**Prosodic Representations of Hindi Inflection**

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**Introduction**

The Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH) (Goad & White 2006, 2008, 2009) aims to explain persistent problems that second language learners have with inflectional morphology such as missing 3rd person singular agreement ("He yelled" instead of "He yells"). The languages so far investigated have included English and Spanish as the second languages (L2a) and Mandarin, Turkish, English and French as the first languages (L1a).

This project aims to investigate the acquisition of Hindi prosodic structures by L1 English speakers. Hindi is unusual in the patterns it displays that could initially mislead English-speaking learners in the beginning.

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**Prosodic Structures and Inflectional Morphology**

- All aspects of linguistic representation are hierarchically represented: sounds are organized into syllables, which are organized into feet, which are organized into Prosodic Words (PWd) and so on (Fig 1).
- Some morphological elements are free standing (like nouns) and others are bound to the free standing elements (hosts), e.g. 3rd person singular agreement marker -s. Affixes differ in how closely they are attached to their stems, within and across languages. Inflectional morphemes attach to the PWd as "affixal clitics" in English (Goad, White & Steele 2003) (Fig 2(a)) which are less close to their hosts than "internal clitics". By contrast, inflectional morphemes in Mandarin attach more closely as "internal clitics", thus incorporate into the same PWd as the host they attach to (Fig 2(b)).
- The tests most commonly used for determining closeness of inflectional suffixes are the phonological processes that apply at the boundary between a host and an inflectional affix, for example the insertion of a glide (e.g. the sound [y]).
- According to PTH, the pronunciations of L2 learners often reflect the L1 prosodic structure in the L2 (transfer) and show difficulty switching to the appropriate L2 structure.
- Phonological factors, such as the shape of the stem to which the inflection attaches, have been shown to affect suppleness.
- Forms are supplied appropriately in those cases where the L1 prosodic structure can accommodate them but not otherwise, which can result in deletion of inflectional morphology.
- Phonological factors, such as the shape of the stem to which the inflection attaches, have been shown to affect suppleness.
- Goad, White & Steele 2003 show that learners of L1a lacking PWd adjunction (such as Mandarin) have difficulties in expressing such inflection in English.

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**Hindi Verbal Morphology**

- Hosts can be either C-final or LV-final.
- The left edge of a suffix is usually LV, e.g. -o (imperative semi-honorific), but can also be C, e.g. -e (present participle, imperfect, masc pl).
- Glide insertion (GI) happens when the right edge of the stem is a LV and the left edge of the suffix is a LV (example 1).
- When suffix left edge is SV, a LV-SV sequence is allowed at the syllable boundary without shortening the LV (example 2).

**Hindi Nominal Morphology**

- Nouns are cumulatively marked for number and case and can be divided into five different classes according to the suffixes they take (Singh and Sarma 2010) (Table 1).

**Implications for Future Research**

- Presence of GI in L2 input may lead L2 learners to believe that inflection is always PWd internal, causing them to initially apply glide insertion across the board, causing infelicitous GI at other syllable boundaries.
- Only a subset of right edges trigger GI in nominal inflection, namely the front vowel [i:]. Given the phonetic closeness of [i:] and glide [y], it is difficult to target the nominal domain in an experimental task.
- Verbal inflection seems to be the better avenue in terms of testing as the perfective marker joins with a wider set of stem right edges than case-number nominal inflection. This will be taken up in Winter 2019 as part of an Independent Study course wherein a task will be devised to test L2ers' knowledge of GI in verbal inflection compared with no GI in derivation and monomorphic words.

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**References**


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