

## **Interference 2016/7**

### **1. Introduction**

Usually viewed as something wrong, not legitimate. It is an individual problem.

#### **a. General**

<The use of features belonging to one language while speaking or writing in another> (Wei p40). It is NOT the same as borrowing. Interference is individual and contingent on various factors. Borrowing is collective and systematic, new features are being integrated, The integration may be only into the local community.

Interference may vary with the medium, style, register, context, tiredness etc. It is easier to resist when writing than when speaking. It may be more of a problem when telling a story than when for instance planning a shopping list, or vice-versa. Individual.

- b. In the final analysis, interference varies from text to text. Text is the unit of analysis. The description of interference requires three steps:
- 1) the discovery of exactly what foreign element is introduced by the speaker into his speech
  - 2) the analysis of what he does with it, substitutions, modifications
  - 3) a measure of the extent to which foreign elements replace native elements

### **2. Kinds of interference**

#### **a. Cultural interference**

The foreign element may be the result of an effort to express new phenomena or new experience in a language where the person does not have the language skills, or even where the language does not readily have the words. eg unfamiliar objects, hot-dogs, cornflakes. Greeting sequences, behavioural patterns. <bon appetit>

#### **b. Semantic interference**

ie familiar phenomena and experience being classified or structured differently. Translation of idioms and metaphors. Eg colour metaphors. They are a type of faux ami. Eg *pain-brun* (brown bread) instead of *pain-bis*  
Eg *papier-brun* instead of *papier-gris*

#### **c. Lexical interference (eg faux amis)**

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A bilingual often has the problem to decide what is acceptable or not. Monolinguals may be more resistant to new words. Eg Tissan, I was not sure if it existed in English. It does, but I rarely find someone who knows it. eg 'Stage'. eg 'Dossier'

**d. Grammatical interference**

eg units and structures of foreign parts of speech, grammatical categories (ism ilfaa3il,) function forms may be broader.

Two languages often have the same parts of speech, but may differ considerably in the way they put them together into structures. This is one domain where bilinguals are most UNconscious. eg *une des plus grande jamais vue dans la région* (one of the biggest ever seen in the area). Unconscious, therefore hard to correct. Often these differences are ones of style: the phrases may well be grammatically correct.

“innaas illi shufthum”. This is hard for English speakers of Arabic to learn to say habitually.

Bilinguals tend to transfer gender (French and Italian are not the same for instance). Also transfer make/do associations. I have frequently heard for instance “I made an experience”.

Agreement problem eg E->F *Vos montagnes sont beaux*. There tends to be indifference to accord between noun and adjective, because English does not have that, coupled with probable uncertainty about the actual gender of the noun.

Function words, linkers, prepositions, interfere. eg *sur le comité, dans quinze jours*. or F->E <on the page five>. Some may realise the mistake only after it has come out. These ingrained errors are hard to eliminate.

**e. Phonological interference**

- 1) intonation
- 2) rhythm
- 3) Articulation. Responsible for a large part of the <foreign accent>.

**f. graphic interference**

eg writing habits, spelling. Discourse patterns.