

An Analysis of the Regression Hypothesis from a Shona Broca's Aphasi Perspective

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Abstract : The present paper tests the applicability of the Regression Hypothesis on the pathological language dissolution of a Shona male adult with Broca's aphasia. It particularly assesses the prediction of the Regression Hypothesis, which states that the process according to which language is forgotten will be the reversal of the process according to which it will be acquired. The main aim of the paper is to find out whether mirror symmetries between L1 acquisition and L1 dissolution of tense in Shona and, if so, what might cause these regression patterns. The paper also sought to highlight the practical contributions that Linguistic theory can make to solving language-related problems. Data was collected from a 46-year-old male adult with Broca's aphasia who was receiving speech therapy at St Giles Rehabilitation Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe. The primary data elicitation method was experimental, using the probe technique. The TART (Test for Assessing Reference Time) Shona version in the form of sequencing pictures was used to access tense by Broca's aphasic and 3.5-year-old child. Using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Studies) and Excel analysis, it was established that the use of the future tense was impaired in Shona Broca's aphasic whilst the present and past tense was intact. However, though the past tense was intact in the male adult with Broca's aphasic, a reference to the remote past was made. The use of the future tense was also found to be difficult for the 3,5-year-old speaking child. No difficulties were encountered in using the present and past tenses. This means that mirror symmetries were found between L1 acquisition and L1 dissolution of tense in Shona. On the basis of the results of this research, it can be concluded that the use of tense in a Shona adult with Broca's aphasia supports the Regression Hypothesis. The findings of this study are important in terms of speech therapy in the context of Zimbabwe. The study also contributes to Bantu linguistics in general and to Shona linguistics in particular. Further studies could also be done focusing on the rest of the Bantu language varieties in terms of aphasia.

Keywords : Broca's Aphasia, regression hypothesis, Shona, language dissolution

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