Contrastive Analysis of the English and Pashto Adjectives

Akbar Ali[*]

Bilal Khan†

Nazakat Awan‡

[*] Assistant Professor, Department of English, Hazara University, Mansehra, KP, Pakistan.
Email: akbar.iub@gmail.com

† Lecturer, Department of English, FATA University, Kohat, KP, Pakistan.

‡ Lecturer, Department of English, Hazara University, Mansehra, KP, Pakistan.

Abstract *The paper mainly focuses on the contrastive analysis of the use of English and Pashto adjectives. Contrastive Analysis hypothesis developed in the 20th century from the two renowned theories of language acquisition and linguistics i.e. behaviorism and structuralism. This hypothesis states that the major barriers in the second learning and acquisition process arise from the interference of the first language. Contrastive analysis between languages facilitate the linguists and language teachers in predicting the difficulties a learner may confront through a structural, scientific analysis of pairs of languages (Brown, 2007). The adjectives of English and Pashto have been compared in the paper using contrastive analysis approach. The study finds that there are certain similarities and differences in the use of adjectives in English and Pashto which can cause issues in learning English adjective use by L1 Pashto speakers as ESL learners.*

Introduction

English language is one of the essential part aspects of educational system almost all over the world and the obvious reason to this fact is the importance of English language. English according to Baugh (2003) is a lingua franca, a language used for international communication. It is the language of democracy, politics, education, science, researchers and it is used almost in all fields of knowledge and walks of life. Likewise the rest of the world, English language learning and teaching are also one of the important parts of the educational system in Pakistan. It is taught from grade one till graduation level in Pakistan as a compulsory subject

(Gulzar, 1997). Apart from the compulsory subject, English language as the medium of instruction at higher level of education. But the students of this language at different level of education in Pakistan still make various mistakes when they produce English either in spoken or written form and these mistakes are visible in the language used by almost every ESL learner. One of the reasons for these according to Brown (2007) might be first language interference. Thus in the 20th century a study of comparing and contrasting two languages resulted in the contrastive analysis hypothesis. The present paper focuses on English as a second language in comparison with L1 Pashto language. This contrastive analysis mainly takes adjectives in these two languages into account and the researcher has shown the similarities and differences in the use of adjectives in the English and Pashto languages. The researcher is of the view that the study would be an important one in terms of highlighting the mistakes of L1 Pashto learners in the use of adjectives and would spread the awareness of the L1 effect in ESL learning through contrastive analysis.

Objectives of the Study

- To show the similarities in the use of adjectives in English and Pashto language.
- To highlight the differences in the use of adjectives and Pashto languages.
- To put forward the mistakes made in the use of adjectives by L1 Pashto learners.

Literature Review

Contrastive Analysis

C.C. Fries (1945), an American linguist, argues that contrastive linguistics consist of such kind of effective materials which are always of scientific description based on target language with its relationship to one mother tongue or native language. Robert Lado laid down his famous framework '*Linguistics across Cultures*' which focused on the foundation of CAH after a period of one decade. His main argument regarding second or foreign language learning is that the comparison of the first and the target language would facilitate the teaching and learning process in the sense that those areas which are similar in the first and target language would be easy to learn for the learners and those areas which are different would be difficult in learning (Lado, 1957, p.1-2). Such a CAH model was introduced in the sixties where behavioral psychology and structural linguistics were more dominant. Brown in chapter 8 of his book believes that the hypothesis mainly claims that the first language of the learners mainly interferes when he/she learn a second or

foreign language and thus the comparison and contrast of language would make the teachers and linguist able to predict the errors made by language learners. (Brown, 2000, p.208).

Bloomfield (1993) favored and supported the main linguistic model related to CAH, and the same model has been further elaborated and explained by Fries (1945) and Lado (1957). James (1985) states that the psychological bases of the CAH are all because of its association with S-R theory. This theory states that the CAH focuses on the L2 learners where they focus on the transfer of the features of L1 whenever it comes to L2 utterances. Lado is also of the view in this connection that the learners and users of language mostly transfer the forms and meaning and other structures from their first language to the language they are learning and same is true to the transfer of culture (Lado, 1957, p.2).

Fisiak (1981, p.1) defines and describes contrastive analysis, or contrastive linguistics as it is a sub discipline of linguistics which mainly focuses on the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages. The aim of such comparison in the language is to find out what features are similar and what features are different in the languages. Therefore, Contrastive Analysis can be applied to pinpoint the difficulties and ease of L2 learners through the comparison between the first or the native language of the learners and the target language they are learning.

Those who favor and advocate Contrastive Analysis are of the view that similar features in the target and native language are comparatively easy in learning for the second or foreign language learners while the differences in language would be difficult in learning (Brown, 2007 & Fisiak, 1981).

Three Different Versions of CAH

CAH has been divided and classified into three different versions: these three version of CAH are the weak version, the strong version and the moderate one. Ronald Wardaugh comments on the strong version and states that the strong version is an unrealistic and impractical one and strict in its nature (Brown, 2000). Wardaugh is also of the same opinion and sates that the strong version is a kind of version that demands of linguists that they have available a set of linguistic universals formulated within a comprehensive linguistic theory which deals adequately with syntax, semantic and phonology' (1970, p.125). He has stated that the weak version of contrastive analysis is so far successfully "used by the linguists and the teacher who had an intuitive appeal 'the best linguistic knowledge available" ....in order to have a clear idea of the difficulties faced by second or foreign language learners (1970, p.126). Oller and Ziahosseiny proposed a new idea and they are of the view that "the categorization of abstract and concrete patterns according to their perceived similarities or differences is the basis for

learning". Therefore, whenever these patterns are different from each other in the languages, they create confusion for language learners (1970, p.186).

Error Analysis

During 1970s and 80s, there was not such a principled approach related to the language teaching that was totally based on errors and such an error analysis flourished in order to investigate L2 language acquisition. A number of theories have been proposed later on which also focuses on its relation to the literature of the second language. Pit Corder, a British linguist, focused on the use of the perspective of language acquisition and language processing. *'The Significance of Learners' Errors'* (1967), and in his paper, argues that the same errors are not only believed to be inevitable but also to be more important without having any sort of improvements that are also focused and believed to be the developmental errors.

Corder believes that the errors made by learners in language acquisition are important in the sense that these errors provide insight to know how language is acquired by learners and which type of strategies are followed by the learners for their learning a second or foreign language (1967, p.167). Richard is also of the view that the field of error analysis is a field which mainly focuses the difference between the language used by the learners of a particular language and the language used by the native speakers of a particular language (Richard, 1971, p.1). Corder (1973) has noted four of the important categories such as addition of necessary elements; selection of incorrect elements, omission of the required elements and also the disordering of the elements.

Interlanguage

Such a term refers to a kind of an intermediate language, also a process where the second language learning is involved between the target and the native language. There has been a drastic change within the twentieth century where one focuses on the field of errors analysis and its focus shifted from the intralanguage error the error of interlanguage. With the passage of time, a great influential contribution was made by another linguist named as Uriel Weinreich in one of his famous publications called *'Language in contact'* (1953).

For such language interference, he suggested the psycholinguistic and psychological explanations which meant that any of the speaker speaking more than two of the languages will have to identify the basic sounds and the basic structures of the one language with that of the other language as well. It can also be argued that speakers of more than two language are always made busy in the making of 'interlingual identifications' (Weinreich,1953, p.7).

Adjectives and its Use

Adjectives are words that modify or qualify Noun and pronoun (Wren and Martin). Although according to Huddleston (1988) some of the languages of the world do not have the category of adjective although there are words which modify or explain, in other words which have adjective like functions in a language. Frank (1993) on the other hand has included all the parts of speech in the adjective class if these various parts of speech functions are modification of a certain phenomenon in a language. Shawet et al. (1970,pp, 19-20) state that there are certain words and groups of words in a language which are used to specify, qualify, or explain the meaning of words used in a language structure. The relationship of specification of qualification or explaining is referred to as modification in grammar. Thus the words that do this function are called modifiers. Modifiers do nor bring changes in the meanings of words, instead such words are to fix and specify the meaning of words in various structures and contexts. Such modifiers in a language are called adjectives and adverbs in a language, those words which modify verbs are adverbs and modifiers of nouns and pronouns are adjectives.

English and Pashto languages have this class of word which is referred to as adjectives. These can be simply called descriptive words in a language. However the form of the adjective remains the same whether used with plural, singular, masculine or feminine in the case of English but in language like Pashto the form sometimes changes and sometime remains the same. Adjectives can be classified in attributive, predicative, simple, compound, numeric, and qualitative. Attributive in the case when it is used before the noun it qualifies, predicative in the sense if use d after the word it modifies, simple as the basic form while compound in the shape of phrases. Qualitative adjectives are those which expresses quality and quantitative adjective is the one which show the quantity (Murphy, 1997).

Methodology

The study is comparative and correlative in nature in which the researcher has compared the use of the adjectives in Pashto language and English language. In addition to this the researcher has given a list of some sentences from the writings of ESL learners in KP Pakistan context to show the mistakes in the use of Adjectives. Certain steps are followed when two languages are compared with each other. The first step is to highlight the differences in the various aspects of two languages. The major focus after the first step is to decide what aspect of a language should be compared with what aspects of another language. Thus the comparison of the same aspects in two languages e.g. the NP with the NP should be compared with each other in two languages. The last step of contrasting two languages with each other is to compare and contrast the various sections as well as sub section e.g. categories as well as the sub categories should be compared with

in two languages. Thus the differences and similarities come out clearly following these steps (Mohammadi & Rashidi, 2009).

Analysis

Order of Adjectives in English and Pashto

Adjectives are used in English as well as in Pashto in the sentence structure in an order. The order in which the English adjectives are put is somehow stricter than the order in Pashto language which is more flexible in nature than that of English. In English, when more than one adjective comes before a noun, they are usually put in a specific order. For example, *a thin, old, English lady*, is the usual structure, and not *an old, thin, English lady or an English old, thin lady*.

In this respect, adjectives in Pashto behave differently. For instance, the phrase *YAO GHAT TOR SPI* (a big, black dog) and *YAO TOR GHAT SPI* (a big, black dog) are both possible in Pashto language.

Predicative and Attributive Adjectives in English and Pashto

Adjectives can be used as attributive and predicative in both the languages. However, in case of the predictive use the position of the adjective is different in English and Pashto. In a Pashto sentence the predictive adjective is always placed next to the noun it qualifies.

English:	The weather is hot.
Pashto:	MOSAM GARAM DI
	Weather hot is

The example clearly shows that the adjective in English is use after the linking verb but in Pashto there is no linking verb placement in the structure between the adjective and the noun it qualifies.
In the case of attributive the use of adjective is almost the same in both the language as the following examples show.

English:	He is an intelligent boy.
Pashto:	AGHA YO OKHYAR HALAK DE.

Demonstrative Adjectives in English and Pashto

A demonstrative adjective modifies a noun. In Pashto as well as in English, demonstrative adjectives come before nouns. But in Pashto and they have only one form; they agree neither in gender nor in number with the noun that they modify. The following examples include proximal and distal demonstratives in English and Pashto.

Language:	Proximal	Demonstrative	Distal	Demonstrative
English:	this book	these books	that book	those books
Pashto:	DA KITAB	DA KITABONA	DAGHA KITAB	DAGHA KITABONA

Adjectives and Agreement

Conversely, though, qualitative and quantitative adjectives in Pashto agree with the noun they qualify. The same is not the case in English.

English:	A	boy	A	girl
Pashto:	YAO	HALEK	YAVA	JINAY

English:	big	tree	big	trees
Pashto:	GHATA	VONA	GHATI	VONI

As is clear from the data, adjectives in Pashto agree in number and gender with nouns they qualify. With masculine nouns the demonstrative is different from that of the form with feminine and in the same way the forms of demonstrative are different with singular and plural. But in the case of English the forms remain the same with singular, plural, masculine and feminine.

Degrees of Adjective

In English, the comparative degree of adjective is formed either by suffixing –er to the adjective or by placing 'more' before it. Likewise, the superlative degree is derived by using the suffix –est to adjectives or the word 'most'. In Pashto, it is achieved by using the prepositional particles DA and NA (from).

Pashto:	DA	ASIF	NA	GHAT	DA	TOLO	NA	GHAT
Translation:	From	Asif	from	old	from	all	from	old
English:	Older than Asif				oldest of all			

Possessive adjectives in English and Pashto

English and Pashto language both have possessive adjective and the use of these adjectives is almost the same in both the languages. In English the possessive forms in the adjective use in first do not change with number and gender and quite the same way the forms of possessive adjectives remain the same with singular and pleural nouns. The following examples show this similarity.

English	*Pashto*
My book	ZAMA KITAB
My books	ZAMA KITABONA

But in the use of possessive adjective in the second person the use is different in English and Pashto. English possessive forms in this case remain the same with

number but in Pashto the forms change with number as the following examples show.

English	*Pashto*
Your book	STA KITAB
Your books	STASO/STA KITABONA

One of the major difference can be seen in the possessive adjective use in third person case. In English the singular his/her form is used with singular as well as with plural nouns but there is a plural form of his/her in the shape of their. In the Pashto language the treatment of the possessive adjective is different. In Pashto a demonstrative (DA) is added before the possessive adjective in third person case whether in singular or plural further more just like his/her Pashto also have masculine and feminine forms. The following example will show the difference in this connection.

English	*Pashto*
His book	DA AGHA KITAB
Her book	DA AGHE KITAB
Their books	DA AGHWE/AGHI KITABONA

Following are some of the exemplary sentences taken from student writing at school level which show the mistakes in the use of adjectives. The following sentences indicate some common inappropriate use of English adjectives by L1 Pashto ESL learners.

It is the shortest pencil of the two.
Who is the youngest you or I?
She is more intelligent or I.
I am the most happiest of all.
He is superior than me.
Rich can help poor.
I go with the nearest bus.
It is a most expensive car.

These extracts were collected from three different teachers teaching English at different schools. In KP, usually grammar of English is taught explicitly to the learners and the focus of the teachers in this connection is on the definitions of the parts of speech providing some practice activities through various examples. But still it might be the influence of mother tongue that L1 Pashto speakers make mistakes in the use of adjectives. Following are some of the sentences which show mistakes in this regard.

Conclusion

Contrastive analysis of the use of adjective in English and Pashto show that there

are certain similarities in some of the structural usage of adjective as well as differences. The main focus of the paper was not only to show the differences and similarities but also the mistakes due to the differences in the use of adjective in both the languages and the last part of the analysis show how far it is applicable to follow the prediction of contrastive analysis hypothesis. The use of simple predicative and attributive adjectives are almost the same in both the languages but when it comes to degrees of adjectives in both the languages, the use and morphological construction are different and thus the L1 Pashto ESL learners make mistakes in this regard. The other major difference can be seen in the use of demonstrative and possessive adjective. The results confirmed that contrastive analysis at the linguistic as well as pedagogical level are both still applicable to language learning and language teaching specially in the context of Pakistan.

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