



Acquisition of English and Odia Present Simple Tense Forms in Through Contrastive Analysis

Dr. Bharat Chandra Samal

Asst. Professor of English, BJB College, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

ABSTRACT

The present study deals with the analysis of Present tense forms in English and Odia for their easy acquisition through Contrastive Analysis (CA). In this paper, CA has been used as a linguistic tool to explore the similarities and differences between English and Odia present tense forms such as Simple Present, Present progressive, Present perfect, Present perfect progressive describing the verb patterns of both languages by way of description, juxtaposition, comparison and contrast. It has been assumed that Odia present tense forms can be treated as an ally in their teaching-learning process of their English counterparts. 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. There is no denying the fact that similarities between the Present tense forms of these two languages quickly facilitate the learning process while those which are different are thought to cause difficulty in SL learning. However, a slight carefulness and close attention can easily process and transfer the data from one language to the other. 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. (Cummins 2007, García 2008 and Kang 2012). One of the main assumptions of my research is that the first language (L1) of the student is an important factor in the second language acquisition, which cannot be eliminated from the process of learning an SL (L2). The view that L1 of the students is a hindrance in SL learning, and is a source of errors in SL production is now being criticized because ESL teachers have become aware of the significance of L1. 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 makes a contrastive analysis of present tense forms of verbs which are essential to the formation of both English and Odia sentences in their written and spoken forms.

Key words: Contrastive Analysis (CA); Simple present tense; English as Second Language (ESL), First Language (L1); Second Language (L2); Noun Phrase; Verb Phrase

1.0 Introduction

This study tries to explore the similarities and differences between the English and Odia present tense forms of verbs with the help of a linguistic tool called Contrastive Analysis (CA). It has been assumed that Odia present tense forms can be treated as an ally in the teaching-learning process of their English counterparts. The present tense patterns of the Odia L1 can provide favourable climate for English as Second Language (ESL) teaching and learning 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 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.

Researchers like 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. 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 present tense 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.

This study makes a contrastive analysis of present tense forms of verbs which are essential to the formation of both English and Odia sentences in their written and spoken forms. This study is designed to help in easy learning of the present tense forms of verbs in English and Odia with the help of contrastive analysis by exploring their similarities and differences.

1.1 Research assumption

One of the main assumptions of my research is that the present tense forms of the first language of a student acts like a catalyst to facilitate the SL learning. 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.”

1.2 Research objectives

The research objectives of this study are to find out:

- i. The structural similarities and differences between the present tense patterns in English and Odia.
- ii. The usefulness of CA for ESL teachers and students while dealing with English and Odia present tense patterns.

1.3 Theory of CA

CA is a linguistic tool used to make a systematic study of a pair of languages for identifying their structural similarities and differences. 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)

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. 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.

1.4 Review of literature

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

Mishra (1988) brings out a comparative study of modification in English and Odia Noun Phrases. In her study, she has explored the similarities and differences between the English and Odia Noun Phrases. She has not done any analysis of subordinate clauses 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 subordinate clause structures in English and Odia.

1.5 Method of data analysis

As this research is based on contrastive study, the data presentation and analysis is made through comparison and contrast. Present tense forms 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. The method of data analysis of Present tense forms of English and Odia will be as follows:

se football *khele* (Odia)
 He football play-pres simp
 He *plays* football. (English)

Each example in the analysis has three lines. The first line is the Odia language transcription. Its part in the italics is the tense form. The

second line contains English words representing Odia equivalent. The third line represents the English version of its Odia counterpart and its part in the italics is the tense form.

1.6 Present simple forms in English and Odia

In both English and Odia, the Present simple forms are essential to the formation of sentences. They are contextual items that are used in all kinds of writings including expository, scientific and analytical texts in both English and Odia.

- Sentence pattern: In Odia: S+V1 (with sub-verb agreement)
In English: S+V1 (with sub-verb agreement)

Present simple forms express a simple action. Odia and English VP may be a single-word VP or a compound VP. They can appear in affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences with sub-verb agreement in both English and Odia.

- single-word VP

Example 1:

Pakshimane *udanti*
Birds fly
Birds *fly*.

In both Odia and English sentences above, *udanti* and *fly* are one word VP respectively. Here, *udanti* and *fly* are the head verbs of their respective VP. These verbs are in their present simple tense forms.

- compound VP

Example 2:

Chhota pakshimane *ati ucchare ud-a-nti*
Little birds very high fly
Little birds *fly very high*.

Both Odia and English VP: *ati ucchare ud-a-nti* and *fly very high* respectively in the sentences above are in their compound forms. They comprise more than one word.

The finite verbs in both Odia and English *ud-a-nti* and *fly* respectively carry tense. The verb *ud-a-nti* in Odia and *fly* in English are finite verbs which are in present simple forms.

The adverbial *ati ucchare* in the Odia VP precedes the head verb *ud-a-nti* whereas the adverbial *very high* follows the verb *fly* in English.

1.6.1 Affirmative sentences

In both Odia and English, affirmative sentences express a statement.

- Singular subject:

Example 3:

Mu bhat kha-e
I bhat eat
I *eat* rice.

Example 4:

Tume bhat kha-a
You bhat eat
You *eat* rice.

Example 5:

Se bhat kha-e
He/ she bhat eat
He/ she *eats* rice.

Example 6:

Gai-ti bhat kha-e
Cow-the bhat eat
The cow *eats* rice.

In both Odia and English, subject-verb agreement is a common and regular feature. The verbs in the above sentences agree with their respective subjects. In Odia, *mu/tume/se/gai-ti* are the singular subjects which take verbs like *kha-e/kha-a/khae/khae* respectively. Similarly in English, *I/you/(s)he/the cow* are the singular subjects which take verbs like *eat/eat/eats/eats* respectively.

Inflection of verb as suitable to the subject also takes place in both the languages. In Odia, *mu* takes *kha-e*, *tume* takes *kha-a*, *se* takes *kha-e*, *gai-ti* takes *kha-e*. Similarly in English, *I/you/(s)he/the cow* take *eat/eat/eats/eats* respectively.

However, both Odia and English have certain different properties. The above sentences in Odia are in their S+O+V pattern whereas their English counterparts are in S+V+O pattern.

- Plural subject:

Example 7:

Ame(mane) bhat kha-u
We bhat eat
We *eat* rice.

Example 8:

Tumemane bhat kha-a
You bhat eat
You *eat* rice.

Example 9:

Semane bhat kha-nti
They bhat eat
They *eat* rice.

Example 10:

Gai-mane bhat kha-nti
Cows bhat eat
Cows *eat* rice.

In both Odia and English, subject-verb agreement is a common and regular feature. The verbs in the above sentences agree with their respective subjects. In Odia, *Ame(mane)/Tumemane/Semane/Gai-mane* are the plural subjects which take verbs like *kha-u/kha-a/kha-nti/kha-nti* respectively. Similarly in English, *we/you/they/the cow* are the singular subjects which take *eat* as the only verb.

However, both Odia and English have certain different properties. Different plural subjects take different inflectional verbs in Odia whereas their English counterparts take the root verb only.

Further, the above sentences in Odia are in their S+O+V pattern whereas their English counterparts are in S+V+O pattern.

1.6.2 Negative sentences

Both Odia and English negative sentences express negation. The negatviser *nahin* in Odia and *not* in English are their respective negative markers.

Example 11:

Pakshimane udanti nahin
Birds fly not
Birds *do not* fly.

In both Odia and English sentences above, *udanti nahin* and *do not fly* are respective VP. Here, *udanti* and *fly* are the head verbs of their respective VP. Both Odia and English constructions prefer a negatviser *nahin* and *not* respectively. These verbs are in their present simple tense forms.

However in Odia, the negatviser *nahin* follows the MV whereas in English, the negatviser *not* precedes the MV and follows the first aux. When the VP is a single word, the MV is split and the negatviser *not* is inserted after the first aux.

1.6.3 Negative sentences

Both Odia and English negative sentences express negation. The negatviser *nahin* in Odia and *not* in English are their respective negative markers.

Example 12:

Pakshimane udanti nahin
Birds fly not
Birds *do not* fly.

In both Odia and English sentences above, *udanti nahin* and *do not fly* are respective VP. Here, *udanti* and *fly* are the head verbs of their respective VP. Both Odia and English constructions prefer a negatviser *nahin* and *not* respectively. These verbs are in their present simple tense forms.

However in Odia, the negatviser *nahin* follows the MV whereas in English, the negatviser *not* precedes the MV and follows the first aux. When the VP is a single word, the MV is split and the negatviser *not* is inserted after the first aux.

1.6.4 Interrogative sentences

Both Odia and English interrogative sentences express a question. They can be in their *yes/no* or *wh*-form. Answer to a *yes/no* question sentence is either *yes/no* whereas a *wh*-form requires some information.

- Yes/no pattern:

Example 13:

Pakshimane udanti ki?
Birds fly-int
Do birds *fly*?

In both Odia and English sentences above, *pakshimane udanti ki* and *Do birds fly* ask questions to which answers are either *yes/no*.

In Odia, the monosyllabic *ki* comes at the end of the MV *udanti* whereas in English, the MV *fly* is split and the first aux (*do/does*: depending on the number and person of the subject) begins the sentence. These verbs are in their present simple tense forms.

- Wh-pattern:

Example 14:

Pakshimane kahinki udanti?
Birds why fly
Why *do* birds *fly*?

In both Odia and English *wh*-pattern sentences above, *pakshimane kahinki udanti* and *why do birds fly* ask questions which requires some information. Their answers are not *yes/no*.

However in Odia, the *wh*-word *kahinki* is versatile enough to be used anywhere in the sentence whereas English has a fixed word order because the *wh*-word *why* has a fixed placement without any change of place. The Odia sentence can be rewritten as: *pakshimane kahinki udanti/ kahinki pakshimane udanti/ pakshimane udanti kahinki* whereas *why* cannot change its place in English. It begins an interrogative sentence and is used just before a *yes/no* question sentence.

1.7 Findings

The analysis of the present simple forms 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 present simple forms 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.

The present simple forms of both English and Odia languages share some structural similarities that are as given in the table below:

Sl. No.	Structural similarities in Odia and English present simple tense forms
1.	Pakshimane <i>udanti</i> Birds fly Birds <i>fly</i> .
2.	Chhota pakshimane <i>ati ucchare ud-a-nti</i> Little birds very high fly Little birds <i>fly very high</i> .
3.	<i>Mu</i> bhat <i>kha-e</i> I bhat eat I <i>eat</i> rice.
4.	<i>Tume</i> bhat <i>kha-a</i> You bhat eat You <i>eat</i> rice.
5.	<i>Se</i> bhat <i>kha-e</i> He/ she bhat eat He/ she <i>eats</i> rice.
6.	<i>Gai-ti</i> bhat <i>kha-e</i> Cow-the bhat eat The cow <i>eats</i> rice.
7	<i>Ame(mane)</i> bhat <i>kha-u</i> We bhat eat We <i>eat</i> rice.
8	<i>Tumemane</i> bhat <i>kha-a</i> You bhat eat You <i>eat</i> rice.
9	<i>Semane</i> bhat <i>kha-ni</i> They bhat eat They <i>eat</i> rice.
10.	<i>Gai-mane</i> bhat <i>kha-nti</i> Cows bhat eat Cows <i>eat</i> rice.
11.	Pakshimane <i>udanti nahin</i> Birds fly not Birds <i>do not fly</i> .
12.	Pakshimane <i>udanti nahin</i> Birds fly not Birds <i>do not fly</i> .
13.	Pakshimane <i>udanti ki?</i> Birds fly-int <i>Do birds fly?</i>
14	Pakshimane <i>kahinki udanti?</i> Birds why fly <i>Why do birds fly?</i>

From the samples in the table above, the following similarities can be drawn:

- In both Odia and English sentences, one word VP are found. Here, *udanti* and *fly* are the head verbs of their respective VP. These verbs are in their present simple tense forms.
- Both Odia and English VP: *ati ucchare ud-a-nti* and *fly very high* respectively in the sentences above are in their compound forms. They comprise more than one word.

- iii. The finite verbs in both Odia and English carry tense. The verb *ud-a-nti* in Odia and *fly* in English are finite verbs which are in present simple forms.
- iv. In both Odia and English, subject-verb agreement is a common and regular feature.. In Odia, *mu/tume/se/gai-ti* are the singular subjects which take verbs like *kha-e/kha-a/khae/khae* respectively. Similarly in English, *I/you(s)/he/the cow* are the singular subjects which take verbs like *eat/eat/eats/eats* respectively.
- v. Inflection of verb as suitable to the subject also takes place in both the languages. In Odia, *mu* takes *kha-e*, *tume* takes *kha-a*, *se* takes *kha-e*, *gai-ti* takes *kha-e*. Similarly in English, *I/you(s)/he/the cow* take *eat/eat/eats/eats* respectively.
- vi. Both Odia and English constructions prefer a negatviser *nahin* and *not* respectively. These verbs are in their present simple tense forms.
- vii. In both Odia and English negative sentences, *udanti nahin* and *do not fly* are respective VP. Both Odia and English constructions prefer a negatviser *nahin* and *not* respectively. These verbs are in their present simple tense forms.
- viii. In both Odia and English sentences, *yes/no* questions are found. *pakshimane udanti ki* and *Do birds fly* ask questions to which answers are either *yes/no*.
- ix. In both Odia and English *wh*-pattern sentences, *pakshimane kahinki udanti* and *why do birds fly* ask questions which require some information. Their answers are not *yes/no*.

1.9 Structural differences

The analysis of this study presents the following structural differences between English and Odia present simple tense forms in the table below:

Sl. No.	Structural differences in Odia and English present simple tense forms
1.	Pakshimane <i>udanti</i> Birds fly Birds <i>fly</i> .
2.	Chhota pakshimane <i>ati ucchare ud-a-nti</i> Little birds very high fly Little birds <i>fly very high</i> .
3.	<i>Mu</i> bhat <i>kha-e</i> I bhat eat I <i>eat</i> rice.
4.	<i>Tume</i> bhat <i>kha-a</i> You bhat eat You <i>eat</i> rice.
5.	<i>Se</i> bhat <i>kha-e</i> He/ she bhat eat He/ she <i>eats</i> rice.
6.	<i>Gai-ti</i> bhat <i>kha-e</i> Cow-the bhat eat The cow <i>eats</i> rice.
7	<i>Ame(mane)</i> bhat <i>kha-u</i> We bhat eat We <i>eat</i> rice.
8	<i>Tumemane</i> bhat <i>kha-a</i> You bhat eat You <i>eat</i> rice.
9	<i>Semane</i> bhat <i>kha-nti</i> They bhat eat They <i>eat</i> rice.
10.	<i>Gai-mane</i> bhat <i>kha-nti</i> Cows bhat eat Cows <i>eat</i> rice.
11.	Pakshimane <i>udanti nahin</i> Birds fly not Birds <i>do not fly</i> .
12.	Pakshimane <i>udanti nahin</i> Birds fly not Birds <i>do not fly</i> .
13.	Pakshimane <i>udanti ki?</i> Birds fly-int <i>Do</i> birds <i>fly?</i>
14	Pakshimane <i>kahinki udanti?</i> Birds why fly <i>Why do</i> birds <i>fly?</i>

From the samples in the table above, the following differences can be drawn:

- i. The adverbial *ati ucchare* in the Odia VP precedes the head verb *ud-a-nti* whereas the adverbial *very high* follows the verb *fly* in English.
- ii. Different plural subjects take different inflectional verbs in Odia whereas their English counterparts take the root verb only.
- iii. Odia sentences are in their S+O+V pattern whereas their English counterparts are in S+V+O pattern.
- iv. In Odia, the negatviser *nahin* follows the MV whereas in English, the negatviser *not* precedes the MV and follows the first aux. When the VP is a single word, the MV is split and the negatviser *not* is inserted after the first aux.
- v. In Odia, the monosyllabic *ki* comes at the end of the MV *udanti* whereas in English, the MV *fly* is split and the first aux (*do/does*: depending on the number and person of the subject) begins the sentence.
- vi. In Odia, the *wh*-word *kahinki* is versatile enough to be used anywhere in the sentence whereas English has a fixed word order because the *wh*-word *why* has a fixed placement without any change of place.

1.10 Conclusion

Present simple tense forms in English and Odia have been analysed and their similarities and differences have been explored to show how these similarities and differences can provide positive transfer to the Odia learners for the acquisition and use of English present simple tense forms and vice versa. It can be safely assumed that CA has not lost its value either as an analytical or a pedagogic tool.

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