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Lexical vs. Syntactic Competence in L2 English

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***Abstract*—This article examines the relationship between lexical and syntactic competences of fairly advanced learners of English. The data consisted of written tasks where the subjects were asked to translate a text written in their L1 Finnish into their L2 English. The subjects were participants in an entrance examination, seeking admittance to study English Philology at the university. The results confirmed the findings of an earlier study (Pietilä, 2009), where the best candidates were found to manifest almost faultless syntax but produced a considerable number of lexical errors. In the present study, the performance of the 50 most successful candidates in the translation task was further compared with the performance of those 50 candidates who got the lowest grades in this task. The least proficient applicants also produced more lexical than syntactic errors, but the difference was smaller than in the case of the top candidates. In other words, the least proficient candidates had considerable problems with some syntactic features as well. The results seem to imply that lexical and syntactic competence do not develop in parallel. What is more, advanced learners tend to lack precision in their vocabulary.**

***Index Terms*—lexical competence, syntactic competence, L2 English, translation, language learning**

I. Introduction

How are grammatical and lexical competences in a second language related? If you know your second language grammar, does that mean that your vocabulary is also adequate? Conversely, if you have a large vocabulary in your L2, does that mean that you also know the grammar properly? The study reported in this paper was inspired by the observation that some fairly advanced learners seemed to write grammatically correct English, while their vocabulary was definitely rather limited, consisting mainly of highly frequent words. The purpose of the present study was to delve deeper into the relationship between grammatical and lexical competence in L2 English and to discover areas where advanced learners (university students of English) would benefit most from language practice and instruction. In this article, the terms grammatical competence and syntactic competence are used interchangeably.

II. Lexical and Syntactic Competence

The relationship between grammar and lexis has been an interesting issue in linguistic study for quite some time. What is more, this relationship has not only been scrutinised from the point of view of second language studies. Studies of aphasic patients, or dementia, have shown that L1 grammar tends to be preserved better than vocabulary. Lexical skills of aphasic patients, then, tend to be lost more easily than grammatical skills (Kempler, Curtiss & Jackson, 1987).

This is probably due to the difference in the degree of automaticity between these two types of language competence. In psychological terms, it is maintained that automatic processes do not require attention and, therefore, operate independently of the subject's control. They (automatic processes) develop where the range of alternatives is limited, in other words, where stimulus and response are mapped frequently and constantly. Syntax would typically belong to the domain of these automatic processes. Once it is acquired, it is automatic and mandatory.

Lexis, on the other hand, is different. Lexical selection is a control process. It requires attention, and its range of alternatives is unlimited and unpredictable. Obviously, syntactic structures are more limited in number than lexical items, and each structure occurs more frequently than individual lexical words. These very characteristics of syntax (consistency and frequency, more limited choice, and therefore its automaticity) account for the fact that the syntactic function is, indeed, preserved more easily in cases like dementia than lexical skills (Kempler, Curtiss & Jackson, 1987: 348).

It would seem, then, that grammar and lexis are stored and mastered differently. They seem to be governed by different processes. If we think about native language development and second language development, we could say that the native language (or L1) is normally considered to be governed by automatic processes. The use of your L1 *on the whole* is more automatic than the use of any L2. Second languages, on the other hand, are governed by controlled processes to a large extent. However, within a second language, we could postulate a distinction between syntax and lexis, which is based on the degree of automaticity. L2 syntax, acquired to varying degrees, fossilized perhaps, but no longer presenting any major problems of conscious reflection, may have become automatized, and therefore it may seem to be used rather fluently. It may still contain errors; it may have fossilized at a certain stage before reaching anything like native speaker proficiency. This is particularly easy to notice in spoken language, as syntactic choices – often fluent and automatized– are not accompanied by hesitations (pauses, corrections, etc.) as often as lexical choices

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are. That is understandable, given that lexical searches are conscious, controlled processes, which are often accompanied by pauses, repetitions, and other time-saving devices.

In L2 writing, which the present paper is concerned with, the situation is rather different. Looking at the final product of the writing process, one cannot see the hesitations or corrections that the L2 writer has made. What remains as evidence of the writer's ease or difficulty while producing the text is the relative correctness of the product. In other words, the researcher can evaluate the relationship between the writer's grammatical and lexical competences by examining the number of grammatical and lexical errors in the text and by analysing their nature.

III. The Study

A. The Aims of the Study

In addition to investigating the relationship between grammar and lexis in the L2 (the primary goal of the present study), I also wanted to find out what kind of practical teaching advanced learners of English actually need. Our students in the English Department at the University of Turku, Finland, are really quite competent users of English: they could be labelled as advanced learners. They have all had about 10 years of English at school, after which they have passed a nationwide matriculation examination. After that, they have taken and passed a fairly demanding entrance examination to be able to start studying English Philology at university. The level of competence in English that they have reached in their upper secondary studies is B2.1, a level based on the B2, or Vantage, level of the *Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)*, but adapted to the Finnish educational context (Pietilä, Taanila-Hall & Vainio, 2009: 212). In their university curriculum, they have a great deal of linguistics, literature, and social and cultural studies to do with English-speaking countries. Many of them will become teachers of English, so they also take pedagogical courses at the Faculty of Education, or they may have other minor subjects within our Faculty, the Faculty of Humanities.

The number of skills courses in our department is very limited. The students are supposed to be very skilful in English to begin with, which they are, by and large, but there are certain areas of spoken and written English where they would actually need training and even explicit teaching. All our teaching is in English, so they are exposed to English all the time and they use it constantly, but they would probably benefit from increased practice in their speaking and writing skills. One of my aims was to see how well our student applicants actually fare in English, and more precisely, how good their grammatical and lexical skills are. Is there some area of language competence to which more attention should be paid?

B. The Data and Subjects of the Study

The data for the present study consisted of translations produced as part of the entrance examination that students had to take to gain admittance to study English Philology at the University of Turku. The examination had three different tests. One was based on a book on linguistics and contained various applied tasks about linguistics, one was an essay that the applicants had to write on the basis of a novel they had been required to read, and the third one –the one that was crucial for this study– was a translation task where the applicants had to translate a text from Finnish into English.

The topic of the text to be translated was India. The title could be translated as *India Strides into the Future* or *India Takes a Long Step into the Future*. It was about the development of India, particularly about its technological advances. The text was taken from a magazine which dealt with scientific and scholarly issues, but was aimed at the general public. The length of the Finnish source text was 170 words, and that of its English translation was about 220 words. The discrepancy in the number of words was due to the fact that Finnish, a synthetic language, has case endings instead of prepositions and makes frequent use of compound words which are always spelt as single lexical items.

It is evident that translation from the mother tongue constitutes a very special kind of second language use, as the starting point is a native language word or expression and not a concept that the speaker or writer wants to express for his/her own communicative purposes. Translation is, therefore, more likely to invite transfer, or interference, from the mother tongue than other types of second language exercise, as the source language (L1) will activate the L1 representation in the mind of the language user.

The subjects of the study were young Finnish adults, candidates taking the entrance examination to be able to study English Philology at university. There were 270 applicants in all, but for this particular study, I have analysed the translations of 100 students, the 50 who got the best grades and the 50 with the lowest grades on this examination (who, obviously, did not get in). The grading was carried out by two or three examiners, so that each student's paper was examined by at least two people. The points for the translations were given in the following way:

- For general impression: 0-5 points.
- For five preselected sentences: 0-10 points.

The maximum number of points, then, was 15 for the translation task. For this particular study, I selected those 50 students who had received over 10 points (the group of the best candidates) and those who had received between 1 and 4.5 points (the bottom group; the poorest candidates). The subjects consisted, therefore, of two groups:

- Group 1 (the best candidates; 10-15 points)
- Group 2 (the poorest candidates; 1-4.5 points)

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C. Background to the Study

In an earlier study (Pietilä, 2009), I had analysed the translations of a larger number of students from the top end of the list (the best candidates) to see the relationship between grammatical and lexical competence in their English. The results from that study showed that a great majority of the errors were lexical**.** In other words, in the English of the very best candidates, lexical errors outnumbered grammatical errors. Of course, the number of errors was very small to begin with, but there was a clear difference in the students' mastery of lexis and grammar. I had divided the errors into three main categories: lexical, syntactic and spelling errors. The distribution of these error types was the following: 50% were lexical errors, the other half consisted of syntactic and spelling errors (30% and 20%, respectively).

It is clear, then, that advanced learners like these (the best applicants, those who got in to study English Philology, either as a major or a minor subject) have mastered English syntax better than lexis. One could argue that our test, the translation task, was not demanding enough –from the syntactic point of view– but it certainly did not pose any major difficulties as far as syntax is concerned. Most of the grammatical errors were typical of Finnish learners: *articles*, *prepositions*, some errors in *number* and *concord*, and some rather unorthodox *syntactic structures*. *Spelling* was slightly problematic for some students, but it was certainly *vocabulary* that posed the greatest amount of problems. Most of the *lexical errors* seemed to be the result of the student using a fairly vague expression for want of the exact word. There were also some literal translations from Finnish (Pietilä, 2009).

It has been shown in earlier studies (e.g. Hasselgren, 1994) that advanced learners easily fall back on lexical items that they feel safe with, *lexical teddy bears*. These are often core words in the second language, often rather neutral in meaning, which can be used in many different contexts and are therefore overused (Hasselgren, 1994: 250). The results of my 2009 study pointed to a similar phenomenon.

One example of a sentence which produced a great number of erroneous translations was the following (the English version is provided here):

The country also manufactures effective vaccines and is developing methods of treatment for many of the *diseases which plague all humankind*.

The end of the sentence (the part given in italic type) rendered a great number of different translations, many of which were rather vague compared with the original idea, for example (Pietilä, 2009: 127):

1. …plagues concerning the whole humanity
2. …diseases that trouble the whole humankind
3. …illnesses that are a nuisance for the whole mankind
4. …diseases that cause trouble to all humankind
5. …diseases that tease the whole humankind
6. …things that bother all the humankind

We have to remember that this was a translation task –and an important examination, an entrance test– so we had to be rather strict in our evaluation and assessment. We had to put the students in order, so we had to reduce points, if there were errors. In other circumstances, these expressions would have been quite acceptable. It would even be commendable that the students should use expressions like these to get their meaning across. Instead of leaving a blank, they have at least written something to make themselves understood. From the point of view of a translation task, however, these translations leave something to be desired; they are not precise. In some cases, it is possible to trace an expression back to the writer's native language, Finnish. For example, the Finnish equivalent of the verb *tease* can also have the meaning *to plague*.

Inspired by the results of this earlier study, I took a new approach to examining the translations of the student candidates. If the most successful candidates manifested such a clear difference between their lexical and grammatical competences, what would be the case of those candidates who were only allotted a few points in the translation task? In other words, how would the best candidates (Group 1) and the poorest candidates (Group 2) compare in their lexical and grammatical competences? What effect does language proficiency have on the distribution of error types, in particular on the relationship between lexical and syntactic errors? Would the poorer students manifest the same kind of predominance of lexical errors as the most successful students? Would the poorer students also master English syntax and morphology remarkably well?

D. Classification of Errors

Lexical errors in the data were identified on semantic grounds, and they were restricted to content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs). They could simply be the result of an erroneous word choice, as in examples 7 and 8:

1. India is easy to *formulate* (target expression: *comprehend; get a sense of*)
2. One third of the population is *illicit* (target word: *illiterate*)

Both *formulate* and *illicit* are English words, of course, but as they are not equivalents of the words in the source text, they are counted as errors. In some cases, the word used in the translation carries part of the meaning of the target word, but is not a full equivalent. This can be seen in example 9.

3. For *new* energy sources (target word: *renewable*)

In example 10, the writer has not known the target words in English but has tried to express the original idea in some other way, thus resorting to a communication strategy.

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4. Cities are *covered by gas* (target expression: *suffocating in exhaust fumes*)

In other circumstances, this kind of paraphrasing (albeit in this case not a very successful one) would be recommended. However, this was a test situation, and the choice of words clearly resulted in an error.

As mentioned in connection with examples 1 to 6 earlier, a certain vagueness of expression was rather common in the translations. The original meaning was often rendered partially, or the words used were somehow less specific than the target words would have been. It is, therefore, possible to see differences in the gravity of the lexical errors in the data. Some errors consist of mere nuances of meaning, while others are the result of a completely wrong word choice. In the former case, the message is conveyed to some degree, while the latter may lead to a communication breakdown. The lexical errors in the present data have been divided into the following types: *near-synonyms* (as in example 9), *existing but completely wrong words* (hereafter abbreviated as *ex-buts*; as in examples 7 and 8), *blanks* (where an applicant has not even tried to produce a word but has left a blank instead), and *vague expressions* (which may be correct English but do not convey the precise meaning of the original Finnish expression). The difference between near-synonyms and vague expressions may not always be absolutely clear, and it is possible that they in fact represent slightly different degrees of the same phenomenon: partial coverage of the intended message. Example 11 illustrates the use of a vague expression, where common, high frequency words are used instead of a more precise one:

5. In *ponds filled with dirty water* (target: *the gutter*)

It was to be expected that there would be differences in the types of lexical errors produced by the two groups of subjects. The best applicants were hardly expected to have left many blanks in their translations, for example.

Grammatical errors in the present data included errors in function words (articles, prepositions and conjunctions) and in syntax. Articles and prepositions have constantly been found to be a problematic area for Finnish learners of English, largely because Finnish does not have any articles and uses case endings instead of prepositions. What is more, there is no regular correspondence between English prepositions and Finnish grammatical cases, so it is rather challenging for Finns to learn the English system of prepositions. As far as errors in syntax are concerned, they included, for example, some problems with subject-verb concord, and an overuse of the progressive aspect. These are illustrated in examples 12 and 13, respectively.

6. Hundreds of people *dies* in religious fights

7. An average Indian *is earning* only about…

In the following subchapter, the results of the study will be presented and discussed. The main focus will be on comparing the two groups of subjects: the most successful candidates in the translation task and those whose performance gained the lowest number of points.

IV. Results

As pointed out in III.*B.*, Group 1 consisted of those 50 candidates who were the most successful in the translation task, and Group 2 of those 50 who got the lowest number of points in the translation task. The two groups were compared in terms of the total number of errors contained in the translations, the distribution of error categories (lexical, grammatical, and spelling errors), and the types of errors within the lexical and grammatical categories. Correlations between the error categories were also examined.

It should be pointed out that the sheer number of errors was very different in the two groups. Group 1 produced 603 errors altogether, which means about 12 errors per person. Group 2, on the other hand, produced 2127 errors in their translations, which amounts to almost 43 errors per candidate. The raw figures can be seen in Table 1:

TABLE 1.
TOTAL NUMBER OF ERRORS PRODUCED BY THE BEST AND THE POOREST APPLICANTS

	Group 1 (N = 50)	Group 2 (N = 50)
Errors total	603	2127
Errors per person	12	43

It is quite clear that the difference in English proficiency was quite significant between the best and the poorest candidates. It should be kept in mind, however, that the entrance examination as a whole is not a proficiency test. It has been planned to reflect the actual contents of English studies at university, which means that linguistics and literature occupy an important role in the examination. The only subtest meant to address practical language competences is the translation task. Given the relatively high number of years (10) that practically all applicants have studied English and their desire to study English Philology at university, it is rather surprising that such a discrepancy does exist in the applicants' English skills.

Among the three main error categories, i.e. grammatical/syntactic, spelling and lexical errors, *spelling errors* were the least frequent in both groups (18% of all errors in the top group and 22% in the bottom group). As far as the number of *syntactic and lexical errors* was concerned, the groups differed from each other: as in the earlier study, the top group had made more lexical errors; in fact over one half of all their errors were lexical (54%), while 28% were syntactic. As for the poorer performers, the bottom group, they had also made more lexical errors than syntactic errors, but the difference was smaller (44% lexical, 34% syntactic errors). It seems, therefore, that the balance between syntactic and

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lexical competences changes somewhat with proficiency; lower level learners still have problems with syntax, which seems to be mastered remarkably well by more proficient learners, who still may have some problems with vocabulary, however.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the error categories in both groups. The absolute numbers of the errors are also given.

TABLE 2.
DISTRIBUTION OF ERROR CATEGORIES

	Group 1		Group 2	
	No.	%	No.	%
Spelling	108	18	465	22
Syntax	167	28	720	34
Lexis	328	54	942	44
Total	603	100	2127	100

As syntactic and lexical competences were the main focus of this study, it was interesting to see to what extent the numbers of syntactic and lexical errors correlated in the translations of the two groups of subjects. The correlation results can be seen in Table 3.

TABLE 3.
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LEXICAL AND SYNTACTIC ERRORS AND BETWEEN ERRORS AND TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS

	Lexical errors		Total no. of points	
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2
Syntactic errors	0.18	0.04	-0.48	-0.32
Lexical errors			-0.58	-0.56

As Table 3 shows, the correlations between the numbers of syntactic and lexical errors are very low in both groups. This is understandable, as there was a great difference in the numbers. However, when looking at correlations between the total number of points gained in the translation task and syntactic errors on one hand, and lexical errors on the other, we can see that there is a fairly strong negative correlation. The negative nature of the correlation is, of course, natural, as a text rich in errors is very unlikely to result in a high grade. The negative relation seems to be particularly strong between lexical errors and the total number of points, which is an interesting finding. Apparently, lexical errors are more disturbing than syntactic errors in the student translations, in addition to being more numerous.

The categories of lexical and syntactic errors were examined more closely, to see what seemed to be particularly problematic for the applicants. Some examples of different errors will also be given in the following subsections, along with a discussion of the possible causes for these errors.

A. Lexical Errors

A close look at the lexical errors produced by the subjects of the present study revealed that the distribution of the error types was very different between the two groups. The biggest group (39.5%) of lexical errors produced by the weakest candidates consisted of *ex-buts*, i.e. words which are real English words but have nothing to do with the target item, as far as their meaning is concerned, for example *illicit* for *illiterate*, or *dungeon* for *gutter*. The weakest candidates (Group 2) also left a considerable number of *blanks* (17.7%), while the strongest candidates (Group 1) left hardly any (a mere 1.8%). The majority of the lexical errors in the translations of the strongest candidates were *vague expressions*, i.e. they used words which conveyed the intended meaning partially but not precisely (as in examples 1 to 6 above). The numerical results concerning lexical errors in the data can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4.
DISTRIBUTION OF LEXICAL ERROR TYPES

	Group 1		Group 2	
Types of lexical errors	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Near-synonyms	86	26.2	269	28.6
Ex-buts	94	28.7	372	39.5
Blanks	6	1.8	167	17.7
Vague expressions	142	43.3	66	7.0
Made-up words	-	-	68	7.2
All lexical errors	328	100	942	100

The great number of *vague expressions* in the translations of the more proficient group is in line with the results of the earlier study described in section III.*C*. In this earlier study, which concentrated on those students who were admitted to study English Philology, i.e. mostly from the top of the list, it was also discovered that the majority of lexical errors belonged to this category (Pietilä, 2009: 126).

An interesting finding is the fact that the more proficient candidates did not make up any words of their own, whereas the weaker applicants produced a fair number of words which were of their own invention, such as *drawel* for *gutter*, or *illiteraric* for *illiterate*. Needless to say, these coinages were not very successful, as they had to be counted as errors in the translation test.

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B. Grammatical Errors

The first sentence in the translation task was the following (a model translation given by a native speaker):

Getting a sense of India is easy: it is the same size as the EU, but has double the population.

Let us consider some translations provided by students from Group 1:

1. India is easy to conceive: it is the size of the EU but with twice as many people.
2. India is easily sketched out: it's the size of the EU, but twice as many people live there.
3. It's easy to picture India: it's about the size of the EU, but it has double the population.
4. It is easy to conceive of India: it is the size of the EU, but with twice as much population.

Examples 14 to 17 are all acceptable versions of the sentence, and the translations in the present data contained many more perfectly error-free solutions. Obviously, there are numerous correct possibilities. However, even a sentence as simple as this one caused several problems for some of the weaker applicants. Examples 18 to 21 illustrate this.

5. India is easy country to describe: it is size of the EU, but there is twice as much people.
6. India is easy to picture: it is the size of European Union, but there are living double so much people.
7. India is easy to figur: it's about size of EU but double number of people.
8. India is easy to figure: it is the size of EU, but there is living double that much people.

Sentences 18 to 21 contain quite a few errors, both lexical and grammatical (and even one spelling error). As far as the grammatical errors are concerned, they are rather typical of Finnish learners of English with fairly low proficiency: articles missing, errors in concord (*there is… people*), strange structures altogether (*there is living…*). Table 5 shows the distribution of different types of grammatical errors in the translations of the two groups.

TABLE 5.
DISTRIBUTION OF GRAMMATICAL ERROR TYPES

Grammatical error types	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Articles	72	43.1	301	41.8
Prepositions	39	23.4	132	18.3
Conjunctions	3	1.8	4	0.6
Number & Concord	22	13.2	96	13.3
Aspect	2	1.2	39	5.4
Mixed structures	29	17.3	148	20.6
Total	167	100	720	100

As can be seen in Table 5, article errors constitute the largest group of grammatical errors in the translations of both groups: over 40%. When article errors were scrutinised in more detail, it was discovered that, in most cases, both groups had failed to use an article when English would have required one. In other words, omissions of articles were the largest subgroup of article errors. The occurrences of various errors in the use of articles can be seen in Table 6.

TABLE 6.
DISTRIBUTION OF TYPES OF ARTICLE ERRORS

	Group 1		Group 2	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Omission of definite article	30	41.7	155	51.5
Omission of indefinite article	11	15.3	65	21.6
Wrong article	16	22.2	42	14.0
Superfluous article	15	20.8	39	12.9
Total	72	100	301	100

As the figures in Table 6 indicate, it was particularly the use of the English definite article that caused problems for both the most proficient and the weakest candidates. In examples 19, 20 and 21 above, there are several instances of a missing definite article, particularly in the expression *the EU*. If all omissions of articles (both definite and indefinite) are counted, they clearly constitute the majority of article errors in both groups. In Group 1, there are 41 omissions (56.9%), and in Group 2, there are 220 omissions (73.1% of all article errors).

Prepositions, another common problem area for Finnish learners, were the second biggest source of errors for the top group (23.4%), while the less successful candidates produced more errors in syntactic structures (20.6%). Examples of erroneous sentence structures can be seen in sentences 19 and 21 above: there are living... (19); there is living… (21).

All in all, the number of grammatical errors was rather low in both groups. In Group 1 there were 3.3 grammatical errors per student, whereas in Group 2 the corresponding number was 14.4. As far as lexical errors were concerned, the figures per head for the two groups were 6.6 and 18.8, respectively. In other words, there was a clear imbalance in the students' mastery of grammar and lexis.

V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the results of the study reported in this article, it can be concluded that students who received high ratings in a translation task (10-15 points out of the maximum of 15) showed a very good command of English grammar, but a considerably weaker mastery of lexis. Their lexical competence turned out to be characterised by a certain amount

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of vagueness. The intended meaning was often only partially conveyed by their lexical choices. As for the group of weaker students (1-4.5 points out of 15), they showed a similar tendency, but they also had many problems with syntax. These results confirm the earlier findings that indicate that lexis and syntax do not necessarily develop in a parallel fashion. Indeed, they seem to be governed by different processes, and lexical choices seem to continue being highly demanding even for advanced learners. The vagueness of expression found in the production of so many students is undoubtedly related to the phenomenon of *lexical teddy bears* (Hasselgren, 1994). Learners find it convenient to resort to expressions that they know well, even if that may result in lexical imprecision.

As the more proficient group of students (Group 1) included mostly those who succeeded in being admitted to study English Philology, it is worth considering ways in which they could be helped to strengthen their lexical competence during their studies. They will use English on a daily basis, as practically all of our courses are taught in English, but they might benefit from explicit vocabulary teaching as well. However, perhaps a better way would be to encourage them to read as much as possible, as it is largely up to the students themselves to see to the development and maintenance of their linguistic skills.

Some studies have shown that active use of the language is a significant predictor for performance on lexically-based items, whereas education is a good predictor of rule-based items, i.e. grammar (Flege *et al.*, 1999, in DeKeyser, 2005: 13). It would seem, then, that to develop their lexical skills, students should take every opportunity to use the language.

One might also speculate that this vagueness of expression, so prevalent in the translations of otherwise highly competent candidates, might be a result of communicative language teaching, which puts a strong emphasis on fluency and communication, sometimes certainly at the expense of accuracy. Lexical precision, after all, is one form of accuracy, and it may well have suffered in the general quest for communicativeness. Striking the right balance between accuracy and fluency is not an easy task, but it seems to be of great significance in the development of lexical and syntactic competences.

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