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## Acquisition of Prepositions & Postpositions by Multilingual Children; Case of Early Language Development of Korean Children in Hindi, English and Korean Environment

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**Introduction:** Language acquisition is one of the most impressive and fascinating aspects of human development. Indeed, learning a language is an amazing feat. How do children accomplish this? The present paper examines briefly some of the characteristics of the language of young children exposed to more than one language in early years.

**Milestones and Patterns in Development:** One remarkable thing about first language acquisition is the high degree of similarity that we see in the early language of children all over the world. According to the month or year (ages), child will have begun to produce a word or began to combine words into simple sentences. Also children can ask questions, give commands, report of real events (by 3 1/2 and 4years). Children's ability to understand language and to use it to express themselves develops rapidly in the pre-school year. A dramatic development in metalinguistic awareness occurs when children begin to learn to read. Metalinguistic awareness also includes the discovery of such things as ambiguity –words and sentences that have multiple meaning. (Crystal D. 1976)

**Early Childhood Bilingualism:** Children who hear more than one language virtually from birth are sometimes referred to as 'simultaneous bilinguals', where as those who begin to learn a second language later are referred to as 'sequential bilinguals'.

The evidence suggests that, when simultaneous bilinguals are in contact with both languages in a variety of settings, there is every reason to expect that they will progress in their development of birth languages at a rate and in a manner that are not different from those of monolingual children.

Children who have the opportunity to learn multiple languages from early childhood to maintain them throughout their lives are fortunate indeed, and families that can offer this opportunity to their children should be encouraged to do so. (Colin Baker, 2006)

**Developmental Sequences:** As children progress through the discovery of language in their early years, there are predictable patterns in the emergence and development of many features of the language they are learning. Those stages in language acquisition are related to children's cognitive development.

About the grammatical morphemes, the children master the morphemes at different ages, but again the order of their acquisition is very similar. *According to Peter A. de Villiers and Jill de Villiers (Rule)*, in children's speech, there are two aspects to the process of identifying morphemes. All words are morphemes, as are the plural -s, the past tense -ed, and comparative -er; since these convey additional meaning. A second finding that has attracted attention is that there is a consistent order of mastery of the common morphemes. In other words, the plural -s and progressive -ing on verbs are almost always the first to appear. Followed by the prepositions *in* and *on*, the articles *a* and *the*. In this article, Eve couldn't use preposition when she was 18 months. But when she was twenty-seven months, she used prepositions *in* and *on*. (Peter A. de Villiers and Jill de Villiers, 1979)

These descriptions of early milestones and acquisition sequences for grammatical morphemes show that we have considerable knowledge of what children learn in their early language development.

**Theoretical approaches for Explaining First Language Acquisition:** Language acquisition is one of the central topics in cognitive science. Every theory of cognition has tried to explain it. Possessing a language is the quintessentially human trait. All normal humans speak but no nonhuman animal does. We know about other people's thoughts through language. And the language and thoughts must be intimately related. Every time we speak for revealing something about language, but the facts of language structure are easy to come at a system of extraordinary complexity. Nonetheless, a child does successfully learning a first language in a matter of a few years and without the need for formal lessons. So language is the core of what it means to be human.

The scientific study of language acquisition began around the same time with cognitive science, in the late 1950's. The historical catalyst was Noam Chomsky's

review of Skinner's Verbal Behavior (Chomsky, 1959). At that time, Anglo-American natural science, social science, and philosophy had come to a virtual consensus about the answers to the questions about language Modularity, Language and Thought and Learning and Innateness. They said that language must be learned and it cannot be a module, and thinking must be a form of verbal behavior. They said that Verbal behavior is the prime manifestation of "thought" that can be observed externally.

**Behaviourism (Input=Output):** Traditional behaviorists believed that language learning is the result of imitation, practice, feedback of success and habit formation. The behaviorist's view of how language is learned has an intuitive. It is also important to note those children's imitations are not random; they don't imitate everything they hear. Thus, unlike a parrot that imitates the familiar and continues to repeat the same things again and again, children's imitation is selective and based on what they are currently learning. The behaviorist's explanations for language acquisition offer a reasonable way of understanding how children learn some of the regular and routine aspects of language. However, their acquisition of the more complex grammatical structures of the language requires a different sort of explanation and we will see below some of the proposals for going beyond imitation and practice. (Place, 1996)

**Innatism(Input  $\neq$  Output):** The linguist Noam Chomsky claims that children are biologically programmed for language and that language develops in the child in just the same way that other biological functions develop. Chomsky argues that the behaviorist theory fails to recognize what has come to be called 'the logical problem of language acquisition'. Here is a summary of the kinds of evidence which have been used to support

Chomsky argued that language acquisition falsified these beliefs. He stated that children learn languages and they do so without explicit instruction or any other environmental clues to the nature of such principles. Hence language acquisition depends on an innate, species-specific module that is distinct from general intelligence. Chomsky's Innate Hypothesis is based on the observation of a number of indisputable facts in relation to language acquisition. For examples, all children can acquire language regardless of I.Q. level. And children acquire language effortlessly and in a relatively short period of time. Children do not have to be taught formally to acquire language. Also language is a complex system, but children discover the system of language from a small, unsystematic amount of data. And language acquisition involves very little imitation. Language acquisition is an active process, involving 'mental computation of things that they have never heard from adults. From these observations, Chomsky drew the conclusions that Infants are born with what he termed a Language Acquisition Device (LAD). This area cannot be pinpointed

in the brain, but is generally presumed to exist through the neurological networks we have developed. (Chomsky, 1975).

American neurologist Eric Lenneberg (1967) formulated the *Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)* originally. The hypothesis implies that children have a special innate ability for acquiring language and it is determined by biological factors. This assumption is based on the biological observation. He said that the brain of a child is plastic whereas the brain of an adult is rigid and set. According to Lenneberg, during early childhood language appears to be more spread out across both brain hemispheres, but as the child grows older and the two hemispheres become increasingly specialised for certain functions, language gradually relocates, settling in the left one. The CPH holds that primary language acquisition must occur during a critical period that starts at about the age of 2 years and ends at puberty (around the age of 12 or 13) with the establishment of lateralisation of the language function. (Lenneberg, 1967).

**The Scope and domain of the Present Investigation:** There are many different ways in which children can be exposed to a second language. For some children, two languages are present in the home from birth. For other children, exposure to a second language begins once they enter early childhood education programs. It is customary in the literature to distinguish between children who learn two languages simultaneously and children who learn one language after their first language is established. Because so much of language development occurs before the age of three, the usual convention is to divide children at that point. If the second language is introduced before age three, children are thought to be learning the two languages simultaneously; after the age of three, they are engaged in sequential bilingualism (McLaughlin, 1984).

Furthermore, children differ in their exposure to their languages. Some children receive a great deal of exposure to two languages, whereas for other children one language predominates. In addition, children may be in an environment where the two languages are intermixed in normal adult speech.

**Aims and Objectives:** The main focus of this study is to see from when the children use the Prepositions in English and Postpositions in Korean and Hindi in a bilingual environment.

**The Target Group:** The target group consists of twelve children, five males and seven females. And their age range is between 2.4 years and 4.11 years. All the children belong to the UMC (UPPER MIDDLE CLASS). These children have their *Mother Tongue*, Korean language and Hindi and English are *Second Language*. The target subjects are

all normal children having no physiological disability or any kind of mental disorder or deviant speech.

**Variables:** We have taken two variables including *age and the time* that they have got exposure in India.

**Table 1. Profile of children**

NO	AGE & NAME	How long they have been in India	SEX	Mother Tongue	Education of Parents
1	2 years and 4 month (Seojun Park)	2.2 years	M	Korean	Both of them have Master's degree
2	2 years and 6 month (Jeonjin Kim)	From birth	M	Korean	Father is Doctor Mother has Bachelor degree
3	2 years and 8month (Seohee Jang)	2years	F	Korean	Both of them Master's degree
4	3years and 2 month (Daeun Kim)	From the birth	F	Korean	Both of them have Bachelor degree
5	3years and 3month (Mina Kim)	1.6 years	F	Korean	Both of them have Master's degree
6	3years and 4month (Cheolho Kwak)	1years	M	Korean	Both of them have Bachelor degree
7	3 years and 7 month (Yejin Son)	2.3years	F	Korean	Both of them have Bachelor degree
8	3 years and 7 month (Yeaun Lee)	3years	F	Korean	Both of them have Bachelor degree
9	3 years and 9 month (Seohee Kim)	3.4years	F	Korean	Both of them have Bachelor degree

10	4 years and 1 month (Jinyoung choo)	1year	M	Korean	Both of them have Bachelor degree
11	4 years and 6 month (Mose Jang)	From the birth	M	Korean	Both of them have Bachelor degree
12	4 years and 11 month (Bada Kim)	From the birth	F	Korean	Father is a Doctor Mother has a Bachelor degree

Table 2. Domains of Use

No.	How long at shool	How long with babysitter	Babysitter speaks.	Source of entertainment and program
1	3 hours	Almost all day		T.V. and Korean C.D., Puzzle (shinjang, daisy, faranker)
2		Almost all day.	Hindi	T.V. and C.D. (Tom& Jerry, Pokémon)
3		Almost all day	Hindi	Sing songs T.V. and Korean C.D. (Power puff girl)
4	3 hours	5 hours	English/Hindi	T.V. and Korean C.D. (Jungle book, Tom& Jerry Power puff girl)
5	3 hours	Almost all day	Hindi	Outside play T.V. and Korean C.D. (Pogo, dragon ball, power lanzer)
6	3 hours		Hindi	Outside play, T .V. and C.D. (Pogo, cartoon network, dra gon ball, power lanzer)
7	3 hours	Almost all day	Hindi	T.V. and Korean C.D. (Jungle book, Tom& Jerry Power puff girl)

8	3 hours	Almost all day	English/Hindi	Outside play wathx T.V. and Korean C.D. (Pogo, dragon ball, Power lanzer)
9	3 hours		English/Hindi	T.V. and Korean C.D. (Jungle book, Tom& Jerry Power puff )
10			English	Outside play T.V. and Korean C.D. (Pogo, dragon ball, power lanzer)
11	3 hours	Almost all day	English/Hindi	T.V. and Korean C.D. (Jungle book, Tom& Jerry Power puff girl)
12	4 hours	5 hours	Hindi	Outside play T.V. and Korean C.D (Jungle book, Tom& Jerry , Power puff girl)

**Methodology:** To make a comparative study of postposition and preposition in Korean, Hindi and English languages the data was collected from Korean Children who live in Delhi.

The data was collected through the following ways.

**1.Questionnaire Method for Profile:**To get more information about child from their parents, I made two more information sheets and used them to children and children's mother. It contains several questions for using preposition in English and using postposition in Korean and Hindi. And collected data.

With very small children, I showed them pictures and interviewed their mothers personally according to the Information Sheet and tried to gather as much information as possible regarding our subjects.

**2. Individual intervies with Children:** I met Children individually in their school and home. I attempted to do individual interview and group interviews with designed questions in a manner in one format. And I recorded interviews with MP3.

**3.Observation in the Natural Environment(Home and School):**I observed their interaction with their parents and brothers and sisters at home. And went to the school where they study, I observed their interaction with peer groups and teachers at school and in their classrooms.

### 3. Test Instruments: Pictures, Story Significant in Picture and Story in Text:

I made a storybook that related with preposition and postposition that I research in English, Korean and Hindi and showed to children. After telling the story, I asked the children about story with specific questions which had to be answered with specific English prepositions and postpositions in Korean and Hindi.

**4. Recordings:** I recorded all the Individual Interviews and Observations at children's home and school.

### 5. Data Analysis:

**A.Tabulation:** The data was classified and tabulated indicating variations from the expected responses for each test unit as against the two variables: age and time that the children have been in India.

The table below shows the List of 8 post-positions in Hindi, 14 post-positions in Korean and 3 pre-positions in English that I use in this research.

**Table 3.Preposition and Postposition under Investigation**

Hindi	Korean	English
Post position	Postposition	Pre position
	은 /eun/	
	는/neun/	
	이/i:/	
	가/ga/	
	을/eul/	
	를/reul/	
ऊपर /upar/	위에/wie:/	on
नीचे /niCe/	아래/aree:/	
	으로/euro/	
अंदर /andar/	안에/ane:/	in
से /se/	부터 /buteo/	
को /ko/	에게/ege/	
का /ka/	의/eui/	
में /me/, पर /par/	에/e/	at



**Table 4. Which language does child use?**

NO	AGE	Parents	Sibling	Neighbors	Peer group	School	Environment	Baby sitter
1	2.4 years	K	K	H/E			K/H/E	H
2	2.6 years	K	K	H/E			K/H/E	H
3	2.8 years	K	K	H/E			K/H/E	H
4	3.2 years	K	K/H	H/E			K/H/E	H
5	3.3 years	K	H/K	H/E	H/E	E	K/H/E	H
6	3.4 years	K	E/K	H	H/E	E	K/H/E	H
7	3.7 years	K	K /E/H	H	H/E	E	K/H/E	H
8	3.7years	K	K /H/E	H/E	H/E	E	K/H/E	H
9	3.9 years	K	K/E/H	H/E	H/E	E	K/H/E	H/E
10	4.1 years	K	K/E	E	E	E	K/H/E	H/E
11	4.6 years	K	K/E/H	H	H	E	K/H/E	H/E
12	4.11 years	K	K /H/E	H	H/E	E	K/H/E	H/E

**K:** Korean      **H:** Hindi      **E:** English.

The table above shows that most children communicate with their parents in Korean. Some children who don't go to school communicate with their siblings in Korean and Hindi. But children who go to school communicate with their siblings in Korean, Hindi and English. Also they have exposure to Hindi and English in their environment because they speak in Hindi and English with their neighbors. They use English and Hindi at school. And most children communicate with their babysitter in Hindi.

The table below made with research information of all methodology. When children use the postpositions in Korean and Hindi or prepositions in English over 90% in their speech and when I tested them with question sheets, if children could answer with

the postpositions in Korean and Hindi or prepositions in English more than 90%, I concluded that the children could use those prepositions or postpositions.

**Table 5. Data tabulation**  
**How many Prepositions and Postpositions child can use?**

No	AGE & NAME	How long have been in India.	ENGLISHH		HINDI		KOREAN	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	2 years and 4 month (Seojun Park)	2.2 years	0	0%	0	0%	3	21.4%
2	2 years and 6 month (Jeonjin Kim)	From birth	0	0%	1	12.5%	2	14.3%
3	2 years and 8month (Seohee Jang)	2years	0	0%	2	25%	5	35.7%
4	3years and 2 month (Daeun Kim)	From the birth	1	33%	8	100%	14	100%
5	3years and 3month (Mina Kim)	1.6 years	0	0%	2	25%	14	100%
6	3years and 4month (Cheolho Kwak)	0.6years	2	66%	2	25%	14	100%
7	3years and 7 month (Yejin Son)	2.3years	3	100%	8	100%	14	100%
8	3years and 7 month (Yeaeun Lee)	3years	3	100%	8	100%	14	100%
9	3 years and 9 month (Seohee Kim)	1year	3	100%	1	12.5%	14	100%
10	4 years and 1 month (Jinyoung choo)	1year	2	66%	1	12.5%	14	100%
11	4 years and 6 month (Mose Jang)	From the birth	3	100%	8	100%	14	100%

12	4 years and 11 month (Bada Kim)	From the birth	2	66%	8	100%	14	100%
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The table above shows that even children under 3 years use Hindi post-positions and Korean post-positions in their conversation, but they didn't use any Pre-position in English. Children whose age is over 3years use Hindi post-positions and Korean post-positions and English Pre-position in their conversation. *Mina Kim* (3years and 3month) and *Cheolho Kwak* (3years and 4month) are older than *Daeun Kim* (3years and 2 month). But they only use two Hindi post-positions while *Daeun Kim* (3years and 2 month) use 8 Hindi post-positions. Because *Daeun Kim* (3years and 2 month) has been in India from birth but *Mina Kim* (3years and 3month) and *Cheolho Kwak* (3years and 4month) have been in India only for 1.6yrs and 0.6yrs.

*Seohee Kim* (3 years and 9 month) and *Jinyoung choo* (4 years and 1 month) are older than *Yejin Son* (3years and 7 month) and *Yaeun Lee* (3years and 7 month) who uses all Hindi post-positions. But they only use one Hindi post-position. They are not exposed to Hindi environment as much. They have been in India for one year. Their school is English medium. And they communicate with their Siblings, Neighbors and Peer group in English. Even their baby sitters try to use English with them. Over 3yrs children could use 14 Korean post-positions as 100%.

The data above shows that all children (100%) used the Korean postposition, /neun/. Eleven children (92%) used postposition, /eun/, /i:/, /ga/. Ten children (83%) used postposition /eui/. Nine children (75%) used the other Postpositions, /eul/, /reul/, /wie/, /ane/, /aree/, /ege/, /buteo/, /ero/. Children acquired these Postpositions, /neun/, /eun/, /i:/, /ga/, /eui/ earlier than others. The last one /e:/ probably was acquired after the other Postpositions.

#### HINDI

The data above shows eleven children (92%) used postposition /ka/. Children acquired this postposition /ka/ quicker than other postpositions. Nine children (75%) used postposition /ko/. The other six postpositions are also acquired by five children (42%).

#### ENGLISH

The data shows that eight children (67%) used English preposition /on/. Six children (50%) used preposition /in/ and four children (33%) used preposition /at/. In English pre-position, Children quickly acquired pre-position /on/ than other preposition /in/ and /at/.

**Variable age:**

According to the age, Children's performance of Korean postposition is very well.

Over 3.2years, ten children (83%) use all Korean postpositions in their speech. Five children (42%) use all Hindi postpositions and only four children (33%) use all English prepositions. Because of Korean is their first language.

Over 3.7years, Korean postpositions, Hindi postpositions and English prepositions appear at the same time. Children use all Korean prepositions and most Hindi postpositions and English prepositions.

**Variables: Time of exposure**

According to the time of exposure, over 0.6yrs, most children use Korean postpositions. Because of Korean is their first language.

For Hindi, among the children have been in India over 2.3yrs, five children (83%) use all Hindi postpositions.

For English, nine children (75%) use English prepositions. Among the children have been in India over 2.3yrs, three children ((50%) use all English prepositions.

Living in India over 2.3yrs children use all Korean prepositions and all Hindi postpositions and most English prepositions, except one child who is younger when compared to other children.

Over 3.2years children acquired all Korean postpositions. They quickly acquired subject makers, /eun/, /i:/ than others.

For Hindi, children quickly acquired postpositions, /ka/, /ko/ than other postpositions.

For English, children quickly acquired preposition, /on/ than others.

**Results and Conclusion:** According to the age, we see different responses in our data. Children who are less than three years Seojun Park (2yrs 3month old) and Jeonjin Kim (2 and half years old) acquired only two or three postpositions in Korean. And they use postpositions at the two or three words string stage. Children who are over three years acquired fourteen postpositions in Korean. After three years, most children use postposition properly in full sentences in Korean. Also in Hindi, Only Seojun Park (2yrs 3month old) didn't use any postposition in his conversation. Three children who are under three years have not acquired any preposition in English. Children who are over three years could use Hindi postpositions and English prepositions.

Also according to the duration which child's spent in India, we see different responses in our data . Children who have been in India from the birth and over 3years acquired more Hindi postpositions than others. Daeun Kim (3years 2 month old), Mose Jang (4

and half years old) and Bada Kim (4years and 11month old) have been in India from the birth. They have greater exposure to Hindi than others. So they acquired eight Hindi postpositions while other children have acquired some Hindi postpositions. Mina Kim (3years 3month old) and Cheolho Kwak (3years 4month old) are older than Daeun Kim (3years 2 month old). But they only use two Hindi post-positions while Daeun Kim (3years 2 month old) use 8 Hindi post-positions. Because Daeun Kim (3years 2month old) has been in India from the birth but Mina Kim (3years 3month old) and Cheolho Kwak (3years 4month old) have been in India only 1.6yrs and 0.6yrs. Seohee Kim (3 years 9 month old) and Jinyoung choo (4 years 1 month old) are older than Yejin Son (3years 7 month old) and Yeaen Lee (3years 7 month old) who uses all Hindi post-positions. But they only use one Hindi post-position. They are not exposed to Hindi environment much, because they have just been in India for one year.

Children who go to school acquired one or two prepositions in English. They have greater exposure to English in the school environment. Bada Kim (4years 11month old) who has been in India since birth is a special case. She used to be exposure to Hindi and Korean languages environment. She started going to school since this April. Therefore she has just acquired only two prepositions in English.

The following conclusions were drawn:

1. Age is an important variable in the acquisition of prepositions in English and postpositions in Korean and Hindi.
2. Duration of exposure to multilingual environment is also an important variable in the acquisition of prepositions in English and postpositions in Korean and Hindi.
3. In the process of acquisition of preposition and postpositions in multilingual environment, it was proved that two or three L1 (Korean) postpositions appear between 2years 4 months to 2years six months. Simultaneously L2 (Hindi) postpositions one or two appear before 2.8months.
4. Since Hindi also has postpositions like L1 (Korean), they seem to appear almost simultaneously.
5. English has prepositions and first English preposition appears only in case of one child the age of 3.2months.
5. By the time children reach the age of 3.6years old, they show 100% score Korean postpositions acquisition. They also show 25% to 100% acquisition of Hindi postpositions and they have two prepositions in English.
6. For the age of 3.7months and 4.11 months children show 100% acquisition of postpositions in Korean & Hindi. And they show 66% to 100% acquisition of prepositions in English depending on their exposure to multilingual environment in India.

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