

THE STUDY ON THE ACQUISITION ORDER OF ENGLISH MORPHEMES IN THE FIRST SEMESTER STUDENTS IN ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM AT BANDAR LAMPUNG UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to find out the order of morphemes acquisition in the first semester students at English Education Study Program, Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Bandar Lampung University. The subjects of this research are twenty-one students in the first semester at English study program at Bandar Lampung University. Their ages ranged from 17-35 years old. They studied English as a subject in their schools for more than 7 years.

To obtain the research data, picture based story is used and the subjects of the research are asked to write a story based on the picture given. From their writings, the acquisition of five English morphemes is analyzed.

The result shows that the order of morphemes acquisition on the subjects of the research are 1) Plural (90.4%), 2) Past regular (85.7%), 3) Progressive (83.8%), 4) Past irregular (82.7%) 5) Third person singular (50%).

Key words: *English morpheme, Morpheme acquisition, Natural order.*

I. Introduction

1. The Purpose of The Study

This study attempts to find out the acquisition order of English morphology in twenty five students on the first semester English Education study program at Bandar Lampung University. In this study, the researcher wants to find out whether the subjects also follow the natural order proposed by Stephen Krashen. For this purpose, the researcher has given them a story based picture to get their responses in creating the story based on the pictures. By using the pictures as a basis for the story, they will create a story based on those pictures and they will use some English morphemes in their story. By analyzing English morphemes used in their story, the researcher will get the order of morpheme acquisition happen in their mind. In this study the researcher will focus only on six English morphemes.

They are progressive (-ing), plural (-s), past regular (-ed), past irregular, article (a, an, the), and third person singular (-s).

2. Rationale

The order of English morpheme acquisition probably is the most popular topic researched in relation to the natural order hypothesis proposed by Krashen. This semester, the researcher teaches one subject namely "Principles of Language Acquisition" taught to the fifth semester students in English Education study program at Bandar Lampung University, and the researcher found that it is very interesting if the researcher can held a small research and find out the order of English morpheme acquisition on the subjects of the study. The natural order hypothesis states that we acquire the rules of language in a

predictable order, some rules tend to come early and others late. The order does not appear to be determined solely by formal simplicity and there is the evidence that it is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes. In this study, the researcher wants to find out whether the natural order hypothesis also happens in the subjects of the study.

1. Organization of the study

This study is divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1 presents an introduction to this study. It gives a detail account of the background, purpose of the study, rationale and the need for this study. It also gives an account of the design that we are going to follow in the course of the study and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a detailed discussion on the literature of acquisition-learning distinction, English morphology and the natural order hypothesis.

Chapter 3 presents a comprehension discussion on the methodology adopted in this study. It discusses how the data were collected in this study and the method of interpreting the data.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive and detail discussion on the outcome of the study findings.

Chapter 5 describes the conclusion of the study.

I. Review of Related Literature

1. The Acquisition-Learning Distinction

According to Stephen Krashen there are two different ways to develop competence in second language, they are acquisition and learning. Krashen proposed this theory of acquisition and learning and give the definite distinction

between the two. This distinction will show us that adults have two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in second language.

The first way to develop competence in second language is by acquisition. Acquisition is a process which is similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language. In other words, language acquisition refers to the process of natural assimilation, involving intuition and subconscious learning, which is the product of real interactions between people where the learner is an active participant. It is similar to the way children learn their native language or mother tongue, a process that produces functional skills in the spoken language without theoretical knowledge. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act. Language acquisition is a subconscious process and language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication. So, the result of language acquisition, acquired competence is also subconscious. As the result of language acquisition, we are generally not consciously aware of the rules of languages we have acquired. Instead, we have a “feel” for correctness. Grammatical sentences ‘sound’ right or ‘feel’ right and error ‘feel’ wrong, even if we do not know consciously what rule was violated.

A classic example of language acquisition involves adolescents and young adults who live abroad for a year in an exchange program, attaining near native fluency, while knowing little about the language in the majority of cases. They have a good pronunciation

without a notion of phonology, do not know what perfect tense is, modal or phrasal verbs are, but they intuitively recognize and know how to use all the structures.

The second way to develop competence in second language is by language learning. The concept of language learning is linked to the traditional approach to the study of languages and today is still generally practiced in high schools worldwide. Attention is focused on the language in its written form and the objective is for the student to understand the structure and rules of the language through the application of intellect and logical deductive reasoning. So, learning is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. In learning process, it involves receiving information about the language, transforming it into knowledge through intellectual effort and storing it through memorization. In brief, learning refers to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them. In learning, form is of greater importance than communication. According to Krashen 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'.

Some second language theorists have assumed that children acquire, while adults can only learn. The acquisition and learning hypothesis claims however that adults also acquire, that the ability to "pick-up" languages does not disappear at puberty. This does not mean that adult will always be able to achieve native-like level in a second language. It does mean that adult can access the same natural "language acquisition device (LAD)" that children use.

1. The Role Of Error Correction

Error correction has little or no effect on subconscious acquisition, but it is thought to be useful for conscious learning. Error correction supposedly helps the learners to induce or figure out the right form of a rule. If, for example, a student of English as a second language says; "I goes to school every day", and the teacher corrects him or her by repeating the utterances correctly, the learner is supposed to realize that the /s/ ending 'goes' with third person singular and not with the first person and then alter his/her conscious mental representative of the rule. This appears reasonable, but it is not clear whether error correction has this impact in actual practice.

Evidence from child's language acquisition confirms that error correction does not influence acquisition to any great extent. Brown and his colleagues have shown that parents actually correct only a small portion of the child's languages. Brown and his colleagues conclude from their research that parents attend more to the truth value of what the child is saying rather than to the form. For example: "her curl my hair" was approved, because the mother was curling Eve's hair. On the other hand, "Walt Disney comes on Tuesday" was corrected, despite its syntactic correctness, since Walt Disney actually came on Television on Wednesdays.

2. English Morphemes

In linguistics, a morpheme is the smallest component of word, or other linguistic unit, that has semantic meaning. It cannot be divided into smaller part. For example *unreadable* consists of three morphemes: *un*, *read*, and *able*. A morpheme is composed by phoneme(s), the smallest linguistically distinctive units of sound in spoken

language, and by grapheme(s), the smallest units of written language in written language.

The concept of word and morpheme are different, a morpheme may or may not stand alone. One or several morphemes compose a word. A morpheme is free if it can stand alone (for example: "one", "possible"), or bound if it is used exclusively alongside a free morpheme (for example: "in" in impossible). For example: the word "unbreakable" has three morphemes: "un-", a bound morpheme; "break", a free morpheme; and "-able", a bound morpheme. "un-" is also a prefix, "-able" is a suffix. Both "un-" and "-able" are affixes.

In general, there are two types of morpheme, free morphemes and bound morphemes. Free morpheme is a morpheme that can stand alone, or a free morpheme is a grammatical unit that can occur by itself. They, free morphemes, are a word. For example: boy, girl, book, teacher, research, etc.

A bound morpheme is a morpheme that cannot stand alone as an independent word, or in other words a bound morpheme is a grammatical unit that never occurs by itself, but it is always attached to some other morphemes. The bound morpheme is not a word. They must be joined to other free morphemes (words). Bound morpheme consists of derivational and inflectional morpheme. Also affixes are bound morpheme.. Ex: *-ish, un-, -ness, -li-, -s, -er*, etc.

In this study the researcher would like to investigate the order of English morpheme acquisition which has special grammatical function. In this study, the researcher will focus on six morphemes they are progressive (-ing), plural (-s), past regular (-ed), past

irregular, article (a, an, the), and third person singular (-s) morphemes.

1. The Natural Order Hypothesis

One of the most exciting discoveries in language acquisition research in recent years has been finding that the acquisition of grammatical structures precede in a predictable order. Acquirers of a given language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early and others later. The agreement among individual acquirers is not always 100%, but there are clear, statistically significant, similarities. This evidence then suggests the natural order hypothesis.

According to Stephen Krashen the natural order hypothesis states that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules tend to come early and others late. The order does not appear to be determined solely by formal simplicity and there is evidence that it is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes. In addition, Krashen argued that those whose exposure to second language is nearly all outside of language classes do not show a different order of acquisition from those who have had most of their second language experience in the classroom.

English is the most studied language as far as the natural order hypothesis is concerned, and of all structures of English, morphology is most studied. Brown (1973) reported that children acquiring English as a first language tended to acquire certain grammatical morphemes, or function words, earlier than others. For example, the progressive marker *ing* (as in "He is playing football") and the plural marker */s/* (as in "two dogs") were among the first morphemes acquired, while the third person singular marker */s/* (as in

boy who wearing red t-shirt asks to the boy who wearing blue t-shirt for climbing up on red boy's shoulder. Finally they can take the mango, and they are eating it together under the tree.

Name : Novita UK
Age : 19 years old

One day, there are two persons were playing together in a small park. They are Boni and Mario. Mario sat near the mango tree and Boni wanted to take the mango. After that, Boni asked Mario to help him. And Mario helped boni to take the mango. Boni carried on the Mario's shoulder and take the mango. After got the mango, Boni give it to Mario and they ate together.

Name : M. Agusman Ajijaya
Age : 18 years old

One day there was a boy with blue shirt in the garden. He want to got a mango in a tree. He tried to reach it, but he can't. And then, behind of him, there is a boy with red shirt while reading a book. So, the boy with blue shirt asked to the boy with red shirt for help him. Then the boy with red shirt helped him to take the mango, he took two mangoes. One mango to him, and one mango to boy with the red shirt. And finally, they ate it together.

Name : Alfiana
Age : 19 years old

Once day in the garden, there two boys were playing. The first boy was read the novel and the second boy was played the ball. In the time, the second boy want to get the mango in that garden and he jump and jump and jump again for get it. But he fail to get the mango.

And then, he think how to get the mango, than he get an idea, he ask for help him to the first boy or the boy who was read the novel, his idea is stand up

on his shoulder to easy get the mango. Finally they get the mango and eat together in the garden.

1. Data Analysis

Data analysis is not a simple description of the data collected but a process by which the researcher can bring interpretation to the data (Powney & Watts, 1987). In this study, data analyses are done by analyzing the occurrences of English morphemes, counting the usage of every morpheme in every subject then convert it into percentage. In this process I identified and count the correct usage of every morpheme and its incorrect usage, and then I convert the correct usage, incorrect usage and the total usage of a particular morpheme into percentage. This is to know how many percent the subject have mastered the rule of a particular morpheme in English.

Here is the data tabulation from the two subjek

“He lives in New York”) and the possessive /s/ (“John’s hat) were typically acquired much later. Dulay and Burt (1974, 1975) reported that children acquiring English as a second language also show a “natural order” for grammatical morphemes, regardless of their first language. The child second language order of acquisition was different from the first language order, but different groups of second language acquirers showed striking similarities. Here are two tables of mean order of acquisition of English morphemes. Table 1: mean order of acquisition of morphemes for English as first language by Brown

1. Present progressive (-ing)
- 2/3. in, on
4. Plural (-s)
5. Pas irregular
6. Possessive (-‘s)
7. Uncontractible copula (is, am, are)
8. Articles (a, the)
9. Past regular (-ed)
10. Third person regular (-s)
11. Third person irregular

Table 2: Average order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language (children and adults)

1. Progressive (-ing)
2. Plural (-s)
3. Copula (‘to be’)
4. Auxiliary
5. Article (a, the)
6. Irregular past
7. Regular past
8. Third person singular (-s)
9. Possessive (-‘s)

I. Methodology

1. The Subject of The Study

The subjects in this study are twenty one students in the first semester of English Education study program at Bandar Lampung University. Their ages ranged from 17-35 year old. They have graduated from various senior

high schools and they have studied English as a subject in their schools. Since they studied in English study program University of Bandar Lampung, they are always in contact and communicate in English with or among students and lecturers in University of Bandar Lampung. Since last 4 months, they joined English Education study program at Bandar Lampung University where English is always used in classroom situation. This condition makes the subjects of this study get more chance to speak English with or among students and lecturers.

2. Method of Data Collection

The instrument used in this study is a set of picture based story (see appendix). The subjects were given a picture based story and were instructed to write a story in their own. Before writing the story, the subjects were given time to look at the pictures to generate some ideas in writing the story. The subjects also were given a chance to ask some words that they might need in writing the story but they do not know the words in English. The subjects also were given a short explanation on how to write a story based on the pictures. There was no upper or lower word limit set. They also were given some words related to the story like *pick up, catch, shoulder*.

The following are texts produced by the four subjects of the study.

Name : Purwanto
Age : 18 years old

One day, there is a boy who want to get a mango, but the tree is very high. So he cannot get it. After that he sees a boy around him, and he asks that boy for halping him to get the mango. Without any say, the boy who wearing red t-shirt comes and helps him soon.

Subj	Prog			Plural			Past Irr.			Past reg.			3 rd Person sing		
	T	C	I	T	C	I	T	C	I	T	C	I	T	C	I
Fajar	0	0	0	8	7	1	8	7	1	5	5	0	0	0	0
Novita	1	1	0	1	0	1	5	3	2	4	4	0	0	0	0
Ajjaya	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	2	1	4	3	1	0	0	0
Eri	2	2	0	7	5	2	9	9	0	9	8	1	0	0	0
Puput	5	5	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purwanto	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	2
Alfiana	5	1	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	3
Retno	4	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Mukti	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Novi	1	1	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Anggi	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	4
Jansen	2	2	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lailatul	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	3	0
Qory	5	5	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dita	9	9	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Endang	3	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Rani	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
Riyan	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rosda	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lia	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Fransiska	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0
Total	62	52	10	52	47	5	29	24	5	28	24	4	30	15	15
%		83,8 %	16,2 %		90,4 %	9,6 %		82,7 %	17,3 %		85,7 %	4,3 %		50 %	50 %

I. Finding of the Research

1. Data Finding

From the data tabulation of twenty one subjects' essay above, if we count its total usages, its correct usages and its

incorrect usages, and measured it in its percentage, it is found that plural morpheme is acquired in the first place is plural with 90,4% correct usages, then regular past with 85,7%, V-ing with 83,8%, past irregular with 82,7% and third person singular with 50% correct usages. By this percentage, it can be seen that plural, past regular, and past irregular have been acquired because it has been more than 50% of correct usages in those morphemes. Meanwhile, the 3rd person singular is not acquired yet and still in the stage of transitional form.

The order of morpheme acquisition of the two subjects:

1. Plural (90.4%)
2. Past regular (85.7%)
3. Progressive (83.8%)
4. Past irregular (82.7%)
5. Third person singular (50%)

Now let's compare the order of morpheme acquisition found in the

measurement of the subjects' story with the natural order of acquisition given by Brown (1973) and Krashen (1982). Then it is found that the order of morpheme acquisition of all subjects is very similar to the natural order of acquisition given by Brown (1973). It can be seen that of plural and progressive better than irregular past and third person singular. The differences are that from the data tabulation of the subjects, plural is acquired better than progressive and regular past is acquired better than irregular past and third person singular while in Brown's natural order of acquisition, progressive is acquired before plural and irregular past is acquired before regular past. When we compare the order of acquisition given by Krashen for English as a second language, it is also found that progressive, plural are acquired earlier than irregular past, regular past and third person singular.

The order acquisition in two subjects	Order of acquisition in Brown	Order of acquisition in Krashen
1. Plural	1. Present progressive	1. Progressive
2. Past regular	2/3. In, On	2. Plural
3. Progressive	4. Plural	3. Copula
4. Past irregular	5. Past irregular	4. Auxiliary progressive
5. Third person singular	6. Possessive	5. Article
	7. Copula	6. Irregular past
	8. Article	7. Regular past
	9. Past regular	8. 3 rd person singular
	10. 3 rd person regular	9. Possessive
	11. 3 rd person irregular	

I. Conclusion

1. Conclusion

From the data finding in the subjects' story and comparison to the order of first language acquisition by Brown and second language acquisition by Krashen, it can be seen that the

order of morpheme acquisition in the subjects of the study is in accordance with the

natural order hypothesis. By this finding, the researcher can understand that the natural order hypothesis which states that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules tend to come early and others late. The order does not appear to be determined solely by formal simplicity and there is evidence that it is

independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes has been proved. The subjects of my study did acquire English as their second language through daily communication in the classroom setting; in fact, the order of acquisition is also predictable and similar with the order given by Brown and Krashen.

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