Folklore and Language: Ergativity and Agreement of Khortha Language in Jharkhand

Dr. Anita Kumari
Assistant Professor
Department of Arts and Humanities, RKDF University, Ranchi
Email id: anita.kumari81@gmail.com

Abstract:

Khortha speaking learner confronts difficulty in learning English pronunciation including sounds85v m,.f43 is due to ergativity in khortha. To discuss Ergativity in khortha, we should know what is ergativity. According to Oxford Dictionary Ergativity in linguistics means " A structuring property of the grammar of certain language" Khortha is one of the varieties of Angika. Angika itself is called the dialect of Maithili, which, in turn, was a dialect of Maithili, which, in turn, was a dialect of Hindi until 2003 when Maithili, via the 92nd Constitutional amendment, became one of the language of the Eighth Schedule to the constitution of India. Khortha is spoken in more than fifty villages in at least five to six districts of Jharkhand. Khortha in Jharkhand has a pattern of SOV language and it possesses most of the typological characteristics such as post-position, negation preceding the main verb, auxiliaries following the main verb, a marker of comparison the standard of comparison following the standard of comparison, etc. of a verb-final language. To maintain clarity in the presentation.

In this paper, we will discuss the structure of khortha and prove that it has ergativity which is marked phonologically if the subject NP ends in a vowel and by a suffix "e" when the subject NP ends in a constant sound.

Keywords: Ergativity, Linguistics, SOV Language, consonant sound, phonology

Introduction:

In Indian education, English plays a prominent role. Even though education in Hindi medium is free at every stage in government schools, the mushrooming of English medium schools make people ignore the government schools. Despite high fees being charged for English medium classes, there has been a scramble for them. The demand for seats in English

medium schools is a fact not limited to Jharkhand. It is found in almost every state. According to Nadkarni, this is because "English continues to be the only sure key to good jobs and careers in the country today." There are no lucrative jobs and careers open to those who are inadequate in English, no matter how highly and excellently they are educated. In India, it is only the poor and the disadvantaged who get educated in their mother tongue. This is indeed a sad state. On the other hand, though there is a rush for English medium schools it is indeed doubtful if teachers of English provide linguistic competency to learners. The country at present finds it difficult to find competent teachers to teach English as a subject of study as most of the teachers experience varied difficulties to teach English as a foreign language. In this regard, Faucett observes that "English has a large place to fill in education in India"

Multilingualism in India has always been respected with great appreciation. This has never been a social or individual deficiency. On the other hand, educated people speaking more than one language are always respected. This is because they can communicate with speakers of two or more languages to transmit their intellectual and philosophical thoughts. Bilingualism/multilingualism is indeed a social need. People code-switch and code-mix different languages, which causes the influence of one language on the other. The states in India have never been linguistically homogeneous. There has always been some form of multilingualism, between languages or dialects, or both. "There is not a single State or Union Territory that is monolingual." The example of the State of Haryana is divided into six or more linguistic or dialectal regions. "Braj is spoken in Faridabad, Mewati is spoken in Gurgaon, Bagri is spoken in Hissar and Sirsa, Bangru is spoken in Rohtak, Bhiwani, and Jind, and Khari Boli is spoken in Ambala and Yamuna Nagar". Amidst all this diversity in dialects in India, there is Hindi that is recognized and used as the official language of the state. Thus, in India, each state is multilingual.

Literature Review:

According to (." (David Crystal 2000) If the language has never been written down or recorded on a tape-and there are still many which have not-it is all there is. But, unlike the normal idea of an archive, which continues to exist even after the archivist is dead, the moment the last speaker of an unwritten or unrecorded language dies, the archive disappears

forever. When the language dies which has never been recorded in some way, it is as if it has never been."

According to Ohdar (2012), there has been a trend of using Khortha as the first language by the indigenous people of the state, though the other indigenous languages like Santhali, Bedia, and Kurmali also existed in the neighboring areas at the same time. At some point in time perhaps the area was inhabited by several smaller indigenous groups. It is possible that at some point in history, the smaller groups of indigenous speakers felt the urge of using a common language across communities. Khortha was the answer to resolve this communication crisis of a link language.

According to((Dangi 2012) It is worth mentioning that earlier literary works on Khortha (Dangi 2012) reported the presence of at least five different varieties of the language. While we sincerely acknowledge the effort and contributions of these researchers on the language, we would like to mention that most of these works lack Dialectologia 25 (2020), 25-43. ISSN: 2013-2247 29 a proper (linguistic) documentation methodology. 1 These gaps surely necessitate further attention in documenting the language scientifically.

According to (Atul Aman 2018) The current status and demographic profile of Khortha suggest its usage as a link language among the other indigenous language communities (i.e. Munda, Bedia, Kurmali, etc.) as well. The scope (usage) of the Khortha language within the various domains (i.e. administration, education, mass media, social divisions and religion, judiciary, and interpersonal communication.

According to (Rusa Bhowmik, 2019) is based on the language structure especially the case declensions and case markings including the non-nominative subject construction. Khortha has certain features as a result of undergoing several morphological changes like other regional languages which have been discussed.

Methodology:

The research was designed for khortha and to prove that it has ergativity which is marked phonologically. The research aimed to work on the noun morphology and If we compare the patterns of agreement in Khortha to that of Hindi, we would say that there is a great

difference between the two types of languages. The first type of language is those in which the subject-verb agreement and object verb agreement alternates based on some syntactic environments. Hindi and some other Indo-Aryan languages such as Marathi, Punjabi, Kangri, etc. are the languages in which the occurrence of a case marker with an NP works as a blocker between the verb and that NP of the agreement. in Khortha. The fieldwork was conducted in a village named Mausibari in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand. The focus of this paper is based on the case declensions that required scheduled elicitation i.e. translational. It is important to note that the questionnaire was prepared to analyze the data as a list of questions as prescribed. The observation was made by eliciting data with the help of a word list and a basic sentence list is used in Mausibari, Hazaribagh.

Ergativity and Agreement in Khortha:

We want to discuss the facts of the agreement system in khortha before I conclude the paper. If we compare the patterns of agreement in Khortha to that of Hindi, we would say that there is a great difference between the two types of languages. The first type of language is those in which the subject-verb agreement and object verb agreement alternates based on some syntactic environments. Hindi and some other Indo-Aryan languages such as Marathi, Punjabi, Kangri, etc. are the languages in which the occurrence of a case marker with an NP works as a blocker between the verb and that NP of the agreement. It is in this context that when an ergative case occurs with the subject NP, the verb cases to agree with the subject NP and it agrees with the object NP if it is unmarked. The syntactic environment is changed from subject-verb agreement to the object verb agreement that has been brought out by the postpositions e.g. ergative accusative and dative etc. has classified this type of language as the languages with a dual system of agreement. There is another type of language where the occurrence of the case-suffixes with the subject or object NPs does not function as the blocker for the agreement between the subject and verb. The subject-verb agreement is the primary system of agreement in these languages. The agreement system does not change the syntactic environments in these languages. In other words, there is no alternation of subject-verb agreement to object verb agreement in these languages and thus these languages have been classified as a single system of agreement. Khortha belongs to a single system and it is for this reason that the occurrence of ergative with the subject NP does not block the agreement between the verb and the subject.

It is a fact that transfer occurs less frequently in other domains of language than it does in phonology. And an L2 speaker may indeed attain an absolute command of the L2 syntax and semantics, yet fail in attaining the same skill in phonology. This shows how our L1 deep-rooted knowledge may deeply influence our language learning faculty, and how this knowledge can assert itself in even simple situations of our L2 production; it all depends on the intensity of the transfer process whether our phonological utterances, for instance, are intelligible or not to the native speaker. In this study, the most common strategy that was observed to be followed by language learners is the interlingual strategy, i.e. L1 transfer. This finding supports the contrastive analysis hypothesis. Apart from that, learners also referred to interlingual strategies such as over-generalization, reduction of complexity, and avoidance, all of which cannot be explained by solely relying on contrastive analysis, and seem to have more of a universal nature. Learners were also observed to render phonemic variations that resulted from factors other than pure differences between the phonological systems of the L1 and the L2. For instance, sociolinguistic factors were observed. Preceding the /i/ phoneme the Bengalis /s/ is produced as /ʃ/. Yet, in the collected data learners (females only) were observed to produce /s/ instead. Phonologically there is no need for that. Later, as research was intensified, it was found out that this type of pronunciation in khortha among female speakers, in particular, is an indication of politeness. This sociolinguistic feature in regional speakers had a significant impact on learners' phonological productions in English. Another feature was the production of /æ/ for /ɪ /. Since /æ/ does not exist in regional language speakers may be displaying a trend of rendering /æ/ for the 'a' spelling character. Such an internal change of the L1, regardless of how minor it may be, is significant in influencing L2 learners' phonological output in English.

In this section, I examine the case of Ergativity in Khortha in different types of sentences with intransitive and transitive verbs:

Subject in intransitive sentences:

i) chora- gher-gelo

The boy went home

ii) chori-kohe-gel-che

The girl has gone somewhere

iii) hɪm-sɪb-ɹgɪnwa-mɪ-bethɹl-cheliya

We were sitting in the courtyard

iv) Kɹha- j- rɹhɹlce

Where are you going

The example (i-iv) from Khortha shows that the verbs in these sentences are intransitive and the subject NPs in these examples are case marked with a convert nomination (i.e. zero cases from) as the gloss of the subject NPs shows. However, let us see examples with transitive verbs in Khortha and explain the form and function of the case marker that comes with the subject NPs in such examples. Subject intransitive sentences:

v) Chora-uta-kitɹba-pɹrhɹ – l- ke

The boy has read that book

vi) hɹmɹ-Ita-kitɹba-pɹrhɹ–l-i-y-e

I have read this book

vii) Tohe-uta-kitɹba-pɹrh-l-i-hi

You have read this book

viii) Chori-ita-cithiya-likh ɹ-l ɹ- hot-e

The girl must be written this letter

The above example (v-viii) shows a different pattern of the case n the subject NPs. The pattern is slightly difficult to discern here without some hint. The subject-NPs bear a phonological marking i.e. a marker of nasalization when the verbs changed into transitive in these examples. The verb agreement, however, does not show any change even when this phonological marker appears with the subject NPs. The phonological material that appears with the subject NPs has been termed, classified, and discussed as an ergative marker in Angika (khortha). The pattern of this ergativity in khortha is very difficult from the pattern of ergativity that we find in Hindi and some other Indo-Aryan languages such as Marathi, Punjabi, etc. The ergative case marker on the subject NPs in khortha does not function as a blocker for the agreement between the verb and the subject. This pattern of agreement and ergativity has been observed in many other languages. The present paper will also show in the third section that ergative case marked subject NPs can also show agreement with the verb in many languages. However, we must try to explain and claim this phonological marker with subject NP as ergative case marker.

ix) ham- ɹb-sut-bo

I will sleep now.

x) –Hame-abe-ɹpɹn-kɹma-kɹr-bo

I will do my work now

The above examples are very helpful to decide the nature and function of the ergative marker in khortha. The maker appears in two forms i.e. meaning if the subject NP ends in a vowel such as chora, boy, and chori girl and they occur with a transitive verb in the sentence, the ergative is marked using a maker of nasalization as we see in example (v and viii). However, if the subject NP ends in a consonant, the ergative marker appears with a nasalized vowel i.e. e when the verb is a transitive one in the sentence. This is what we see in examples (vi-vii & ix-x). The ungrammatically of(ix-x) ensures that this extra phonological material and nasalized vowel in Khortha must be very important from the point of view of the structure of the language. Based on the above discussion, we can claim that the markers (i.e. /e/) that appears with the subject NP with the transitive verb is an ergative marker in Khortha. Moreover, the example (x) adds up to another important point for the marking of the Ergativity in Khortha. The example (x) has a transitive verb and it is conjugated with future indefinite tense, and it still shows the ergative case with the subject NP. This is something very unusual concerning the availability of ergative cases in some Indo-Aryan languages is concerned.

Discussion of Findings:

The following were the findings of the Phonological Effect of the Khortha Language on the English Language. Under this phonological aspect, the following factors were observed as been responsible for the deviant pronunciation of words: they are phonemic differences, wrong placement of stress, interference of vowel harmony, interference of vowel nasalization system, and insertion of vowels between consonant clusters.

- Phonemic differences between the two languages: it was observed that the pronunciation problems encountered by students are a result of the phonemic differences between the L1 and the English language. As a result of these differences, the L1 learners of English tend to 63 substitutes English dental fricative /th/ and /ð/ for either /t/ or /d/. This constitutes part of the reason we should "note the distinctive characteristics of each consonant and pay special attention to the three consonants which do not occur in L1. These consonants are /ɵ/, /∂ / and /ɜ/ and experiences show that they are usually substituted with other consonants which occur in the learner's mother tongue"

- Wrong placement of stress on English words: next to this problem of phonemic differences is the wrong placement of stress on some English words which accounted for students of the total number of deviant pronunciations of words. This problem is not only attributed to the fact that 'the Native languages are syllable time languages' while ' the English language is stress- time language' but to the fact that 'there are no clearly defined rules governing the stress pattern of words of three or more syllables"

- Interference of vowel nasalization system: I observed that the use of nasalization in the native language affects the learners of English as a Second Language. Findings showed that the deviant pronunciation is a result of this factor. The majority of the students were having problems with the sounds "y, n, w", especially when they occur in the initial position of words. For instance, the phoneme "n" is usually added at the beginning of the word young, hence pronouncing the word as "Nyoung". But this problem is not peculiar to the students' pronunciation only but also reflects in their writings. The students interchanged the nasal sounds /m/ and /n/. For example, the word 'man' is pronounced as 'mam' thereby replacing 'n' with 'm', other examples include cane as "came", own as owm.

- Interference of native vowel harmony: One of the concepts that were also observed was the interference of the vowel harmony system into the English language, which resulted in the wrong pronunciation of some of the words that were presented in chapter four. From the words, the students were given to pronounce, it was also observed that some words were also wrongly pronounced due to this interference of vowel harmony, an example is seen in the pronunciation of 'table' as 'tabulu'

- Insertion of vowels between consonant clusters: absence of consonant clusters in the native language could be a major reason why the students insert vowels between consonant clusters. This accounted for the pronunciation problem "in many Indian languages, there are no consonant clusters but in English, there may be an initial cluster of two or three consonants". l observed that learners of English tend to insert a vowel before a syllabic consonant to simplify the pronunciation. An example is seen in the pronunciation of the word 'Scrap' as 'Sucrap'. Syntactical Effect of the native language on the English language. Apart from the problem of the wrong use of tenses

which was partly traced to the way native language shows tenses by not inflecting the verbs, the other two syntactical problems (which have to do with omission/wrong use of concord and wrong use of the preposition) occurred mainly as a result of the students either making overgeneralization or the inconsistencies in the rules of the English language. From the findings, one could state that the syntax of the native language does not hinder the effective learning and proficiency of the English language rather the inconsistencies in the rules of the English language contributed to the problems that resulted in the ungrammatical sentences.

Conclusion:

Languages, like cultures, are rarely sufficient in themselves. The necessity of social communication brings the speaker of one language into direct or indirect contact with a different language. The language of the people that are looked upon as a center of culture is naturally far more likely to exert an appreciable influence on other languages spoken in its vicinity than to be influenced by them. Interference or influence can be seen concerning the transfer of elements of one language to another at various levels, especially phonological, grammatical, and lexical. Phonological interference is the influence of accent, stress, intonation, etc. Grammatical interference is defined in terms of word order, pronouns, determinants, tense, etc of the first language influencing the second language. Lexical influence includes borrowing and lending of words from one language and using that according to their native language accent. Code-switching and code-mixing are one of the very important aspects of influence between two languages. Code or language switching occurs when a bilingual individual alternates between two languages. A bilingual person is said to be able to communicate to a varying extent in a second language. This mostly happens when the individual is considerably skilled in the second language or those who make irregular use of a second language. This happens with both, the first language and the second language.

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