CHAPTER VII

A COMPARISON OF THE ACQUISITION OF MORPHOLOGICAL PATTERNS OF ENGLISH AND HINDI

7.1 Similarities.

7.2 Contrasts.
7.1 Similarities

Free, Compound, Complex and Bound Morphemes

Free Morphemes

According to L.N. Pandey, "In Hindi, almost all root-words can act as 'free morphemes' as in English".¹

The child begins with a few sounds but most of the phonemes are truly established when it starts acquiring words. These starting words are free morphemes which it acquires in unit forms. Free morphemes of Hindi appear at the end of the first year. Exceptions are observed with children beginning at the fourth or fifth month of the second year.

In case of L2 (English) the child realizes most of the phonemes in the words. The reason is that it has sounds of all sorts at its disposal and they occur at one time or another in its speech. But the specific environment to these phonemes is provided only in the free morphemes of the respective language. Thus though the child has sounds, they get their true expression in the free morphemes which it acquires.

The first free morphemes are the nouns, i.e. the names of the animals, toys, pets, common household objects in both the languages. Nouns dominate in both the languages, and are understood by the child from the very beginning.

Verbs in case of L1 also enter the child's corpus in stem forms but in L2 they are roots, if they ever occur. The verbs or nouns, whether roots or stems, remain in its corpus to undergo inflexions or modification as required in its L1 or L2.

Compound Morphemes

At the beginning of the third year, with exceptions, the child begins to create compound morphemes, with free morphemes at its disposal. The free morphemes may be either of L1 or L2, but it is not a matter of concern. But it has more combinations of L1 than of L2. In L2 it has to depend on the adults' vocabulary or of the other children with whom it plays. Combinations can be formed by using morphemes from either languages, as the child is free to do anything with the words. The combinations generally include a noun plus an action word, or a noun plus its companion, as [dɔŋ bʰuː bʰuː].
[kæt mia:ti:], [ďudh roti:], [g$honti: toñtôn]. In case of action verbs the words are usually reduplications of roots.

Instances are also noted in which the child has the meaning of L1 in L2, as in [b$-l-gend], [h$-rs-g$hoda:]. The second word is to emphasise the meaning of the first one. With an insight in relations with other family members the number of compound morphemes increases, as the name of the person and the relative nouns are generally used as [sêñ1fu:caça:], [chotì:na:nì:], [râ:fu:šnakl], [mini:anti].

With the beginning of the fourth year, the child has many adverbs and adjectives at its disposal which it uses freely in multiword sentences. These combine with free morphs to give compound morphemes, as [g$-ëcʰi:ra:ni:], [sêñ-ld k$hgo:], [mi:∫-bi:caji], [t-ëkça]:, [ʃ-co]. The child starts imitating the roles of adults, and may teach the elders, where they produce nonsense-sentences in which compound morphs of standard L1 and L2 can be used, while other words are nonsense syllables.

With the acquisition of colour names of L2 it mixes them with nouns of either language, as [blæk kutta:], [grin'ped], [ka:lə: ðegi], [ni:li: ðe:k].

**Complex Morphemes**

Complex morphemes of L1 are noted in the child’s corpus. Of L2 only a few may be present. These morphemes are formed with the help of a free morpheme plus a suffix. Prefixes are usually absent in both. Rarely a few examples of prefixes of L1 may be noted.

**Bound Morphemes**

Bound Morphemes of both L1 and L2 are absent, which can be combined with free forms to form new words of standard vocabulary of the languages. Sounds of these bound morphemes may be present in the nonsense talks of the child and may be used later to form complex morphemes.

**Morphological Constructions**

**Inflexional morphemes**

Inflexions, mostly suffixes, enter the child’s idiolect of L1 by the middle of the third year. In case of L2 inflexions are to be taught by the elders as the child is not using L2 in its day-to-day communication.
Plurals

In case of plurals, the child in early stage uses no plural nouns of L1 or L2. Knowing the limited capacity of the child elders avoid complicated language. Thus plurals come up only by the beginning of the third year or in its middle. Instances are observed where it uses plurals in place of singulars.

In the third year the child comes in contact with a large inflected vocabulary of L1. The end of the year shows simple plural endings of L1. However as the child learns L2 by especial attention of the elders it may get used to some plural nouns which are generally retained and used in the sense of singulars.

In L1, except for the female plural suffix [-jā], all others are acquired by the beginning of the third year. The nasalization of the final vowel of the words is the most frequent plural suffix, completely absent in case of L2.

Imitation by the child shows that the child is capable of all plural suffixes of L1. But in case of L2 it finds difficulty. The reason may be the lack of practice and few chances of hearing the new patterns in different phonemic structures. Both ‘teeth’ and ‘tooth’ denote the whole set of teeth in the mouth. ‘Eyes’ or ‘eye’ denote sometimes one and at other times the pair.

Rules for forming plurals in L1 are generally noted in the fourth year but same is true of L2, if the child has similar L2 rich environment as of L1.

Possessive Endings

The form of possessiveness is understood by the child at an early stage but the terms to denote it come up in the later stages. The third year is the crucial time period for acquiring it. The post-positions come up slowly. In case of L2, prepositions are acquired at the school age. Even in the fifth standard the child faces difficulty in acquiring them.

In L1, the child acquires the possessive pronouns. The earliest ones are the first person pronouns, followed by those of second person. If it is surrounded with L2 in the family then it follows the same sequence. The third person pronouns come up by the end of the third year, or in the beginning of the fourth year. Colloquial influences are also noted and they exist parallel to the standard forms. In case of L2 the second person
pronouns may come up, if used frequently, but the third person pronouns are absent and are acquired only at school level.

In case of pronouns used for inanimate objects they are acquired, but not of L2. The phonemic structures of L2 are new for the child and not frequently heard by it, thus it has difficulty in articulating them.

**Verbs**

Generally the child has none, or very few verb-roots of L2, but of L1, they are many by the beginning of the fourth year. The inflexional endings in early stages follow the personal term used by the child; /mə/ or /həm/. The verbs in present tense come up first. Even verbs of near future are noted, as [məkʰaːu] or [həm kʰaːl].

In case of L2 the child has verbs in nursery rhymes, other-wise they are absent and acquired, following the same sequence, only if the child communicates in L2. If the child joins the nursery school it learns roots or stems in phonetic drills and nouns denoting their actions as [bɔrdz ˈɪlai], [dəks ˈkwæk], [dəɡz ˈbɑːr]. L1 helps it in learning the meaning of verbs used in L2.

**Adjectives**

Suffixes used for adjectives are absent from the child's corpus for both L1 and L2. Adjectives in positive degree are present in the idiolect. The gender endings in L1 are also acquired by the end of the third year, as in [ɔlˈccʰa]-[ɔlˈccʰi]. The songs and ads. on T.V. can teach it some of the adjectives of L2.

In case of adjectives in both L1 and L2, the child has a tendency to repeat the words, as [ɔlˈccʰiː; ɔlˈccʰiː mɔˈmni], [bləkiː; bləkiː ˈdʒe]. Such phrases are melodious.

**Derivational Morphemes**

In case of derivational morphemes in L1, they are not many in the initial stages, but bounce in large number by the end of the third year. In case of L2, derivational morphemes are very few, only those that have been adopted in L1.

In both L1 and L2, the child has no derivational prefixes. Suffixes are the only morphemes present. In L1 these suffixes increase with age and are many at the
beginning of the fourth year. The main field of change is from noun to adjective in L1, while in L2 usually from verbs to nouns, for example, /pijər/ - [ˈpijərə], /draiv/ - [ˈdraivər].

In both the languages the roots may or may not be present. Since the child acquires the words as units, it is difficult to say whether it uses the roots to derive the new words, or learns the new words itself, as units. However observation shows that adjectives or agentive nouns are present though the roots may come later.

The suffixes, however, once established in the idiolect can be thought of being used in other instances. Thus suffixes like [-ər], [-iən], [-i:], [-a:] once patterned in the child’s morphological system can remain there to join with other words that enter its corpus in the fourth year.

The main factors that influence the occurrence of derivational morphemes are:

1. The vocabulary that surrounds the child.
2. The child’s attention.
4. Child’s personality, i.e., a talkative child learns more than a silent child.
5. Company of children.
6. Nursery education, more common now-a-days, beginning by the middle of the third year.

In L2 derivational morphemes are very few. Here in L1 the child has the derived forms first and then the roots come later as /juːˈbɛrə/ → [ˈbɛrə].

Class Maintaining Derivations

Prefixes are absent in the child’s idiolect.

Verbs

In L1 the child has many verbs with class maintaining derivational morphemes by the fourth year. It begins with singualrs and switches over to plural forms by the end of the third year. In L2 examples are not enough to emphasise the facts. It uses the roots or stems of the verbs and plurals are absent. Lack of communication is the major hindrance in acquisition of derivational forms of L2. Even at school it faces problems in grammar, unless communication in L2 is forced in the school hours.
The idea of past tense and long future is not attained. Concepts of present and near future are clear to the child.

**Nouns and Pronouns**

L1 shows a wide range of class maintaining derivations, changing the genders or numbers. The relative nouns of L1 are common in the child’s speech, which in case of L2 are devoid of derivational morphemes.

Acquisition of plural forms of L1 begins in the middle of the fourth year. Nasalization of [-i:] in feminine gender to indicate plural number is common. Other forms are with [-ɾ], [-ɾ], [-ɾ], [-ɾ] not very common. Post-positions come in Hindi, while prepositions and articles (determiners) in L2 are absent.

In L2 the child does not have plural forms. In case of genders it has free morphemes, not derived words. Adjectives are derived with final [-i:] ending, as in /hɔɾt/ - ['hɔɾtːi:], /swiːt/ - ['swiːtːi:].

Reduplication of adjectives is very common in both L1 and L2. It is the main device used to give melody to speech which is used by the child and the elders while talking to it. In case of L1 the adjectives have open codas, i.e., ending in vowel. However in case of L2 the child has roots of adjectives usually ending in stops to which it adds an - [-i:] to maintain the melody for a longer duration, for example, [ɔlɔŋhiː] [ɔlɔŋhiːr]. ['swiːtːiː] [swiːtːiː], respectively.

**Morphophonemics**

**Reduplication**

Reduplication is more common in Hindi. This point has been emphasized by Rukmini Bhaya Nair in her paper. In case of a child brought up in a Hindi environment it is incorrect to emphasise this point because the vocabulary of English is very little to analyse the case of reduplication. The child begins L2 only when it has a fairly established L1. Reduplication is also less as the child gets knowledge of phonic drills where it gets used to same rhyme in different monosyllables. In L1, as it is beginning with new words, it tries to memorise it and another reason may be that it has only a few words at its disposal to communicate with the adults. Thus to make its communication more emphatic, like that of adults, it reduplicates the same syllable or word. Another more important reason may be its immature muscles which may not stop
at its wish and glide over again to produce the same sound to reduce error. Reduplication declines with age and gets limited only to songs and the nursery-words used by the child. In L2 it is the same case.

Modification

Modification is common both in L1 and L2.

Modification due to vowel change

Vowels undergo change both in quality and quantity as the child has a very flexible, untrained articulatory system. They are realized before the consonants get stable. The only feature that keeps changing is of length which remains somewhat unstable even in later stages. Some features become a part of the idiolect of the child which appear even in adulthood.

Vowel changes are also common in L2. But as the child has a vowel system of L1 at its disposal the changes that occur in the phonemic structures of L2 are only due to the new phonemic patterns which it rarely hears in its family. Even then the variations of length are more common in both the languages.

Substitution of vowels is noted only when the child lacks a particular vowel-consonant pattern or when it does not receive a clear audible impression of the vowel sequence through the speech of the adults, or when it lacks the true vowel. As these factors are resolved the child starts imitating the adults’ form correctly. Most of them are due to the moods of the child. In excited stage the vowels are long but in depressive moods they are reduced in length. It is difficult to make out what the child wants to say.

A significant point to be noted is that the child has no grammatical rules to follow; thus the modification in the child’s speech cannot be tested on these rules.

Modification Due to Consonants

In the early stages as the child is devoid of many consonants it drops them in initial stages in case of L1, but by the time it starts acquiring L2 most of the consonants or their allophones appear which replace those that were absent at the time of acquisition of L1. Usually allophones of same consonants occur in L2, except that the new phonemic structures modify their articulation. The L1 phonemes and allophones,
most of their characteristics shared by those of L2, help in realization of the new phonemic structure of L2. The child finds less difficulty in shifting from L1 to L2 if communication, which it shares, has L2 vocabulary. Special lessons given by elders help it in realizing the new patterns correctly. But the main inhibiting factor is that that the elders themselves use Hindi phonemic versions in L2 instead of pure English phonemes.

As in L1 all the phonemes are produced, the child follows the same sequence in L2. It retains the final /b/ after /m/. It does not follow the rules of changing sound word finally or in clusters correctly in L2.

In case the child drops a consonant, its loss is compensated by lengthening the preceding vowel, a feature shared in initial stages of language acquisition in both L1 and L2.

In both partial modification is more frequent than the total modification. Total modification cannot be analysed as the child acquires phonemic structures in unit forms, i.e. either the modified form or the root, either of which can occur first. There is no rule that the root will be acquired first.

**Metathesis**

Metathesis is the process which cannot be denied in either languages. The only reason is that the child encounters both the languages at first hand. Also, the sound patterns, whether of L1 or L2, it hears for the first time. Since its hearing capacity is still developing all the sounds are new to it.

While acquiring the language patterns it is also learning to distinguish the same or different audible sounds produced by different speakers. The audible impressions that the adults’ speech produce on the child’s hearing organs are new to it. In order to produce the same sounds the child hears, either memory foxes it or its articulatory organs fox it leading to misplacing of phonemes, tries to imitate the sounds produced by adults. Once the phonemic structures are established the case of metathesis decreases.

One more reason is that that the child uses the easiest form at its disposal. Thus it alternates the clusters or syllables at its convenience. The phonemic structures of L2 have a variety of consonantal cluster. As the child adds to the L2 corpus these clusters also enter it but at the initial stages of acquisition it has little knowledge of such clusters.
in a new phonemic environment. L1 has different patterns of clusters but less in number than those of L2. The child has to begin anew with the new forms in L2, and metathesis is the result. Usually the tongue slips for clusters with /l/ or /r/.

In the early stages it has many slips of the tongue, which lead to many examples of metathesis, as it gets practice and control on the organs of speech these reduce. But at a time when it is over whelmed with new phonemic patterns it again shows cases of metathesis which again reduce with frequent encounters with correct forms. The child does not have a large L2 vocabulary still the cases of metathesis are noted.

Imitations, self-induced corrections and guidance of the elders help in reducing the incorrect forms. Some are still retained as they are not taken as incorrect, like /'chilka:/ - [chikla:], /gup'cup/ - [cup'gup].

**Loss of Phonemes**

Loss of phonemes is common to both L1 and L2. Though in L1, it is highly operational as the child does not have all phonemes at its disposal in the initial stages. In mono-or-disyllabic phonemic structures all phonemes are retained and those which are not in the repertoire of the child are either dropped, or substituted by their allophones or other suitable phonemes at the child’s disposal. This is similar in case of L2 also. Chaturvedi has observed neutralization of contrasts in final position in speech of Hindi speakers. He says,

> It should be noted that in the final position after a vowel the aspirate-non-aspirate contrast of the stop consonants is completely neutralized, and the voice-voiceless contrast is also almost lost.  

This has been the case in the speech of the child also.

In polysyllabic words phonemes in the middle are dropped to retain the audible phonemic structure and vowels or their lengths are substituted in place of missing phonemes.

In the initial stages the phonemes are dropped but the same come up as the child adds them to its repertoire. This is true in case of both the languages. But in case of L2 it is in a better condition since it has phonemes of L1 or their allophones to be used in L2.
In consonantal clusters, the clusters are simplified by inserting short vowels and dropping the unacquired phonemes, like /k,t,\(t^h\),s,\(s^h\)/ and others. Even in the later stages when the child acquires the required phonemes, the clusters are generally simplified to give glide to the tongue, as it does not glide easily from one consonant to the next.

In L1 the final phonemes are vowels which are retained by the child, but in L2 the final sounds are consonants which, if voiced, are devoiced, otherwise dropped in case of di-or polysyllabic words. In case of diphthongs they are reduced to suitable vowels. This is more prominent in L2, as L1 has few diphthongs which are simplified in the speech of adults.

**Stress Shift**

As the child is an egocentric being, its moods guide the stress shift both in L1 and L2. It can either stress all syllables, rather all phonemes or none. In order to make clear the phonemic structure of a word to the child, the adults use musical sound patterns which are easily acquired by it. First it has single word utterances in which it uses melody or falling-rising contours, later it does the same in the sentence.

The stress patterns which it acquires in L1 show their influence on those of L2 also. Thus the stress shift used by the adults are grammatical but those used by the child are emotional.

**Palatalization**

Since the child has very flexible organs they are to be trained for a required pattern of sounds of L1. It takes time to learn the control of the muscles of the speech organs. The movement of the tip of the tongue is restricted to the dental and alveolar regions of the roof of the mouth. Accidentally it may move up to the palatal regions. Thus the palatalized phonemes of L1 and L2 are not acquired in the initial stages. In exceptional case the child may never acquire a palatalized or retroflexed phoneme. In L1 /t, \(t^h\),d,\(d^h\),\(n\)/ are retroflexed phonemes while /c,\(c^h\),\(s\),\(s^h\)/ are non-retroflexed phonemes. But both the varieties are not acquired in the early stage. The tip learns to touch the dento-alveolar, alveolar and rarely post-alveolar regions. This is true in case of L2, where the child uses the L1 phonemes or allophones of L1; /\(t,\(t^h\),d,\(d^h\),\(n\)/ in place of alveolar plosives /t,d/ and palato-alveolar /\(j,\(s\)/. The absence of the capacity to retroflex the tip poses the major hindrance, and this is observed in the middle of the fourth
year when the child has a large vocabulary to tone-up its tongue. Though /t,d/ are alveolar plosives in L2, they require retroflexion in L1 which it does not have at its disposal. So it substitutes with the relevant sounds in its L1.

As soon as the child acquires the retroflexion it can apply it to phonemes of L2. /t,d/ of L1 replace those of L2.

/t/ is post-alveolar in L2 but alveolar in L1. It is acquired at a much later stage, around middle of the fourth year. Alveolar lateral /l/ replaces it in phonemic structures with /r/. The absence of trill is the only factor responsible for absence of /r/. r-coloured allophones of /l/ or trill-less allophones of /r/ appear in the beginning of the fourth year. Exceptions are noted where the child retains /l/ in its idiolect throughout its life. Post-alveolar /l/ or /r/ occur only exceptionally.

**Haplography**

Haplography operates in both L1 and L2. It is more frequent in L1 as it is the language used by the child in communication, while L2 is restricted only to special lessons. In case of L2 haplography is restricted to few polysyllabic words or phrases, or while singing the nursery rhymes. There are two main reasons behind this: firstly, it does not get the correct audible impression of the phonemic patterns as not all members have the same expression for a word. Secondly, the child may be unable to retain the memory of all the phonemes in a phonemic pattern. Another important factor is that that the child acquires L2 in an atmosphere of L1, i.e., the medium of teaching is generally L1, thus it finds difficulty in shifting from a familiar pattern to something very different and that, too, without clear meaning.

With practice and error-corrections such instances decline easily in L1. And by the age of four L1 is fully established. But L2 becomes a language of communication only at school level.

**7.2 Contrasts**

The child uses the free morphemes of L2, at its disposal, in L1 compositions as it does not communicate in its L2. Thus morphemes of L2 are not heard in fully L2 environment, but L1 ones. In L1 it acquires the free morphemes orally with real contact with the object, but in case of L2 it gets lessons through phonic drills or nursery songs.
In case of L1, the free morphemes are readily used in the communication, but in L2 they are contextual, used only while taking lessons, or to those situations in which they are applied.

In L1 the phonemes are realized before it begins with Varnamala or with informal education at home. But in case of L2 though the child has various sounds at its disposal it begins with true phonemes of L2 in L2 environment. While learning the alphabets. In case of L1-varnamala is non-arbitrary, i.e., the child uses the same sound as denoted by an alphabet, in the example like, [ə ə'nər kə:], [i ɪmlı: kə:]. But in L2, it is very different. The alphabets are arbitrary, i.e., the alphabets do not represent the sounds, for example, [ei fər'æpɪl], [bi fər'æt], [si fər'æt].

Thus though it acquires the alphabets of L2, it does not acquire the phonemes of L2. The free morphemes used in the lessons can be used by it in its L1 environment, if they are reinforced by the adults. The morphemes get a L1-colouring as some of them are accepted now in Hindi and used so.

The vocabulary of L1 spurs in the end of the second year but in case of L2 it depends on the adults’s attention, or its use in the family. The vocabulary of L2 may increase by the middle or end of the third year. But the free morphemes that it acquires in the drills or numbers or in rhymes are limited to that particular lesson or book. They never become practical. Nouns however may be used by the child to explain them to adults, as [ˈræbɪt ˈmeɪn ˈkʰərˈgəl], [ˈmɜrɡi ˈɛɡ əˈtiˈhæː]. Thus nouns are understood by the child in both L1 and L2 from the very beginning.

Verbs in L1 are acquired by the child along with the inflexions by the time it begins with L2. In L2 they are occasionally acquired like ‘birds fly’ or [flai: ˈmeɪn ˈudnəː]. But such verbs are of no practical use to it at the time of acquisition, until and unless, it starts using English in its communication, at school level. Otherwise these free morphemes remain in the child’s corpus as remnants of L2 thoughout its life.

Aspirated forms of L1 do not substitute for those of L2 /ptk/ as these are not heard by the child. In case of inflexional ending, L1 and L2 show great dissimilarity. In case of L1 the endings are usually vowels while, in case of L2 they are consonants or their allophones in case of tense, number and superlative degree. However it acquires
these only at school age. Even in L1 even if the child uses a large vocabulary, most of the words are the uninflected ones. Not all plural allophones are noted in nouns. In verbs the inflections of all the tenses are noted.

References:-

1. L.N. Pandey, op. cit. p. 112.