

# Examining English Morphosyntactic Trials in Interlanguage Unfolding: A Case Study of Balti Enrollees' Verbatim Practices

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<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2024.13.3.30>

## Abstract

*The paper scrutinizes the triggers of fossilization in the English Morphosyntactic process caused by the interlanguage unfolding and verbatim transformation practices of L1 (Balti). Interlanguage development in the learning process and the results of fossilization in L2 (English) were caused by Balti enrollees' verbatim practices. Practices of verbatim strategies in handling the English Morphosyntactic process by the Balti enrollees was the key model found in the study and the model was based on particular L1 (Balti) morphosyntactic rules. The thematic analysis of the collected data from the Balti enrollees indicated the challenges of Balti speakers who learn and use English as an L2 for academic and professional purposes. The findings of the collected data through purposive sampling in focus group discussion demonstrated the major dissimilarities of morphosyntactic structures in Balti to English and where there was a contrast, there found interlanguage issues and fossilization for the enrollees. In the thematic analysis, the codes, all the themes, and global themes were explored and unraveled accordingly. The findings of this case study offer solutions to ESL instructors in making the pedagogical process of English as an L2 effective by indicating the role of Interlanguage unfolding and verbatim practices.*

**Keywords:** Morphosyntax, Interlanguage, Verbatim Translation, Balti Language, Fossilization.

## Introduction

As a linguistic system, Interlanguage is considered the most important source of fossilization in the communicational process as the interference of the rules of L1 to L2 creates some challenging linguistic issues. The Interlanguage phenomenon is the course of using L1 rules to convey and apply L2 where the rules of both may differ and consequently, there is a great chance of misconceiving and misunderstanding in the discourse. In the recently published papers, it has been identified that the micro level of linguistics had been focused in terms of Interlanguage trials, and the broader macro linguistic level was ignored (Hao, et al. 2023). Interlanguage (IL) theory was proposed by a prominent linguist named Salinker (1972) under psycholinguistics and is still being applied for SLA instructional and research purposes (Tarone, 2018). Verbatim is the course of words for words translation from L1 to L2 which is a great deal for Interlanguage and interlingual errors in SLA. Balti as an L1 with particular linguistic features is a language mostly spoken in Baltistan, North of Pakistan, Kargil and Ladakh in India, Bhutan, Tibet in China, and Sri Lanka (Omniglot, 2023). The morphosyntactic processes of Balti as an L1 differ from English in some

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major areas which may cause challenges for the learners of English as an L2 due to the Interlanguage and verbatim trials. Lexical items are an integral part of syntactic structures and Syntactic structures of one language may differ from others linguistically (Bano, et al. 2024). The morphosyntactic structure of the Balti language in contrast to English is found a gap for analysis thus, the current qualitative study aims at targeting the errors of the Balti enrollees of the English language due to the contrasting morphosyntactic processes and Interlanguage. As a case study, the Interlanguage system and its trials for Balti speakers in using English as an L2 with variant morphosyntactic rules have been targeted with focus group discussion accordingly. So, the main objective of the current study was to examining the verbatim transformation by the Balti students and the English morphosyntactic trials in Interlanguage development.

### **Background and Contextualization**

Interlanguage (IL) theory was proposed by a prominent linguist, Salinker (1972) under psycholinguistics and is still being applied for SLA instructional and research purposes (Tarone, 2018). Verbatim is the track of word-for-word translation from the mother tongue to the target language which is a great deal for Interlanguage systems and interlingual errors in SLA. Balti as a mother tongue with particular linguistic features is a language typically spoken in Baltistan, North of Pakistan, Kargil and Ladakh in India, Bhutan, Tibet in China, and Sri Lanka (Omniglot, 2023). Language disorders or the difficulties of L2 learners in the pedagogical processes are based on morphosyntactic, semantic, phonological or any other micro or macro linguistic domain (Hengst, et al. 2022).

Translation is considered a crucial process in ensuring the correct meanings from L1 to L2 and qualitative research possesses a vital role in the accurate translation and the enrollee's meanings conveying between languages (Akma, et al., 2022). A case study is done where an in-depth understanding is required concerned with the genuine contemporary issues or phenomena of the system and particularly the investigators find the answers to what, why, and how type-based queries regarding the system (Coombs, 2022). In cross-linguistic comparisons, different languages possess diverse morphosyntactic strategies in the functions of processing and conveying messages (Croft, 2022). As a complex adaptive system, it is a difficult task to get through the domain of morphosyntax, in the learning process of L2 of SLA but associative learning can be a great deal for the morphosyntactic challenges (Ellis, 2022). One of the most popular approaches in qualitative studies is thematic analysis which is supportive in comprising the heavy qualitative data and complex data collected for analysis systematically (Naeem, et al., 2023). Vygotsky's proposed 'zone of proximal development' is supportive of successful pedagogical processes in interlanguage unfolding or development because it provides the learners an opportunity to learn together and peers' guidelines.

### **Methodological Framework**

As a qualitative study, this case study has analyzed the interlanguage unfolding in English sentences due to the variant Balti morphosyntactic rules contrasting to English. Case studies in qualitative approach are supportive of understanding the social, health, and linguistic issues of a community (Knox, et al., 2022). Data was collected from elementary-level Balti students who were enrolled at the English language institute named TOPS Education System, Skardu. Focused group discussion was the main source of data gathering within purposive sampling from the targeted four students who were just enrolled recently to learn English as an L2 for their academic and practical purposes. The targeted enrollees of English (L2) belonged to the Balti community and Balti was

the mother tongue (L1). The collected data was analyzed with thematic analysis to thrash out the codes and themes systematically. The main objective of the study was to examine the English morphosyntactic trials and issues in interlanguage development so; the researcher gathered and analyzed the data with thematic analysis to find out the Balti syntactic processes and structures that hinder the English sentence construction process in terms of morphosyntax.

The findings unboxed by a recent study unveiled the role of syntactic and semantic processing while mentioning that the left- Hemisphere (LH's) role in intra-hemispheric syntactic priming and the complex interplay between semantic and syntactic processing, offering insights into hemispheric specialization and advancing serial processing models in language comprehension (Kim et al., 2024). Sentence formation process and person in contrast were the main focus of the study thus, targeted students were not informed while recording the session to avoid their confusion and challenges but at the end of the session, they were informed about the recordings and asked for their consent to meet the ethical considerations. It took one and twenty-eight minutes to complete the focus group discussion with purposive sampling with the targeted enrollees and finally, the recorded data was assessed systematically. After finding the codes systematically all the themes and global theme was explored accordingly. The researchers focused only on sentence formation of the present tense, in addition to its transformations and use of persons in statements by the targeted students to assess the interlanguage unfolding and its impacts on the syntactic process of L2.

### Analysis and Implications

The findings of the collected data through purposive sampling in focus group discussion demonstrated that there are some major dissimilarities of morphosyntactic structures in Balti to English and where there was a contrast, there found interlanguage issues for the enrollees. The findings showed few types of errors in the sentence formation process and the use of persons in the statements that hindered the morphosyntactic processes of English. In the SLA process, the learners make errors in subject-verb concord and use of clauses appropriately due to interlanguage development (Puspita, 2019).

The collected data represented the errors made due to the interlanguage unfolding. The main differences of the syntactic process of Balti and English found in the word order as Balti follows Subject + Object + Verb structure in contrast to English, Subject + Verb + Object.

Balti: Shama zdrung chik bred. SOV

English: Shama writes a folktale. SVO

Balti: Negative: Shama zdrung chik bria med.

English: Negative: Shama does not write a folktale.

The error-based statements uttered by the enrollees in L2 are given as under;

Shama, a folktale write.\* Balti: Shama dzrung chik bred.

Interlanguage unfolding occurred due to syntactic variations and verbatim translation.

Negative: Shama, a folktale write not.\* Interlanguage development in English due to L1 rules

We, a folktale write.\* Balti: Ngaya zdrung chik bred.

We, a folktale write not.\* Balti: Ngaya zdrung chik bria med. SOV+med.

Interlanguage development and verbatim influenced L2 morphosyntactic structure negatively.

She write a folktale.\*

Error committed in subject verb concord, due to interlanguage and verbatim.

Use of person in morphosyntactic process with L1 rule has been used in L2 by the enrollees.

She and I, a folktale write.\* She and I, write a folktale not.\*

Balti: Mo na ngna zdrung chik bred. Mo na ngna zdrung chik bria med.  
Interference of L1 morphosyntactic rule to L2 and Verbatim translation observed.  
These sentences were ungrammatical due to L1 variant rules of using ‘persons’.

<b>Table 1: Balti concord</b>		
<b>Balti (Persons) Concord</b>	<b>Interlanguage unfolding: Morphosyntactic errors and fossilization</b>	<b>English (Persons) Concord</b>
Nгна zdrung chik bred	I, a folktale write.* I write a folktale.	I write a folktale.
Ngnadang zdrung chik bred.	We, a folktale write.* We write a folktale.	We write a folktale.
Yangni zdrung chik bred.	You, a folktale write.* You write a folktale.	You write a folktale.
Khhongni zdrung chik bred.	They, a folktale write.* They write a folktale.	They write a folktale.
Kho zdrung chik bred.	He write a folktale.* He, a folktale write.*	He writes a folktale.
Mo zdrung chik bred.	She write a folktale.* She, a folktale write.*	She writes a folktale.
Singay shoqbu chik bred.	Singay write a book.* They, a folktale write.*	Singay writes a folktale.

### **Familiarization with the Data and Initial Codes**

The sentence formation structure of Balti and English encountered in contrast, consequently, it led the enrollees to errors in the sentence formation process English as an L2. Few sentences were found meaningless in L2 due to the interference of L1 rules in terms of the morphosyntactic process. The next errors were found in subject-verb concords of L2 and the errors were caused by Interlanguage unfolding in L2 morphosyntactically. The enrollees committed mistakes in the proper applications of ‘persons’ in present simple sentences in terms of subject-verb concord. Errors are considered the part of learning process and both the instructor and the learners with deeper knowledge are required to strive and good practice in the target language (Septiardhya 2024). The major errors were based on missing the subject-verb agreement in the use of the third person pronouns and their concord with verbs in the same statements. In other words, the same rule was used with all types of pronouns in the sentences. Thus, the major codes were ‘subject-verb concord, morphosyntactic process, use of persons, and negative transformation.

### **Themes and Report**

The major themes found in the study illustrated the causes and types of morphosyntactic errors by the Balti enrollees due to interlanguage unfolding. Error Analyses function a vital role in cognitive stages in learning instructional processes of L1 and L2 as it is capable of identifying, describing and unveiling the errors, nature of the errors and solutions of the errors in L2 learning procedures (Mathaba et al., 2024). The errors were just done due to the interference of Balti (L1) morphosyntactic rules to English (L2). The themes were identified within the focus group discussion of the targeted enrollees of L2 who had a background of Balti language as their L1 with particular morphosyntactic rules. The identified themes were ‘morphosyntactic errors, Subject-

verb concord issues, interference of L1 morphosyntactic pattern, Use of Persons, and Negation errors. Collective the identified global theme was ‘interlanguage unfolding’ in the L2 learning process which indicated the role of the L1 rule in the learning process of English as an L2 in Baltistan. So, the global theme indicated how interlanguage influenced L2, particularly the morphosyntactic process of L2 and its learning and application process negatively if the learners are not guided appropriately. While delving into the intricacies of verbatim and interlanguage, the findings provided vital insights into the unique morphosyntactic issues and fossilization in English as an L2 due to the interference of Balti (L1) rules.

## Conclusion

In culmination, the current study delved into the morphosyntactic trials in English due to interlanguage unfolding. The Balti enrollees of L2 (English) were chosen for data collection in the Focus group discussion and found the main causes of their morphosyntactic errors in L2 was due to the interference of L1 morphosyntactic rules. The examination and findings highlighted the role of verbatim and interlanguage in learning L2 for the enrollees who possess Balti as their L1. The identified global theme ‘interlanguage unfolding’ and sub-themes ‘morphosyntactic trials like subject-verb concord trials, interference of L1 rules, use of persons, and negation errors’ in the process of thematic analysis. This study unlocks the linguistic trial in terms of morphosyntactic errors in English due to the phenomena of Verbatim and interlanguage unfolding. The application of verbatim translation proved major support for interlanguage unfolding as the discussion and its analysis indicated the meaningless statements transformed by the targeted enrollees. The major morphosyntactic errors were based on five areas in terms of sentence formation structures, subject-verb concords, use of persons in the syntactic process, and errors in negations accordingly. The findings contribute to the pedagogical trials of the SLA and interlanguage for the language instructors who teach English (L2) to the Balti enrollees or of any other language as an L1 and offer insights regarding the pedagogical strategies to avoid the mentioned trials. The findings of this case study has offered solutions for English instructors to make the instructional process of English as a target language effective by designating or pointing out the role of Interlanguage unfolding and verbatim practices.

In short, to resolve the interlanguage trials in L2, the instructors are recommended to be aware of the ‘zone of proximal development’ that is supportive of successful pedagogical processes in interlanguage unfolding because it provides the learners an opportunity to learn together and peers’ guidelines. Proper steps and techniques can be applied in the pedagogical process of teaching English as an L2 for the enrollees who have a background of Balti language as native speaker at the elementary level.

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