

Appreciating Linguistics: A typological approach
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Lecture – 62
Typology and word change: Child language Acquisition – Part 3

Hi, hello everyone, welcome to this session of our NPTEL course Appreciating Linguistics: A typological approach.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:24)

GEN-5

(A) INITIAL STAGE:

Children do not understand or use spatial terms. There does not appear to be an inborn bias either for containment versus support or the close-fit versus loose-fit distinction.

(B) INTERMEDIATE STAGES:

Children extend and possibly overextend words but these extensions still stay within the basic categories of the ambient language.

(C) FINAL STAGE:

Terms are understood and used as in the ambient language.

(D) CONDITIONS:

Frequency of exposure and biunique relationships between word forms and word meanings facilitate acquisition.



Now, the concern is the above study which has been done on English and Korean what sort of generalization we can draw? Before that let us summarize what we have studied so far. So, the concern here is that the children who are acquiring Korean and English they are sensitive to the spatial distinction of the ambient language. That means, a Korean child would automatically acquire the loose connection and closefit, there is a difference.

A Korean child would not have to give special effort to identify that an apple and a cup are loosely connected, but a ring and a cassette they are closefit with each other. So, that is not a problem, for typologically the children are sensitive to the spatial distinctions of the ambient language. Then what is the question? The question is how do they acquire the spare related terms or the spatial terms. And crosslinguistically if you try to find out then a couple of

conditions can be noted as recurrent factors that shapes the language acquisition process across languages and one such condition is the frequency of forms in the ambient language.

If a particular word has been frequently occurring and it gives the exposure of it gives the child exposure, and it facilitates the learning, the child is going to acquire it faster. It depends on the frequency of that word. Second, the children show a preference for one to one relationship between form and meaning. If a word is polysemous; that means, for example: the word like bank or if the language has words whose meanings either overlap, cake and pastry or are identical something like doctor and physician.

In such cases it becomes difficult for the child. The one typological generalization is that the word which occurs frequently in the discourse, it is easier for the child to acquire that. Second, the children irrespective of whatever language they are acquiring they tend to go for a one to one mapping of the meaning. So, if there is a one to one mapping of the meaning, of the word, it becomes easier for child's acquisition. But what becomes a challenge?

It becomes a challenge when the child encounters polysemous words like bank or if the language has overlapping meaning like cake and pastry, the meaning is overlapping. And if there are words which are identical and they are synonyms, something like doctor and physician. So, in these cases it becomes difficult for the child. The child finds it a little tricky to zero in on the proper use of such words.

So, irrespective of whatever might be the language, be it English, be it Korean, be it Japanese, Hindi anything to acquire the spatial terms, the first condition is that the frequency of such words should be more in the discourse. Second, if there is a one to one mapping it is easier for the child to pick it up. If the words are polysemous or if they sound to be identical and if there is an overlapping in the meaning, then it is difficult for the child.

So, if you summarize the process of acquisition of spatial terms this is what we can draw the generalization. Look at the generalization 5. what is the initial stage, what is the intermediate stage, what is the final stage and what are the conditions associated with it? The initial stage is that the children do not understand or use spatial terms, we will start from there. They do not understand.

If there is no appearance to be the inborn bias either the containment was a support of the closefit versus the loose fit distinction. So, to begin with at the initial stage, if they do not understand; they do not care whether there is a loose fit or a close fit distinction. Whether the words are loosely connected or closely connected does not matter because they just do not. So, we assume that in the initial stage the children do not understand anything about the spatial terms.

So, what happens in the intermediate stage? The children try to extend and possibly overextend words, but these extensions will stay within the basic categories of the ambient language. So, in the intermediate stage, they started from 0 and in the intermediate stages they overextended the use of the word, if it is in, on, over, close, far. They try to relate all possible semantic overextensions with such spatially connected words. That is the intermediate stage.

Though 0 use, 0 understanding is the initial stage. Overextension is the intermediate stage. And what is the final stage? The final stage is that the terms are understood and used in the ambient language. The language that they are using or they are speaking, they could finally understand all the terms related to the space. If it is Korean, they would think about loose connection close fit, if it is English, it does not really matter.

It only focuses on the adposition in English, but in Korean they have to distinguish and it happens automatically to a child, to a Korean speaking child it happens automatically the child can easily figure out whether the objects are loosely connected or they are close fit. If it is happening in the close connection or loosely connected then the verb form would be different, if it is a closed fit, there is no difference in the verb form.

So, that is the final stage that the child acquires. And what are the conditions for which such things happen? There are two things, first the frequency of exposure and this frequency of exposure and then the biunique relationship between the word form and the meaning. So, these are the two things which facilitate acquisition if the child has enough exposure as far as the frequency of the term is concerned in the linguistic environment, that is one condition; the second condition, if the word has a one to one mapping of the meaning then it will help the child to acquire that particular word faster.

But if you have the polysemous words, overlapping semantics, identical words then it is going to be difficult. So, crosslinguistically we can draw this conclusion. 0 understanding, initial stage, overextension, intermediate stage, understanding of the word and correct use in the ambient language is the final stage. And what are the conditions? Frequency of exposure and then the second one biunique relationship; that means, one to one word mapping that is going to facilitate the acquisition process of the child.

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- PRODUCTION BELOW THE INPUT (selectivity) Learners do not produce all that they have heard: their production is selective of the input.
- PRODUCTION BEYOND THE INPUT (creativity) Learners do not only produce what they heard: their production includes novel forms as well.
- PRODUCTION BELOW THE INPUT (selectivity) Why does the learner not pronounce the target language exactly the way native speakers do?
- PRODUCTION BEYOND THE INPUT (creativity) Given that the learner's pronunciation deviates from the phonology of the target language, what is the nature of the deviations?

X → Input (selectivity)
 X-5 → Output (creativity)
 x → Input, x+5 → Output (creativity)



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- GEN-6
- (A) INITIAL STAGE
No knowledge of the phonological system of the target language.
- (B) INTERMEDIATE STAGES
Both the order of acquisition and deviations from the target are affected by two factors:
 - (a) Structures shared by L1 and L2 are acquired earlier in the course of learning L2 than those that are different.
 - (b) Errors in acquiring marked structures tend to show preference for the unmarked structures.
- (C) FINAL STAGE
(Near-)perfect comprehension and production of the target- language system.
- (D) CONDITIONS
Several factors may play a role including frequency of exposure to the L2, type of exposure, and learners' motivation and attitudes toward the L2.



With this, I think we would quickly just move to the second language acquisition. Again, I am not really going to discuss in detail, but I will just give you a brief idea how this was about the first language acquisition, when a child is trying to acquire words related to antonyms or for example, spatial terms. Now we are going to talk about the second language acquisition. But, both the systems have certain parallels, certain overlaps, also certain distinctness.

The first distinctness that I want to highlight when it is second language acquisition is that, unlike the first language acquisition, the learner has two systems in one head. So, why the task is a little complicated here? In case of the first language acquisition, the movement involves starting with no language and arriving at knowledge of a language from 0 to 1; that is why the child has only one system in her head. But in case of second language acquisition, it involves adding a language to one's already existing experience, already existing linguistic experience. Did I make sense, could you understand?

In case of first language acquisition, the journey is from 0 to 1, the child did not have any language if we assume which is generativist would not agree with that or the child had something in it, but this language acquisition device if we can use the term here. So, it is the journey is from 0 to the knowledge of a language. There was no existing other language when the child acquired the first language. It is 0 to 1, but in case of the second language acquisition the learner already has a system in the head. That is what the title should be two systems in one head. In such cases what sort of typological generalization we can draw as far as initial, intermediate, and final stages are concerned.

So, if you look at it, you might feel that oh these are very different things, but not really, these are not as different as it looks. Nevertheless, there are parallels between the two acquisition processes. And, what is the similarity? The similarity is that in some like there could be discrepancy, but then the linguistic input from the environment and then the one to one mapping as we have seen in the previous generalization that also or things like that also have a certain role to play.

In case of second language acquisition there is a problem and the problem is same as it is in the first language acquisition and what is that? There is a discrepancy between the language

input and the learners are exposed to, so the input of the language and what the learner is expected to learn, there is a discrepancy. And how they comprehend it and how they produce it.

So, the competence and the performance if I can say, or the available input and the production; so, there is a discrepancy in both cases. The available input in case of first language and the production of the first language, the available input of the second language and then the production of the language; this process remains same in both cases whether it is first language acquisition or second language acquisition. The journey might be from 0 to 1, but the input versus production, that is remaining same.

With this information, let us see what actually happens in case of second language acquisition. To begin with, the first two things we have to focus, this and this, then we will go to this and this. Maybe I will just circle it. Let us focus on the first two things. What is happening? What is our expectation as a language learner?

When you say second language learning, we expect the production of the target language should be error free. And error free in comparison with what they have heard and nothing else should be considered here; that means, the native speaker of the second language and the second language learners' language should be exactly alike, they should be replicas.

That means, there must not be any error in the learner's speech, that should be the ultimate output. But what happens actually? Does it really happen in this way? And we will see or we will check if typologically it is the same, no matter whatever language you are learning as the second language, does it have any discrepancy or typologically can be put it together or there are various categories that we will see.

As we understand it seems no matter whatever might be the language, the crosslinguistic generalization is almost similar. So, what happens? Let us look at the first two points. The first point is, the production is below the input. And what does it say? This says about the selectivity of the learner. So, what does the learner do? The learners do not produce all that they have heard, rather their production is selective of the input.

Let us say there is some X number of inputs available. I am going to write here X number of inputs. So, the number of inputs that is X, but the learner selectively learns things. So, X minus 5 let us say, this is the output. The learners did not select all of them, rather the learner became selective and instead of producing all that they have heard, what they did? Their production became selective; this is one thing that happens in the language acquisition process, the second language acquisition. The other side of the story is this was production below the input.

Now, in the second point look at this the production beyond the input. This is below, this is beyond; when it is below, it is related to selectivity; when it is beyond the input, it is the creativity of the learner. So, what do the learners do? The learners not only produce what they have heard, they also produce by including novel forms so that becomes creativity. This thing will work in case of selectivity, and if X is input, X plus 5 is output if this is output then this is creativity.

So, these are the two things happening typologically; typologically the pattern is same here. No matter whatever second language you are learning, if your output is below what you have heard; that means, you are selective in acquisition, selective in learning. If your output is beyond what you have heard; that means, you are creative in acquisition like you have been a creative person. So, your production is X plus 5, in case of below your production is X minus 5 right. Let us look at the first two these two statements then we will go to the next two points over here. So, what are the questions that you might have? I just said typologically this is true across crosslinguistic references.

So, how to account for the selective imitation and creativity? In one case the learner is selective, the other case the learner is creative. Do you think all languages behave similarly as far as the selectivity and creativity are concerned. So, selectivity issue boils down to the order in which various aspects of the target language structure are gradually observed by the learner.

So, when you are talking about selection, the learner is targeting only selected structures; in case of creativity, this involves finding the sources of errors. And what the learners do? They deviate from the target language and they note the changes in the deviant structure and they

create their own constructions. So, selection involves or selection includes the grammatical aspects of the target language, creation includes identification of errors, identification of the sources of errors and then the learner tries to deviate from the target language.

This is how it is different in most of the cases as far as the second language acquisition is concerned. With this information, let us choose one point. So, on the basis of the selection increase and selectivity and creativity and what we want to consider here is accent. The way I speak English, my accent is different from a native speaker of English or maybe a speaker who belongs to some other country, but I have my own accent of English speaking.

So, in this connection let us try to understand what happens when a learner is trying to learn a particular language and whether accent as a linguistic tool does it help us to understand or to find out some crosslinguistic generalization. The very famous Russian linguist Roman Jakobson was able to speak 6 languages and all of them that is Russian.

So, keeping in mind that a multilingual speaker that Jakobson would be or Jakobson was or for that matter any person who is a multilingual speaker, what sort of conditions or what sort of situations do we have when we are talking about the foreign accents; let us say English is not really a foreign language to me, but it is a second language, foreign for an average Indian, but my accent is going to reflect my attempt to imitate the pronunciation of the target language.

If I speak almost like a native speaker; that means I have imitated it well. If my accent has been different from the standard English the kind of English which is spoken in Britain, British or American English then I would say that my accent has been different. So, keeping in mind the issue of accents, let us see what the things like creativity and selectivity say, in fact I am going to put it in two separate units.

So, what is the first point again? Selectivity which is related to below and creativity which is related to beyond. If I am a selected learner, if I am focusing on selectivity; that means, my production has been below the input, which is why the accent of my accent of my target language is not exactly the way a native speaker will speak.

My accent would be different from the native speaker's accent and why this happens? That means, I have been selective in acquisition or in learning. So, what I produce and what sort of information that I have in the linguistic environment the word below is going to be used. So that means, I am not producing or I could not produce all that I have heard. All that I have heard from the native speakers or the way the native speakers speak, I could not produce it all, rather my production has been below the input. That is why it will be a part of selectivity. In case of creativity, the production is beyond the input.

So, what happened as far as my accent of English is concerned? My pronunciation deviates from the phonology of the target language. This deviation is going to be different which is why it will be considered as Indian English because the kind of English that I speak is one particular variety. That is Indian English and I deviated from the phonology, I deviated from the phonological inventory that English has and I applied my creativity which is why my accent is Indian accent.

This is a crosslinguistic pattern that you would find in almost all the languages, be it English, be it Hindi, be Odia, be it Chinese. Crosslinguistically this is going to be the same thing and these hypotheses can be or these points can be considered for any given language in the world as far as the second language acquisition is concerned. So, with this information, let us move to the generalizations. Just like we did it for the previous session when I was talking about the generalizations involving first language acquisition of antonyms.

Here we will see the second language acquisition based generalizations. So, what is that at the initial stage a learner has? At the initial stage the learner does not have any knowledge of the phonological system of the target language. I do not know what is the phonological system and through the intermediate stage I started learning and finally, I started speaking like a native speaker. Let us see what is written in the initial stage. Initial stage, no knowledge of the phonological system.

Intermediate stage, both the order of acquisition and deviation from the target, order of acquisition is related to the structure shared by L1 and L2 so if it is L1 and L2 both are acquired earlier in the course of learning L2. So; that means, considering the person has already an L1 in the mind. I remember I told there are two systems. So, the system of L1 was

already there and during the intermediate stage the L2 has been acquired. Now, both the systems are simultaneously existing in the learner's head so that is the intermediate stage. And, because of the existence of both the things since the learner is handling both the systems at the same time, there have been certain errors in the marked structures which shows that the learner has a preference for the unmarked ones. So, the unmarked structures are given preference and the marked ones have certain errors. That means, the specific grammatical structure of L2 seems to have certain errors.

So, the error stage is the intermediate stage; no language, the initial stage; a simultaneous presence of L1 and L2 that is the intermediate stage. And what is the final stage? The final stage would be almost perfect or near perfect comprehension and production of the language system. If you could acquire that fluency and you are able to speak almost like a native speaker then it is going to be the final stage.

And what are the conditions associated with it? There are many factors. The fourth point is the condition. And if I say there are many factors, first the frequency of exposure, as we have seen in the first language thing. Types of exposure, learner's motivation and attitude towards the L2; these four factors play an equally important role to help the learner to learn a language, basically the second language.

So, in case of the first language, we had only two factors, one is frequency of exposure, the second one is one to one mapping. One to one mapping will facilitate learning, but in case of second language acquisition there are more components added, frequency, type of exposure, learner's motivation and attitude, learners attitude towards L2. If you really like the target language and you are motivated enough to learn it as quickly as possible, that will enhance your acquisition or your learning process.

So, that is about language change and typology. I did not really focus much on the use issue, but I definitely talked about the diachrony related issues and then the development related issues. In case of diachrony, we did discuss how the articles have developed, how the word order has developed and how the ad position in noun phrases that condition has developed. These are in the diachronic perspective; and the synchronic level, what sort of development

the first language acquisition that is also development second language acquisition is also a development.

In case of first language acquisition, the journey is from 0 to 1; in case of second language acquisition it could be from 1 to 2. But what is same? The similarity both the development stages have is that it is the discrepancy between language input and language production. Be it first language acquisition or second language acquisition, this discrepancy has got to be there in both the cases.

So, that is all about typology and language change that we have studied so far. My suggestion for you would be please go back and check the book that has been referred Introducing language typology by Edith A Moravcsik published by Cambridge University press. When you read you will find out more data and these concepts are going to be clearer to you.

Thank you, I end the language change and typology section here and we will move to a new unit in the coming days.

Thank you.

Keywords: frequency of exposure, biunique relationship, second language acquisition, selectivity, creativity, accent, learner's motivation and attitude