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**EASY ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH AND ODISIA NOMINAL CLAUSES THROUGH
CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

This study presents an analysis of the English and Odia Nominal Clauses for their easy acquisition through Contrastive Analysis (CA). CA has been used as a linguistic tool to explore the similarities and differences between these languages by way of description, juxtaposition and comparison/ contrast. It has been assumed that Odia can be treated as an ally in the process of English as Second Language (ESL) teaching since it has been supported by research that students do not construct rules in a vacuum; rather they work with the first language information at their disposal to understand, learn and use the Second Language (SL) rules. The L1 (Mother tongue) thus, is viewed as a kind of 'input from inside' (Ellis, 2003). The L1 serves as an inbuilt mechanism to promote the process of transfer while learning English.

The similarities between the two languages quickly facilitate the learning process while those which are different are thought to cause difficulty in SL learning. But a slight carefulness in understanding their differences can help in the transfer of

data to the learning of the L2. Many researchers, e.g. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) have proposed that, when students use first language structures in second language performance, they, in effect, plug lexical items of the first language into the surface structure of the second language. In other words, they think in the first language and use words from the second language, as much as one would handle word-for-word translation. In recent years, most SL learning research endorses the use of the first language as it facilitates the learning process of the second language (Cummins 2007, García 2008 and Kang 2012).

One of the main assumptions of my research is that the first language of the student is an important factor in the second language acquisition, which cannot be eliminated from the process of learning an SL.

This study is an attempt at making a contrastive analysis of major Nominal clauses of English and Odia. Nominal Clauses (NCs) used as subordinate clauses act as the building-blocks of a language. They are essential to the formation of complex sentences, which are fundamental

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to the expository, scientific and analytical texts. Odia speakers often feel it urgent to learn the English NCs for a fair understanding of such texts. To meet such requirements, they can understand the English NC structures well enough with the help of CA.

The present study has been planned to make contrastive analyses of the Nominal clauses of English and Odia by exploring the similarities and differences in their structural patterns with the help of CA.

Keywords: Contrastive Analysis (CA); Nominal Clause (NC); English as Second Language (ESL), First Language (L1); Second Language (L2)

Odia transcriptions: [ɽ]: Alveolar consonant variant of English RP /t/
[ʈ]: Velar consonant variant of English RP /t/
[ä]: Vowel variant of English RP /a:/

1.0 Introduction

The present study discusses the easy acquisition of English Nominal Clauses through Odia with the help of Contrastive Analysis (CA). CA has been used as a linguistic tool to explore the similarities and differences between these languages. It has been assumed that Odia can be treated as an ally in the process of English as Second Language (ESL) teaching since it has been

supported by research that students do not construct rules in a vacuum; rather they work with the first language information at their disposal to understand, learn and use the Second Language (SL) rules. The L1(Mother tongue) thus, is viewed as a kind of ‘input from inside’ (Ellis, 2003). The L1 serves as an inbuilt mechanism to promote the process of transfer while learning English.

The areas between the two languages that are similar were understood to facilitate the learning process while those which are different were thought to cause difficulty in SL learning. Moving a little further, many researchers, e.g. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) have proposed that when students use first language structures in second language performance, they, in effect, plug lexical items of the first language into the surface structure of the second language. In other words, they think in the first language and use words from the second language, as much as one would handle word-for-word translation. In recent years, most SL learning research endorses the use of the first language as it facilitates the learning process of the second language (Cummins 2007, García 2008 and Kang 2012).

The use of L1 often frees students from psychological barriers like embarrassment or nervousness that accrues out of a forced use of only SL structures. First language support offers them a level of comfort, and creates a better rapport

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between the teacher and the students. The students feel motivated to interact with the teacher if allowed to use the first language props. The first language provides a new dimension to the class and makes it pupil-friendly and lively.

One of the main assumptions of my research is that the first language of the student acts like a catalyst to facilitate the SL learning. The first language which was initially used to be considered a hindrance in SL learning, has now proved very effective for the SL acquisition. The L1 is an important factor in the second language acquisition, which cannot be eliminated from the process of learning an SL. The ESL teachers have now become aware of the significance of L1. Vivian Cook (2001) writes about the first language in ESL classes as “a door that has been firmly shut in language teaching for over a hundred years”. When students come to the classroom they don’t come carrying a blank slate in their heads; they come *loaded* with their native language and its structure that is a shared commodity in the Universal Grammar. The utility of this knowledge for SL learning can neither be denied nor underestimated. So, instead of looking at the students’ native language and as a source of errors, they must be used as a tool to maximize second language teaching (Cook, 2001)

This study is an attempt at making a contrastive analysis of major NCs of English

and Odia. NCs are the building-blocks of a language and are essential to the formation of complex sentences, which are fundamental to the expository, scientific and analytical texts. Odia speakers often feel it urgent to learn the English subordinate clauses for a fair understanding of such texts. To meet such requirements, they can understand the English NC structures well enough with the help of CA.

The present study has been planned to make contrastive analyses of Nominal Clauses of English and Odia by exploring the similarities and differences in their structural patterns with the help of CA.

1.1 Research objectives

The research objectives of this study are to find out the structural similarities and differences between the noun clauses (NCs) in English and Odia suggest the usefulness of CA for ESL teachers and students while dealing with English and Odia NCs?

1.2 Theory of CA

CA is the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities. Fisiak (1978) defines CA as “a sub discipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them (Fisiak,1978).” According to Wardhaugh (1970), “The claim that the best language-teaching materials are based on a contrast of the two competing linguistic systems has long been a popular one in language teaching”.

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Historically, Contrastive Linguistic Analysis is said to have developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe out of Comparative Philology which was the system in place when linguists pre-occupied themselves with studies aimed at unveiling the historical and genetic relationships between languages. Such studies led to the establishment of language families (Olaoye, 2008).

According to Olaofe (1982) in Olaoye (2008), the first extensive application of structural linguistics to contrastive linguistic analysis was in connection with investigations of bilingualism. In relation to this, Weinreich's (1953) conceptual framework for understanding the ways by which languages in bilingual situations affect each other phonetically, grammatically and semantically becomes interesting. CA has the primary objective of establishing the historical and genetic connections between languages on the basis of their manifest similarities or differences Olaoye (2008) in Sebele (2014)

This theory was first suggested by Whorf (1941) as contrastive linguistics, a comparative study which gave emphasis on linguistic differences. CA of languages and their properties first appeared before the World War II. The publication of Lados' book *Linguistics Across Cultures* in 1957 set the corner stone of the modern applied CA.

Lado (1957) claims, "...those elements which are similar to (the student's) native language will be simple for him and those elements that are different will be difficult" for the student to learn. While this was not a novel suggestion, Lado was the first to provide a comprehensive theoretical treatment and to suggest a systematic set of technical procedures for the contrastive study of languages. He introduced CA as an instrument of identifying areas of difficulty for language students that could then be handled with suitable and appropriate exercises.

Lado (1957) believes that in bilingual situations, individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings of their first language (L1) and culture when trying to speak the target language. However, there are language universals; that is, certain features have been found to extend beyond the boundaries of any one language or culture. This has been the basis for which linguists venture into the business of comparing and contrasting the systems of languages in order to identify the features that are constant and those that differ from language to language.

For Lado (1957), the fundamental goal of CA is the improvement of language pedagogy which unveils how a monolingual becomes a bilingual. Lado's principles were used to prepare materials to enhance foreign language teaching and learning.

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CA as a linguistic technique created a great sensation, and enjoyed a wide acceptance among scholars, researchers, second language teachers and students. But, the great enthusiasm which it evoked initially faced a setback when behaviourism went out of fashion. It however soon reappeared in Second Language Acquisition linguistics and language teaching.

Recent research in the above mentioned areas suggest how pedagogical methods with adequate structural analysis of languages will be helpful to the students learning a second/foreign language. Considering the relevance of CA in the present context of SL learning, this research has used CA for similar analytical and pedagogic application purposes.

1.3 Review of literature

Patnaik (1976) studies the importance of complementation in both English and Oriya based on the Chomskyan model, the findings of which may be exploited for writing of modern Oriya grammar. He is one of the few initial scholars who have worked on the contrastive studies of English and Oriya. He has not done any analysis of subordinate clauses in English and Oriya.

Mishra (1988) brings out a comparative study of modification in English and Oriya Noun Phrases. In her study, she has explored the similarities and

differences in the pr She has not done any analysis of subordinate clauses in English and Oriya.

Thakur (1998) researches on the grammatical and lexical cohesions in English and Oriya grammatical structures through contrastive study. He has juxtaposed and analyzed students' writings and educated writings. He has studied both Grammatical Cohesion and Lexical Cohesion in English and Oriya languages.

Samantray (2000) elucidates the structure of the Oriya tense system in the theoretical framework of the new Reichenbachain-Hornstein system (proposed by Hornstein 1990), drawing comparisons with the English tense system and contrasting with it as well. Although she discusses the Oriya tense system, she does not analyse the subordinate clause structures in English and Oriya.

1.4 Method of data analysis

Since this research is based on contrastive study, the basic design of analysis is comparison and contrast. Nominal Clauses (NC) will be as follows:

Example:

mu dekhi-li je se
fula-ti toli-lä
I see-past that he
flower-sing pluck-past
(I saw that he plucked

the flower.)

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Each example in the analysis has three lines. The first line is the Odia language transcription. Its part in the normal font is the Main Clause (MC) and the other part in the italics is the Nominal Clause. The second line contains English words representing Odia equivalent. The third line represents the English version of its Odia counterpart.

1.5 Nominal clauses in English and Odia

Nominal/ Noun clauses in Odia along with their English counterparts are presented through description, juxtaposition and comparison with a view to bringing out the similarities and differences in the structural patterns of both the languages to facilitate their learning process.

A Main Clause (MC) and one or more than one Subordinate Clause (SC) can make a sentence in both the languages. Here, Nominal/ Noun Clauses (NC) are taken as the Subordinate Clauses in different sentences. *That* in English is the equivalent of *je* in Odia. Like English, Nominal/ Noun clauses in Odia can be used as a subject, an object, a complement, an apposition, and an object of a preposition.

a. Subject:

Example:

S + <i>je</i> + Adj + MC
<i>fula-ti je sundar</i>
ehä satya ate
flower-sing that beautiful
it true is

(*That the flower is beautiful is true.*)

When a *that*-clause, as above, is the subject of the whole sentence in English, *that* precedes its subject in the NC whereas *je* in an Odia *je*-clause follows its subject. In the above English sentence, *That the flower is beautiful* is the Nominal SC which is the subject of the whole sentence ‘*That the flower is beautiful is true*’ and *that* precedes its subject *the flower* whereas *je* in an Odia *je*-clause, *fula-ti je sundar* follows its subject *fula-ti*.

The Odia *je* does not appear initially in the clause as *that* does in the English clause structures. The expression *satya ate* is also preceded by *eha*: but its English equivalent *it* does not occur in the English clauses. The verb in an Odia *je*-clause and the subject of an English *that*-clause remain omitted that means the MC in English has an implied subject whereas the MC in Odia has a explicit subject. Here, the English MC has a subject less word order.

b. Direct Object (DO):

je + S + DO + V

An NC in Odia can be used as a Direct Object. Such Nominal Clauses usually answer to the question *what*.

Example:

mu	dekhi-li	<i>je</i>	<i>se</i>
<i>fula-ti</i>	<i>tohi-lä</i>		
I	see-past	that	he
flower-sing	pluck-past		
(I saw <i>that he plucked the flower.</i>)			

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Here, *je se fula-ti tohilä* is the Nominal SC which functions as the DO of the transitive verb *dekhili*. This NC answers to the question *what*. Here, *je* is a focus marker. In the English sentence, ‘I saw *that he plucked the flower*’, ‘*that he plucked the flower*’ forms the NC which functions as the Direct Object.

c. Complement:

je + S + NP + V

Example:

*tära ichhä (achhi) je tära bhai
eka shikshak heba*

his wish (is) that his brother
a teacher become-fut

(His wish is *that his brother will be a teacher.*)

Here, *je tära bhai eka shikshak heba* is the NC which functions as the complement to the subject *tära ichhä (achhi)*. It forms an integral part of the whole sentence. It is the complement without which the MC *tära ichhä (achhi)* does not express a complete sense. In the English sentence, ‘His wish is that his brother will be a teacher’, ‘*that his brother will be a teacher*’ forms the NC which functions as the Complement.

d. Appositive:

je +S + V

Example:

*tära bhay (thilä), je gachha-ti dine
upudipadi-ba, tähä äji satya helä*

his fear (is) that tree-sing one day
uproot-fut that today true become-past

(His fear, that the tree will be uprooted one day, became true.)

Here, *je gachha-ti dine upudipadiba, tähä äji satya helä* is the NC which functions as the appositive to the subject *tära bhay (thilä)*. In Odia, the adverb of time *dine* goes before the verb *upudipadiba* whereas the adverb of time *one day* in English follows the verb *will be uprooted*.

1.6 Structural similarities

Some NCs in English and Oriya are structurally similar. The following similarities in the structural patterns of NCs in English and Odia, as specified below, have been established using contrastive analysis:

- i. A Main Clause (MC) and one or more than one Subordinate Clause (SC) can make a sentence in both the languages. Here, Nominal/ Noun Clauses (NC) are taken as the Subordinate Clauses in different sentences. *That* in English is the equivalent of *je* in Odia. Like English, Nominal/ Noun clauses in Odia can be used as a subject, an object, a complement, an apposition, and an object of a preposition.
- ii. As an English NC *that he plucked the flower* functions as a DO, an NC in Odia can also be used as a DO, *mu dekhili je se fula-ti tohilä*. Such

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Nominal Clauses in both English and Odia usually answer to the question *what*. This NC answers to the question *what*. Here, *je* is a focus marker.

- iii. Both English and Odia NC can be used as the complement of a sentence. It completes the meaning of the whole sentence. The sentence without it becomes incomplete and meaningless. In English, *that his brother will be a teacher* is the complement to the subject. In the sentence *His wish is that his brother will be a teacher*; '*that his brother will be a teacher*' functions as the complement to the subject *His wish*. Similarly, *je tãra bhai eka shikshak heba* in Odia is the NC which functions as the complement to the subject *tãra ichhã (achhi)*. In both English and Odia, the complement forms an integral part of the whole sentence.
- iv. In both English and Odia, the NC can have an appositive use. In the English sentence, *His fear, that the tree will be uprooted one day, became true*; '*that the tree will be uprooted one day*' is appositively used. Similarly, in the Odia sentence, *tãra bhay (thilã), je gachha-ti dine upudipadiba, tãhã äji satya helã*; '*je gachha-ti dine upudipadiba*' has an appositive function.

1.7 Structural differences

Some NCs in English and Oriya are structurally different. The following differences in the structural patterns of NCs in English and Odia as specified below have been established using contrastive analysis:

- i. In English, the NC is patterned S + V + O, Ex: *that he (S) plucked (V) the flower (O)*, just like a main clause, whereas in Odia, the NC is patterned S + O + V, Ex: *je se (S) fula-ti (O) tolilã (V)*, similar to the main clause.
- ii. In English, the complementiser *that* precedes the subject as in *that his brother will be a teacher* whereas in Odia, the complementiser *je* follows the subject as in *je tãra bhai eka shikshak heba*. *Je* in the Odia NC does not precede the subject in the *je*-clause, it rather follows the subject.
- iii. In English, the *be*-form in a *that*-clause is always explicitly present following the subject whereas in Odia *je*-clauses, the *be*-form (*ate*) can be either omitted or it can occur at the final position of a main clause as in *ehã satya ate*. In Odia, *ate* is optional.
- iv. In an English NC, all subjects, whatever their number and person, usually take one verb form in the past/past perfect. In the sentence, '*His fear, that the tree will be uprooted one day, became/ had*

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become true.’ If the subject is made plural i.e. ‘His fear’ becomes ‘Their fears’, there is no inflectional change in the verb in their past/ past perfect forms whereas in Odia, for every number and person of the subject, there is a specific inflectional verb-form in the past simple/past perfect. The Odia verb forms are number/person-specific.

1.8 Generalizations from the findings

This section deals with the generalizations from the findings of the study. The similarities and differences between the NCs in English and Odia form the basis of the findings of this research. Exploring the similarities and differences between the NCs in English and Odia has been made possible with the help of CA. Major NCs have been analysed and their similarities and differences have surfaced. Similarities and differences made explicit with the help of CA can be instrumental to the learning process of English as a second language.

It is a proven fact that similarities promote the process of acquisition whereas differences pose inhibition. However, the learner often faces problems in the acquisition of NCs in English and Odia due to their inherent differences. A careful attention on the part of the students can make them aware of the differences which they

can use in learning the English subordinate clauses.

1.9 Conclusion

As has been stated earlier, it is a proven fact that structural differences between a pair of languages cause ‘interference’ to second language acquisition whereas similarities facilitate the process. The same principle also applies to the Odia students going for English as an L2. When an Odia learner sets out for the acquisition of NCs of English with the help of CA, he may make structural errors when he encounters differences. However, CA is a viable process which can be instrumental to the learning process of English and Odia NCs at the present context.

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