EARLY-EMERGING AFFIXES IN CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
TIL O'ZLASHTIRAYOTGAN BOLALARNING NUTQIDA DASTLABKI NAMOYON BO'LADIGAN QO'SHIMCHALAR
РАННИЕ АФФИКСЫ В РЕЧИ ДЕТЕЙ НА СТАДИИ ОСВОЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКА

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ABSTRACT

Morphological growth plays a key role in early language learning, especially the appearance of affixes that indicate grammatical and semantic connections. This research explores the initial affixes that appear in children's language development by integrating generative, usage-based, and sociocultural perspectives. It investigates the sequence of affix learning, the cognitive and distributional factors that influence morphological acquisition, and insights across different languages. The results indicate that the initial appearance of affixes is influenced by frequency, clarity of meaning, vocabulary scope, and social engagement

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Key words: morphology, early-emerging affixes, vocabulary development, psycholinguistics

ANNOTATSIYA

Morfologik rivojlanish, xususan, grammatik va semantik bog'lanishlarni ko'rsatadigan qo'shimchalarning paydo bo'lishi jihatidan erta til o'zlashtirish jarayonida muhim rol o'ynaydi. Ushbu tadqiqot bolalarning til rivojlanishida dastlab namoyon bo'ladigan qo'shimchalarni generative (*tug'ma yondashuv*), usage-based (*Foydalanishga asoslangan / amaliy yondashuv*) va sotsiolingvistik yondashuvlarni integratsiya qilgan holda o'rganadi. Tadqiqot qo'shimchalarni o'rganish tartibini, morfologik o'zlashtirishga ta'sir qiluvchi kognitiv va taqsimotli omillarni, shuningdek turli tillardagi kuzatuvlarni tahlil qiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, qo'shimchalarning dastlabki paydo bo'lishi ularning tez-tez uchrashi, ma'nosining aniqligi, lug'at hajmi va ijtimoiy muloqot bilan bog'liqdir.

Kalit so'zlar: morfologiya, dastlab namoyon bo'ladigan qo'shimchalar, lug'at rivoji, psixolingvistika

АННОТАЦИЯ

Морфологическое развитие играет ключевую роль в раннем освоении языка, особенно в появлении аффиксов, которые указывают на грамматические и семантические связи. В данном исследовании рассматриваются первые аффиксы, возникающие в языковом развитии детей, с интеграцией генеративной, ориентированной на использование и социокультурной перспектив. Исследование анализирует последовательность освоения аффиксов, когнитивные и распределительные факторы, влияющие на морфологическое освоение, а также особенности в разных языках. Результаты показывают, что раннее появление аффиксов определяется их частотностью, прозрачностью значения, объёмом словарного запаса и социальной вовлечённостью.

Ключевые слова: морфология, ранние аффиксы, развитие словарного запаса, психолингвистика

INTRODUCTION

Language learning in early childhood encompasses the swift and organized growth of various interconnected linguistic systems, such as vocabulary understanding, syntactic arrangement, and morphological composition. These elements do not evolve in isolation; instead, they engage dynamically as children slowly formulate an operational language system. Within these areas, morphology holds a notably important role, acting as a link between the expansion of vocabulary and the development of grammatical skills. The gain of affixes allows children to express grammatical relationships like tense, number, aspect, and agentivity, thus enabling them to progress from single-word statements to more structurally and semantically intricate expressions.

Examining early-emerging affixes provides essential understanding of how children structure linguistic input into significant and rule-based patterns. Due to the systematic distribution and functional constraints of affixes, their appearance in children's speech indicates the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms behind pattern recognition, abstraction, and generalization. Consequently, early use of affixes offers a significant diagnostic insight into the child's evolving grammatical system. By analyzing the initial appearance of affixes and their usage, researchers can gain insights into how children associate form with meaning and grammatical roles.

Moreover, early-emerging affixes serve as an excellent platform for examining the interplay between inherent linguistic abilities and external input. On one side, children show notable consistency and uniformity in the order of affix acquisition, implying the influence of internal limitations on language learning. Conversely, fluctuations in usage frequency, clarity of meaning, and caregiver involvement suggest a significant influence of experience and engagement. The

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examination of initial affix acquisition therefore adds to larger theoretical discussions about the comparative influences of biological tendencies, distributional learning, and social interaction in language growth.

The current research focuses on the affixes that appear first in children's natural speech and aims to determine the psycholinguistic processes that facilitate their learning. The research seeks to elucidate how children transition from lexically specific forms to generative morphological patterns by concentrating on early morphological development. This analysis enhances theoretical insights into language acquisition and holds significant implications for early education, clinical intervention, and evaluating atypical language development.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theoretical interpretations of affix acquisition have typically been influenced by generative, constructivist, and sociocultural paradigms. In the generative tradition, Chomsky's theory suggests that children possess a biological capacity for language that allows for the quick and organized learning of grammatical patterns (Chomsky, 1965). Viewed this way, the initial employment of affixes in children's language demonstrates the slow development of fundamental grammatical ability rather than mere imitation or superficial learning. The stable sequence of affix emergence among learners, along with children's capacity to use affixes productively, is seen as support for the existence of abstract morphological representations that are accessible early in development (Chomsky, 1965).

Conversely, usage-based and constructivist approaches highlight the importance of linguistic experience and interaction with input in influencing morphological growth. From this perspective, children acquire affixes by noticing consistent patterns in language and by creating generalizations based on lexical items they encounter in daily communication. Clark contends that the frequency of exposure and clarity of meaning are vital in influencing which affixes appear first and how children understand them (Clark, 1982). Consequently, early affix

acquisition is regarded as a progressive process where children experiment with hypotheses concerning form–meaning connections and improve them over time with ongoing exposure (Clark, 1995).

From a sociocultural viewpoint, Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the inherently social aspect of language acquisition. Linguistic knowledge, encompassing morphological structures, is initially developed through social engagement and subsequently internalized by the child (Vygotsky, 1962). In the zone of proximal development, adults offer scaffolding that aids children's developing language skills. By employing methods like repetition, expansion, and corrective feedback, caregivers highlight morphological differences and help children focus on affixal forms and their functions (Vygotsky, 1962). n this framework, early affix acquisition is viewed not only as a cognitive achievement but also as a socially mediated process shaped by interaction and cultural context.

ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON EARLY-EMERGING AFFIXES

Empirical studies on early morphological growth consistently show that inflectional affixes generally appear earlier in children's language compared to derivational affixes. Longitudinal and observational research indicates that inflectional morphemes like the English plural -s and the progressive -ing are typically among the earliest morphological features to emerge in natural speech. These affixes are usually common in child-directed speech, appear in fairly consistent syntactic contexts, and have clear grammatical meanings, which aids in their early learning.

Maratsos and Chalkley (1980) present empirical evidence indicating that children heavily depend on distributional cues for recognizing grammatical categories and affix patterns. Their results indicate that children notice patterns in co-occurrence, like the frequent pairing of certain affixes with specific word categories or syntactic roles. By encountering these repeated patterns, children slowly deduce the grammatical role of affixes and start to apply them creatively.

Significantly, the research by Maratsos and Chalkley shows that children can gain morphological knowledge without needing direct instruction; rather, their awareness of distributional patterns in the input allows them to learn affixes early in their development (Maratsos & Chalkley, 1980).

Additional empirical evidence for early morphological productivity is provided by Clark and Hecht (1982), who examined children's application of the agentive suffix -er. Their research indicates that children can create new agentive nouns by adding the suffix -er to verbs to signify an agent (e.g., runner, opener). While children's initial uses of -er can be inventive and effective, they might not entirely adhere to the semantic rules of adults at first. This result suggests that children grasp the fundamental morphological structure prior to understanding its finer semantic and pragmatic constraints (Clark & Hecht, 1982).

Expanding on this research, Clark, Carpenter, and Deutsch (1995) further show that young children's initial morphological inventions indicate an engaged process of formulating and evaluating hypotheses. The findings indicate that children often use derivational suffixes in ways that go beyond standard adult application, implying that morphological creativity emerges before they fully grasp adult-like limitations. With time, ongoing exposure to input and communicative feedback results in the gradual improvement of these morphological forms, leading to more target-like applications. Collectively, these studies highlight that the initial acquisition of affixes includes both productive use and incremental learning of constraints, instead of merely imitating adult language (Clark, Carpenter, & Deutsch, 1995).

VOCABULARY EXPANSION AND MORPHOLOGICAL PROGRESSION

Anglin's (1993) mentioned that morphological examination of vocabulary advancement offers strong empirical support for the close relationship between lexical expansion and morphological growth in early childhood. His research shows that as children's vocabularies expand, they encounter an increasing array of

morphologically intricate words, comprising both inflected and derived variations. This heightened exposure encourages children to recognize repeated affixal patterns and to cultivate a budding understanding of the form–meaning connections that affixes convey. Anglin's (1993) analysis suggests that morphological knowledge evolves in conjunction with vocabulary size, arising as a result of lexical growth. As children learn more vocabulary, they start to notice common morphological elements among various words, enabling them to see affixes as significant components. This method improves children's skills in analyzing unknown words by breaking them down into familiar stems and affixes, thus aiding additional vocabulary development.

Concurrently, Anglin (1993) highlights that morphological awareness significantly supports ongoing vocabulary growth. When children learn to understand affixes, they become more capable of deducing the meanings of unfamiliar and infrequent words found in spoken or written language. This mutual connection between vocabulary expansion and morphological understanding emphasizes the key importance of acquiring affixes in overall language and literacy advancement. Morphology serves as both a result of lexical expansion and a tool that facilitates more effective word acquisition throughout development.

PERSPECTIVES ON CROSS-LINGUISTIC AND BILINGUALISM

Cross-linguistic studies show that the characteristics, order, and timing of affix acquisition differ significantly among languages, primarily influenced by elements like morphological clarity, consistency, and typological features. These variations across languages indicate that children are attuned to the structural features of their language and modify their morphological growth accordingly. In bilingual settings, these processes may engage with each other in intricate manners, occasionally leading to blended or cross-linguistic morphological patterns.

Morimoto (1999) analyzed data from Japanese–English bilingual children and showed that prosodic constraints significantly influence the acquisition and

integration of affixes between languages. The research indicated that the rhythmic and stress patterns of different languages affected how children applied and generalized affixes, emphasizing the connection between phonological structure and morphological advancement. Morimoto's research indicates that bilingual children do not simply develop two distinct morphological systems independently; instead, the affixal patterns are actively influenced by the prosodic and phonological traits of both languages. This study highlights the significance of taking into account phonological and prosodic elements when examining morphological growth in bilingual and cross-linguistic situations, since these aspects can promote or limit the initial use of affixes (Morimoto, 1999).

CONCLUSION

The evidence examined collectively indicates that early-emerging affixes possess multiple key traits that aid in their learning. These affixes are usually very common in the language input children encounter, semantically clear, and shown within stable and expected distributional patterns. These features assist children in recognizing repeated morphological patterns and in deriving generalizable rules from the input. Consequently, children can generatively create these affixes and apply them to new lexical items, showcasing the development of initial morphological competence.

An integration of theoretical and empirical insights suggests that no singular explanatory model completely explains the patterns seen in affix acquisition. Rather, the process showcases an active interaction of various elements. Innate cognitive and linguistic systems offer the essential ability to identify and utilize morphological patterns, while consistent engagement with linguistic input and interaction within significant social environments directs the gradual enhancement of these abilities. The learning of early-emerging affixes represents a complicated interplay of biological tendencies, experiential learning, and social interaction, emphasizing the intricate aspects of early language development.

Early-emerging affixes are not just linguistic elements to acquire; they serve a crucial function in the overall progression of children's language growth. They aid in developing grammatical proficiency, assist in broadening vocabulary, and allow for more advanced syntactic structures. Additionally, the capacity to generalize and handle affixes demonstrates the growth of abstract morphological understanding, essential for future language and literacy abilities.

Future studies ought to keep exploring how these initial patterns develop in various linguistic and cultural contexts. Comparative research assessing cross-linguistic and bilingual settings can enhance our understanding of the processes that facilitate morphological learning, whereas applied studies can convert these insights into effective approaches for educational and clinical practices. Grasping the elements that aid in the development and comprehension of affixes can enhance language instruction methods, early literacy initiatives, and strategies for assisting children with unusual language growth

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