

Representing the Concept of Future in Persian Writings by Foreign Students: An Analysis Based on a Concept-oriented Approach

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Abstract

The present study represents the concept of future in the writings of foreign Persian learners based on three stages (pragmatics, lexical and morphological) concept-oriented approach. The corpus of this research is 50 texts written by Persian foreign students from China, Russia, Iraq, Uzbekistan and Syria, in elementary, intermediate and advanced language levels. The purpose of this study is to answer the question whether the application of the concept of future in Persian's writings based on the stages of the concept-oriented approach is represented or not. The study and analysis of Persian students' writings showed that the concept of future is represented according to the three stages of the concept-oriented approach in Persian writing for students of elementary to advanced levels. The results showed that Persian learners in the first stage (pragmatics) are familiar with the concept of future and use their knowledge of the first language to understand and understand this concept. At higher language levels, with more learning of Persian, in addition to having a lexical stage, they also reach a morphological stage and use various forms to express the concept of the future.

Keywords: Future, Concept-oriented approach, Lexical forms, Morphological forms.

Extended abstract

1. Introduction

The concept-based approach is presented in the framework of Functional Theory. In this approach, there are two orientations to study language forms and functions associations. The former deals with the form-function, and the latter has a focus on the function - form mapping. This study first will use the simple present tense as a form and concentrates on its functions. Then will gather forms by which the concept of futurity could be expressed. According to the concept-

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oriented approach, language learners have underlying concepts in their first language, which should be mapped with new linguistic forms in their second language. The lower the language level of Persian learners, the more they use forms of higher functional load. Progress in language learning will enrich the grammatical repertoire. The focus of the present study is the extent to which concept-oriented approach could explain futurity use in learners' writings. The aim of the present study is to investigate whether the representation of futurity in writings of foreign learners is based on the stages of the concept-oriented approach or not.

2. Theoretical framework

Based on the concept-oriented approach, the concept of time is represented in several ways. The fundamental principle of this approach is that second language learners have access to semantic concepts through their cognitive and linguistic experience and require specific methods and devices to express those concepts, which are learned in three stages of pragmatic stage, lexical and morphological. First, the learner selects a form to express the concept in the second language after activating the concept in his first language. Then, uses connectors and enters the morphological stage, where the concept of time is learned through grammatical tense and grammatical morphemes. Therefore, in order to investigate futurity, it is crucial to study the expression of the concept at each level by evaluating excerpts of Persian's foreign learners' writings, and to explain the process of concept and form mapping development in the framework mentioned earlier.

3. Methodology

This research is of analytical and applied type, and based on the concept-oriented approach and its stages, the degree of representation of the futurity in the writings of foreign students is examined. The data was collected through 50 writings of male and female Persian learners at basic to advanced levels and from Chinese, Russian, Iraqi, Syrian and Uzbek students. The learners participated in a placement test at Persian Language Center for non-Persian speakers at Allameh Tabatabai University and then spent one semester on Persian course. At the end of the course, the learners' texts written in progress test, were carefully examined, and the representation and frequency of occurrence of expressions conveying futurity were analyzed based on the stages of the concept-oriented approach.

4. Result & Discussion

Since at the Pragmatic stage, Persian learners have perception of futurity in their first language, therefore, this study concentrated on this concept at lexical and morphological stages. The results revealed that words and adverbs are used to express the future tense at basic level. learners used adverbs of time in

combination with the simple present tense (e.g. I **go** to Persian class **tomorrow**.) 30.90 percent use of the adverbs of time and (27.27%) percent use of simple present tense was viewed at the lexical stage among intermediate learners. These learners also used obligatory forms (27.27%), modals (12.72%) and auxiliary verb "want" (1.81%) at the morphological stage. This explains Persian learners' transition from the lexical stage, while maintaining its knowledge, to the morphological stage and their ability to apply more complex forms. The use of adverbs of time (32.25%) and simple present tense (14.51%) were also noted at the lexical stage among advanced learners. Obligatory forms (25.80%), modals (14.51%) and finally the auxiliary verb "want"(12.90%) were used at the morphological stage, which shows an increase in learners' knowledge and their progress at morphological stage. Basic Chinese learners, used more future forms of the present tense and simple present tense at the lexical stage, in comparison with learners of other nationalities. The reason could be the lack of verb conjugation in Chinese. Learners of other countries used future forms equally. Adverbials and simple present tense were used more at the lexical stage among intermediate learners. Uzbek, Russian, Iraqi, and Syrian Persian learners were the next ones in this regard. Also, at intermediate level, Chinese learners used more future forms in their writings at the morphological stage than learners of other nationalities. Only intermediate-level Chinese learners in the morphological stage have used the auxiliary form "want". At the advanced level, Chinese Persian learners have used more future forms (obligatory form, modals, and auxiliary verb) than other Persian learners. Iraqi and Uzbek learners performed similarly, and other Persian learners used less future forms in the morphological stage.

5. Conclusion & Suggestions

The results showed that foreign Persian learners are familiar with the concept of futurity at the beginning of education and use their knowledge of their first language to understand this concept. With the gradual development of the Persian language, they use the words and lexical forms of the target language to express the futurity. In accordance with the obtained results, futurity use in Persian's writings of foreign students is in line with the stages of the concept-oriented approach. This means that the efficacy of this approach for learning futurity is approved.

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