

## ACQUISITION OF FRICATIVES AND AFFRICATES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CHILD'S PHONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN CASE OF HINDI

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### INTRODUCTION

The study of speech acquisition and language development has been an important area of investigation for speech scientists, linguists, psychologists, neurologists and cognitive scientists alike. Language acquisition according to Pit Corder (1982) takes place in the infant and the young child at a time when he is acquiring many other skills and much other knowledge about the world. It is a subconscious process which occurs naturally and informally. The process of language acquisition and then its development is concerned with how a child acquires a language system as his mother tongue or his first language investigating the processes involved in acquiring language by spontaneous and informal interaction with his native environment. Different kinds of approaches have been taken into account by different scholars of this complex process of acquisition and development of speech and language ranging from the most casual jottings of the parents, their observation of their children's developments put down on paper, to sophisticated and systematic elicitation and analytical techniques of the later periods. In the later periods, there emerged the two kinds of approaches systematizing such studies of language and language acquisition, are the **Empiricists' approaches** and **Rationalists' approaches**. Empiricists believe that language acquisition is the result of "experience" and "environment influences" whereas rationalists believe that the process of language acquisition is an "Innate Endowment of an Inborn Mechanism triggered by environmental influences." (Ingram, 1975: 221)

The most influential and best known study or rather *Theory of Phonological Development* was formulated by linguist, Roman Jakobson in his pioneering work "Kindersprache, Aphasie and Allgemeine Lautge Setze" (1941, English translation 1968). His theory represents the first attempt to explain the acquisition of phonology on the basis of linguistic universals, structural laws that underlie every modification of language, individual or social.

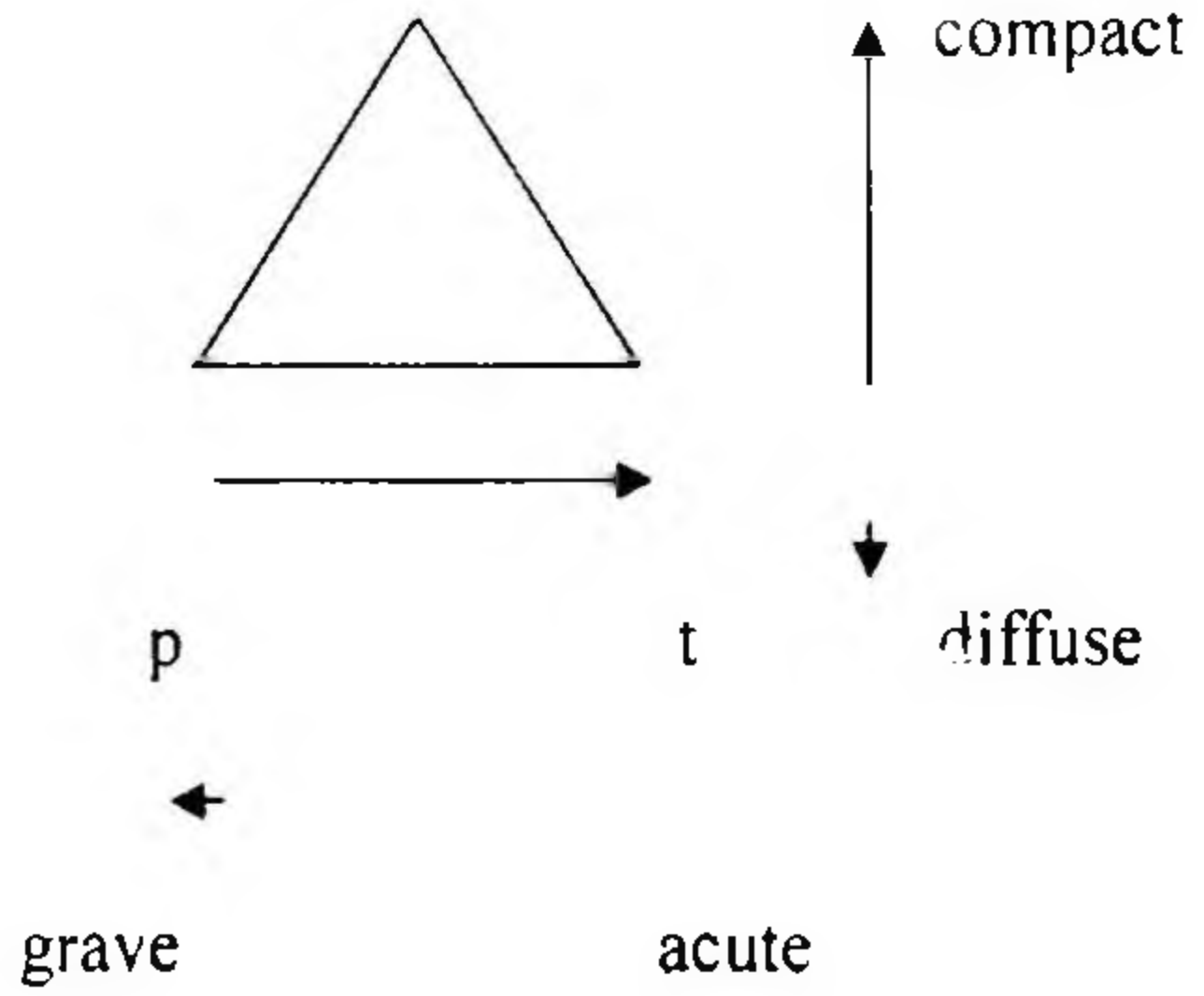
Jakobson distinguishes two discontinuous periods of phonological development which are:

- 1) The pre-language babbling period (mere production of sounds) and
- 2) The acquisition of language proper.

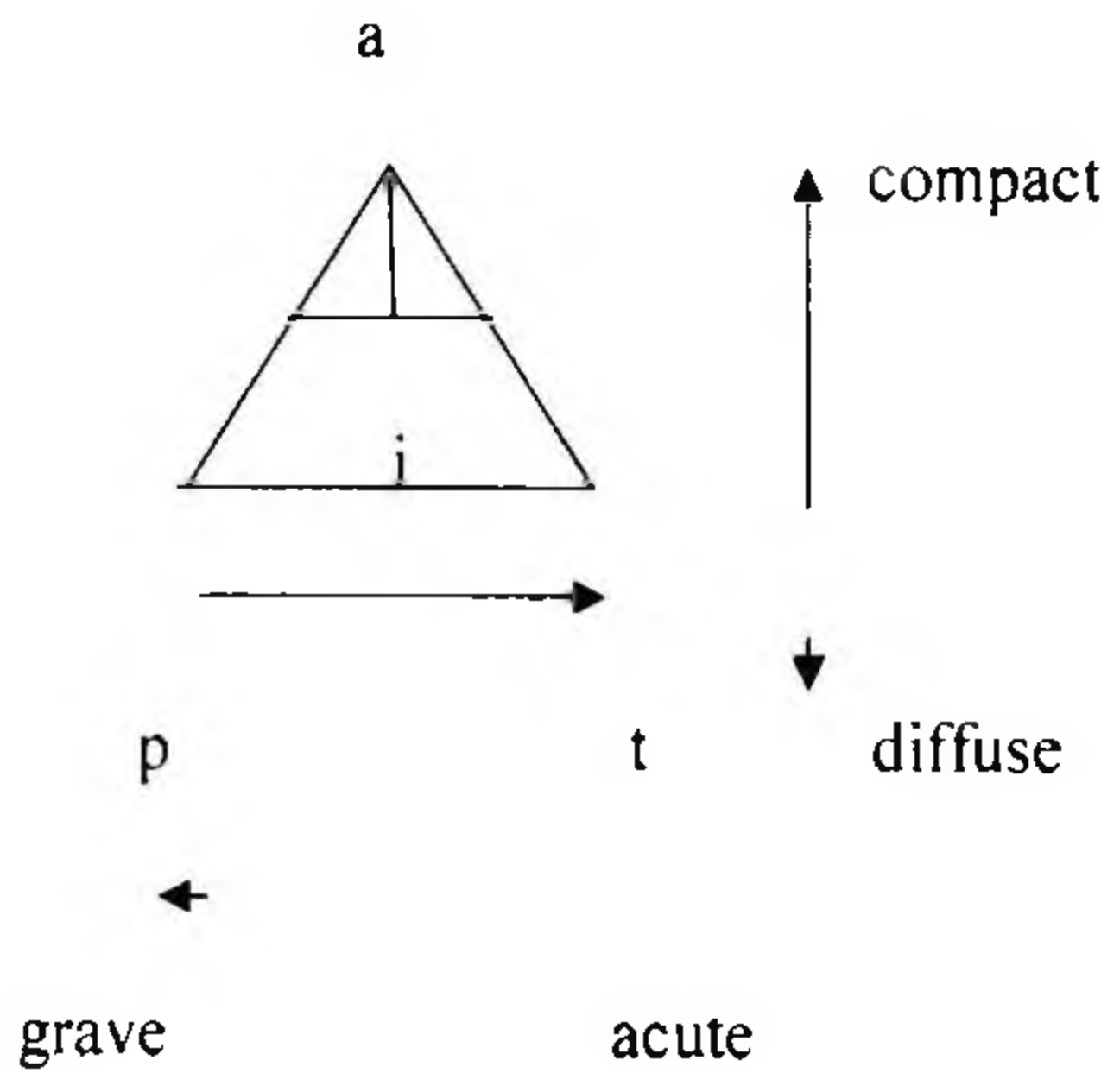
This division by Jakobson has widely been accepted and it takes place in a sequential way as he puts forth (e.g. stop sounds precedes the fricative ones i.e. simple sounds to complex/ rare ones). In other words, children may be viewed as occurring in sequence of stages each of which is relatable to its preceding stage in a coherent way. This orderly progression seems to have certain universal aspects, universal not in the sense of "absolute prediction" but in the sense of "statistical probability." According to Jakobson the development of phonetic system is the result of filling up of gaps between the two extreme sounds [p] (optimal consonant) and [a] (optimal vowel). The process of development is differentiation. The contrast between these two units in succession establishes the universal model of the syllable-CV (Consonant and Vowel). The beginning of the second period "language proper" is marked by sound utterances and these utterances as dummy dialogue become the true dialogues and as soon as the utterances "are employed for the purpose of designation and to the desire to communicate is added the ability to communicate something" launching the actual stage of language formation. For the most part one stage merges into the other, so that the acquisition of vocabulary and disappearances of the pre-language inventory occur concurrently. The child expresses in his first words important objects, events and persons from daily experiences (Jakobson, 1968:29). The sequence of stages in phonological development is based upon "the principle of maximum contrast" and "development proceeds from the simple and undifferentiated to the stratified and differentiated." Thus, the differentiation of the space between /a/ and /p/ is the result of successively introducing distinctive features. Jakobson summaries this process in terms of a series of vowel and consonant triangles which are shown as below. Jakobson further asserts that the phonemes that are relatively rare among the languages of the world are among the last phonemes to be acquired by the children exposed to be acquired. In general rare phonemes embody more distinctions of more subtle type than do the phonemes of wider distributions and these acquired later. For example, [θ] in English is one of the last phonemes to be acquired.

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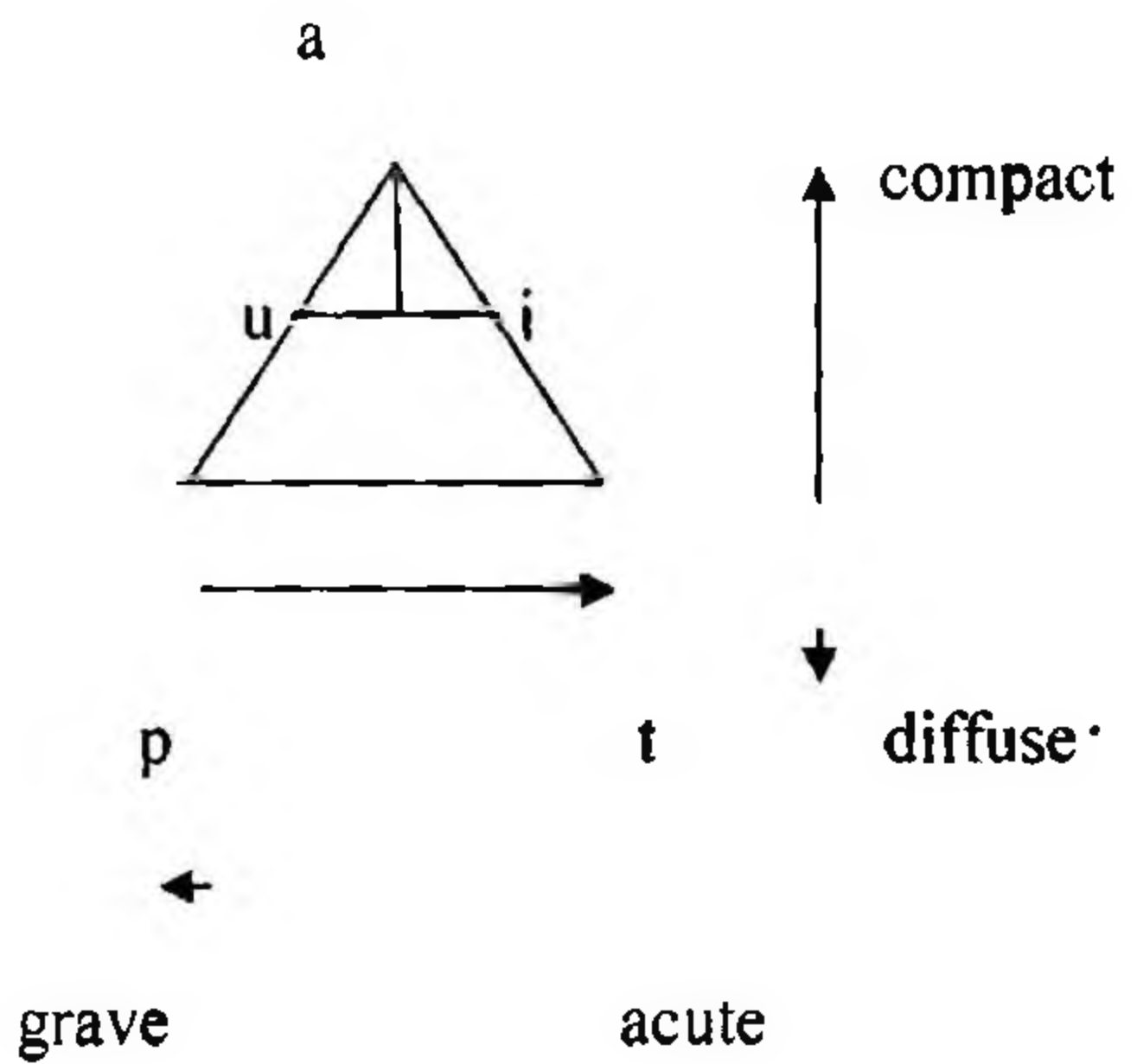
**A) a**



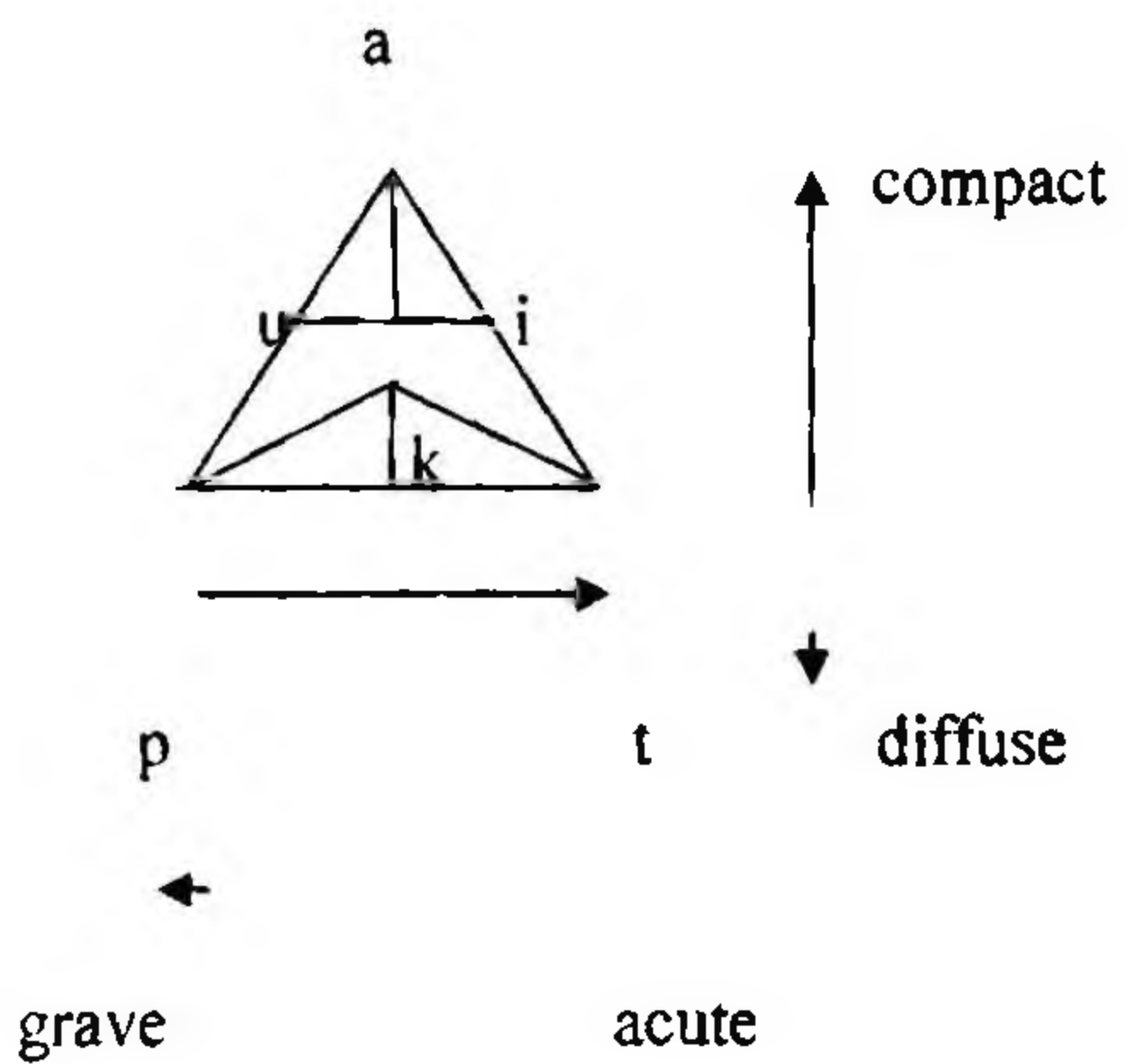
**B)**



C)



D)



[Fig.-Successive development of the primary triangles as proposed by Jakobson's theory of phonological development; adapted from (McNeil 1970)]

For the same reason most of the fricatives are acquired late as they involve more distinctions than the stops. The fundamental opposition between stops and vowels naturally precedes the opposition between the stops and the fricatives, according to Jakobson.

As explained by means of these triangles, vowels and consonants are joined in a unified system. The fundamental split can be seen along with the compact- diffuse

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axis. This shows the contrast between the back open vowel /a/ and closed front consonant /p/. The successive stage is formed by the split between the consonants. At the same stage, the pole of high and concentrated energy /a/ contrasts with low energy stops /p/ and /t/. Both of these stops are opposed to each other by a predominance of one or the other of the frequency spectrum as the 'gravity' and 'acuteness' pole. Then the primary triangle splits into two vocalic and consonantal. The most characteristic feature of vowels is their compactness and so their split takes place along the compact-diffuse axis.

The actual facts of this developmental course are yet to be obtained although several models of this development have been proposed on the hypothesis that the distinction is from the least marked segment, especially in terms of distinctive features to progressively more marked ones. Despite the fact that this developmental course has been carefully analyzed and that very little research has been reported on this, some data has been collected in various languages.

## 2. THEORETICAL GOALS AND THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present paper explores an empirical study restricted to the phonological development of the acquisition of fricatives and affricates in Hindi language for normal speaking/ hearing children whose profiles and data will be discussed subsequently. This empirical study was conducted in Brilliant Public School, Munirka, New Delhi. The topic of the paper is inspired by the argumentation of the existing literature, specifically mentioning, the *Theory of Phonological Development* by Roman Jakobson, (1941, Hindi translation, 1968). As it has already been argued that the developmental process of phonemes of a language proceeds from the simple and undifferentiated to the stratified and differentiated, the development of stops precedes fricatives, since fricatives involve more distinctions than do stops, so are difficult and complex to be acquired according to Jakobson.

The present work deals with the phonological development of six fricatives and affricates of Hindi language. These fricatives and affricates are: /č/, /j/, /s/, /š/, /f/ and /v/ (Appendix- 1). The questions expecting the answers to fit the **assumptions and hypothesis** are:

1. What is the order of acquisition of these sounds? Is it very one put forth by Jakobson, if indeed there is any?
2. What are main substitutes used for these fricatives and affricates in pre-language babbling periods?
3. Is this acquisition or development gradual or abrupt?

4. Does the phonological position (phonotactics) of the test sound in the test word (initial, medial or final) affect the production of the test sound?
5. Does the method of elicitation i.e. spontaneous elicitation or elicitation by imitation affect the production?

All these questions are the main core of the investigation and have been taken into account while adopting the procedural and methodological steps to collect and elicitate data.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL AND PROCEDURAL STEPS

Several studies have been conducted over a number of years in the area of speech and language acquisition either cross-sectionally or longitudinally, depending upon the goal of the study. In cross-sectional study, the investigator picks up several subjects, several age groups simultaneously while in the longitudinal setup the researcher is concerned only with certain subjects over a given time-period observing and assessing the results. The cross-sectional study is quick to do and is appropriate if the main purpose is in what abilities and behaviors are typical at certain age. The present study also aims at the very interest, so is concerned with the cross-sectional design.

#### 3.1 SELECTING THE SUBJECTS (SAMPLE GROUPS)

The selected subjects were children 14 in number in all, (7 girls and 7 boys) from age group 3 years to 6 years. All the subjects were normal hearing and listening children. All of these were taken from primary and nursery and pre-nursery classes from Brilliant Public School, situated at Munirka, in the southern part of New Delhi. Taking an appropriate and easy analysis into consideration, all the 14 subjects were divided into three age-groups. The divided age-groups are tabulated here as in Table- 1:

Table- 1

Group No.	Age-group	No. of subjects	Boys	Girls
I	3-4 years	6	3	3
II	4-5 years	4	2	2
III	5-6 years	4	2	2
All groups	3-6 years	14	7	7

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All these children were from Munirka except one subjects studying in this school. This is also an individual introduction to the profiles of the subjects, though the data analysis of the subjects has been discussed both at the individual level and group-level. However, all the required information of the subjects' background could not have been possible. The sequence of names of the subjects is according to order of the recorded tracks.

### 3.2 SELECTING THE LINGUISTIC SAMPLES

As mentioned in the beginning, the test sounds are six fricatives and affricates i.e. /č/ /j/, /s/, /š/, /f/ and /v/. Each of these sounds was tested in three positions; word initial, word medial and word final. The effort was to ask mostly those words which were familiar to the day to day vocabulary of the child. Pictures were shown less than getting them to imitate the required sound. The list which I used to stimulate the child to produce fricatives and affricates is given in Table-2; sometimes subjects' names and their family names themselves were giving information of the production of fricatives and affricates. Such additional information is not included in this list.

**Table- 2**

Requ red Sound	Position of the sound in the word					
	Initial		Medial		Final	
/č/	-č	/čavəl/ 'rice'	-č-	/báčča/ 'child'	-č	/pāč/ 'five'
/j/	j-	/jənjir/ 'chain'	-j-	/pənjab/ 'Punjab'	-j	/fri:j/ 'freeze'
/s/	s-	/sabən/ 'soap'	-s-	/pəse/ 'paise'	-s	/pərs/ 'wallet'
/š/	š-	/šer/ 'lion'	-š-	/məšin/ 'machine'	-š	/brəš/ 'brush'
/f/	f-	/ful/ 'flower'	-f-	/təfi/ 'toffee'	-f	/sərf/ 'surf'
/v/	v-	/vərsa/ 'rain'	-v-	/čavəl/ 'rice'	-v	/nav/ 'boat'

### 3.3 ELICITATION TECHNIQUES

Three techniques were used in collecting the data. These were picture recognition, for spontaneous elicitation, and imitation and thirdly by making the subject memorize such item which he/she might have seen earlier e.g. 'what is that thing in which we make the water cold?' Most of the subjects did answer 'freeze' as it was expected. While conducting the test, some moments were spent with the child to be friendly to him/her by giving toffee or chocolate etc. In doing so the child was asked his/her name, hobbies, family names, class, school etc. Then the stimuli list was used that was already prepared. Each session with the subject took 10-15 minutes. The sound to be tested was tested at each phonological position i.e. word initial, word medial and word final with each subject individually.

### 4. ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

#### 4.1 CLASSIFICATION AND TABULATION OF DATA

In this section the analysis of data has been presented through various tables. The analysis has been done on both the Age-group-wise and Individual-variations levels. The base of all the tables is Table 3 and 4.

Table- 3

S.No Group	S. No. of CD tracks	č - č - č	ǰ - ǰ - ǰ	s - s - s	š - š - š	f - f - f	v - v - v
01.- I	V006	/t/ /t/ /t/	/d/ /j/ /-/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
02.- I	V0010	/č/ /č/ /-/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s <sup>h</sup> / /s <sup>h</sup> / /s <sup>h</sup> /	/š <sup>h</sup> / /š <sup>h</sup> / /š <sup>h</sup> /	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
03.- I	V0011	/č/ /č/ /t/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s <sup>h</sup> / /s <sup>h</sup> / /s <sup>h</sup> /	/š <sup>h</sup> / /š <sup>h</sup> / /š <sup>h</sup> /	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
04.III	V0012	/č/ /č/ /č/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/š/ /š/ /š/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
05.-II	V0013	/č/ /č/ /č/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /š/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
06.-II	V0015	/č/ /č/ /č/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
07.- I	V0016	/č/ /č/ /t/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s/ /s/ /s <sup>h</sup> /	/s/ /s/ /š <sup>h</sup> /	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
08.III	V0018	/č/ /č/ /č/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/š/ /š/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
09.III	V0019	/č/ /č/ /č/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/š/ /š/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
10.III	V0020/21	/č/ /č/ /č/	/ǰ/ /ǰ/ /ǰ/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/š/ /s/ /š/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/



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11.-II	V0022	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /pʰ/ /pʰ/	/b/ /v/ /v/
12.- I	V0023	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /č/ /j/	/čʰ/ /s/ /s/ /	/čʰ/ /s/ /s/ /	/pʰ/ /f/ /p/	/v/ /v/ /v/
13.- I	V0024	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /p/	/v/ /v/ /v/
14.-II	V0026	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /p/	/v/ /v/ /v/

The Table-3 shows all the phonological positions i.e. word initial, word medial and word final with each subject individually. This table also shows the age-group with the sequence of the recordings. Now the very table is ordered as age-group-wise as shown in Table- 4 on the next page.

The Table- 4 maps all responses of each subject. Though there is not any difference between Table 3 and 4. Table 3 matches to the order of the personal profile of the subjects and Table 4 matches to the classified age-group of the subjects as shown here:

**Table- 4**

GROUP	S.N o.	S. No. of CD Tracks	č - č - č	j - j - j	s - s - s	š - š - š	f - f - f	v - v - v
I	01	V006	/t/ /t/ /t/	/d/ /j/ /-/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
	02	V0010	/č/ /č/ /-/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/čh/ /čh/ /čh/	/čh/ /čh/ /čh/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
	03	V0011	/č/ /č/ /t/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/čh/ /čh/ /čh/	/čh/ /čh/ /čh/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
	07	V0016	/č/ /č/ /t/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /čh/	/s/ /s/ /čh/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
	12	V0023	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /č/ /j/	/čh/ /s/ /s/ /	/čh/ /s/ /s/ /	/ph/ /f/ /p/	/v/ /v/ /v/
	13	V0024	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /p/	/v/ /v/ /v/
II	05	V0013	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
	06	V0015	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
	11	V0022	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /t/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /ph/ /ph/	/b/ /v/ /v/
	14	V0026	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /p/	/v/ /v/ /v/
III	04	V0012	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/
	08	V0018	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/

	09	V0019	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /s/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/š/ /š/ /s/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/b/ /v/ /v/
	10	V0020/21	/č/ /č/ /č/	/j/ /j/ /j/	/s/ /s/ /s/	/š/ /s/ /š/	/f/ /f/ /f/	/v/ /v/ /v/

Table- 5 matches the substitutes and the number of times each substitute was produced for each test sound by each of the 14 cases. The number of times a substitution is used indicated in the same column just in front of the substitution. Later on the number of the substitution can be matched with results of Table 9. Omissions, wherever found, are also marked (only one could be found). Where there is no mark in any of the column, means that all the desired or expected sounds are correct and there are no omissions.

Table- 5

Group	S.No	/č/	/j/	/s/	/š/	/f/	/v/
I	01	/t/ 3	/d/ 1; /-/ 1		/s/ 3		/b/ 1
	02	/-/ 1		/č <sup>h</sup> / 3	/č <sup>h</sup> / 3		/b/ 1
	03	/t/ 1		/č <sup>h</sup> / 3	/č <sup>h</sup> / 3		
	07	/t/ 1		/č <sup>h</sup> / 1	/s/ 2; /č <sup>h</sup> / 1		
	12		/č/ 1	/č <sup>h</sup> / 1	/č <sup>h</sup> / 1; /s/ 2	/p <sup>h</sup> / 1; p/ 1	
	13				/s/ 3	/p/ 1	
II	05				/s/ 2		
	06				/s/ 3		/b/ 1
	11			/t/ 1	/s/ 3	/p <sup>h</sup> / 2	/b/ 1
	14				/s/ 3	/p/ 1	
III	04						
	08				/s/ 1		
	09		/s/ 1		/s/ 1		/b/ 1
	10				/s/ 1		

## Acquisition of Fricatives and Affricates

The Table- 6 presents the number and percentage of subjects of each age-group to pass each of each of the six sounds. The criterion for passing a sound is to give correct response for at two times out of three times including all the methods of elicitation -spontaneous, imitation and by clue. The table shows that /v/ is the sound produced correctly most of the time i.e. 100%/ 99%. Its noticeable here that, from the calculation the result is 100% but still there the cases where some of the subjects were not able to produce the sound at one of the three phonological positions as shown in Table- 4 for /v/. Therefore, where there are such cases, the result is shown as 100% or 99%. They also shows that /ʃ/ is produced correctly the least number i.e. 28.57% and no subject could produce this sound in the I & II age-group. It implies that palatal fricatives are not easy to pronounce for the younger children. The calculation formula used is: **No. of passed subjects/ No. of total subjects X 100.**

### 4.2 PERCENTAGE OF THE SUBJECTS WHO PASS A SOUND

Table- 6

Group →	I	II	III	Total
Sound ↓				
/ɛ/	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	13/14 = 92.85%
/j/	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%/99%	13/14 = 92.85%
/s/	4/6 = 66.66%	4/4 = 100%/99%	4/4 = 100%	12/14 = 85.71%
/ʃ/	0/6 = 0%	0/4 = 0%	4/4 = 100%/99%	4/14 = 28.57%
/f/	5/6 = 83.33%	3/4 = 75%	4/4 = 100%	12/14 = 85.71%
/v/	6/6 = 100% 99%	4/4 = 100%/99%	4/4 = 100%/99%	14/14 = 100%

### 4.3 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT RESPONSES TO ALL SOUND TAKEN TOGETHER IN DIFFERENT PHONOLOGICAL POSITIONS

Table-7 shows the number and the percentages of correct responses for all six test sounds taken together in the three different phonological positions i.e. test sounds in the initial, medial and final positions in each of the age-group. The table lays bare the fact that as soon as the child gets older, the development of the acquisition of fricatives gets stronger, as highest percentage for all the positions in the III (6-5 yrs) age-group. This table is further elaborated in Table-8. The formula for calculation: total correct phonemes of initial position/ all initial phonemes X 100 and so on.

Table- 7

Group No. →	I	II	III
Sound's Position ↓			
Initial	22/36 = 61.11%	18/24 = 75%	23/24 = 95.83%
Medial	26/36 = 72.22%	20/24 = 83.33%	23/24 = 95.83%
Final	20/36 = 55.55%	17/24 = 70.83%	21/24 = 87.50%

#### 4.4 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF CORRECT RESPONSES TO EACH TEST WORD

Table-8 shows the number and percentage of correct responses to each test sound, in phonological position in each age-group. All these responses in the table are based on the imitation method and clue based technique. This table helps in finding out whether or not the word in which a sound appears affects production. It also investigates whether the phonological position of the test sound in the test word affects its production.

Table- 8

Group No. →	I	II	III	Total
Sound's Position ↓				
ç-	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	13/14 = 92.85%
-ç-	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	13/14 = 92.85%
-ç	2/6 = 33.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	10/14 = 71.42%
j-	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	13/14 = 92.85%

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-t	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	13/14 = 92.85%
-j	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	1/4 = 25%	10/14 = 71.42%
-s	3/6 = 50%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	11/14 = 78.57%
-s-	4/6 = 66.66%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	12/14 = 85.71%
-ʒ	3/6 = 50%	3/4 = 75%	4/4 = 100%	10/14 = 71.42%
-ʃ-	0/6 = 0%	0/4 = 0%	4/4 = 100%	4/14 = 28.57%
-ʒ-	0/6 = 0%	1/4 = 25%	3/4 = 75%	4/14 = 28.57%
-ʃ	0/6 = 0%	0/4 = 0%	2/4 = 50%	2/14 = 14.28%
-f-	5/6 = 83.33%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	13/14 = 92.85%
-f-	6/6 = 100%	3/4 = 75%	4/4 = 100%	13/14 = 92.85%
-f	4/6 = 66.66%	2/4 = 50%	4/4 = 100%	10/14 = 71.42%
-v-	4/6 = 66.66%	2/4 = 50%	3/4 = 75%	9/14 = 64.28%
-v-	6/6 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	14/14 = 100%
-v	6/6 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	4/4 = 100%	14/14 = 100%

## 4.5 TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF SUBSTITUTION MADE BY ALL SUBJECTS

Table-9 shows the type and frequency of substitution made by all subjects for the six test sounds. As the table lays bare, certain substitutions are very common like /č<sup>h</sup>/ for /s/ and /š/. As the table shows, /s/ is the most substituted sound for /š/ which was substituted by /s/ for 24 times with the frequency of 75% occurring at different phonological positions in the test word.

**Table- 9**

Sound	Substituted by	No. Substitutions	Total	Frequency	Aggregate
/č/	/t/	5	5	/t/ - 100%	100%
/j/	/d/	1	3	/d/ - 33.33%	100%
	/č/	1		/č/ - 33.33%	

	/s/	1		/s/ - 33.33%	
/s/	/ʃ/	8	9	/ʃ/ - 88.88%	100%
	/t/	1		/t/ - 11.11%	
/ʃ/	/s/	24	32	/s/ - 75%	100%
	/ʃ/	8		/ʃ/ - 25%	
/f/	/pʰ/	3	6	/pʰ/ - 50%	100%
	/p/	3		/p/ - 50%	
/v/	/b/	5	5	/b/ - 100%	100%

## 5. TABLES REPRESENTING THE INDIVIDUAL VARIATIONS

These tables comprise data reflecting to individual variations. The individual subject, even by name, can be known (from Appendix- 2 also) by matching the S. No. given along with S. No. of the recording tracks irrelevant to the order no. of the age- group. These tables from Table 10 to Table 15 also present the general patterns as well. Table 10 shows that acquisition of all the six fricatives takes place at the age ranging form 5 year to 6 years. Table 11 points out that all other fricatives appear before the palatal fricative i.e. /ʃ/. Table 12 shows general pattern that there is a preference for using stops as substitutes for the fricatives, if neither of the sound of a pair has been acquired (pair means /s/ & /ʃ/, /ç/ & /j/ and /f/ & /v/). Here we are reminded Roma Jakobson's theory of phonological development our beginning of work

### 5.1 LIST OF THE SUBJECTS WHO HAVE ACQUIRED ALL THE SIX FRICATIVES AND AFFRICATES

Table- 10

Group	S. No.	Recorded Track No.	Age	Sex
			YY/MM/DD	
III (5-6 Yrs.)	04.	V0012	05/08/05	F
	08.	V0018	05/03/04	M

## Acquisition of Fricatives and Affricates

	09.	V0019	05/07/11	M
	10.	V0020/21	05/11/02	F

## 5.2 LIST OF THE SUBJECTS WHO HAVE ACQUIRED ALL THE FRICATIVES EXCEPT /ʃ/

Table- 11

Group	S. No.	Recorded Track No.	Age	Sex
			YY/MM/DD	
I (3-4 Yrs.)	01.	V006	03/06/05	M
	02.	V0010	03/02/25	F
	03.	V0011	03/06/05	M
	07.	V0016	03/00/09	F
	12.	V0023	03/10/24	M
	13.	V0024	03/06/11	F
II (4-5 Yrs.)	06.	V0015	04/10/24	F
	11.	V0022	04/04/02	F
	14.	V0026	04/03/13	s

## 5.3 LISTS OF THE SUBJECTS WHO HAVE SUBSTITUTED STOPS FOR FRICATIVES

Table- 12

Group	S. No.	Recorded Track No.	Age	Sex
			YY/MM/DD	
I (3-4 Yrs.)	01.	V006	03/06/05	M

	02.	V0010	03/02/25	F
	03.	V0011	03/06/05	M
	07.	V0016	03/00/09	F
	12.	V0023	03/10/24	M
	13.	V0024	03/06/11	F
II (4-5 Yrs.)	06.	V0015	04/10/24	F
	11.	V0022	04/04/02	F
	14.	V0026	04/03/13	M
III (5-6 Yrs.)	09.	V0019	05/07/11	M

#### 5.4 LIST OF THE SUBJECTS WHO HAVE SUBSTITUTED PALATAL AFFRICATES FOR OTHER FRICATIVES

Table- 14

Group	S. No.	Recorded Track No.	Age	Sex
			YY/MM/DD	
I (3-4 Yrs.)	02.	V0010	03/02/25	F
	03.	V0011	03/06/05	M
	07.	V0016	03/00/09	F
	12.	V0023	03/10/24	M

#### 5.5 LIST OF THE SUBJECTS WHO HAVE SUBSTITUTED /S/ FOR /š/

Table- 15

Group	S. No.	Recorded Track No.	Age	Sex
			YY/MM/DD	
I (3-4)	01.	V006	03/06/05	M



## Acquisition of Fricatives and Affricates

Yrs.)	02.	V0010	03/02/25	F
	03.	V0011	03/06/05	M
	07.	V0016	03/00/09	F
	12.	V0023	03/10/24	M
	13.	V0024	03/06/11	F
II (4-5 Yrs.)	05.	V0013	05/00/10	M
	06.	V0015	04/10/24	F
	11.	V0022	04/04/02	F
	14.	V0026	04/03/13	M
III (5-6 Yrs.)	08.	V0018	05/03/04	M
	09.	V0019	05/07/11	M
	10.	V0020/21	05/11/02	F

### 5.6 LIST OF THE SUBJECTS WHO HAVE ACQUIRED /S/ BEFORE THE PALATAL AFFRICATES

Table- 13

Group	S. No.	Recorded Track No.	Age	Sex
			YY/MM/DD	
I (3-4 Yrs.)	01.	V006	03/06/05	M

## 6. CONCLUSION

As stated earlier that one of the most important works so far has been that of Roman Jakobson (1941). His theory of phonological universals remains as the most well known theory about language universals. He is of the view that language producing skills may be viewed as occurring in a sequence of stages each of which is relatable to its preceding stage in coherent way. According to him due to being involved more distinctions than stops fricatives are one of the difficult classes of sounds to be acquired by children.

The work in this paper dealt with the four fricatives and two affricates [/č/, /j/ /s/, /š/, /f/ and /v/]. The main issue to be kept into mind was the order of acquisition of these six sounds, common substitutes used for these sounds in general as well as any kind of individual variations that might be present. The other questions dealt with are whether the production of the test sound differs due to the difference in the phonological position and method of elicitation.

In this empirical study; we have come to know that /f/ was produced as the first labio-dental fricative and /š/ the sibilant fricative to be acquired. Only those children could acquire /š/ that crossed the age of five. /š/ in this study is the least acquired sound that also implies that /š/ is the last fricative to be acquired. The general order of acquisition is followed by labiodental fricatives-Palatal affricates-sibilants. This also presupposes that the child who has acquired the sibilants had also acquired the other two classes of fricatives and any child who had acquired the palatal affricates had also necessarily acquired the labiodental fricatives generally. It is clear from the three age- group that the phonological position does not significantly affect the production of the sound in any of the groups. The study (Table 12) also agrees with Jakobson who said, children prefer to use stops as substitutes for the fricatives, but once /č/ has been acquired, it was also very frequently, though not always, used as a substitute for /s/ and /š/. While analyzing the data, apart from the emerging general patterns, some individual variations have also come into notice (as Tables 10-15)

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## **PRIORITIES FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH: THE CASE OF IRANIAN UNDERGRADUATES**

**Abdullah Sarani**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In an era when humanistic and specifically learner-centered view of language teaching is the guiding principle (Nunan, 1990), learners' needs seem to play increasing greater role in all types of language teaching programmes. This provides the rational for serious attempts at identifying and catering for different learners' needs.

EFL/ ESL learners have a variety of needs due to various physiological, psychological, and educational factors such as age, previous education and cultural background (Peck, 1979). This entails a trend away from predetermined large-scale centralized curriculum towards programmes which reflect and thereby meet learners' varying needs. As such, a systematic approach to identification of learners' needs is called for (Richards, 1985; Nunan, 1990; Jones, 1991; Pholsward, 1993; Benesch, 1996). Needs analysis or needs assessment is the process through which information as to the learner's needs and objectives is obtained and then analyzed. Although needs analysis research started as early as 1970's and since then a large body of research has been compiled in this area (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; West, 1994), it has mostly been carried out in ESP courses and thus has been neglected in the General English Courses (Seedhouse, 1995).

Students in Iran, having been admitted to university, have to take some English courses including General and ESP ones. However, they come to these courses while they are different in many respects. Although all of them have already completed English courses at school, they attend the university English courses with a wide range of aptitudes, interests, and competencies. Harlow and Muyskens (1994) note that the problems associated with university level courses originate from various sources. First, students have different backgrounds; some come to

university while they have merely completed the English courses at high school whereas some others come to university having already been exposed to more English—in the present case, for instance, at private institutes. Still another source of problem is “the gap between coverage and performance in previous courses” (Harlow and Muyskens, 1994, p. 141) It is presumed that most of the grammatical issues, for instance, have been covered in previous courses.

Nonetheless, some students cannot actually use them actively. Hence, materials presented and activities done in university classes may be perceived by some students as being too difficult and yet by some others as too easy which leads to either despair, developing bad attitudes towards the course and boredom on the part of the students. Consequently, in order to implement any sort of change or improvement it is mandatory to survey the students’ needs and objectives and their preferences for activities which help them fulfill their perceived needs at this level. This study is basically an attempt to examine University of Sistan and Baluchestan’ and their instructors’ priority goals. Furthermore, it is intended to survey the ideas of both groups as to the most effective in-class and out-of-class activities that help them achieve the perceived objectives. Therefore, the findings of the study will hopefully be of significance to curriculum developers, course designers and instructors since the results will provide them with the rudiments of any sort of attempt to improve the present situation. The following section, review of literature, concentrates first on providing a brief account of theoretical issues related to the topic and then on reporting some empirical studies conducted in this regard.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### THEORETICAL ISSUES

The use of the term needs analysis dates back to 1920’s when Michel West used it to refer to two basic concepts of needs, that is, “what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training” (West, 1994, p.1). West(1994) adds that the terms seems to have been forgotten for about 50 years after the first time Michle West used it and its revival appears to coincide with the advent of ESP in 1960’s whose course design has been considered to be highly dependent upon needs analysis.

It is notable that although language teachers have usually used intuitive or informal analysis of students’ needs as the basis for their instruction (Tarone and Yule, 1989), the formal analysis of needs which heavily relies upon the requirements of various situations in which the target language is to be used was implemented in the early 1970’s chiefly in the field of ESP (West, 1994). According to West (1994), this form of needs analysis was developed mainly due

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to the work of those associated with the Council of Europe and the later Munby's influential Communicative Syllabus Design (1978).

Reichterich (as cited in West, 1994) comments that implementation of any sort of needs analysis has to deal first with some fundamental questions the answer to which lies in the methodology. The questions are concerned with "what", "why", "when", "who", "for whom", and "how" of the procedure. In what follows, a brief account of West's explanation of the questions will be given.

West (1994) illuminates the question of "what" and "why" of needs by discussing various perceptions and categorizations of needs which give rise to different forms of needs analysis. According to Hutchinson and Waters (as cited in West, 1994) needs can be defined in terms of 1) necessities or what the learner is required to know to function efficiently in the target situation, 2) lacks or the gaps between what the learner already knows and what the target situation demands him to know, 3) wants or learners perceived needs, 4) learners strategies or the learner's preferences with regard to the use of various learning strategies to advance from his present situation to the target situations, 5) external factors such as resources, the dominant attitudes of culture and the materials which play a crucial role in syllabus design, and finally 6) language audit or a large scale survey of a company, an organization or even a country to determine their language policy. Accordingly, five approaches to needs analysis have evolved namely target situation analysis, deficiency analysis, strategy analysis, means analysis, and language audits.

As for the question of "when", three types of needs analysis have emerged due to differences regarding the time at which the analysis may be carried out. In other words, the analysis may be conducted in advance of the course, the first day the trainees start the course, and also during the course. These forms of analyses are referred to as "off-line" analysis "on-line" analysis or the "first-day" analysis, and "on-going" analysis respectively.

The question of "who" relates to the three parties who are vigorously involved in determining what the language needs are, though some other parties have also been referred to by other scholars. The three parties include the students, the teacher, and the sponsor.

As far as the question of "for whom" is concerned, the "user" or the learner is said to benefit from needs analysis although the "requirer" or the sponsor may sometimes benefit more, particularly in the case of language audits.

The question of "how" deals with the steps or phases incorporated in the process of needs analysis and, more importantly, with the instrument used for data collection. Berwick (as cited in West, 1994) categorizes needs analysis methods into inductive and deductive ones. The former rely upon observations and case studies on the basis of which courses can be generalized and the latter draw on

questionnaires, surveys or other data gathering instruments which provide various types of the course designing. Furthermore, Jordan's list (as cited in West, 1994) specifies ten methods of data collection for needs analysis such as surveys based on questionnaires, structured interviews, learner diaries, and evaluation/feedback. West (1994) discusses each method separately and elucidates its merits and demerits.

In spite of the apparent fruitfulness of needs analysis and its great impact on curriculum development in general and syllabus design in particular, several criticisms against needs analysis and its feasibility in the realm of language teaching have been raised (West, 1994). Some of the debates still unresolved address such issues as little information on the validity or reliability of the instruments and the results obtained as well as problems emerging in the process of converting the specified needs into goals.

## EMPIRICAL STUDIES

In an attempt to identify the past, and future needs of foreign and American college freshman students, Kroll (1979) administers a three-part questionnaire to 55 students enrolling in two freshman courses held at the University of Southern California, one for native and the other for international students. She admits the predictability of the results of the needs analysis since the emerging types of writing demands were actually part of the core of writing courses held as a service to other departments in the university. However, she maintains that the results eradicated many possible doubts "that foreign students [should] be required to take an English writing course" (Kroll, 1979, p.225); and therefore, take in the situation into account, she insists upon providing students with an opportunity to become familiar with modes of discourse they will be required to utilize in the future.

Baumgardner, et al. (1985) report on a needs analysis carried out in the University of Moratuwa (Sri Lanka) for two courses in English for engineering students, one for technician level diploma students and the other for bachelor's degree level students, and identify differences between the two courses. Ramani, et al. (1988) argue for an ethnographic reorientation to needs analysis and syllabus design in ESP courses in advanced graduate centers of sciences and technology and describe a seven-stage framework used for evaluating and revising the curriculum in Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Opting for a learner-centered approach to language teaching, Nunan (1990) elucidates different phrases through which a correspondingly developed curriculum can be established. In so doing, he meticulously reports the process from the very initial stage-needs analysis and grouping of students-to the final ones-assessment and evaluation-with reference to the data collected from the Australian Adult Immigrant Education Programme. He predicts that such a curriculum will meet the learner's needs more satisfactory than the centralized ones.

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Jones (1991) exhorts the syllabus designer to employ a mathematically-based analysis of language use data derived from principal component analysis in order to delve into the underlying traits of responses to needs questionnaires. He exemplifies the process using language data gathered from 400 technical employees of FRANCE TELECOYME. He claims that "the approach adds a new dimension to the notion of needs-related syllabus design by incorporating 4-tier representation of needs"(Jones, 1991,p. 170) . The approach not only depicts language functions relevant to the specific purpose of the target population, as the classical approach to needs analysis does, but also yields a model of the organization of language functions forming the communicative needs of the target population. Moreover, a syllabus design developed in this way links the discourse model and the teaching model by relating speech events to micro topics.

Sharp (1991) conducts a case study through which he delineates how a more elaborate system of course evaluation through needs analysis was carried out at the University of Brunei Darussalam which was more successful than traditional methods of assessing course success.

Savage and Storer's survey (1992) indicates that teachers succeeded to adapting an ESP programme in Northeast Thailand by actively involving learners in both needs analysis and design.

Fryer and Day (1993) examine the efficacy of an LSP programme aiming at preparing candidates for internship abroad so that they can meet the requirements of the target situation. The results of their survey lead them to emphasize "the need for continual fine tuning of language courses" so that the courses can "fill the gaps that appear in their [the students'] training once they are abroad" (Fryer and Day, 1993, p, 285). They highlight the significance of initial and on-going needs assessments "for optimal course design and for periodic fine tuning"( Fryer and Day,1993, p. 285).

In order to verify the validity of the type of language use and skills focused upon in the commercial ESP materials in the area of computer science, Pholsward (1993) gathered data from the departmental managers or managing directors of 22 computing firms in Bangkok. Based on the findings of the survey, he offers some guidelines to ESP instructors in general and language practitioners in the field of computing in particular. He also persuades ESP practitioners to conduct needs analyses so that they can "efficiently reduce the gap between what they are doing and what is expected of the students in the job market" (Pholsward, 1993, p. 96). In addition, he calls for an on-going analysis in order to "... keep pace with the rapid change in the business and technology of computer science" (Pholsward, 1963, p. 96).

Bushel and Dryer (1994) assess the English-as-a-Second Language curriculum at the International Christian University (Japan) and find that students' perceptions of their language needs are close to those of both their teachers and the

programme's goals and objectives. In addition, the content-based global studies are perceived as appropriate to students' immediate academic needs and visions of the future.

Harlow and Muyskens (1994) investigate priority goals and objectives of intermediate level students and instructors and their opinions about the most effective classroom and out-of-class activities in meeting their goals. Based on the results of the questionnaires, they suggest some guidelines for establishing a new or revised curriculum for foreign and language instruction.

Seedhouse (1995), seeking to specify the needs of the learners in a General English classroom through a questionnaire, finds out that the students, despite being young, clearly know their own needs and wants. He claims that the needs analysis yielded information that helped them resolve a problem. The findings of the study are purported to have some implications for materials design.

Halliday's study (1995) of English language needs of an oil company emphasizes the integration of analysis of needs in a broader analysis of means for the whole process of realizing a programme of language learning. Halliday asserts that language needs cannot be isolated from the social context in which they play a role. In this regard, he assigns a significant role to the culture of the organization, the various interests which influence the implementation option and the micropolicies which they represent.

Benesch (1996) illuminates the characteristics and limitations of a descriptive approach to needs analysis. He critically reviews some studies carried out in this fashion and finally advocates and exemplifies a model of critical approach to needs analysis in an EAP context. The process, he posits, is a political and subjective one. He adds that "critical needs analysis is a reaction to the pragmatic stance of EAP/ESP: changing existing forms is unrealistic whereas promoting them is practical" (Benesch, 1996, p. 739).

And ultimately, Shahini (1998) attempts to gain information as to the present status of the English educational system, the desired situation and the discrepancies between the two at Shiraz University. His study reveals some of the deficiencies in the present English language educational system and the students' perceptions of their needs based on which he puts some suggestions for the improvement of the situation forward.

As mentioned before, this study, in line with some of the research reported above specifically Harlow and Muyskens (1994) and Shahini (1998), was intended to investigate Shiraz University students' and their instructors' priority goals and activities.



### METHOD

#### PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study mainly comprised 100 undergraduate students, both male, enrolled in General English and ESP courses at University of Sistan and Baluchestan. They were selected using cluster sampling. In other works, four classes were randomly selected from among all the General and ESP courses, two from each, and then questionnaires were given to all the students in the classes.

The demographic data presented in Table 1 reveals that 62% of the students were freshmen, 21% sophomores, 2% juniors and 15% seniors. The mean age of the students was 16.5 and nearly an equal of both sexes were included in the sample (47% female and 53% male). The mean years of study at private institutes (0.75) shows that most of the students had only completed the 6 years of education at school.

In addition to the first group of participants described above, almost all the instructors involved in teaching the two courses were given questionnaires, though out of 15 questionnaires distributed only 11 were returned. Table 2 displays the demographic data related to instructors. The instructors in age were between 30 to 52 years old, with mean age of almost 37. The proportion of male female instructors included in the study (81.2% male and 18.8% female) represents the fact that the teaching staff of the English Department of University of Sistan and Baluchestan is mainly composed of male instructors. Most of the instructors held an MA and Ph.D, mainly in TEFL and Linguistics (81.8%). The instructors' average years of English teaching experience (12.8) indicated that they had extensive teaching experience.

#### MATERIALS

The data for the study were gathered through two questionnaires developed on the basis of Harlow's and Muysken's (1994) questionnaire for students since only the student version was available and Harlow and Muysken had stated that the version for instructors had been similar to that of students except for the part eliciting the demographic data, the version for instructors was developed accordingly for the researcher. The content of the original version of the questionnaire was first examined by an expert in the field and the researcher and then a few minor modifications were made and a final draft was prepared.

Apart from the section eliciting demographic data, each questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first included 13 items which elicited the participants' views concerning the priority of goals and the second part including 19 items dealt with the appropriacy of various activities to accomplish the goals. As such, each questionnaire contained a total of 32 items in Likert-scale format which made it

possible for the participants to specify their perceptions of importance for each item from one (not very important) to five (extremely important). Comments were also invited at the end of the questionnaires.

## DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The questionnaires were distributed among the participants by the researcher. Furthermore, the students were informed of the significance of the study and the importance of their honest and precise answers to the items in the questionnaire.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered through the questionnaires were subjected to two types of statistical analysis, first, students' and their instructors' mean rating for each goal/activity mentioned in the questionnaire was obtained separately. Based on the average of the ratings, an overall rank from one to thirteen for goals and one to nineteen for the activities was obtained so that an order of priorities could be arrived at. Finally, in order to determine to what extent students and their instructors agreed upon goal/activity priorities, an index of correlation (Spearman's Rho Coefficient of correlation) between students' and their instructors' ranking of goals/activities was obtained.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### GOALS: STUDENT VIEWS

Table 3 presents the data related to student perceptions of goals. Looking at the top third of the ranked goals, one finds that speaking (defined as the ability to communicate in social, travel, and job situations), the ability to read and understand newspapers, magazines and books of a nonliterary nature, and vocabulary have the highest rank. Listening, defined as the ability to understand conversations, radio, TV, news broadcasts, and films was ranked fourth in importance. It seems that oral skills are among the priorities for students. The ability to translate and to apply English to one's career has been ranked fifth and sixth, respectively. As far as these two skills are concerned, one might think that students believe if they master other skills such as speaking and reading, they can somehow manage to translate texts or apply their knowledge to their career as well or they might not have seriously needed the abilities so far. The fact that they have ranked self-confidence as the seventh priority lends some support to the above claim and shows that they already feel confident enough to use English so they just need to improve their speaking and reading abilities.

A short glance at the goals whose ranks have fallen lower gives us a lot of information. Although speaking and listening are among the top four goals,

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pronunciation defined as the ability to pronounce English well has been ranked eighth. This may indicate that students think that as they can make themselves understood, there is no need for further attempt at pronouncing accurately. Furthermore, the ability to perform everyday life activities such as asking for and giving information, ordering things, and negotiating prices has been ranked ninth. This may suggest that since they are learning English as a foreign language, they rarely confront everyday life situations in which they have to use English. Writing (defined as the ability to write notes, letters, and essays) and grammar have been ranked as the tenth and eleventh priorities consecutively. As far as the ability to write is concerned, the results may show that students at this level are not required to write such things in English. As for grammar, it seems that students think that they already have had enough of grammar and so they do not focus upon it any more.

Finally, the abilities to know and appreciate the culture of the target language and literature worked as the least important abilities. This may indicate that either students are unaware of the significant role of appreciation of the target culture and literature in understanding and using the language appropriately, or they may have thought that appreciating a foreign culture may mean alienation from one's own culture and thus due to this type of association they have ranked them low.

## **GOALS: INSTRUCTOR VIEWS**

Instructors' views and rankings of goals delineated in Table 4 indicate that instructors have rated reading, speaking, and vocabulary as the most important goals. The next priority, according to instructors, is improving students' self confidence. Based on their teaching experience, instructors may have noted that students do not feel confident enough to use the language in at least their class interactions and thus they feel it necessary to elevate students' confidence in the use of the language. Grammar has been ranked as the next priority, so instructors appear not to have been so sure about students' mastery over the necessary grammatical structures.

The least important goals in the instructors' opinions have been the ability to appreciate the target literature and culture as well as the ability to translate. This may show that instructors also view culture and literature in a superficial sense and thus they are also avoiding alienation. It might also be the case that they think these abilities, including the ability to translate, are not much required at this level of education.

## **GOAL: COMPARISON OF STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR VIEWS**

Table 5 provides a comparison of student and instructor opinion on perfect goals. The results reveal that there is broad consensus between students and instructors

on overall of goals ( $r= 0.74$   $p<0 .01$ ). However, it should be born in mind that there were 100 students included in the sample whereas instructors just totaled 11. Therefore, it seems reasonable to exercise caution in the interpretation of the result.

It is noticeable that both groups have ranked speaking, the ability to read and understand newspapers, magazines and books of nonliterary nature, and vocabulary as the three top goals and the ability to read and understand literature and that of appreciating the target culture as the least important goals unanimously, although some minor discrepancy can be observed in the exact rank order. Furthermore, the ability to perform everyday life activities, writing and pronunciation are just one rank apart.

Nevertheless, grave differences are observable with respect to grammar and translation. Translation has been ranked as fifth in importance by students and yet eleventh by instructors while grammar has been ranked as the fifth priority by instructors but as eleventh by students. The above phenomena may be justifiable by the fact that students mostly resort to translation to understand the language precisely and that they think they know enough of grammar to make them capable of fulfilling their needs. However, instructors might have thought that mastery over grammatical structures of a language along with some other skills and components of the language automatically makes students capable of translating. Or, since the instructions at the top of the questionnaire had asked the participants to indicate the immediate goals, the instructors may have considered translation as an objective to be accomplished in long term and not as an immediate one.

### ACTIVITIES: STUDENT VIEWS

Table 6 presents students' views on the most effective classroom and out-of-class activities helping them accomplish their preferred goals. The ratings of various activities indicate that students have ranked activities mostly based on their preferred goals. For instance, most of the activities which received high ranks- speaking activities, films, video and TV shows, listening comprehension activities, conversation partner, oral presentations pronunciation, and interaction with native speakers- are oral activities which are closely related to the goal of speaking. On the other hand, the activities located at the bottom of the list and deemed as least significant- grammar exercises, writing, and cultural readings- are chiefly related to the goals previously identified as least important to achieve. Yet, role play and games which are normally associated with speaking activities have received low ranks (sixteenth and eighteenth, respectively). This incongruity can be justified on several grounds. For instance, students' lack of experience with these activities and their possible advantages may account for the above phenomenon. It may be inferred that they have mostly considered these activities just as fun not activities that can contribute to their linguistic competence. Therefore, they may have considered them as inappropriate for their purposes and hence waste of time. On

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the other hand, as these activities are usually done in groups, inhibitions and the fear of making mistakes and looking foolish in front of their peers might have restrained students from assigning high importance to them.

### **ACTIVITIES: INSTRUCTOR VIEWS**

Instructors' order of priorities of activities has been represented in Table 7. A direct relationship can be observed between the instructors' preferred activities and their preferred goals. Instructors have evaluated vocabulary practice and reading as the topmost activities which exactly correspond with their first priority in goals, reading. Interestingly enough, the next ten activities are the ones which promote speaking ability rated as the second goal by instructors have evaluated games, cultural readings and writing as the least appropriate activities for achievement of the goals which accords with their previous assessment of goals priorities.

### **ACTIVITIES: COMPARISON OF STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR VIEWS**

The data presented in Table 8 make it possible to compare students' opinions with those of instructors ( $r = 0.61$   $p < 0.05$ ). Close examination of the two sets of rankings reveals that about half of the activities have similar rank—ratings for vocabulary practices and speaking activities and low ratings for games, writing, role play, cultural readings, and language club.

However, instances of substantial incongruity can be observed in the case of some items. Although both groups have already given priority to speaking as a goal (students ranked it first and instructors second), they shown greatest inconsistency on two and eleventh by instructors) as well as having instructors speak only in English (ranked twelfth by students and third by instructors). It seems that consideration of such issues as the time, expense and energy required for the implementation of films and video has affected instructors' views on the use of such facilities. In contrast, they have assigned high priority to having the instructor speak only in English which demands no extra expenditure of time and money but exposes students to more English. On the other hand, students, far from such preoccupations and willing to have more variety, have indicated an opposite view.

Another point of departure is the case of nonliterary type of reading activities which has been ranked much higher by instructors than by students (second and ninth, respectively) although it has been opted for by both groups as a priority in the goals section. However, a more scrupulous inspection of the items ranked higher by students shows that they all happen to be activities developing speaking ability which is the first priority of students in the goal section. Taking the above fact into consideration, one may think that the rating assigned by students is not as

low as it apparently seems to be and students have not actually denied the importance of reading activities.

Finally, it is interesting to note the discrepancy in opinions in the case of small group activities (ranked sixth by instructors and thirteenth by students). Students' unfamiliarity with such activities and their putative benefits may account for the difference. Or else, they might have experienced instances of such activities leading to some students' too much use of mother tongue or lack of cooperation and thus inefficiency of the activity.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study lead us to some tentative conclusions with respect to the need of the students of the present study. Both students and their instructors favored focusing on developing speaking, reading and vocabulary which is in line with some of Shahini's findings (1998). Students' disposition to deviation from teacher-centered (implied by their low rating of having the instructor only speak in English) and their inclination towards more learner-centered activities (indicated by their high rating of activities such as the use of films and video) should also be taken into consideration. Thus, instructors are recommended to make less use of teacher-centered activities and instead try to introduce more variety to class activities by using films and video, if available, having students present some relevant topics orally or engaging students in role play and small group activities.

However, since seemingly students are not well-acquainted with such activities as role play, language club activities, small group activities, as Harlow and Muyskens (1994) suggest, instructors should provide them with clear guidelines as to how to carry out these activities. Still, to achieve more desirable results, according to Nunan (as cited in Harlow and Muyskens, 1994), students should continuously be asked to assess the effectiveness of class activities.

The researcher hopes that the finding of the study can be useful for establishing or revising a curriculum geared towards learners' needs. Nevertheless, it should be admitted that this study was carried out with a limited number of students using just one instrument for data collection. It is recommended to verify the findings by extending the scope of the study and examining the opinions of greater number of students through different means of data collection such as interviews. Finally, further research is also needed to determine specific needs of students at various levels of proficiency studying different majors.

**Table 1. Student Demographic Data**

<b>University Classification</b>	
<b>Freshman</b>	62%
<b>Sophomore</b>	21%
<b>Junior</b>	2%
<b>Senior</b>	15%
<b>Sex</b>	
<b>Male</b>	53%
<b>Female</b>	47%
<b>Mean Age</b>	19.5%
<b>Mean Yrs of H.S. Study</b>	6.1
<b>Mean Yrs of Study at Pr. Ins.</b>	0.73

**Table 2. Instructor Demographic Data**

<b>Mean Age</b>	36.55
<b>Sex</b>	
<b>Male</b>	81.8%
<b>Female</b>	18.2%
<b>Mean Yrs. of Teaching Experience</b>	12.82
<b>Degree</b>	MA/Ph.D
<b>Major</b>	TEFL, Linguistics, Literature

**Table 3. Goals: Student**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Speaking	1	4.47
Reading	2	4.44
Vocabulary	3	4.39
Listening	4	4.37
Translation	5	4.35
Career application	6	4.25
Self-confidence	7	4.22
Pronunciation	8	4.16
Every day life act.	9	3.49
Writing	10	3.37
Grammar	11	3.22
Culture	12	3.20
Literature	13	3.04

Table 4. Goals: Instructor Views

Goal	Rank	Mean
Reading	1	4.43
Speaking	2	4.14
Vocabulary	3	4.14
Self-confidence	4	3.86
Grammar	5	3.85
Listening	6	3.83
Pronunciation	7	3.71
Career application	8	3.70
Writing	9	3.43
Every day life act.	10	3.42
Translation	11	3.29
Culture	12	3.14

Table 5. Goals: Comparison of Student and Instructor Views

Rank	Students	Instructors	Rank
1	Speaking	Reading	1
2	Reading	Speaking	2
3	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	3
4	Listening	Self-confidence	4
5	Translation	Grammar	5
6	Career application	Listening	6
7	Self- confidence	Pronunciation	7
8	Pronunciation	Career application	8
9	Every day life act	Writing	9
10	Writing	Every day life act.	10
11	Grammar	Translation1	11
12	Culture	Culture	12
13	Literature	Literature	13
	$r = 0.74$	$p < 0.01$	



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Table 6. Activity: Student Views

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Speaking	1	4.30
Films, video	2	4.07
Vocabulary	3	4.00
Listening	4	3.93
Conversation partner	5	3.92
Oral presentations	6	3.85
Pronunciation	7	3.85
Interaction with natives	8	3.79
Reading	9	3.78
Language lab tapes	10	3.73
Native speaker visits	11	3.68
Inst. Speaks only English	12	3.67
Small groups	13	3.49
Language club	14	3.41
Cultural readings	15	3.24
Role play	16	3.21
Writing	17	3.15
Games	18	3.09
Grammar exercises	19	2.91

Table 7. Activities: Instructor Views

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Vocabulary	1	4.57
Reading	2	4.30
Inst. Speaks only English	3	4.20
Conversation partner	4	4.14
Speaking	5	4.10
Small groups	6	4.05
Interaction with natives	7	4.00
Pronunciation	8	3.86
Oral presentations	9	3.85
Language lab tapes	10	3.82
Films, video	11	3.80
Listening	12	3.78
Grammar exercises	13	3.76
Role play	14	3.72
Native speaker visits	15	3.70
Writing	16	3.68
Language club	17	3.60

Cultural readings	18	3.14
Games	19	3.00

Table 8. Activities: Comparison of Student and Instructor Views

Rank	Students	Instructors	Rank
1	Speaking	Vocabulary	1
2	Films, video	Reading	2
3	Vocabulary	Inst. Speaks only English	3
4	Listening	Conversation partner	4
5	Conversation partner	Speaking	5
6	oral presentations	Small groups	6
7	Pronunciation	Interaction with natives	7
8	Interaction with natives	Pronunciation	8
9	Reading	Oral presentations	9
10	Language lab tapes	Language lab tapes	10
11	Native speaking visits	Films, video	11
12	Inst. Speaks only English	Listening	12
13	Small groups	Grammar exercises	13
14	Language club	Role play	14
15	Cultural readings	Native speaker visits	15
16	Role play	Writing	16
17	Writing	Language club	17
18	Games	Cultural readings	18
19	Grammar exercises	Games	19

$$r = 0.62$$

$$p < 0.01$$

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