

The Acquisition of the English Inflectional -s Morphemes by Young L1 Chinese Speakers

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Abstract

This paper examines the acquisition of the inflectional –s morphemes (the plural marker, genitive marker and third person singular present tense marker) in English by eighteen young ESL learners from two Chinese primary schools. Learners were shown pictures as stimuli, and they were asked to describe the pictures in English. During these sessions, the descriptions by the learners and the conversations between the researcher and the learners were taped and later transcribed. The results of the study indicated that learners exhibited a distinct accuracy order for the morphemes. The learners also exhibited variability and produced overgeneralizations in their L2 utterances. The findings in fact suggested that the acquisition of the –s morpheme was systematic and staged. A discussion on the reasons for the phenomenon then followed and some implications were drawn for the teaching of these forms to young L1 Chinese speakers of L2 English.

Keywords: morphemes, English as a second language, transcription, overgeneralization, acquisition.

Biodata

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Introduction

Some of the most well-known studies in second language acquisition research are the morpheme studies. These morpheme studies were inspired and stemmed from work done in first language (L1) acquisition conducted by Roger Brown in 1973. In this in-depth longitudinal study, Brown found a consistent order of emergence of 14 grammatical morphemes in English among three children of different backgrounds.

Studies on the acquisition of grammatical morphemes among second language (L2) learners were conducted by Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974c, 1975; in Mitchell and Myles, 1998; 31). In the first study (1973), the subjects were one hundred and fifty-one Spanish-speaking children of three different levels of exposure to English. The researchers used the Bilingual Syntax Measure, an elicitation technique, to collect data for the study. Among the findings, they found that ‘the acquisition sequences obtained from the groups of children were strikingly similar although each of the group on the whole was at a different level of English proficiency’ (Dulay *et al.*, 1982: 204). In another study, Dulay and Burt (1974c), using a similar approach, but with different subjects (L1 Chinese and Spanish children) found that the subjects acquired eleven grammatical morphemes similarly. Their findings concluded that second language acquisition (SLA) is staged and systematic. SLA is staged in that learners work their way through a number of developmental stages, from primitive and deviant L2 forms to increasingly more native-like forms (Mitchell and Myles, 1998: 10). It is systematic in the sense that learners from different L1 backgrounds develop L2 linguistic knowledge in a way that is not directly attributable either to their L1, or to the L2 input and their development follow a common route, although the rate of attainment may be very different (Towell and Hawkins, 1994: 11).

In addition to L2 development being staged and systematic, Towell and Hawkins also highlighted another phenomenon that is prevalent among L2 learners, and that is the variability, where L2 learners ‘allow more than one structural variant for a given construction where the target language has only one form’ (p. 13). Yet another phenomenon that is observed among L2 learners, although to a lesser extent, is that of “overgeneralization”. In L1 acquisition literature, this is used to describe instances where children form generalisations based on input they receive, that is they apply linguistic rules they have hypothesised too broadly (Crain and Lillo-Martin, 1999: 29). Examples include the formation of past tense and plural forms such as *goed* and *foots*.

In this study, we investigated the acquisition of the *-s* morphemes in English (the plural marker, the genitive marker and third person singular present tense marker) by L1 young Chinese speakers of L2 English and to determine the accuracy order of acquisition of

these three morphemes at a particular stage of language development. Thus, it is primarily interested in describing the stage or stages the subjects are at in their acquisition of the three morphemes. Where appropriate, explanations are provided for the data in light of the various phenomena that are observed among L2 learners in general and which are highlighted above. Dulay and Burt's approach is adopted. In the next section, the use of the *-s* morpheme in English and the notions of number, possession and aspect are highlighted to show the contrast of these properties in both the languages. A comparative analysis of the selected features of the two languages is necessary as the L1 of the respondents in this study is Chinese and the target language being studied is English.

The Use of the *-s* morpheme in English

***-s* as Plural Marker**

The inflectional morpheme *-s* is attached to nouns to show plurality (Yule, 1996: 77). According to Katamba (1993: 233), 'number is an obligatory category in English nouns and nouns have to carry inflection showing whether they are singular or plural'. Therefore, we must add the suffix *-s* to a plural form even though the numeral before the form dictates that more than one entity is being referred to, for example, *ten cats* as *ten cat* is grammatically incorrect (Katamba, 1993: 51). There are, however, other ways in English to show plurality in nouns, for example, the plural of *child* is *children*, not *childs* and the plural for *ox* is *oxen*, not *oxes* (Akmajian, Demers and Harnish, 1987: 58).

***-s* as Genitive Suffix**

There are two types of possessive forms in English; one is the *-s* (for singular nouns) or *-s'* (for plural nouns) such as in *the dog's tail* and *the boys' father* respectively. The other, which is used with inanimate nouns, applies the *of* possessive form to sentences whereby the positions of the possessor and the thing possessed are reversed, for instance, *the foot of the bed* (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999: 315). Traditionally, the morpheme *-s* which is used in singular and plural nouns to indicate possession is analysed as an inflection (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999: 311). According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) the three main uses of the morpheme *-s* as the genitive marker in English are, "to mark the noun referring to the possessor of something, to mark a noun that describes something and to mark a noun as a measure" (in Katamba, 1993: 52).

Although the usual function of the genitive marker *-s* is to mark possession, the genitive *-s* can also be used without a possessive meaning as seen in the following examples:

1. Paul's doctor has retired.
2. Peter's playing thrilled the audience.

In the examples above, *Paul* does not possess the *doctor* but is related through doctor-patient relationship and *Peter* does not own the *playing*. The second sentence in fact suggests *Peter's playing* as 'the way Peter plays' (Katamba, 1993:241).

In most current accounts, however, the bound morpheme *-s*, which is attached to nouns to show possession, is analysed as a type of clitic. A clitic, which belongs to another category of bound morphemes, is incapable of standing on its own as an independent form and is attached to words which are known as hosts or anchors. Clitics can also be further divided into two sub-categories: simple clitics and special clitics. The genitive *-s* falls into the special clitics category. The main difference between these two categories is, unlike simple clitics, special clitics are incorporated phonologically, semantically, and syntactically to the host. A special clitic cannot be simply taken away from its host and attached to another word of the sentence (O'Grady, Dobrovolsky and Katamba, 1997:139 – 140).

-s as Third Person Singular Present Tense Marker

English is a tense language, which means that it is concerned with time and aspect during the plotting of an action. Tense can indicate whether an action or event 1) has taken place (past tense), 2) is happening at the very same moment (present tense) or 3) is subsequent or going to happen. Normally, there is only one kind of ending for verbs in the present tense, which is the third person singular ending *-s*. This ending is used with singular pronouns such as *he, she* and *it* and nouns such as *Ali, the dog* and *my uncle* (Katamba, 1993: 220). The present tense form is set apart from each other by invoking the grammatical categories of 'person' and 'number'. 'Person' refers to the person or thing doing or undertaking an act, going through an event or being in a state. When the person is the one being talked about, we refer to it as third person, which is related to the pronouns *he, she, it,* and *they*. 'Number' refers to the number of subject. The *-s* ending is affixed to verbs only when it involves the third person singular form, *he, she* and *it* (Jackson, 1990: 17). Most of the verbs in the present tense have only this inflectional third person singular ending *-s*, for example, *she walks, he runs*. As for the other forms of verbs used with the first or second person singular present tense, they are referred to as the base form (Aarts, 1997: 33). Base forms of verbs are those found in dictionaries and are used with first and second person singular present tense (Börjars and Burridge, 2001: 61).

Plurality, Possessive and Aspect in Chinese

Number as an optional category in Chinese

Normally, we cannot find inflections for number showing whether nouns are singular or plural in Chinese. This is due to the fact that number is not an obligatory morphological category in Chinese. There is, however, an evident relationship between animacy and number. In Chinese, when a noun is inanimate, such as *shu* (book), singularity or

plurality is usually not indicated. On the other hand, clear plural marking is marked out for nouns which are animate, especially humans (Katamba, 1993: 233).

3. Ni-*men* yau chi shen me?
You all want eat what?
(What do you all want to eat?)

The plural suffix *-men*, which is regularly found in pronouns like *wo-men* ‘we’ and *ta-men* ‘they’, are generally employed with nouns referring to human beings. These plural markings in Chinese are not requisite in all situations unlike the English plural nouns. They are obligatory if distinctions between *I*, *you* (singular) and *it*, and between *we*, *they* and *you* (plural) are to be made. They are not used with numerals and they are commonly used to refer to people in groups taken as a whole, for example *haizi* means ‘child’ but *haizi-men* (with the plural suffix *-men*) means ‘a certain group of children’. We can also use classifier or enumerator or measure words (Katamba, 1993: 233) such as *youde* ‘some’, *jige*, ‘several’ or *hen duo* ‘many’ to express number. (See examples 4 and 5.)

4. Wo you *jige* niao
I have several birds
(I have several birds.)
5. *Hen duo* shu zai zhuozishang
Many book located on table top
(There are many books on the table.)

(after Norman, 1988: 159)

The appropriate enumerators are selected depending on the animacy or some particular property of the noun. Hence, the difference for ‘three’ which is *san-wei* for people and *san-liang* for cars in 6 and 7 below:

6. Wo yao ching *san wei* peng you qi wo jia
I invited three-CLASSIFIER friends to my house
(I invited three friends to my house.)
7. Wo *men* cheng zuo *san liang* che
We travelled three-CLASSIFIER car
(We travelled in 3 cars.)

The suffix *-de* as a possessive modifier

In Chinese, a modifier is put before the element which is to be modified. In all cases of nominal subordination, which also includes possession, a single suffix *-de* is used and this suffix is almost similar to the genitive cases of most languages:

8. Mei Ling *de* dianshiji

Mei Ling *de* television set
(Mei Ling's television set)

9. jintian shangwu *de* hui
Today morning *de* meeting
(This morning's meeting)

(Norman, 1988: 159)

Since Chinese is impoverished in inflectional morphology, use of affixes in the expression of grammatical relationships in the language is seldom found. In this instance, it is the use of the particle *de* that conveys the meaning of possession.

The absence of tense in Chinese

In Chinese, verbs do not need to change according to time. As such, Chinese is said to be an aspect language, which means that it places importance only on whether an action has taken place or not. In Chinese, a completed event or action can be shown by using the verbal suffix *-le*. In other words, it is used to indicate the perfective aspect (*Asp*).

10. Ta da *le* wo
S/he hit *Asp* me
(S/he hit me.)
11. Ta gei *le* wo yi ben shu
S/he give *Asp* me a Classifier book
(S/he gave me a book.)

Importance is, therefore, placed on showing if an action is still in progress or has already been completed. It is not concerned with the time the action is/was done. For example, in the present tense as in *wo chi* (I eat) and *ta chi* (he eats), *wo men chi* (we eat) and *ta men chi* (they eat) the verb *chi* (eat) does not change. It can be used for both, the first person (singular and plural) and the third person (singular and plural) and therefore it is regular. This applies to all other tenses, whereby a change in the verb stem is not required:

12. Zuotian wanshang ta men *kan* shu
Yesterday evening they read book
(They read a book last evening.)
13. Ta chai jia *kan* shu
S/he at home read book
(He reads a book at home.)

In the examples above, the verb *kan* 'read' is used for both past tense and present tense. A change in the verb stem is not necessary (Norman, 1988:164).

In sum, there are differences between English and Chinese in the way they express the notions of number, possession and tense. It would be interesting to see how these differences would affect the way young L1 Chinese learners acquire the *-s* morphemes manifesting these notions in this study. In the next section, the methodology adopted for the study is outlined.

Methodology

Procedure

In this study the instrument used and the procedure of data collection are similar to those used by Dulay and Burt. The L1 group in this study is different from that of Dulay and Burt's in that it is a homogeneous group (L1 Chinese speakers) while Dulay and Burt's sample comprises L1 Chinese and Spanish speakers. The subjects in this study are homogeneous in terms of their L1 but different in terms of their backgrounds.

The collection of data from the subjects was carried out through the use of stimuli in the form of nineteen (19) pictures and comic strips of people performing everyday tasks. These stimuli were designed to elicit utterances which included the use of the plural marker, the genitive marker and the third person present tense singular marker. The study was located at two primary schools namely, Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Sentul in Kuala Lumpur and Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Serdang Baru 2 in Seri Kembangan. The rationale for carrying out the study in two schools was to examine whether or not the data collected from different locales would converge.

The stimuli were presented in sequence to eighteen (18) subjects. Questions were posed with the stimuli requiring them to describe or relate the incidents portrayed. During these sessions, the subjects' utterances were taped. Each session lasted approximately fifteen (15) minutes. The subjects' responses were then transcribed and categorized according to the type of *-s* morpheme used.

Upon transcription, errors in the use of the three morphemes were identified and classified. Subsequently, the obligatory contexts under which the morphemes should be used were determined. The following formula was used to obtain the frequency of correct use.

$$\text{Total percentage of correct use of the morpheme} = \frac{\text{Total number produced}}{\text{Total number of obligatory contexts}} \times 100$$

The data were subject to paired sample t-tests using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to determine whether the results for the acquisition of the three *s*-morphemes were significant.

Subjects

Subjects were selected based on three criteria. Firstly, their first language must be one of the Chinese languages. Secondly, the subjects are to be in the age group of nine to ten years. This was because young students of this age group were anticipated to be able to respond adequately to the stimuli presented. English proficiency level was another criterion for the selection. The students were recommended by their teachers as students generally having a high competency in speaking English. This was to ensure that there was a reasonable ability to convey their responses in English. The students would have been exposed to English from the beginning of their primary years and the amount of exposure to English as a subject in school is 150 minutes per week.

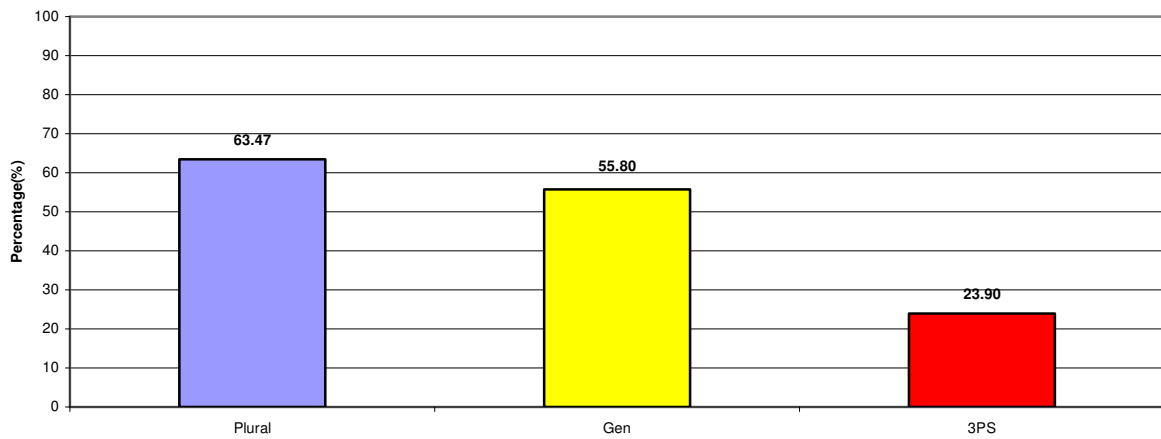
Results and Discussion

The results were presented according to the two schools in which the study was carried out. The data in the following bar graph (see Figure 1) indicated that the correct use of the plural marker was the highest with a percentage of 63.47 among subjects in SRJK (C) Sentul. The scores obtained for the genitive marker was only slightly lower, that is 55.8%. The use of the third person singular present tense marker was the lowest at 23.9%, with only one subject scoring above 50% (see Appendix I).

In comparing the scores using the paired sample t-test, the following results were obtained. There was no significant difference in the use of the plural marker and the genitive marker ($p=0.384$, sig. 2 tailed). However, it was observed that there were significant variations in the scores of the two morphemes (see Appendix I). In the case of the plural marker, the variation was not as large as that of the genitive suffix. The genitive marker was shown to vary from 7.14% to 94.44 %. This large variation indicated that there are individual differences and that the L2 learners were indeterminate in their acquisition of the genitive *-s*.

The statistics for data obtained for the plural marker and the third person singular present tense marker showed a significant difference ($p = 0.001$, sig. 2 tailed). Similarly, there was a significant difference in the use of the genitive marker and the third person singular present tense marker ($p = 0.008$, sig. 2 tailed).

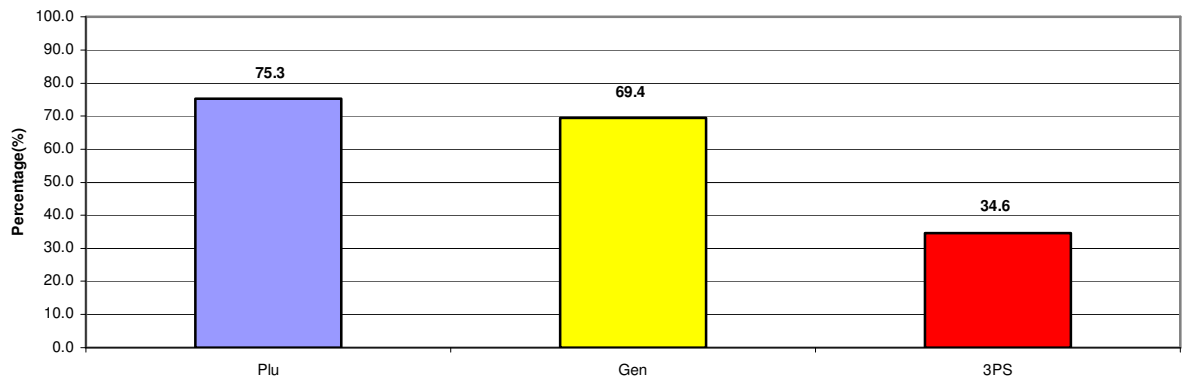
Figure 1: Total Correct Use of the -s Morphemes (as Plural Marker, Genitive Marker and Third Person Singular Present Tense Marker) in % for SRJK (C) Sentul



Plural – Plural marker
Gen – Genitive marker
3PS – Third person singular present tense marker

The bar graph for SRJK(C) Serdang Baru 2 (see Figure 2) showed that the results obtained for the correct use of the plural marker (75.3%), the genitive marker (69.4%) and the third person singular present tense marker (34.6%). Similarly a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores obtained. There was a significant difference between the use of the genitive marker and the third person singular present tense marker ($p = 0.001$, sig. 2 tailed). The comparison between the use of the plural marker and the third person singular present tense marker also showed a significant difference ($p = 0.002$, sig. 2 tailed). The results indicated that subjects had more difficulty in using the third person singular present tense marker (see also Appendix II for individual scores).

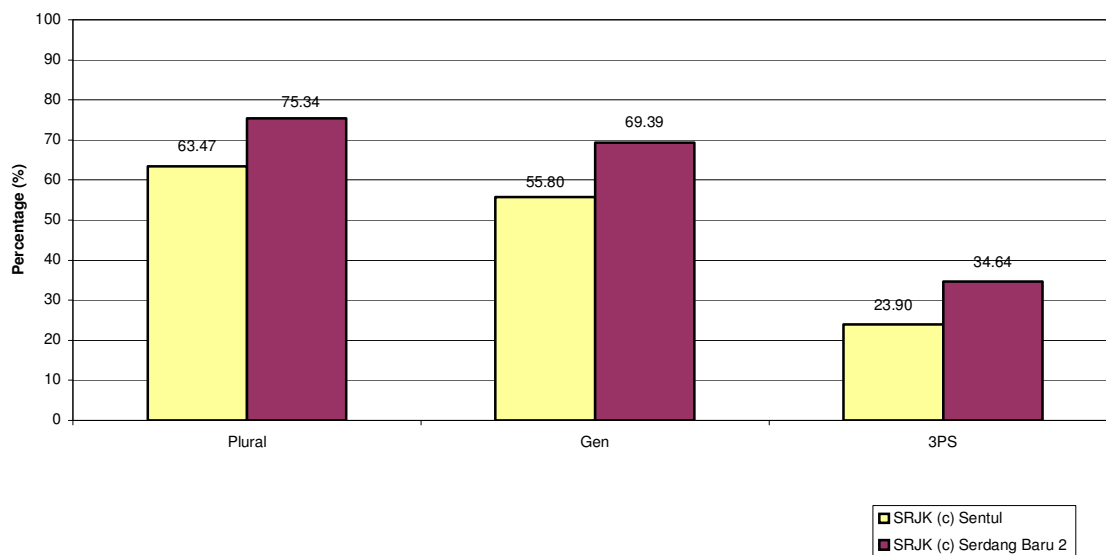
Figure 2 : Total Correct Use Of -s Morphemes (as A Plural Marker, Genitive Marker and Third Person Singular Present Tense Marker) in % for SRJK(C) Serdang Baru(2)



Plural – Plural marker
Gen – Genitive marker
3PS – Third person singular present tense marker

A trend was noted in the subjects' acquisition pattern. The subjects consistently had obtained higher scores for the plural marker followed by the genitive marker and lastly, the third person singular present tense marker. In other words, there is a distinct order in terms of accuracy of production of the three morphemes from most accurate to least accurate: plural marker, genitive marker and third person singular present tense marker. The data from one school had confirmed the trend in the other. This is seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3 : Total Correct Use of the -s Morpheme (as Plural Marker, Genitive Marker and Third Person Singular Present Tense Marker) for SRJK (C) Sentul and SRJK (C) Serdang Baru 2



Plural – Plural marker
 Gen – Genitive marker
 3PS – Third person singular present tense marker

Whether the L1 has an effect on the acquisition of the L2 has been the subject of much debate. The first language has always been thought to be a barrier to a learner as he learns a second language. This phenomenon commonly identified as “interference”, a situation where previous learning habits of the first language influence the acquisition of the second language (Brown, 1987: 81), is of relevance to the findings of this study. During the fifteen-minute data-collection sessions, many of the subjects who were considered to have a reasonable command of the language were unable to use the inflectional *-s* morphemes (plural marker, genitive marker, third person singular present tense marker) correctly. The results indicated that they have acquired the plural marker and the genitive marker only slightly above chance level (set at 50%) and well below chance level for the third person singular present tense marker.

A possible reason to account for these findings is the differences between the grammatical properties of English and Chinese. As noted, overt plurality marking is lacking in Chinese (Katamba, 1993: 233). Unlike English, number is not obligatorily marked in Chinese. The following (14) is an utterance where the plural marker *-s* is left out by one of the subjects. The stimulus used in this case was a picture of a market scene with several stalls, sellers and buyers. The question posed was *How many apples are there?*

14. *There are 5 apple.*

Some of the subjects had not used the plural marker *-s* consistently. In 15a, the response was provided by a subject in response to the question *What does this man sell?* (Stimulus: picture of market scene)

15a. *He sells apples, durian and watermelons.*

15b. *There are 4 colour in the rainbow in Picture A and 3 colours in the rainbow in Picture B.*

Utterance 15b was provided by another subject in response to the instruction: *Tell me the differences between the two pictures.* In this case, subjects were shown two pictures that were identical except for minute details like the number of items in each, for example, the number of fishes and the number of colours that could be seen in a rainbow.

The above responses indicate that there was variability in the subjects' production of the L2, at least in the L2 plural forms. As mentioned earlier, this is one of the prevalent phenomena observed among L2 learners. In this instance, the subjects were indeterminate, allowing a deviant plural form in English while being able to produce the appropriate forms at the same time.

In addition, a number of the subjects were found to be confused as to when they should use the plural marker. This is seen in the utterances below. The utterance in 16 was a response to the question *Who do you think this boy is?* This was in relation to the picture of a market place in which was a boy who was with a lady customer.

In 17, the subject's response was in relation to a picture of a family tree and the question asked was *Who are Hock, Ping and Ling?*

16. *That boy is the lady's sons*

17. *His childrens.*

In 16, the subject allowed a deviant form *sons* to refer to the noun *boy*. This seems to be an instance of variability too. In 17, the form *childrens* is perhaps best explained as a result of the subject applying the rule for plural formation too broadly, that is it is a case of "overgeneralization". Similar to children acquiring English as the L1, the subject in this case has acquired the rule for the formation of regular plural forms, that is the addition of the plural marker *-s*. At the same time, the subject has learned the irregular plural form of *child* which is *children*. Then the subject applies the general rule for plural formation on the word to form *childrens*.

Subjects were accurate at slightly above chance level in the use of the genitive marker (55.8% for subjects from SRJK (C) Sentul and 69.39% for subjects from SRJK (C) Serdang Baru 2). Their responses to several of the questions requiring the use of the genitive marker were incorrect. The subjects would either leave out the inflection *-s* or apply *of*, the manner of showing possession for inanimate objects, to indicate the possessive form. The following were some instances of this phenomenon:

- 18a. *He is Jim father.*
- 18b. *These are Lily cats.*
- 18c. *He is the son of Ah Yee.*
- 18d. *He is grandfather of Ling.*

Interestingly, some of the subjects had even created their own variety to show possession as illustrated below:

- 19a. *He is the father to Hock.*
- 19b. *He is the husband to Grandma Lim.*

The data in 19 indicate that the subjects were not quite certain of how to use the genitive marker *-s*. In fact, given that the single suffix *de* is used in Mandarin to indicate possession as in *Mei Ling de papa* (Mei Ling's father), the subjects seemed to have treated the *de* suffix as a preposition in English. Some researchers (for e.g. O'Grady, Dobrovolsky and Katamba, 1997; Katamba, 1993) have claimed that the genitive *-s* is not an inflectional suffix and as such it might be an easier property for L2 learners to acquire when compared to the acquisition of the third person singular present tense marker.

The majority of the subjects basically did not use the third person singular present tense marker in their attempt to reply to questions posed by the researcher. Unlike the use of the genitive marker and plural marker, where subjects had manifested different structures to incorporate the use of the inflections, there were more subjects who did not use the third person singular present tense marker. This result lends support to the interim conclusion that the third person singular present tense marker is not as accurately acquired as the other two *-s* morphemes. English is a tense language whereas Mandarin is an aspect language; thus in Mandarin, a verb does not need to change in agreement to the time aspect. A verb in Mandarin retains its original form even if the sentence is referring to the past or the subject is the singular third person. This fact could have affected the subjects' inaccurate acquisition of the singular present tense marker at this early state of L2 development.

Another possible explanation as to why the third person singular present tense marker is problematic is the fact that the subjects had to contend with multiple structural features simultaneously. They would have to exercise the choice of the relevant number for the noun group such as whether it is singular or plural, and at the same time, marking the noun group as first person, second person or third person, in relation to the verb form. In other words, two syntactic categories are involved here, namely a verb (or verb phrase) and noun (or noun phrase), whereas in the use of the plural and genitive markers, only one syntactic category is involved in each case, that is a noun or noun phrase, making them structurally less complex.

Conclusion and Implications

An acquisition pattern or accuracy order of the *-s* morphemes is clearly detected in this study. The plural marker appears easier to acquire than the genitive marker and the third person singular present tense marker. One possible reason could be attributed to the structures that are used in the questions posed to the students. The questions posed contained the use of the plural marker *-s* and this allowed the students to imitate the same structure in their responses. As such, this could lead to the scores for the plural marker *-s* to be the highest. Nonetheless, inconsistencies were observed and the subjects on many occasions omitted this morpheme *-s* or added it on unnecessarily to exceptional plural nouns. The scores for the correct use of the genitive marker indicated that it is almost at a similar level of acquisition as the plural marker.

Subjects were very weak at using the third person singular present tense marker. It could be concluded that interference from their L1 had caused difficulty for the subjects to acquire this inflection. The acquisition pattern that characterised the use of the *-s* morphemes affirmed that the acquisition process was staged and systematic. In support of this, the data from one school had confirmed the data of the other.

The findings have implications for teaching. Teachers play an important role in developing interest in learning and in helping learners to improve their acquisition of particular grammatical properties in an L2. It is in the interest of the learners and the responsibility of the teachers to be able to relate the learners' first languages to their second languages. A comparison would serve to highlight the similarities and differences and lead to greater sensitivity to problems such as those of interference or overgeneralisation.

Additionally, since there is a pattern of acquisition, it is recommended that teachers teach according to a sequence based on a difficulty index. Therefore, teachers could teach the plural marker before the genitive marker and the third person singular present tense marker. This is in line with the learnability hypothesis which states that learners cannot acquire a complex structure before simpler ones. The hypothesis is based on observations that L2 learners follow a fairly rigid route in the learning of certain grammatical structures (Pienemann, in Mitchell and Myles, 1998). The structures become learnable when the previous steps in the acquisitional or developmental path have been acquired.

Finally, the findings could prove useful for material development in the acquisition of the *-s* morphemes for these L2 young learners. A certain amount of attention is needed to impress on the consistent use of the morphemes even within the same sentence. Training in accuracy must be emphasised to give the edge in grammatical competence among L2 learners who are considered as having attained a high level of communicative ability.

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Appendix I:

Table showing the % of correct use of the Inflectional *-s* Morphemes as plural marker, genitive marker and third person singular present tense marker for individual subjects in SRJK (C) Sentul.

| Subjects | Plural Marker | Genitive Suffix | 3PS |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| S9 | 81.25 | 94.44 | 18.52 |
| S10 | 90.91 | 92.86 | 37.04 |
| S11 | 79.49 | 50.00 | 14.29 |
| S12 | 63.33 | 14.29 | 4.76 |
| S13 | 32.14 | 7.14 | 7.69 |
| S14 | 36.00 | 35.71 | 36.00 |
| S15 | 56.41 | 61.54 | 45.00 |
| S16 | 87.18 | 75.00 | 69.57 |
| S17 | 50.00 | 53.33 | 13.79 |
| S18 | 42.86 | 70.00 | 25.93 |
| Mean | 63.47 | 55.80 | 23.90 |

Appendix II:

Table showing the % of correct use of the Inflectional *-s* Morphemes as plural marker, genitive marker and third person singular present tense marker for individual subjects in SRJK (C) Serdang Baru 2.

| Subjects | Plural Marker | Genitive Suffix | 3PS |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| S1 | 95.8 | 33.3 | 11.1 |
| S2 | 89.5 | 100.0 | 61.9 |
| S3 | 64.0 | 76.9 | 22.7 |
| S4 | 84.6 | 100.0 | 83.3 |
| S5 | 81.8 | 50.0 | 33.3 |
| S6 | 66.7 | 37.5 | 15.4 |
| S7 | 82.1 | 61.5 | 28.0 |
| S8 | 58.8 | 100.0 | 31.8 |
| Mean | 75.3 | 69.4 | 34.6 |