

The Need of Forming a Comprehensive Odia-English Linguistic Inventory

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Abstract

This paper attempts at presenting a proposal for the review of teaching and learning of English in Odisha in the light of multilingualism. The factors hindering communicative competence and performance should not be undermined. There should be continuous effort to form a commonly accepted comprehensive Odia-English linguistic inventory which must include the interlingual translation of the words, sentences and common expressions of all the coastal, western, southern and northern Odisha with their respective variations in systems of morphological, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic norms and then the equivalent English translation needs to be formulated so as to be used both for academic and professional purposes. The paper gives some word and sentence level models collected from empirical evidences and propose that the inventory needs to guide to point out influence of mother tongue (MTI) while learning English. This would definitely help measuring linguistic compatibility between Odia and English, code-switching and code-mixing, bilingual proficiency, interlanguage factors too.

Keywords: Odia-English Linguistic Inventory, MTI, Linguistic Compatibility, Bilingual Proficiency, Interlanguage

1. Introduction

India is a country with pluralistic society having multitudes of languages and cultures. So, it is full of varieties of persons, places and things. So is the case with the Indian state of Odisha. This State has a tremendous socio-cultural and linguistic potential. Like other States in India, Odisha are surrounded by multilingual contexts. Although for many the medium of instruction is English, for some others, it is yet to be conformed because they learn in Odia medium but the reality in professional sector drags them to use English ultimately. Since they come across multilingual contexts, they have to frequently undergo the process of code-switching and code-mixing. This seems to lead on to inter-traffic problem in multilingual mind which ultimately aims at anglicizing their minds in the midst of a hue and cry of maintaining purity and preserving originality of Odia language.

Developing both competence and performance in a target language such as English in Odishan context is not an easy matter. It is equally difficult to maintain purity in the use of Odia language as well. It involves temporal, psychological, linguistic and socio-cultural factors. In Odisha, English language has been learnt so far with the methods of structural translation imbibed through traditional way as well as a byproduct of colonial influence. This entails a series of linguistic factors which have been neglected so far. Odia is one of the Indo-Aryan languages having its origin from Sanskrit basically, and then there is linguistic influence of several other Indian languages on it such as the Dravidian languages. The learning of English, one of the European languages here undertakes an uphill task of cognitive as well as linguistic decoding. Still then, people of Odisha have been making efforts to achieve higher level of proficiency in English. It is obviously an accepted fact that we love our mother tongue and continuously try to develop it following voluntary academic and administrative efforts. But for apparently unavoidable reasons, Odishan people have been learning more of English in Odia set up and using English in daily life transactions which is

really a difficult task. But, as a matter of fact, it is pertinent enough to say that no substantial, comprehensive and/or complete work has been undertaken so far to mingle the linguistic and cultural features of both the languages. Maintaining balance between two different varieties of language for communication for all purposes with a target language use in mind neither improves the quality and quantity of mother tongue (MT) nor preserves its value in any way. Even it does not help doing the same with the target language that is English. So, it is high time to think of some suitable, positive and long lasting solutions to this bilingual/multilingual complexity.

After more than six decades of acceptance of English as the medium of instruction for scientific, technical and professional studies and for researches and professional practices etc, the idea of imparting such education in Odia emerges. This leads to the interest of linguistic research considering a series of factors such as biligualism and its impact; the problems and prospects of academic and professional as well as non-academic systems. Initiating a wide range of intralingual translation between the dialects of Odia and then find linguistic compatibility and adaptability between them happen to be one of the important activities in this regard.

2. Statement of problem

The bone of contention lies in getting the linguistic output in taking such tasks of mixed method of instruction where mostly English remains a dominant language having pseudo-linguistic influences. Sometimes it makes the learners translate the ideas, wordings and expressions into English from Odia in order to understand better. This process acts in some way but in some other the cloud of confusion prevails over traditional Anglocentric attitude versus current Indian planning and policy in practice. Not only this, there are factors of cognitive and linguistic compatibility which multilinguals adopt as a strength or weakness which cannot be undermined for our survey. By the way, Odia has potential dialects in its

northern, southern and western parts respectively. These dialects happen to be the common modes of discourse and very much assimilated into culture, education, profession and mind of people of those areas. Thus, Sambalpuri, Ganjami, Dakshini, Koraputia, Baleswari Odias have predominant role to which the academic and administrative systems have not been giving vent to normal existence. Although used in daily discourse and so to say being mother tongues of these respective regions these dialects have not been updated and taken into consideration with their English translation. One of the most important factors is that in these languages there are plenty of colloquial and idiomatic expressions in day to day life which bear untranslatable features. For example, in central Odisha, people say dhumrapaana or dhuankaiba kshyatikaraka. The same is spoken in western Odisha as buddhighare dhuandeba thik nuhen for which the English equivalent is 'Smoking is injurious'. There are many such expressions in Odia which carry appropriate meaning only if they retain their dialectal originality. This leads to problem in translating or reproducing a text appropriately in English.

In order to develop a comprehensive linguistic inventory in Odia dialects on the basis of translation and by taking English language as a common medium as well as the target second language, it is worthwhile to study the matter related to the acquisition factors of language. Teaching and learning of English has not been done so far through the language acquisition techniques rather it has been done by adopting superfluous and exaggerated explanation of literary texts. Most of the linguistic works including both the languages involve vocabulary in isolation and contextual discourse which has not been substantially taken into account.

3. Research Questions

- i. Is there a positive linguistic and cultural output in intralingual translation in Odia and can we prepare an inventory with Odia-English translation?

- ii. Can we obtain a substantial output in the use of English vocabulary in Odia?
- iii. Can we measure the cognitive ability and bilingual proficiency among the speakers of Odia in this process?
- iv. Will it be effective to do efforts to make English closer to Odia culturally and linguistically through a comprehensive translation of discourse in daily life?

4. Objectives

- i. To make intralingual translation and then make a linguistic analysis of Odia language along with its dialects
- ii. To analyse use of English vocabulary in discourse in Odia
- iii. To prepare a comprehensive lexical, syntactic and discourse level Odia-English inventory and make use of them in academic and professional fields in practice. To include translation of general cultural texts and simultaneously take knowledge texts to form a compendium of Odia interlingual dialectal translation.
- iv. To measure the competence through code-switching and code-mixing and evaluate the how the learners develop their sense and attitude to meet cognitive challenge and subsequently develop language repertoire, construct language and account for learner autonomy; multiple intelligence and proficiency in technical as well as professional proficiency. It also accounts for assessment of cognitive ability, interlanguage factors and achievement of levels both in Odia and English.

5. Approach and Methodology

The approach of the study will be pragmatic, practical, descriptive and analytical based on current language system in use with collection of empirical evidences. This includes the study of the tenets of bilingualism, contrastive analysis parameters, evaluation of MT versus the target language etc. The study includes the causes of attrition, modification, code-mixing and code-switching. There will be mixed research including both qualitative and

quantitative methods. Data will be collected through random sample survey of natural discourse in socio-cultural, academic and professional contexts. There will be audio recordings and preparation of transcripts and taking down responses through observation and discussion etc.

6. Coverage of area and sampling frame

- i. Universe of the study: The area of study includes the State of Odisha identified on linguistic basis
- ii. Sampling frame: It includes formation of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, Perceptual Learning Style, T-tests, cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies, testing bilingualism and intelligence, language aptitude(ability to identify, recall, reproduce, manipulate lexical and syntactic patterns; ability to memorize; ability to make generalizations from new language material with little guidance
- iii. Sampling procedure: Both statistical and non-statistical

7. Implications

- i. The outcome of the research project aims at giving a number of up-to-date ideas for improved language teaching and learning in Odisha.
- ii. It will help enriching the spirit and strategy of learning of MT as well as English
- iii. There will be enough of comprehensive lexical and syntactic materials as well as comparative discourse data available for further research in this dimension

8. An example of Analysis of sentence/expression

Let us take a sentence or an expression as an example of analysis in this context of intralingual as well as interlingual translation which will enlighten us in the dimension of the topic. More of such examples are available in Appendix-C.

C- aajikaalira pilamaane bada raagi

S- ebara pilanka badarisaa

N- einaakara pilamane bahuta raagi

W- aajkal pilamaane bahuta raagi

E- Children of these days are very upset/inflamed.

Here, in intralingual form, there are changes in morphology as ‘pilamaane/pilanka’, ‘aajikalira/ebara/einaakara/aajkal’ whereas the change of syntactic order leads to change of decoding of sounds such as in the sentence:

aajikaalira pilamaane bada raagi

/a:ʃIka:lIɾə pɪla:ma:ne bədəra:gi/

/tʃɪldrən əf these deɪz a:r verɪ ʌpset/

9. References of initiatives at various forums

Realizing the importance of translation of many of the regional languages of India (including Odia), the national government employs planning and policies as a massive initiative of translating many texts of science and technology. They keep a broad objective of imparting tertiary level scientific and technical education so as to develop the indigenous knowledge and linguistic competence of the students and professionals in their respective mother tongues. Thus Indian universities, different government departments, Centre for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT), National Translation Mission (NTM), CSIR, Technological Development of Indian Languages (TDIL) under Deptt. of Electronics and Telecommunication have taken up projects of translating basically the knowledge texts and develop and inventory of technical terminologies. However, this effort might help in adding lexical references of registers and jargons. But in order to make the target language closer, culture and acquisition order must be closer to the target language too. There should be freedom to learn the target language such as English by using the dialects of our regional languages directly.

10. Acculturation Factor

Schumann(1978) describes acculturation as the social and psychological integration of second language learners with the target language group. Social adaptation is an integration strategy which involves second language learners' adjustment to the lifestyles and values of the target language group while maintaining their own lifestyle and values for use within their own group. Schumann's acculturation model includes several social variables and affective variables such as *Congruence*: the more similar the culture of the two groups, the more likely there will be social contact and thus language acquisition; and *Enclosure*: the more the second language learning group shares social institutions such as schools, churches, workplaces and clubs with the target language group, the more favourable the conditions will be for acquiring the target language. In fact, it requires mere comprehensive and critical attention while talking of dialects of a language as we have not focused on the factors that we can also take the dialects of a particular language into consideration at par with the formal and functional levels of the target language and learn it directly rather than following a system of intralingual translation and then adopting the acquisition process of the target language.

11. Conclusion

For apparently many known reasons, we have to accept many modest systems so as to bring in English linguistic proximity to not only in Odia and its dialects, but also in other Indian languages including their respective dialects. It will help developing a comprehensive learning system including English words and sentences without adopting an intralingual translation in the Indian languages anymore.

Appendix-A: Examples of Odia Lexical and Morphophonemic Proximity

i. Words

kirita-crest, khata-cot, garama-warm, gonad-gum, chamara-chowrie, charitra-character, chobaiba-chew, katiba-cut, lembu-lemon, daceuta-dacoit, dindima-drum, aatha-eight, naa-nine, sarpa-serpent, navi-navel, tumula-tumult, traya-tri, banka-bend, dakhina-deccan, barah-boar, danta-dental, maal-mall, daman-demon, bazaar-bazar, durbar, dana-donate, krura-cruel, kaudi-cowrie, mastula-mast, anyantara-another, misrita-mixed, kali-quarrel, debata-deity, divya-divine, chhak-chowk, verandah, satan, hospital, antar-inter, duranta-distance, Madeira, masraji-mercerised, pendi-pendent, gilasa-glass, lantahan-lantern, ghasa-grass, father-pitara, mother-matara, silata-slate, nama-name, galu-gall, firifiri-free, tanki-tank, bhari-very, tapeiba-top, tip, botala-bottle, bhikari-beggary, doctor, kakara-cake, apara-upper, afima-opium, patha-path, byabahara-behaviour, flower-fula, kantarati-contractor, ardali-orderly, naba-new, sama-same, taskar-tusker, abasa-house, almirah, churna-churn, bandhak-bond, kana-corner, kanun-canon, kafa-cough, divaga-divide, saram-shame, nasaa-nose, nua-new, galisi-gills, bad-bad, barbar-barbarous, ballav-beloved, behera-bearer, sangita-song, marmara-murmer, misra-mix, rafu-rough, rasid-receipt, shal-shawl, samata-symmetry, galti-guilty

Most of the nominals, verbals and adjectival bases must have to bear linguistically proximal features.

Appendix-B: Commonly Used English Vocabulary

Request, torch, chair, table, glass, school, college, stand, station, hospital, auto, bus, car, computer, motorcycle, cycle, road, bank, computer, injection, operation, police, court, film, dress, chapel, pen, pencil, rubber, bag, pant, shirt, almirah, sofa, mill, hotel, line, bulb, football, cricket, lantern, fuse, cement

Appendix-C: Some examples of sentences with varied structure

Let us take some sentences and expressions from Odia proper and its parallel Odia dialects randomly for analysis in this context and then make an analysis of intralingual as well as interlingual translation for a comprehensive idea.

Set-1

C- aajikaalira pilamane badaragi

S- ebara pilanka badarisa

N- einakara pilamane bade ragi

W- ajkal pilamane bahuta ragi

E- Children of these days are very upset/inflamed.

Set-2

C- gaara duita taanilu

S- dita gira tanilure

N- gaara duita taninu

W- gaara duita tanta

E- Draw two lines.

Set-3

C- dhuma paana nisedha

N- buddhighare dhuan deba thik nuhen

W- dhuan khaebata nisedh

E- Smoking is prohibited.

Set-4

C-kaantha pakhare seita pakeide

S- kaantha kani sita pakeide

N- kaanth pakhre seta pakeide

W- kaanthpakhe seta pakeide

E- Put that near the wall.

Set-5

C- se baata deikari jibu

S- sebaat heikiri jibu

N- sebaat deikari jibu

W- sebat deikari jibu

E- Go by that way.

Set-6

C-ramahin sethaku jaithila

S- ramka sithiki jaithila

N- Ramni sethiki jaithila

W- ramhin senke jaithila

E- Only Ram had been to that place.

Set-7

C-tora khaibara achhi

S- tukhaibar aka

N-

W- tor khebar achhi

E- You have to eat.

Set-8

C- semanesabu asithile

S- tankesabu aithile

N- simanesabu asithile

W- semanesabu aithile

E- All of them had come.

Set-9

C- mote byatibyasta lagilani

S- mate bitikulu lagilani

N-

W- mote bitbitaa laguchhe

E- I am feeling exhausted.

Set-10

C- adauasibaku habani

S- terika aasibaku habani

N-

W- neina silebi chalba

E- You don't have to come at all.

Set-11

C- se kahuthilabele shunila nahin

S- bailaasiki shunilani

N-

W- sekahuthilabele neishunila

E- He did not listen while speaking.

Set-12

C- kahinki, kana helaki?

S- kikanhelaki?

W- kaenkajekaanahela?

E- What's the matter?

Set-13

C- kaana kahunu kanhiki

S- kyana kahunu kanhiki?

N-

W- kaen hela nainkahibar?

E- Why do not you tell?

Set-14

C- kana karuchu?

S- kyanata karuchaba?

W- kaen karuchhu?

E- What are you doing?

Set-15

S-tu Madhya kahibu

S- tu misha kahibu

N/W- tuibi kahibu

E- You will speak too.

Set-15

C- ketebelaku jiba?

S- kosariki jiba?

N- kakhani jiba?

W- ketebelke jiba?

E- When will you go?

Set-16

C- pokharire pratidina phula phutuchhi

S- bandhare roj phula phutuchhi

N- pukhriridina phula phutuchhi

W- bandhan fidin phula phutuchhe

E- Flower blooms everyday in the pond.

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