to ensure the confidentiality of personal information. The speaking performance of 83 students in the end-of-term speaking test are recorded to analyze the cases of language transfer and 8 students among 83 students are randomly chosen to participate in the interviews.

3.2 Research instruments

3.2.1 Language transfer cases detection

3.2.1.1 Data collection

83 non-English major students at Hue University from 2 classes of B1 level of the researcher were required to take the end-of-term speaking test in the 11th week of the course. There were totally 5 sets of questions distributed by the Office for Testing and Quality Insurance of University of Foreign Languages, Hue University in the testing week. Normally, students had to take the speaking test in their class. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all students had to enter an online meeting to take the test on Google Meet website. To be more specific, the researcher first created a meeting and invited the students one by one to enter the room. This way can ensure that others cannot hear the questions or answers in the meeting and the examinee's psychology is not affected. Thus, they can answer the questions more confidently in front of the examiner. Next, the researcher presented a random number wheel and spun the wheel to select one set of questions out of five. Subsequently, the researcher read aloud the questions and students had to answer 4 short questions during 2 - 3 minutes in Part 1 and present a topic in 3 - 4 minutes in Part 2. There was no preparation time in Part 1, students had to answer immediately, whereas students could prepare in 1 minute in Part 2 by writing down some key points on their pieces of paper. While students were giving their answers, the researcher used an assessment sheet to mark each student. All of the students' performances were recorded while they were speaking. Because of the complex procedures of taking the test

online, the whole session lasted about 5 - 7 hours.

3.2.1.2 Data analysis

After the sessions, Google Meet automatically sent the two recordings of the two researched classes through email. As a result, the researchers were able to could watch and listen to the speaking performances many times. 83 speaking performances of 83 students in 2 B1 level classes were listened carefully to detect possible occurrences of language transfer. Next, all of those occurrences were compared with Vietnamese grammar to determine whether they were caused by the transfer from Vietnamese or not. If those occurrences are correlated with the correct use of grammar and vocabulary in Vietnamese, they are classified into language transfer phenomenon and then would be transcribed into written form. After that, we calculated the percentage of students who produced utterances based on language transfer in each class. In the subsequent stage, we grouped them into different categories of language transfer in English such as word choice, word order, articles, prepositions, infinitive, gerund, pronoun, etc. The frequency of occurrences in each category was counted and arranged from the least to the most frequent group. Various types of tables were employed to facilitate the processes of data analysis and categorization. Various types of tables were employed to facilitate the processes of data analysis and categorization.

3.2.2 Interview

Among the researched non-English major students that showed the cases of language transfer, 6 of them were randomly chosen to answer three open-ended questions. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, the researcher had to conduct the interview through Google Meet. The interviews were conducted several weeks after the speaking end-of-term test date. The participants were asked questions in Vietnamese. By this way, the participants could easily express their ideas in full meaning and the researcher could obtain in-depth information. The interview was recorded and the data were translated into English to analyze. Some remarkable answers were cited for discussions. The data were used to collect more information with the purpose of enhancing the validity and reliability of the research.

4.   Findings and discussion

4.1   Findings

4.1.1   Language transfer in linguistic category classification

Table 4.1 Language transfer in linguistic category classification

	Subcategory	Frequency (times)	Percentage
1.	Preposition	27	17.5%
2.	To be	23	14.5%
3.	Article	17	10.7%
4.	Tense	15	9.5%
5.	Word order	12	7.6%
6.	Gerund	10	6.3%
7.	Word choice	7	4.4%
8.	Subject-Verb agreement	7	4.4%
9.	Plural form of noun	7	4.4%
10.	Infinitive	6	3.8%
11.	Declarative clause formation	6	3.8%
12.	Word class	5	3.2%
13.	Quantifier	4	2.5%
14.	Possessive adjective	4	2.5%
15.	Discourse	3	1.9%
16.	Reflexive pronoun	1	0.6%
17.	Comparative	1	0.6%
18.	Superlative	1	0.6%
19.	Demonstrative	1	0.6%
20.	Adjective	1	0.6%
		N= 158 times	**100%**

From Table 4.1, it is evident that there were total 158 times in which language transfer cases were spotted. Surprisingly, up to 20 related aspects of English were found from those cases, which was more than we had anticipated. This number demonstrated that B1 students wanted to convey their thoughts with a wide range of English linguistic aspects but they could not do it in a correct way. The subcategories were arranged from the most frequent to the least

frequent. By this way, B1 students can realize which ones were the most problematic and challenging for them to pay attention to when speaking and B1 teachers can know the biggest weaknesses of students to make suitable changes in teaching and assessing speaking skills. Looking at Table 1 in detail, it could be seen that students made the most mistakes in using *Preposition*. They showed up to 27 times of negative transfer in this subcategory, which was much higher than the remaining ones. The second most problematic subcategory was *To be*. There were up to 23 times that students transferred negatively an utterance from L1 to L2 without using proper forms of To be. Therefore, these are two linguistic aspects that B1 students need to focus the most to improve the quality of their English performance. Besides, the top two subcategories in this Table partly proved that English and Vietnamese had the most differences in the use of prepositions and *To be*. The remaining subcategories had under 20 times of language transfer and they also needed to receive great attention from B1 teachers and students.

4.1.1 Language transfer cases related to syntax

Among the listed cases of language transfer, the ones belong to the category of syntax are extremely big compared to the others. The subcategories of syntax are analyzed and discussed one by one in this section.

4.1.1.1 Preposition

Negative language transfer in B1 students speaking performances is largely reflected through the utilization of preposition. It means that students transferred the Vietnamese prepositions into English ones in an incorrect way due to the differences between the two languages' preposition systems.

4.1.1.1.1 Wrong preposition

 In Vietnamese, the word "ở" or "vào" is used in many phrases to introduce the places or time that speakers want to refer. However, in English, prepositions are much more complicated, different prepositions like "in", "on", "at" are used to indicate different types of place or different times. Therefore, students often have trouble remembering which one is suitable in their case and they tend to use "in" for most cases. For example, students said "in the beach" in stead of "at the beach", "in the weekend" instead of "at/on the weekend".

Besides, English is very complex when it comes to the fact that a preposition have to go with a certain adjective. Therefore, students find it challenging to memorize or learn by heart all of them. One case detected in two B1 classes revealed that student said "I feel very tired with weather", which was similar to the Vietnamese utterance "Tôi cảm thấy mệt mỏi với thời tiết". Instead, that student should have said: "I feel tired of the weather".

4.1.1.1.2 Redundant preposition

Because Vietnamese people often say "ở ngoài trời", B1 students tended to transfer this phrase into "in outdoor" without realizing that "in" is not needed in this case. Similarly, students said "I live in there" based on their Vietnamese utterance "Tôi sống ở đó" but in this case, "there" refers to her hometown; therefore, "in" is redundant and "I live there" is enough. Actually, "in there" is also used in English but with a different meaning from this one. For example, the sentence "*I'm not going in there, it's freezing!*" means someone does not want to go inside a covered place, not a hometown like in the detected case.

The pattern of the word "affect" goes with an object without needing any preposition. Nonetheless, in Vietnamese, people have a tendency to say "Nó ảnh hưởng đến sức khoẻ của con người" with the preposition "đến" before mentioning the affected subject. As a result, a student expressed this sentence by saying that "It affects to the health of people". In this case, adding 'to' is unacceptable and it is considered to be grammatically wrong.

In English, the use of an adverbial phrase as the subject of a sentence is grammatically incorrect; however, this structure is commonly accepted and frequently used in Vietnamese. Consequently, when learning English, Vietnamese students think that this aspect in their mother tongue is applicable in English and they often create a wrong sentence structure without realizing that each language possesses a different way of forming a sentence. To illustrate, a B1 student said "In my country have beach, seafood" which is equivalent to "Ở đất nước tôi có biển, hải sản" which should be changed into "My country has beaches and seafoods".

4.1.1.1.3 Lacking preposition

In addition to using wrong preposition or adding unnecessary preposition, some students also omit important prepositions because they do not need them in Vietnamese utterances. For example, students said "listen music" (nghe nhạc) instead of "listening to music" or travelling to many places (đi du lịch nhiều nơi) instead of "travelling to many places".

In addition, students do not have the habit of using "for" before a period of time because of their habit in Vietnamese. Most of them often refer "for" as "cho" in Vietnamese. However, "for" has many other meanings in English and in this case, "for" means "trong" to signal the present perfect tense. Many students omitted "for" when it was obligatory in these situations to express the duration.

Table 4.1.2.1.3 Lacking preposition

Students' English utterances	Vietnamese versions	Teacher's suggested versions
listen music	nghe nhạc	listen to music
because two reasons	bởi vì 2 lý do	for two reasons
travelling many places	đi du lịch nhiều nơi	travelling to many places
I drink 2 litres water	tôi uống 2 lít nước	I drink 2 litres of water
I usually search information	tôi thường tìm kiếm thông tin	I usually search for information
.. and free time I go swimming	... và thời gian rảnh tôi đi bơi	... and in my free time, I go swimming
I learn English 6 years	Tôi học tiếng Anh 6 năm	I have learnt English for 6 years
I learn English about 10 years	Tôi học tiếng Anh khoảng 10 năm	I have learnt English for about 10 years
I live in there about 10 years	Tôi sống ở đó khoảng 10 năm	I have lived there for about 10 years
I live in Quang Binh 20 years	Tôi sống ở Quảng Bình 20 năm	I have lived in Quang Binh for 20 years
We stay here about a week	Chúng tôi ở đây khoảng một tuần	We have stayed here for about a week

4.1.2.1 To be

In fact, many Vietnamese students assume that "to be" only means "là". Consequently, they tend to use "to be" to add a noun or noun phrase to express names, jobs, things, definitions like in Vietnamese but they forget other functions of this word in a sentence. The same thing happened in two researched B1 classes. Specifically, many students omitted "to be" when it was needed to form sentences with adjectives, adjective phrases or prepositional phrases. This is understandable because there is no word like "to be" in a Vietnamese utterance to precede an adjective, an adjective phrase or a prepositional phrase. Therefore, those utterances sound unreasonable because they lack a very crucial component of a sentence – the main verb.

229

4.1.2.1.1 To be with adjectives or adjective phrases

Among 22 cases without "to be", there are up to 15 cases that "to be" needs placing before adjectives or adjective phrases, significantly more than the cases related to prepositional phrases. Students created sentences with a wide range of adjectives like *interesting, happy, funny, friendly, famous, logic, warm, hot, good, healthy*; or adjective phrases such as *very beautiful, really important, very friendly and kind, very beautiful and peaceful, very great, so pretty* to talk about many topics given by the teacher but the proper forms of "to be" like "be", "being", "is", "are" cannot be found.

Table 4.1.2.2.1 To be with adjectives or adjective phrases

Students' English utterances	Vietnamese versions	Teacher's suggested versions
I think music interesting	Tôi nghĩ âm nhạc thú vị	I think music is interesting
We happy after the trip	Chúng tôi hạnh phúc sau chuyến đi	We are happy after the trip
People funny	Mọi người hài hước	People are funny
Young people friendly	Người trẻ thân thiện	Young people are friendly
Hue famous for Truong Tien bridge, Dong Ba market, Thuy Tien lake	Huế nổi tiếng về cầu Trường Tiền, chợ Đông Ba, hồ Thuỷ Tiên.	Hue is famous for Truong Tien bridge, Dong Ba market, Thuy Tien lake
... because it logic	... bởi vì nó lô-gic	... because it is logic
The weather warm and hot	Thời tiết ấm và nóng	The weather is warm and hot
Spring very beautiful	Mùa xuân rất đẹp	Spring is very beautiful
The environment really important	Môi trường thực sự quan trọng	The environment is really important
The people very friendly and kind	Mọi người rất thân thiện và tốt bụng	The people are very friendly and kind
Hue city very beautiful and peaceful	Thành phố Huế rất xinh đẹp và bình yên	Hue city is very beautiful and peaceful

The weather summer very great	Thời tiết mùa hè rất tuyệt	The summer weather is very great
Landscape so pretty	Phong cảnh rất đẹp	Landscape is so pretty
I must try my best to good at English	Tôi phải cố gắng hết mình để giỏi tiếng Anh	I must try my best to be good at English
Healthy help me live good than.	Khoẻ mạnh giúp tôi sống tốt hơn	Being healthy helps me live better

4.1.2.1.2 To be with prepositional phrases

Compared to 15 cases without "to be" to precede adjectives and adjective phrases, there are only 6 cases that lack "to be" to accompany prepositional phrases in students' speaking performances and these 6 cases proved that students had problems with this aspect when learning and using the verb "to be", therefore, more attention should be paid to it besides adjectives and adjective phrases to minimize the quantity of cases.

It is obvious that the prepositions like "từ", "trong", "gần" "lên đến" do not need to be followed by "là" or any words like "be" to make correct Vietnamese sentences, whereas different forms of "be" such as "is" or "are" are compulsory to go before "from", "in", "near" "up to" to make the English sentences grammatically correct.

Table 4.1.2.2.2 To be with prepositional phrases

Students' English utterances	Vietnamese versions	Teacher's suggested versions
Dry season from March to August	Mùa khô từ tháng 3 đến tháng 8	Dry season is from March to August
Rainy season from October to December	Mùa mưa từ tháng 10 đến tháng 12	Rainy season is from October to December
Because my friends in video games always in another country	Bởi vì những người bạn của tôi trong trò chơi điện tử luôn ở nước khác	Because my friends in video games are always in another country
Hue city near Da Nang city	Thành phố Huế gần thành phố Đà Nẵng	Hue city is near Da Nang city
The annual temperature from 28 – 38°C	Nhiệt độ hằng năm từ 28 – 38°C	The annual temperature is 28 – 38°C

In the hottest time, the temperature up to 40°C and more	Vào thời điểm nóng nhất, nhiệt độ lên đến 40 °C và hơn nữa	In the hottest time, the temperature is up to 40°C and more

4.1.3. Reasons for language transfer

Through the interview, we categorized students' ideas into five common reasons to explain why students made negative language transfer cases in their speaking performance.

Firstly, between the two productive skills, the interviewees found speaking skills was much more difficult than writing skills. They did not have time to think much before speaking and they had to answer immediately after the teachers asked them the questions. It was why there was an interviewee revealed: "I cannot control my speech well when speaking, I also had to speak continuously. Therefore, I do not have time to think carefully when making English sentences or check the mistakes before submitting like in writing skill

Secondly, students believed that they suffered from psychological problems when speaking English and they made them get into bad habits. An interviewee confessed that, "I was too shy to participate in speaking activities because I was afraid of mispronouncing English words and my friends could make fun of me. Therefore, I tended to speak by intuition rather than my own knowledge about English."

Thirdly, all of them believed that their knowledge about English grammar, vocabulary and discourse was limited. They were unsure of the structures and words they used when speaking English. As a result, they were likely to resort to Vietnamese rules of using structures and words to apply to their utterances in English.

Fourthly, they acknowledged that they had been learning English for years but only in large classes. Therefore, they did not receive enough feedback from the teachers about their negative language transfer to correct their mistakes in speaking skills. Besides, they supposed that when they have to learn English with many other students, the time they spent on speaking in front of the class was restricted

Lastly, they perceived that the listeners still understood what they were conveying in most cases even though they just transferred word by word without considering much about of the lexical and syntactic aspects. An interviewee said, "I think transferring is acceptable as long as two people understand each other and achieve the purpose of communication. If I am obsessed with making language transfer mistakes, I may not dare to say anything." With this perception, they continued to transfer until that moment.

From the above reasons given by the interviewees, it could be found that students were unaware of their negative transfer. The meaning taken from the five reasons shows that students transferred and acknowledged both the benefits and drawbacks of language transfer.

Therefore, we can draw the corresponding implications to solve the language transfer phenomenon.

4.2. Discussion

Based on the findings presented, it is evident that negative language transfer is a common phenomenon among B1 level English language learners. The research also found that syntax was the most problematic area for learners, with the most frequent errors found in the use of prepositions and the verb "to be." This suggests that learners need to focus on improving their knowledge and understanding of English syntax to enhance their speaking performance.

Furthermore, the study found that learners had limited knowledge of English grammar, vocabulary, and discourse, and they tended to rely on their knowledge of Vietnamese language rules when speaking English. This highlights the need for more effective teaching methods that address the specific challenges faced by learners in understanding English syntax and grammar.

Additionally, the study found that learners faced psychological barriers such as shyness, which resulted in them relying on intuition rather than their knowledge of English. Therefore, it is important to create a comfortable learning environment that promotes learners' confidence in their ability to speak English.

Moreover, learners' perception that their language transfer was acceptable because they were still able to convey their intended meaning. Thus, there should be methods to promote awareness among learners of the potential negative impacts of language transfer on their English language proficiency and ways encourage them to adopt strategies that can help mitigate the negative effects of language transfer.

5.   Conclusion

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the language transfer phenomenon among B1 Vietnamese students in their English language performance. The study found that B1 students had difficulty conveying their thoughts using a wide range of English linguistic aspects, and they often transferred the grammatical rules and structures of Vietnamese into their English. The most problematic subcategories were using prepositions and To be, with 27 and 23 times of negative transfer, respectively. The study also indicated specific cases of language transfer performed by B1 students related to syntax, including using wrong, redundant, or lacking prepositions and related to To be, including to be with adjectives or adjective phrases and to be with prepositional phrases. Additionally, the interview findings suggested that negative language transfer in speaking skills is prevalent among Vietnamese students, and the reasons behind it are complex. The students' perceived difficulty in speaking, psychological factors, limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, lack of feedback, and a perceived

acceptability for transfer all contribute to this phenomenon. It is apparent that students are not always aware of their negative transfer and its impact on their English performance. Overall, the findings suggested that B1 teachers needed to pay attention to these subcategories of language transfer and make suitable changes in teaching and assessing speaking skills to help students improve the quality of their English performance.

6.   Implications

6.2   Research implications

Based on the findings, the researcher would like to suggest various implications for both teachers and non-English major students in order to minimize the number of negative language transfer cases in students' speaking performance.

6.2.1   For teachers

First of all, the analysis of the detected language transfer cases in this study showed the differences in many aspects between English and Vietnamese. As a result, teachers should anticipate the common cases of negative language transfer and then establish tables to compare clearly the correct sentences in English and the incorrect ones in Vietnamese. After that, teachers can show those tables on the slide in the speaking lessons. Teachers should prioritize this activity over others to help students know the common mistakes in advance to avoid in their speaking performance. Secondly, due to the fact that students had the largest number of transfer cases in using *Preposition* and *To be,* teachers should concentrate on teaching these two grammatical points than the others. Thirdly, students confirmed that they were unaware of their negative language transfer. As a result, to raise students' awareness of this phenomenon, teachers should design more exercises related to recognizing and correcting language transfer cases. By this way, students can be more familiar with it. For example, teachers can ask students to distinguish between the right and wrong choices of language transfer that they show on the board or slide. Fourthly, students supposed that they are unsure of the way to use English grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, when teaching any new grammar points or vocabularies, teachers should demonstrate how to use them by giving many different examples in practical situations. This enables students to apply them to their own speech in a proper way. Fifthly, as students answered in the interviews that they transferred based on their intuition, teachers should let students approach a wide range of authentic materials in listening skills to help them be accustomed to the ways that English structures and words are used correctly many contexts. Sixthly, students acknowledged that the time they spent on speaking in front of the class was restricted, leading to the high frequency of transfer. Hence, teachers need to organize more speaking activities in which as many as students can be involved in. In addition, to deal with the limitation of time in class, teachers should instruct students the methods to study by

themselves more at home. Specifically, teachers can demonstrate how to use the dictionary to check their mistakes, how to access the website of Cengage publisher to review their speaking lessons in B1 Life textbook and recommend some useful reference books about how to use grammar, vocabulary and discourse for students to improve their speaking performance. Seventhly, students believed that their shyness in speaking was also the underlying cause of their negative language transfer. Thus, teachers should encourage students to be involved in more social activities to be more confident in speaking English. Teachers can give students good marks if they prove their participation in English clubs at their universities or in their local areas or become a member of internet-based English-speaking communities around the world to practice speaking with the foreigners. Lastly, students perceived their negative language transfer is resulted from not receiving enough feedback from the teachers when learning in large classes. Therefore, teachers should give them more comments that are detailed and specific after they finish their speaking performance. By this way, they know to do and what to improve to make more progress. Otherwise, those mistakes will be fossilized in their mind.

6.2.2 For students

Along with the implications for the teachers, we suggest a number of corresponding ones for students. First and foremost, students must spend more time exploring the contrastive tables with negative language transfer cases created by the teachers to follow the ways teachers correct those mistakes and avoid making the same ones. Besides, after learning any new grammar points or vocabularies, especially knowledge of *Preposition* and *To be* students should practice using them frequently by making their own utterances in different contexts. By this way, they can memorize the knowledge better and know how to use them properly in a sentence. Also, if students have problem understanding any words or structures, they should ask the teachers for more explanations immediately. Otherwise, they may have a sense of uncertainty when using them and are likely to produce negative language transfer cases. Additionally, to avoid making language transfer cased based on intuition, students should listen to more authentic recordings at home and then try to repeat what the speakers have said in real time, with as little delay as possible. This can help them learn and imitate how the native speakers use many English structures and words in different real-life situations. Moreover, students need to have proper schedule for self-study after school. In particular, they should actively look up for words and structures that they find confusing to use in reliable dictionaries. Also, they should visit the website of Cengage publisher to consolidate the knowledge of speaking lessons in B1 Life textbook and read some useful reference books recommended by the teachers about how to use grammar, vocabulary and discourse. Last but not least, students should be more active to engage in different out-of-class activities related to English speaking skills to overcome their shyness. Specifically, they can search for English communities on social network sites to join in and try to communicate in English with the native speakers or foreigners as much as possible.

In addition, they can register to become a member of the English clubs at their universities or local areas.

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