



THE PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF ODISIA LANGUAGE: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT Phonology is the study of sound patterns of a particular language. More popularly known as the study of mental representation of contrastive sound units. In other words the study of how speech sounds structure themselves to participate in higher forms and functions in languages. Odia the state language of Odisha, is spoken by nearly thirty five million people as mother tongue inside and outside Odisha province and nearly half figure reported here also speak this language as their other tongue. Odia is an essential tool for anyone planning to work among people of Odisha as ninety percent of the state's population uses it for their major purposes. Odia is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language, belongs to Indo-Aryan language family. From the semantic point of view Odia words can be divided into functional word, grammatical word, lexical word, contains word, compositional word, lexicalized word, onomatopoeic word etc.

KEYWORDS : LANGUAGE, ODISIA, SPEECH, PHONOLOGY, LETTER

A phonological study refers to the inventory of segments in a particular language and their successful arrangement in producing meaning for that particular language. Odia phonological system may be analysed from the following points of view-

- a. Segmental phonology
- b. Suprasegmental phonology

Odia Odia has thirty seven segmental phonemes and one suprasegmental phoneme. Out of thirty seven segmental phonemes six vowels and thirty one consonants are found in the language. Nasalization is the only suprasegmental phoneme found in Odia which occurs with all the vowels. There are six vowels in Odia. They are represented in this presentation as A, a, i, u, e and o. It is important to note that phonemically speaking there is no contrast between long and short vowels in the language. The letters of Odia syllabus traditionally have been arranged into five groups without referring to fundamental similarities shape. We may refer to these groups as – spikes, hooks, handles, hoops and hatracks for teaching purpose. However, they have been found useful for the discussion of phonology, so far the pedagogical matter is concerned. Here are some more discussions in this regard, this helps us to teach scripts by giving certain clues to the learner. The phonological patterns of any particular language reminded us two important observations. One we can find in Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics (1971) and another in language (1923) Linguists observe, a list of phonemes alone is not sufficient to give a clear picture of the pattern of a particular language. A list of combinations of the phonemes also to be mentioned. The combinations of phonemes may be stated as word-initial and word final clusters; they can be referred to in terms of onsets, peaks and codas of syllables – for example /pot/, /p/ is the onset, /o/ is the peak and /t/ is the coda. The vowel in a syllable is always mentioned as the peak, the consonant before the vowel is the onset and the consonant after the vowel is coda. When we see the phonological system of Odia language, we notice when n is the first member in a consonant cluster other than the palatal series it is dental – dantA (tooth), when n occurs before c, ch, j, jh it has a slight palatal quality – kAnca (raw), sAnjA (evening). When N is the first member in a consonant cluster it is a retroflex nasal and not a flap- ANTA (waist) ANDA (egg). D has a retroflex flap allophone R in inter vocalic and final positions. In most noninitial positions that in pronounced as R. This is similar to the pronunciation of tt in some varieties of English. All vowels in Odia can be nasalized. Vowels occurring in sequence sometimes become diphthongs. The vowel 'O' occurs finally only in vocatives. In Odia, L, R, Rh, N never occur initially. D, Dh in medial and final positions became R, Rh. W occurs rarely and in loan words, clusters only. R and Rh are variants of D, Dh in Odia, though stress is not phonemic in Odia, yet it plays a prominent role in separating one word from another in a speech chain. Odia follows a particular stress pattern by stressing the penultimate syllable with some exception towards ending in /a/ vowel. The vowels in monosyllable are slightly longer in duration than in other positions. Thus, the vowel is dAs in ten when pronounced in isolation is slightly longer than the vowel in the same word pronounced slowly with a final vowel dAsA. There is no dearth of comparative

work in linguistics comparing different in linguistic aspects for pedagogical purposes. However, there is only a handful amount of research reporting available when we consider the case of Odia language. We observe the polite and honorific words in Odia are a kind of courtesy substitute, bARA, mAjhiA and sanA are the three terms indicating elder, middle and youngest respectively. For example – bARA bhai (elder brother), bARA bohu (elder daughter-in-law), mAjhiA bhai (middle brother), mAjhiA bhAuNi (middle sister), mAjhiA bihu (middle daughter in law), sanA bhai (younger brother), sanA bhAuNi (younger sister) etc. Similarly although proper names are generally non-connnotative, most Odia names have meanings. For example male names like Bijaya, Ananda, Basanta have the meanings victory, delight and spring respectively. Similarly female names like Sulochana, Asha, Usha have the meanings – the one with beautiful eyes, hope and dawn respectively. The nicknames continue to remain along with the proper names throughout the life of a person. The days of a week are named after planets. Two different calendars are solar and the other lunar are prevalent in India. Following the moon, a month is divided into two pAkhyA (fortnight), sukLA pAkhyA (bright fortnight) and Krushna pakhyaA (dark fortnight). Three seasons are generally recognized in the colloquial parlance in Odisha, GrishmA or khArA (summer), shitA (winter), bArshA (rainy). All such examples are based on pronunciation. These examples show the uniqueness of phonological pattern of Odia language. As we notice, language being essentially a left-hemisphere function, is a product of evolution. The process of evolution is, in a way, reflected in the biological time table that is found in the development of a child's linguistic ability. Linguist says, the child does not wake up one morning with a fully formed language in his brain. It is acquired by stages, each stage more closely approximating to the language of the adults around him. These stages are very similar irrespective of whether the child is acquiring Odia, Spanish, Hindi or Telugu. All children acquire the systems, patterns or rules of the language of their speech community in stages of increasing complexity. From the semantic point of view Odia words can be divided into Functional word, Grammatical word, Lexical word, contain word, Compositional word, Lexicalized word, Onomatopoeic word etc. Derivational Morphology which is responsible for structuration of Odia Lexicon may be analyzed under the following points-

- i. Morphological Derived Form
- ii. Compound
- iii. Incorporation etc.

Because of structure or form relation. Phonology here plays an active role. Sound systems play crucial role for formation of Lexical words. Odia language, the sixth classical language of India, is unique in its sound pattern. The phonological pattern of Odia language is comparatively attractive than Bengali, Assamese, Maithili. The pronunciation and formation of sounds in Odia language is really remarkable. Western scholars like G. h. Grierson in his work Linguistic survey of India, Volume V, Part II (1803 -1923). John Beams in his work – 'A Comparative Grammar' (1970) discussed in nutshell the phonological systems of Odia language in some other scholarly

publications like A. Souton's 'Introductory Grammar of the Odia Language' (1831), A.N.Youngs 'The first lesson in Odia' (1912), P. Majumdar's 'A Historical Phonology of Odia' (1970) and D.P.Pattanaik's 'Controlled Historical Re construction of Odia, Assamese, Bengali and Hindi (1986) we noticed how the phonological system of Odia Language attracted scholars to do research on the same because of its feathery and features of uniqueness in the language both in form and function.

We may say, though Odia has retained most of the Indo Aryan characteristics it has undergone changes over the period of time due to its contact with the surrounding Dravidian and Munda languages, both in pronunciation and in other respect of linguistic factors. It is described to be the oldest among all languages of Eastern India. Odia, is the sixth classical language of India. As we know, language is a resource with which human beings structure and organise their experience. It is through language are constructs information, attitudes, ideas or point of views and passes them on to others. Similarly word is the unit of oral communication, a series of words make a sentence, and that communicates an idea, a thought etc. The morphology of Odia deals with two types of morphemes: free and bound for formation of derivational words and inflectional forms. Besides, primary words made of free morphemes, it is derived words made of free + free, bound + bound, and free + bound morphemes. The bound morphemes are mainly derivative affixes which are suffixed, prefixed or infix. All these words are classified under three board from classes, nominals, verbals and functors. The nominal constitute nouns, pronouns and adjectives and these are inflected with the categories of number, gender and case. The verbals are mainly action words and are inflected with the categories of tense, mood aspects etc. The function words are indeclinable; therefore do not take any morphological marker.

The etymology and development of Odia narrate how society and culture simultaneously contribute for richness. Odia word may be defined as any linguistic unit functioning under a prominent stress. The stem puts the foundation in the inner most layer for the formation of any word except function words. The Odia verbal system is at once simple and complete. It has two types of verb forms-non-finite and finite. The non-finite forms are obtained with the addition of aspectual affixes to the verb root and are used for construction of compound verb phrases and sentences. Linguistically speaking the language has a long history. Still we have proofs in inscription, palm leaf, copper plates, temples, mutts and moreover in regional varieties. The origin and development of Odia language is really remarkable.

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11. Otto Jespersen, Language (1923), P. 412 - "No theme in Linguistic science is more often and more columniously treated than this and by scholars of every grade and tendency- the greater part of what is said and written upon it is mere windy talk".