The Role of Pashto (as L1) and Urdu (as L2) in English Language Learning

Ayesha Saddiqa
Govt. Post Graduate College for Women- Samanabad, Lahore

ABSTRACT
Pashto speakers, particularly based in Lahore, Pakistan are mostly multilingual learners. They speak Pashto as their mother tongue; for day to day communication Urdu acts as their L2; while in order to compete with the global needs and the medium of instruction in Higher Education institutions, they learn English as well. In this scenario, the current study aims at investigating a) what are the common syntactic properties (sentence structure, aspect, preposition, article and mood) in Pashto, Urdu and English languages?, b) What are the advantages and/ or disadvantages to Pashto speakers in English language learning? and c) What is the potential role of Urdu in English language learning? Linguistic Proximity Model has been used as the theoretical framework of the study. Qualitative content analysis was performed to infer and interpret the prevalent patterns in the data. The results showed that Pashto and Urdu language are more similar to each other in syntactic properties than English. Findings do not support the facilitative role of background languages in English language learning. The status of L2 also remains ambiguous in English learning.

Keywords: Third language acquisition, Cross Linguistic Interference, Typology, Pashto, Urdu, Language