

ROLE OF LANGUAGE TRANSFER IN SYNTACTIC ACQUISITION
OF ENGLISH VERB PARTICLES BY PAKSTANI LEARNERS



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Fariha Yasmeen

DEDICATED

To

ALLAH ALMIGHTY

(Creator of the Universe)

HOLY PROPHET HAZRAT MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

(The Greatest Human Educator)

AND

My father Haji Muhammad Nawaz, and my father in law Syed Ulfat Hussain Zaidi.

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they are not here to see the completion of this project.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated “Role of language transfer in syntactic acquisition of English verb particles by Pakistani learners”. It explored the learnability issues in syntactic acquisition of English verb particles (VPC) with reference to Schwartz and Sprouse’s Full Transfer/Full Access hypothesis (FT/FA). It addressed the research questions: Do Pakistani learners acquire functional structure of English verb particles, which is not represented in their first language (Urdu)? Do they accommodate transferred Urdu grammar in learning English verb particles?

The research is quantitative in nature and data were collected at four Educational levels: Secondary, Higher Secondary, Graduation and Postgraduation. 200 respondents (50 students at each educational level) were selected as sample of the study from different schools, colleges and universities of Lahore city. The learners were assigned Grammatical Preference Task (GPT). It consisted of 50 paired sentences and developed on a five-point Likert-scale. Each paired sentence (A & B) was followed by the five closest options.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data on SPSS; standard deviation (SD), chi-square, t-test and ANOVA were used to test the mean differences of the respondents. The findings showed that Pakistani learners do not demonstrate similar patterns of acquisition like L1ers, contra the Pure UG hypothesis, and L2ers are strongly influenced by L1 transfer, supporting the FT/FA hypothesis; Pakistani learners select prepositions and particles in the same way and mark adjacent VPC as prepositions or adverbs. The learners do not have semantic and syntactic acquisition of VPC and most of them omit verb particles due to the transfer of L1 properties. So, the increase in adjacent transparent VPC proves that Pakistani learners might have acquired particle integration and the structure for transparent and adjacent VPCs as compared to split VPC.

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