INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES, PHILOSOPHY AND LANGUAGE (IJHPL)

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN ENGLISH AND GERMAN FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS THROUGH DIGITAL LANGUAGE

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Article Info:

Abstract:

The main purpose of this study is to shed light on the concept of how L2 and L3 can be enhanced. In this regard, digital language in English and German are examined in terms of a comparative study in the context of non-native speakers and the following research questions are focused: 1) What can German teachers consider when using digital language in the class?; 2) What kind of effective *Teaching Materials and Tasks* can be employed based on the efficient language teaching performance?; and 3) What practical recommendations can be provided to FL teachers concerning effective language pedagogy? It is suggested in this study that comparing the knowledge of German with what learners have learned previously, namely the knowledge of English, can enhance the competence of learners when learning German language. Regarding data analysis, the language functions of the two languages are analyzed qualitatively which will lead to some practical recommendations for FL teachers concerning effective language pedagogy in the context of L2 and L3. Additionally, the results of this study may be applied to develop the competence of students to their fullest potential and to enable them to compete with graduates from other institutions and other countries.

Keywords:

Digital Language, Comparative Study, L2, L3

Introduction

It is possible to consider English to be the universal language spoken by most people. English is the first foreign language taught in Thailand (L2). Khon Kaen University in Thailand has introduced a new policy regarding the use of English as a medium of teaching in an effort to improve the English competence of its students. This means that students should be able to take some English-taught courses to help them get ready for the workforce. The Faculty of

Humanities and Social Sciences, one of the organizations affiliated with Khon Kaen University, also planned to host a training session for the lecturers to provide insight into the concept of English-medium teaching and how to design a course when being taught in English to further this idea and support the policy. To ensure that students have the best opportunity to compete with graduates from other nations in the ASEAN and ASEAN Economic Community, it is inevitable that the lecturers of the Language Programs (French, German, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean) will have to offer some courses taught in English. To learn a third language effectively and quickly, learners can apply their learning styles, experiences, barriers, and problems to their L3 learning in addition to using English as their second language. In this regard, connecting learners' new knowledge to what they already know may help them learn effectively. It is clear that Thai students learn English as their first foreign language before learning German (L2). As a result, comparing L3 knowledge (German) with L2 knowledge (English) can be a useful learning method because these two languages have some linguistic characteristics that help learners see connections between their language studies.

Apart from this, digital language is extremely important when it comes to technologies and language instruction. Digital language is used for academic reasons to communicate between teachers and students. When it comes to teaching foreign languages, Digital Language offers a variety of languages that are widely spoken throughout different nations. Therefore, it is advised that researching how digital technologies might be used to teach language in Thailand, particularly English and German, is crucial for learners in the setting of non-native speakers.

Literature Review

In relation to the concept of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) mention that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become a vital and innovative activity within *the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language Movement* (TEFL/TESL). For much of its early life ESP was dominated by the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP); most of the materials produced, the course descriptions written and the research carried out were in the area of EAP. English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) played an important but nevertheless smaller role. However, the massive expansion of international business has led to a huge growth in the area of English for Business Purposes (EBP).

(Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998)

In recent years, the concept of ESP can be related to teaching other foreign languages when considering the situation of teaching foreign languages in Thailand.

Specifically, the comparative study in this study between English and German for specific purposes should be conducted in the context of non-native speakers. In this regard, Hufeisen (2010) mentions the role of L2 for L3 learning as follows:

> Beim Lernen einer zweiten Fremdsprache tritt nicht nur eine weitere Fremdsprache hinzu, sondern das Lernen einer Fremdsprache wiederholt sich und bedeutet den erwähnten *qualitativen* Unterschied zum Lernen einer L2.
> [...] Erfahrungen mit dem Lernen der ersten Fremdsprache können auf das Lernen der zweiten übertragen werden (wenn sie sich z. B. als gut funktionierend und erfolgreich erwiesen haben) oder völlig vermieden werden (wenn sie beispielsweise als ungeeignet empfunden wurden); Vergleiche zwischen den Lernprozessen

und/oder den Sprachen können helfen. Der gezielte Einsatz bestimmter Lernstrategien bei typischen Fremdsprachenaufgaben [...]

(Hufeisen, 2010, pp. 203)

From the citation, English as L2 can affect L3 learning. Learners may transfer the previously gained knowledge and relate their learning styles, experience, obstacles or problems to their L3 Learning to acquire the third language effectively and efficiently.

To place an emphasis on this study, Hufeisen & Marx (2007) conduct a research on how DaFnE and EuroComGerm can contribute to the concept of receptive multilingualism. In this study, they stress the role of English (L2) that it can have a great impact on learning German:

> Researchers in DaFnE (Deutsch nach Englisch = German L3 after English L2, third-language acquisition / tertiary language learning) and specifically in *EuroComGerm* combine the concept of receptive multilingualism with the idea of the polyglot dialogue or plurilingual discourse in order to assist communication among EU citizens. They study linguistic processes which underlie such communication patterns and search for methods to prepare and enable speakers/hearers to tackle this challenge.
>
> (Hufeisen & Marx, 2007, p. 308)

To extend the notion regarding these studies, Goethe-Institut, one recognized Institute for German language learning and teaching, accepts the advantages learning German based on the aspects of English language as in the following:

> *Lernvorteile durch Englischkenntnisse:*
> [...] Dass ein Rückgriff auf andere (Fremd-)Sprachen gerade lernförderlich sein kann, zeigt uns ein Blick in die Forschungslage der letzten Jahrzehnte. Es wird immer wieder nachgewiesen, dass Lernende, die Englisch als erste Fremdsprache gelernt haben oder noch lernen, viele Vorteile beim Deutschlernen haben. Diese Vorteile liegen nicht nur in sprachlichen Merkmalen, sondern gehen auf bereits erworbene Lernstrategien und Lerntechniken zurück. [...]
>
> (See https://www.goethe.de/ins/ge/de/kul/mag/21161178.html)

To briefly explain, Goethe-Instiut accepts that English as L2 can affect L3 learning. Learners may transfer the previously gained knowledge and relate their learning styles, experience, obstacles or problems to their L3 Learning to acquire the third language effectively and efficiently.

In light of the process of conscious learning, Goethe-Institut further discusses that learning experiences of learners play a vital role for the new language:

> Lernende wissen beispielsweise bereits aus ihren früheren Erfahrungen mit dem Fremdsprachenlernen, dass Sprachen verschiedene Satzstrukturen aufweisen können, die sich von denen der eigenen Muttersprache unterscheiden. Sie haben weiterhin die Erfahrung gemacht, dass einzelne Wörter oder Ausdrücke in der Muttersprache keine direkte Entsprechung in der Fremdsprache haben oder dass kulturelle Eigenheiten eine Rolle bei der Sprachverwendung spielen.
>
> (See https://www.goethe.de/ins/si/de/spr/unt/kum/jla/20382749.html)

Similarly, Saengaramrueng (2008) further states that learning German based on the aspects of English language can lead to successful language learning in the Thai context as follows:

แนวทางของการเรียนการสอนภาษาที่สาม (L1= ภาษาแม่ ,L2= ภาษาต่างประเทศที่ 1 ,L3=ภาษาต่างประเทศที่ 2) โดยทั่วไปแล้ว ต้องคำนึงสิ่งต่อไปนี้ 1) คำนึงความรู้ด้านเนื้อหาสาระ (declaratives Wissen) ได้แก่ ด้านศัพท์ โครงสร้างไวยากรณ์ การถ่ายโอน (Transfer) และการแทรกแซงทางภาษา (Interferenz) ในด้านสัทศาสตร์และการสะกดคำ 2) คำนึงถึงกระบวนการ (prozedurales Wissen) ได้แก่ ประสบการณ์ในเรื่อง วิธีการสอน และประสบการณ์ด้านวิธีการเรียน เทคการเรียนและกลวิธีการสอน ประโยชน์ในการใช้การสอนตามแนวคิดนี้ คือ เป็นการใช้หลักการประหยัดในกระบวนการเรียนรู้ โดยให้ผู้สอนกระตุ้นความรู้ภูมิหลังที่ผ่านการเรียนภาษาที่ 1 และที่ 2 ให้เป็นประโยชน์ในด้านต่อไปนี้ 1. ความรู้ด้านศัพท์ 2. ความรู้ด้านไวยากรณ์ 3. ความรู้ด้านการออกเสียงและสะกดคำ 4. การกระตุ้นผู้เรียนทำได้หลายวิธี เช่น ให้ผู้เรียนรู้ว่าตนเป็นผู้เรียนประเภทใด กระตุ้นให้ผู้เรียนนำความรู้ทั้งหมดที่มีอยู่ก่อน แล้วมาใช้ให้เกิดประโยชน์ในการเรียน (Saengaramrueng, 2008, pp. 74-75)

(Translation: Generally, we should consider the following things to teach L3: 1) Declarative knowledge: Vocabulary, structure, transfer and interference related to phonetics and orthography or spelling; and 2) Procedural knowledge: Methodologies and teaching experiences, learning experiences, and learning strategies. This teaching concept enables learners to learn faster. The learners can develops their already existing knowledge of the first language in order to relate to the knowledge of the second one, resulting in the benefits or advantages in relation to vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling. In doing so, the learners can motivate themselves by finding out what type of learner they are. Then, they can apply their previously gained knowledge in the process of the new language.)

To conclude, the insights gained from these previous studies can lead to new teaching approaches and methods of conducting research in the context of L2 and L3.

Research Methodology

Instruments
Facebook Language Functions between the two languages were used in this study.

Data Collection
The digital language functions on Facebook were collected based on the two levels of language studies: 1 Vocabulary and 2) Sentence Level.

Analysis
The digital language functions on Facebook were analyzed qualitatively in terms of linguistic and grammatical studies which consist of *Structure and Word Order; Grammatical Gender; and Tenses.*

A Comparative Study between English and German (L2 and L3) through Digital Language

This study mainly focuses on the following research questions:

1) What can German teachers consider when using digital language in the class?

2) What kind of effective *Teaching Materials and Tasks* can be employed based on the efficient language teaching performance?

3) What practical recommendations can be provided to FL teachers concerning effective language pedagogy?

Hence, his part is illustrated according the research questions specifically.

Research Question 1: What can German teachers consider when using digital language *in the class?*

In the first step of learning, language functions of Facebook at the vocabulary level should be considered. For instance, a group of words concerning feelings between the two languages can be compared as the following:

German	English	German	English
fröhlich	happy	gesegnet	blessed
geliebt	loved	traurig	sad
dankbar	thankful	aufgeregt	excited
verliebt	in love	verrückt	crazy
sehr dankbar	greatful	glückselig	blissful
fantastisch	fantastic	albern	silly
festlich	festive	wunderbar	wonderful
cool	cool	belustigt	amused
erholt	relaxed	positiv	positive
entspannt	chill	hoffnungsvoll	hopeful
freudig	joyful	müde	tired
motiviert	motivated	stolz	proud
allein	alone	nachdenklich	thoughtful
nostalgisch	nostalgic	zornig	angry
krank	sick	erfreut	delighted
ausgelaugt	drained	bewegt	emotional
selbstbewusst	confident	hervorragennd	awesome
frech	fresh	entschlossen	determined
erschöpft	exhausted	genervt	annoyed
froh	glad	glücklich	lucky
gelangweit	bored	todunglücklich	heartbroken
schlafrig	sleepy	voller Energie	energised
hungrig	hungry	lustig	funny
schmerzerfullt	pained	friedlich	peachful
enttäuscht	disappointed	optimistisch	optimistic
kalt	cold	niedlich	cute
fabelhaft	fabulous	großartig	great
betrübt	sorry	beunruhigt	worried
schlect	bad	mies	down
inspiriert	inspired	zufrieden	satisfied

voll motiviert	pumped	ruhig	calm
verwirrt	confused	vermisst	missing
brav	good	sarkastisch	sarcastic
einsam	lonely	stark	strong
beunruhight	concerned	besonders	special
deprimiert	depressed	munder	jolly
neugierig	curious	niedergeschlagen	depressed
willkommen	welcome	kaputt	broken
schön	beautiful	außergewöhnlich	amazing
genervt	irritated	gestreest	stressed
unvollständig	incomplete	aufgedreht	hyper
schelmisch	mischievous	erstaunt	amazed
stinksauer	annyoed	aufgefressen	fed up
verwundert	puzzled	wütend	furious
stocksauer	annoyed	erfrischt	refreshed
versiert	accomplished	überrascht	surprised
verblüfft	perplexed	frustiert	rustrated
hübsch	pretty	besser	better
schuldig	guilty	sicher	safe
frei	free	verloren	lost
alt	old	faul	lazy
schlechter	worse	fruchtbar	horrible
behaglich	comfortable	dämlich	stupid
verschämt	ashamed	hundeelend	terrible
todmüde	asleep	gut	well
lebendig	alive	schüchtern	shy
taff	rough	merkwürdig	weird

From learning experience of Thai learners in English class, they may have already learned this vocabulary previously. However, these comparable German words can be their new knowledge. Hence, the German language function of Facebook can be useful for their learning process to study comparable words between the two languages.

Apart from the vocabulary level, the sentence level can be studied follows:

English	German
Wassamill shared a link	Wassamill hat einen Link geteilt.
Mutual friends	gemeinsame Freunde
New message	Neue Nachicht
Create a new account.	Erstelle ein neues Konto.
friend request	Freundschaftsanfrage

Although some sentences used in the Facebook language function may not be learned in class, learners may transfer the previously gained knowledge and relate their learning styles or experience to their L3 Learning to acquire the third language effectively and efficiently. Besides, learners may foster their autonomous learning through language comparison of Facebook. In other words, English as L2 can affect L3 learning.

In conclusion, these examples show the possibility how to compare English and German can help instructors conduct a comparative study in the context of non-native speakers when using Facebook in the class. For the comparative studies between English and German, vocabulary should be taken into account for learners at the fundamental level. Sentence level in English and German should also generally be illustrated to Thai learners to create general pictures in their mind and to enable them to compare their L2 with their L3.

Research Question 2: What kind of effective Teaching Materials and Tasks can be employed based on the efficient language teaching performance?

According to Dudley-Evans and ST John (1998), it is important that instructors should consider Grammar for language teaching. Additionally, Reisman (2012) mentions that grammatical gender of German language is vital in terms of a comparative study between English and German. Based on this notion, grammar can be a vital role for language teaching in the Thai context. To create effective teaching materials and tasks in the classroom, the following aspects: *1) Structure and Word Order; 2) Grammatical Gender; and 3) Present Tense / Past Tense* can be considered and some practical and useful examples can be provided:

Structure and Word Order:
English   *German*
You /are/ friends /*on Facebook*.   Ihr /seid /*auf Facebook* / befreundet.
1   2   3   4   1   2   4   3

From the example, it is clear that the English sentence starts with Subject *(You),* followed by a Verb *(are),* then the word *friend* is in the third position, and the phrase *on Facebook* is the last position of the sentence. In contrast, in German sentence, the phrase *auf Facebook* in German language is in the third position whereas the word *befreundet*, which means friends in English, is in the last position.

After analyzing the different structures of the two languages, the task can be suggested as follows:

Suggested Task: Look at the language function of Facebook in German language. How to say this sentence in German?
        Eng: Jack and Tom / have / their birthdays / today.
                      1   2   3   4
        Ger: …?...
        (Answer: Jack and Tom / haben / heute / Geburtstag.)
                        1   2   4   3

After giving the correct answer in class, students should further analyze the word order of each word in the sentences of the two languages.

Grammatical Gender of German language
English   *German*
Wassamill shared *a* link   Wassamill hat *einen* Link geteilt.

In this English sentence, "a" as an article is used without considering the grammatical gender. But in German language, students have to consider grammatical gender

(Masculine/Feminine/Neutral) when building sentences. Learners have to find the correct gender for the word **Link** which is *Masculine* in German language. This is the reason why the word **einen** is used in the given German structure. After analyzing this, students should further analyze other words with various grammatical genders as the following:

Suggested Task: Look at the language function of Facebook in German language. How to say this sentence in German?

Eng: Share in *a* group
Ger: …?...
(Answer: In *einer* Gruppe teilen)

From this correct answer, students can learn that the word **Gruppe** in German is *Feminine*. This is the reason why *einer*, which means "a" as an article in English, is used in this sentence.

Present Tense / Past Tense:

English	*German*
Create a new account.	Erstelle ein neues Konto.
(Present Tense)	(Present Tense)

At this learning step, after analyzing the structure of the two languages in the present tense, learners should study the sentences in the past tense and compare with German sentences.
Suggested Task: Look at the language function of Facebook in German language. How to construct a comparable German sentence with the given English sentence in the form of past tense?

Eng: Wassamill added two new photos. (Past Tense)
Ger: …?...
(Answer: Wassamill hat zwei neue Photos hinzugefügt.)

In doing so, students need to know how to say the word *"add"* in German. After students get the correct answer, they must analyze the past tense form of the word in German language. Then, they can correctly construct a comparable sentence between the two languages.

From these examples, Facebook allows all learners the opportunity to critically think for their language learning and communication. Class instructor may use it as teaching materials in terms of a comparative study in class if he or she wishes to enhance the skills of learners according to its purposes to specifically assess the language skills of non-native speakers in the Thai context.

Research Question 3: What practical recommendations can be provided to FL teachers concerning effective language pedagogy?

In terms of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes according to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), and the concept of multilingualism by Hufeisen (2010), Watcharakaweesilp (2015) suggests the learnings tasks for telephoning between the two languages in the Thai context as follows:

Preposition		Collocation / Chunk		Expression / Chunk	
German	*English*	*German*	*English*	*German*	*English*
für	.....	eine Nachricht	....	-Was kann ich für Sie tun?	....
mit	.....	hinterlassen?	…………	-Ich möchte bitte mit Herrn Kümmel sprechen.	....
				-Wie ist Ihr Name, bitte?	....
				-Mein Name ist…..	....
				-Einen Moment bitte.	....
				-Ich verbinde Sie.	....
				-Würden Sie mich bitte Frau Schön verbinden.	....
				-Tut mir Leid.	....
				-Frau Schön ist nicht im Haus.	....
				-Ich rufe sie nochmal an.	....

(Watcharakaweesilp, 2015, p. 288)

Regarding data analysis in the previous part, the language functions of the two languages are analyzed qualitatively which will lead to some practical recommendations for FL teachers concerning effective language pedagogy in the context of L2 and L3. In terms of language teaching at the higher level for advanced learners, linguistic features such as *morphology, syntax, pragmatics, semantics*, *and so on* can be further discussed and studied based on the language functions of Facebook to enhance the competence of learners when learning German language in comparison with English.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier that, digital language is popular among users around the globe. Facebook is used in terms of academic purposes to communicate between instructors and leaners. Regarding foreign language teaching, it offers various languages which are widely used by people in many countries. A comparative study between English and German based on the language functions of Facebook is consequently recommended. Based on the notion of Dudley-Evans and ST John (1998), it is important that instructors should consider Grammar for language teaching. According to Reisman (2012), grammatical gender of German language is vital in terms of a comparative study between English and German.

Researcher, language evaluator, class instructor, or German language educators in Thailand may use the suggested examples if he or she wishes to foster the skills of learners according to learners' motivation defined by Ellis (1997) which comprises *1) Instrumental; 2) Integrative Motivation; 3) Resultative Motivation; and 4) Intrinsic Motivation.* Some practical recommendations in this study can be helpful to design language activities so students can study and compare vocabulary and linguistic features of the two languages to develop the competence to their fullest potential to enable them to compete with graduates from other institutions and countries in the Asia and ASEAN Economics Community.

Lastly, learners may transfer the previously gained knowledge and relate their learning styles, experience, obstacles or problems to their L3 learning to acquire the third language effectively and efficiently. In this regard, relating the knowledge of learners to their previously gained knowledge may enable them to learn successfully. Prior to German, it is obvious that Thai learners learn English as a first foreign language (L2). Thus, comparing the L3 knowledge (German) with the L2 knowledge (English) can be an efficient learning strategy as these two languages have some language features in common which will cause learners to find some similarities for their language studies.

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