MORPHOSYNTACTIC STUDY OF URDU ESL LEARNERS: A DERIVATION BY INTERFACE

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to investigate morphosyntactic concatenation of the ESL leaners' errors under the theoretical tent of Interface Modular Approach posited by Chomsky (1995). Interface Hypothesis is a perspective on interfaces in L2 acquisition that has gained a lot of traction compares various interface types in grammars that are close to native in order to discuss the nature of the end state knowledge of highly skilled L2 speaker[s]. For conducting this study, the dubbed interface hypothesis that developed over time is that, in so far as near-native speakers have issues at all, these are likely to be related only with certain interfaces. The aim of this study is to analyse the interface of syntax/morphology of L2 English of Urdu learners. For the analysis of morphology/syntax interface, data is collected from 15 students of Grammar Model high school through an essay writing. Data is analysed according to *inflectional morphology*, *arguments*, *loan words* and *phrasal verbs*. The study theoretically predicts that interface approach is advanced modular inter-connected system, Urdu ESL learners committed such investigated errors but syntactically, they are due to *incompatible* upper module of cognitive systems as thematic and functional layers are generated cyclically.

Keywords: Interface hypothesis; morphosyntactic interface; second language acquisition; inflectional morphology

1. Introduction

Acquiring a second language (L2) coupled with mastering one's mother tongue (L1) is unavoidable as the world has become a smaller, more interconnected 'global village', and everyone, except for a select few, encounters some levels of difficulty when acquiring a second language (Fromkin & Rodman, 1998)**.** If someone (learners) is exposed to a cluster of perplexed sequential multilingualism, the situation in Pakistan is comparable. Pakistani language learners who initially begin studying English in school level due to its academic and official nature, encounter difficulties and make phonetic, syntactic, morphological, and lexical errors because there is not a suitable natural environment in which to practice their second language. This is surprising and alarming in Pakistan since then (Haidar & Fang, 2019),

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English is the official language, the language of education, and is linked with promoting social mobility and where English also emerged as a dominant and prestigious language in the globe.

A child begins learning their first language (L1) before the age of three, at three months. This language is also referred to as his/her mother tongue or primary language (Elman *et al..* 1996; Karmiloff and Karmiloff-Smith 2001). In today's interconnected world, learning a second language has become essential for practically everyone in the globe particularly in Pakistan. Each language in the world has a set of grammatical principles/rules. Recent studies (Khan, 2020; Jo, 2000; Sorace, 2000; Haidar & Fang, 2019; Islam, 2012) on L2 acquisition have placed a lot of focus on interfaces between the language system and the external grammar components, such as Syntax and Discourse, or between the various grammar modules, like Syntax and Semantics, Syntax and Morphology (Borer, 1998), or Morphology (Embick, 2007; Islam, 2012) and Phonology. This has given rise to motivation and inclinations that the challenges faced by L2 learners can be attributed to issues integrating language phenomena pertinent to certain interfaces. Linguistic Interfaces; the application of interface principles to language learning content, procedures, and outcomes is the most significant recent advancement in Chomsky's theory of constructive linguistics for SLA.

While Universal grammar (UG) theory and research continued to place a strong emphasis on syntax, lexical, grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic/discourse meanings are all given far more weight when linguistic interfaces are taken into account. This method builds on Chomsky's Principles and Parameters Model (1981), which states that the output of phonological and semantic modules must relate to the core computational system (syntax), continuing his earlier assertion that the language faculty is modular (with separate components for Syntax, Phonology, Semantics, etc.) Despite the significantly improved focus on meaning, there are still several SLA-related challenges that a UG method that primarily places an internal focus on the learner's mental organization cannot adequately address. Lexical meaning resides in the words that are stored in learner's mental dictionaries/lexicon[s].

When one learns an additional language, some of the words that learned already are equivalent in meaning to words that are known in our L1, but many are not translation equivalents. Grammatical meaning is often carried by inflectional morphology, including information about *number, gender, tense, and aspect*. The word form *'cats'*, for instance, includes the lexical meaning of cat plus the grammatical marking of *'plural'*. The addition of context and real-world knowledge in pragmatic/discourse meaning can be accounted for as a syntax-pragmatic/discourse interface. While some of these interfaces might be universal and require no special knowledge, others clearly reveal L1 and L2 differences. These could contribute to incomplete second language learning as well as serve as a substantial source of language transfer (i.e. fossilization) according to Maqsood *et al* (2019). The most difficult aspects of multilingual acquisition are lexical and grammatical meaning since they account for language variance.

In L2, phrase-and sentence-level semantics frequently necessitates some resetting of parameters, but options are fairly constrained because universal concepts apply to all languages. The learner must therefore travel through the inflectional morphology in order to acquire meaning in a second language, making morphology the acquisition bottleneck. The pragmatic phrasal and linguistic meaning is free and they are all and only encoded unless functional layers are attached via step-wise fashion completing one module successively upgraded into subsequent module[s]. The primary focus of this study is to investigate the sequentially successive language acquisition system that operates in L2 (Urdu L1 leaners) in Pakistan to account for the errors and its rectification according to the interface modular approach (Chomsky, 1981; 1998; 2011).

2. Literature Review

According to the Interface Hypothesis (henceforth IH) Sorace, (2000) and her works. It is more difficult to learn structures that involve an interface between syntax and other domains like semantics and pragmatics than structures that are entirely developed in syntax as syntax provides the formal structure that how sound, meaning are encoded within the words, it suggests a universal frame technically called morphosyntactic frame of the sentence. Nakayama & Yoshimura (2016) worked on Japanese ESL learners and talked about how Japanese English learners acquire L2 inflectional morphology. They examined English writings from learners in two proficiency levels (High and Low) and discovered that while their L2 did not suffer much from the transfer of null subjects and objects from L1, it did not successfully insert inflectional morphemes like the third person singular -s in PF (Chomsky, 1995). The findings of this study indicate that while both groups have very low rates of missing '–ed' and subjects, the rate of missing -s is much higher in the Low group than the High group. These could lead to more arguments in support of the IH. Realizing overt subjects followed by past verbs shows that creating tension sentences is possible.

Khan (2020) extensively worked on the Pakistani ESL learners and said that numerous researches on Pakistani English vocabulary had been done, but only a few have addressed morphology. Therefore, the goal of this study was to investigate how Urdu loan words have been morphologically incorporated into Pakistani English. The investigation of the primary causes of this morphological integration process was another goal of the study. This study employed the qualitative research methodology. In the integration of these foreign words, four distinctive morphological (Embick, 2003) processes had also been discovered.

Viewing the recently conducted studies on ESL on IH, this study formulates some core investigative objections and aims to pursue, as the Urdu is the head last language and learning English by Urdu L1 speakers, creates crucial problems. For dealing this phenomenon, Interface modular approach is best to deal with Urdu learners who are learning English as second language. This study is twofold as it is going (a) to analyse the morphology-syntax interface of L2 English learners whose first language is Urdu and (b) investigating the errors in inflectional morphology of L2 English.

3. Method and Materials

This study is qualitative in nature. It is investigating the errors of Urdu leaners who are acquiring English as second language. For achieving the desirable results, each applied studies needs data. For this study, data has been accumulated from Urdu ESL learners. Data has theoretically been analysed under the core prospectives of the IH. It is more difficult to learn grammatical phenomena at the interface (Embick, 2007; Stewart, 2007) and L1 verb form transfer affects L2 morphosyntax. If these are on the correct track, the same logic can be used to explain how Urdu learners of L2 English acquire inflectional morphology, argument structure, loan words and phrasal verbs.

3.1 Participants

Participants for this study have randomly been recruited on the basis of their availability from remote area and they are fifteen students from Grammar Model High School in Punjab (Pakistan). For empirical data for this study, it has been collected from speakers whose first language is Urdu and they are acquiring English as second language. Essay writing (EW) used as tools for data collection from the speakers. They were asked to write essay on different topics which are part of their syllabus. The students are fully prepared for writing an essay as it is the core subject in ESL syllabus.

3.2 Procedures

For getting more credible data, it has been assured that natural and accurate samples can be achieved. For this, the study is following the proper procedure for data collection. First of all, all the students are assigned 5 topics on one type of essays like descriptive essays. They are now in free hand to collect information to the related topic from any source. Second they have been given 2 days for preparation and informed the date of data collection. On the specified day, they have been arranged into one fully ventilated room and given one topic for essay writing. At this stage, they have given the guideline on to organize the essay. They have been given proper time to write the essay according to the length of the essay.

4. Data Analysis

For selection of samples, random sampling technique has been adopted. If samples have been selected on preferences basis like highly appreciative and highly unappreciative, the results will be contradictory and then, we will have to specify the variables as the previous have been conducted by Khan (2020). Different examples have been collected from the essays written by the students.

4.1 Inflectional Morphology and Syntax

Inflectional morphology (Jo, 2000) is characterized as morphology with grammatical content, such as which is pertinent to syntactic operations. For instance:

Case-marking is used to indicate an NP's syntactic role in a sentence. Here are some examples of *case marking* from the essays of students.

1. Quaide Azam contributed a lot in the formation of Pakistan. ***He** contribution is unforgettable.

2. Corruption is increasing day by day in our country. **We** must take serious steps to control over it, as Pakistan is ***us** country. Heard about the incident from ***he**.

Clauses of a particular type are identified by inflectional markers like *tense* and *aspect-affixes*. Here are examples;

1. He struggl**ed** too much for the achievement of his goal. But he didn't get it.
2. Walk**ing** with the help of stick-on mountain tops, was easy for us.

3. He ***eat** the whole meal and went on job.

In agreement between adjectives and the nouns they modify, or between verbs and their subjects or objects, *person* and *number markers* frequently play a role. These are some examples;

1. Allama Iqbal and Quaide Azam were our **national** heroes.

2. This **kind** of things are not allowed in our society.

3. The **weather** is very **beautiful**.

In some ways, **inflection** can be seen as a component of the **binding agent** that binds sentences.

4.2 Arguments

Arguments are defined as words or phrases that a verb logically requires or that the verb's meaning implies within the thematic domain. Typically, arguments must accompany a verb, as in the following examples.

1. Our vehicle runs.

   Vehicle with run.

2. She ate the whole meal.

   She and meal.

3. Ali placed the bottle in the refrigerator.

   Ali, the bottle, refrigerator.

4. Ali placed the refrigerator.
   Placed.

   Interpretation: In the above cited examples from (1-4) the interesting data has been reported. In example (1), the verb **run** has just one *argument* which is its subject noun phrase (NP). Intransitive verbs are those that take *only one argument*, according to conventional

   In the example (2), the verb- eat requires two arguments which are its subject and object noun phrases and these types of verbs are actually transitive verbs as they require two arguments (a) internal and (b) external arguments. The verb placed in example (3) needs a subject, an object, and a different way to express location. Therefore, if a verb needs three, intransitive is the term typically used to describe arguments.

   4.3 Loan Words

When a word is borrowed from other language, the level of morphological integration (Islam, 2012) provides information about how widely the word was used. The phonological, morphological, and syntactical systems of the beneficiary language can also be used to represent a borrowed item (i.e. code-switches), but there is still a chance that the item will appear again in the beneficiary. Language raised the likelihood that word would be widely used in new language structures.

Here are some examples from the essays of students.

1. **Shriah** should be followed by the people of our society.   Islamic Law
2. **Qawali** is played on the mehndi night of Muslims. A style of Muslims music
3. Muslim women carry **dupatta** on their heads. A long piece of cloth
4. Sufism is very famous in Muslim society.
5. A thought of school which emphasis on the search of Allah.

   4.4 Interface Items

   Cases that exist somewhere between the two levels of organization, i.e. cases where it is not entirely evident what belongs to morphology and what belongs to syntax.

   Clitics (Franks, 2000) are minor grammatical components that are not *free morphemes* because they cannot exist on their own. But they also don't exactly resemble affixes. They do not bear emphasis in terms of phonology, and they combine with a nearby word to form a single phonological word that we shall refer to as the host of the clitic. Proclitic are clitic that arrive before their hosts, while enclitics are clitic that come after their hosts. Because of this, morphologists and syntacticians are both interested in linguistics. They both exhibit the traits of bound morpheme and syntactic units. Basic clitic as free morphemes without accents may

be phonologically reduced and subordinated to a nearby word. However, in terms of their syntax, they appear in the same spot that the comparable free word can occupy.

Simple clitic in English includes forms like -**II** or **-d**, like in the lines below:

a. I'll take tea.

b. She'd like the apple.

The contracted forms of the auxiliary verbs will and would in these phrases are will and would, and they appear exactly where the independent words would have gone after the subject and before the main verb.

Like simple clitic, special clitic is phonologically dependent on a host, but they are not shortened versions of independent words. Compare the following French examples:

a. I see Raza, or Je vois Raza.

b. I see him, I le vois, C.I can see him. I see him.

Despite being written as a separate word, the object pronoun 'le' in French is phonologically dependent on the verb to the right of it; in other words, the verb and object pronoun are sounded as a single phonological word. In French, there isn't a standalone term that denotes 'he'. Le and the other object pronoun forms are hence unique clitic in French.

Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs are those that combine a verb with a preposition or particle, for example:

Ask somebody out invite on a date.

Back something up reverse

Back somebody up support

Chip in help

Phrasal verbs frequently have idiomatic meanings, as the aforementioned examples demonstrate, and in that regard are similar to words. The combination of a verb with a particle or preposition in English may appear to be another type of compound in terms of structure.

The two elements of the phrasal verb can, and in certain cases must, be separated, in contrast:

a. *I called up him.*

b. *I called a friend up.*

c. *I called her up.*

d. *I called up her.*

The particle can come before or after a whole noun phrase when it is the verb's object. In the first instance, it is close to its verb; whereas in the second instance, it is distant from the verb. Additionally, the particle must be kept separate from the verb when the object is a pronoun.

5. Discussion

This section is interpreting the discussion.

5.1 The Syntax-morphology Interface

The methods in which words are constructed in various languages are the subject of morphology. Identifying the rules that let people combine words into phrases and phrases into sentences is, in contrast the focus of syntax. Therefore, morphology and syntax are typically concerned with different levels of linguistic organization. Despite this, morphology and syntax interact in a variety of ways. The morphology-syntax relationship frequently has a sense of directionality; in some instances, the morphology seems to drive the syntax, while in other instances, the syntax seems to drive the morphology. When the derivation/inflection distinction is important, this perception closely matches it. Words, phrases, and sentences make up language. The rules/principles of language apply at all levels and universally claimed syntax is all the way down. Morphology is the study of word formation and structure at the word level.

Understanding and employing the proper word structure, such as word roots, prefixes, and affixes, are essential morphological abilities (called morphemes). Solid understanding of grammatical morphemes, including the use of the *-ing* for a right usage of the present progressive verb, /s/ to denote the plural form, and having a strong understanding of verb tense is essential for morphology. Morphological construction and syntactic design are plainly reliant together. Inside a given language, plural subjects can require plural types of limited action words, derivational appendage can change an action word's contention structure necessities, and similar provisions can be presented by modifiers which should be properly bent. Complex word-inside structure in polysynthetic dialects addresses the same legitimate substance as sentence-interior construction in secluding dialects, with expansive yet not endlessly factor radiance between these limits.

6. Conclusion

The overall prediction of this is that L2 learners may eventually, achieve native-like acquisition at the internal interface, or the interface connecting language-internal modules, such as syntax, semantics: whereas there will be prolonged optionality for adult L2 learners at the external interface, or the interface connecting a linguistic module with a language-external domain, such as syntax and discourse. Morphology and language structure share a jargon of classifications and highlights –things, action words, tenses, cases, and so on. The two of them show progressive design and headedness.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. The research was conducted in an unbiased manner, and the results and interpretations presented in this paper are based solely on the data collected during the study.

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