INTERLANGUAGE CONCERNING FOSSILIZATION AND UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of fossilization as the feature of interlanguage has been acknowledged and studied many times since the emergence of the theory proposed by Selinker which came into existence in the field of SLA in 1972. The premise of interlanguage as a separate language system used by second language learners as well as foreign language learners in learning their target language is credited to Selinker. Fossilization in interlanguage is coined by Selinker and is generally defined as a cessation of learning the target language. Nevertheless, the notion that interlanguage is fossilized is still open to question. Thus, this present study aims to provide insight to the reader about the concept of fossilization by defining and characterizing interlanguage and fossilization in second and foreign language acquisition, discussing the causes of fossilization in interlanguage development, as well as examining the relationship between interlanguage development and Universal Grammar principle in an attempt to help the reader better grasp and comprehend the phenomenon.

INTRODUCTION

Second or foreign language learning is a creative process in which learners consciously construct a system by a testing hypothesis about the target language from various sources of knowledge such as the limited knowledge of the target language, knowledge about the first language, and the communicative function of language (Hasan, 2015). In the process of acquiring and learning a second or foreign language, learners may encounter a state known as interlanguage. The term "interlanguage" was coined by Larry Selinker. Selinker (1972) described interlanguage as an intermediate state of a learner's language, a creative process influenced by L1 as well as input from the target language (L2), and a unique linguistic system that partly comes from the rules of the learner's L1 yet differs from that of L1 and L2. Since the first discussion of this phenomenon, SLA researchers have attempted to study

interlanguage and everything related to it for years. It is believed that interlanguage is the outcome of learners' attempts to generate the rules of the target language (Fauziati, 2011).

Interlanguage, according to Selinker (1972), can be characterized by these three characteristics: permeable, dynamic, and systematic. The statement that interlanguage is permeable means that the rules making up learners' knowledge are not permanent, meaning that they are open to alteration. The next characteristic is dynamic, meaning that interlanguage is persistently changing. Learners experience interlanguage from one stage to the next stage gradually, revising the tentative systems to adjust and adapt to the new rules in the target language system. The last characteristic that defines interlanguage is systematic, implying that despite the uncertainty of interlanguage, it is possible to discover the rule-based nature of the learner's interlanguage. The interlanguage rules are not picked up inadvertently from the learner's storage of interlanguage rules, i.e. they are always selected in foreseeable ways.

In learning and mastering a new language, making errors is an inevitable process. Learners' rules of the target language always contain an error. During this process of learning a language, learners develop a 'new' linguistic system that will "continue to advance until it becomes equivalent to that of the target language" (Vujisic, 2007). However, learners may face a delay or even a cessation somewhere as they are in the process of learning the target language. A permanent cessation, according to Selinker and Lamendella (1978), is defined as fossilization. As learners stop learning a language, their errors are fossilized.

To explain and discover further the phenomenon of fossilization in interlanguage, this current study tried to provide insight to the reader about the concept of fossilization by defining and characterizing fossilization in second and foreign language acquisition, discussing the stages of fossilization in interlanguage development and examining its relationship to Universal Grammar principle in an attempt to help the reader better grasp and comprehend the phenomenon.

METHOD

This research paper adopted the literature review method as the authors collected the data by conducting the following steps that are "identifying, recording, understanding, meaning-making, and transmitting information pertinent to a topic of interest." (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). The procedures conducted include conceptualization, planning, implementation, and dissemination.

The instrument used is a document and therefore the data analysis technique used is document analysis. A document can be utilized as a data source since it provides a natural source of data in which "a document does not only emerge from its context but also explains the context" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981 as cited in Alwasilah, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Interlanguage

Interlanguage exhibits several characteristics influenced by the learners' native language and second language, which can be seen from the patterns occurring in all interlanguage systems, in which function words and grammatical morphemes are omitted (Broad, 2020). Al-Khresheh (2015) argued that interlanguage, in contrast to Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Error Analysis (EA) which paved the way for interlanguage theory, is not a process in second language acquisition that is affected by L1 or L2. In conclusion, interlanguage is neither the system of L1 nor the system of L2; it is an independent linguistics system. Below is a diagram illustrating the notion of interlanguage according to Selinker (1972, as cited in Corder, 1981).
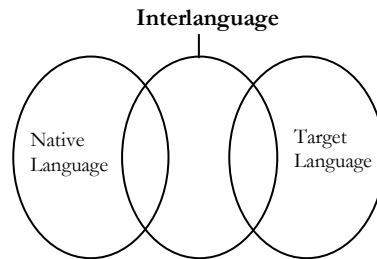
Figure 1. The notion of interlanguage (Adopted from Corder, 1981)

Learners may change their grammar over time during the process of learning a second or foreign language by adding, omitting, and reconstructing rules and this is viewed as mental grammar creating the interlanguage system. Mental grammar is exposed to both external and internal influences. Learners may find difficulties to learn the grammar of a second or foreign language due to their linguistic backgrounds (Widianingsih & Gulö, 2016). The temporary interlanguage grammatical systems keep changing gradually as the systems move toward the complete complexity of the target language grammatical systems. This process is called an Interlanguage Continuum, which was proposed by Shameem (1992). Interlanguage can be both advantageous and disadvantageous for learners in affecting learners' second or foreign language acquisition. It is considered to influence positively if it has positive transfer which makes learning easier, especially when both the native language and target language of learners share similar forms, whereas it is considered to influence negatively if it has negative transfer, also known as interference, in which the learners' first language patterns or rules are used, driving learners to make errors in the target language (Aini et al., 2020). Hereinafter, Aini et al. (2020) stated that "stabilized interlanguage permanently shows occurring fossilization in the target language learning".

Fossilization
Fossilization is a system in which a speaker inclines to maintain his interlanguage items, rules, and linguistic subsystems of his first language concerning a given object language (Baralo, 2005 as cited in Reyes, 2019). This means that students keep repeating the same mistake in learning the target language due to the inability to recognize the difference between the rules and linguistic systems in their interlanguage and target language. (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). However, researchers are still arguing whether fossilization exists, what the exact definition of fossilization is, what causes fossilization, and how fossilization occurs. Fossilization can also be described as the learner's failure of second or foreign language acquisition such as backsliding, learning plateau, low proficiency, and errors made by advanced learners (Wen, 2010 as cited in Zhang & Xie, 2014). Many factors can cause fossilization to occur, due to both internal factors, such as the age when the learner starts learning the language, and external factors such as social factors. Shin (2006, as cited in Pustika, 2021) stated that the critical period to effectively learn a second or foreign language such as English is before 12 or 13 years old, and during this critical period, learners may obtain the developmental benefits of learning the language. This is because the brain of young children is still able "to use the mechanisms that assisted first language acquisition" (Cameron, 2001 as cited in Pustika, 2021). Ellis (2015) stated that "social factors do not alter the cognitive/psychological process responsible for acquisition". On the contrary, Tarone believed that social relationships do affect the cognitive process involved in language acquisition, claiming that social factors are the roots of fossilization (Brigham, 2018).

Interlanguage and Fossilization
Factors Causing Fossilization by Selinker (1972)
Selinker (1972, as cited in Aziez, 2016) claimed that there are no less than five main psycholinguistic processes that are usually found in second or foreign language learners: borrowing patterns from their native language (language transfer), applying prior knowledge from instructors or textbooks (transfer

of training), the conscious attempt by learners to master the target language (strategies of L2 learning), expressing meaning using the lexicons and grammatical systems already known by learners (strategies of L2 communication), and extending patterns from the target language (overgeneralization of TL linguistic material), The first process which is language transfer (LT) is also referred to as L1 interference. Corder (1974, as cited in Puspita, 2019) claimed that a learner's mother tongue may interfere learner's language acquisition and this is called interlingual interference. Language transfer in interlanguage is a process in which the learners' first language rules and systems affect the target language acquisition and the linguistic knowledge of the first language is applied to the target language performance. (Mahmood & Murad, 2018). From this perspective, the interlanguage created this way is a composite of non-existent structures and loan translation.

The second central process leading to fossilization is the transfer of training. Transfer of training, or, to put it another way, poor teaching, resulting in "poor language". This consists mostly of the emergence of erroneous language forms and/or overproduction of the correct linguistic items as a result of ineffective training processes, such as exercises conducted by teachers or taken from textbooks. In contrast to the transfer of training, strategies of L2 learning lay a large portion of the blame for the resulting IL forms on the learner. It is thus because the learner's attitude toward the information to be acquired plays a role in language development. When the learner breaks and ignores the rules, or when the learner simplifies the TL, the output produced lacks standard and normative language forms (Wysocka, 2007).

Strategies of L2 communication are thought to aid learners in approaching contact with native speakers of the TL, but when used incorrectly, or worse, not used at all, they have devastating impacts. Using the wrong strategy may lead learners to produce unacceptable patterns of conversation. While no strategy implementation is apparent to cause communication breakdowns, communication avoidance and refusal to talk (Wysocka, 2007). Selinker (1974, as cited in Wysocka) provided compelling evidence that the overgeneralization of TL norms has a significant impact on the development of the fossilization process. This impact can be seen in the learners' application of linguistic rules. The rules are typically extended to a context in which they appear to apply logic to the learner but do not result in erroneous or non-existent structures (Wysocka, 2007).

Factors Causing Fossilization by Ellis (1995)

Ellis (1995, as cited in Wysocka, 2007) proposed another approach and classification of the sources leading to fossilization. Internal and external elements in nature, according to Ellis (1995), are favorable to fossilization. They have diverse effects on fossilization, as they have in the past; they may work in tandem or produce fossilization one at a time. Internal influences, which originate from the learners themselves, include their age and lack of desire to acculturate. When learners reach a crucial age, their brains lose their flexibility, making it impossible to master particular language features (Scovel, 1988). Regarding the lack of desire to acculturate, learners make little to no attempt to acquire TL cultural norms due to a variety of social and psychological variables (Schumann, 1978a).

The external factors are derived from the learners' surroundings and reflect a zone of impact on fossilization. They encompass communicative pressure, lack of learning opportunities, and the form of feedback on the usage of L2 by learners. Concerning communicative pressure, fossilization may be caused by a constant demand to express concepts that necessitate the use of language that is beyond the learners' linguistic capacity (Higgs & Clifford, 1982). It is also possible that learners are deprived of opportunities to receive input as well as to use the L2 (Bickerton, 1975). Positive cognitive feedback causes fossilization while negative feedback prevents it (Vigil & Oller, 1976).

Factors Causing Fossilization by Han (2004)

Han (2004) mentioned there are four major factors contributing to fossilization namely cognitive, neuro-biological, socio-affective, and environmental factors which are included in the so-called taxonomy of putative causal variables influencing fossilization. Han (2004) also divided those factors into external and internal sub-divisions. The first three factors are included in the internal factor, while

the last one, which is the environmental factor, is considered the only external factor contributing to fossilization. The cognitive factor covers knowledge representation, knowledge processing, and psychological factor. The taxonomy can be seen in Table 1 below.

External	Environmental	
Internal	Cognitive	Knowledge representation
		Knowledge processing (receptive/productive)
		Psychological
	Neuro-biological	
	Socio-affective	

Table 1. A taxonomy of causal factors of fossilization (adapted from Han 2004)

The link between environment and linguistic fossilization is organized around the variables that are said to influence fossilization in the classroom. When it comes to interlanguage usage, a lot depends on the amount and quality of input that the learners are exposed to. Classroom input is quite restricted and lacks diversity in terms of vocabulary. Most of the time, it comes from teacher talk, student talk as well as linguistic materials on hand. Knowledge representation, which is included in the cognitive aspect, includes all of the elements that impact the TL's current level of knowledge such as the influence of L1 as well as its influence with other factors, lack of access to UG, non-operation of UG learning principles, representational deficits of the language faculty, learning inhibiting learning, a procession of a mature cognitive system, and failure of parameter-resetting. Selinker & Lakshmanan (1993) stated that 'when two or more SLA factors work in tandem, there is a greater chance of stabilization of interlanguage form leading to possible fossilization'. There is thus an admission that language transmission is involved in every scenario where the MEP (Multiple Effects Principle) is relevant, with a high chance of language fossilization.

There are a lot of cognitive variables that affect knowledge processing, including lack of attention, lack of verbal analytical skills, lack of opportunity to use the TL, lack of understanding, lack of sensitivity to input, false automatization, processing constraints, and so on. Psychologically-influenced elements are those that influence the learners' language behavior as a result of their feelings, mental processes, personality traits, and purposeful learning choices. This factor includes inappropriate learning strategy, simplification, avoidance, transfer of training, change in an emotional state, reluctance to take the risk of restructuring, and natural tendency to focus on content, not on form. Age, changes in the neural structure of the brain, neural entrenchment, maturational constraints, decrease of cerebral plasticity for implicit acquisition, and lack of talent are covered in neuro-biological constraints triggering fossilization. Socio-affective also accounts for fossilization, comprising lack of acculturation, socio-psychological barriers, will to maintain identity, and satisfaction of communicative needs.

Universal Grammar and Interlanguage Development

Before discussing the relationship between Universal Grammar (UG) and interlanguage development, we have to know the definition of UG first. Universal Grammar was a theory propounded by Noam Chomsky in the 1960s. Chomsky argued that human beings are equipped with an innate capacity to make up Universal Grammar. Universal Grammar, according to Chomsky (1976, as cited in Birkner, 2015) is "the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human language". From this perspective, grammar must have a finite set of rules that generates an unlimited number of deep and surface structures that are all related in some way. Due to the differences between learners' first language and second language, many researchers are still

contending on the issue of whether Universal Grammar has a major role in second language acquisition.

Interlanguage is thought to be a transitional language that emerges during the language-learning process. It is, in essence, a regular evolutionary and approximative system. Nevertheless, it is often believed that second or foreign language learners will never be able to attain the same advanced level as native speakers do. UG will have a different impact on first language acquisition than it does on second language acquisition based on the different initial states. He (2020) asserted that the initial state of learning the first language is called zero states (S0) in which the children begin to learn their first language with a blank mind. The children's initial UG consists of both the fixed principles and the open (unset) parameters. Open parameters will gradually be fixed through experience, and children's fundamental grammar will emerge as a result. A newborn child may be receptive to learning any language, and the language he learns is determined by the external world to which he is exposed. The first language (L1) acquisition is constantly developing into a steady state (Ss) as the parameters of a given language are determined and the core grammar is formed. L2 learners, on the other hand, begin learning the second language with a foundation from their first language, referred to as an initial state (Si), which consists of one grammar, replete with principles and real parameter values. In comparison to the steady state (Ss) of the L1 learners, L2 learners will reach a terminal state (St) in the end.

CONCLUSION

During the process of learning a second or foreign language, learners are most likely to create their interlanguage system in which the rules are different from that of L1 and L2. This interlanguage may have positive and negative influences on learners' language learning. It is said to have a positive influence when learners can learn a language easier, particularly due to the similar forms their first language and second language share, while it is considered to have a negative influence when learners' first language patterns or rules are used, driving learners to make errors in the target language. These errors caused by the transfer of L1 rules may be stabilized and thus result in interlanguage fossilization. Many factors take account in the occurrence of interlanguage fossilization, mainly come from internal and external factors. The internal factors come from the learners themselves, involving their age, which is then related to their neuro-biological aspect, and lack of motivation to learn and acculturate. The external factors are derived from the learners' surroundings, encompassing the amount and quality of input that the learners are exposed to, communicative pressure, lack of learning opportunities, and the form of feedback (positive and negative) on the usage of L2 by learners. Since the initial state of learning L1 and L2 are different, the output is also different. It is said that L2 learners could never be able to reach the advanced level of L2 language proficiency they could in their L1. This is due to the influence of learners' L1 in the initial state of learning the L2, which then leads L2 learners to reach a terminal state (St) rather than a steady state (Ss).

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