



Role of the Mental Faculties in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) *(A Critical Survey on Speaking Skill of the English Learners in the Odia Medium Schools)*

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ABSTRACT

The mental faculties of ideation or schema, linguistic coding and decoding, innateness, communicative competence as well as pragmatic competence in the case of bilinguals/multilinguals give rise to lots of scholarly responses in the context of second language acquisition. In this context, the present paper focuses on the emerging dimensions of mental faculties such as cognition, and how it relates to the acquisition of English language with specific reference to the Odia medium school students in Odisha. At first, it critically discusses the theoretical components of cognition and SLA. Then, it obtains data using tools such as observation, survey, predefined oral assessments and interactive activities of the Odia medium school students in order to focus on how such learners deal with all the discrete as well as discourse units of the English language; problems and possibilities associated with second language learning particularly in the speaking skills in English and relates to the practical aspects of speech production. Also, it throws light on mother tongue (MT) interference and error analysis to reach at a conclusion with a set of recommendations both for the teachers and learners of the English language in Odisha for the improvement of the speaking skills in English in the Odishan environment.

Keywords: Linguistic coding, Communicative and pragmatic competence, Speaking skills, Odia medium, Cognition and SLA, Mother tongue interference

1. Introduction

Normally, mental faculties or the cognitive domain of human being includes thought, imagination, memory, will, intelligence, intelligence quotient, creativity and sensation. These are inbuilt abstract systems of human mind responsible for language acquisition and speech production by using

physiological, physical and acoustic components and behavioural patterns. In case of teaching and learning using Mother Tongue (MT)/L1 or in the case of monolinguals, researches have different dimensions. But, in case of multilingual and multicultural set-ups such as India, it is really a challenging task to deal with Second Language (SL) teaching and learning. As mentioned above, the mental faculties such as cognition, memory, retrieval of linguistic data, creating proper linguistic codes, motivation and willingness to communicate in the target language have to be dealt with proper pedagogy for better results. As the present research domain is Odisha, which is one of the states in the eastern India with a population of around 4.5 crores, it is empirically evident that mostly in its rural and semi-urban areas both in the tribal and non-tribal set-ups where millions of students aim at improving their competence in English, such mental factors have been grossly neglected so far. Moreover, the rote learning methods, inappropriate syllabus design, and no focus on facilitation such as proper neuro-linguistic programming in the process of learning English language can be the major factors. But as a matter of fact, it is high time to think about how to improve their level of competence and performance in English in a systematic way by adopting the appropriate methods, approaches, tools and techniques.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Cognition and Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Cognition lexically refers to the mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension. It involves cognitive processes such as thinking, knowing, remembering, judging, and problem-solving. These are higher-level functions of the brain and encompass language, imagination, perception, intuition and planning. The basics of cognitive science are also associated with the interdisciplinary study of mind in which the study of second language acquisition is the emerging one. It is in fact concerned with how young children master their first language as well as how children and adults acquire a second language. It is observed that multilinguals have multiple benefits. Research findings say that people who speak more than one language have improved memory, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, enhanced concentration, and ability to multitask, and better listening skills. They switch between completing tasks and monitor changes in their environment more easily than monolinguals and show signs of greater creativity and flexibility.

Worth saying that being able to communicate in another language exposes us to and fosters an appreciation for the traditions, religions, arts, and history of the people associated with that language. Greater understanding, in turn, promotes greater tolerance, empathy, and acceptance of others. It is observed that children who have studied another language are more open toward the target language culture. They express more positive attitudes toward that culture associated with that language which establishes its strong connection with representational, functional, developmental, and differential

and cognitive psychology. Consequently, these factors cover performance in relation to speech production, fluency, gestures, lexical processing, sentence processing, connectionism, social cognition, and working memory. In this light, research findings and theoretical constructs in cognitive science have become increasingly influential in SLA research in recent years.

Speech/ spoken language production has four important components: (a) *conceptualization*, that is, planning what one wants to say; (b) *formulation*, which includes the grammatical, lexical, and phonological encoding of the message; (c) *articulation*, in other words, the production of speech sounds; and (d) *self-monitoring*, which involves checking the correctness and appropriateness of the produced output. (Kormos, xviii)

Additionally, researchers share the view that one of the basic mechanisms involved in producing speech is *activation spreading*. Activation spreading is a metaphor adapted from brain research which is based on the findings of neurological studies that neural networks consist of interconnected cells (neurons) that exchange simple signals called activations via the connections they have with each other (Hebb, 1949). The speech-processing system is assumed to consist of hierarchical levels (i.e. conceptualization, formulation, articulation), among which information is transmitted in terms of activation spreading. The knowledge stores such as the lexicon and conceptual memory store help in this speech-processing. Decisions are made on the basis of the activation levels of the so-called *nodes* that represent various units such as concepts, word forms, phonemes, and so on.

As regards the bilingual lexicon, one of the first issues in bilingualism research was whether L1 and L2 words are organized in the same lexicon. By now, it is a well-received view that L1 and L2 words are stored in a common lexicon, which is conceptualized as an interconnected network (Kroll & Tokowitz, 2005).

There are two important issues related to this. Firstly, whether the syntactic information related to both L1 and L2 words can be shared across the languages or not. That is, if the two languages have similar syntactic information structure (e.g., gender systems) or not. Secondly, whether grammatical features are accessed automatically every time a word is retrieved basing on the activation level of the syntactic feature nodes or not (Costa, et al., 2003). In this context, Chomskian (1986) concept of I-language and E-language; competence and performance like factors can be taken into critical consideration.

1.1.2 Pre-verbal and Verbal Stages

The findings of L2 speech production research suggest that knowledge stores such as conceptual memory, the lexicon, the syllable, and the store of phonemes are shared in L1 and L2, and therefore L1 and L2 items compete for selection (La Heij, 2005; Poulisse, 1999; Poulisse & Bongaerts, 1994 quoted in

Kormos,2006). One of the consequences of this competition is that it can happen that linguistic units in the non-intended language are selected, which are generally called unintentional code-switches. Code-switching can also happen intentionally either due to lack of competence, or because the speaker thinks that the word, phrase, or expression in the other language matches his or her communicative intentions better in the other language.

In Dell's (1986) spreading activation model, the lexicon is considered a net work of interconnected items and "contains nodes for linguistic units such as concepts, words, morphemes, phonemes, and phonemic features, such as syllables and syllabic constituents as well" (p. 286). In the lexicon, conceptual nodes are assumed to be connected to word nodes that define words, and word nodes are conjoined with morpheme nodes, which again represent specific morphemes. Next, there is a connection between morpheme and phoneme nodes specifying phonemes, and finally phoneme nodes are linked to phonological feature nodes such as labial, nasal, voiced, and so on. In order for the words to be able to be selected for specific slots in the sentence, each word is labeled for the syntactic category it belongs to (e.g., in our example sentence "cow" is labeled as noun). Similarly, morphemes and phonemes are also marked for the class they are the members of (e.g., "eat" as stem, "s" as affix).

The basic mechanisms of speech processing are conceptualized by Levelt in a fairly straight forward manner: People produce speech first by conceptualizing the message, then by formulating its language representation (i.e., encoding it), and finally by articulating it. With regard to speech perception, speech is first perceived by an *acoustic-phonetic processor*, then undergoes linguistic decoding in the speech comprehension system (i.e., the *parser*), and is finally interpreted by a conceptualizing module.

In order to have a better understanding of L1 and L2 production research, it is important to be familiar with the basic techniques applied to study production mechanisms. The methods of language production research can be divided into three different groups: observational, experimental, and neuroimaging. Early psycholinguistic research dating back to the 1950s almost exclusively applied various techniques of speech observation, whereas experimental tasks started to be used in the 1970s. Neuroimaging techniques became available for speech production research at the end of 1980s and are now complementary to experimental research.(12).

1.2 Hypothesis Formation

1.2.1 Avoidance (or reduction) strategies

Unlike achievement strategies, avoidance strategies are used by learners who try to avoid having to use language over which they do not have control (Here, it is English). Far from being creative with the language in an attempt to communicate effectively, learners who use avoidance strategies will only

communicate those messages that they already have the linguistic means to convey. Avoidance strategies are usually classified into Formal and Functional avoidance.

Formal avoidance refers to the context when a learner avoids using part of the language system it is difficult to detect. (For example, if a learner does not use passive voice, even where passive would be more appropriate). Functional avoidance refers to the context when a learner may simply give up trying to put a message across, without any attempt to use achievement strategies or appealing for help. When this happens, utterances are usually left propositionally incomplete.

1.2.2 Item and System learning; CALP and BICS

Linking both item as well as system learning in a coordinated way with Odia language which happen to find solutions to the improvement of fluency in English. Item-learning that applies at various levels of language (phonology, intonation, morphology and syntax, and semantics) before a stage of system-learning and it may involve segmentation and subsequent substitution can be a potential study. Similarly, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are commonly used in discussion of bilingual education and arise from the early work of Cummins (1984) in which he demonstrated his ideas about the two principal items of second language development. BICS describes the development of conversational fluency in the second language, whereas CALP describes the use of language in decontextualized academic situations.

Speaking is a complex matter. In relation to second language, when one wishes to speak, then he/she must learn the grammar and vocabulary of the language, and master its sounds. Planning what to say, formulating the utterances and producing them need to become automatic if what the learner says is to be considered 'fluent'. The learner needs to be able to open and close conversations in acceptable ways, and manage the switch between topics. The speaker needs to know the conventions of turn taking, when to begin speaking and when to stop.

Cultural knowledge and sensitivity to social context is also very important. And speakers must maintain appropriate roles and relationships with other speakers in a variety of speaking contexts that differ with regard to a wide range of variables including social distance, power and authority.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is very often observed that students in Odia medium schools lack required fluency in the speaking skills in English. This is quite evident that their society, classroom interaction, their thought process, cultural and experiential constructs are occupied with the codes of Odia language. In addition, in most cases, English is taught to them following frequent translation both in lexical

as well as discourse units. As a result, achievement of the required level of fluency in English as the target language is greatly hampered. Observations also confirm that such students are unable to express their feelings, attitudes, emotions and imaginations satisfactorily only for the above mentioned reasons. In this context, a critical focus on some of the theoretical perspectives is worth considering.

One of the most important differences between L1 and L2 production is that L2 learners' knowledge of the target language is rarely complete, as they often lack the language competence necessary to express their intended message in the form originally planned. Therefore, L2 speakers frequently have to make conscious efforts to overcome problems in communication, which efforts have traditionally been called communication strategies (Færch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, 1977 quoted in Kormos, 2006). Dörnyei and Scott (1997) distinguished four main problem sources in L2 communication: (a) resource deficits, (b) processing time pressure, (c) perceived deficiencies in one's own language output, and (d) perceived deficiencies in decoding the interlocutor's message. Resource deficit might be associated with three stages of speech processing: lexical, grammatical, and phonological encoding. In addition to the lack of knowledge of L2 lexis, syntax, and phonology, L2 speakers often have to face the problem that due to limited attentional resources they cannot process their message within the time constraints of real-life communication. L2 speakers might also experience problems deciding on whether their message has been accurate, appropriate, and understandable to the interlocutor, which problems arise in the phase of monitoring.

The major source of difference between monolingual and bilingual speech processing is that in bilingual speech production the effect of the other language, which is generally the influence of L1 on the L2 which cannot be eliminated.

1.4 Research Objectives

- i. To explore how the cognitive factors work in the process of speaking English of the Odia medium school students.
- ii. To identify problems concerning English-speaking-skills the Odia medium school students and categorize them under linguistic/ELT parameters.
- iii. To forward a set corrective measures customizing the linguistic needs of such students for the improvement of English-speaking-skills.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. How does cognition work in the process of speaking English in case of the students of Odia medium schools?

- ii. What are the problems and prospects of speaking English and categorize them under linguistic/ELT parameters?
- iii. What are the corrective measures to improve English speaking skills of the learners?

2. Methodology

A mixed method of research has been adopted including both quantitative and qualitative analysis for the research. The action research design parameters have been taken into consideration since the research involves high school students of different places of Odisha with almost similar age groups of 14-15 years old who are taken as random samples and given the English speaking activities ranging from lexical to discourse levels.

2.1 Data Collection

The following steps were adopted for data collection:

- i. Interaction with the teachers of English and the students of selected schools of different Odia dialectal zones (eastern, western, northern and southern) Odisha
- ii. Recording oral responses of the students' English classes
- iii. Organising pre-defined oral assessments such as reading aloud, listening-speaking activities (oral comprehension), self-introduction, speaking in English (ex tempore) and spontaneous translation of ideas from mother tongue to English (on the basis of topics of general interest and local cultural contexts)

Data was analysed on the basis of SL/FL error analysis parameters outlined by Pit Corder (1975).

2.2 Data Analysis

8.1 At the level of sound: Second language learning and using them in different contexts appropriately happen to be a challenge for many. It starts with the listening and producing the sounds or speaking with proper pronunciation. The following data was obtained from the secondary school students from different parts of Odisha.

Initial /l/ as prefix with 'school' and 'station' like words

Initial /l/ is realized as /n/ as 'lunch' is spoken as 'nunch'

Initial /w/ is realized as [ua:] as 'watch' is spoken as 'ua:tch'

Initial [ar] spoken for /ɜ:/ as in 'early' becomes 'arli'

Initial [kwa] is realized as [kua:] as 'quarrel' is spoken as 'kuarel'

Initial [gl] as [gil] as 'glass' is spoken as 'gilasa', 'class' as 'kilasa'

Initial /v/ in 'honour' 'hour' is realized as /h/

Medial /æ/ is realized as /Ia:/ as 'gas' is spoken as 'gia:sa', 'man' as 'mia:na'

Medial /æ/ is realized as /e/ as 'family' is spoken as 'femili'

Medial /I/ is spoken as /u/ as in 'biscuit'

Medial /ɜ:/ is not clear as in 'girl', 'shirt' etc. and it sounds like /a:/

Medial /dʒ/ in 'bridge', 'budget', 'lodge' etc. are realized as [dz]

Final /eI/ instead of /eə/ as 'hair' is spoken as 'heara', 'care' is spoken as 'keara'

Final /t/ is realized as /d/ as 'rite' is spoken as 'raid'

Final /eə/ is realized as /Ia:/ as 'chair' is spoken as 'chiaar'

Final [tl] is realized as [tili] as 'kettle' is spoken as 'ketili'

Final /ŋ / is spoken as [ŋi] as 'cutting' is spoken as 'katingi'

/u/ is used in the final position as 'gas' is spoken as 'gasu', 'tebulu'

/ə/ is used in the final position in 'mail', 'bus', 'doctor', etc.

/I/ is used in the final in the words like 'light', 'office', 'bridge', 'engine', etc.

Medial [n] is not exact as in 'do (n) key'

Medial [ra] instead of /ə/ as in 'under (a) standing'

Final [e] is realized as in 'absent (e)'

Final [ə] is realized as in 'finger (a)'

Final [I] is realized as in 'standing (i)'

Final [u] is realized as in 'beautiful (u)'

Final [əl] is spoken as [na:l] or [na:la] in 'national', 'rational', etc.

Final [try] is realized as [tary]

No clear-cut distinction is found in pronouncing nouns and their corresponding verb forms in putting stress.

2.3 Empirical evidence of problem with sounds

- i. Homophones and homonyms are often confused
- ii. The plural markers [s] and [es] are not realized /z/ or [iz] after consonant sounds

- iii. The sentences with alliterative effects like ‘The main man was not among the men’ create confusion in distinguishing sounds and meaning of the words.
- iv. At the basic level, it is noticed that many children have certain problems with sounds as a consequence of speech impediment factors like rhotacisation or specific problem associated with the utterance of certain sounds like /r/ substitutes /l/ such as ‘fatal’ is spoken as ‘fatar’; /t/ substitutes /k/ as ‘kirk’ is pronounced as ‘tart’; in words beginning with cluster like ‘plural’ is spoken as ‘prulal’; trap-bath slip of RP, /t/ and /d/ as in ‘cursed/curst’; non-rhotic: /ha:d/, /bat°/ becomes rhotic: /ha:rd/, /bat°r/; /t/ becomes prominent in ‘catch’ whereas /d/ is silent in ‘cardboard’.

2.4 Problems at the level of vocabulary and grammar

- i. Common speech formation at the level of sound-meaning: As the mechanism goes, when a name comes, first the neuroimaging or ideation starts forming followed by encoding of the symbol or picture followed by sound formation. For example, Odia word ‘ghara’ i.e. a disyllabic word /g^hθrθ/ and in English ‘house’ /haus/. This sometimes gets confused with ‘gruha’ i.e. /gru:hθ/ which in English is ‘home’ i.e. /houm/. Similarly, when it comes to use say a verb, for example, ‘ja:’ i.e ‘go’ which is a total variation of the sequence of sounds. In terms of sentences and sequence of sentences, levels of variation occurs both at sound and structure levels.

Like other languages, in Odia, there are verbs used in multiple lexical as well as idiomatic contexts: such as *pia/piba* which means ‘drink’ but it can be used to mean smoke, grasp, absorb, etc.; *khā/khaiba* which means ‘eat’ but can be used to mean confuse or hide, affect, corrupt, etc.; *mara/mariba* means ‘to die’ but used to mean to dry, to lose the value, take away illegally, etc.; *nacha/nachiba* means ‘dance’ but used to mean creating problem, to act in disguise, etc. Their corresponding causative verbs also mean differently in different contexts.

- ii. Approximation: Primarily a lexical strategy, learners may replace an unknown word with one that is more general (using ‘went’ for ‘drove’), or use exemplification (‘tables’ and ‘chairs’ for ‘furniture’). Use of adhoc and remote vocabulary is a problem. Instead of appropriate words, they give explanation, for example, instead of ‘commuting’, they say going and coming. Between phrasal verbs and their respective single words, there is confusion.
- iii. Prepositions like in/on/into, over/above, under/below create confusion
- iv. Overgeneralization/morphological creativity: When learners need to use lexical items or expressions over which they do not have full control, it is likely that they will transfer knowledge of the language system onto these items. For example, if a learner knows that the

- morpheme -ed is a past tense marker and wishes to use the past tense of the verb 'buy' he or she would say 'buyed' instead of 'bought'.
foots/feet, If I knowed the last cake I eated.
- v. Paraphrase: If a learner cannot remember vocabulary immediately, it is common to paraphrase by using a lexical item that is a near synonym for the word needed. Alternatively, a learner may sometimes use circumlocution by trying to explain what is meant, or describe the concept for which the words are not known.
 - vi. Word coinage: Sometimes, learners invent a new word for an unknown word, as in the common example of using 'air ball' for 'balloon'.
 - vii. Restructuring: After a learner has said something and realizes that it has not been understood, it is common to begin again and try to communicate the same message using different words. The new attempt usually follows a different grammatical pattern.
 - viii. Cooperative strategies: In face-to-face communication it is possible for a learner who is having difficulty communicating to get help from the listener. Getting help can take the form of asking someone if they have understood, appealing directly for help in saying something, or providing an unknown word.

2.5 At the level of common discourse

Actually, the task of the learner is not to acquire language but to learn a new code, a particular realization of human language. He has to use this new code in achieving a selected range of already familiar functions for which he uses the mother tongue. The learner therefore comes to the class room with an implicit knowledge of the target language in so far as it shares a range of communicative functions with his mother tongue. Further no two human languages are totally different from each other formally and share in varying degrees features in common. Hence the learner's task is to make explicit his knowledge of the target language by discovering for himself more of such similarities between the target language and his mother tongue. One of his learning tasks is, thus to learn what he needs to know about the second language. The other task he has to perform is to learn the differences between the two languages.

Though English and Oriya are cognate languages and are genetically related to each other by being members of the Indo-European family of languages and share many syntactic features in common, there are significant differences between the two languages. Whereas the word-order in English is fixed and it follows the pattern of subject-verb-object in the sentence structure Oriya, on the other hand, does not have a fixed word-order and favours subject-object verb sentence pattern in general. In both the languages, sentences are connected by various types of connectors.

2.6 At the level of discourse linkers

It is noticed that the process of sentence connection in both English and Odia are similar in several respects. Both the languages have logical connectors, coordinators, sub-ordinators, correlatives, time relators and place relators which bring about a connection between sentences. The devices of comparison ellipsis substitution and discourse reference are also helpful in the connection of sentences in both the languages. However, there are broad differences between the two languages with regard to the correlatives the position of the connectors and coordination of pronominals, comparison, and ellipsis. Following are some examples:

Sl.No.	Odia Sentences	Literal Translation of the Odia sentences in English	Actual sentence in English
1(Correlative Conjunctions)	<i>se na parishrami kimba bhadraloka atanti</i>	He not industrious or honest person is	He is neither industrious nor honest.
2 (Coordination of pronominals)	<i>se dukhita kintu bhanghi padinahanti</i>	He sad is but broken-hearted not	He is sad but not broken-hearted.
3 (Comparison)	<i>tume motharu adhika sundrara nuhen</i>	You from me more beautiful not is	You are not more beautiful than me.
4 (Ellipsis)	<i>mun jibaku chahen kintu jibinahin</i>	I to go want but not go	I want to go, but I won't.

3. Results and Discussion

It is obvious that the ideation and schema formation in case of such students is strongly guided by a strong socio-cultural and linguistic influence. In addition, errors in segmental and supra-segmental parts in English pose problem of communication among the students of Odisha those who speak Odia dialects such as Sambalpuri, Berhampuri, Baleswari and Koraputia as their respective MTs. The data presented in the above can be discussed under the research parameters of applied linguistics. Mother Tongue Influence (MTI) on ELL can be categorized under the presence of Divergences from RP; error analysis in speaking ESL; and other factors associated with SLL such as language transfer.

3.1 Divergences from Received Pronunciation (RP)

There are three kinds of divergences from RP found in Odia students speaking English which are categorized here as: i. Phonemic divergences ii. Phonetic divergences and iii. Distributional divergences.

- i. Phonemic divergences: The speakers use the same sound for two different phonemes of RP. For instance, the speakers use [s] for two different RP phonemes, viz, /s/ and /ʃ/.
- ii. Phonetic divergences: The speakers use a phonetic form which is deviant from the frequently used form of an RP phoneme but which is close to the latter, in terms of general phonetic quality, than to any other sounds in the system. For example, generally the vowel sound [a:] which is a slightly advanced form of RP /a:/. Whereas RP /a:/ is a back, open, unrounded vowel in Odia speaking English, [a:] is an advanced form. The two vowel sounds are, nevertheless, close to each other.
- iii. Distributional divergences - The speakers have an RP phoneme in their system and use it accurately in a word but in the case of some other words having that phoneme in a certain position they replace it with another sound. For example, the RP phoneme /u/ in their inventory and use it frequently, and accurately, in words like **good** and **put**, but some speakers have used [u:] in the place of [u] in words like **looks** and **book**.

3.2 Errors analysis (Corder 1975) in pronunciation and accent evaluation

- i. There are **Systematic errors** occurring due to a set pattern in the mind of the learner. These expressions are incorrect grammatically and distort the meaning. The occurrence of error is consistent, frequent and systematic. The errors committed by the learner of the second language so that he has stored knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar rules of his native language, these 'interference errors' are identified by contrastive analysis.
- ii. This can be categorized as **Developmental Errors** as they imply that the learner is processing the second language in his own way and these errors are similar to those that occur in mother tongue also.
- iii. This can also be categorized under **Fossilized errors** because these errors become ingrained like habits and they reappear despite remediation and correction.

3.3 Language transfer

The transfer of rules (Dechert, 1983) and structure as a 'set of habits' from the mother tongue to second language is one of the active strategies for many learners in sensing the language data as second language learners.

3.4 Lack of proper mental coding and decoding; and insufficient attempt or input of achieving fluency:

Although speech is primary, it is observed that the students fail to achieve the most minimum standard of fluency at primary and secondary school levels. This accounts for many reasons. As the case of Odisha, spoken Odia versus spoken English is a long lasting issue mostly associated with the vernacular medium schools. It often observed that the students of such schools go up to securing at an average of 85% or even more of marks in English in final examinations without possessing the basic level of competence to speak *ex tempore* in English even for two minutes continuously. We need not consider the fluency features any more here. Since this is the problem at the primary and secondary levels, this obviously hinders their competence even at the higher level. This is associated with the factors like their reluctance to speak, shyness or nervousness, lack of confidence leading to a number of mistakes in the English speaking activities.

4. Conclusion

Learners of a language may be able to use the grammar of a language, pronounce the sounds and speak fluently, but this may not mean that they communicate well. It has become an axiom of applied linguistics that 'There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (Hymes, 1971). Hymes continues: 'Just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as semantic rules perhaps control aspects of syntax, so rules of speech acts enter as a controlling factor for linguistic form as a whole.' The ability to communicate through speech is much more than the knowledge of the grammatical or phonological system of a language. Unless learners understand the 'rules' of speaking they may at best appear 'rude' or, at worst, cause offence. Much research has been conducted into these rules of speaking, and they are often taken into account in tests of speaking under terms like 'appropriacy' which is a construct and concerned with the way in which speakers use language according to rules of which they are hardly aware. These 'rules of speaking' are pragmatic in nature (Thomas, 2003). They are conventions that must usually be followed. This brings us to a very important point in understanding 'errors'. If a grammatical error is made in speaking, or a word is used incorrectly, the listener is likely to be very patient and make a great deal of effort to understand what is being communicated. (40)

Speakers also adopt and play roles in the use of language. In any particular context, the role the speaker is playing will have speaking rights attached to it. 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. The

learning of English, one of the European languages here undertakes an uphill task of cognitive as well as linguistic decoding.

4.1 Recommendations

- i. Students should be made aware of the similarities as well as differences in sound systems of both Odia and English right from the beginning and given the chance of speaking with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation.
- ii. Right from the beginning of formal education, same language and literary items should be taught in both the languages. For example, a story should be taught in both the languages by the respective Odia as well as English teachers. Same should be the case with teaching and learning of grammar.
- iii. In a predominant Odia speaking environment, use of both the languages of Odia and English in terms of code-mixing and code-switching should be encouraged.
- iv. There should be enough of activities done in order to improve spoken English as a part of BICS following role-play and given room to share their experiences in which they would be able to express their feelings, emotions and imaginations.

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