



A Linguistic Analysis of Odia and English Prepositions: An Effective Bi-Lingual Learning Proficiency through Contrastive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In this study, an analysis of the Odia and English prepositions has been made through Contrastive Analysis (CA) for their learning proficiency and easy acquisition. CA as a linguistic tool has been used to explore the similarities and differences between the prepositions of these languages by way of description, juxtaposition and comparison/ contrast. It has been assumed that the adjectives of Odia can be treated as an ally in the process of learning the prepositions of English as a part of the 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.

It is a fact long established that the similarities between the prepositions of 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. The present study has been planned to make contrastive analyses of the prepositions of Odia and English by exploring the similarities and differences in their structural patterns with the help of CA.

Key words: Contrastive Analysis (CA); Prepositions; English as Second Language (ESL), First Language (L1); Second Language (L2)
Odia transcriptions: [t]: Alveolar consonant variant of English RP /t/
[ɬ]: Velar consonant variant of English RP /l/
[ä]: Vowel variant of English RP /a:/

1. Introduction

The present study tries to explore the similarities and differences between the prepositions of Odia and English with the help of Contrastive Analysis (CA) for their learning proficiency and easy acquisition. It has been assumed that Odia prepositions can be treated as a process favourable for learning their English counterparts as a part of the Second Language (ESL) teaching. 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 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 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.

1.1 Research assumption

One of the main assumptions of this research is that the first language of a student acts like a catalyst to facilitate the SL learning. The first language, which was initially used to be considered to be 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.

1.2 Research objective

As prepositions play a very vital role in the sentence structure of a language, the research objective of this study is to explore the structural similarities and differences between the prepositions in Odia and English and suggest the usefulness of CA for ESL teachers and students while dealing with Odia and English prepositions.

1.3 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 subdiscipline 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”.

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.

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.

1.4 Literature review

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 between the English and Oriya Noun Phrases. She has not done any analysis of prepositions in English and Odia.

Thakur (1998) researches on the grammatical and lexical cohesions in English and Odia 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 Odia languages.

Samantray (2000) elucidates the structure of the Odia 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 Odia tense system, she does not analyse the prepositions in English and Odia.

1.5 Method of data analysis

Since this research is based on contrastive study, the basic design of analysis of prepositions is through comparison and contrast. The data analysis of Odia and English will be as follows:

Example:

Mu *ei* ghar-e rahe (Odia)
 I *this* house in live
 I live in this house. (English)

Each example in the analysis has three lines. The first line is the Odia language transcription. Its italicised part is its adjective. The second line contains English words representing Odia equivalent. The third line represents the English version of its Odia counterpart and its italicised part is its adjective.

1.6 Major Prepositions in Odia and English

Prepositions are very important grammatical items in both Odia and English. The most commonly used prepositions in Odia and English are given in the following table.

Simple prepositions		Compound prepositions		Double prepositions		Participial prepositions	
Odia	English	Odia	English	Odia	English	Odia	English
bisayare	about	sepāriku	across	bhitaru	from-	bābada-re	Concern-ing
upare	above	ekpāsaku	aside		within	bichārk-ari	Conside-ring
pare	after	pākhare	beside	bhitaraku	in to	anusara-nkari	following
madh-yare	among	anusāre	accordi-ng to	uparaku	on to	bisayare	regarding
re			in addition-n	bhittaru	out of		
tale	at	ehābād	to				
madhy-are	below		in front of				
sudhā	between	sāmānā-are					
tale							
pāin	by						
thāru	down						
re	for						
upare	from						
bāhare	in						
paryanta	on						
	out						
	until						

1.6.1 Prepositions of time

The following prepositions express time in sentences.

Example 1:

Mu thik samay-*re* āsib-i
 I seven at come-fut
 I shall come **at** seven.

Example 2:

Se sakāl-*e* āsib-a
 He morning in come-fut
 He will come **in** the morning.

Example 3:

Mu thik samay bhita-*re* āsib-i
 I right time in come-fut
 I shall come **in** time.

Example 4:

Se 2021-re janma
 He 2021 in was born
 He was born **in** 2021.

Example 5:

Mu thik samay-*re* āsib-i
 I right time on come-fut
 I shall come **on** right time.

Example 6:

Se somabār-e āsib-a
 He Monday on come-fut
 He will come **on** Monday.

Example 7:

Se somabār sudhā āsib-a

He Monday by come-fut
He will come **by** Monday.

Example 8:

Se sakäl-u jara-re pad-ich-i
He morning since ill
He has been ill **since** morning.

Example 9:

Se tini gphantä helä jara-re pad-ich-i
He three hours for ill
He has been ill **for** three hours.

Example 10:

Afis samay-re sua-nähin
Office hour during sleep-not
Don't sleep **during** office hour.

Both Odia and English sentences above have prepositions as important grammatical items. They express time in the sentences. The sentences of both the languages are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.

In Odia, the prepositions come before the verbs whereas they precede the time expression in English.

1.6.2 Prepositions of place

The following prepositions indicate place in sentences.

Example 1:

Bahi-ti thäka-re achh-i
Book the shelf in is
The book is **on** the shelf.

Example 2:

Se got-e byank-re käma kara-nt-i
He one bank in work do
He works **in** a bank.

Example 3:

Bäpä ghar-e achha-nt-i
Father home at is
Father is **at** home.

Example 4:

Pakshi-mäne parbat upare udu-chha-nt-i
Birds mountain on flying are
The birds are flying **over** the mountains.

Example 5:

Pakshi-mäne gachha tañ-e bas-i-chha-nt-i
Birds trees under sitting are
The birds are sitting **under** the tree.

Example 6:

Surya ebe äma munda upa-re achh-i
Sun now our head above is
The sun is now **above** our head.

Example 7:

Bilei-ti meja tañ-e so-i-chh-i
Cat the table below sleeping is
The cat is sleeping **under** the table.

Example 8:

Se mo päkh-re bas-i-lä
He my side sit-past
He sat **beside** me.

Both Odia and English sentences above have prepositions as important grammatical items. They are used with place in the sentences. The sentences of both the languages are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.

In Odia, the prepositions come before the verbs whereas they precede the place expression in English.

1.6.3 Prepositions of instrument

The following prepositions are prepositions of instruments.

Example 1:

Ei chithi-ti gote kalam-re lekhä-jä-ich-hi
This letter a pen in is written
This letter is written **with** a pen.

Example 2:

Se tāku eka bādi-re bādei-lā
 He him a stick in beat-past
 He beat him **with** a stick.

Example 3:

Se tā chute dhar-i ghosā-ri-lā
 He his hair catch-nf pull-past
 He pulled him by his hair.

Both Odia and English sentences above have prepositions as important grammatical items. They express time in the sentences. The sentences of both the languages are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.

In Odia, the prepositions come before the verbs whereas they precede the time expression in English.

1.6.4 Prepositions of movement

The following are prepositions of movement.

Example 1:

Se ghara bhitara-ku galā
 He house in-to go-past
 He went **into** the house.

Example 2:

Se ghara bāhāra-ku galā
 He house out go-past
 He went **out of** the house.

Example 3:

Pilā-ti meja upara-ku jibā-ku chestā kalā
 Child the table on to go to try do-past
 The child tried to go **onto** the table.

Both Odia and English sentences above have prepositions as important grammatical items. They express movement in the sentences. The sentences of both the languages are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.

In Odia, the prepositions come before the verbs whereas they precede the time expression in English.

1.6.5 Miscellaneous prepositions

The following are a few miscellaneous prepositions.

Example 1:

tā bāpā tā-ku tā-ra adhikāra-ru banchita kal-e
 his father him his rights from deprive do-past
 His father deprived him **of** his rights.

Example 2:

Se mo apekshā nyuna
 He me than inferior
 He is inferior **to** me.

Example 3:

Se haijā-re malā
 He cholera in die-past
 He died **of** cholera.

Example 4:

Se ati khāibā-re malā
 He over-eating in die-past
 He died **from** over-eating.

Example 5:

Se abahelā-ru malā
 He neglect from die-past
 He died **through** neglect

Example 6:

Se bas-re āsi-lā
 He bus in come-past
 He came **by** bus.

Example 7:

Se gotāe bas-re āsi-lā
 He one bus in come-past
 He came **on** a bus.

Both Odia and English sentences above have prepositions as important grammatical items. They show miscellaneous expressions in the

sentences. The sentences of both the languages are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.

In Odia, the prepositions come before the verbs whereas they precede the ideas they govern in English.

1.7 Findings

The analysis of the prepositions in English and Odia brings out the following similarities and differences which have been explored in the form of findings with the help of CA.

1.8 Structural similarities

Similarities between the structural properties of prepositions in English and Odia languages are brought out with the help of CA. Their syntactic patterns have many things in common. Although emerged from different roots, both the languages share a lot of structural similarities in their linguistic properties of their prepositions. The prepositions of both English and Odia languages share the following structural similarities as given in the table below:

Sentences in Odia	Sentences in English	Similarities
Preposition of time: <i>Example 1:</i> Mu thik samay- re äsib-i	Preposition of time: <i>Example 1:</i> I shall come at seven.	Both Odia and English sentences have prepositions which perform important grammatical functions. The sentences are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.
Preposition of place: <i>Example 2:</i> Bahi-ti thäka- re achh-i	Preposition of place: <i>Example 2:</i> The book is on the shelf.	Both Odia and English sentences have prepositions which perform important grammatical functions. The sentences are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.
Preposition of instrument : <i>Example 3:</i> Se täku eka bädi- re bädei-lä	Preposition of instrument: <i>Example 3:</i> He beat him with a stick.	Both Odia and English sentences have prepositions which perform important grammatical functions. The sentences are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.
Preposition of movement: <i>Example 4:</i> Se ghara bhitara-ku galä	Preposition of movement; <i>Example 4:</i> He went into the house.	Both Odia and English sentences have prepositions which perform important grammatical functions. The sentences are bereft of meaning if the prepositions are amputated.

1.9 Structural differences

Differences between the structural properties of prepositions in English and Odia languages are also brought out with the help of CA. As they have emerged from different roots, they share a lot of structural differences. The prepositions of both English and Odia languages have the following structural differences as given in the table below:

Sentences in Odia	Sentences in English	Differences
Preposition of time: <i>Example 1:</i> Mu thik samay- re äsib-i	Preposition of time: <i>Example 1:</i> I shall come at seven.	In Odia, it takes a post-position whereas in English it is known as a pre-position.
Preposition of place: <i>Example 2:</i> Bahi-ti thäka- re achh-i	Preposition of place: <i>Example 2:</i> The book is on the shelf.	In Odia, it is treated as a post-position whereas in English it is known as a pre-position.
Preposition of instrument : <i>Example 3:</i> Se täku eka bädi- re bädei-lä	Preposition of instrument: <i>Example 3:</i> He beat him with a stick.	In Odia, it is treated as a post-position whereas in English it is known as a pre-position. In Odia, -re can go with the prepositions of time, place and instrument whereas time, place and instrument carry different prepositions in English
Preposition of movement: <i>Example 4:</i> Se ghara bhitara-ku galä	Preposition of movement; <i>Example 4:</i> He went into the house.	In Odia, it is treated as a post-position whereas in English it is known as a pre-position.

Miscellaneous prepositions: <i>Examples:</i> Se mo thāru nyuna Se haijā- re malā Se ati khāibā- jogun malā Se abahelā- ru malā Se bas- re āsi-lā Se gotāe bas- re āsi-lā	Miscellaneous prepositions: <i>Examples:</i> He is inferior to me. He died of cholera. He died from over-eating. He died through neglect He came by bus. He came on a bus.	In Odia, the prepositions come before the verbs whereas they follow the the verbs in English. In Odia, it is treated as a post-position whereas in English it is known as a pre-position.
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1.10 Generalizations from the findings

Exploring the similarities and differences between the prepositions in Odia and English has been made possible with the help of CA. Major prepositions 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 and vice versa. It is an established fact that similarities promote the process of acquisition whereas differences pose inhibition. However, a careful attention can make one aware of the differences which one can use in learning the Odia and English prepositions as the case may be.

1.11 Conclusion

When an Odia learner sets out for the acquisition of prepositions of English or an English learner sets out for the acquisition of prepositions of Odia 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 prepositions.

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