Impact of English Orthography on L2 Acquisition

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Abstract

English language has become unavoidable being a global language in the present era. Whether it is a field of business, technology or education, its significance can't be denied. Thus, majority of the world is learning and speaking English owing to its dire need. Unfortunately, despite staining through different reforms, the orthography of English language failed to become learners' friendly as it seems to be a queer language for the beginners. The present study describes the ways how English orthography becomes impediment for EFL learners. It elucidates how learners in general and Urdu learners of English language in particular, are influenced by its deep orthography. The article reviews the interesting history of English orthography. Moreover, it reveals the phonological relationship between Urdu and English Consonants that causes inferences based on grapheme to phoneme conversion. The study highlights problems posed by English vowels resulting in wrong assumptions by L2 learners from English orthography. It sums up showing the significance of phonological awareness of English spellings to avoid wrong L2 phonology.

Keywords: Orthography, phonological system, inference, L2 acquisition, queer language

1. Introduction

In order to master literacy, one must not only be able to read and write, but to spell as well (McCardle, Chhabra, & Kapinus, 2008). There has been an increase in spelling research in the past years due to the significance of spelling on literacy acquisition (Conrad, 2008). Spelling is "the encoding of linguistic forms into written forms (Perfetti, 1997). Two of the most important processes which spelling relies on are:

a.   phonological awareness

b.   alphabetic knowledge

Previous research shows that among the best predictors of a child's spelling success is his or her phonological knowledge (Treiman, 2006). In recent times, the topic of English writing system has particularly been addressed by some researchers. Cook (2004) points out that English writing system is connected to our lives in many ways not something that is ancillary to other aspects of language but vitally important to almost everything we do from signing our wills to sending a text message. Cook and Bassetti (2005) while defining writing system say that there are two prominent meanings in writing system:

a.   meanings attached to general idea of writing

b.   meanings to specific languages

According to Coulmas (1999), a writing system in the first sense is "a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systemic way" and related to the terms of *script* and *orthography*. A *script* is "the graphic form of the units of a writing system", namely its actual physical form-characters. On the other hand, *orthography* is the set of rules for using a script in a particular language i.e. the English orthography for Roman alphabet like symbol-sound correspondences, capitalization, hyphenation, punctuation, and so on (Coulmas 2003). The second sense of writing system overlaps with orthography by means of referring to the set of rules used in a particular language for spelling, punctuation etc., that is, "the English writing system".

Most of the previous research has focused on English monolinguals. Nevertheless, the literacy acquisition among English second language learners differs from first language learners because they use their knowledge of their L1 in learning to read, write, and spell in their second language (Figueredo, 2006).

2. Short Story of English Orthography

The story of English orthography starts with the missionaries who first penned down English as best they could use the Roman alphabet. They made the best of it once they had found extra letters to cope with the sounds they didn't have in Latin, such as *th*, in both *thin* and *this*. The Latin root of English words was a great way to expand vocabulary but most Latin-rooted words entered English usage from French after the Norman Conquest of the 11th century. The British English spelling of *colour* and *centre* are vestiges of this relationship.

Crystal (2012) narrates that the spellings of Old English were phonetic to a great extent and all characters/digraphs were articulated. The letters *w*, *g* and *k* sounded in the words **w**rite, **g**nat and **k**now respectively. Then, the French arrived with their own ideas. The old forms were replaced with the new ones. *Cwen was replaced with queen and mys* became *mice*. French was replaced by the Normans and they declared it as the language of the court throwing Old English, a Germanic language out of official usage for 300 years. The situation changed and many texts on different topics were written in English after 1300. Baugh and Cable (2002) indicate that only after 1300, English re-emerged as a language used for literature, the court and the church. In 1258, Henry III used both English and French for an official proclamation and English gradually gained popularity. In 1349, English was first used at Oxford University; and in 1362, Edward III opened Parliament in English. It seems that in the Early Middle English period, English was not considered as a prestigious language and its use required to be defended.

There was no prescribed form for orthography and same word was spelt differently in sentences in *The Canterbury Tales*. English was French – infused Middle English when it was allowed at the court. Chaucer is the best example of English orthography of this strange period. It was not the fault of Chaucer hence he adopted the orthography of that time. The present spelling system dates to this particular pronunciation of the fifteenth Century when technology froze English orthographic system. For the first time, the printing press and the distribution of books at massive scale homogenized the orthography by repeating the spellings. Considering the different spelling of Anglo-Saxon words and the French-influenced Latin, English orthography did not respond to contemporary pronunciation. Later on, the story got a little tricky. From 1450 to 1750, English pronunciation underwent a great vowel shift. Since the 17th Century, scholars have been challenging the irregularities in the spellings of the English language. One of the problems that spellers faced was the diverse origin of English words. German, Latin, French, and Greek are all common sources and each followed a different system for orthography. Amongst these languages, it was hardly possible to guarantee internal consistency; when these systems mix together helter skelter, one ends up with English orthography.

3. The Spelling System of English and Urdu

Basically, Urdu and English deployed two different spelling systems. In spite of transgressing a letter to a phoneme agreement, the Urdu orthographic system is shoal. That is why Urdu has supernumerary letters as the same sound is presented by different letters e.g. (ه, ح, ہ) represent /h/ sound and (ص, س) represent /s/ sound. The incongruity between orthography and sounds is hardly a rule-specific. One is left with an expedient solution reviewing the graphic/scripted form. Thus, contrary is a queer synthesis without any doubt. **Acclimation** is spelt with an "i" in the middle but **acclamation** with an "a". Why do we distinguish between **carat** |ˈkærət |, **caret** |ˈkærət|, **carrot** |ˈkærət| and **karat** |ˈkærət |? So Urdu speaking L2 learners are usually unable to spell the words based on the prosody.

Unlike Urdu, English has an obscured orthographic system as usually referred in literature. Same spelling combination gives different sound in different words or one letter represents variety of sounds e.g. [oo] in *book,* sounds /ʊ/ but in *pool,* it sounds /u:/; the letter [u] in *put* sounds /ʊ/ but in *hut* it sounds /ʌ/. The other variation between orthography and the pronunciation is of least significance. One comes across the fact that letters with no sound exist etymologically. Comparatively, Urdu possesses more alphabet than similar sounds but English orthography has few characters than similar pronunciation.

English and Urdu orthographic systems are principally different from each other. Urdu is a phonetic language. Its orthography represents sound according to its alphabet. On the contrary, English orthographic system has morphophonemic system. The pattern of word formation and its associated form e.g. *period* and *periodically,* the base word is spelt the same way in both but pronunciation is not same e.g. period /ˈpɪərɪəd/ and /ˌpɪərɪˈɒdɪk̩li/. Similarly, it can be applied to other phonemes as well. For example:

a. The character [c] in *authentic* and *authenticity* is pronounced with variation i.e. /k/ is replaced with /s/ sound or the letter [i] in *define* /dɪˈfaɪn/ and *definition* /ˌdefɪˈnɪʃn/ are associated with /aɪ/ and /ɪ/.

b.   It could be predicted about reduction of vowel in syllables of *authentic* and *authenticity* depending on stress-pattern while the substitution of /K/ with /S/ is depending on the feature of succeeding suffix initial vowels.

c.   /ai/ is reduced according to tri-syllabic reduction rule. It is applied with regard to reduce the third syllable back from the last when it's succeeded by two syllables in which the first syllable is not stressed.

The main objective in the above-mentioned examples is to represent the same morphemic optical illustration which may be called orthographic lexicon as well. Carney (1994) interprets, "The English writing system is not simply concerned with mapping phonemes on to letters. To a greater extent, it tries to offer the reader a constant spelling for a morpheme despite the change in pronunciation of the morpheme in different contexts." Besides, completely predictable variations acquired as rules by the English speakers are utilized among them and their shadow in spellings may be tautologous. All variations between spellings and pronunciation may not be accountable on this ground. The present study focuses on the fundamental difference between orthographic system and morpho-phonemes.

English orthography is not the easy game that many people consider it to be. Of course, **easy** is not an absolute term, and it is only in relation to other languages that one can decide whether English really is as simple as its reputation. Hence, the author wants to take one aspect of the language system and compares English with another language, Urdu. The aspect under consideration here is spelling / pronunciation which is often neglected by the learners. They think if they can communicate in English with other fellows in their class, they will be able to talk with native speakers, too. They only realise they were wrong when they go to an English-speaking country and discover that people can't understand them.

English orthography can mislead the reader. For example, the pronunciation of the word *put* is /pʊt/. But other words which contain these three letters can be pronounced differently. For example, *putty* (a soft whitish substance used to fix glass into window frames) is pronounced   /pʌtɪ /. The spelling of a word doesn't tell the reader how to pronounce it. The famous English playwright George Bernard Shaw is said to have joked that the word 'fish' could legitimately be spelt *ghoti* by using the 'gh' sound from 'enough,' the 'o' sound from 'women' and the 'ti' sound from 'action'.

In the same way look at the word *box*; the plural is *boxes* but the plural of *Ox* is *Oxen*, not *oxes*. One foul is a *goose* and two are called *geese* but the plural of *moose* is never called *meese*. You may find alone *mouse* or a *house* full of *mice* yet the plural of *house* is *houses*, not *hice*. The plural of *man* is always *men*, but the plural of *pan* is never *pen*. If one speaks of a *foot*, and you show him two *feet* and somebody gives you a *book*, would a pair be a *beek*? If one is a *tooth* and a whole set are *teeth*, why shouldn't two *booths* are called *beeth*? If the singular is *this* and the plural is *these*. Will the plural of *kiss* be ever called *keese*? We speak of a *brother* and also of *brethren* but though we say *mother*, we never say *methren*. Then the masculine pronouns are *he*, *his* and *him* but imagine the feminine….*she*, *shis*, and *shim*. Compare this with English. Each of the following sets of words contains the same vowel or vowel combination but the words are pronounced differently.

Table 1. Same spelling with Different Pronunciation

Orthographic Pattern	Word	Transcription	Orthographic Pattern	Word	Transcription
oes	sh**oes**	ǀ ʃuːz ǀ	omb	t**omb**	ǀ tuːm ǀ
	g**oes**	ǀ gəʊz ǀ		c**omb**	ǀ kəʊm ǀ
	d**oes**	ǀ dʌz ǀ		b**omb**	ǀ bɒm ǀ
ear	b**ear**	ǀ beə ǀ	ove	m**ove**	ǀ muːv ǀ
	f**ear**	ǀ fɪə ǀ		gl**ove**	ǀ glʌv ǀ
	early	ǀ ˈɜːli ǀ		dr**ove**	ǀ drəʊv ǀ
ough	c**ough**	ǀ kɒf ǀ	oo	b**oo**k	ǀ bʊk ǀ
	thr**ough**	ǀ θruː ǀ		f**oo**l	ǀ fuːl ǀ
	pl**ough**	ǀ plaʊ ǀ		p**oo**r	ǀ pʊə ǀ
ch	**ch**air	ǀ tʃeə ǀ			
	chemistry	ǀ ˈkemɪstri ǀ			
	chamber	ǀ ˈtʃeɪmbə ǀ			
	champagne	ǀ ʃæmˈpeɪn ǀ			
aid	p**aid**	ǀ peɪd ǀ	ew	f**ew**	ǀ fjuː ǀ
	s**aid**	ǀ ˈsed ǀ		S**ew**	ǀ səʊ ǀ

atch	**catch**	| kætʃ |	olf	Go**lf**	| gɒlf |
	w**atch**	| wɒtʃ |		Wo**lf**	| wʊlf |
orse	h**orse**	| hɔːs |	ive	G**ive**	| gɪv |
	w**orse**	| wɜːs |		Dr**ive**	| draɪv |
ave	h**ave**	| hæv |	ead	B**ead**	| biːd |
	sh**ave**	| ʃeɪv |		Br**ead**	| bred |
thi	**thi**s	| ðɪs |	ture	Na**ture**	| ˈneɪtʃə |
	thin	| θɪn |		Ma**ture**	| məˈtʃʊə |
ut	b**ut**	| bʌt |	oo	B**oo**k	| bʊk |
	p**ut**	| ˈpʊt |		F**oo**l	| fuːl |
sure	**sure**	| ʃʊə |	rea	R**ea**d	| riːd |
	expo**sure**	| ɪkˈspəʊʒə |		Tr**ea**d	| tred |
weat	sw**eat**	| swiːt |	face	F**ace**	| feɪs |
	sw**eat**	| swet |		Pre**face**	| ˈprefɪs |

There is another monster of orthography in the way of learning English language i.e. the words having different spellings but same vowel sounds.

Table 2. Words with Different Spellings but Same Vowel Pronunciations

/e/		/ʌ/		/əʊ/	
h**ea**vy	ˈhevi |	s**u**n	sʌn |	Br**oo**ch	brəʊtʃ |
fr**ie**nd	ˈfrend |	s**o**n	sʌn |	C**oa**t	ˈkəʊt |
any	ˈeni |	bl**oo**d	blʌd |	Gr**ow**	grəʊ |
s**ai**d	ˈsed |	d**oe**s	dʌz |	S**ew**	səʊ |
b**u**ry	ˈberi |	s**o**me	sʌm |	T**oe**	təʊ |
berry	ˈberi |	t**ou**ch	tʌtʃ |	R**ow**	rəʊ |
leop**ar**d	ˈlepəd |	sh**u**t	ʃʌt |	N**o**	nəʊ |

The matter is much more interesting when the learner comes across (homophones) words with same pronunciation but different spellings along with different meanings. Most of the words (table 3) are high frequency words.

Table 3. Words with Different Spelling but Same Pronunciation

Orthography	Transcription	Examples in sentences
hear	/hɪəʳ/	Can you hear me?
here		You can sit here.
hour	/aʊəʳ/	It will take me one hour to reach there.
our		Our home is big.
there	/ðeəʳ/	There is one table.
their		These are their books.
week	/wɪːk/	I will come to you next week.
weak		He is very weak.
right	/raɪt/	Give me the right answer.
write		You are not allowed to write in red ink.
sea	/sɪː/	We went to sea last week.
see		I can see you from here.

Homonyms are another aspect of orthography causing obstacle in learning English. Words with same spelling and pronunciation confuse L2 learners when are used in different contexts.

Table 4. Words with Same Spelling and Pronunciation but have Different Meanings

Orthography	Transcription	Meanings
rose as **red rose**	| rəʊz |	red flower
rose as **rose up**		got up
wave as **waving**	| weɪv |	to raise your hand
wave as **water waves**		a line of higher water across the surface of the sea or lake
tie as **tie to**	| taɪ |	to fasten something with string
tie as **attractive tie**		a long , thin piece of cloth for wearing around the neck
rock as **rocking**	| rɒk|	to move backwards or forwards or side to side
rock as **heavy rocks**		a hard substance
bank as **river bank**	| bæŋk |	the land along the side of a river
bank as **money bank**		an organization or place to borrow or save money
left as **left hand**	| left |	towards the side of your body to west when you face north
left as past participle of **leave**		went away from a place

Silent letters are another reason why English orthography is so weird. Silent letters are the letters in words that are not pronounced but make a huge difference to the meaning and sometimes the pronunciation of the whole word.

Table 5. Words with Silent Consonants

su**b**tle	su**b**poena	ya**ch**t	i**s**land	num**b**
Chris**t**mas	as**th**ma	han**d**kerchief	champa**g**ne	hym**n**
fei**g**n	**w**rong	of**t**en	bri**gh**t	**g**naw
plum**b**er	colum**n**	yo**l**k	**w**rite	daug**h**ter

One is taken aback having come to know that more than 60% of English words have silent letters in them which can cause all sorts of problems, spelling the word or looking for the word in a dictionary. Words with silent consonants have been mentioned in the table, silent vowels have not been discussed because their spelling rules are so complicated that they are very difficult to classify as being silent or not.

4. Difference between Urdu and English Phonology

English differs phonetically and phonologically from Urdu with reference to its prosody and phonemic inventories. It's important to note that the spelling of an English word is not always an accurate guide to how it is pronounced. Similarly, the pronunciation of a word is not always helpful when working out how that word should be spelt. The best example of it, is *of* or *off* which are pronounced alike by the non native speakers but *of* is hardly pronounced correctly by EFL learners. Likewise, just look at the transcription of *sweat* and *sweet*.

Phonetically or phonologically, English is a difficult language for Urdu speaking L2 learners. Space limitations do not allow reporting the problem sector fully; hence, a comparative study of these two may be informative. According to the vowels and consonants of the two languages, Urdu and English primarily vary in their vowels regarding the complexity and inventory size. English vowel system is a complex phenomenon comprising twenty vowels depending on the dialect including single vowels and diphthongs marking the length difference in monophthongs (Ladefoged 2006). Urdu speaking L2 English learners usually accommodate these vowels with Urdu vowels. English monophthongs are articulated with the same length, and diphthongs are misconceived as two syllables and /ɜ:/ and /ə/ are much problematic. On the other hand, Urdu basic vowels appear evenly on the vowel periphery. According to Kachru (1990), there are seven long oral vowels, and three short oral vowels in Urdu. The two languages differ prosodically, too. There are 36 letters and 28 consonantal sounds of Urdu as found in several studies (Kachru, 1990; Bokhari, 1991; Khan, 1997; Hussain, 1997). There are 26 letters in the English alphabet but there are many more sounds in the English language. This means that the number of sounds in a word is not always the same as the number of letters. For example, the word *pat* has three letters and three sounds but the

word *batch* has five letters but still only three sounds. If we write these words using sound symbols, we can see exactly how many sounds they have. Pat is pronounced as /pæt/ and *batch* is pronounced as /bætʃ/. In *batch* the three letters *tch* are one sound represented by one symbol /tʃ/.

5. Inappropriate Inference from the Orthography

Since orthography is not the right key to pronunciation in English language as it is non-phonetic language, the phenomenon of inappropriate inference from the orthography is very common by Urdu speaking L2 learners which can be discussed in following two ways.

5.1 Inappropriate Inference from the Orthography in Phonology

The English native speakers pronounce weak vowel /ə/ in the word *marvelous* whereas non native speakers use strong vowel /ʌ/ in the final syllable of the word instead of /ə/ owing to misinterpretation of orthography as Wells (2005) elucidates that most of the peculiarities of non native speakers' English sounds are the outcome of wrong assumptions based on orthography. Native speakers pronounce *marvelous* as /mɑːvələs/. Non native speakers who speak /mɑːrvəlʌs/, pronouncing differently from native speakers using /ʌ/ in the last syllable wrongly. Urdu L2 learners of English make wrong inferences of this kind who think that the spellings of English are purely phonemic like their L1. This assumption is made by such learners who follow a grapheme-to-phoneme (letter-to-sound) conversion. To understand how a grapheme converts to phoneme (see Table 6), in which grapheme is regarded as having a continuous reading by Urdu speaking L2 learners as they do in their L1 orthography. These learners misarticulate the diphthongs, /ə/ and /ʌ/ sounds because of orthography. They convert diphthongs to monophthongs, weak vowels to strong and sometimes strong to weak vowels. The learners are reinforced by the use of digraphs in diphthongs that *toy*, *clay*, *ear*, *out* etc. constitute two syllables. They actually over apply it to the phonemes in particular, which correspond to a single sound e.g. [ay] in play but it is pronounced as /pl*ei*/.

Table 6. Grapheme-to-phoneme Inference

orthography	transcription	Inappropriate Inference
operator	ˈɒpəreɪtə	[ɒpəreɪtʌr]
opposite	ˈɒpəzɪt	[ɒpɒzɪt]
over	ˈəʊvə	[ɒvʌr]
close	kləʊz	[klɒz]
caught	ˈkɔːt	[k ɑːt]
oven	ˈʌvn̩	[ɒvʌn̩]
abstract	ˈæbstrækt	[æbstrækʌt]

While pronouncing unstressed suffixes, those vowels are used to be articulated which one can't find on the English vowel inventory (see table 7).

Table 7. Inference in Unstressed Suffixes

Unstressed suffixes	Orthography	Transcription	Inappropriate Inference
	tremendous	trɪˈmendəs	/trɪˈmendʌs/
us	fabulous	ˈfæbjʊləs	/ˈfæbjʊlʌs/
	medium	ˈmiːdɪəm	/ˈmiːdɪ ʌm/
um	curriculum	kəˈrɪkjʊləm	/kəˈrɪkjʊlʌm/
	Button	ˈbʌtn̩	/ˈbtʌn̩/
ton	mutton	ˈmʌtn̩	/ˈmtʌn/
	nature	ˈneɪtʃə	/ˈneɪtʃʌr/
ure	picture	ˈpɪktʃə	/ˈpɪktʃʌr/
	famous	ˈfeɪməs	/ˈfeɪmʌs/
ous	gracious	ˈɡreɪʃəs	/ˈɡreɪʃɪəs/
	playful	ˈpleɪfəl	/ˈpleɪfʊl/
ful	Joyful	ˈdʒɔɪfəl	/ˈdʒɔɪfʊl/
	delicate	ˈdelɪkət	/ˈdelikeɪt/
ate	classmate	ˈklɑːsmeɪt	/ˈklɑːs ˈmet/
	Image	ˈɪmɪdʒ	/ ˈɪmʌdʒ/
age	cabbage	ˈkæbɪdʒ	/ˈkæbʌdʒ/

Unstressed syllables are pronounced with a full vowel regardless of their place within a word.

Table 8. Inference in Unstressed Syllables

Orthography	Transcription	Inappropriate Inference
Inevitable	ɪnˈevɪtəbl̩	ɪnˈevɪteɪbl̩
Extempore	ekˈstempəri	ekˈstempɔːr
Preface	ˈprefɪs	ˈprɪfeɪs
Prejudice	ˈpredʒʊdɪs	ˈpredʒʊdaɪs
Prefer	prɪˈfɜː	preˈfɜː

After voiceless phonemes *ed* sounds /t/ but based on orthography it is inferred as /d/

Table 9. Inference in Voiceless Phonemes

Past participle of verbs	Transcription	Inappropriate Inference
Looked	lʊkt	lʊk**d**
Locked	lɒkt	lɒk**d**
Watched	wɒtʃt	wɒtʃ**d**
Kissed	kɪst	kɪs**d**
Missed	mɪst	mɪs**d**
Washed	wɒʃt	wɒʃ**d**

It is very common that different silent letters are pronounced. However, the frequent error regarding [ng] digraph as in suffix [ing] represents /ŋ/ phoneme and is pronounced as /ŋg/ e.g. writing /ˈraɪtɪŋ/. It constitutes a small example of particular orthographic-inferred errors committed by Urdu speaking L2 English learners. The empirical examples have been derived from author's own observation. It is worth noting that the research in second language oral English by Urdu speaking L2 English learners is not so vast.

5.2 Inappropriate Inference from the Orthography in Semantics

English orthography is taken for granted sometimes but examine its paradoxes for a while; one finds that a quicksand takes him down slowly boxing rings are square and a *guinea pig* is neither from *Guinea* nor is it a *pig*. If the *writer writes* how comes the *finger* doesn't *fing*. If the *teacher taught* why didn't the *preacher praught*. If a *vegetarian* eats *vegetables* what the heck does a *humanitarian* eat? Why people *recite* at a *play* yet *play* at a *recital* and why we *park* on *driveways* and *drive* on *parkways*. You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language, where a house burns up as it burns down. We *fill in* a form by *filling it out*. The bell is only heard once it goes. EFL learners are bothered when they find no *egg* in the *eggplant*, no *ham* in the *hamburger* and neither *pine* nor *apple* in the *pineapple*. English muffins were not invented in England. *French fries* were not invented in *France*. As a matter of fact, people but not computers, invented English and it reflects the creativity of the human race which of course isn't a race at all. Thus, when the stars are out they are visible but when the lights are out they are invisible. And why it is so, when one *winds up one's watch* it starts but when one *winds up the story* it finishes.

All this leads to EFL learners to ask some legitimate questions about English orthography; does the *infant* enjoy *infancy* as much as the *adult* enjoys *adultery* and why is a person who *plays the piano* called a *pianist* but a person who *drives a race-car* is not called a *racist*; why are wise men and wise guys opposites? Why do overlook and oversee mean opposite things? If *horrific* means to make *horrible*, what about *terrific*? Does it mean to make terrible? Why don't we pronounce *11* as *tenty one* (like 21, 31, 41 etc)? Why is it that if someone tells you that there are one billion stars in the universe you will believe them but if they tell you a wall has wet paint you will have to touch it to be sure? If you take an Oriental person and spin him around several times, does he become disoriented? *People from Poland* are called "*Poles*", why *people from Holland* aren't called "*Holes*"?

6. Effect of Orthography on Cognitive Process

L2 orthography influences the mental representations of second language phonology in the L2 learners who are beginners as proposed by Bassetti (2006). Thus, the L1 English speaking beginner reader as mentioned by Seymour et al. (2003), has been found to need twice as much time to develop basic decoding skills than a beginner reader of a shallow orthography. So, it is quite natural that mapping Roman letters to English phonemes is a difficult task. It takes comparatively more time than mapping Urdu characters to Urdu phoneme. The Urdu speaking L2 learners of the English language are unaware of this reality owing to less phonological knowledge. They try to evolve phonology from orthographic system by mapping the minimal unit of writing system onto

minimal sound units in true shallow orthographic manner in order to understand reading and writing. The beginners, in general, depend on grapheme – phoneme correspondence in order to decipher writing more than any competent reader. Thus, they work for developing skills in decoding orthography and establish spelling inventory. Koda (1988) discovers that phonological coding strategies used in L1 processing are transferred to L2 processing so that a bonding between orthography and language learning cannot be ignored. Therefore, EFL learners will have to use their L1 techniques in L2 learning. In the area of first language (reading/writing) acquisition and about the impact of orthography on cognitive process, a huge research is available. In the same way, L2 research is mostly involved in the influence of L1 orthography on L2 reading achievement and less in relationship between orthography and cognition.It has been advised by several language researchers (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987; Garton & Pratt, 1998) that L2 learners must have acquired some phonological awareness before reading and writing that is true about L1, where early learners are phonologically aware before they start formal language learning. There is different scenario in EFL classroom where L2 teaching is mostly concerned with reading and writing at the beginning and without any introduction to the phonological awareness of the target language.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is argued that spelling reforms will enhance accuracy of letter combinations by substituting words phonetically. On the contrary, others say that English spellings provide a great assistance to discover the history and etymology of words facilitating readers understand not only the phonetic base but also semantic heritage of a word. However, readers often experience difficulty in fluency when they first approach works written in dialect, the difficulty reinforces arguments against spelling reform whose pronunciation is chosen as the "correct" pronunciation that spelling should be modeled for. Thus, the ongoing debate is: "Will English be able to *fix* the problems owing to orthography?"

Both the languages i.e. Urdu and English belong to substantially two different phonetic and phonological systems. It is highly recommended that phonetics and phonology should be part of syllabus right from the elementary level so that beginner level learners will be able to acquire some kind of phonological awareness before they start reading and writing. The basic and a very important method with the help of which phonological awareness can be attained by maximum exposure to teacher input mostly, is non native English. Simultaneously, second language learners terribly need to learn grapheme - phoneme correspondence to decode writing.

Special attention must be paid to teaching two fundamentally different orthographies (Urdu and English) in the EFL classrooms. Unfortunately, spelling acquisition is ignored. *Spelling Bee* competitions should be encouraged not only at school but at college level, as well. It has been observed that L2 pronunciation teaching in Pakistan is not appreciable. Research in this area is also insufficient, rather rare. In schools and colleges, pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary are treated as orphans. Presently, these components must get their place in the curriculum of the second language teaching/learning and special attention should be given to pronunciation and spelling acquisition while designing the syllabus so that wrong L2 English phonology be avoided and effective L2 teaching could be guaranteed.

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