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PERFACE

The title of the thesis sufficiently explains that the work mainly deals with the process of acquisition of phonological and morphological patterns of Hindi as L1 and English as L2 by a Hindi-speaking child. Along with the analysis of the process involved, a comparative view has also been applied to discern the similarities and dissimilarities involved in their acquisition.

The case is restricted to the study of a child residing in an ordinary family in M.P., with Hindi as L1. But it is a general study of Hindi-speaking children using Hindi as the mother-tongue and English as second language.

The observations were done in natural conditions without any control on the speech of the child. These observations have been carried out from the early infancy until the completion of four years simultaneously on two children. While three children of the age of 1 year, 2 years, and 3 years were observed at random for analysis, the result obtained are essentially from the former children. The same subject was observed during the English lessons. However the work generalizes the observation and speaks about the case of a single child to avoid complications.

Being a first-hand acquisition of language there neither seem to be, nor are there any fixed accentual patterns in the child’s speech, either in words or in connected speech. With wandering attention, immature muscles and their weak control, immature auditory apparatus, the child hardly presents any regularity in its accentual patterns. It can stress all-or-none of the syllables in a polysyllabic word or in a sentence.

An essential point that needs a mention here is that in case of Hindi, accentual patterns have not been strictly followed in words and connected speech because there are no fixed rules of accentual patterns either for words or connected speech. Aryendra Sharma (Hindi Word Accent, Vol. I, 30, 1969), points out that the three way gradation of syllable timed accent made by Kelkar is untenable and he himself has presented certain rules which, in his own words, “may account for the generally acceptable accentuation of Hindi words (including the tatsama words). It may, however, be noted that since accent is not significant in Hindi, occasional variations in accentuation cannot be ruled out” (115).

Accentual patterns in Hindi are syllable-timed and not stress-timed as in English. Further, in case of a child it is difficult to observe these patterns. In case of English, there are well established rules which can be followed in words and connected speech. Thus
the accentual patterns of English used by the models are followed by the child. But in case of a Hindi-speaking child, it usually follows a model having Hindi as L1, the influence of the patterns of Hindi on those of English is quite obvious. Even the emotional conditions to which the child is exposed every now-and-then result in irregularities in accentual patterns.

As for the classification of the stages of Language Acquisition, the early/first stage begins from the babbling stage at around six months of age and goes up to the middle of the second year. Then second stage begins which ends somewhere in the middle of the third year. The ‘later stages’ usually include the period after the first stage.

Danial Jones’ symbols have been followed to represent the phonological and morphological patterns of English. However, the accentual patterns have not been strictly followed in case of the child’s linguistic productions.

Such a comparative study, I hope, will satisfy a long-standing need in Developmental Linguistics and will lead to further study and analysis.