

# A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF MORPHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ENGLISH AND BALTI ADJECTIVES

Muhammad Mustafa<sup>1\*</sup>, Lubna Ali Mohammed<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Issa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Lincoln University College of Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.*

<sup>2</sup>*University of Baltistan, Skardu, Hussainabad, Skardu, Pakistan.*

*Corresponding author: Muhammad Mustafa, Email: [mmustafa@lincoln.edu.my](mailto:mmustafa@lincoln.edu.my)*

**Abstract:** This study aims at focusing on the linguistic properties of adjectives in English and Balti language, employing a CA approach to identifying the similarities and dissimilarities of the mentioned languages' adjectives. The investigation involved a parallel contrastive analysis of adjectives, with data sourced from linguistic texts in both languages. The findings revealed that similarities and differences are evident across various dimensions of adjectives, including their classifications by form, formation, semantic, and syntactic positions. Morphologically, Baltis exhibit reduplication as a distinctive feature, which is absent or rarely applied in English. Thus, the two languages differ significantly in applying the reduplicative adjectives and the affixation systems particularly in using the prefixes. Understanding these contrasts is crucial for addressing learning difficulties. By recognizing both the similarities and, more prominently, the dissimilarities in adjective structures, educators and learners can mitigate trials in the pedagogical process of English adjectives. Awareness is fundamental in reducing the linguistic trials faced by Balti speakers acquiring English as a L2, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of language education.

**Keywords:** Contrastive analysis; Morphology; Balti adjectives; English adjectives linguistics

## 1 INTRODUCTION

English, as an International lingua franca, holds a crucial position in instructive systems worldwide, frequently serving as a mandatory requirement from primary to tertiary levels for enrollment, graduation and certification [1,2]. Consequently, various non-English-speaking countries across the globe have integrated English proficiency into key domains of life, including employment and livelihood advancement, making its mastery a critical skill for employment seekers and professionals [3]. In short, English is now considered the language of instruction, trade, medicine, lingua franca, technology and prosperity across the globe accordingly.

However, mastering English as a foreign language presents significant trials for enrollees, particularly those from non-English-speaking territories. One of the chief hurdles lies in the structural and systemic variations and differences between English and its learning enrollees' L1 [4]. These disparities, principally in linguistic characteristics such as morphology, phonology, syntax, and semantics etc, complicate the progression of language acquisition or SLA, for instance, translating certain Indonesian adjectives into English, such as kemerah-merahan (rendered as reddish in English), exemplifies how variations and dissimilarities in derivational morphology and affixation systems generate pedagogical or instructional trials [5].

A CA approach offers valuable insights by systematically comparing linguistic systems to identifying the similarities and differences between the enrollees' L1 and L2. Such comparisons underscore the obstacles posed by linguistic differences and the facilitative part of linguistic similarities [6]. The influence of learners' first language (L1) on their second language (L2) acquisition frequently results in interference or Interlanguage problem where L1 traits are unconsciously transferred to L2 practices, further complicating the language education process [4,7].

For the Balti language enrollees of English, the differences and variations in adjectives' characteristics—including their forms, formations, meanings, and syntactic positions—present specific linguistic trials. Some languages frequently employ reduplicative adjectives, a feature absent in English. Moreover, the formation of derivational adjectives differs significantly, as English primarily relies on prefixes and suffixes, whereas various languages include a broader range of affixes, such as prefixes, infixes, confixes, and suffixes. Differences also extend to the positional and functional roles of adjectives in statements. For instance, Indonesian adjectives frequently serve as predicates lacking linking verbs, unlike their English counterparts, which require explicit syntactic constructions.

Given these complexities, comprehending the similarities and distinctions in adjective structures between English and other languages like Balti, Urdu and Shina etc is pivotal for effectual language pedagogy. A meticulous grasp of these linguistic features can enhance the teaching of English to Indonesian and other specific learners, addressing specific problem areas and minimizing translation and linguistic errors [8,9]. Therefore, this study critically examines the forms, formations, meanings, and positions of adjectives in both languages through a contrastive analysis framework, aiming to provide practical insights for improving English language pedagogy for Balti speakers.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The comparative study of two distinct linguistic systems, such as English and Balti, with a focus on contrasting their adjectival properties, necessitates adherence to foundational linguistic theories to ensure a robust and scientifically grounded examinations. To achieve this objective, this study employed the theoretical framework of CA as its principal analytical approach.

### **2.1 Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)**

In the domain of applied linguistics, several theoretical models are integral to SLA studies, including CAH, Error Analysis (EA), Transfer Analysis (TA), and Interlanguage (IL) [10]. These frameworks collectively address the linguistic challenges faced by second language learners, offering sequential paradigms to describe and analyze their linguistic performance.

This research prioritizes CA, a framework devoted to examining linguistic features such as the form, formation, meaning, and syntactic positioning of adjectives in English and Balti. CA operates within the comparative linguistics discipline, aiming to identify the similarities and divergences between linguistic systems [11]. As Davies [12] notes, "CAH is a theory in SLA focusing on the comparative study of the primary and secondary language systems to identify their structural characteristics." Similarly, Raji [13] and Al-Sobhi [14] emphasized that contrastive linguistics, a subfield of linguistics, systematically compares two or more linguistic systems or subsystems to elucidate both their commonalities and dissimilarities systematically. The central premise of CA posits that a systematic comparison of a learner's L1 and the L2 can illuminate linguistic similarities and discrepancies, thereby facilitating the enhancement of effective pedagogical materials [15]. The approach is especially applicable for identifying areas of linguistic interference, enabling instructors and linguists to predict errors and tailor pedagogical strategies accordingly [16].

## **3 FACTORS AND SOURCES OF ERRORS**

### **3.1 Interference or Interlingual Transfer**

In SLA, interference, or inter-lingual transfer, occurs when learners' L1 systems influence their L2 production and this phenomenon is particularly pronounced in the early stages of learning, where structural discrepancies between the two languages contribute to errors [17]. Selinker and Gass [14] highlighted that learners must navigate differences while disregarding similarities, as these do not pose major challenges. Interference typically arises from established linguistic habits in the primary language / L1 that variance with the targeted language's linguistic rules. This divergence frequently results in negative transfer, where existing patterns lead to erroneous structures in the SL [18,19]. For instance, morphological, phonological, and syntactic differences frequently generate learner errors, particularly in areas like word formation and order [20].

### **3.2 Intra-lingual Transfer**

Intra-lingual transfer, which originates from within the target language itself, represents another major source of error. Unlike inter-lingual errors, intra-lingual errors stem from incomplete knowledge or overgeneralization of rules within the targeted or associated language. Brown [16] states that Intra-lingual transfer manifests as learners acquire portions of the L2 system, leading to overgeneralizations and subsequent errors. These errors often arise during the transition from initial learning stages to more complex linguistic structures.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

CAH has been applied in this study to assess the similarities and dissimilarities of Balti and English adjectives. The required data had been collected from the text books particularly from the Balti grammar 'Short Sketch of Balti Grammar by Lobang' published by Universitat Bern and Essential Grammar in Use by Murphy. The targeted area of the current study is just the uses, formation and affixation in English and Balti adjectives. CA is an effective approach to compare and contrast the phenomena is research studies systemically [21].

### **4.1 CA of Adjectives in English and Balti**

#### **4.1.1 English adjectives**

In English, adjectives are lexical items that describe or modify nouns and pronouns, adding semantic nuance to their referents [22]. They can occur in attributive and predicative positions, form comparative and superlative degrees, and are modifiable by intensifiers (e.g., very happy) or derivational processes (happy – happier – happiest). By contrasting these features, this study highlights the structural and functional nuances of adjectives in both languages, providing insights into the linguistic challenges faced by Balti learners of English.

### 4.1.2 Balti adjectives

In Balti, adjective is known as Phshatpa that serves a similar function but exhibit unique linguistic features. In both languages, adjectives are placed before the nouns and pronouns etc.

**English:** Nice man: (Nice = adjective + man = noun)

**Liakhmo mi** (Liakhno = adjective + Jmi = noun)

The adjective formation of both English as Balti is given with the below examples.

Natpa	Sick	Kinza is sick.	Kinza nadpa yod.
Skambo Dry	The wood is dry.		Di Shinpo skambo yod.

Adjectives in both English and Balti serve the common linguistic function of modifying or describing nouns, pronouns, or other substantives. Both languages utilize intensifiers and qualifiers, such as 'more' (pa-xy), 'extremely' (tiaq), and 'very' (ashin). However, morphological distinctions arise in comparative and superlative constructions. English employs suffixes (-er, -est) or modifiers (more, most) to adjectives of varying syllabic lengths [23]. In contrast, Balti employs lexical items (do/deo pa, Do gisha) or the prefix gangma pa- for superlative formation and utilizes reduplication structures like (Gangma + pa + gisha) Gangma pa gisha.

<b>English:</b>	Good	Better	Best
	Beautiful	More Beautiful	Most beautiful
<b>Balti:</b>	Liakhmo	do pa liakhmo	Gangma pa liakhmo
	Gisha	Do pa gisha	Gangma pa gisha

## 4.2 Classification of Adjectives by Form

Both English and Balti exhibit similarities and dissimilarities within the morphological classification of adjectives.

### 4.2.1 Simple or base adjectives

Both languages define base adjectives as morphologically unaltered forms with inherent adjectival functions.

<b>Examples:</b>	<b>English:</b>	Happy	Big	Small
	<b>Balti:</b>	Thad	Chhogho	Xhonxy

### 4.2.2 Compound adjectives

In English, compound adjectives arise from combinations of adjectives with other lexical classes (e.g., nouns, verbs, adverbs) or adjectives themselves, often joined by hyphens [24]. In Balti language, compounds are limited to adjective-adjective combinations reflecting related meanings and combinations of adjectives with other lexical classes like English.

<b>English:</b>	Well known	Part time	Midnight
<b>Balti:</b>	Ming yod	Nngin fed	Xhan fed

### 4.2.3 Reduplicative adjectives

A reduplicative adjective is a word that repeats a syllable or part of a word, often with a slight change. Reduplication is a type of informal wordplay in English that can be used in a variety of ways, including imitate sounds: ding-dong and Suggest alternative movements: flip-flop etc. Reduplication is a productive morphological process in Balti language as compare to English. Reduplication is rarely used in English but their found similarities in this phenomenon in both English and Balti accordingly.

Examples: Balti: Sing-sang                      Toq-Taq Hiling-Halang                      Piling-Piling

## 4.3 Formation of Adjectives

### 4.3.1 Affixation

English predominantly employs prefixes (e.g., un-, non-) and suffixes (e.g., -er, -est) for adjectival formation, while Balti does not apply prefixes but suffixes (-chan, -mo, bo-, fo-) are found in Balti commonly practiced in daily discourses.

Examples:	<b>English:</b>	loyal – disloyal,	valid – invalid
	<b>Balti:</b>	Suffixes: Khashan-chan	Drakh-mo      Skam-bo

### 4.3.2 Derivational process

Adjectives derived from verbs and nouns in English and Balti involve distinctive affixation strategies. English relies heavily on suffixes (e.g., -able, -ous, ing), while Balti employs no prefixes but with suffixes (-chan, fo, bo, khhan, rim etc).

**Examples:**

<b>English:</b> (verbs)	create – creative,	satisfy – satisfactory
<b>Balti:</b>	Chham - Chhamkhhan,	Sning –Sningchan,      Khsum -Khsumrim

### 4.3.3 Semantic classification of adjectives

English adjectives are commonly divided into descriptive (denoting qualities) and limiting (restricting scope) categories [22,25]. Both categories enrich language by either specifying or elaborating on nouns.

**Descriptive adjectives:** Describe qualities (beautiful, tall, and green etc).

**Limiting adjectives:** Restrict scope (five, my, this, the).

Both categories enrich language by either specifying or elaborating on nouns. Balti semantics follows a similar dichotomy but are influenced by broader lexical and affixation systems contrastively.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The CA highlights several distinct features of adjectives in Balti and English, which contribute to trials and linguistic errors for Balti native enrollees of English as an L2. These differences are evident at both the morphological and syntactical levels in discourses. Morphologically, Balti employs reduplication for adjectives to denote repetition or emphasis, a feature absent or rarely applied in English particularly in the textual discourses. This can lead Balti learners to inappropriately transfer this rule to English or IL problem. Additionally, the affixation systems in the two languages differ significantly. While English adjectives utilize both prefixes and suffixes, but absent of infixes, vice versa, Balti adjectives are formed using a range of suffixes particularly. At the syntactical level, notable differences were also emerged in the placement and formation of adjectives in discourses. Although both Balti and English language recognizes attributive and predicative adjectives, their usage varies considerably on specific grammatical structures for similar expressions. These differences in form, formation, meaning, and positioning underline the potential trials faced by Balti learners of English. The findings of this study can serve as a foundation for further research into Interlanguage and common translation errors between the two mentioned languages, particularly in the use of adjectives. Additionally, the results may inform the development of lesson plans to address the specific needs of enrollees navigating the complexities of adjective usage in English and Balti.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Manan, A, Azizah. Formative Evaluation of the English Structure of English Department Curriculum at Teacher Training Faculty, the State Islamic University (UIN) Ar-Raniry. *Proceedings of English Education International Conference*, 2016, 1(2): 285-289.
- [2] Manan, A, Fadhilah, M A, Kamarullah, K, et al. Evaluating paper Based TOEFL preparation program using the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 2020, 7(2): 457-471. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v7i2.16467>.
- [3] Warschauer, M. The Changing Global Economy and the Future of English Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 2000, 34(3): 511-535. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587741>.
- [4] Leong, L M, Ahmadi, S M. An Analysis of Factors Influencing Learners' English Speaking Skill. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 2017, 2(1): 34-41. DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.18869/acadpub.ijree.2.1.34>.
- [5] Ulum, B. Students' Structural and Cultural Problems in Translating from Indonesian into English. *JARES (Journal of Academic Research and Sciences)*, 2016, 1(2): 10-16. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35457/jares.v1i2.416>.
- [6] Johnson, K. *An Introduction to Foreign Language Learning and Teaching*. Routledge. 2017.
- [7] Yusuf, Y Q, Mustafa, F, Iqbal, R M. An Inquiry into Grammatical Errors in Writing Committed by High Achieving EFL Students. *International Journal of Language Studies*, 2021, 15(2): 1-22.
- [8] Swan, M, Walter, C. *Oxford English Grammar Course*. Oxford University Press. 2011.
- [9] Arsiwela, A. An Analysis on the Translation of Repetitive Indonesian Adjective into English. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 2019, 7(1): 63-70. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35760/jll.2019.v7i1.2001>.
- [10] Mustafa, M, Mohammed, L A, Sadia Ayub. Examining English Morphosyntactic Trials in Interlanguage Unfolding: A Case Study of Balti Enrollees' Verbatim Practices. *International Journal of Religion*, 2024. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.62345/jads.2024.13.3.30>.
- [11] Obudikianga, B L, Naomi, C W. A Contrastive Analysis of Affixation in English and Kirika. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2022, 9(2): 34-39. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14445/23942703/IJHSS-V9I2P105>
- [12] Davies, A. *A Glossary of Applied Linguistics*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 2005.
- [13] Raji, O W. A syntactic contrastive analysis of English and Yoruba Language: A re- Examination. *Journal of Qualitative Education*, 2012, 8(1): 1-5.
- [14] Al-Sobhi, B M S. Nitty-Gritty of Language Learners' Errors-Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis and Interlanguage. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 2019, 7(3): 49-60. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v7n3p.49>.
- [15] Gass, S M, Behney, J, Plonsky, L. *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. Routledge. 2020.
- [16] Brown, H D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (Vol. 4)*. Longman. 2000.
- [17] Derakhshan, A, Karimi, E. The Interference of First Language and Second Language Acquisition. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2015, 5(10): 2112-2117. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0510.19>.
- [18] Mahmud, M. Interference: Its Role in the Second or Foreign Language Mastery to Indonesian learners. *Academic*

- Journal Perspective: Education, Language, and Literature, 2017, 5(5): 52-58. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18326/rgt.v4i1.91-108>.
- [19] Rasulova, M. The Problem of Interference in the Second Language Acquisition. *Academicia: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 2021, 11(2): 1139-1145. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7137.2021.00478.X>.
- [20] Richards, J C. *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. Routledge. 2015.
- [21] Khaleel, S A, Risana, S. Exile, Dispossession, and National Identity in Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry: An Exploration of Palestinian Experience. *African Journal of Biomedical Sciences*, 2024. DOI: 10.48047/AFJBS.6.1.2024.349-362
- [22] Page, M E M. *ESL Grammar: Intermediate & Advanced (English as a Second Language Series) (2nd ed., revised)*. Research & Education Association. 2011.
- [23] Carstairs-McCarthy, A. *An Introduction to English Morphology Words and Their Structure*. Edinburgh University Press. 2002.
- [24] McCarthy, A C. *An Introduction to English Morphology*. Edinburgh University Press. 2002.
- [25] Rossiter, A. *A Descriptive Grammar of English: Modern English Grammar by Example*. Linguapress. 2020.