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Abstract

The dissertation deals with lexical knowledge entitled “A contrastive study of lexical knowledge between ESL&EFL (Mysore & Tehran) at undergraduate level”. To achieve practical purposes, the researcher has defined the lexical knowledge in terms of synonymy, antonymy, idiomaticity, collocation and concrete as well as abstract categories. It is worth noting that some of the categories are also classified into some sub-categories. Besides, each category and sub-category is tested in terms of both word and sentence level. Synonymy is divided into 'near synonymy' and 'propositional synonymy'. Antonymy is classified into 'complementaries', 'graded antonymy', 'converse' or 'relational antonymy' and 'auto- antonymy'. Idiomaticity falls into two classifications as 'flexible idiom' and 'inflexible idiom'. No classification is used for collocation, concrete and abstract categories. Totally, 110 items as a main test are used from reliable source. It is added to a background questionnaire, which is used merely to elicit the general knowledge of the testees.

Two equal pilot groups (20 students for each) in terms of both number and gender from Mysore and Tehran students as ESL and EFL learners are selected at random from the first undergraduate students from five classes with English language as a medium of instruction within the age group 17-25. TOEFL test as a test of English as a foreign language learning is used to enable the researcher to determine three levels of learners as 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low' in terms of one standard deviation above, between (+1&-1) and below the mean respectively. The allocated time for the standard test is 80 minutes, which is based on the instructions of the test. The reliability of the TOEFL test for each group is obtained, indicating very high reliable test.

The main test added to background questionnaire is administered in the two mentioned pilot groups. Following item analysis, 110 items (As it is mentioned) from 220 ones are recognized to be the most suitable for the ESL and EFL students with the above qualifications. The means of allocated time for pilot group indicate 15 minutes for the background questionnaire and 30 seconds are suitable for each item of the main test. 250 students as main students from Mysore and the same amount from Tehran are selected at random with all mentioned qualifications from the same classes of pilot groups. The
TOEFL test is administered to the main students to determine three levels of 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low' respectively.

Then, the main test with 110 items addendum to the background questionnaire is administered. The reliability of the main test is obtained from the two Mysorean (ESL) and Tehrani (EFL) students, indicating high reliability of the test.

The obtained results indicate that there are significant differences between ESL and EFL learners in various parts of lexical categories. On the other hand, ESL learners are significantly better than the EFL learners in lexical knowledge. The rate of differences, despite numerous variables, is exactly determined.

The obtained results reveal that lexical knowledge variation should be duly taken into consideration in lexicography, computational linguistics, linguistics, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics along with discourse and pragmatics as well as interdisciplinary studies.