

# 行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫成果報告

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※ 新一代網際網路多媒體英語學習環境與語料庫之設計-- ※

※ 台灣學生英語中間語言分析: ※

※ 網路型英語學習環境與語言分析工具的結合 ※

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計畫類別：個別型計畫  
計畫編號：NSC 89-2411-H-032-021  
執行期間：89年8月1日至90年7月31日

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執行單位：

中華民國 91 年 01 月 24 日

# 行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫成果報告

新一代網際網路多媒體英語學習環境與語料庫之設計--台灣學生英語中間語言分析: 網路型英語學習環境與語言分析工具的結合

## An Investigation of Taiwan Learners' English Interlanguage: Toward Linguistic Tools for a Web-based English Learning Environment

計畫編號: NSC 89-2411-H-032-021

執行期限: 89年8月1日至90年7月31日

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執行機構: 淡江大學英國語文學系

### 一、中文摘要

本專題研究計畫旨在探究關於網路英語學習環境方面的語言學基本議題。執行本計畫的主要前提在於學生在說寫英文時，常會受母語（即中文）和本身中介語言的影響，因而需要他人的建議與回應（feedback）。學習者語料庫的分析結果顯示，在第二語言習得研究中，學習者第二語言語彙知識之分析扮演相當重要的角色。因此，本計畫針對英文以及中文的字彙時貌（lexical aspect）對比進行研究。結果顯示，台灣學生的英語語言輸出對於現今的第二語言學習理論，特別是時貌假設（Aspect Hypothesis），帶來了極大的挑戰。

關鍵詞：語彙知識、中介語、第二語言語彙

### 二 English Abstract

This project explores foundational issues in linguistic aspects of the design of a web-supported English language learning environment. One of the main premises of this work is that learners need feedback on their second language production which takes into account the sources of their difficulties rooted in Chinese L1 as well as their interlanguage generalizations. From analysis of a learner corpus, it is concluded that one of the most important areas of linguistic analysis needed to support such learners is their L2 lexical knowledge. The work reported here focuses then upon the contrast between English and Chinese with respect to lexical aspect. Results reveal that Taiwan learner's English production poses substantial challenges to current SLA theory, specifically to the Aspect Hypothesis.

Keywords: lexical knowledge, interlanguage, second language lexicon

### 三、Purpose and Background

The purpose of the research projected reported here has been to determine an area of contribution where linguistic tools can support web-based English

learning environments for Taiwan's EFL learners. The assumption has been that the persistent difficulties of learners and the limited success of traditional classroom foreign language education call for new approaches to the problem. The scope of this project is narrow: to determine a concrete and constructive role where linguistic analysis can support web-based language learning. The results of this project have served as the basis for the current project investigating the contrasts between English and Chinese verbs. In what follows, I describe one major locus of contrast that has shown consequences in the English interlanguage of Taiwan learners, cross-linguistic contrast with respect to aspectual class. The learner data have important implications calling into question fundamental claims of the Aspect Hypothesis (Anderson 1991; Bardovi-Harlig 1994, 2000; Shirai and Anderson 1994; inter alia).

### 四、Findings and Theoretical Implications

Mandarin and English exhibit fundamental differences concerning the expression of lexical aspect (Tai 1984; Chu 1979). Specifically, verbs which in English yield accomplishment or achievement readings (i.e., telic verbs) are in many cases in Mandarin lexically atelic, requiring the addition of aspectual morphology or resultative complements to render them telic. For example, *learn* in Chinese can be expressed only by adding a resultative morpheme to the simple verb *xue* to yield *xue-hui* or *xue-de* or *xu-dao*.

These differences lead to a range of important empirical and theoretical issues (See Wible 2001 for some discussion.) The concern of this project, however, is focused upon implications for second language learners and eventually for web-based systems designed to support them. Hence, the relevance of the cross-linguistic aspectual differences for learners was explored.

Interlanguage data attributable to this cross-linguistic contrast were uncovered in a corpus of learner English, data which have implications for SLA. In recent years the Aspect Hypothesis has been called upon to account for a range of phenomena concerning the relationship between the acquisition of tense distinctions and aspectual classes of verbs (Anderson

1991; Bardovi-Harlig 1994, 2000; Shirai and Anderson 1995; inter alia) More specifically, the Hypothesis claims that learners treat telic and atelic verbs differentially with respect to past tense marking, specifically suggesting that learners will use past tense on telic verbs before they use it on atelic verbs. This claim relies upon the assumption that learners make target-like distinctions between telic and atelic verbs.

Interlanguage data uncovered in the research reported here call this assumption of the Aspect Hypothesis into question, however. Attested learner sentences such as *I made the card for a week*, when seen in terms of English, show the past tense being used on a telic verb *make*. Internal to the learner's interlanguage, however, the durative adverbial *for a week* suggests that the verb *make* here is treated as atelic. This raises fundamental questions about the Aspect Hypothesis. Does the Aspect Hypothesis treat this data as a case of past tense being used on a telic verb or on an atelic verb? The question is central to the claims of the Hypothesis.

For example, one of the central questions that the Aspect Hypothesis is concerned with is whether "verbal morphology shows differential distribution across the aspectual categories" (Bardovi-Harlig (2000:252). The relevance of the NSC project reported here to this question is that it has suggested the importance of a prior question: How do learners construe the relevant aspectual categories in their interlanguage grammar/lexicon? That is, even though a verb such as *make* is a telic verb in English, rather than assuming that the learner who produces the verb form *made* in the phrase *I made the card* is using the past tense form on a telic verb, it is crucial to ask whether the verb is telic in the eyes of the learner, not just in terms of the target language. Indeed attested examples like *I made the card for a week* suggest that the learner who produced it is treating this verb as atelic, since it can be modified by a durative adverbial phrase, as mentioned above.

Without considering L1 aspect and interlanguage data which exhibit aspectual distinctions different from the target language, however, such questions never arise. Based upon evidence for negative transfer due to cross-linguistic contrasts in lexical aspect, it is suggested that learners' mastery of the lexical aspect of English verbs must be investigated rather than presumed.

The project reported here has been able to uncover the theoretical implications of apparently innocuous errors like the one cited above. There are important theoretical and applied consequences. First, SLA work on lexical aspect must find ways to articulate and test hypotheses about 'the learners' point of view' or their interlanguage with respect to lexical aspect. Second, a thorough and careful comparison of the broad cross-linguistic differences in the encoding of lexical aspect in Chinese and English must be pursued along with the ramifications of these differences throughout the respective grammatical systems. Current work provides a promising foundation (Juffs 1995, Wible 2001 inter alia). Third, the implications of these differences for the analysis of interlanguage of

Taiwan's English learners must be taken into account in analyzing the English production of these learners.

Future work will examine a wider range of data and attempt to classify the sorts of verbs that learners tend to use anomalously with respect to aspect. Results promise to be important to the evaluation of the Aspect Hypothesis and for the design of web-supported English learning environments for Taiwan's learners.

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