

Fossilized Use of Active and Passive Simple Present by Iraqi M.A. Students

Nawal Fadhil Abbas

Department of English, College of Education for Women,
University of Baghdad, Jadiriya, Baghdad, Iraq

Lina Laith Younus

Department of English, College of Education for Women,
University of Baghdad, Jadiriya, Baghdad, Iraq

*Corresponding author

Huda Hadi Khalil

Department of English, College of Education for Women,
University of Baghdad, Jadiriya, Baghdad, Iraq

Abstract

Interlanguage fossilization is a crucial dilemma that foreign language learners may fall in. The problem of the present study is shown clearly in the answers of Iraqi students of Master of Arts in the College of Education for Women University of Baghdad. In spite of all the previous years of studying English language, some still have the problem of fossilized active and passive simple present tense. The present study aims at shedding light on the reasons behind the Iraqi students' problem. An error analysis is applied to critically examine the students' answers in their final course exam of two courses namely; pragmatics and discourse analysis. Depending on Selinker's model (1972) of error analysis, students errors are all traced back to the language transfer of their native language. Among the results of analysis the researchers have arrived at a suitable solution for the current problem embodied by Sharwood's Consciousness-Raising Approach (1981). It is recommended as a psycholinguistic model for defossilization. It is very suitable for mentally matured learners and help to solve the dilemma.

Keywords: active and passive simple present tense, Consciousness-Raising, interlanguage-fossilization, Iraqi M.A. students

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1.0. Introduction

Being a university teacher or an M.A. degree holder in linguistics is a great job that makes a person stand as a model for all his university students to follow. That is why it is a dilemma to prepare university teachers that have fossilized minds in the linguistic system of interlanguage. In terms of the current paper, the selected a number of Iraqi M.A. students of linguistics have fossilized use of simple active and passive present tense. Spending many years of studying English language, its grammar and sentence structure has no positive impact on the student use of language now. That appears clearly in the error analysis of the collected data from the M.A. students' answers of the final course exam of pragmatics and discourse analysis. The researchers diagnose the reason behind this fossilization that is traced back to the native language transfer and how they are still affected by the grammatical rules of their native language i.e. Arabic. A psychological model is recommended to solve the dilemma and defossilize the use of simple active and passive present tense.

1.1. What is Interlanguage

Crystal (2008) defines interlanguage as a type of language that is not similar to the learners' native language nor to the foreign language they intends to study along the process of learning.

Corder (1981) says that interlanguage is the temporal change in grammatical rules that is made by the learner to approximate the grammar of the target language. He states the interlanguage of the second or foreign language should be developed continually and gradually until it becomes similar to the target language.

The transactional stage of learning a foreign language has its own grammatical system and rules created by the learners themselves in order to reach the target language proficiency. This stage is named interlanguage. The term is first discussed and brought foreword by Selinker at the Cambridge International Confyxerence in 1969. Then the term became prominent in 1972 in Selinker's paper "Inter-language". In this regard, Stern (1983) states that Selinker suggests the term of interlanguage refers to the fact that the ill-formed language produced by the learners in this period can be classified as an independent language variety that has its own rules and properties.

1.1.1. Inter-language Theory

This theory stems from two different views of second or foreign language acquisition:

1. The first view is based on the mentalist or psycholinguistic theory of language acquisition. Those who work within this view believe that learners have an inbuilt faculty of language acquisition that makes them acquire a foreign language in the same manner they acquire their native language. They depend on Chomesky's Universal Grammar (1959) that people have inborn linguistic rules which find a middle ground for the 'initial state' and control the structure of any given language (as cited in Ellis, 1985, p. 43).
2. The second view is based on the behaviorist concept of foreign language acquisition that is affected and shaped by the interference of their environment and native language (Ellis, 1985). That is shown clearly in Selinker's processes of language acquisition and language transfer.

1.1.2. Selinker's Processes of Language Acquisition

Selinker (1972) proposes five major processes that shape the interlanguage behavior and lead to fossilized production of language. They are:

1. Language transfer,
2. Transfer of training,
3. Procedures of second language communication,
4. Procedures for second language learning,
5. Overgeneralisation of the target language linguistic material (p. 37).

1.1.2.1. *Language Transfer*

It has other names including first language interference, linguistic interference, cross linguistic influence. It is the case when knowledge is applied from one language to another by the speaker or the writer transferring all the linguistic features between languages (Weinreich, 1953). Selinker (1969) regards language transfer as a well-known phenomenon for all linguists causing a problem because the structural rules of the learners' native language are moved to the foreign language they intend to study.

Lado on the other hand (1957) defines language transfer with emphasis on the transfer of the form, meaning and culture of the native language in the productive and receptive cases as in:

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of the native language and culture to the foreign language and culture ... both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives (as cited in Selinker & Gass, 1992, p. 234).

Odlin (1989) describes language transfer in terms of the positive and negative influences of one's native language as is in "transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired" (p. 27).

Odlin proposes two types of transfer depending on the similar and different properties between languages. They are "positive and negative transfer". The positive one refers to the similarities between the native language and the foreign one that result in "positive transfer". The similarities in semantics, phonetics, writing patterns, and syntax have the function of facilitating the process of acquisition and can save the time needed. An example of this case is the large range of similarities between French and English language. Learners with French as their first language are a head in acquiring English language system than Spanish. "Negative transfer" is caused by different characteristics between the native and the foreign language that lead to an inter-language that is deviated from the norms of the target language (Odlin, 1989).

1.1.2.2. *Transfer of Training*

Selinker (1972) states that errors in Interlanguage process can be traced back to the process of training. It is represented by the drills of English language school course. If these drills have some shortage or ill-formed structures, they will cause fossilization in the interlanguage performance and result in "transfer of training" (p. 37).

Unlike the language transfer that deals with the influence of native language in the interlanguage process of the foreign language, transfer of training is the result of the consequence of drills in textbooks as it is believed by Selinker. He exemplifies this process by the speakers of Serbo-Croat that have the problem of using only “he” and never using “she” in spite of having gender distinction in their first language. That is because of the drills in their textbooks. They always produce sentences with the use of pronoun “he” and never with the pronoun “she” (Selinker, 1972).

This fact is also asserted by Richards (1972) who illustrates the phenomenon of training transfer with the situation when the learners receive errors from their only input represented by the teacher instructions and the drills in textbooks. Those errors become fossilized because of the training transfer.

1.1.2.3. Procedures of Learning foreign Language

Selinker (1972) states that the procedures of learning foreign language are found when the grammatical rules are displayed in interlanguage of an individual result from a distinguishable approach by the learner to the target language.

There are two basic procedures implied in the settlement of interlanguage rules including hypothesis formation. They are simplification and inferencing.

a) Simplification

Selinker defines simplification as one example of the procedures of foreign language learning. In this strategy learners try to make their task easier to learn and communicate in the foreign language. Such as when the Japanese attempt to omit articles or use plural forms as singular. They try to reduce the target language by omitting the small parts details and focus on the main linguistic elements.

Ellis (1985) indicates that simplification refers to the situation when the learners try to reduce the range of hypotheses formation in order to make the process of communication easier in the interlanguage period.

Thus, in simplification, learners try to facilitate their task of learning and communication in the target language. The learners’ reduction leads to some strategies such as omission, insertion, addition, substitution or mis-ordering of linguistic elements. That is why Selinker (1975) considers simplification as a super-ordinate strategy representing a step taken by the learners to solve their learning and communication problems.

The second or foreign language learners use a reduced language in order to simplify their task of learning but not to simplify the target language system. Caretakers of children and language teachers try to simplify the language system to communicate with children and language learners. That is called “linguistic simplification” (Mahmoud, 2014, p. 279).

b) Inferencing

Ellis (1985) points out that inferencing come when the second or foreign language learners form hypotheses by attending to the input. He mentions an example of Spanish learner who cannot obtain the rule of sentences with negative forms by simplification, so he attends the input of the target language and forms a suitable hypothesis.

1.1.2.4. Procedures of Learning and communication

Selinker (1974) states that learners of foreign language are usually influenced by their culture. That is why they vary in following certain strategies for the sake of communication. It is shown clearly in his words when he states:

little is known in psychology about what constitutes a strategy ... even less is known about strategies which learners of language use in their attempt to master TL and express meanings in it... It has been pointed out that learner strategies are probably culture-bound to some extent (p. 39)

This can be revealed clearly in Selinker's example of Japanese learners who tend to consult dictionaries or ask their colleagues rather than asking their teachers. They are afraid of making errors in front of others and tend to be shy (Selinker, 1974). So, learners often follow certain strategies so that they can communicate in the foreign language. But these strategies are affected by cultural factors that are different from one culture to another.

1.1.2.5. Over-generalization

It is the case when the learner uses previous knowledge and experience in the inter-language to have the characteristics that far away from the rules of the foreign language. That is shown clearly through the definition of Jacobvits (1969) that is when the learners over-generalize what they have already learned in the foreign language and use it in new situations. Sometime, it could be helpful but most of the time cannot be applied and lead to mistakes.

For example inter-language features can be seen in "she can plays" the third person singular "-s" because of the pronoun "she", the learner here overgeneralizes the rule of adding "-s" to the verbs that concord with the pronouns "he, she and it". But the learner here doesn't recognize the necessity of putting the verb in its base form because of the model "can".

Over-generalization, as one of the inter-language processes, is linked to the simplification strategy in which learners also try to reduce the linguistic elements by omission. This is revealed clearly in the sentence "*she like sushi*" the learner here omits the third person singular "-s" in the verb "*like*" to simplify the process of learning for himself/herself.

1.3. Inter-language Fossilization:

The term fossilization is borrowed from paleontology that conjures up the image of dinosaurs that no more alive. They become hardened ruins enclosed in sediment like rocks. This metaphoric expression is used in foreign language acquisition to refer to the earlier language forms that are enclosed in the learners' inter-language. This language cannot be changed or developed like rocks even with awareness and practice of the foreign language. The learners' mind is fossilized to use

the wrong form of inter-language that is not similar to the foreign language or to their mother tongue.

Selinker (1972) postulates that fossilization is a linguistic phenomenon... and

Fossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language will tend to keep in their inter-language relative to a particular target language, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation or instruction he receives in the target language (p. 41).

Selinker assumes that the fossilized linguistic items, rules etc. from the learners' native language are stored in their brain by a fossilization system throughout one of Selinker five processes. He states that there is an interlingual unit exists in the learners' minds. When learners want to produce any target language this unit will be available. It has three linguistic systems; namely: "native language", "inter-language" and "target language". So when the learner wants to produce any target language and fails then he immediately goes back to use his inter-language unit and creates it.

Thus, Selinker states that the mechanism of fossilization is found in the interlingual unit of the learners' brain no matter how much the instruction is given or the age of the learner. Selinker then says that not only the errors can be fossilized but also the correct forms of the target language can be fossilized. This point is also emphasized by Ellis (1985) who states that fossilization can be recognized as errors or correct forms in the target language. If a learner has a certain feature in his/her interlanguage which has a similar form in the target language then it proves the fossilization of the correct form. On the other hand, if a learner has a certain feature in his/her interlanguage which has no similar form in the target language, then it will lead to fossilized error.

1.4. Reasons of Fossilization

In order to find suitable remedies and overcome the dilemma of interlanguage fossilization, we need to diagnose the reasons stand behind it. There are two types of reasons; the first one concerns the learner and it is called "internal reasons" and the second concerning the "external reasons":

1.4.1. Internal Reasons

Selinker neglects three important points as factors in the process of interlanguage fossilization. These points stand as the possible reasons behind fossilization. The first reason is the age. Depending on the contemporary universal grammar, Chomsky (1959) argued that children's brain is ready to acquire new language by their innate ability that is gradually lost by the age progress when they become matured (as cited in Ellis, 1985, p. 44). Researchers have revealed that the critical period for human language acquisition is the age from 12 to 15. Interlanguage fossilization rarely occurs before this age and that is why learning a target language is easier before that critical period of age (12-15). Thus, interlanguage fossilization can occur clearly after that period showing the inability to acquire new language characteristics and structures (Yang, 2015).

The second reason is related to the purpose of learning a foreign language which is classified into a comprehensive purpose and an instrumental purpose. A comprehensive purpose is when the

learner intends to acquire the target language for the purpose of communication accepting the cultural and historical background of that language. On the other hand, the instrumental purpose is that when a learner studies the target language in order to pass the examination. It is short-way learning because learners care about passing the exam only and don't care about the use of that language in the future (Yang, 2015).

The third reason behind fossilization is related to the mentality of a foreign language learner. The changes in the students' minds affect the process of learning. Therefore, some students start to learn a foreign language with a strong interest and when they reach a certain level they will feel anxious and lose their interest and motivation to learn more. At this moment, fossilization clearly appears (Yang, 2015).

1.4.2. External Reasons

The external reasons behind fossilization are reflected by sociolinguistics. The first reason can be represented by the influence of the target language culture and the learners' chance of communication. Brown (1980) focuses on "acculturation" in order to explain fossilization. It is the state of being part of a new culture. Thus, when an adult cannot cope with the target language community and adapt their culture, then s/he will not be able to communicate with them using their mother tongue. In this case, learning will be fossilized. The second sociolinguistic reason of fossilization is the influence of communicative feedback on the foreign language learner. Learners in interlanguage communicate with the external world with a high possibility of making mistakes. These mistakes, do not affect the process of sending and receiving the understood messages in interlanguage. But if the communicators do not provide suitable feedbacks to correct these mistakes the interlanguage fossilization will occur (Yang, 2015).

1.5. The Method

The present study focuses on the fossilized minds of some English language learners who cannot master the target language in spite of spending years of studying and training to acquire English as a foreign language. In order to answer the question presented in the current study why Iraqi M.A. students of linguistics cannot produce well formed active and passive simple present, an error analysis is carried out on Iraqi M.A. students of English linguistics. Their written answers in the examination of two different courses are the data for this study in order to identify the ill-formed and ungrammatical production of language that is fossilized through the interlanguage period in which they study hard for years to acquire English as a foreign language.

The research participants are six Iraqi students of master degree of linguistics in the College of Education for Women/ University of Baghdad. Their native language is Arabic. They have studied English as a foreign language for ten years including three years in intermediate school, three years in the secondary school plus four years in the college to get a B.A. degree in English language.

The data are elicited through the students' answers in the course exam of two subjects namely; pragmatics and discourse analysis. Their written answers constitute the subject of error analysis to shed light on their interlanguage production of English language. There have been 60 ill-formed sentences that denote the fossilized use of simple present tense in its active and passive forms. It is hypothesized that if those students match between their implicit and explicit knowledge

accompanied with a continuous practice they will acquire any foreign language and be fluent. That is why a psycholinguistic model is recommended to perform this solution.

1.6. The Scheme of Analysis

The researchers analyze the collected data by making error analysis for the production of the students' interlanguage following three procedures:

1. Identifying the students' errors in the use of the active and passive simple present tense
2. Drawing the patterns, the students use to represent active and passive present events.
3. Discussing and explaining the data to draw a conclusion.

1.7. Analysis of the Data

1.7.1. The students' fossilized use of the verb tense to denote active present event

Producing a sentence in a simple present tense is done when it describes factual or habitual events. The present tense uses the basic form of the verb like (write, work) with a singular subject and uses the basic form with –s ending with the third person singular subjects like (he works, she works and it works). The present tense refers to actions that occur in the present but that are not necessarily exist right now: "It rains a lot in Portland" is a kind of timeless statement while the present continuous is something like "It is raining in Portland" which means that something is going on right now. Similarly, "I use my bike to get around town", is in the present, but "I'm not actually on my bike right now". Moreover, the present tense is also used to describe events that are scheduled (by nature or by people): "High tide is at 3:15 p.m. The Super Bowl starts at 6:15 p.m." (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, pp. 40-1).

The students have studied the above rules of using the simple present tense along their years of studying English but they are still in their interlanguage stage. They cannot move to master the foreign language. Thus, based on the analysis of the collected data, the students have made three fossilized patterns to denote the simple present tense:

1. [singular subject + base verb + object]

For example:

- "This study *increase* the learners' interest."
- "How the speaker *use* language."
- "The husband *promise* his wife that he will be faithful next week."

The students here omit the –s ending for the verb of the sentence. The omission of –s ending is not for simplification but it goes back to the language transfer. The mother tongue of the students has no such rule in its present form. So they are still influenced by their native language. The first example is said in Arabic like this "تزيد هذه الدراسة من اهتمام المتعلمون". This is the only present form for the verb "increase" or "تزيد" in Arabic. It has no addition of –s ending with the verb and no progressive form for the present continuous tense.

2. [plural subject + verb+s +object]

For example:

- "Moves *consists* of acts."

- “The linguists *points* out that the residents in the Narwiagion village ... have two languages.”

The students here add –s ending to the main verb to denote simple present tense but with a plural subject. The addition of the third person singular (–s) is traced back to the over-generalization. The students try to over-generalize the previously learned rule of adding –s ending to the main verb of the sentence with a singular subject to indicate a simple present tense. In this case, they add –s ending to the verbs that have plural subject to produce ill-formed simple present tense.

3. [subject + be + verb-ing + object]

For example;

- “Critical discourse analysis *is exploring* the connection between the use of language and social and political contexts.”

The students here use the progressive present to denote a simple present tense. This error is traced back to the transfer of language reason of fossilized interlanguage. Students are still influenced by their native Arabic language because there is no present continuous; there are only present and past in Arabic language and that is why they cannot master the situation in which they have to use the present continuous or simple present. As long as the simple present tense is used to describe factual events, it is the most suitable tense for describing and defining Critical discourse analysis as one branch of linguistics.

To sum up, the students’ fossilized interlanguage patterns with some examples from the collected data are shown in table 1 to make it clear:

Table 1. A comparison between native, interlanguage and target language patterns

	Native Language Patterns in Arabic	Fossilized Interlanguage Patterns	Target Language Patterns
1	[Subject+verb+object] تزيد هذه الدراسة من اهتمام المتعلمون	[Sing. Subject+verb+Object] “This study <i>increase</i> the learners’ interest”	[Subject+(verb+-s)+Object] “This study <i>increases</i> the learners’ interest”
2	[Subject+verb+object] يشير اللغويون الى ...	[Plural subject + verb+-s +object] “The linguists <i>points</i> out that the residents in the Narwiagion village ... have two languages.”	[Subject+(verb+-s)+Object] “The linguists <i>point</i> out that the residents in the Narwiagion village ... have two languages.”
3	[Subject+verb+object] يعرض تحليل النص النقدي الصلة بين اللغة والسياسة والأجتماع والنص	[Subject +verb (be)+(verb+-ing)+Object] “Critical discourse analysis <i>is exploring</i> the connection between the use of language and social and political contexts.”	[Subject+(verb+-s)+Object] “Critical discourse analysis <i>explores</i> the connection between the use of language and social and political contexts.”

1.7.2. *The Students' fossilized use of the verb tense to denote the passive present event*

The passive present tense is also used by students to denote that something happened by an unknown subject. A passive verb tense refers to the time of the action. First of all, it is important to differentiate between the passive verb tense and the passive voice. We need a passive verb tense when we write in the passive voice. In this case, tense refers to the time of the action whereas the voice refers to the verbs function with the absence of the subject. Thus, we cannot write in the passive voice without using the passive verb tense.

The structure of the passive verb tense is created by using the past participle form of the verb that should be preceded by verb "be". The past participle is structured by adding -ed or -en to the main verb. It depends on the regular and irregular form of the verb. The object of the verb comes in the position of the subject to receive the action of that verb.

The M.A. students have studied the rules of the passive simple present along all the previous years of study. Some use different fossilized patterns to denote passive simple present as follows:

1. [Object+ verb (base) + by + Subject]

Example:

- "How the spoken or written discourse *affect* by social or cultural factors".

The students here do not use a verb "to be" followed by a past participle form of the verb to create the passive simple present. They are not familiar with the use of verb "be" because they do not have such a type of verbs in their native language. This fossilized misuse of verb "be" is traced back to the language transfer stage of interlanguage. Students are still influenced by the rules of their Arabic native language. The passive simple present of the above example in Arabic is as follows:

تتأثر النصوص المكتوبة والملفوظة بالعوامل الاجتماعية والحضارية"

In Arabic the form of the main verb is only changed from its active "تؤثر" in to its passive form "تتأثر" without adding any more verbs or articles. Students omit the -ed or -en ending of the past participle form of the main verb in order to simplify the structure of the passive simple present.

2. [Object + verb "do" + past participle]

Example:

- "Stylistics *does not* concerned only with syntax of text but it concerns with the context by itself"

In the above pattern, students use verb "do" instead of verb "be" in order to achieve the passive simple present. This fossilized error is also traced back to language transfer; the fact that in the Arabic language they have no such a use of verb "be" they just change the form of the main verb in order to create the passive form.

3. [Object + past participle]

Example:

- "adjancy pairs considered as basic unit in conversation."

In pattern 3, students omit verb “be” form in the passive simple present. This error is also traced back to the language transfer that affects the students’ interlanguage. Because students have no such a type of verbs, they omit its use in order to simplify the passive structure.

4. [Object + verb + (-s)]

Example:

- “Critical discourse analysis reveals the hidden meaning that *implies* between lines of the text.”

The students in pattern 4 are not aware of the necessity of using passive simple present. The demonstrative “that” refers to the noun “meaning” that should be “that is implied” instead of “implies”. This example shows how students are really confused between the use of simple present and its passive form signified by preceding the main verb by verb “be”. Table 2 summarizes the students’ use of passive as follows:

Table 2. A comparison between native, interlanguage and target language patterns of passive simple present

	Native Language Patterns in Arabic	Fossilized Interlanguage Patterns	Target Language Patterns
1	[main verb in passive form + Object] Example: تتأثر النصوص المكتوبة والملفوظة بالعوامل الاجتماعية والحضارية.	[Object+ verb (base) + by + Subject] Example: “How the spoken or written discourse <i>affect</i> by social or cultural factors”.	[Object + verb “be” + past participle] Example: “how the spoken or written discourse <i>is affected</i> by social and cultural factors”
2	[main verb in passive form + Object] لا يعنى علم الأسلوبيات بنحو النص فقط بل يهتم بالنص نفسه.	[Object + verb “do” + past participle] Example: “Stylistics <i>does not</i> concerned only with syntax of text but it concerns the context by itself”	[Object + verb “be” + past participle] “Stylistics <i>is</i> concerned only with syntax of text but it concerns the context by itself”
3	[main verb in passive form + Object] تعتبر أزواج الجواركوحدة رئيسية في المحادثة.	[Object + past participle] Example: “adjancy pairs considered as basic unit in conversation.”	[Object + verb “be” + past participle] “adjancy pairs <i>are</i> considered as basic unit in conversation.”
4	[main verb in passive form + Object] يظهر تحليل النص النقدي المعنى المخفي المتضمن بين سطور النص.	[Object + verb + (-s)] Example: “Critical discourse analysis reveals the hidden meaning that <i>implies</i> between lines of the text.”	[Object + verb “be” + past participle] “Critical discourse analysis reveals the hidden meaning that <i>is implied</i> between lines of the text.”

1.8. Remedies for Fossilization

There are two types of remedies; the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic remedies. The sociolinguistic solution is related to the external sociolinguistic reasons of fossilization. This solution is represented by the communicative approach to teach English as a foreign language.

Following Lightbown and Spada (1999), the communicative approach depends on the real practice of the target language in actual situations. The main purpose of this approach is to send and receive the meaningful message that is understood by the sender and the receiver. The only weak point that leads to fossilization in this approach is its lack of sufficient feedback i.e. correction of errors and explicit instruction. This will pave the way for fossilization of the uncorrected errors to occur.

Learners of a foreign language are always in need of explicit instructions and continual correction of instant errors in order to acquire the target language. Iraqi M.A. students of linguistics cannot overcome their problem of fossilization by the aid of the communicative approach because they have no chance to communicate in English outside their classrooms. The target language does not have enough time and practice to be transformed into their competence and in this stage fossilization occurs. Learners of a foreign language need the explicit instructions that with practice will be transformed into the competence of the learners' mind and finally the acquisition of the target language will happen.

In order to match the learners' needs to acquire a language, Sharwood-Smith's consciousness-raising approach (1981) is the perfect way to reach the de-fossilization. This approach depends on the psycholinguistic aspect of the learning process. It is defined as the interaction between the explicit and implicit knowledge about the target language in order to reach the acquisition. What is meant by explicit knowledge is "a conscious analytic awareness of the formal properties of the target language" and the implicit knowledge is "the intuitive feeling of what is correct and acceptable" (p. 159).

The explicit knowledge is represented by giving the learners information about the target language structure like rules and lists of words meaning. This property is very similar to the grammar-translation method of teaching language in which the learners have to receive rules and list of words meanings to acquire the foreign language (Sharwood, 1981). Reaching the acquisition of a language cannot be achieved by merely giving the learners that explicit knowledge. This knowledge should be accompanied with practice that what is found in the direct method that matches the conscious raising approach in some properties. Students have to use their competence to perform a life-like communication in the foreign language. There is no use of the native language inside the classroom. They use long complicated phrases in order to explain the structure of the target language. Thus, learners of a foreign language have to add the explicit knowledge they receive to their competence accumulated by the previous experiences of learning and by practice and with time this knowledge will be transformed into the implicit knowledge that is fixed in mind to achieve language acquisition and leave no space for fossilization. That is why the conscious raising approach is very suitable for mentally matured learners because they have previous competence and experience that will increase their interest to get more and more explanation about the target language. They have the sufficient awareness of the structure of the target language. In

order to apply this approach on our students as the paper unit of analysis, the following model is going to be the solution to overcome fossilization:

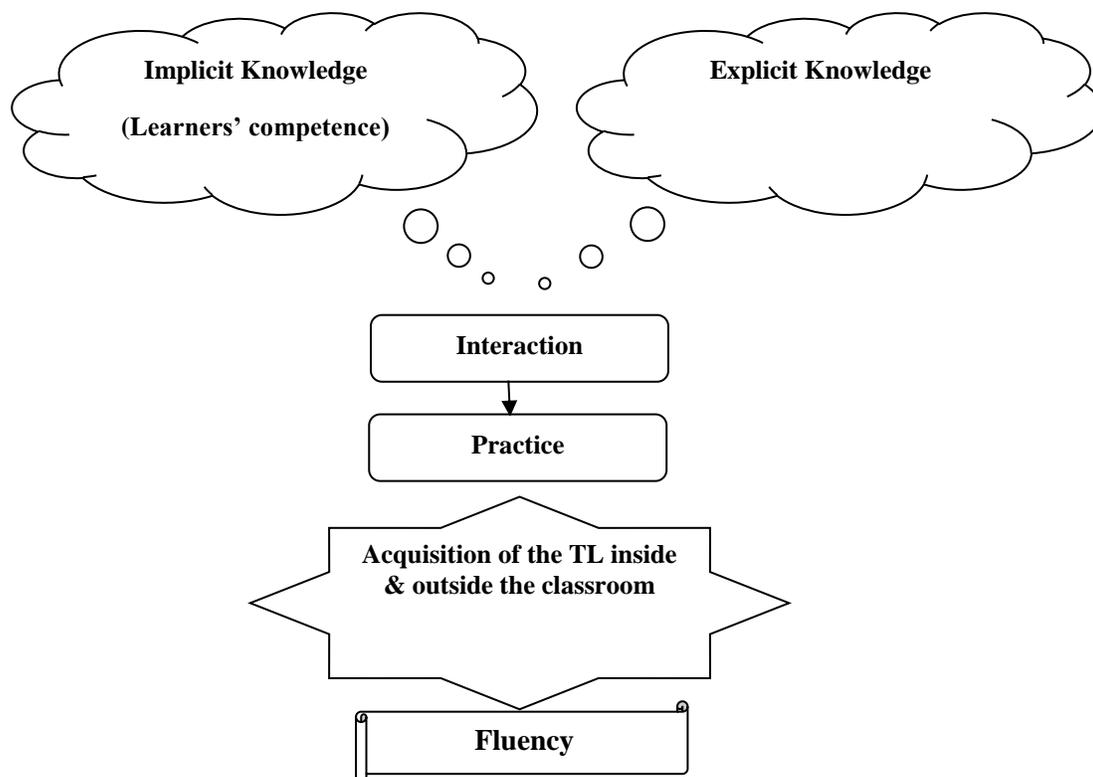


Figure 1 Consciousness-raising model of de-fossilization

This model will be very beneficial for our unit of analysis represented by the Iraqi M.A. students of linguistics because it summarizes all the three aforementioned schools of teaching methods and integrate their properties in one approach. It matches our students needs because they are mentally matured enough to receive the explicit knowledge related to the rules of active and passive simple present tense and add it to their implicit knowledge that is stored in their competence. They spend long time in receiving those rules throughout their previous years of study. Following the stages of development shown in the model the students have to match between what they previously know about the structure and the suitable situations of active and passive simple presents and what they always receive as more supporting information and explicit knowledge about the same tenses and reinforce them with more and more practice inside and outside the classroom. In this case, after a suitable period of time the active and passive simple present will be transformed into their implicit knowledge. They will overcome their fossilized errors and put the present tense in its well formed shape and de-fossilize it. Finally they can write and speak English language specifically the simple present tense in its active and passive form inside and outside the classroom very well. As a result of more and more practice they will have fluency in using the target language.

Conclusion

The occurrence of fossilization in the use of active and passive simple present tense is a serious problem for English language learners. But it is a crucial dilemma for Iraqi M.A. students of

linguistics, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad because they are future university students and mentally matured but their minds get fossilized when learning the basic structures of a foreign language.

In terms of the error analysis, the main reason behind fossilization is traced back to the lack of communication outside the classroom and the influence of their native language namely language transfer. Iraqi students are unfamiliar with adding third person singular (-s) to the main verb in the active simple present tense and unable to use verb to be in the passive form of the simple present tense. So in spite of all the previous years of studying English language they get fossilized minds and stand helpless to correctly use the two forms of simple present tense.

De-fossilizing the aforementioned use of the two forms of present tense needs a psycholinguistic approach represented by Sharwood Smith (1981) "Consciousness-Raising" that suits learners who are mentally matured and have competence of stored information about language. A psycholinguistic model has been developed to help learners match between implicit and explicit information supported by practice and communication in order to reach the production of a well-formed language. Following this model, students can overcome fossilization by raising their awareness of a foreign language.

About the Author:

Nawal Fadhil Abbas got her PhD in English Language and Linguistics in 2014 from University of Sains Malaysia and now she is teaching at the College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. Her field of study is Semantics and Pragmatics. Other fields of interests include Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Stylistics and Corpus Linguistics. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2608-6909>

Lina L. Younus got her PhD in English Language and linguistics 2012 from University of Baghdad College of Arts. Now she is teaching at the College of Education for Women university of Baghdad. The major field of study is language and linguistics. Other fields of interest discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and applied linguistics. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5219-2460>

Huda H. Khalil holds the Master of Arts degree in English Language and Linguistics obtained from the University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq in 2000. The major field of study is English language and linguistics. She is a faculty member in the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq, since 2002. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4194-9194>

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