



## MOTHER TONGUE AS AN AID IN THE ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGE: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN ALWAR

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### ABSTRACT

Roger Bacon points out "Grammar is substantially one and the same in all the languages despite its accidental variations." So there is not much difference in the structure of a language. If a person has good command over the mother tongue, there are more possibilities to adapt, assimilate and accommodate second language without putting up much pressure on the learners. There are some similarities in syntax, phonology, morpheme, word inflection and various other aspects of the language. In this context of learning the second language, introspective learning should be emphasized, language learning should be action oriented and engaging so that learners can practice more and more. They can easily perceive what one wants to convey in a particular sentence. It is obvious that acquisition through mother tongue becomes easier and pervasive. Mother tongue plays a crucial role in imbibing second language. Learning things through mother tongue is more stable and pragmatic. Comprehension happens through learning and observation, learning and observation happen only through mother tongue even at the primary learning stage. Our first thoughts come to us only in mother tongue whether we learn second language through syntax or we acquire it by living in that environment. At embryonic stage of learning, we think twice, first in the mother tongue and then in the other tongue. Gradually we do not take much time in thinking. As we start thinking in second language, thoughts come inadvertently. In fact in this process of imbibing the second language we internalize syntax, phonology, morpheme of second language with the help of our knowledge of the mother tongue. The focus of the paper will be on phonological aspect of mother tongue and second language, by drawing similarities between the two. The second part of the paper will focus on syntactical aspect in language learning. At places structures of the mother tongue and the second language are parallel. There is difference in structure but it can be solved out very easily if we focus on sentence pattern seriously but more on practice of sentences. The third part of the paper will focus on morphological aspects of the mother tongue which aid in the learning of the second language because there is similarity in the use of affixes in of Hindi and English

### INTRODUCTION

Rightly pointed out by a writer "a human baby appears to be born with pre-existent knowledge of language." We are habitual of thinking in the mother tongue when we start learning or speaking a second language. It is the mother tongue which is the main root of becoming bilingual or multilingual. For a child, first imbibing process is sound. His process of listening remains for two to three years. During this cognition period



they acquire all aspects of the mother tongue. He then tries to speak some letters and words repeatedly. After sometime they begin to speak little sentences. Imbibing mother tongue is a natural process and it reflects the later period of learning process of the second language. Acquiring second language through mother tongue becomes tactic when we are not taught basic syntax, phonology and morpheme from the very beginning in very positive manner and at same time to highlight or to put more stress on accuracy. Basic unit of teaching in the class must be how to pronounce words with the help of mother tongue. How we can simplify structure pattern to make learners feel that there is no big difference in the structure between mother tongue and second language. Mother tongue is total submission to inculcate new things by the learners. In fact learner is more leaning toward visualization process which can culminate into acquisition naturally. An embryonic learner makes imaginary process of imbibing the second language through watching from their own surroundings which ultimately culminate into syntax and morpheme. Since after watching; learners obviously speak out some sentences. These sentences come out into mother tongue which are directly associated with syntax. If teaching of second language is done through practical process then need of mother tongue will be lesser because when everything is done manually then emphasis on medium is not required since these all things are happening in front of the learners like their creation, formation etc. Acquiring second language through mother tongue can be simplified by the facilitator if it is done through creativity and some teaching aids. For further, enhancing knowledge of second language teacher must take help of mother language in which he applies phonology, syntax and then morpheme. At last we can say that there are some similarities and parallel in syntax, phonology and morpheme and teacher's job is to inculcate the second language in simple way to the learners. Since a learner cannot make out metaphorical syntax but he/she can easily grasp similes. Mother tongue becomes a barrier when subject matter is presented to the learners in complicated way whether it is syntax, phonology and morpheme and more teaching is based on cramming vocabularies.

### Phonological aspect

Phonology is analysis of sound pattern in a language. First knowledge of phoneme should be given to the learners so that they can pronounce letters, syllables and then words. Sound (P) is similar to (Ph) in Hindi and a learner can easily pronounce it. After it we can make them understand the allophones sound of -P in *pit*, *lamp*, *spit*. In this way a learner can pick phoneme which sounds P. It is very essential to teach the learners allophones so that they can learn different sounds of a phoneme. Although orthography of English is so irregular that we cannot sustain on a single strategy to manipulate the learners but we can assimilate Hindi sound and English sound from the very beginning. What happens in teaching English sound of Hindi does match to English that creates confusion among learners. As *CH* is sometime pronounced in Hindi (*K*) or (*+*). E

Whichever word we pronounce is identified by its phonetic sound with the help of Hindi consonant and vowel. Every word of second language is same as in mother tongue. First we should give the basic knowledge of sound pattern to the learners. First we must teach how to pronounce letters. If the learners are well enough in pronunciation then we can start how to pronounce words it must be given like single vowel sound words, must be given for more and more practice.

Vowel sound 'O' similar to (O in Hindi)

*Dog fog jog log boss nod hot tom pot toad*

Vowel sound 'e'

*Bad cat sat mad mat rat fat van mat pat ban tat*

In this way we can make aware to the learners with vowel sound in different ways and how vowel sound matches with the mother tongue. Later on we can choose complex words which are pronounced differently as- *fine, china, dine, lime, etc.* can be taught.



### Syntactical aspect

According to Noam Chomsky syntax is prominent part of grammar of language structure. Process of sentence structure in learners at embryonic stage is without subject. A child does not speak subject for many years he just says; *Chay do, Pani do, kela do, Dudh pasand hain*, but we get meaning what he wants to convey. Citing these examples is very relevant in this context of second language acquisition. Since there is big difference in structural pattern of Hindi and English. Simple structure pattern of Hindi follows S.O.V. whereas English pattern is S.V.O. in this way it becomes very tough to make learner understand how to cop up this difference so that English learning can become easier. In the class teacher should teach basic sentence pattern and should be used these sentences in contextual point of view so that they can fix structure pattern in their mind. At primary stage abstract sentences should be avoided because these sentences make learners confused but focus must be on 'from known to unknown'. Country like India where everyone knows two or three languages and they can easily grasp what is being taught. Sentence structure must be taught in which learning involves the formation of concept. Formation of concept can be achieved when learning is concerned with perception and sense. In this process we can adapt situational sentences in the class. The teacher can ask the learners to pick out Verb, Subject, Object, and later on adverb and adjective. This process can inculcate their mental process of differentiation between mother tongue and second language. The teacher's focus must be on recurrent errors of the learners and they should be given motivational environment. Teachers should account for the reason of these errors and handle them tactfully without making the learners very conscious. According to Taylor (1983), learners at an elementary level produce more transfer errors than learners at an advanced level. So it is clear that learners should be given a free atmosphere to bloom to overcome L1. Using different kind of approach can give better result in the second language acquisition. The teacher can use English sentences and then he can use Hindi sentences or translation from English to Hindi. This refers to linguistic aspect of every person. Because everyone has internal language of his own and it can adapt external language very easily. If a learner is going to toilet, this time teacher can use this sentence practically or put down on the black board and he can ask students to tell what this sentence is about. In this process every aspect of learning like perception, formation of conception, situational context.

<u>He</u>	<u>is going</u>	<u>to toilet</u>
S	V	A
<u>Vah</u>	<u>toilet</u>	<u>ja rha hain.</u>
S	A	V
<u>She</u>	<u>speaks</u>	<u>English.</u>
S	V	O
<u>Vah</u>	<u>Angreji</u>	<u>Bolti Hain.</u>
S	O	V

This technique is turned out to be more successful in English learning point of view. This learning is incidental in nature because the learner commits less error. Everything is clear in the mind because sentences do not store in the mind but lexical data remain in the mind. When they see sentences in English they translate them very quickly. We translate sentences from Hindi to English then it becomes hurdle. The point is that a learner wants to learn second language in which he can write, speak, listen and read and more then he can make out what is being said in the particular sentences.

### Morphological aspect

Morpheme is another very crucial part in learning second language. Every word has its meaning and with meaning it carries its image. Content Words and function words can be identified in Hindi too. This process of word adaptation comes gradually to the learners. Many verbs in English differ from in Hindi in word formation but their meaning is same. Inflectional categories like tense, person, gender, number, case help the



learners to imbibe second language easily. Since these are very pervasive words which can be formulated according to current situation. All these words produce new words with addition of extra word before or at end of a word. Same happens in both in Hindi and English. There are similarities in verb formation.

Eat	ate	eaten
<i>Khana khana</i>	<i>khana khaya</i>	<i>khana kha chukka hain</i>
Do	did	done
<i>Karna</i>	<i>kiya</i>	<i>kar chukka hain</i>

In English there are irregular verb and regular verb to be used in tenses. In Hindi we can make a new past or perfect verb to make complete sentence. Pronoun 'he' is used in Hindi *vaha, usane, usake*. If the word 'he' carries multiple words in Hindi we must not consider that mother tongue is interference in acquiring second language but it can be made the learners understand that this word's meaning is in *vah, usane, usake*. In Hindi we use *ve or unhone* for showing respect for elders and in English we use *he*.

Derivational morphology is same as we see in Hindi *prati+ kar becomes pratikar*. In English too new word becomes from the old one. The word 'cleverness' is formed by adding -ness, to clever. There is parallel in affix. It covers suffixes and prefixes. As in Hindi - *Pratayya and Upsarg*.

**Suffixes****Pratayya**

Clever	cleverness	<i>kushal - kushalta</i>
Power	- powerless	<i>suraj - surajmukhi</i>
Mercy	- merciless	<i>prabhu - prabhutva</i>

**Affixes****Upsarg**

Read	- reread	<i>Kool - Anukool</i>
Regular	- irregular	<i>Haar - Aahaar</i>
Act	- enact	<i>Aadar - Sadar</i>
Grade	- degrade	<i>Achar - Durachar</i>
Possible	- impossible	<i>Kriti - Vikriti</i>

English verb	Hindi verb
Rain	<i>brasat aa rahi h</i>
Study	<i>adhdhyan karna</i>
Know	<i>ati hain</i>
Get	<i>Samajhana</i>

Solution to these words can be sorted out by practicing more and more so that the learner can get them properly. Because we talk about interference of mother tongue then we find that even mother tongue users do not know properly how to form words.

**Sociolinguistic Aspect**

Environment and social support is very prominent in language acquisition. In schools if a teacher gives task to the students, there are very much chance to adapt what they are being taught. Since task based teaching is very much based on observation from the surrounding. This learning is based on learning by doing. Students are given task, related to their psyche and they are divided into groups. In this way they learn things according to their own perspective. Focus is on meaning rather than grammatical form. Since task is class room activity in which students comprehend, manipulate and express their understanding in target language by structuring their own grammar as we express ourselves into the mother tongue. Task-based teaching is more communicative in nature as it involves the learners in some activity. Drawing a line by listening is a task in which the learner performs according to the instruction. Drawing a line does not involve any language production but task is counted when it is completed. In task based oriented classes motivation and support of the parents and society is vital to promote students.



Counseling and guidance is good tool in boosting English language acquisition. Counseling is a good way of motivation since it is learners' oriented term. In it learners freely express their inner ideas without any hesitation. What happens in English language acquisition most of time students are afraid of committing errors while speaking or writing. This thing becomes a great hurdle for learners while teaching English a teacher can provide such an environment and take out better result. Guidance is also helpful in second language acquisition. Most of time students are well aware of vocabularies, syntax but they can't put them into sentences. This becomes a hurdle.

### Conclusion

The current paper is confined to how mother tongue is an aid in acquiring second language. In this paper there are some gaps will be researched by later on researchers. The researchers can carry on the research on accidental learning in lexis, the syntactical movements of articles, prepositions and auxiliaries of SOV language and other similar languages. The paper focuses on syntax, phonology and morpheme. How far these three topics are relevant in acquisition of second language, has been analyzed. After going through this paper we can add here that mother tongue is not always a barrier but it helps if we apply good pedagogy in the class to acquire second language. As questionnaires show that most students are in favor of mother tongue and task based teaching in schools. Parents' motivation and environment is very helpful in English language acquisition.

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### Appendixes:

#### Questionnaire for intermediate students

S.No	Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Social aspect affects English Language learning in schools.	70%	8%		
2	Mother tongue is helpful in English language learning.	14%	83%		



3	Task based teaching is good technique in adapting English.	66%	37%		
4	Content Words and function words can be identified in Hindi too.	9%	6%	27%	18%
5	Basic unit of teaching in the class must be how to pronounce words with the help of mother tongue.	57%	34%		
6	Enhancing knowledge of second Language, teacher must take help of mother language	76%	6%		
7	Parents should encourage children to learn English.	16%	67%		
8	At primary stage abstract sentences should be avoided	23%	71%		
9	Environment is very crucial in acquiring English.	13%	78%		
10	Accidental English learning helps in language acquisition.	23%	17%	23%	21%