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**ENGLISH AND ODIA RELATIVE CLAUSES: THEIR EASY ACQUISITION  
THROUGH CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS**

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**Dr. Bharat Chandra Samal**

Asst. Professor of English

BJB College, Bhubaneswar

Odisha, India

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**Abstract**

This paper tries to explore the Relative Clause (RC) structures in English and Odia by way of description, juxtaposition, comparison and contrast through Contrastive Analysis (CA) as a research tool. Major Relative Clauses in these two languages have been presented and analysed at length. Similarities and differences that exist between the structural patterns of the RCs of these two languages have been explored to show how these similarities and differences can provide positive transfers to the Odia learners for the acquisition and use of English RCs.

It is a proven fact that the similarities between the two languages quickly facilitate the learning process while those which are different are thought to cause difficulty in Second Language (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 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 makes the students free from psychological inhibitions like embarrassment or nervousness that accrues out of a forced use of only SL structures. In this regard, the 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 when they are allowed to use the first language structures.

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.

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The first language of the students was once considered to be a hindrance in SL learning, and as a source of errors in SL production. This view is now being criticized because ESL teachers have 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)

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

**1.0 Introduction**

This study is an attempt at making an analysis of English and Odia Relative Clauses (RC) 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 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.

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

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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.

**1.1 Assumptions of the research**

One of the main assumptions of this research is that 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. The present study has been planned to make contrastive analyses of Relative Clauses of English and Odia by exploring the similarities and differences in their structural patterns with the help of CA.

**1.2 Research objectives**

The research objectives of this study are to find out:

- The structural similarities and differences between the Relative Clauses (RCs) in English and Odia
- Usefulness of CA for ESL teachers and students while dealing with English and Odia RCs?

**1.3 Theory of CA**

Contrastive Analysis (CA) is a linguistic tool which makes a systematic study of a pair of languages in order to identify their structural differences and similarities. According to Fisiak (1978), “CA is 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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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).

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

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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**

Patnaik (1976) makes a study of 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. Although acknowledged to be one of the initial scholars on the contrastive studies of English and Odia, he has not done any analysis of relative clauses in English and Odia.

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Mishra (1988) makes a comparative study of modification in English and Odia Noun Phrases. In her study, she has explored the similarities and differences in the phrases but has not done any analysis of the relative clauses.

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 relative clause structures in English and Odia.

**1.5 Method of data analysis**

Since this research is based on contrastive study, the method of analysis is comparison and contrast. The method of data analysis will be as follows:

*Example:*

Jañe krushak heu-cha-nti eka byakti *jie/jie-ki jami chäsha kara-nti*  
one farmer is one person who land cultivate do-pres  
(A farmer is a person *who/that cultivates land.*)

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

**1.6 Relative Clauses in English and Odia**

A Relative Clause is a subordinate clause that acts as an adjective. It is called a Relative Clause because it is introduced by a relative pronoun like *who/that/ whom/whose* for persons *which/that/whose* for things in English and *jie/jie-ki/ jähäku/ je~u-mäna-nku* for persons *jeu~tä/jeu~ti/jeu~t(ä/i)-ki/jähä/jähä-ki/ jahi~ra* for things in Odia. The Relative Clauses in Odia and English are presented through juxtaposition and comparison in the sections that follow.

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**1.6.1 jie/jie-ki (who/that) for singular human antecedent**

Example:

Jañe krushak heu-cha-nti eka byakti jie/jie-ki jami chäsha kara-nti  
one farmer is one person who land cultivate do-pres (A  
farmer is a person *who/that cultivates land.*)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘Jañe krushak heu-cha-nti eka byakti jie/jie-ki jami chäsha kara-nti’, *jie/jie-ki jami chäsha kara-nti* forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jie/jie-ki* speaking about the singular human antecedent ‘byakti’ (person) that precedes the relativiser. Further, *ki* is an emphasiser in the context. In the English sentence, ‘A farmer is a person *who/that cultivates land*, ‘*who/that cultivates land*, forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *who/that* speaking about the singular human antecedent ‘person’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.6.2 jeunmäne/ jeunmäne-ki (who/that) for singular human antecedent**

Example:

krushakmäne heu-chha-nti sehimäne jeunmäne-ki jami chäsha kara-nti  
farmers are those who/that land cultivate do-pres  
(Farmers are those *who/that cultivate land.*)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘krushakmäne heu-chha-nti sehimäne jeunmäne-ki jami chäsha kara-nti’, ‘*jeunmäne-ki jami chäsha kara-nti*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jeunmäne/jeunmäne-ki* speaking about the plural human antecedent ‘sehimäne’ that precedes the relativiser. Further, *ki* is an emphasiser in the context. In the English sentence, ‘Farmers are those *who/that cultivate land*’, ‘*who/that cultivate land*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *who/that* speaking about the plural human antecedent ‘those’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.6.3 jähära (whose) for singular possessive human antecedent**

Example:

ie sehi pilä jähära äkhigudika bada  
this that boy whose eyes big  
(This is the boy *whose eyes are big.*)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘ie sehi pilä jähära äkhigudika bada; jähära äkhigudika bada’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jähära* speaking about the singular possessive human antecedent ‘pilä’ that precedes the relativiser. In the English sentence, ‘This is the boy *whose eyes are big*’, ‘*whose eyes are big*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the

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relative pronoun *whose* speaking about the singular possessive human antecedent ‘person’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.6.4 *jeunmānankara (whose)* for plural possessive human antecedent**

*Example:*

emāne heuchhanti sehi pilāmāne *jeunmānankara ākhigudika bada*

these those boys whose eyes big

(These are the boys *whose eyes are big*.)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘emāne heuchhanti sehi pilāmāne *jeunmānankara ākhigudika bada*’, ‘*jeunmānankara ākhigudika bada*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jeunmānankara* speaking about the plural possessive human antecedent ‘pilāmāne’ that precedes the relativiser. In the English sentence, ‘These are the boys *whose eyes are big*’, ‘*whose eyes are big*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *whose* speaking about the plural possessive human antecedent ‘boys’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.6.5 *jeu-tā/jeu-ti/jeu-t(ä/i)-ki (which/that)* for singular non-human antecedent**

*Example:*

eitā heu-chi sei gachha *jeu-tā/jeu-ti/ jeu-t(ä/i)-ki/ mu lagäithili*

this is that tree which/that I plant past-perf

(This is the tree *which/ that I had planted*.)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘eitā heu-chi sei gachha *jeu-tā/jeu-ti/ jeu-t(ä/i)-ki/ mu lagäithili*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jeu-tā/jeu-ti/ jeu-t(ä/i)-ki* speaking about the singular non-human antecedent ‘gachha’ that precedes the relativiser. In the English sentence, ‘This is the tree *which/ that I had planted*’, ‘*which/ that I had planted*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *which/that* speaking about the singular non-human antecedent ‘tree’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.6.6 *jähä/ jähä-ki* for uncountable non-human antecedent**

*Example:*

ehä heu-chhi sei chini *jähä/ jähä-ki jār bhitare thilä*

this is that sugar which/ that jar in was

(This is the sugar *that/which was in the jar*.)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘ehä heu-chhi sei chini *jähä/ jähä-ki jār bhitare thilä*’, ‘*jähä/ jähä-ki jār bhitare thilä*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jähä/ jähä-ki* speaking about the uncountable non-human antecedent ‘chini’ that precedes the relativiser. In the English sentence, ‘This is the sugar *that/which was in the jar*’, ‘*which/ that was in the jar*’

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forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *which/that* speaking about the uncountable non-human antecedent ‘sugar’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.6.7 *jähära/jeu~tära/jeu~tira* (whose) for singular non-human possessive antecedent**

Example:

eitä heu-chi sei meja *jähära/jeu~tära/jeu~tira* godagudika bhangä  
this is that table whose legs broken

(This is the book *whose pages are torn*.)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘*eitä heu-chi sei meja jähära/jeu~tära/jeu~tira godagudika bhangä*’, ‘*jähära/jeu~tära/jeu~tira prusthägudika bhangä*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jähära/jeu~tära/jeu~tira* speaking about the singular non-human possessive antecedent ‘meja’ that precedes the relativiser. In the English sentence, ‘This is the table *whose legs are broken*’, ‘*whose legs are broken*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *whose* speaking about the singular non-human possessive antecedent ‘meja’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.6.8 *jeu~gudikara* (whose) for plural possessive non-human antecedent**

Example:

eigudika heu-chi sei meja *jeu~gudikara* godagudika bhangä  
these are those table whose legs are broken

(These are the tables *whose legs are broken*.)

In the Odia sentence above, ‘*eigudika heu-chi sei meja jeu~gudikara godagudika bhangä*’, ‘*jeu~gudikara godagudika bhangä*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *jeu~gudikara* speaking about the plural possessive non-human antecedent ‘meja’ that precedes the relativiser. In the English sentence, ‘These are the tables *whose legs are broken*’, ‘*whose legs are broken*’ forms the RC which is introduced by the relative pronoun *whose* speaking about the plural possessive non-human antecedent ‘tables’ that precedes the relativiser.

**1.7 Restrictive relative clause**

The relative pronoun is an essential part of an RC. It takes no comma and restricts the meaning of the preceding noun or pronoun.

Example:

Jañe krushak heu-cha-nti eka byakti *jie/jie-ki jami chäsha kara-nti*

one farmer is one person who land cultivate do-pres

(A farmer is a person *who/that cultivates land*.)



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Here, *jie/jie-ki jami chäsha kara-nti* is the Restrictive Relative Clause of ‘jañe krushak heucha-nti eka byakti *jie/jie-ki jami chäsha kara-nti*’ and *jie/jie-ki* is the relative pronoun which is the essential part of the relative clause in Odia. Similarly, ‘*who cultivates land*’ is the Restrictive Relative Clause of ‘A farmer is a person *who/that cultivates land*’ and *who/that* is the relative pronoun which is the essential part of the relative clause in English.

### 1.8 Non-restrictive relative clause

A Non-restrictive Relative Clause tells something about the antecedent but does not restrict its meaning. It is not an essential part of the RC. It is separated by commas which give an additional information about the antecedent.

*Example:*

mo pua, *jie/ jie-ki bideshare padhuchhi*, (sie) käli gharaku äsiba  
my son, who abroad is studying, (he) tomorrow home return-fut  
(My son, who is studying abroad, will return home tomorrow.)

Here, *jie/ jie-ki bideshare padhuchhi* is the Non-restrictive relative clause in the Odia sentence, ‘mo pua, *jie/ jie-ki bideshare padhuchhi*, (sie) käli gharaku äsiba and *jie/jie-ki* is the relative pronoun. The RC is not the essential part of the sentence in Odia. The sentence still retains its meaning if the RC is dropped. Similarly in English, ‘who is studying abroad’ is the Non-restrictive relative clause of ‘My son, who is studying abroad, will return home tomorrow’ and *who/that* is the relative pronoun. The RC is not the essential part of the sentence in English. The sentence still retains its meaning if the RC is dropped.

### 1.9 Findings from Relative Clauses

This study has made a meticulous analysis of Relative Clauses (RCs) in English and Odia. We have come across certain findings from the study of structural similarities and differences between the syntactic patterns of RCs in English and Odia.

### 1.10 Structural similarities

RCs of both English and Odia languages share the following structural similarities:  
From the samples above, the following similarities can be drawn:

i. RCs in both English and Odia act as adjectives. The choice of relative pronoun in both the languages depends on whether the antecedent is human or non-human. In English, relative pronouns like *who/whom/that/whose* are used for persons, *which /that/ whose* for non-persons.

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This concord is based on the personal or non-personal forces of the antecedents which determine the relative pronouns grammatically admissible in a Relative Clause in both the languages. Similarly, in Odia, *jie /jie-ki/ jähäku* go with human antecedents, while *jähä* with non-human antecedents and *jähära* with both.

ii.

iii. The RC in English and Odia, allows no commas and limits the meaning of the preceding noun or pronoun. The choice of relative pronouns: *who/that* and *jie/jie-ki* in English and Odia is dependent on the relationship of the relative clause to its antecedent.

iv.

v. Some clauses in English and Odia give more information about the preceding nouns, but do not limit or restrict the information to these nouns. As such clauses give extra information about their antecedents without defining or restricting them, they are also known as extra information relative clauses. These clauses are also called non-identifying relative clauses.

**1.11 Structural differences**

The structural analysis of this study given in the table below presents the following differences between the structural patterns of RCs in English and Oriya.

The following differences are found in the above RCs in English and Odia:

- i. In an English sentence, a human antecedent takes either *who* or *that* as relative pronoun to form a Relative Clause whereas a relative pronoun in Odia is antecedent-specific. The relativiser *jie/jie-ki* goes with only a singular countable human antecedent. A singular countable non-human antecedent prefers only *jeu-tä/jeu-tä-ki/jeu-ti/jeu-t(ä)i-ki*. An uncountable non-human antecedent takes *jähä/jähä-ki*.
- ii. In English, the relativiser *whom* goes with both singular and plural countable human antecedents whereas in Odia, the relativiser *je-u-mäna-nku* goes with only a plural countable human antecedent not with a singular countable human antecedent.
- iii. In an relative clause in English, one fixed relativiser *whose* is admissible whereas in Odia, more than one possessive relativiser can go with an uncountable non-human antecedent.

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- iv. In an English sentence, inversion of verb takes place i.e. the verb goes before the subject whereas in Odia, the sentence is interrogative without inversion of verb except for the monosyllabic expression *ki* at the end of the sentence.

**1.14 Conclusion**

It can be safely assumed that CA has not lost its value either as an analytical or a pedagogic tool. If used with young adult or adult SL students to develop their insights into structural properties of sentences supported by contextualized and meaningful practice, CA can function as a worthwhile tool for researchers, teachers and students.

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