

A CONTRASTIVE AND ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE ACQUISITION OF KOREAN TENSE BY HINDI SPEAKING KOREAN LEARNERS WITH A PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Many researches have been done as a reaction to never ending astonishment at learner's ability to acquire and learn grammatical structure of second language or foreign language. Consequently psycholinguistic came into the light as a major field of study which explains the difficulties encountered in learning grammar by learners of second language or foreign language during their long journey of second language or foreign language acquisition. Grammar has always been one of the most difficult part in the process of language learning and specially the learning of tense part of the language. The present studies tried to investigate the psycholinguistic and pedagogical difficulties encountered by Hindi speaking Indian Korean language learners in mastering or acquiring Korean tense especially past and future as well as tense oriented honorific expressions. In the present study we use a mixed method design combining quantitative data 60 informants Linkert scale survey with qualitative evidence from written error analysis and class observations. After analysis of the data it was found that more than 90% students thought Korean tense acquisition as difficult of very difficult stating pervasive cognitive and linguistic issues. In the contrastive analysis of Korean and Hindi Tense we found that there is a sharp difference between Korean and Hindi Tense as Hindi has categorical and auxiliary based tense while Korean has agglutinative and relational structure which integrates temporal, aspectual and social meaning within single morphological units. Due to this structural differences, compounded by high cognitive load and effective anxiety, results in regular morphological, semantic and sociolinguistic errors among Hindi Speaking Korean Language learners in India.

In the present study we interpret the findings through in-language theory, the noticing hypothesis and cognitive load theory which explains that how the mastery of Korean tense morphology is obstructed due to linguistic transfer and limited proceduralization. The present study further states that in the perception of Korean and politeness conceptual transfer constitutes a major barrier in perceiving the proper use of Korean tense. Further this study argues, pedagogically, for contrastive, context based and cognitive scaffolded approach to tense instruction that has honorific forms and communicative drill. In the conclusion this paper states that for effective acquisition of Korean tense by Hindi Speaking Korean language Learners linguistic restricting and conceptual orientation are required and it could be achieved through psycho-linguistically informed and learner centered strategies.

Key words: Korean Tense, Hindi Tense, Hindi speaking Indian learners, second language acquisition, foreign language acquisition, psycholinguistics, Inter-language, cognitive load, honorificity, contrastive analysis, error analysis, tense pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION:

Tense acquisition of language has always been one of the most cognitively demanding aspect of second or foreign language learning. So is the case with the acquisition of Korean tense. Those who learn Korean as a foreign as a second language or as a foreign language, they often encounter difficulty in having mastery over tense and aspect of and it has emerged as significant source of linguistic difficulty, particularly when learners of Korean tense and aspect belongs to a language which follows a different grammatical and temporal logic. As far as the Hindi Speaking Indian Korean learners are concerned, issues of the acquisition of Korean tense and aspect becomes more complicated and intense as though both languages belong to typologically agglutinative yet differ drastically

in the way they encode temporality, politeness and speaker's intention through tense morphology and honorific expression. In this paper we have tried to explore this psycholinguistics complexity by examining that how Hindi Speaking Indian Korean learners conceptualize and acquire Korean tense, and what cognitive linguistics and pedagogical factors contribute to their persistent problems in overcoming the issues in learning Korean past tense and future tenses.

The major concern of psycholinguistics is to deal with the study of language as psychological phenomena. It deals with inquiries of the nature of the relationship between language and the brain, process of acquisition and how people set about acquiring the grammatical structure of second or foreign language. within the field of psycholinguistics, the acquisition of tense is recognized as a window into the learner's cognitive architecture, temporal cognition and language interlanguage development. Learners of a target language which may be a Second language or a foreign language one often recognizes one's internal temporal frameworks learner finds conceptual difference as far as time is concerned. When we focus on Korean Tense markers we find that Korean tense markers are intertwined with modality, aspect and honorificity and it jointly determine not only when an event occurred but also the social and pragmatic relationship between speaker and listener. But in Hindi we do not find that intricacies as in Hindi we find a very straightforward

Generally Hindi Speaking Korean language learners encounter two kinds of cognitive challenges in perceiving Korean tenses. First, restructuring temporal cognition to align with Korean morpho-syntactic and second simultaneously integrating the sociolinguistic variables of honorificity into verb conjugation.

The need of this study was felt due to the growing number of Korean language learners especially in Hindi speaking states of India. Recently, Korean language education has emerged as one of the most fascinating among foreign language education in India. Even National Education Policy 2020, Indian government has given space to Korean language at school level. Students may choose Korean as a foreign language. At university level various eminent central universities started running certificate, diploma and Degree programmes in Korean. This fascination towards Korean was enhanced by increasing pace of Indo-Korea economic and trade partnership. In one hand we saw an increase in Korean language education in India, on the other we saw an increasing concern towards the challenges faced by Indian students' specially Hindi speaking Korean language learners. Learners often complain against the pace of learning ability in Korean Grammar especially against the morphology of Korean verbs. It is a high time for the research to investigate and understand is there any psychological barriers which create hindrance in mastering Korean grammar in general and verb morphology which includes acquisition of tense as well, in particular. Initial observation of the class of Hindi speaking Korean language learners it has been observed that even after completing three semesters, they shows confusion in using past tense making morphemes and future tense making morpheme, in present perfect, past perfect and simple past. Even in the use of tense in adnominal and in the case of honorificity Hindi speaking Korean language learners exhibits confusion and expresses frustration and becomes passives towards their learning.

Hence, in the present study we have set three fold objectives-

First, we need to identify structural and conceptual difference in Korean and Hindi Tense system.

Second we need to analyze the types and frequencies of tense –related errors among Hindi Speaking Indian Korean language learners; and

Third we need take help of psycholinguistic lens to analyze these errors and exploring that how cognitive transfer, inter-language restricting and processing limitations interact in Korean tense acquisition.

When we look at the significance of this study, we find that it lies its potential to contribute to both theoretical psycholinguistics where it provides empirical evidence for how typological distance and cognitive load interact in second and foreign language learning and applied pedagogy where it aims to inform Indian Korean language educators/instructors/ teachers about the specific cognitive bottlenecks that Hindi speaking learners encounter and force them to think for the development of targeted instructional strategies. In the present study we will combined the contrastive and error analysis and consequently it seeks not only highlights and describe difficulties encountered by the learners but to explain those difficulties as well.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of Korean tense acquisition or learning by Hindi speaking Korean language learners or by anyone not much work have been done from psycholinguistics point of view. Few works have been done on Korean tense recently by few M.Phil⁴ and Ph.D. scholar⁵ at Jawahar Lal Nehru University and at central University of Jharkhand. Farooq (2019)⁶ noted that Pakistani learners showed marked improvement in functional communication when tense instruction was contextualized within interactive tasks, such as storytelling or dialogue simulation. Similarly, Nguyen (2017) highlighted that Vietnamese learners retained tense forms more effectively when integrated into authentic communicative contexts rather than isolated drills.

⁴ K..H. Roopa's M.Phil dissertation on a Contrastive Analysis of Korean and Hindi Tense, 20212

⁵ Shashi Kumar Mishra and others' research paper on Analysis of Korean Tense Education, 2023 & 2024

⁶ Farooq (2019)

Their focus is primarily on the contrastive analysis and less on error analysis with psycholinguistic perspective. of Korean and Hindi tense. They have not touched the psycholinguistic perspective to deal with the issues of errors committed during tense education. Hence to follow a theoretical frame work for this present research work I have gone through three selected- 1. Dr. Rehab Farouk Gad (2018) - A Psycholinguistic Perspective on Error Analysis: The Acquisition of Tense-Aspect 2. J. J. (2003) -Acquisition of L2 English DP by Korean children-2003 and 3. Eunyoung Ko (2012) -Acquisition of English Tense-Aspect Morphology in Korean Instructed Learners. I have gone through Alesaw(2015) and Alruwaili (2015). Both concluded in their work that acquisition of tense in learning second language, it is the interface of first language which significantly creates barrier. There are few researches which have done on tense acquisitions but they are primarily focused on tense acquisition and error related to it by English, Japanese and Chinese, speaking Korean language learners as Korean language education took its root in these areas much before the arrival of Korean education in India.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Generally it is believed that the proper acquisition of tense of any language means the mastery of internal structure of the verb or morphology of verb which bears the load of tense especially in the case of Korean but it is not. Apart from understanding and mastering the intricacies of verb morphology, it is a reconfiguration of how the human mind perceives, encodes and expresses time. As far as the psycholinguistic study is concerned, learning or acquisition of tense has been recognized as a critical domain where linguistic form, cognitive processing and conceptual transfer intersect. Every language has a unique temporal logic that guides its speaker to conceptualize the time in specific ways. When target language learners encounter a language which temporal system differs from their own, they must reconstruct deep stated cognitive frame works.

Tense in Korean and Hindi

Tense and aspect plays a significant role in the grammatical structure of any language of the world. It deals with various temporal relations in the description of the situation. In Korean language Tense is generally categorized into past, present, and future, based on the relationship between the time of speaking and the time when an event, action, or state occurs. However, since many Korean tense markers also carry aspectual meanings, they should not be understood merely as indicators of time.⁷

In Korean, tense is expressed through several grammatical means -First, by using specific final verb endings that denote time, second through adnominal forms that reflect temporal relations within clauses and third with the help of temporal adverbs, which can either indicate or clarify the time reference in a sentence. Therefore, when Hindi speaking Korean language learners encounters Korean tense, they bewilder as Hindi which belongs to Indo-Aryan family distinguishes tense system primarily through auxiliary verbs and particles form not by morphology of the verbs unlike Korean. Hindi tense system even does not do reflects direct interference from politeness or honorific markers. In Hindi, temporal reference is purely grammatical and semantic. It does not exhibits socio-pragmatic unlike Korean. Consequently, when Hindi speaking Korean language learners faces the Korean tenses, they should go for learning morphological markers along with grasping the social semiotics of Korean tense. Namely, they should grasp how temporal and relational meanings occur. As no much research have been done in this field in India, for this study we draw theoretical grounding from two major frameworks in second and foreign language tense learning or acquisition. First theoretical frame work is Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and second is Error Analysis and both theoretical frame works are reinterpreted in the light of modern psycholinguistics. As per contrastive analysis theory, the degree of similarities or differences between first language and second language or foreign language determines the ease of difficulty of acquisition. In error analysis theoretical frame work, we empirically examine learner output to find out the patterns of deviation from target norms. When we point out the error, such errors represent windows into cognition rather than mere mistakes. Through this it is revealed that how learners internalize, test and revise linguistic hypothesis. When it is applied to tense system learning, it is the error analysis which supports us to find out how learners conceptualize temporal reference and how these conceptualization evolve through exposure, practice and feedback.

In this present research we situate both contrastive and error analysis with within a cognitive -interactionist framework as it views language acquisition or learning as a dynamic interplay between input processing, working memory and hypothesis testing. Acquisition Korean tense by Hindi speaking Korean language learners exemplifies this frame work. Hindi speaking Korean Learners receive input in the form of tense marking morphemes and attempt to map on to preexisting Hindi categories and adjust their integral grammatical structure through feedback.

4. Contrastive Analysis of Korean and Hindi Tense

It is very true that generally the contrastive and comparative study of tense or any grammatical structure highlights the fact that how deeply grammar is embedded and intertwined in cognition and culture and society. Though Hindi and Korean come from two distinct language family- Indo-Aryan and Altaic respectively yet both exhibit agglutinative character and have postpositional syntactic order and have same word order - Subject+ object+ Verb.

⁷ New Edition Korean Grammars for International Learners (ihm , Ho Bin, Chang , Suk In) Yonsei University Press, Nov 30, 2003

Thought they are of agglutinative nature and has postpositional syntactic order and share same word order-Subject + Object+ Verb yet they have so many differences and they encode time, aspect and social relationship through the morphological features of tense radically in different way. When we think of Hindi speaking Korean language learners of India, we find that for them these differences constitute the central psycholinguistic challenges in proper acquisition of Korean tense and grasping it in a masterly way. Hence a contrastive study of Korean and Hindi tense systems provide crucial insight into the nature of these difficulties encountered by Hindi speaking learners.

Korean Present Tense

Final Endings	-(ㄴ/는)다	-ㅂ/습니다	-어(아,여)요	-지 않아요
Dict. Forms				
사다-	산다-	삽니다	-사요-	사 지않요- .
하다-	한다	합니다	해요-	하지 않아요-
마시다	마신다	마십니다	마셔요	마시지 않아요

(Table no. 1 Final Verb endings in Present Tense)

The present tense in Korean is primarily indicated through suffixes attached to the verb stem. Declarative sentences use -는다/-ㄴ다, while polite and conversational forms use -아요/-어요. The present tense expresses not only ongoing actions but also habitual actions, general truths, or near-future events, which creates a conceptual difference for Hindi-speaking learners, whose present tense is largely limited to ongoing or habitual actions. Even if an event occurs after the time of utterance, the present tense is used if the event is expected or anticipated

Korean Past Tense: Past tense is expressed by attaching the past tense ending -았(았,였) to an action or descriptive verb base.

Dict. Forms	Past Tense (Final Endings)			
	-었(았,였)다	었(았,였)습니다	-었(았,였)어요	-지 않았어요
사다	샀다	샀습니다	샀어요	사지 않았어요
하다	했다	했습니다	했어요	하지 않았어요
마시다	마셨다	마셨습니다	마셨어요	마시지 않았어요

(Table no.2 Past Tense verb forms endings)

Future Tense

The future tense refers to the time that expresses an action or event that will occur after the moment of speaking, that is, it indicates something that is yet to happen in the time following the present. (I) In Korean, the future tense can be expressed using -겠 or -(으)ㄹ 것이다 / -(으)ㄹ 거예요. The ending -겠 is typically used when the speaker wants to convey a strong sense of will, determination, or intention about a future action. In contrast, -(으)ㄹ 것이다 or -(으)ㄹ 거예요 is a more neutral way to talk about future events, simply indicating that something will happen without emphasizing the speaker's personal intention. This distinction is important for understanding nuances in Korean, as the choice of ending can subtly change the tone of a statement. Refer to the table below for a clear comparison of these forms and their specific uses.

Korean Future Tense

Future Tense					
Future form	Dict.	겠다	겠습니다	겠어요	지 않겠어요
사다		사겠다	사겠습니다	사겠어요	사지 않겠어요
하다		하겠다	하겠습니다	하겠어요	하지 않겠다
					할 거예요
					할 거예요

마시다	마시겠다	마시겠습니다	마시겠어요	마시지 않겠어요	마실 거예요
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(Table no.3 Future Tense verb forms endings)

Adnominals Ending

The primary function of adnominal endings is to attach to the stem of a verb and transform it into a new part of speech. This new part of speech can modify a noun, that is, it clarifies the meaning and attributes of the noun it describes.

In addition, a significant function of adnominal endings is to convey the tense and aspect of the verb. In other words, these endings indicate whether an action has occurred in the past, is occurring in the present, or will occur in the future; these functions and meanings differ slightly depending on the type of verb base. ⁸

Adnominal Endings

Classifications 구분	Action Verbs 동작동사	Descriptive verbs 상태동사	Exist ‘있다’	Copula ‘-이다’
Present(Progressive) .현재 (지속)	-는	-(으)ㄴ	-는	-ㄴ
Past (Perfect) 과거(완료)	-(으)ㄴ			
Future(Conjecture)미래 (추측)	-(으)ㄹ	-(으)ㄹ	-을	-ㄹ
Past Retrospective)과거(회상)	-던	-던	-던	-던

(Table no.4 Adnominal forms)

In Indian Classrooms Hindi-speaking Korean Language learners face challenges in mapping gender agreement rules which often leads them in producing incorrect tense forms in Korean or deleting nuances of experiential past. While learning Korean tenses Hindi speaking learners might incorrectly say 나는 책을 읽었다 without contextual emphasis, losing the nuance of completion or sequence. Hindi speaking learners makes such constructions, lacking a direct Hindi equivalent, often lead learners to apply Hindi auxiliary strategies incorrectly, resulting in overuse or omission of tense markers. Generally the future tense in Korean language is marked by -겠다 (-getta) or periphrastic forms to indicate intention, prediction, or promise.

These complex interactions of tense, aspect, and mood are particularly challenging for Hindi-speaking learners because Hindi separates tense and mood morphologically and syntactically, whereas Korean encodes them simultaneously in bound morphemes, creating frequent errors in tense selection, modal interpretation, and aspectual alignment.

Beyond simple declarative uses, the Korean present tense carries additional semantic nuances that often confuse Hindi-speaking learners. For example, Korean present tense can indicate general truths, habitual actions, or actions that are about to occur, which contrasts with Hindi, where present tense is typically bound to habitual or ongoing actions and future actions are distinctly marked using auxiliaries. For Hindi-speaking learners, these semantic overlaps often lead to overgeneralization. Learners might incorrectly use Korean present tense where future markers are required, such as 그는 내일 커피를 마신다 intending “He will drink coffee tomorrow,” instead of 그는 내일 커피를 마실 것이다, which correctly conveys future tense. This illustrates the L1 transfer challenge, where learners map Hindi auxiliary-based distinctions onto Korean morphologically bound tense markers.

Korean present tense also interacts with honorific forms:

Hindi learners often ignore the honorific system because Hindi uses distinct pronouns or verbs less consistently for politeness. This omission leads to pragmatic errors in formal or academic settings, demonstrating that tense mastery in Korean is inseparable from sociolinguistic competence. The Korean past tense not only indicates simple completion but is also used for narrative sequencing, reported speech, and experiential contexts. Hindi-speaking learners frequently misalign the temporal interpretation because Hindi often relies on auxiliary verbs and context rather than bound morphemes.

Hindi-speaking learners often fail to distinguish between experiential and simple past in Korean, producing sentences like 나는 그 영화를 봤다 without the experiential nuance, which might misrepresent the intended meaning. Teaching strategies must therefore highlight how past tense interacts with context, aspect, and evidentiality.

⁸ New Edition Korean Grammars for International Learners (ihm, Ho Bin, Chang, Suk In) Yonsei University Press, Nov 30, 2003 page. 316

Korean future tense conveys not just temporal reference but also intention, prediction, probability, or promise, which is often encoded morphologically. Hindi learners may misinterpret these modal nuances because Hindi marks future tense separately and relies on context for modal meaning.

In learning the future tense, learners face difficulties with intention, prediction, scheduled actions, and retrospective conjecture. The morpheme “-겠다” expresses intention or conjecture, which has no direct equivalent in Hindi. Students often substitute present or simple future endings incorrectly: “나는 내일 학교에 가겠다” may be produced as “나는 내일 학교에 간다,” losing the intentional nuance. Predictive usage is similarly affected: “그는 아마 늦게 도착하겠어요” becomes “그는 늦게 도착해요,” eliminating modality.

Complex past-future combinations, such as “그는 이미 떠났었겠어요” (He might have already left — retrospective conjecture), are especially error-prone. Learners may reduce it to “그는 이미 떠났다,” omitting modality and aspectual markers. Overgeneralization of future markers, incorrect use of honorifics, and L1 transfer together result in semantic inaccuracies, pragmatic violations and unnatural sentences.

5. METHODOLOGY, PARTICIPANTS AND DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

For the present research we have adopted a psycho-linguistically informed descriptive and analytical research method which will explore the challenges which comes in the acquisition/leaning of Korean tense system by Hindi speaking Indian Korean language learners. The reason behind selecting this research design is our two objectives. First objective is to conduct grammatical analysis and second one is to do empirical error analysis. Both objectives form a comprehensive view of the learners’ difficulties in acquiring and learning Korean tense system. Over all this research will identify that how linguistic contrast, cognitive processing mechanism and sociolinguistic characteristics come in between to influence the acquisition of Korean tense system by Hindi speaking Korean language learners in Hindi speaking states of the country in general and the domains of past, future tense and tense related honorificity in particular.

To obtain holistic understanding of the tense and its acquisition phenomenon, we employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. We collected data through a structured Likert –scale questionnaire from 60 students studying in third, fourth and fifth semester of Korean language programme at central university of Jharkhand. For qualitative data we collected from class observation. The criteria through which we have selected the students for data collection was the language Hindi or Varsity of Hindi used as a first language and were enrolled in full time degree programme of Korean language as it was significant for contrastive psycholinguistic analysis. For Error analysis, we went through written tasks. Under this data collection process, we gave selected 15 sentences to all 60 participants and instructed them to translate into Korean. Sentences were carefully selected to represent various temporal and aspectual situations including simple past, past perfect, past continuous, future, habitual past and honorific oriented sentences. Each sentence was evaluated by us carefully and errors were marked.

We did the part of data analysis in two different stages- quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis- one for Likert- scale result and second for written sentences data.

In the results of the first stage we found that 92% of participants rated Korean tense learning/acquisition as difficult or very difficult. The mean difficulty score was 4.4, 4.4 and 4.2 for future tense, past tense and honorific tense respectively. This result attributes and confirmed that Hindi speaking Korean language learners from Hindi speaking states of India experienced highest cognitive and linguistic strain in future, past tense.

For the second part of data analysis was qualitative data analysis. For this an error typology was developed using the frame work of contrastive analysis of an error analysis. For this three parameters were sought an divided in three different categories- Morphological errors (ga-otta for gaataa), semantic-pragmatic errors (inappropriate use of tense gaagettaa for factual future.) and third sociolinguistic error- (gaaseyo instead of gasysoyo) .

The results and evidence of data analysis provided an absolute understanding of the psycholinguistic reality behind the difficulties and challenges faced by Hindi speaking Korean language learners. This result established a clear empirical foundation for proving that how first and second language contrast creates cognitive and linguistic difficulties in tense acquisition. This result also provides a foundational ground for Korean language instructors, teachers to go for adopting psycholinguistic supportive teaching strategies in which they may go with scaffolding, reduced error correction during fluency activities and positive reinforcement to handle anxiety. Teachers should encourage the learners to verbalize their thought process. To sum up we could say that the acquisition of Korean tense has multidimensional psycholinguistic challenges for Hindi speaking Korean language learners in India.

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude it could be said that teaching and learning of Korean language to or by Hindi speaking Korean language learners from Hindi speaking states of India is not simply a grammatical challenge but serious psycholinguistic transformation. It is highly advisable to the learners that they should unlearn the categorical linearity of Hindi temporal structures and adopt the relational and socially embedded logic of Korean time expression. One could be able to go through this challenge only if he/she will be able to go through linguistic restructuring and conceptual flexibility which demands a great transition in the process of Korean tense acquisition

of Hindi speaking Korean language learners of Hindi speaking states of in India. To conclude it is also significant to say that this study clearly affirms that linguistic competence in tense learning or acquisition is highly interwoven with cognitive adaptation and emotional resilience.

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