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**COMPs in Assamese:  
Implications For Second Language Acquisition**

*Thesis  
submitted by*

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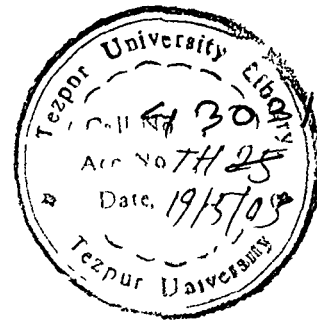
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*Under the guidance of*

**Prof. M.M.Sarma and Dr.P.Madhavan**

*for the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**



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## Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled: "**COMPs in Assamese: Implications for Second Language Acquisition**", submitted by Madhumita Barbora, a research scholar in the *Department of English and Foreign Languages, Tezpur University, Tezpur*, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a record of an original research work carried out by her under our supervision and guidance. The thesis has fulfilled all requirements and in our opinion has reached the standard needed for submission. The results embodied in this thesis have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.



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## Abstract

In this dissertation, we examine: (i) the COMP position in Assamese, and (ii) the acquisition of English (L2) by native Assamese (L1) speakers in a formal set-up. Our study of the COMP position shows that in [+declarative] finite complement clauses, the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* are obligatorily present. The quotative *buli* has similar properties like the Bangla *bole* and the oriya *boli*. The particle *ze* in the clause peripheral position is a complementizer and in the clause internal position a focus marker. The peripheral *ze* occurs only in [+ declarative] constructions. *Buli* occurs in [ $\pm$  wh] constructions. Normally, a [+ wh] construction has a null particle in the COMP position. Whenever *buli* occurs in a [+ wh] construction it gives a wide scope reading. The null-Prt CP gives only narrow scope reading. As in direct wh- questions, in direct yes-no questions too the COMP position has a null particle. Our examination of the COMP position is mainly to highlight the parametric differences between English (L2) and Assamese (L1) [ $\pm$  wh] constructions. Our study of the acquisition of direct wh- and yes no questions and the finite complement clauses show that the degree of success depends largely on how the parameter values of the L2 is set as against that of the L1 parameters. UG operates independently in the L2 acquisition process. But parameter setting, mother tongue influence, the teaching / learning environment and the quality of input determines the degree of success. This is true for the learners who have maximum exposure as well as those who have minimum exposure to the target language.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter One: Linguistic Universal and Language Acquisition

1.0	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Input Problems.....	6
1.1.1	Input Problems in L1 Acquisition.....	6
1.1.2	Input Problems in L2 Acquisition.....	11
1.2	Factors Affecting L2 Acquisition.....	12
1.2.1	Mother tongue Influence.....	12
1.2.2	Age of the Learner.....	14
1.2.3	Fossilization.....	15
1.2.4	Quality of Input.....	15
1.3	Universal Grammar.....	16
1.4	Aims and Objectives of the Study.....	24
1.4.1	The COMP Position.....	24
1.4.2	Background.....	26
1.4.3	Position of English (L2) in Assam.....	31
1.4.3.1	Assamese Medium Schools versus English Medium Schools.....	32
1.5	General Outlay of the Thesis.....	36

### Chapter Two: Finite Complement Clauses in Assamese

1	Intorduction.....	39
2.1	Finite Complement Clauses in Assamese.....	40
2.1.1	Complementizer Particles and wh- words Co-occurrence Facts.....	43
2.2	The <i>buli</i> -CP.....	46
2.2.1	The status of <i>buli</i> -CP.....	46
2.2.2	Properties of the <i>buli</i> -CP.....	49
2.2.2.1	Properties of <i>bole</i> -CP and <i>boli</i> -CP.....	51
2.3	The <i>ze</i> – CP.....	57
2.3.1	The <i>je</i> – CP in Bangla and Oriya.....	59
2.3.1.1	The <i>je</i> - CP in Bangla.....	59
2.3.1.2	The <i>je</i> -CP in Oriya.....	64
2.3.2	Internal <i>ze</i> in Assamese.....	67
2.3.2.1	Focus and Focus Position in Assamese.....	71

2.3.3	Status of the Peripheral <i>ze</i> .....	83
2.3.4	<i>ze</i> as a Wh-Operator .....	85
2.4	The null-Prt CP .....	90
2.4.1	The null-Prt CP in Bangla .....	94
2.5	Conclusion .....	96
<b>Chapter Three: Yes- no Questions in Assamese</b>		
2	Introduction .....	99
3.1	Data .....	100
3.1.1	The Status of the Particle <i>ne</i> .....	103
3.1.1.1	Disjunct in Assamese .....	104
3.1.1.2	Disjunct in Interrogative Clauses .....	105
3.2	Background.....	107
3.2.1	Disjunction in English .....	107
3.2.2	Disjunction in Kannada and Malayalam .....	112
3.2.2.1	Disjunction in Kannada .....	112
3.2.2.2	Disjunction in Malayalam.....	121
3.3	Disjunction in Complex Clauses.....	126
3.3.1	<i>ba</i> in Complex Clauses .....	126
3.3.2	<i>ne</i> in Complex Clauses .....	130
3.4	The Disjunct Phrase in Assamese .....	134
3.4.1	<i>nai</i> and <i>ki</i> in Disjunct Phrase.....	134
3.4.1.1	<i>nai</i> in Disjunct Phrase .....	135
3.4.1.2	<i>ki</i> in Disjunct Phrase .....	137
3.4.2	Scope Facts and Interpretation .....	140
3.4.2.1	Scope Facts in Assamese Disjunct Construction .....	142
3.4.2.1.1	Scope Facts of <i>ba</i> .....	142
3.4.2.1.2	Scope Facts of <i>ne</i> .....	146
3.4.2.2	Interpretation in the Assamese Disjunct Construction .....	147
3.5	Conclusion .....	152
<b>Chapter Four: Acquisition of Direct wh- and yes-no Questions</b>		
4.0	Introduction.....	154
4.1	Interrogatives in English and Assamese .....	160
4.1.1	Interrogatives in English .....	161
4.1.2	Interrogatives in Assamese .....	163

4.2 Data Collection.....	167
4.2.1 Production Tasks .....	169
4.2.2 Participants .....	170
4.2.3 Production Task Analysis .....	173
4.3 Analysis of the Preliminary Tasks .....	174
4.3.1 Analysis of Task 1 .....	175
4.3.2 Analysis of Task 2 .....	180
4.4 Analysis of the direct wh- and <i>yes-no</i> questions .....	186
4.4.1 Arrangement of Jumbled words in the Right Wood Order .....	187
4.4.1.1. Task 1a. direct wh- questions .....	187
4.4.1.2 Analysis of Task 1b.....	193
4.4.1.3 Analysis of Task 1c .....	194
4.4.2 Analysis of Task 2 .....	196
4.4.3 Analysis of Task 3 .....	200
4.5 Conclusion .....	205
<b>Chapter Five: Acquisition of Finite Complement Clauses</b>	
5.0 Introduction .....	206
5.1. Finite Complement Clauses .....	207
5.1.1 Finite Complement Clauses in Assamese.....	208
5.2 Data Collection .....	212
5.3 Analysis of the [+ declarative] Finite Complement Clauses .....	215
5.3.1 Analysis of Task 4 .....	215
5.3.2 Analysis of Task 5 .....	222
5.4 Analysis of [+wh] Finite Complement Clauses .....	223
5.4.1 Analysis of Task 6 .....	224
5.4.2 Analysis of Task 7 .....	227
5.5 Conclusion .....	231
References .....	234
Appendix	



## Chapter One

### Linguistic Universal and Language Acquisition

#### 1.0 Introduction:

Every normal child, by the age of four is able to speak and understand a language like an adult in all its complexities and intricacies. This phenomenon has led linguists to assume that there must be some kind of prior knowledge of the language available, which enables the child to arrive at the adult like language. Research on language acquisition has shown that children generally produce their first recognizable word by the age of twelve months. For the next six months or so, there is little apparent evidence of grammatical development. In these six months, the young learners increase their vocabulary by three words a month. And by the age of eighteen months the first sign of acquisition are obvious. Children around this age make productive use of inflections (plural nouns, participles). And by the age of four, they are able to understand and use language like an adult and produce sentences, which they have never heard before. How do children arrive at an adult like language in such a short period of time? How do children produce and understand sentences that they have never heard before? Can mere listening to adults facilitate the language acquisition process? Queries of this kind have led researchers to assume that mere exposure to the target language may not be sufficient to acquire a language. Exposure to the target language does trigger the acquisition process. But the kind of input learners are exposed to is not adequate. Learners must have prior knowledge of some kind that facilitates the acquisition process. This prior knowledge comes in the form of the grammatical principles and rules which linguists assume are innate in the human brain. The innate presence of the grammatical principles and rules which constitutes the *linguistic competence* enable children to acquire a language. Normally children acquire

the language of the speech community they are born in. There are, however, situations where children may not acquire the language of the speech community they are born in. This usually happens to children who are adopted by families belonging to another speech community. In such situations they acquire the language of their foster parents. Two factors then play an important role in the language acquisition process: one, the input which triggers the acquisition process, and two, prior knowledge of the grammatical principles and rules which facilitates the acquisition process.

Evidence from child first language acquisition has led Chomsky (1986a) to raise three fundamental questions with regard to adult native speakers knowledge and use of language, and, child first language acquisition. These three fundamental questions are:

- 1:1a. What constitutes knowledge of language?
- b. How is such knowledge acquired?
- c. How is such knowledge put to use?

In the generative grammar framework the knowledge of language is technically termed as linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is the unconscious knowledge that enables both adults and children alike to understand and produce sentences that they have never heard or used before. Linguistic competence makes native speakers judge grammatical sentences from ungrammatical ones. The grammar representing one's unconscious knowledge is thus a mental construct, it is psychologically real and it underlies language use. This unconscious knowledge is systematic and rule-governed. Chomsky argues that this underlying abstract system of principles and rules is innate in the human brain and it provides the prior knowledge to children and

thus enables them to arrive at the adult language in all its intricacies and complexities Knowledge of language or linguistic competence, which is universal, is technically termed as Universal Grammar (UG hereafter). According to Chomsky, the innate knowledge of language, i.e. UG, mediates the acquisition process. What children hear from adults work as the input and this triggers the acquisition process. The schema in (1:2) below shows how the language acquisition process is initiated with the triggering of the input.



With the triggering of the input, UG constrains the language learner from acquiring ungrammatical sentences. This is possible because UG generates only grammatical constructions. The innate grammatical principles and rules in UG help children to arrive at the internalized system i.e. the grammar which allows them to understand language produced by others as well as to produce language themselves. The first question *what constitutes knowledge of language?* analyses the content of UG. The second question *how children acquire knowledge of language?* probes into how children arrive at the linguistic competence of an adult native speaker. The third question *how is such knowledge put to use?* deals with the *performance* of adults and children alike. Performance is the concrete realization of competence. According to Chomsky, performance may not always reflect the linguistic competence of a learner. While speaking, a person may be distracted, tired and the like. Of the three questions in section 1.1, researchers are mainly concerned with the first two questions for two reasons: one, to arrive at a theory of universal grammar which can adequately explain the underlying principles and rules in natural languages and, two, to understand how these underlying principles facilitate the acquisition process in a learner.

In normal circumstances, a person acquires more than one language. A language acquired for the first time is technically termed as the *first language* (L1, hereafter). Any language acquired after L1 is technically termed as the *second language* (L2, hereafter). There is no argument amongst researchers regarding the role of UG in L1 acquisition. But when it comes to the acquisition of an L2, researchers are divided in their views about the role UG plays in the acquisition process. This is because acquisition of an L2 is not as successful as that of an L1. The attempts to account for the difference in the degree of success in L1 and L2 acquisition have led in the formulation of three hypotheses about the accessibility of UG in L2 acquisition. The first is the *no-access hypothesis*, which claims that no aspect of UG is available to the L2 learner. The second is the *partial access hypothesis*, which claims that only L1 instantiated principle and L1 instantiated parameter values of UG are available to the learner. The third, called the *full-access hypothesis*, asserts that UG in its entirety constrains the L2 acquisition process. L2 acquisition is not as straightforward as L1 acquisition. Research on L2 acquisition has shown that there are heterogeneous factors that may influence the acquisition process. It is the influence of these factors, *external* to the language faculty that has resulted in three different positions on the role of UG in L2 acquisition process.

L1 is *primary* in the sense that it is the first language a learner acquires in his / her life. The first language is normally the mother tongue of the learner and it bears social, emotional and psychological significance to the learner. Any language that comes after the first language is technically termed the second language. There is no specific age at which one can acquire a second language. Unlike L1, L2 is *non-primary* to the learner socially, emotionally and psychologically. L1 is acquired *naturally* and the acquisition process starts when the child is around twelve months. While L2 is acquired either naturally, or *artificially* by both children and adults. A language is acquired naturally

when the learner is not conscious of the acquisition process. Situations where learning of a language, is deliberate and conscious, the acquisition process is regarded as artificial. This usually takes place in a formal situation like the classroom. *Formal* L2 acquisition is artificial while *informal* L2 acquisition is natural. Besides these basic differences, factors like the attitude of the learner, the age of the learner, the social background of the learner, the influence of the learner's mother tongue and the environment in which the learner acquires the second language may influence the L2 acquisition process.

Notwithstanding the role of the external factors in L2 acquisition, researchers working within the generative framework aim at establishing the role of UG in the acquisition process. The role of UG in child first language acquisition is established by the *input problems*. The three input problems (or *projection* or *learnability* problems) are *underdetermination*, *degeneracy* and *negative evidence*. Out of these three input problems, at least one, namely, underdetermination provides crucial evidence of the availability of UG in child first language. Supporters of the *full access* hypothesis argue that the input problems can be discerned in L2 acquisition, more specifically, in natural L2 acquisition. More than *child* L2 acquisition attempts are being made to see whether input problems affect adult L2 acquisition too. The general argument in language acquisition is, after adolescence learners are not able to acquire a second language as successfully as they do during the pre-adolescence period since they cross the *critical period*. Recent research in *adult* L2 acquisition has shown that the age of the learner is not detrimental to the acquisition of a language. An L2 learner can acquire a language even after puberty i.e., after she / he crosses the critical period. In case of *formal* L2 acquisition the general argument is that learners learn the rules of the target language consciously. Deliberate and conscious teaching of the grammatical rules does not provide any clue as to the role of UG. Hence there has been a conscious attempt to separate pedagogical L2 acquisition from natural L2 acquisition.

The discussion of certain crucial issues relating to L1 and L2 acquisition in the foregoing paragraphs has brought into focus three crucial factors that affect the acquisition process. These factors are (a) input problems in L1 and L2 acquisition (b) influence of external factors in L2 acquisition and (c) the content of UG. In the sections to follow we shall look in detail into these factors: in section 1.1.1 we look at the input problems in L1 and L2 acquisition, in 1.1.2 we examine the extra-linguistic factors and in 1.1.3 the content of UG.

## **1.1 Input Problems**

White (1989) argues that the mismatch between the input children receive and the end result which they arrive at indicate that input is not free from problems. The three major input problems in language acquisition are: *underdetermination*, *degeneracy* and *negative evidence*. These input problems provide evidence that UG mediates in the acquisition process. In the next two sub-sections we look at the input problems in first language in section 1.1.1 and second language acquisition in 1.1.2.

### **1.1.1 Input Problems in L1 Acquisition**

Of the three input problems, *underdetermination* provides crucial evidence of the presence of UG in the language acquisition process. The problem of underdetermination occurs when the input cannot fully determine the final grammar the learner arrives at. The linguistic competence of the learner includes properties which are not immediately obvious and which are not explicitly taught. The grammar acquired by the learner goes far beyond the actual sentences that the learner is exposed to. Take for instance the distribution of the complementizer *that* in English. The complementizer *that* is optional in a variety

of structures in English as shown in the complex sentences (1:3- 1:5) from White (1989, 14 -16) below:

1:3.a. I think that John is a fool.

b. I think John is a fool.

1:4.a. The girl that I met yesterday was very tall.

b. The girl I met yesterday was very tall.

1:5.a. Who do you think that Mary met yesterday?

b. Who do you think Mary met yesterday?

The sentences (1:3) to (1:5) show that the complementizer *that* in English is optional. However, there are cases where the deletion of the complementizer *that* is obligatory. The sentences in (1:6) from White (1989, 19) show that the complementizer *that* is obligatorily dropped.

1:6.a. Who do you think arrived yesterday?

b.\* Who do you think that arrived yesterday?

In (1:6a) the complementizer *that* is obligatorily dropped when the subject of the lower clause moves to the left periphery of the complex structure. In (1:5) we see that the complementizer *that* is optional: when the object of the lower clause moves out of the clause the complementizer may or may not be dropped. The acquisition problem is that a learner working out a hypothesis on the basis of data such as in (1:3 - 1:5), will assume that the occurrence of the complementizer *that* is optional in English. Then how does the learner come to know the restrictions on the complementizer in (1:6)? The input data to which the learner is exposed do not explicitly deal with the seemingly idiosyncratic features of the language. Nor does the adult native speaker clearly explain this restriction. Yet the learner is able to infer the 'idiosyncratic' behaviour of the

complementizer. This clearly indicates that prior knowledge of the underlying principles of the language helps the learner to arrive at the right conclusion.

The second input problem is *degeneracy*. Miller and Chomsky (1963) state that the kind of input a learner is exposed to is normally degenerate. The language that the learner hears is not always perfect. Adults make mistakes, hesitate, change their minds about what they are going to say, etc. Degenerate input includes ungrammatical or partial forms as well as fully grammatical ones. The degenerate input in no way helps the learner to know which aspect of the input is grammatical and which is ungrammatical. This problem provides another argument in support of UG. White (1989) points out that degenerate input does not affect the acquisition process because learners have prior knowledge provided by UG. Some researchers in developmental psycholinguistics have shown that children are rarely exposed to degenerate input. Adults talking to young children tend to use short sentences and phrases. White (1989) argues that this kind of input may remove the confusion in the young children but the problem of underdetermination would persist. The L1 learner would have no problem in distinguishing a grammatical sentence from an ungrammatical one. But the totally grammatical input would still underdetermine the adult grammar. Simplified input fails to exemplify all sorts of complex properties of language, making the acquisition problem more difficult. Properties of complex sentences are not simply the sum of the properties of simple sentences. White argues that children may initially find it helpful, but simplified input in no way solves the acquisition problem. For it is seen that the L1 learners arrive at a level of competence that is beyond the non-degenerate input available to them. This is possible due to under-determination.



The third input problem is how L1 learners come to know about ungrammaticality. Knowledge of ungrammaticality comes from negative evidence. Learners have to be provided with negative evidence when they make errors i.e., they should be told (repeatedly) that these constructions are not acceptable in the language. Usually this is provided by the adult native speakers. Research in L1 acquisition shows that children do not normally get corrected when they make mistakes (Brown and Hanlon 1970) and when they make mistakes in grammatical forms and are corrected they usually ignore it (Braine 1971). Linguists like Hirsh-Pasek et al. (1984), Bohannon and Stanowicz (1988) suggest that negative evidence is available in first language acquisition. However, there are various problems with the kind of negative evidence provided. Hirsh-Pasek et al (1984) show that mothers repeat and correct young children's ungrammatical forms. But they also repeat and rephrase grammatical sentences as well. This creates confusion in the child for she / he cannot know for sure which particular repetition signals that the utterance is incorrect. Such repetition is most frequent with young children, but it stops long before the course of language acquisition is completed. On the other hand Bohannon and Stanowicz (1988) show that a majority of the utterances do not receive rephrasing and repetitions at all. They point out that the kinds of errors that parents responded to are not at all the kind of things the principles of UG are concerned with. Children may have access to negative input but negative evidence is irrelevant in the absence of certain kinds of errors. It turns out that there are many logically possible errors which children never make. White (1989) argues that children may produce forms which are incorrect from the adult's point of view, but the errors that they make are far more limited in type than might be expected. Chomsky (1981) argues that children proceed largely on the basis of positive evidence. The assumption in generative grammar is that certain hypotheses about language are never entertained by the child in the first place; the knowledge about what is not possible stems from UG. The biological endowment UG consists of negative

constraints, principles that provide information about what languages may not do. This built – in knowledge in some sense compensates for the lack of availability of negative input. For instance the child already knows the constraints on movement in sentences like (1:5) above. She / he realizes that a sentence like (1:5b) is bad due to the Empty Category Principle (ECP).

Chomsky (1981) argues that indirect negative evidence may be more relevant than direct negative evidence in language acquisition. Research on L1 acquisition shows that learners normally ignore direct negative evidence. Learners do produce ungrammatical constructions from the adult point of view, but after a certain interval tend to avoid the ungrammatical constructions when they notice the non-occurrence of certain sentence types and conclude that they are not permissible in the language. The child learner hypothesizes the grammar and arrives at an interlanguage (IL hereafter). At different stages of the acquisition process the IL of the learner undergoes changes. IL is not adult language, but the process of internal hypothesizing of the target language finally leads the learner to the adult grammar. In other words the linguistic competence of the learner is (more or less) at par with that of an adult. Chomsky (1981) states that there are complicating factors in the language acquisition process. For instance, in some cases, the process of maturation may affect the acquisition process while in certain cases frequency effects may intervene the acquisition process. Normally in L1 acquisition, factors external to the mental process, does not affect the acquisition process. It is in L2 acquisition that the effect of extra linguistic factors is evident. This of course depends on the situation in which the second language is acquired.

### 1.1.2 Input Problems in L2 Acquisition

In second language acquisition (SLA), Chomsky's (1986a) second question *how is knowledge of language acquired?* is of primary concern to researchers. The main focus in this area of research is to find out to what extent UG mediates in L2 acquisition. Research in L2 acquisition has shown that learners do not achieve total success in their second language as they do in their first language.

Supporters of the *full-access* hypothesis claim that there is a parallel between L1 and L2 acquisition. According to them, L2 learners face the same input problems as child L1 learners. Mismatch between available input and the end result in L2 acquisition proves that UG plays a predominant role in L2 acquisition. In case of formal L2 acquisition, researchers have a different view on the kind of input available to the L2 learners. Ellis (1986) argues that L2 learners often get non-degenerate input in the form of teacher-talk and foreigner-talk. The non-degenerate input weakens the arguments in favour of an innate component in L2 acquisition. White (1989) argues that in a *formal* L2 learning situation, learners may be provided with non-degenerate input but the situation may not be same in *informal* L2 acquisition. The existence of non-degenerate input in *formal* L2 acquisition does not solve the acquisition problem at all. Even though L2 learners are provided with grammatical input it still under-determines the learners' linguistic competence. As in L1 acquisition, in L2 acquisition too, the problem of under-determination indicates that language acquisition is facilitated by the innate linguistic capacity of the learner. Thus even if the input is not totally grammatical, this will not allow a learner to induce the abstract properties of the internalized grammar, suggesting that knowledge of these abstract properties must be in-built in some form. Simplified input is only of limited value, since it does not contain information

relevant to complex sentences, effectively depriving the learner of important information about the language. Providing simplified input only puts off the issue of acquiring complex structures; it does not solve it.

Coming to the third input problem namely, *negative evidence*, one encounter widely different views. In natural L2 acquisition as in L1 acquisition it is assumed that *direct* negative evidence does not affect the acquisition process of the learners. Instead *indirect* negative evidence affects the acquisition process. However, in a formal situation where learning is deliberate and conscious, direct negative evidence may affect the acquisition process. Negative evidence comes directly in the form of correction and evaluation. Since evaluation plays a significant part in formal teaching, learners in all likelihood are not able to ignore it. In our analysis of the acquisition level of the L2 learners, in chapters four and five, we shall find out whether the learners are able to ignore direct negative evidence.

## **1.2 Factors Affecting L2 Acquisition**

Some of the factors which are assumed to affect the L2 acquisition process mainly are: (i) mother tongue of the learner, (ii) fossilization, (iii) age of the learner and (iv) the quality of the input.

### **1.2.1 Mother Tongue Influence**

One factor that supposedly hinders the acquisition process is the *mother tongue* of the learner. During the acquisition of the first language a learner undergoes the process of acquisition for the first time. The first language that is normally the mother tongue, is of primary importance to a learner because the learner is emotionally, socially and psychologically associated with it. A second language is non-primary. Normally it is not as

important as the first language. Supporters of the *no-access* hypothesis argue that the mother tongue pull in the L2 learner is strong. According to them, acquisition of a second language is mediated by the mother tongue. In case of languages having similar structural patterns the grammatical rules of the first language or mother tongue facilitate the acquisition process. In case of languages having different structural patterns there is bound to be a two-way effect. One, if the learner has strong mother tongue pull the result of the acquisition of the second language would not be an unqualified success; indicating that UG does not mediate in the L2 acquisition process. On the other hand, if the learner acquires the underlying grammatical principles and rules of the second language, even when there is a mother tongue pull, it would indicate that UG operates in L2 acquisition.

A second language can be acquired both by a child and an adult. But since the situation and the age of the learner vary in L2 acquisition it is obvious that the nature and degree of the influence of the mother tongue would also vary. In *child* L2 acquisition, the learner may not experience the mother tongue pull as strongly as an *adult* L2 learner. Children normally acquire their L2 naturally. This is especially true in multi-lingual contexts where child L2 learners may need to acquire a language in order to be part of a social group. Normally an adult acquires a second language when she / he migrates to a foreign land or works amongst people belonging to a different speech community. In such a situation the learner may acquire the L2 for day to day communication. Once minimal communication is established, the adult learner may not be interested in learning the second language further. Lack of interest or motivation reflects the attitude of the L2 learner towards the second language. For the L2 learner the language of utmost importance is the L1 which normally is the mother tongue. In formal L2 acquisition too, mother tongue pull may affect the acquisition process. In such a case child L2 acquisition may essentially be similar to L1 acquisition.

### 1.2.2 Age of the learner

Penfield and Roberts (1959) assumed that language learning becomes difficult with age because of decreasing cerebral plasticity. Lenneberg (1967), based on his analysis of existing clinical literature on unilateral brain damage and hemispherectomies, concluded that there is a progressive lateralization of the language function to the left hemisphere of the brain, which is completed at puberty. Based on such findings he claimed that there is a dramatic decrease in the ability to acquire language after puberty. Findings of this kind have led researchers to claim that once a learner crosses the *critical period*, acquisition of a language becomes difficult. This position based on *critical period hypothesis* (CPH) has been challenged by subsequent researchers. Krashen (1973) argues that lateralization is over around the age of five. Whittaker (1981) points out that if lateralization is to be linked to brain maturation, then puberty is an unlikely time for lateralization to be completed, since the language area of the brain takes on most of its adult characteristics by age five. Researchers argue that relying on brain growth as the biological process that times the critical period would predict a critical ending at 5. This is not an age at which sharp discontinuities in language acquisition can be observed however. They question the observation that language function can be transferred to the right hemisphere after left hemispherectomy. For there is no evidence against L1

and L2 being subserved by the same neural stratum. Findings of this kind have led recent researchers to speak of *sensitive* rather than *critical* periods. This change or shift in the terminology reflects that whatever biological determinants there are of behaviours, they are unlikely to become totally unavailable after a certain age. Epstein et.al (1993) claim that during certain periods of development, certain organisms tend to have heightened sensitivity to certain stimuli, thereby enjoying an optimal situation for a given behaviour to develop. There are clear differences between child and adult language

learning and these differences need not reside in accessibility or inaccessibility of universal linguistic principles as suggested in the *no-access* hypothesis.

### 1.2.3 Fossilization

Selinker (1972) points out that L2 learners often get *stuck* at a point short of native-like grammar and produce non-target forms that are ineradicable. In most cases, *fossilization* involves the use of forms attributable to the mother tongue of the learner. Selinker states that L1 learners also pass through stages of fossilization but they do not get stuck in any of these interim stages. White (1989) counters this observation by stating that one cannot come to a conclusion from the existence of fossilization that UG does not operate in the L2 acquisition process. L1 learners reach adult like linguistic competence because they are constantly exposed to the input of the target language. Constant exposure to the target language is what enables the learner to arrive at adult like language. White (1989) states that extra-linguistic factors may affect the L2 acquisition process but the role of UG in the acquisition process cannot be denied, hence the argument for the *partial-access* hypothesis.

### 1.2.4 Quality of Input

In natural L2 acquisition, learners receive input from native speakers. Input in a natural setting is degenerate. The degree of success of the L2 learner in a natural set-up indicates that input or learnability problems are there. It is a different question whether L2 acquisition is a total success as L1 acquisition. But the input problems inherent in the acquisition process indicate that UG mediates in the acquisition process. In the case of formal L2 acquisition, the general notion is that learners get maximum exposure to the target language in the classroom. The teachers or instructors of the second language provide *comprehensible input* to the L2 learners, that is, input which is easily understood but not too simple to be challenging enough for the learner. Along with the comprehensible input there is conscious and deliberate teaching of the

grammatical rules of the target language. This kind of exposure affects the quality of the input and in that case there is no scope to identify the input or learnability problems. Even if formal L2 acquisition is much more successful than natural L2 acquisition it defeats the objective of SLA research. The main goal of SLA research is to find out whether UG mediates in the acquisition process. White (1989) argues that in formal L2 acquisition too the input (or learnability) problems can be traced. She points out that simplified and comprehensible input do not solve the problem of underdetermination. Of the three input problems, underdetermination provides crucial evidence of the presence of UG in the acquisition process.

To recapitulate our discussion, we find that it is difficult to state clearly what factors may affect the acquisition process. Heterogeneous factors influence the L2 acquisition process. Degree of success of L2 acquisition depends on what factors are predominant in the teaching / learning situation. Because of this researchers have arrived at the three logical possibilities namely, the *no-access* hypothesis, the *partial access* hypothesis and the *full access* hypothesis on the presence of UG in the L2 acquisition process. Having looked at the input problems and the role of extra-linguistic factors in L2 acquisition, in the next section we shall examine in detail the content of the biological endowment namely UG.

### **1.3 Universal Grammar**

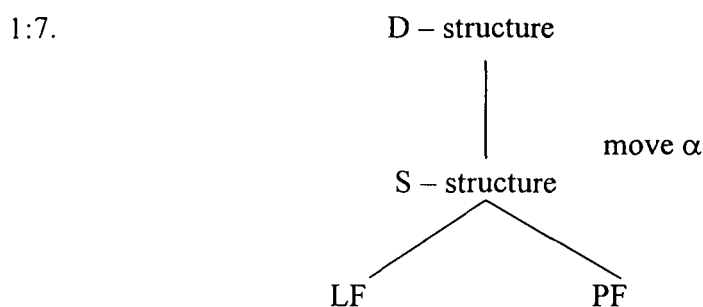
Chomsky (1981) states the language faculty has an initial state that is uniform to every normal person. The initial state comprises the UG theory. When a child is initiated into the acquisition process for the first time, UG is present in its initial state ( $S_0$ ). Once the acquisition process is triggered the child learner passes through a series of states before reaching a relatively stable state. The stable state that the learner arrives at is the stage where the learner reaches the linguistic competence of an adult. Chomsky's (1986a) first question *what*



*constitutes knowledge of language?* is a probe into the content of UG. In the last four decades researchers within the generative framework have come up with a theory of UG that addresses both *descriptive adequacy* and *explanatory adequacy*. Empirical evidence has shown that UG has a high valued internal (I-) language that is consistent in all first language learners. Since 1965 the probe into the content of UG has led to the development of the Principles and Parameter (P&P) approach. The P&P approach assumes that UG comprises principles and parameters. Principles are the underlying grammatical rules which are universal and common in all natural languages. Parameters are universal too, and they are open, that is the parametric values of languages may be fixed one way or the other, mainly on the basis of the data available. Fixing of the parameters of a particular language thus accounts for language variations. When an acquisition process is initiated, the underlying principles combine with the parameters of the target language to form its *core grammar*. Besides the principles and the parameters there are peripheral rules that a learner has to learn consciously. Idiosyncratic or peripheral rules have to be learnt by both L1 and L2 learners alike.

The theory of UG must meet two criteria: one, descriptive adequacy and, two, explanatory adequacy. A theory of UG is true if it correctly describes the initial state ( $S_0$ ) of the language faculty. A theory of UG is explanatorily adequate if it can suggest plausible patterns of explanation. For the past four and a half decades there has been a constant striving to arrive at a theory of UG that can describe and explain the language faculty adequately. In the 1960s UG was assumed to have Phrase Structure (PS) rules and transformational rules. With the development of the X-bar theory in the seventies, UG was assumed to comprise different levels of representation. In the Government & Binding (GB) theory, Chomsky (1981) posited the language faculty to have four levels of representation and a number of subsystems or modules that operate at

different levels. The four different levels of syntactic representation in the so called inverted Y model are: the D-structure, the S-structure, the PF and the LF levels. The schema in (1:7) shows the four different levels of representation within the language faculty.

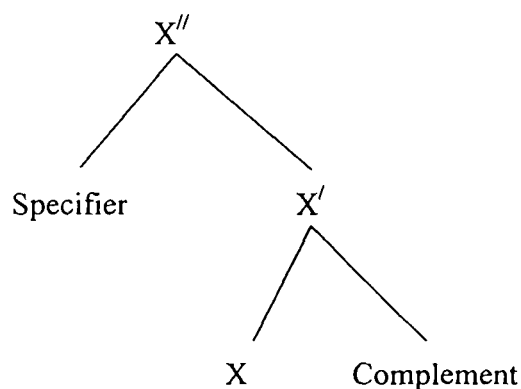


At the D-structure level, the grammatical and thematic relationships are represented. Movement from D-structure to the S-structure takes place by the rule move  $\alpha$ . The rule move  $\alpha$  maps the D-structure to the S-structure. Whenever a constituent moves from the D-structure to the S-structure, it leaves a trace, to mark its original or base generated position. Phonetic Form (PF) is a level at which various phonological and phonetic operations take place. Logical Form (LF) is a level of representation for those aspects of meaning that relate to the interpretation of a sentence. The rule move  $\alpha$  mediates between S-structure and LF as well. In addition to these levels, there is the lexicon (or mental dictionary) where the lexical items like words, affixes and idioms are stored together with information about such properties as the syntactic categories, subcategorization requirements, thematic properties, morphological and phonological structure and meaning. Move  $\alpha$  is a general rule it can move anything anywhere. The general assumption is that move  $\alpha$  is the only one simple rule, which a child has to acquire rather than acquiring a number of complex rules, thus reducing the burden of the learner in language acquisition. However, there is a fear that the too simplistic and general rule of move  $\alpha$  may overgenerate structures which are not permitted in natural

languages. Herein come the different principles or constraints of UG which prevent the learner from overgenerating. The constraints, which are the subsystems or modules of UG, operate at different levels of representation. Some of these subsystems are: the  $X'$  (- bar) theory, the Theta theory, the Binding theory, the theory of Government, Empty Category Principle (ECP) and Subjacency.

Within this framework the general assumption is that structural units i.e. constituents of a phrase or a sentence are put together at different levels in the underlying structure. In other words, derivation of phrase structures or sentence structures is constrained by X-bar theory, which specifies the hierarchical structure holding between heads of phrases and their specifiers and complements. Within the X-bar theory phrasal categories such as noun phrase (NP), verb phrases (VP), preposition phrase (PP) and adjective phrase (AP) are maximal projections. The maximal projections contain a head ( $X = N, V, P$  and  $A$  respectively); the direct objects in VPs or objects of prepositions are complements. The head and the complement together form the X bar ( $X'$ ) level. Specifiers such as determiners are outside this level. The overall schema is as shown in (1:8) below:

1:8



The position of head and complement depends on the language under study. In case of SVO languages like English, the order of the head and complement is

as shown in the schema in (1:8). In case of SOV languages like Assamese, the complement precedes the head. Thus the order of the constituents within the X-bar is irrelevant. The general assumption within the classical GB (or the P&P) framework is that the interplay of the various sub-theories determines the derivation of a syntactic structure. The sub-theories namely the Theta theory, the Government theory, the Binding theory, ECP, Subjacency and so on operate at the different levels of representation i.e. the D-structure, the S-structure, the PF and the LF.

In the Minimalist Programme (1995), Chomsky attempts to reach a deeper level of explanatory adequacy. Rather than the question ‘ what does knowledge of language consist of?’ (Chomsky 1986a), Chomsky asks the question ‘why is the language faculty the way it is?’. His basic answer to this question is that the following two sorts of conditions are imposed on the language faculty: conditions arising from its place in the cognitive architecture *bare output* conditions and conditions of *conceptual naturalness* such as economy, simplicity and nonredundancy. The approach of the Minimalist Program (MP, hereafter) is to account for the structure of language as the consequence of what are assumed to be intuitively natural *economy conditions* on the computational mechanisms that comprise grammar. There are essentially two such mechanisms, *phrase structure*, which falls under the  $X'$ -theory in the P&P framework, and *movement*, which is characterised by move  $\alpha$  in the P&P framework. In the P&P theory the major driving force is the Uniformity Principle. According to this principle grammars conform to configurational and derivational patterns. In the MP grammars are assumed to minimize structures and derivations. The notion of *intuitively natural economy conditions* with respect to movement is the basic principle of the MP.

In the MP, the cognitive system of the language faculty is assumed to consist of a computational component and a lexicon. Language is a generative procedure. A linguistic expression is assumed to be a pair of sound ( $\pi$ ) and meaning ( $\lambda$ ). The sound component is interpreted at the articulatory-perceptual (A-P) interface and the meaning component is interpreted at the conceptual-intentional (C-I) interface. Sound and meaning must be compatible and must satisfy the output conditions at the PF and the LF, only then it gets Full Interpretation (FI). Thus  $\pi$  is a PF representation and  $\lambda$  is the LF. Each linguistic expression generated by the computational system is a pair of representation at PF and LF. A computation is said to *converge* at the interface levels if its structural description contains only legitimate PF and LF objects, with all their morphological features satisfied; otherwise it *crashes*. That is, in the course of the derivation, the lexical items must check its grammatical features. Once, the feature is checked, it is erased if it is uninterpretable. Any uninterpretable feature that remain unchecked in the course of the derivation, at the level of LF will cause the derivation to crash. The operations of the computation system that produce linguistic expressions must be optimal in the sense they must satisfy some general considerations of simplicity referred to as economy principles. One of these principles the *Last Resort Condition*, prohibits superfluous steps in the derivation. It requires that every operation apply for a reason. A second economy principle proposed by Chomsky and Lasnik (1993) *Minimal Chain Link* condition imposes locality restrictions on the operation Move, by requiring that each movement be as *short* as possible. A third economy principle, also relevant to the operation Move, is Chomsky's (1993) *Procrastinate*, which favours covert to overt movement, thus delaying the application of Move until LF, whenever possible.

In the MP the assumption is that the *lexicon* is a list of "exceptions", whatever does not follow from the general principles. The general principles

fall into two categories: those of UG and those of a specific language. Phonology, morphology, choice of parametric options and whatever else may enter into language variation are part of the lexicon. The lexicon provides an “optimal coding” of such idiosyncrasies. The lexicon contains substantive elements (noun, verb etc) with their idiosyncratic properties. It contains functional categories like the complementizer (C), T(ense), D(eterminer) and AGR. The semantic and functional properties of the functional categories are listed in the lexicon. For instance, C is basically an indicator of mood or force: declarative, interrogative and so on. For each lexical item in a particular language the idiosyncratic codings are given in a unified lexical entry.

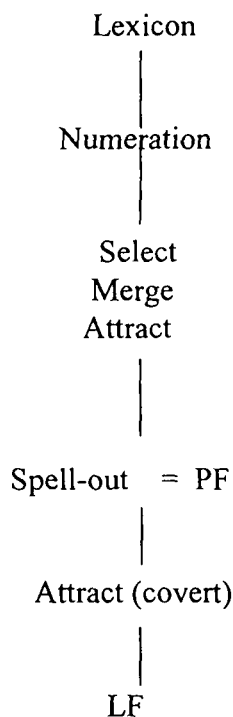
In the classical GB framework, all items of a clause are inserted in the D-structure at one go. In the MP, the computational system selects a lexical item from the ‘numeration’. Operation Select initiates the structuring of a clause. This is followed by the operation Merge, which integrates new elements into the structure. A core property of the computational system is feature checking, the operation that drives movement under the Last Resort condition. In order to feature check, the constituents in a structure are rearranged by the operation Move. Merge and Move are elementary operations, which generate a clause structure. The clause structure generated by the computational system may submit to Spell-Out at some point. In other words it is that point in a derivation at which the phonetic (PF) and the semantic (LF) features are processed by separate components of grammar. The Spell-Out operation applies to a structure that is fully formed. Spell-Out strips away from the structure those elements relevant to PF, the rest are mapped to LF. Pre-Spell-Out operations are overt. The subsystem that maps the well-formed structure to PF is an overt operation, what continues in the computational system after Spell-Out to LF is a covert operation. In the MP, an operation can apply anywhere without special stipulation. This is true for Spell-Out as of other operations.

We have observed that language variations are brought about by the idiosyncratic properties inherent in the lexicon. Another element, which brings about language variation, is feature strength. A formal feature may or may not be strong. Chomsky (1995) states: if F (feature) is strong, then F is a feature of a non-substantive category and F is checked by a categorial feature. For example, overt wh-raising in English, is due to a strong D feature of C. I to C raising of modals and verbs in *yes-no* questions is another instance of the feature strength of C. A strong feature has two properties: one, it triggers overt operation before Spell-Out, and two, it induces cyclicity. A strong feature triggers a rule that eliminates it: [strength] is associated with a pair of operations, one that it introduces it into the derivation (a combination of Select and Merge), a second that quickly eliminates it. Cyclicity follows at once. A strong feature triggers an overt operation to eliminate it by checking. In the case of a merger of a lexical item with strong features, but no phonological features, the strong feature merged at the root must be eliminated before it becomes a part of a larger structure. Thus Movement before the Spell-Out operation is an overt movement. This is mandatory for the FI of the construction. Constituents with non-overt morphological features undergo covert movement to the concerned functional head after spell-out for FI. Overt movement helps in the FI of the PF component and covert movement that of the LF component.

Chomsky (1995) states that movement is triggered by an attraction from a head. In that case *attract* becomes a fundamental step in the derivation. The concept *move* is replaced by that of *attract*. Chomsky (1995) substantially revises the ideas in the MP (1993). The schema in (1: 9 = Haegeman's 1997, 15b) summarizes the organization of the grammar in the MP. In the MP, *spell-out* is assumed to be equal to the S-structure of the classical GB framework. The classical S-structure is a static level of representation but the Minimalist

spell-out is dynamic in the sense that the *spell-out* point can occur at any point of the derivation of the clause structure. In other words, when a clause structure is rendered overt we have the operation *spell-out*.

1:9.



#### 1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is two fold: one, to examine the complementizer (COMP or C) position in Assamese; and two, to find out to what extent native speakers of Assamese (L1) come to acquire their second language English (L2). We shall briefly look into the background of the COMP position in section 1.1.4.1 and the background in which acquisition English (L2) takes place in section 1.1.4.2.

##### 1.4.1 The COMP Position

The term complementizer is used in two ways. On the one hand, it denotes a particular category of clause introducing words such as *that / if / whether / (for)*



– *to* . On the other hand, it is also used to denote the pre-subject position in the clause. This pre-subject position is technically termed as the complementizer or the COMP position or the C head. CP a maximal projection dominates the COMP position or the C node. Consider the English sentences in (1:10) below:

- 1:10a. Mary said *that* John will be late.                    [+ declarative, + finite]  
      b. Mary wants *to* go to the market.                    [+ declarative, - finite ]  
      c. Mother asked *whether/if* John will be late.        [- declarative, + finite ]

In (1:10) the clause introducing words namely the clause introducing complementizers, *that* (1:10a), (*for*) – *to* (1:10b) and *whether / if* (1:10c) occupy the pre-subject position or the COMP position or the C head. Technically the complementizers are base-generated or inserted in the C head. The overt presence of the complementizers determines the clause type. The complementizer *that* occurs with a [+declarative, + finite] clause, the complementizer (*for*) – *to* occurs with a [+ declarative, -finite] clause and the complementizers *whether / if* occurs with a [- declarative, + finite] clause.

Other elements that move to the C head are auxiliary verbs like *be*, *have*, *do* and the modal auxiliaries in English. A head initial language like English derives an interrogative sentence (direct wh-questions) by two movement rules. The first rule is to move a wh-word or a question word to the clause initial position. This position is technically termed as the specifier position of a clause i.e the [Spec - CP] and the movement is termed as the *operator* movement in the MP. In English type languages this position is to the left of the clause structure i.e. the clause initial position. The second rule is to move the auxiliary verb or a modal auxiliary to the COMP position or the C head of the clause. The auxiliary verb or modal heads the IP and it moves to C position, which is the head of the CP. In the MP the movement of the auxiliary to the C

position is termed as *head to head* movement. To derive direct *yes-no* questions an auxiliary verb or a modal is obligatorily moved to the COMP or C position.. Consider the direct questions in (1:11) below:

- 1:11.a What did you buy?  
b. Did you buy a car?

The sentences in (1:11) are direct questions. (1:11a) is a direct *wh*-question and (1:11b) a direct *yes-no* question. The direct questions are derived by movement rules. In (1:11a) the *wh*-word *what* moves to the clause initial position i.e. to the [Spec-CP] position by operator movement and the auxiliary verb *did* moves to the C position by head to head movement. In (1:11b) the auxiliary *did* obligatorily moves to the COMP position. I – C raising of the dummy verb *do* takes place to check the strong features of the [+*wh*] COMP. The movement of the *wh*-word to the [Spec-CP] position is also an instance of the strong feature of the [+*wh*] COMP. Not all natural languages may have to move the *wh*-word to the clause initial position to derive an interrogative sentence. Hence the movement of the *wh*-word is a parameteric option.

#### 1.4.2 Background:

Early literature on the complementizer position was confined only to languages, which had the clauses to the right of the head. It started with Rosenbaum's (1967) *transformational rule of complementizer placement*: 'insert complementizers in the appropriate position in the clause'. This was followed by Baker's (1970) *Q-Universal Hypothesis*, which states: 'if a language has a rule of question word movement it moves the question word to the left'. Baker proposed a clause initial node Q as the daughter of S. It was observed by Bresnan (1970, 1972) that verbs may subcategorize for the type of complement they take. She came with the following Phrase structure (PS) rule in (1:12):

1:12.         $S'$          $\longrightarrow$         COMP        S

where COMP and S are sisters and are dominated by  $S'$ .

Bresnan posited the COMP node. Further, she argued that the Q-morpheme was a complementizer and when it moved to the left it moved to the COMP node. In other words, a wh-word was a complementizer and the COMP node had a [+wh] feature underlying for question words and a [-wh] feature underlying for relative clauses. This argument led her to posit the *Complementizer Substitution Universal (CSU)*: ‘only languages with clause initial COMP permits a COMP substitution transformation’. This universal notion could thus account for the leftward movement of a question word and the relative clauses across languages.

Chomsky and Lasnik (1977) observed that there are languages that permit both wh-phrase and the equivalent of the complementizer *that* to appear to the left of the complementizer. They argued that the rule “move wh-phrase” places the wh-phrase in the COMP position to the left of the complementizer. See (1:13):

1:13. Chomsky and Lasnik (1977:16):

The rule move wh-phrase places the wh-phrase in the COMP position to the left of the complementizer.

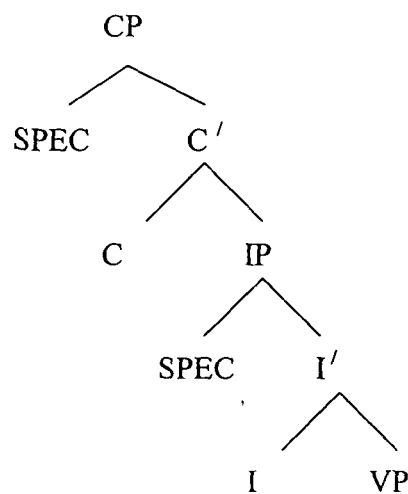
Chomsky and Lasnik assumed the leftward movement of the wh-phrase to be a principle of Universal Grammar (UG). The left adjunction of the wh-phrase to COMP replaced Bresnan’s notion of the complementizer substitution. A filter checks multiple elements in COMP and subsequent deletion in COMP. The Doubly Filled Comp Filter was proposed as a language specific filter. On the

lines of Perlmutter (1971), Chomsky and Lasnik posited the *that-trace* filter. In Chomsky (1981), following Bresnan (1970, 1972), COMP is a position which may be filled with a wh-phrase or other category that has moved to COMP, and one that is [ $\pm$  wh], where [- wh] = *that* and [+wh] is the abstract element that appears in direct or indirect questions and might be base generated with lexical content in the case of such elements as *whether*. In English the complementizer *for* in infinitivals is base generated in the COMP. The Doubly Filled Comp Filter of Chomsky and Lasnik (1977) determine the presence of a wh-phrase or the complementizer *that* in the COMP position.

Evidence of languages like Hebrew, Quecha and Bavarian having more than one COMP led Reinhart (1981), Lefebvre (1982) and Bayer (1984) to propose two COMP positions under  $S'$ . This led Chomsky (1986a) to extend this system of projection of phrasal categories from a head to non-lexical categories like complementizer and INFL. The complementizer ( C ) is the head of  $S''$  ( = CP ) and INFL ( I ) is the head of S ( = IP ). Thus CP, IP and VP have Specifiers (Spec) on the left of the head. Thus C is the COMP node where complementizers like *that / for-to / whether* are base generated and inverted auxiliary moves into. The Spec-CP is the landing site for wh-phrases. Chomsky's (1986b) analysis provides a universal configuration reduction of the whole range of problem to a new version of the  $X'$  - theory. It predicts that the order of the constituents is a matter of choice based on head initial / head final parameter. The proposed universals like Baker's Q and Bresnan's *complementizer substitution* as well as Chomsky and Lasnik's idea that wh-movement is to a pre-COMP landing site can be subsumed under this analysis. The consequence that the Q element always occurs to the left now follows from the fact that [Spec-CP]' the position where the Q element lands always occur to the left, now that all Specifiers precede what they specify universally unlike heads and complements which vary cross-linguistically according to parametric

choices. In the (1986) version of the  $X'$  - theory the functional heads COMP and INFL behave like lexical categories in that they bear head-complement relation. The C(omplementizer) is the head of the maximal projection CP (= S'') and I(nfl) is the head of the maximal projection IP (= S). In Chomsky's (1986b) model wh-movement takes place to [Spec-CP] and the lexical complementizers are base generated in C. This model could neatly account for the proposals made by Reinhart, Lefebvre and Bayer regarding two COMP positions. Problems that could not be accounted for earlier were subsumed under this new model of  $X'$  theory of functional heads. The clause structure within the new model of  $X'$  theory of functional heads has the following configuration as shown in (1:14).

1:14.



Within the Minimalist framework the basic clause structure representation as in the schema shown in (1:14) remains more or less the same. But the basic relation involves the head and locality. There are two local relations: (i) Spec(ifier) - head relation, and (ii) head - complement relation. The head - complement relation is 'more local' and also more fundamental. Other admissible relations are: (i) head - head relation and (ii) chain link.

Chomsky (1995) states that the functional category C determines the clause type. The lexicon provides the semantic and phonological features of the complementizer head. In case of an interrogative clause the feature Q is specified in C. In other words, the feature Q determines the interrogative clauses. In languages where Q is Interpretable, its feature need not be checked before Spell-Out. In languages where the Q feature is strong it must be checked before the Spell-Out. For English, Q is strong. Therefore when Q is introduced into the derivation its strong feature must be eliminated by insertion of  $F_Q$  in its checking domain before Q is embedded in any distinct configuration.  $F_Q$  may enter the checking domain by Merge and Move by substitution or adjunction. The substitution option is realized by raising  $F_Q$  to [Spec, Q] by overt wh-movement, which pied-pipes a full category for PF convergence. This is normally seen in case of direct wh-questions as in (1:15) below:

1:15a. What did John give Mary?

b. [ SPEC What [ did Q [ John give t Mary ] ]

In (1:15b) the strong feature of D in C is checked by wh-movement. In case of direct *yes-no* questions, the strong feature is checked by raising I to C see (1:16) below:

1:16a. Can I have your pen?

b. Can Q [ IP I t have your pen ]

In case of languages with a weak Q the question word remain insitu at PF and also at LF. The wh-feature does not need to adjoin to Q for both are Interpretable and need not be checked for convergence.

Unlike the strong interrogative C, the declarative C in English is weak. The declarative C has two phonological realizations: *that* and a phonologically realized *null* C. Merge is an overt operation. For the declarative *that*, merger takes place overtly, while the phonologically *null* C is inserted covertly at the root. On the contrary, the declarative C in Assamese is strong. The complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* are overt. The interrogative C is weak it has a phonologically null particle, except for the [+wh] *buli* CP constructions. These facts are relevant to any any analysis of the Assamese (L1) speakers' acquisition of English (L2). However, before proceeding to such an analysis it would be pertinent to look at the background, that is the teaching / learning context.

#### **1.4.3 Position of English (L2) in Assam**

The Constitution of India recognizes English as the second official language of the country. English as a second language is compulsorily taught in all the educational institutions of the country. As in the rest of the country, in the northeastern state Assam too, English is part of the academic curriculum. In Assam, English (L2) is introduced to learners at school. Schools in Assam impart education in either English or in a regional language like Assamese (the state official language), Bodo, Bengali, Nepali and the like. Depending on the medium of instruction of the school, the L2 learners are exposed to their second language, English, at different levels. In the section to follow we shall examine the main differences between the English medium and the Assamese medium schools.

#### **1.4.3.1 Assamese Medium Schools versus English Medium Schools**

In Assam, Assamese medium schools are run by the state Government. In these schools English is introduced in class V<sup>1</sup>, when the learners are around the age of 10+. By the time the learners are exposed to English (L2) they have a strong footing in their L1 (Assamese). English is taught as a content subject. The maximum exposure a learner has on his / her L2 (English) is about 30 minutes in the middle school (classes V to VII) and 40 minutes in the high school (classes VIII to X). Feedback obtained from students reveals that hardly any English is used in the middle school level. Most of the teaching is done in Assamese (this may not be the case in all the Assamese medium schools). Students are provided with literal translation of the prescribed text. At the high school level there is some amount of exposure but it is limited to the reading of the text. Teachers and students do not normally interact in English. In the Assamese medium schools then mother tongue pull in case of both teacher and learner alike apparently affects the process of L2 acquisition.

Missionaries or private organizations run English medium schools. In these schools the learner is exposed to English (L2) from the day they join school, normally from the age of 4+. Since they are relatively younger than the L2 learners from the Assamese medium schools, the pull of the mother tongue is apparently not so strong. Further, they have constant exposure to the target language during the school hours. Besides formal teaching of English (L2) in the classroom, interaction with their peers and teachers during the school hours provides informal exposure to the target language. The blend of formal and informal L2 (English) exposure is best seen in the Assam Valley School (AVS), a residential school, run by a Trust of some tea companies of Assam. Since AVS is a residential school the learners there have exposure to English

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<sup>1</sup> From the year 2000 the directorate of elementary Education, Assam has introduced English in class III in Assamese medium primary schools.



(L2) to the maximum i.e for 16- 18 hours. The problem of mother-tongue pull amongst the L2 learners in AVS is almost negligible. Klein (1987) states that *formal L2* acquisition leads to the *domestication* of the target language. In case of the L2 learners of AVS there is domestication of English. The table in (1:17) below shows the main difference between the English and Assamese medium schools. Since AVS is a residential school and the L2 learners here have an added advantage over L2 learners from convents and the Assamese medium schools, we shall consider the learners of the school in a separate category. The ensuing discussions will justify our stand.

In formal L2 acquisition the English teachers play a crucial role, as they are the direct source of input. Indirect sources of input are the prescribed textbooks. In the Assamese medium schools the teachers i.e. the direct source of input hardly interact with the learners in the target language. In the English medium schools the teachers interact in the target language. A questionnaire was given to the English teachers of some of the premier schools in and around Tezpur<sup>2</sup>, Assam. The table in (1:18) shows the response of the teachers from the Assamese and English medium schools.

1:17

<b>Assamese Medium</b>	<b>English Medium Convents</b>	<b>English Medium AVS</b>
English from class V (= 6 years)	English from Nursery (= 12 years)	English from Nursery (= 12 years)
Learner's age 10+	Learner's age 4+	Learner's age 4+

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<sup>2</sup> Tezpur is the district headquarter of Sonitpur, Assam. Most of the data collection for our research has been done in and around Tezpur

30 / 40 minutes of English	6 hours of English	16 – 18 hours of English
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1:18

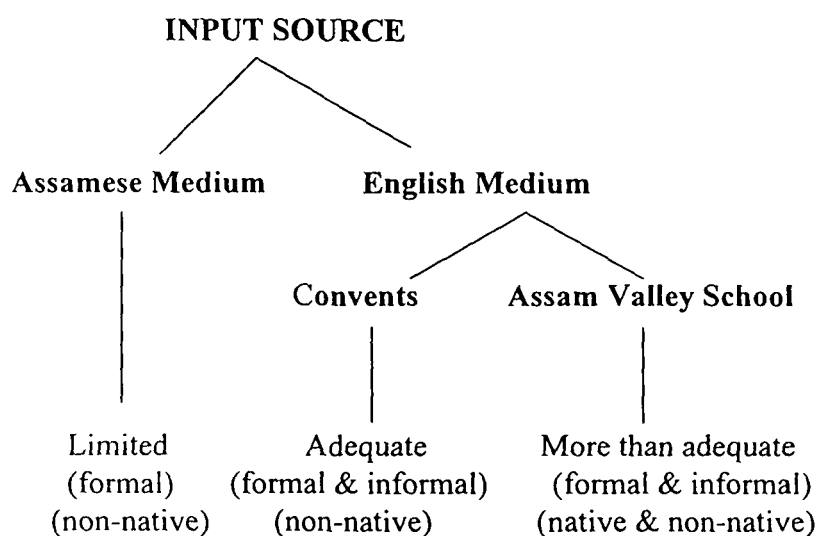
QUERIES	Assamese Medium	English Medium Convents	English Medium AVS
Interaction in English Inside classroom	No	Yes	Yes
Interaction in English outside classroom	No	Yes	Yes
Any other activities to improve English	No	No	Yes
Student's response to English	Negative	Positive	Positive

In order to acquire a language the learner should be exposed to the target language constantly. From the table in (15) it is evident that the quantity of input, which the L2 learners get varies. L2 learners from AVS are exposed to the target language constantly for nearly 16-18 hours a day. L2 learners in non-residential English medium schools are exposed to the target language for 6 hours approximately six days a week. In case of L2 learners from Assamese medium schools exposure to English (L2) is not frequent and is limited to only the English period, which is of 30 / 40 minutes per day. The disparity in the exposure of the target language, lack of interaction in the target language and the negative attitude of the L2 learners of the Assamese medium schools should have a telling effect on the L2 learning / acquisition process.

It is assumed that in a formal L2 acquisition context, learners receive *non-degenerate input*. This observation may hold true for the English medium schools but in the Assamese medium schools there are hardly any exposure to

English (L2). In L1 and *natural* L2 acquisition, learners interact with native speakers. In our situation the L2 learners of both the Assamese and English medium schools interact with non-native speakers of English. In other words, for the English teachers too English (L2) is a second language. We know that the degree of success of acquisition of a second language is not total as that of a first language. This being so the quality of the input, which the L2 learners receive might adversely affect to the acquisition process. This is specifically true of the L2 learners of the Assamese medium schools and maybe to some extent of the L2 learners of the non-residential English medium schools. In a residential school like the AVS the L2 learners do not face this problem. AVS has an English head master. The school runs on the line of English Public schools. Gap students (native speakers of English) from Oxford and Cambridge universities teach in the school on short-term basis and most of the regular teachers (non-native) in the school have a Public School background. Since it is a residential school, the learners get the maximum opportunity to interact with the teachers, during school hours and outside school hours. The learners from AVS have the added advantage in that they can interact with native speakers of English. The schema in (1:19) shows the disparity in the kind of input L2 learners get in the English and Assamese medium schools.

1:19.



### 1.5 General Outlay of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of the Universal Grammar theory. The objective of this dissertation is two fold: one, to look at the COMP position in Assamese within the generative framework, and two, to analyse the acquisition of English (L2) by Assamese (L1) speakers. We therefore look at the theoretical and practical aspects of language research within the generative framework. The theory part includes issues on UG and the hypotheses and approaches posited within the generative framework. On the practical side we look into various issues of language acquisition and the role UG plays in the acquisition process. We highlight the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition in general and then focus on the background of the L2 learners from the English and Assamese medium schools.

In chapter 2 we examine the finite complement clauses. Like its sister languages Bangla and Oriya, Assamese too has two complementizer particles *ze* and *buli*. The quotative *buli* has properties similar to those of the Bangla quotative *bole*. It is the left peripheral *ze* that is of interest to us. According to Dasgupta (1981,1990) the Bangla *je* is a clitic. Bayer (1995) argues that the Bangla *je* to be a complementizer. Bal (1990) posits that the Oriya *je* is a wh-operator. In Assamese, the peripheral *ze* and the internal *ze* do not bear the same status. The clause internal *ze* is a focus marker. In the lines of Bayer (1995) we assume that the peripheral *ze* has undergone reanalysis. Once a relative word *ze* has been reanalysed as a functional category ( $X^0$ ), *ze* retains its operator status and is base generated in the [Spec-CP]. The internal *ze* is base generated in-situ.

In chapter 3, we examine the *yes-no* questions. In Assamese, *yes-no* questions are derived when the particle *ne* 'or' occurs in the clause final position. *ne* is compatible with a [+wh] COMP. *ne* is syntactically and

semantically a disjunct. Unlike the Assamese *ne*, the Kannada – *oo* and the Malayalam – *oo* operate as question particles as well as disjunctives. The particle *ne* is a conjoiner. The underlying structure of a direct *yes-no* question shows that the disjunctive *ne* conjoins two clauses. Evidence for this comes from the negative element *nai* ‘is not’ and the question word *ki* ‘what’, whenever overt, occurs after the disjunctive *ne*. In complex clauses the disjunctive *ne* gives an indirect *yes-no* question reading of the English *whether* type. In indirect *yes-no* questions (positive), the negative element *nai* is obligatory. In indirect *yes-no* questions (negative), the question word *ki* is obligatory. In direct *yes-no* questions the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are optional. The Disjunctive phrase has either a phonologically realised null (O) or a generic element *hoi* ‘is’ under the Polarity Phrase in the [Spec-Disj]. The disjunctive *ne* is inherently a negative element. Once a negative operator, *ne* has been reanalyzed as a functional category ( $X^0$ ). *ne* has retained its negative operator status and is base generated in the head of the Disjunct Phrase. The negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are overt for licensing reasons.

In our study of the COMP position, we observe that a [+declarative] COMP is compatible with the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* in finite complement clauses, and the disjunctives *ba* (positive) and – *u* (negative) in disjunct constructions. In [-declarative] constructions the COMP position normally takes an abstract Q morpheme (see Aoun & Li (1993)). This is true of the *null-Prt* CPs and the *yes-no* questions. The exception to the case is the quotative *buli*. Finite verbs like *ko* ‘say’, *bhab* ‘think’ and the like, subcategorise for a [+wh] *buli* – CP. Dasgupta (1990) argues that the Bangla quotative *bole*, a verbal element undergoes a CP / TP merger. In the lines of Dasgupta (1990), we assume that the quotative *buli* too undergoes a CP / TP merger.

In the second half of the dissertation we examine the degree of success the L2 learners achieve in the acquisition of English. In the English medium schools, the L2 learners start learning English at age 4 +, i.e., from Nursery class. In Assamese medium schools, the L2 learners start at age 10 +, i.e., in class 5. This dichotomy along with linguistic and extra-linguistic factors like the mother tongue pull, the teaching / learning environment and the quality of the input available to the learners; determine the degree of success in the acquisition English.

Grondin and White (1996) argue that functional categories and their projections are present in the earliest utterances of child (L2) learners. Grondin and White arrived at this conclusion from their observation of two English-speaking children who started attending French kindergarten at age of 4.9 and 4.5. These learners attended a French immersion kindergarten class before they were transferred to a regular French kindergarten. In chapter 4, we try to identify the stage at which the functional category C (OMP) is available to the L2 learners. We have observed that the L2 learners are introduced to English when they join school (English medium) or in class 5 (Assamese medium). Irrespective of when the second language is introduced to the learners, we find that the COMP position is available to them. The difference in the acquisition level comes from the quality of the input that is available to the learners. In this chapter we examine the acquisition of the direct wh- and yes-no questions and in chapter 5, we examine the acquisition of the finite complement clauses. Our analysis shows that the functional category C and its projection the CP, is available in the early grammar of the L2 learners. However, the degree of success of the learners vary because of factors like the relative dominance of the mother tongue, the quality of the input and the environment in which the second language is acquired / learnt.

## Chapter Two

### Finite Complement Clauses in Assamese.

#### 2.0 Introduction

The east-Indic languages, namely, Assamese, Bangla and Oriya have two complementizer particles, which introduce a complement clause. Assamese *ze* and Bangla and Oriya *je* occur in the clause initial position of the complement clause. The left peripheral *ze / je* occurs in a non-canonical direction. For a head final language (SOV), the canonical direction for a complementizer is the clause final position. The Assamese *buli*, Bangla *bole* and the Oriya *boli* occur in the clause final position of a complement clause. The complementizer particles: *buli*, *bole* and *boli* are quotatives<sup>1</sup>. The status of the left peripheral complementizer *je* in Bangla and Oriya are not the same. Bal (1990) posits the Oriya *je* to be a Wh-operator. In Bangla there are two positions: Dasgupta (1981, 1990a) claims the Bangla *je* to be an enclitic; Bayer (1996a) argues that the Bangla *je* is a complementizer. Keeping in view the various positions, in this chapter, we intend to establish the status of the left peripheral *ze* in Assamese. While examining the status of *ze* we shall also look into the true complement CP in Assamese in the lines of Dasgupta (1990).

The chapter is divided as follows: in section 2.1, we look at the data of finite complement clauses in Assamese and highlight the differences between the *ze* and the *buli* complementizer particles. In section 2.1.1 we examine the co-occurrence facts of the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* with question words. Section 2.2. is on the *buli*- CP. In section 2.2.1 we look at the status of

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<sup>1</sup> In most Indian languages the complementizer in the clause final position has a verbal vestige. The complementizers *eruu* (Malayalam), *erru* (Tamil), *ari* (Telugu) occur clause final and are quotatives.

*buli*. In section 2.2.1 we examine the properties of the *buli*-CP and in the subsequent sub-sections we examine the properties of the *bole*-CP and *boli*-CP of Bangla and Oriya respectively. In section 2.3 we look at the *ze*-CP. Section 2.3.1 is on the *je*-CP in Bangla and Oriya. In section 2.3.2 we look at the internal *ze*, in subsection 2.3.2.1 we examine focus and the focus position in Assamese. In section 2.3.3 we establish the status of the peripheral *ze*. Section 2.4 is on the *null*-Prt CP in Assamese and Bangla. In section 2.5 we conclude our observations on the finite complement CPs in Assamese.

## 2.1 Finite Complement Clauses in Assamese

Assamese, like Bangla and Oriya has two complementizers: *ze* and *buli*, which typically introduce a declarative clause and are intrinsically finite. *ze* and *buli* are equivalent to the English complementizer *that* (we will revise this position as we progress). The complementizers *ze* and *buli* head finite complement clauses. See (2:1 – 2:5) below.

2:1. a. *riju – e    zan - e    [ ze    rima    ah - ib -o ]*  
 Riju - nom know – agr    that Rima    come - fut-agr  
 ‘Riju knows that Rima will come.’

b. *riju – e    [ rima    ah - ib – o    buli ] zan - e*  
 Riju - nom    rima    come - fut - agr that    know - agr  
 ‘Riju knows that Rima will come.’

2: 2. a. *riju–e    gom - pa is - e <sup>2</sup> [ ze    rima-i    kitap-khon    ni-s-e ]*

<sup>2</sup> In Assamese verbs agree overtly with the subject argument in Person. Table 1 below shows the overt agreement markers.

Table 1:	Person	Agreement Markers
	1 <sup>st</sup> Person	-u
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	-a (casual), -i (informal), -e (formal)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	-e

The agreement markers in Table 1 occur when the verb is in the present and past Tense form. Table 2 shows the agreement markers for the future tense form.



Riju-nom know-has got-agr that Rima-nom book-Cla take-perf-agr  
 ‘Riju has come to know that Rima has taken the book’ .

b. riju-e [ rima-i kitap-khon ni-s-e buli ] gom-pa-is-e  
 Riju-nom Rima-nom book-Cla take-perf-agr that know-get-perf-agr  
 ‘Riju has come to know that Rima has arrived’.

2: 3. a ma-e xun-is-e [ ze riju-e rima-k bhal pa-i ]  
 mother-nom hear-perf-agr that Riju-nom Rima-acc love get-agr  
 ‘Mother has heard that Riju loves Rima’.

b. ma-e [ riju-e rima-k bhal pa-i buli ] xun-is-e  
 mother-nom Riju-nom Rima-acc love get-agr that hear-perf-agr  
 ‘Mother has heard that Riju loves Rima’.

2: 4.a ma-e ko-is-e [ ze riju-e rima-k biya kor-ib-o ]  
 mother-nom say-perf-agr that riju-nom Rima-acc marry do-fut-agr  
 ‘Mother has said that Riju will marry Rima’.

b. ma-e [ riju-e rima-k biya kor-ib-o buli ] ko-is-e  
 mother-nom Riju-e Rima-acc marry do-fut-agr that say-perf-agr  
 ‘Mother has said that Riju will marry Rima’.

2:5a. riju-e xun-iboloi pa-is-e [ ze rima dilli-loi za-b-o ]  
 Riju-nom hear-infin get-perf-agr that Rima Delhi-to go-fut-agr  
 ‘Riju got to hear that Rima would go to Delhi.’

b. riju-e [ rima dilli-loi za-b-o buli ] xun-iboloi pa-is-e  
 Riju-nom Rima Delhi-to go-fut-agr that hear-infin get-perf-agr  
 ‘Riju got to hear that Rima would go to Delhi.’

In the finite complement sentences (2:1 - 2: 5), the finite verbs *zana* ‘know’, *gompua* ‘ come to know’, *xuna* ‘hear’, *ko* ‘say and *xuniboloi pua* ‘ get to hear’ subcategorise for both *ze* and *buli* complement clauses. The complementizer *ze*

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Table 2:	Person	Agreement Markers
	1 <sup>st</sup> Person	ϕ
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	-a (casual), -i (informal), -o (formal)

occurs in the clause initial position of the complement clause and *buli* in the clause final position. Also the data (2:1-2:5) show that *ze*-CP (a) occurs to the right of the matrix clause and the *buli*-CP (b) embedded inside the matrix clause. Further, contrast between the sentences (a) and (b) can be seen in the movement of the complement clauses. The *ze* complement clause has movement restriction, it has to obligatorily occur on the right periphery of the matrix clause. See (2: 6) below.

2: 6. a. \* [ *ze*    *rima*    *ah-ib-o* ]    *riju-e*        *zan-e*  
           that    *Rima*    come-fut-agr    *riju-nom*    know-agr

b. \* *riju-e*    [ *ze*    *rima*    *ah-ib-o* ]        *zan-e*  
       *Riju-nom*    that    *Rima*    come-fut-agr    know-agr

The *buli* complement clause obligatorily moves to the left of the matrix clause. This is the typical position of the *buli* – CP and is therefore unmarked. See (2: 7a) below:

2:7. a. [ *rima*    *ah-ib-o*        *buli* ]    *riju-e*        *zan-e*  
           *Rima*    come-fut-agr    that    *Riju-nom*    know-agr  
           ‘*Riju* knows that *Rima* will come tomorrow.’

In specific context the *buli* – CP can also occur on the right periphery of the matrix clause. See (2:7b) below:

2: 7.b *riju-e*        *zan-e*    [ *rima*    *ah-ib-o*        *buli* ]  
       *Riju-nom*    know-agr    *Rima*    come-fut- agr    that  
       ‘*Riju* KNOWS that *Rima* will come (you don’t have to remind him....)’

The differences between the *ze* and *buli* complement clauses can be summarised as follows :

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3<sup>d</sup> Person    -o

- a) the particle *ze* occurs clause initially and *buli* clause finally in complement clauses.
- b) the *ze* - complement clause occurs only in the right periphery of the matrix clause.
- c) The *buli* - clause can move either to the right periphery or the left periphery of the matrix clause. The *buli* - clause in the left periphery of the matrix clause is unmarked. Whereas the *buli* clause to the right of the matrix clause or embedded within the matrix clause are marked.

The data (2:1-2:5) show that the finite verbs subcategorise a [+ declarative] clause. The finite verbs: *zona* 'know', *gom pa* 'come to know', *xuna* 'hear' *xuniboloi puwa* 'get to hear' have *selectional restrictions* (Chomsky, 1965). In (2:1 – 2:5) the finite verbs select a complement clause, which is intrinsically [+ declarative].

### 2.1.1 Complementizer Particles and Wh-words: Cooccurrence facts

In the previous section we saw that finite verbs like *zona* 'know', *gompa* 'come to know', *xuna* 'hear' and the like select a complement clause which is intrinsically [+declarative]. In this section we shall examine finite verbs in Assamese which select a [-declarative] complement clause. Let us consider the sentences in (2: 8) below:

2:8a \* riju-e    zan-e    [ ze    kon    ah-ib-o ]  
 Riju-nom know-agr that who    come-fut-agr  
 'Riju knows that who will come.'

b. \* ma e    ko-is-e    [ ze    kon    ah-ib-o ] zan-e  
 mother-nom say-perf-agr that who come-fut-agr know-agr  
 'Mother asked that who will come'.

The ill-formed sentence (2:8a) improves when the complementizer particle *ze* is dropped. See (2:9a).

2:9a rijū-e    zan-e    [ kon    ah-ib-o ]  
 Riju-nom know-agr who come-fut-agr  
 ‘Riju knows who will come.’

But the ill-formed sentence in (2:8b), does not improve even when the complementizer particle *ze* is dropped. See (2:9 b).

2:9b \* ma-e    ko-is-e    [ kon    ah-ib-o ]  
 Riju-nom say-perf-agr who come-fut-agr  
 ‘Mother said who will come.’

From (2:9) it is evident that finite verbs like *zana* ‘know’ can subcategorise for an interrogative clause with a *null*-Prt in the complementizer position. While finite verbs like *ko* ‘say’ do not subcategorise for an interrogative clause with a *null*-Prt. (2: 9 b) improves when the *null*-Prt is replaced by the complementizer particle *buli*. See (2:10) below:

2:10.a. [ kon    ah-ib-o    buli ] ma- e    ko-is-e  
 who come -fut-agr that mother-nom say-perf-agr  
 ‘Who did mother say will come?’

In the section 2.1, we noted that the [+declarative] *buli*-CP occurs embedded within the matrix clause (2:1b- 2: 5b), it occurs on right periphery of the matrix clause (2: 7b) as well as on the left periphery of the matrix clause (2: 7a). Out of these three positions, (2: 7a) is unmarked. In (2:10a) we find the [-declarative] *buli* CP too occurs on the left periphery of the matrix clause, which

is the unmarked position. Let us find out if the [-declarative] *buli*-CP can occur embedded within the matrix clause. See (2:10b) below:

2:10b ma-e [ kon ah-ib-o buli ] ko-is-e  
 mother-nom who come-fut-agr that say-perf-agr  
 'WHO did mother say will come?'

The sentence in (2:10b) is well - formed when there is a pause after the subject argument *mae* 'mother'. The interpretation of (2:10b) differs from that of (2:10a). In (2:10b) there is an extra force / emphasis on the wh-word *kon* 'who'. Unlike (2:10b), the [- declarative] *buli*-CP cannot occur on the right periphery of the matrix clause. See (2:10c).

2:10c \* ma- e ko-is-e [ kon ah-ib-o buli ]  
 mother-nom say-perf-agr who come-fut-agr that

From the evidence in (2:10a-c) we find that [-declarative] *buli*-CPs have movement restrictions compared to the [+declarative] *buli*-CPs (see 2:7a-b). We shall examine the movement restrictions of the [-declarative] *buli*-CP later in the chapter. As of now we find that Assamese can have three types of finite complement clauses namely, the *ze*-CP, the [ $\pm$  declarative] *buli*-CP and the *null*-Prt CP. The finite complement clauses are in complementary distribution. The status of the C(omp) head determines the kind of finite complement clause it selects. See (2:11) below:

2:11	<b>[ + declarative ]</b>	<b>[ - declarative ]</b>
	<i>ze</i> - CP	<i>null Prt</i> CP
	<i>buli</i> - CP	<i>buli</i> - CP



b.        pro        pagol        bul-is-il-u  
                               mad        say - perf - pst - agr  
 ‘I said you are mad.’  
 (lit: I had said you are mad.)

2:13a     pro        ki        bul-is- a  
                               what        say-perf-agr  
 ‘What have you addressed me as?’

b.        pro        mami        bul-is-il-u  
                               aunty        say-perf-pst-agr  
 ‘I have addressed you as aunty (maternal aunt).’

2:14a     pro        ki        bul - ib - o  
                               what        say-will-agr  
 ‘What will she / he / they say?’

b.        pro        bhal        bul-ib-o  
                               good        say-will-agr  
 ‘She / he / they will say you are good.’

The sentences in (2:12 – 2:14) show that the transitive verb *bul* occurs regularly in the language, *bul* in the intransitive form is still heard occasionally in constructions as in (2:15) below:

2:15     kesua-e        bul-is-e  
                   baby-nom        say-perf-agr  
 ‘The baby has said something.’

The finite and the non-finite forms of *bul* ‘say’ occur in certain complex constructions too. These complex sentences are typically multiple embedded sentences where the innermost embedded clause is normally a quote. The quote is followed by the second embedded clause where either the finite form of *bul*

or the non-finite *buli* may occur as the verb. Normally an emphatic marker follows the verb of the second clause. In case of the non-finite *buli* the emphatic marker is a bound morpheme *-u* ‘even’ and for the finite verb *bul* the emphatic marker is a lexical word like *zodiu*. The bound morpheme *-u* and *zodiu* may be interpreted as ‘even then’ / ‘even though’. See (2:16) and (2:17) below:

2:16 teo “(moi) ah-im” buli-u n<sup>3</sup>-ah-il (nonfinite)  
 he I come-fut say-even neg-come-pst  
 ‘Even though he said “I will come”, he did not come.’

2:17 teo “(moi) ah-im” bul-is-il zodiu n-ah-il (finite)  
 he I come-fut say-perf-pst even though neg-come-pst  
 ‘Even though he had said “I will come”, he did not come.’

When the finite verb *bul* ‘say’ is replaced by another finite verb like *ko* ‘say’, a synonym, the non-finite *buli* obligatorily follows the quote *moi ahim* ‘I’ll come’. See (2:18) below:

2:18a teo “(moi) ah-im” buli ko-is-il zodiu n-ah-il  
 he I come-fut that say-perf-pst even though neg-come-pst  
 ‘Even though he had said that “I will come”, he did not come.’

b.\* teo “(moi) ah-im” ko-is-il zodiu n-ah-il  
 he I come-fut say-perf-pst even though neg-come-pst

<sup>3</sup> In Assamese negative form of a verb is derived when the negative morpheme *n-* prefixes to the verbal root. The negative morpheme *n-* copies the vowel of the root verb.

Verbal Root	Gloss	Negative Form	Gloss
an	bring	n-an	neg-bring
kʰa	eat	na-kʰa	neg-eat
porh	read	no-porh	neg-read
pindʰ	wear	ni-pindʰ	neg-wear



In (2:18a) the non-finite *buli* functions as a quotative *buli* has to be obligatorily overt to make the sentence well formed. When *buli* is non - overt the construction in (2:18b) is ill formed *buli* occupies the clause final position, a typical complementizer position in a head final language. From the data in (16-18) it is evident that the complementizer particle *buli* is a quotative. Having established the status of the right peripheral complementizer in Assamese we now examine the properties of the *buli*-CP in the next section.

### 2.2.2 Properties of the *buli*-CP:

We have already noted that the complementizer particle *buli* occurs clause final i.e., in the canonical direction that is typical of a head-final (SOV) language. See (2:19):

2:19a moi [riju-e (\*buli) rima-k (\*buli) bhal-pa-i buli] zanu  
 I riju-nom Rima-acc love-get-agr that know  
 'I know that Riju loves Rima'.

The sentence (2:19) shows the verbal-type particle cannot occur clause internal. The non-finite complementizer particle *buli* has to be obligatorily clause final. We had observed in section 2.1.0 that the unmarked or typical position of the *buli*-CP is on the left periphery of the matrix clause (2:7a). See (2:19 b) below:

2:19b [riju-e rima-k bhal pa-i buli] moi zan-u  
 Riju-nom Rima-acc love get-agr that I know-agr  
 'I know that Riju loves Rima.'

The *buli*-CP can also occur to the right of the matrix clause in a specific context. See (2:19c) below:

2:19c moi zan-u [riju-e rima-k bhal pa-i buli]  
 I know-agr riju-nom Rima-acc love-get-agr that  
 ‘I KNOW that Riju loves Rima (you don’t have to tell me).’

Whenever the *buli*-CP is right extraposed as in (2:19c), the matrix verb needs an added stress. We have noted that the leftward movement of the verbal type CP as in (2:19b) is typical of the language. Babu (1997:149) states that quotative has the property of highlighting (focusing) the quoted element. In the lines of Babu we assume the leftward movement of the verbal type CP is an instance of focusing. We shall look in detail the facts of focus and the focus position in Assamese in sub-section 2.3.2.1.

In section 2.1.1 we noted that the complementizer particle *buli* cooccurs with a question (or *k-*) word (2:10a) repeated here as (2: 20).

2: 20. [kon ah-ib-o buli ] ma- e ko-is-e  
 who come-fut-agr that mother nom say-perf-agr  
 ‘Who did mother say will come?’

The compatibility of the complementizer *buli* with the [-declarative] C head is restricted to certain finite verbs like *ko* ‘say’. We have noted in (2:8a) that the complementizer particle *ze* is not compatible with a [- declarative] complement clause. See (2:8a) repeated as (2:21) below:

2: 21 \* riju-e zan-e [ ze kon ah-ib-o ]  
 Riju-nom know-agr that who come-fut-agr  
 ‘Riju knows that who will come.’

Let us find out if the complementizer particle *buli* can co-occur with the complementizer particle *ze*. See (2: 22) below:

2:22a \* riju-e    zan-e    [ ze    rima    ah-ib-o        buli ]  
           Riju-nom know-agr ze    Rima    come-fut – agr    buli

b. \*riju-e    zan-e    [ rima ze    ah-ib-o        buli ]  
           Riju-nom know-agr Rima ze    come-fut – agr buli

The ill-formed sentences in (2: 22) indicate that the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* cannot co-occur in the same clause.

From our observation of the *buli*-CP we find it has the following properties:

- a) the complementizer particle *buli* in the *buli*-CP is obligatorily clause final,
- b) the *buli*-CP is obligatorily preposed to the left of the matrix clause,
- c) the particle *ze* does not co-occur with the *buli*-CP, and,
- d) a wh-phrase inside the *buli*-CP obligatorily gets a wide scope reading.

The two sister languages Bangla and Oriya have two complementizer particles: the clause initial *je* and the clause final *bole* (Bangla) and *boli* (Oriya). The clause final *bole* / *boli* have a verbal vestige. In other words they are quotatives. In this section we have established that *buli* too is a quotative (2.2.1) a verbal vestige. Since the clause final complementizer particles *buli*, *bole* and *boli* have the same status we expect them to have similar properties. In the next section, we shall examine the properties of the Bangla *bole* and the Oriya *boli*.

#### 2.2.2.1 Properties of *bole* –CP and *boli*- CP

We shall first examine the properties of the *bole*-CP in Bangla. Consider the complex sentences in (2:23) from Dasgupta (1990a) below.

2:23 = Dasgupta's 2

2: 23 amra Sobai [ajke (\*bole) briSTi (\*bole) poRbe bole ] Sunechi  
we all today rain will-fall that have-heard  
'We have all heard that it will rain today.'

In (2:23), as in the Assamese equivalent in (2:19) the verbal particle *bole* is obligatorily clause final. Dasgupta (1990a) assumes that the morphological non-finiteness of the *bole* particle obligatorily makes it clause final. Let us find out if the same holds true for the particle *buli* too. Consider the non-finite sentences in (2:24) below.

2: 24a riju-e [ pro rima-k logdhor - iboloi ] ah-ib-o  
Riju-nom Rima-acc meet - infin come-fut-agr  
'Riju will come to meet Rima.'

b. \* riju-e [ pro logdhor-iboloi rima - k ] ah-ib-o  
Riju-nom meet- infin Rima-acc come-fut-agr

The ill-formed sentence (2: 24b) indicates the non-finite verb *logdhoriboloi* 'to meet' has to be obligatorily clause final. The clause finality of the non-finite explains why *buli* has to be obligatorily clause final in sentences like (2:19). Assuming that I(nfl) has both plus and minus T(ense) feature . In cases like (2:24) the V *logdhor* 'meet' moves to I (minus T) to form the non-finite *logdhoriboloi* 'to meet' .The movement of the non-finite verb would then be from I to some adjoined position.

The finite complement clause in (2:7a) shows that the *buli*-CP is obligatorily extraposed to the left of the matrix clause, which is its unmarked position. The verbal type CP with the *bole* particle can occur as the leftmost constituent of the matrix clause see (2:25) below.

2: 25 = Dasgupta's 3

2:25 [ ajke briSTi poRbe bole ] amra Sobai Sunechi  
today rain will-fall that we all have-heard

However, when the *bole*-CP is extraposed to the right of the matrix clause is not well formed. See (2:26) below.

2:26 = Dasgupta's 5

2:26? amra Sobai Sunechi [ ajke briSTi poRbe bole ]  
we all have-heard today rain will-fall that

Dasgupta (1990a) states the CP with the verbal particle to the right of the matrix clause as in (2:26) can be improved by either stress or some scope taking element or negation in the matrix clause. Coming to the co-occurrence facts we find the Bangla *bole* - CP is not compatible with the particle *je*, i.e. the verbal particle *bole* and the particle *je* cannot co-occur in the same clause. See (2:27).

2:27 \* ora [ dilip-je prodip - ke khun korbe bole ] jante perechilo  
they Dilip-prt Prodip-obj kill will that to-know had-come

The *bole*-CP allows a *wh*-phrase to occur inside its clause. The *wh*-phrase inside the *bole*-CP obligatorily gives a wide scope reading. See (2: 28) below.

2:28 = Dasgupta's 37

2:28a ora [ dilip kake khun korbe bole ] jante perechilo  
they Dilip whom kill will that to-know had - come  
'Whom had they heard Dilip would kill?'

- b. \* ora [ dilip kake khun korbe bole ] jante perechilo  
 they Dilip whom kill will that to-know had -come  
 ‘ They had heard whom Dilip would kill.’

From our observation of the *bole*-CP (2:23 – 2:28) we find that it has identical properties as the Assamese *buli*-CP. We briefly summaries the properties of the *bole*-CP:

- a) the verbal particle *bole* is obligatorily is verb final
- b) the particle *je* is obligatorily absent inside the *bole*-CP, and
- c) a wh-phrase inside the *bole*-CP obligatorily gives a wide scope reading.

Dasgupta (1990a) states that the *bole*-CP in Bangla has the following properties:

- a) the *bole*-CP is verb final
- b) the particle *je* is obligatorily absent, and
- c) the *bole*-CP allows only wide scope reading

From our observation we find that the Assamese *buli*-CP have the properties (b) in (2.27) and (c) in (2.28) of the *bole*-CP. We have now to find out if the *buli*-CP has property (a) like the *bole*-CP. In (2:29) we have an instance of the verb finality of the *bole*-CP.

2:29 = Dasgupta’s 28

2:29 \* ora [ dilip khun korbe prodip bole ] jante perechilo  
 they Dilip kill will Prodip-obj that to-know had-come

Let us find out if the same applies for the *buli*-CP. Consider (2:30) below:

2:30a. \* [ riju-e bhal pa-i rima-k buli] moi zan - agr  
 Riju-nom love get-agr Rima - acc that I know

b.\* [bhal pa-i    riju-e    rima-k    buli]    moi zan-u  
 love get-agr Riju-nom Rima - acc that    I    know-agr

From the sentences in (2:30) it is evident that the *buli*-CP in Assamese is obligatorily verb final too.

We now examine the properties of the *boli*-CP in Oriya. Bal (1990) states the *boli*-CP in Oriya occurs embedded within the matrix clause. See (2:31) below.

2:31 = Bal's 15.

2:31 mun [ s' raama    maacha    khaae    BOLI ] jaane  
 I    Rama    fish    eats    BOLI    know  
 ' I know that Rama eats fish.'

Bal (1990) claims that the position of the embedded *boli*-CP in (2:31) is a typical one. The *boli*-CP has the option of occurring to the right of the matrix clause, in 'extraposed' position. In fact, *boli* clauses can, in addition, be 'extraposed' to the left of the matrix clause, another typical position for these clauses. See (2:32) below:

2:32 = Bal's

2:32 mun    jaane [ s' raama    maacha    khaae    BOLI ]  
 I    know    Rama    fish    eats    BOLI  
 'I know that Rama eats fish.'

b. [ s' raama    maacha    khaae    BOLI ] mun    jaane  
 Rama    fish    eats    BOLI    I    know  
 ' I know that Rama eats fish.'

In (2:32a) the *boli*-CP is extraposed to the right of the matrix clause and in (2:32b) to the left of the matrix clause. Unlike the Assamese *buli*-CP, the three positions (2:31) (2:32) of the Oriya *boli*-CP are *typical* i.e.unmarked. In Assamese only the left peripheral *buli*-CP is unmarked (2:7a).

In Oriya the complementizer particle *je* cannot co-occur within the *boli*-CP. See (2:33) below:

2:33 = Bal's 122c

2:33 \* se [ JE ramma machaa khaae BOLI ] jaane  
 He JE Rama fish eats BOLI knows

The ill-formed sentence (2:33) improves when the particle *je* is clause internal. In other words the *boli*-CP is compatible with the clause internal *je*. See (2:34) below.

2:34 = Bal's 121

2:34 se [<sub>CP</sub> ramma JE machaa khaae BOLI ] jaane  
 He Rama JE fish eats BOLI knows

Bal (1990) states that the internal *je* is a sentence adverbial which focusses the whole clause. Its co-occurrence with *boli* is not surprising, as there is no restriction on the co-occurrence of a sentence adverb with a complementizer in a complement clause. In the case of the *buli*-CP we have noted in (2:22) that the particle *ze* cannot co-occur inside the clause either in clause peripheral position (2:22a) or in clause internal position (2:22b). This indicates that the status of the internal *ze* in Assamese is not that of an adverbial as is the case with the Oriya internal *je*. We shall look in detail into the status of the internal *ze* in section 2.2.3.2



Coming back to the properties of the *boli*-CP, we find that it allows a *wh*-phrase to occur within its clause. Like in Assamese (2:10a, 2:20a) and Bangla (2:28), a *wh*-phrase inside the *boli*-CP gives a wide scope reading. See (2:35) below.

2:35 = Bal's 171

2:35a kie, tume bhaabucha [ t, raamaku saahaajya kariba BOLI ]  
 who you are thinking to Rama help will do BOLI  
 'Who do you think will help Rama?'

b \*kie, tume [ t, raamaku saahaajya kariba BOLI ] bhaabucha  
 who you to Rama help will do BOLI are thinking  
 'Who do you think will help Rama?'

The *boli*-CP in Oriya has the following properties:

- a) the particle *boli* obligatorily occurs in the clause final position,
- b) a *wh*-phrase within the *boli*-CP gives a wide scope reading, and
- c) the *boli*-CP can co-occur with the clause internal *je*.

In this section we examined the properties of the verbal particle CPs in Assamese, Bangla and Oriya. The properties of the Assamese *buli*-CP and the Bangla *bole* – CP are similar. The properties of Oriya *boli*-CP are same except for one. Unlike the *buli*-CP and the *bole*-CP, the *boli*-CP is compatible with a clause internal *je*. From this evidence we may assume that the internal *ze* in Assamese and the internal *je* in Bangla do not have the same status as the internal *je* in Oriya. In the next section we examine the status of particle *ze* in Assamese.

### 2.3 The *ze*-CP

In section 21.0 we had observed that the particle *ze* occurs to the left of the complement clause (2:1a –2:5a) and the declarative CP headed by *ze* occurs

obligatorily to the right of the matrix clause. The *ze*-CP in its unmarked position as is shown in (2:36) below:

2:36 moi zan-u [ ze riju-e rima-k bhal pa - i ]  
 I know-agr that Riju -nom Rima – acc love - get - agr  
 ‘I know that Riju loves Rima.’

The *ze* – CP has movement restrictions, it cannot move to the left periphery of the matrix clause nor can it occur embedded within the matrix clause. See (2:37):

2:37a \* [ ze riju-e rima-k bhal pa - i ] moi zan - u  
 that Riju-nom Rima-acc love get –agr I know-agr

b. \* moi [ ze riju-e rima-k bhal pa-i ] zan-u  
 I that Riju-nom Rima-acc love get –agr know-agr

The *ze* - CP is obligatorily verb final . See (2:38):

2:38a \* moi zan-u [ ze riju-e bhal pa-i rima-k ]  
 I know-agr that Riju-nom love get-agr Rima-acc

b. \* moi zan-u [ ze bhal pa - i riju-e rima-k ]  
 I know-agr that love get-agr Riju-nom Rima-acc

The ill-formed sentences in (2:38) show the *ze* - CP has to be obligatorily verb final . From (2:38) and (2:31) we find both the *ze*-CP and the *buli*-CP have to be obligatorily verb final. But unlike the *buli*-CP (2:20), the *ze*-CP is not compatible with a *wh*-word. See (2:39) below:

2:39a. \* moi zan - u [ ze riju-e kak bhal pa - i ]  
 I know –agr that Riju -nom who(m) love get – agr

b. \* moi ko- is-u [ ze kon-e rima-k bhal pa-i ]  
I say-perf-agr that who-nom Rima-acc love get-agr

c. \* moi bhab-is-u [ ze riju-e kak bhal pa-i ]  
I think-perf-agr that Riju-nom who(m) love get - agr

From the data in (2:36 – 2:39) we find the *ze*-CP has the following properties:

- a) the *ze*-CP is obligatorily verb final
- b) the *ze*- CP occurs on the right periphery of the matrix clause
- c) the *ze* –CP is not compatible with a *wh*-phrase

Having examined the properties of the *ze*-CP in Assamese we now examine the *je*-CP in Bangla and Oriya.

### 2.3.1 The *je*-CP in Bangla and Oriya

In the east-Indic languages namely, Bangla and Oriya, the status of the complementizer particle *je* is not the same. Dasgupta (1990a) states the Bangla *je* to be a clitic. Bayer (1996a) considers the Bangla *je* to be a complementizer particle. Bal (1990) posits the Oriya *je* to be some kind of a *wh*-word. In this section we examine the properties of the particle *je* in Bangla and Oriya.

#### 2.3.1.1 The *je*-CP in Bangla

In Bangla the particle *je* can occur clause internal as well as clause peripheral. The particle *je* occurs clause internal in adsentential relative clauses and clause peripheral in finite complement clauses. Dasgupta (1990a) states the adsentential relative clause is a typical adjunct with a clause internal *je*. The internal *je* clause has the following properties .

- a) the internal *je* needs a phonetically non-null host
- b) the Prt *je* is optional
- c) the complement clause with the internal *je* need not be verb final
- d) it allows only narrow scope reading

The internal *je* clause as in (2:40) cannot occur clause initial without a phonetically null host.

2:40. = (Dasgupta's 1

2:40 (\**je*) *ajke* (*je*) *briSti* (*je*) *poRbe* (*je*), *amra* *keu* *SeTa* *bujhte* *pari* *ni*  
 today rain fall-will we anyone that understand did not  
 'That it would rain today none of us had understood.'

*je* is morphologically an enclitic and must have a phonologically non-zero host. Dasgupta (1990a) assumes *je* to be an anchor. ... 'Anchors, an observational label for the clause-internal occurrences of Prt, are base generated in situ as particles associated with, but leaving intact the categories of sisters of various types – verbs, arguments, adjuncts' (Dasgupta 1990a:1) . He further assumes that an anchor particle covertly moves its feature to C.

The NP argument *SeTa* in (2:40) is co-referential to the CP. *SeTa* is not an expletive, it can be replaced by a full NP like *Se ghoTonar Sombhabonar batar tatporjo* (English translation not available). As the CP and the A-NP do not form a chain and the CP is not theta-marked by V it is clear that the CP in (2:40) is an adsentential relative clause. The adsentential relative clause is technically an adjunct. The element *je* is morphologically a relative or *j*-word. The *je*-CP is never a complement to V.

The internal *je* in an adsentential relative clause is optional. See (2:41):

2:41a. = Dasgupta's 25

2:41a ora [ dilip-je khun korbe prodipke ] SeTa jante perechilo  
they Dilip-prt kill will Prodip-obj that to-know had-come

2:41b = Dasgupta's 26

2:41b ora [ dilip khun korbe prodipke ] SeTa jante perechilo  
they Dilip kill will Prodip-obj that to-know had-come

The internal *je* clause is compatible with a *wh*-phrase and can co-occur in the same clause. Whenever a *wh*-phrase co-occurs with the internal *je* it gives a narrow scope reading. See (2:42):

2:42 tumi (-je) kake (-je) boita [ (-je) debe ] SeTa jani na  
you -prt to-whom book -Cla will-give that I - know neg  
'I don't know who you will give the book to'.

The clause internal *je* can cliticize to any argument within the clause as shown in (2:42). The change in the order of the constituents within the clause does not affect the well formedness of the sentence. Dasgupta (1990) states the Bangla anchor clitic's S - structure host is co-indexed with the clitic and thus with C and must at LF be contiguous to C, by placing its feature either in [Spec, C'] or in a topic (TopP adjoined) position. If the anchor's clitic host is marked [+wh] it will LF move to [Spec, C']. If the host is not [+wh] it will either covertly / overtly move to a TopP at S - structure. Consider the sentences in (2:43) below:

2:43a = Dasgupta's (16)

2:43a.\* tumi kake boiTa -je debe SeTa jani na  
you to-whom book-Cla-Prt will-give that I-know-neg

2:43b = Dasgupta's (18)

2:43b \* kake boiTa -je tumi debe SeTa jani na

to-whom book - Cla -Prt you will-give that I - know-neg

The sentences in (2:43) are ill formed because the two A'- binding paths of the same tree overlap. Pesetsky states, two A'- binding paths of the same tree must not overlap without one containing the other. Following Pesetsky's Path Containment Condition, (PCC) the anchored argument *boiTa-je* must covertly feature move to a topic position. The unanchored interrogative *kake* must also move at LF to the [Spec-C'] this movement violates PCC hence the ill-formedness. The adsentential relative clause need not be verb final. See (2:44):

2:44a = Dasgupta's 21

2:44a. ora [ dilip-je prodipke khun korbe ] SeTa jante perechilo  
 they Dilip-prt Prodip-obj kill will that to-know had-come  
 ' They had come to know that Dilip would kill Prodip.'

2:44b = Dasgupta's 25

2:44.b ora [ dilip-je khun korbe prodipke ] SeTa jante perechilo  
 they Dilip-prt kill will Prodip-obj that to-know had-come  
 'They had come to know that Dilip would like Prodip.'

We now examine the post verbal *je* - CP in Bangla. In the post-verbal – CP, the particle *je* obligatorily occurs in the clause initial position. See (2:45):

2:45 ora jante perechilo (je) dilip-(\*je) prodipke -(\*)je khun korbe (\*je)  
 they to-know had-come Prt Dilip Prodip-obj kill will  
 ' They had come to know that Dilip would kill Prodip.'

The clause initial particle *je* in (2:45) is optional. Dasgupta (1990a) states the Prt *je* occurs in a CP- initial site but not as a TP internal anchor, i.e inside the clause as in (2:40). The particle *je* is base generated (or inserted) under the C head of the lower clause. The particle *je* in Bangla, according to Dasgupta is a clitic. It requires a non-null host. In (2:45) *je* moves from its base-generated

position, i.e. from the C head of the embedded clause to the COMP position of the matrix clause; since it requires a phonologically non-null host it moves from the C head of the matrix clause to cliticize to the matrix verb.

The *je*-CP need not be verb final, see (2:46) below:

2:46 = Dasgupta's 41

2:46 ora jante perechilo (je) dilip khun korbe prodipke  
 they to-know had-come (Prt) Dilip kill will Prodip-obj  
 'They had come to know that Dilip would kill Prodip.'

The *je*-CP is compatible with a wh-phrase. The particle *je* and wh-phrase can occur in the same clause. Whenever a wh-phrase occurs inside the *je*-CP it gives a narrow scope reading. See (2:47):

2:47 = Dasgupta's 42

2:47 ora jante perechilo (je) dilip kake khun korbe  
 they to-know had-come (Prt) Dilip whom kill will  
 'They had found out whom Dilip would kill.'

In (2:47) *je* cliticizes to the matrix verb and *kake* LF moves to the [Spec, C'] of the complement CP, giving a narrow scope reading .

From our examination of the post-verbal CP, we find it has the following properties:

- a) the clause initial *je*-CP need not be verb final
- b) the *je* particle is optionally present
- c) the *je*-CP allows only narrow scope.

to the licensing facts, Dasgupta (1990a) points out that in (2:46) *korbe* is not clause final, indicating, that the T *korbe* need not move to C to get licensed,

which in turn suggests that C is able to license T. Regarding the licensing of the particles *null* or *je*, he takes the following data set in (2:48) and (2:49):

2:48.= Dasgupta's 39

2:48 amra Sobai Sunechi (je) ajke briSTi poRbe  
 we all have-heard Prt today rain will-fall

2:49 = Dasgupta's 43

2:49 ?? amra Sunechi orkache (je) ajke briSTi poRbe  
 we heard from him Prt today rain will-fall

In (2:49) the Prt *je* or *null* is base-generated in the downstairs C and cliticizes to the matrix verb (matrix T, technically) leaving a trace at C which licenses the downstairs T and thus permits (2:47). (2:49) is excluded because the configuration prevents movement to the superordinate head . Why does the *je* or *null* particle need to be raised? If the *je* Prt functions as an anchor it turns the CP into a sequential relative clause, which cannot follow the matrix verb. On the other hand, the *null* Prt cannot serve as an anchor since an anchor is a highlighting device and a *null* Prt is no use as a highlighter. Hence *je* or *null* particle has to rise to the matrix verb.

### 2.3.1.2 The *je*-CP in Oriya

Bal (1990) claims that the Oriya *je* is not a complementizer but a wh-operator. The complementizer particle *je* in the sentences in (2:50) behave like a wh-operator. It thus becomes imperative to examine the Oriya *je* to analyse the status of the Assamese *ze*. Like in Bangla, the Oriya clause internal *je* and clause peripheral *je* are one and the same. The internal *je* occurs in situ when the complement clause is inside the matrix clause (2:50b). The internal *je*



moves to the clause initial position when the *je* - CP gets extraposed (2:50a).  
 Extraposition does not affect the interpretation of the sentences. See (2: 50)  
 below:

2:50 = Bal's 98

2:50a mun jaane [ je raama maacha khaii ]  
 I know JE Rama fish eats  
 'I know that Rama eats fish.'

b. mun [ raama je maacha khaii ] jaane  
 I Rama JE fish eats know  
 'I know that Rama eats fish.'

c. \* mun jaane [ raama je maacha khaii ]  
 I know Rama JE fish eats

The Oriya *je* retains the same status whether it occurs clause internal or clause  
 peripheral. Bal (1990) states the extraposed verb complement clause can occur  
 without an overt 'complementizer' i.e., without either JE or BOLI. See (2:51).

2:51 = Bal's 103

2:51. mun jaane [ raama maacha khaii ]  
 I know Rama fish eats  
 'I know that Rama eats fish.'

Coming to co-occurrence facts, we have noted in (2:34) that the internal  
*je* can co-occur with the quotative *boli*. See (2:34) repeated here as (2:52).

2:52 se [ <sub>CP</sub> ramma JE machaa khaae BOLI ] jaane  
 He Rama JE fish eats BOLI knows

The *je*-CP in Oriya allows a wh-phrase to occur inside its clause. Whenever a wh-phrase occurs with the peripheral *je* it gives a wide scope reading. See (2:53).

2:53 = Bal's 170a

2:53 kie<sub>i</sub> tume bhaabucha [ JE t<sub>i</sub> rammaku saahaajya kariba]  
 who you are-thinking JE to Rama help will do  
 'Who do you think will help Rama?'

From our observation of the *je*-CP in Oriya we find that the status of the particle *je* whether clause internal or peripheral is the same, that of a wh-operator. And the interpretation of the internal *je* clauses (2:50b) and the peripheral *je* clauses (2:50a) are the same. The differences of the internal *je*-CP and the peripheral *je*-CP in Oriya are as shown in (2:54) below:

2:54.	<b>internal <i>je</i> –CP</b>	<b>peripheral <i>je</i>-CP</b>
	a) internal <i>je</i> occurs insitu	a) peripheral <i>je</i> occurs extraposed
	b) internal <i>je</i> obligatory	b) peripheral <i>je</i> optional
	c) co-occurs with <i>boli</i>	c) co-occurs with a wh-phrase
		d) wh-phrase gives wide scope reading

The status of the Bangla *je* (internal and peripheral) is that of a clitic and they have similar properties. See (2:55) below:

2:55.	<b>internal <i>je</i> –CP</b>	<b>peripheral <i>je</i>-CP</b>
	a) needs a phonetically non-null host	a) needs a phonetically non-null host
	b) the Prt <i>je</i> is optional	b) the Prt <i>je</i> is optional
	c) need not be verb final	c) need not be verb final
	d) co-occurs with a wh-phrase	d) co-occurs with a wh-phrase
	e) wh-phrase gives narrow scope	e) wh-phrase gives narrow scop

reading

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Coming back to the properties of the *ze*-CP in Assamese, we find that it differs from the Bangla and Oriya *je* –CP on the following points:

- a.) the *ze*-CP is obligatorily verb final
- b) the particle *ze* is obligatory, and
- c) the *ze* –CP is not compatible with a *wh*-phrase

In section 2.3 we have examined the properties of the clause peripheral *ze*, in the next subsection 2.3.2 we examine the properties of the internal *ze* in Assamese.

### 2.3.2 Internal *ze* in Assamese

Assamese allows the internal *ze* in construction as in (2:56) below:

2:56a [ *azi ze riju n - ah - e* ] (xeito) ami xakalue zan u  
today Prt Riju neg-come-agr that we all know-agr  
'That Riju won't come TODAY we all know.'

b. [ *azi riju ze n-ah-e* ] (xeito) ami xakalue zan-u  
today Riju Prt neg-come-agr that we all know-agr  
'That RIJU won't come today we all know'.

c. \* [ *azi riju n-ah- e ze* ] (xeito) ami xakalue zan-u  
today Riju neg-come-agr Prt that we all know -agr

In (2:56) the internal *ze* occurs after the adverbial *azi* (2:56a) and the NP argument *riju* (2:56b) but not after the verb *nahe* (2:56c). *ze* highlights the argument which precedes it. In other words the internal *ze* acts as a focus

marker. *ze* is coindexed to the demonstrative pronoun *xeito*. The focus marker *ze* is obligatory, while the demonstrative *xeito* is optional. Compare (2:56) with the Bangla internal *je* construction (2:40) repeated here as (2:57):

2:57 (\**je*) ajke (je) briSti (je) poRbe (je), amra keu SeTa bujhte pari ni  
 today rain fall – will we anyone that understand did not  
 ‘That it would rain today none of us had understood.’

In (2:57) the particle *je* cliticises to all the categories in the sentence. *je* co-occurs with *SeTa*, it is optional while the NP argument *SeTa* is obligatory. In (55) *ze* does not occur after the verb. It is obligatory while the demonstrative *xeito* is optional. The argument NP *SeTa* (2:57) occurs inside the matrix clause. The demonstrative *xeito* can occur inside the matrix clause too. See (2:58) below:

2:58 [azi ze riju n-ah-ib-o ] ami konue (xeito) bhaba n-as-il-u  
 today Prt Riju neg-come-fut-agr we no one that think neg-be-pst-agr  
 ‘None of us did think that Riju will not come TODAY.’

In (2:58) *xeito* occurs in situ, while in (2:56) it undergoes leftward movement. The antecedant *xeito* acts as a licenser of the internal *ze*-CP and therefore it is adjacent to it in (2:56).

Comparing the sentences in (2:56) and (2:57) we find the following differences between the Bangla internal *je* and the Assamese internal *ze*, see (2:59) below:

2:59. <b>Bangla internal <i>je</i></b>	<b>Assamese internal <i>ze</i></b>
a) cliticizes to any argument	a) occurs after any argument but not after a verb

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| b) <i>je</i> is optional                      | b) <i>ze</i> is obligatory                       |
| c) the NP <i>SeTa</i> is obligatory           | c) the demonstrative <i>xeito</i> is optional    |
| d) the antecedant <i>SeTa</i> remains in situ | d) the antecedant <i>xeito</i> may move leftward |

Let us now examine some of the properties of the internal *ze*-CP in Assamese. The internal *ze* - CP normally occurs as the left most constituent (2:56). It can occur inside the matrix clause too. When the internal *ze*-CP is inside the matrix clause the demonstrative *xeito* is obligatorily dropped. See (2:60).

2:60 *ami xakalue [ azi ze riju n-ah-e ] zan-u*  
 we all today Prt Riju neg-come-agr know-agr  
 'We all know that TODAY, Riju will not come.'

Sentences as in (2:56) are unmarked i.e. they are used in normal contexts while the one in (2:60) is used in a specific context. In (2:58) the internal *ze* occurs after the focused argument. Normally, the focused argument moves to the left of the clause. See (2:61):

2:61a [ *riju-e ze rima-k kitap khon di-s-e* ] ( *xeito*) *ami xakalue zan-u*  
 Riju-nom Prt Rima-dat book -Cl give-perf-agr that we all know-agr  
 'That RIJU has given the book to Rima, we all know'.

b. [ *rima-k ze riju-e kitap khon di-s-e* ] ( *xeito*) *ami xakalue zan-u*  
 Rima-dat Prt Riju-nom book-Cl give-perf-agr that we all know-agr  
 'That Riju has given the book to RIMA, we all know.'

c [ *kitap khon ze riju-e rima-k di-s-e* ] ( *xeito*) *ami xakalue zan-u*  
 book -C Prt Riju-nom Rima-dat give-perf-agr that we all know-agr  
 'That Riju has given THE BOOK to Rima , we all know'

The data in (2:56) and (2:61) indicate that internal *ze* is a focus marker. We have noted in section 2.2.3 that the peripheral *ze* (2:39) cannot co-occur with a *wh*-phrase. The internal *ze*, however, can co-occur with a *wh*-phrase. See (2:62) below:

2:62 *riju-e kak ze kitap khon di - b - o (xeito) (moi) ne-zan-u*  
*Riju-nom who Prt book-Cl give-fut-agr that I neg-know-agr*  
 ‘I don’t know TO WHOM Riju will give the book.’

The compatibility of the internal *ze* with the *wh*-phrase in (2:62) indicates that the peripheral *ze* and internal *ze* does not have the same status. The ill-formed sentences in (2:39) indicate that the peripheral *ze* which occupies the [Spec-CP] might be some kind of a *wh*-operator on the lines of the Oriya *je*. We shall deal with this problem in section 2.2.4. Coming to the internal *ze* and the peripheral *ze*, we find that they differ on the following points. See (2:63) below:

2:63.	<b>peripheral <i>ze</i></b>	<b>internal <i>ze</i></b>
	a) a <i>wh</i> -operator	a.) a focus marker
	b) CP verb final	b) not verb final
	c) obligatory	c) obligatory
	d) does not co-occur with a <i>wh</i> -phrase	d) ) co-occurs with <i>wh</i> -phrase
	e) scope facts irrelevant	e) <i>wh</i> -phrase gives a narrow scope reading

The properties of the internal *ze* and the peripheral *ze* clearly indicate that they do not have the same status. The internal *ze* is a focus marker. Focusing apparently plays a crucial role in the language and we have already noted in section 2.2.2 that the left peripheral *buli*-CP to be an instance of focusing. Before we examine the status of the peripheral *ze* it becomes imperative to examine how the phenomenon of focus takes place in Assamese and also to analyze the focus position within the clause structure. In the next section we examine the phenomenon of focus and the focus position in Assamese.

### 23.2.1 Focus and the Focus Position in Assamese:

Jayaseelan (1996) posits the focus position in Malayalam to the left of V. The focus projects a Focus Phrase and takes the VP as its complement. Question words are inherently focused; their movement to the focus position is therefore simply an instance of focus movement. In (2:64a) the Malayalam non-cleft question occurs to the verb's immediate left. (2:64b) is ill-formed because the question word is not to the immediate left of V.

2:64 = Jayaseelan's 3

2:64a. ninn-e aarð aticcu ?  
you who beat  
'Who beat you?'

b. \* aarð ninn-e aticcu ?

Jayaseelan states that focus movement to a position next to the verb is a fairly wide spread phenomenon<sup>4</sup>. In the lines of Chomsky (1992) and Kayne (1994), Jayaseelan assumes that heads take their complements to their right, the difference in the surface order amongst languages results from *overt vs covert* raising of V and complement. Analogous to IP being the complement of C, which is the head of CP, VP is the complement of Focus, which is the head of the Focus Phrase (FP). FP may be universally available. AGR<sub>o</sub>P and AGR<sub>i</sub>oP are higher than FP.

As per the Minimalist Programme all strong features must be checked before Spell-Out. In Malayalam all Case features are strong and must be checked before Spell-Out. Verbs agree weakly with arguments in Malayalam.

Therefore the subject argument and object (direct / indirect) argument must move to check their Case features before Spell-Out. In (2:64a) the direct object *ninne* moves into Spec - AGRP<sub>o</sub> to check its features. The subject *arre* normally would move to Spec-AGR<sub>s</sub> P to check its case feature but in (63a) *arre* case marked for focus moves to the Spec- Foc P. Jayaseelan (1996) points out that any NP (subject / complement) in Spec - FP will not have checked its features with AGR even though AGR is by hypothesis ‘strong’. The problem cannot be solved by stipulating that Focus is a stronger feature than AGR. Thus in (63a) the subject *aarð* first moves into Spec - FP and then further rises to Spec - AGR<sub>s</sub> P all before Spell-Out. In Malayalam it is a matter of XPs “floating away” from a head.

Like in Malayalam, question words in Assamese move to the immediate left of the verb. See (2:65a):

2:65a    rima - k            kon - e            mar - il - e  
           Rima -acc    who -nom            beat -pst - agr  
                   ‘Who beat Rima?’

When the question word remains in-situ the interpretation of the sentence is as in (2:65b) below:

2:65b.    kon - e    rima - k            mar - il - e  
           who -nom    Rima -acc            beat -pst - agr  
                   ‘Who is it that beat Rima?’

The interrogative sentence in (2:65 a) shows the question (k-) word *kone* ‘who’ the focused argument, is to be placed to the immediate left of the verb. Following Jayaseelan (1996) we may assume the focus position in

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<sup>4</sup> For details see Jayaseelan (1996)



Assamese too is to the immediate left of the verb. As per the MP, strong features have to be checked before Spell-Out. Assamese has strong Case features and Tense features which must be checked before Spell-Out. Thus the arguments with strong Case features check their features in their respective head; and the verb obligatorily moves to T(ense) to check its tense and then moves to AGR<sub>s</sub> to check its  $\phi$  features.

The Malayalam sentence in (2:64b), shows a question word is in-situ the sentence is ill-formed. In Assamese, a question word can occur in-situ (2:65b) as well as move to the immediate left of the verb as in (2:65a). Kidwai (1996) states focusing can take place in the canonical (SOV) order as well in the non-canonical (OSV, VSO...) order. The interrogative in (2:65a) is in a non-canonical order and the one in (2:65b) is in the canonical order. Canonical focusing is normally *neutral* and the focus is wide while the non-canonical focusing is *non-neutral* and it has a narrow focus. The example in (2:65b) is *neutral* and has a wide focus while (2:65a) is *non-neutral* and has a narrow focus. Kidwai observes that the link between movement and positional focusing is not limited to leftward clause internal argument scrambling alone. Rightward scrambling within the clause also yields the same result. See (2:66):

2:66 = Kidwai's 6

2.66.a. anjum – ko    kitaab    dii            nur - ne  
 Anjum(IO)    book(DO)    gave    Noor (SU)  
 'It was a book that Noor gave Anjum.'

b.    anjum – ko            nur - ne            dii            kitaab  
 Anjum(IO)            Noor (SU)    gave            book(DO)  
 'It was Noor who gave Anjum. a book.'

Assamese is a free word order<sup>5</sup> language i.e. it allows both leftward and rightward scrambling. In (2:67) we have examples of leftward and in (2:68) that of rightward scrambling.

2:67.a riju-e rima - k kitap e - khon di-s - il - e  
 Riju-nom Rima -dat book one - cl give -perf -pst agr  
 'Riju had given Rima a book.'

b. rima - k riju-e kitap e- khon di-s - il - e  
 Rima -dat Riju-nom book one- cl give -perf -pst agr  
 'It was A BOOK which Riju had given Rima.'

c. kitap e - khon rima - k riju-e di - s - il - e  
 book one- cl Rima -dat Riju - nom give -perf -pst agr  
 'It was RIJU who had given Rima a book.'

d. kitap e- khon riju-e rima -k di - s - il - e  
 book one- cl Riju - nom Rima -dat give -perf -pst agr  
 'It was RIMA to whom Riju had given the book.'

2:68a. riju-e kitap e- khon di - s - il - e rima - k  
 Riju- nom book one - cl give - perf - pst -agr Rima - dat  
 'It was A BOOK that Riju had given Rima.'

b. riju-e rima - k di - s - il - e kitap e- khon  
 Riju-nom Rima - dat give - perf - pst -agr book one - cl  
 'It was to RIMA , Riju had given a book.'

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<sup>5</sup> Assamese is a free word order language. The arguments within a clause can occur in positions as shown below in (1):  
 1a. rijue rimak matise (SOV)    1b. rimak rijue matise (OSV)    1c. rijue matise rimak (SVO)  
 Riju Rima has called        Rima Riju has called        Riju has called Rima  
 1d. rimak matise rijue (OVS)    1e. matise rijue rimak (VSO)    1f. matise rimak rijue (VOS)

- c. rima – k    riju-e    di - s - il - e    kitap e-khon  
 Rima – dat Riju - nom give - perf - pst -agr book one - cl  
 ‘It was to Rima that RIJU had given a book.’

The examples in (2:67) and (2:68) show that leftward and rightward scrambling can occur in the language. However, leftward scrambling is normal and acceptable by the native speakers than rightward scrambling. Jayaseelan (1996) states that the argument moved to the right of the verb gets defocused. In (2:68) the arguments to the right are after thoughts and therefore defocused. The sentences in (2:67 b-c) and in (2:68c) we find the object argument *rimak* moved to the clause initial position. Normally when a constituent receives special emphasis it is moved to the clause initial position. The constituent that gets the emphasis is a topic. Scrambling then not only takes place for focusing but also for topicalization.

Kidwai (1996) notes that Hindi-Urdu has three strategies for realising *non-neutral* focus:

- a) a syntactic strategy of preverbal focusing,
- b) a morphological strategy of in-situ focus via cliticization of an emphatic marker, and
- c) by a prosodic strategy of heavy (contrastive) stress.

In (2:65) we have observed instances of the syntactic strategy of preverbal focusing. The sentences in section 2.3.2 are instances of morphological strategy of focusing. Besides the internal *ze*, morphological strategy for focusing involve the use of the emphatic marker *he*. See (2:69):

- 2:69a. riju - e – he    kitap – khon    an - ib - o  
 Riju -nom -emph book –cl    bring -fut - agr  
 ‘It is RIJU who will bring the book.’

- b. riju - e    kitap - khon- he    an - ib - o  
 Riju -nom book -cl-emph    bring -fut - agr  
 'It is THE BOOK which Riju will bring.'

In (2:69) the emphatic marker *he* operates as a focus marker. In certain cases, the emphatic marker *-i / -ei* may cliticizes to a focused argument. *-i / -ei* are allomorphic variations. *-i* (2:70a) occurs after a vowel sound and *-ei*(2:70b) after a consonant sound.

- 2:70a riju - e - i            kitap - khon    an - ib - o  
 Riju -nom-emph    book -cl            bring -fut - agr  
 'It is RIJU who will bring the book.'

- b. riju - e    kitap - khon- ei    an - ib - o  
 Riju -nom    book -cl-emph    bring -fut - agr  
 'It is THE BOOK which Riju will bring.'

Another instance of a morphological strategy in focusing is the occurrence of the particle *buli* with the emphatic marker *he*. See (2:71)

- 2:71a. moi    tum - ak    buli-he    di - s - u            dei  
 I            you-acc    emph    give - perf - agr    right  
 'Considering that it is YOU, I have given it to you, O.K.'

- b. moi    buli-he    tum - ak    di - s - u            dei  
 I            emph            you-acc    give - perf - agr    right  
 'Considering that it is I, I have given it to you, O.K.'

The ill-formed sentences in (2:71c-d) show the emphatic marker is obligatory, when *he* does not obligatorily follow *buli* there is no focus.

2:71c. \* moi tum – ak buli di – s – u dei  
 I you-acc prt give – perf – agr right  
 ‘Considering that it is YOU, I have given it to you, O.K.’

d. \* moi buli tum – ak di – s – u dei  
 I prt you-acc give – perf – agr right  
 ‘Considering that it is I, I have given it to you, O.K.’

The emphatic markers *buli* and the emphatic markers *he* and *-i / ei* do not occur with a question word. See (2:72) below:

2:72a \* kak buli – he di - s - u dei  
 who(m) emph give-perf -agr right

b. \* kon -e – he kitap – khon an - ib - o  
 who-nom-emph book-cl bring - fut – agr

c. \* kon - e – i kitap – khon an - ib - o  
 who-nom-emph book – cl bring - fut - agr

The non-finite *buli* and the emphatic marker *he* cannot highlight a question word. Question words are normally highlighted by the emphatic marker *nu*. See (2:73):

2:73 kon -e – nu kitap – khon an - ib - o  
 who - nom - emph book-cl bring - fut - agr  
 ‘Who is it that will bring the book?’

The examples in (2:71 – 2:72) show that the emphatic marker *he* and *-i / ei* occur in a declarative clause and *nu* in an interrogative clause. Instances of

prosodic strategy can be seen in examples where a heavy stress is given on the focused argument. In (2:74) we have an instance where the three strategies occur together.

2:74. *riju - e - he*      *KITAP KHON*    *rima - k*    *di - s - il - e*  
Riju -nom - emph book khon      Rima - dat give -perf - pst - agr  
'It was RIJU who had given THE BOOK to RIMA.'

In (2:74) the subject argument *riju* undergoes morphological focusing, the indirect object *rimak* moves to the immediate left of the verb, an instance of positional focusing, and the direct object *kitab khon* takes the heavy contrastive stress. Having looked at the three focusing strategies we shall now give an account of the focus position in Assamese.

Kidwai (1996) states the three focusing strategies demonstrate that distribution of focus position in natural language is contingent upon (i) XP and X<sup>o</sup> adjunction (ii) a weak proximity-to-the-verb requirement, and (iii) the grammatical nature of the feature [FOCUS] in that it needs licensing by the time phonetic output is reached. Kidwai further states that these three strategies interact in the following manner to give rise to the superficial occurrence of focus positions.

2:75 [FOCUS] is a feature in UG that requires licensing under adjacency to adverbial projection..XP and / or X<sub>o</sub> - adjunction is driven by adjacency requirement, since this scrambling results in an adjacency between the focused phrase and the licensing verb projection that would not otherwise obtained.

In the current minimalist assumption licensing of [FOCUS] is within the PF component, this licensing is discourse related, rather than any LF relevant consideration. Focusing is largely a pragmatic strategy and the interpretation of non-WH focus is context dependent and constrained by a number of discourse factors. The interpretation of focused argument gets determined in a separate component inside PF. Kidwai (1996) following Wiltschko <sup>6</sup> (1995) claims Domain D(iscourse) to be a level at which presuppositionality, focusing and coreference effects are interpreted. This interpretation is assessed at the interface along with the LF and PF. The feature [FOCUS] is a [ PF [+ Interpretable ] ] and can be licensed at any of the levels of PF either via PF - movement (scrambling), by morphology (-*hii* cliticization) or by phonology (stress). Like LF [ + Interpretable] features, it can be accessed repeatedly by PF computation since all the three types of focus marking can be found in a single example. See (2:76) below:

2:76 = Kidwai's 10

2:76 kitaab RAAM-hii laayegaa, (siitaa nahii)  
 book Ram - EMPH bring-FUT Sita not  
 'RAM will bring the book, not Sita.'

Kidwai argues classifying [+Focus] as a [ PF [+Interpretable] ] comes from wh - focus construction. Wh- focusing in the designated pre / post verbal position appears to be obligatory than non-wh positional focusing. The difference between wh- and non-wh- foci lies in the fact that the former is intrinsically [+FOCUS] elements in the lexicon, while for non-wh - focus the [PF [+Interpretable] [+FOCUS] feature is added in the formation of the

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<sup>6</sup> Wiltschko (1995) coined the term Domain D(iscourse) to refer to the hypothetical component which contains the feature [FOCUS]. He assumes it to be a level where presuppositionality effects are interpreted.

enumeration. Kidwai maintains the traditional assumption that feature [+Focus] is checked by a verbal projection.

The Assamese examples show that focused [ $\pm$  WH] elements occur in a preverbal position. According to Kidwai (1996) this scrambling is Morphology-serving PF component driven by the need to establish an adjacency between the focalizing verbal feature and the focused category. In the lines of Kidwai we assume Assamese scrambling is Morphology - serving PF phenomena. Let us consider the following sentence in (2:77):

2:77 kitap khon riju – e an - ib - o  
 book cl Riju-nom bring - fut - agr  
 'It is Riju who will bring the book.'

In Assamese verb has overt agreement with the subject. In (2:77) the subject argument *rijue* is under focus. Assuming that the focus argument is [PF] [+Interpretable] it must be checked under subjacency with the verb. In the normal word order (SOV) the direct object intervenes. With the scrambling of the direct object, a topic, is expressed as left adjunction to TP it yields adjacency between the verb and the subject. At PF we assume the sentence in (2:75) to have the following structure as in (2:78).

2:78. [<sub>TP</sub> kitapkhon<sub>J</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> rijju- e<sub>i</sub> [+F] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>SPEC 2</sub> t<sub>J</sub> [<sub>SPEC 1</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>v</sub> an-ib-o<sub>+</sub>F] ] ] ] ]  
 [ <sub>VP</sub> t<sub>J</sub> t<sub>J</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ] ] ]

Since the feature [+FOCUS] can be spelled out in different ways by the subcomponents inside the PF-component, the feature can also be licensed by morphology as in (2:79a) and phonology as in (2:79b) below, and by all strategies as in (2:74) above:



2:79a. riju - e – he      kitap – khon      an - ib - o  
 Riju -nom -emph book -cl      bring -fut - agr  
 ‘It is Riju who will bring the book.’

b. RIJU-E      kitap – khon      an - ib - o  
 Riju -nom      book –cl      bring -fut - agr  
 ‘It is Riju who will bring the book’.

Kidwai (1996) claims that the modern Indic clauses never let a clear focus precede a clear topic. The sentences in (2:80) also show that a clear focus can precede a clear topic.

2:80a [kitab khon ze rima - k riju-e di-s- e ] ( xeito) ami xakalue zan-u  
 book-Cl Prt Rima-dat Riju-nom give-perf-agr that we all know-agr  
 ‘That Riju has given THE BOOK to Rima, we all know.’

b. [rima-k kitap khon ze riju–e di-s-e ] (xeito) ami xakalue zan-u  
 Rima-dat book-Cl Prt Riju-nom give-perf-agr that we all know-agr  
 ‘That Riju has given THE BOOK to Rima, we all know.’

In (2:80a) the focus argument *kitabkhon* precedes the topic *rimak* and in (2:80b) the topic *rimak* precedes the focus argument *kitab khon*. In (2:69) too we find that the focus argument precedes the topic argument. Let us consider another example with a [+wh] focus argument as in (2:81) below:

2:81a. riju-e kitap khon ka-k ze di-l – e (xeito) ne-zan-u  
 Riju-nom book-Cl who-dat Prt give-pst -agr that neg-know-agr  
 ‘I don’t know TO WHOM Riju gave the book.’

b. ka-k ze riju-e kitap khon di-l-e (xeito) ne-zan-u  
 who-dat Prt Riju-nom book-Cl give-pst-agr that neg-know-agr

c. *kitab khon riju-e ka-k ze di-l-e (xeito) ne-zan-u*  
 book Cl Riju-nom who-dat Prt give-pst-agr that neg-know-agr

The sentences in (2:81) are well formed. In (2:81a) the indirect object *kak* followed by the emphatic marker *ze* is to the immediate left of the verb. In (2:81b) the focused argument *kak ze* is the left most constituent and in (2:81c) the topic argument *kitab khon* is the left most constituent. In (2:81) either the topic or the focus argument moves leftward. In (2:82) we have instance of both a topic and a focus argument moving leftwards. In (2:82a) the topic *kitab khon* precedes the focus argument *kak ze* and in (2:82b) the focus argument precedes the topic argument.

2:82a *kitab khon ka-k ze riju-e di-l-e (xeito) ne-zan-u*  
 book-Cl who-dat Prt Riju-nom give-pst-agr that neg-know-agr

b. *ka-k ze kitab khon riju-e di-l-e (xeito) ne-zan-u*  
 who-dat Prt book-Cl Riju-nom give-pst-agr that neg-know-agr

As per Kidwai's (1996) observation the sentences in (2:82) should be ill formed. But they are not so. In (2:78) we have assumed focus in Assamese is [PF] interpretable. Since the feature [+FOCUS] can be spelled out in different ways by the subcomponents inside the PF-component, the feature can also be licensed by Morphology and Phonology (see 2:79), the well formed sentences in (2:80 – 2:81) vouch for it. From our observation of the sentences in (2:69), (2:80) and (2:81) we may conclude that the morphological strategy used as a device for focusing mainly to highlight the difference between a topic and a focus argument. In the examples in (2:80) and (2:81) both the topic and focus argument can occupy the same position in the clause structure but it is only the focus argument, which allows cliticization of a focus particle like *ze*. The focus

position in Assamese needs further investigation, which is beyond the scope of the present work. As for now it suffices to show that the internal *ze* and the peripheral *ze* in Assamese are not one and the same as is the case with the Bangla and Oriya *je*. In the next section we examine the status of the peripheral *ze* in Assamese.

### 2.3.3 Status of the Peripheral *ze*:

We have observed in the preceding section that the peripheral *ze* and internal *ze* in Assamese are not one and the same. The internal *ze* is a focus marker and the peripheral *ze* some kind of a WH- operator. We assume the peripheral *ze* to be a Wh - operator because it does not co-occur with a wh-phrase. This crucial difference makes the particle *ze* different from the Bangla and Oriya *je*. Before we move onto the analysis of the peripheral *ze*, let us once again look at the properties of the Bangla *je* and the Oriya *je*.

2:83.	<b>Bangla <i>je</i></b>	<b>Oriya <i>je</i></b>
	a) relative word	a) relative word
	b) anchor / clitic	b) wh-operator
	c) base generated in C	c) base generated insitu
	d) cliticises to matrix verb	d) moves to [ Spec-CP]

The peripheral *ze* is not a clitic. It does not cliticize to the matrix verb. Evidence of this comes from the fact that the peripheral *ze* is not compatible with a wh-phrase (2:53) and it restricts movement of the arguments within the clause (2:52) unlike the verbal particle *buli* (2:39). From our observation we conclude that *ze* is some kind of a wh-operator. It occupies the [Spec-C<sup>′</sup>]. This makes *ze* closer to the Oriya *je*. But Bangla and Oriya *je* share one common feature i.e., it is morphologically related to a relative or *j* - word. Thus we have

before us two issues: one to figure out if *ze* is morphologically related to a relative or *z-* word and two where *ze* is base generated.

In Assamese a question word is derived from the *k*-morpheme and a relative word from the *z*-morpheme. Morphologically then *ze* should be related to a *z*-word. The table in (2:84) below shows how question and relative words are derived in Assamese.

2:84.	Case	k-word	gloss	z- word	gloss
	Nom -i <sup>7</sup>	ki	what	zi	who , what ,which
	Acc -ak	kak	who(m)	zak	who(m)
	Genitive -ar	kar	whose	zar	whose
	Dative -ak	kak	who(m)	zak	who(m)
	Dative -olo	koloi	where to	zoloi	where to
	Locative -ot	kot	where	zot	where

In (2:84) the question words and the relative words are derived when the *k*-morpheme and *z*-morpheme respectively when the morphemes get case marked. Not all question and relative words are derived from the *k*-morpheme and the *z*-morpheme. The table in (2:85) shows question words and relative words, which are free morphemes .

2:85.	k-word	gloss	z-word	gloss
	kon	which		
	ketiya	when	zetya	when
	kene	how	zene	how

---

<sup>7</sup> Nominative case in Assamese is marked by the case markers *-e* (after a consonant) and *-i* (after a vowel). In the derivation of the question word *ki* 'who' and the relative word *zi* 'who' the case marker *-i* is overt.

Normally the question words and relative words, which are free morpheme is not declinable. The exception to the case is *kon* ‘which’ it takes the Nominative Case - *e* to form *kone* ‘who’. From the tables in (2:84) and (2:85) we find that the particle *ze* does not conform to either a *k*-word or a *z*-word. Further evidence of *ze* not being a relative or *z*- word comes from correlative constructions. See (2:86):

2:86. tom - ar - logot oha manuh-zon moicini na - pa - u  
 you-gen-with coming man -Cl I know neg-get - agr  
 ‘I don’t know the man who has come with you.’

A correlative clause in Assamese (2:86) normally does not take a relative word. The verb in the correlative clause gets nominalised and acts as a modifier to the argument, which gets relativized. A correlative clause may have a relative word in construction as in (2:87):

2:87 [ zi-zon manuh<sub>i</sub> tom-ar-logot e<sub>i</sub> ah-is-e ] moiteokcিনি na-pa-u  
 who-Cl man you-gen-with come-perf-agr I him know neg-get-agr  
 ‘I don’t know the man who has come with you.’

The relativised NP *zi zon manuh* obligatorily moves left and is co-indexed with the object NP *teok* in the matrix clause. A construction like (2:87) is used in a specific context. The relative word *zi*, a wh-operator, moves overtly to [Spec-C’].

### 2.3.3.1 *ze* a WH- Operator

Bal (1990) states that *je* in Oriya is never a complementizer. It is some kind of wh-operator that undergoes movement to [Spec-C’] when the CP is

extraposed. *je* has to be co-indexed with the trace of the extraposed CP or with a *pro* that remain in the A-position of the clause . See (2:88):

2:88. [ IP .....e<sub>i</sub> / pro<sub>i</sub> V [ CP je [ C' φ [ ..... e<sub>1</sub>,..... ] ] ]  
 (Bayer: 1996a: 257)

This analysis is based on the fact that pleonastic elements can appear to the left of the verb when the tensed CP is displaced. See (2:89):

2:89 = Bal's 99

2:89a mun e kathaa jaane [ JE satis bides jiba ]  
 I this fact know JE Satis abroad will-go  
 'I am aware of the fact that Satis will go abroad.'

b. \* mun e kathaa jaane [ satis JE bides jiba ]

Bayer (1996a) states that this analysis can be carried over to Bangla, which is extremely close to Oriya. See (2:90).

2:90 = Bayer's 14

2:90a. [ baba aS- be ] chele - Ta [ e - Ta ] jan - e na  
 father come-FUT3 boy -CF this -CF know-3 not  
 'That his father will come , the boy does not know this.'

b. chele-Ta [ e kOtha ] jan-e na [ je baba aSbe ]  
 boy-CF this fact know not that father will-come  
 'The boy does not know it that his father will come.'

In these sentences CP is not in an A-position. The A-position is occupied by the pleonastic elements *eta* ‘this’ and *e kOtha* ‘this talk / matter’. Argument in favour of *je* clause being extraposed comes from the fact that these languages (Bangla and Oriya) freely allow null objects. The extraposed CP is licensed the same way as a relative clause to the right in which case *je* is an operator in [Spec-CP].

Let us find out what result we get when the peripheral *ze*- CP and the internal *ze*-CP when they undergo displacement. See (2:91):

2:91a \* [ deuta-k ah-ib-o ] lora-tu- e [ei - tu ] ne - zan - e  
 father-acc come-fut-agr boy-Cl-nom this-Cl neg-know-agr

b. lora-tu-e [ ei-tu kotha ] ne-zan-e [ ze deuta - k ah-ib-o ]  
 boy-Cl-nom this-Cl talk neg-know-agr Prt father-acc come-fut-agr

c. \*lora-tu-e [ ei-tu kotha ] ne-zan-e [ deuta-k ze ah-ib-o ]  
 boy-Cl-nom this-Cl talk neg-know-agr father-acc Prt come-fut-agr

Pleonastic elements in Assamese are *etiu* ‘this’ and *ei kothatu* ‘this talk / matter’. The Bangla sentences (2:90) show displacement to the left and right of the verb . In Assamese displacement can take place only to the right (2:91b). Further the peripheral *ze* and the internal *ze* have to be obligatorily present. (2:91a) is bad because *ze* is not present. (2:91c) is ill formed as the internal *ze*-CP moves to the right of the matrix verb . The sentence improves when internal *ze* is obligatorily present and the internal *ze* -CP moves to the left of the matrix clause. See (2:92):

2:92 [ deutak ze ah-ib-o ] lora-tu-e [ ei-tu kotha ] ne-zan - e  
 father Prt come-fut-agr boy-CI-agr this-CI talk neg-know-agr  
 ‘That FATHER will come , the boy does not know this.’

Bayer (1996a) points out that this analysis mainly helps to explain why *je* clause cannot appear in a topicalized position. But he challenges the validity of this argument. The Bangla *je* clauses are ungrammatical in a pre-verbal position if they follow a pleonastic phrase. See (2:93).

2:93 = Bayer’s 16

2:93. ?? chele-Ta [ e kotha ] [ je baba aS - be ] jan - e na  
 boy - CF this talk COMP father come-fut 3 know-3 not

(2:93) turns out to be completely ungrammatical when *e kotha* is replaced by an empty category . See (2:94):

2:94 = Bayer’s 17

2:94.\* chele - Ta pro [ je baba aS - be ] jan - e na

The ungrammaticality of (2:94) indicates that *pro* is not able to license the *je*-clause. Bayer’s argument is if *pro* can license it when the *je*-clause is extraposed why cannot it license it in (2: 94). Bayer argues it is not clear what *je* binds. If it does not bind anything, the structure is ruled out as a case of vacuous quantification. *je* is then some kind of a *factivity operator* that binds a certain position in the clause.

When there is displacement of the *ze*-clause to a pre-verbal position the sentences are ungrammatical. See (2:95) below.



2:95a. \* riju-e [ ei-tu kotha ] [ ze rima ah-ib o ] ne-zan-e  
 Riju-nom this-CI talk that Rima come-fut-agr neg-know-agr

b. \* riju-e pro [ ze rima ah-ib-o ] ne-zan-e  
 Riju-nom that Rima come-fut-agr neg-know-agr

Both Bangla and Oriya allow overt extraction from the *je* clause. If *je* occupies the [Spec-CP] position it should not be possible to license an intermediate trace of the moved wh-phrase in [Spec-CP] and both examples should at least be ungrammatical due to subjacency violation. But the Bangla sentence is well formed. See (2:96):

2:96 = Bayer 's 18

2:96 tumi [ ki Osukh - e ], bhab - cho [CP je ram e<sub>i</sub> mara gE-che ] ?  
 you which illness-LOC think - 2 COMP Ram die go - PST 3  
 'Of which illness do you think that Ram died?'

The same is true for the Oriya sentence in (2:97).

2:97 = Bal's 170

2:97 kie, tume bhaabhcha [CP je e<sub>i</sub> raamaku saahaajya kariba ] ?  
 who you are-thinking COMP Ram help will-do  
 'Who do you think will help Ram?'

From the evidence in (2:96) and (2:97), Bayer argues that *je* is not a wh-operator. Coming to Assamese we find that the *ze*-clauses do not allow overt extraction. Since *ze* occupies the [Spec-CP] position it is not possible to license an intermediate trace of the moved wh-phrase in [Spec-CP]. The ill formed sentences in (2:98) indicate that *ze* is a wh-operator.

2:98a \* tumi [ ki oxokot ], bhab-is-a [ ze ram e<sub>1</sub> dhooka - l ] ?  
 you what illness think- perf-agr that Ram die-pst  
 ‘Of what illness do you think that Ram died’?

b.\* kon , tumi bhab-is a [ ze e<sub>1</sub> riju-k xohai kor-ib-o ] ?  
 who you think-perf-agr that Riju-acc help do-fut-agr  
 ‘Who do you think will help Riju’?

According to Bayer *je* in Bangla is a complementizer (an  $X^0$  category). The relative or *j* - word has been reanalysed as a functional category. Reanalysis is a common phenomenon, for instance Germanic *dat* ‘that’ historically identical to a deictic pronominal has been reanalyzed as a functional category. The same is the case with Romance *che*, *que* these words, identical to a wh-operator, have undergone reanalysis. In all these cases, a monomorphemic operator must have been reanalyzed as a head that serves as a complementizer. The same has happened to the Bangla and Oriya *je*. From our observation of the peripheral *ze* we find that *ze* is not related to a relative or *z*- word but behaves like a wh-operator. Thus in the lines of Bayer (1996a) we may assume that *ze* once a relative word has been reanalysed as a functional category ( $X^0$ ) but it has retained its operator status. Having established the status of the peripheral *ze*, we now examine the *null -Prt* CP in the next section.

#### 2.4 The *null - Prt* CP

In section 2.1.1 we had observed that the COMP or C head selects a null-Prt when a question word occurs in a finite complement clause. See (2:9a) repeated here as (2:99) below:

2:99a riju-e zan-e [kon ah-ib-o ]  
 Riju-nom know-agr who come-fut-agr  
 ‘Riju knows who will come’.

We shall now examine the properties of the *null*-Prt CP in Assamese. Most finite verbs in Assamese select a *null* - Prt CP. The *null*-Prt CP obligatorily takes a *k*-word, which allows only a narrow scope reading. See (2:100):

2:100a. riju-e    zan-e    [ kon-e    kitap khon    ni-l-e ]  
 Riju-nom know-agr who-nom book Cl    take-pst-agr  
 ‘Riju knows who has taken the book.’  
 \* ‘Who does Riju know has taken the book?’

b. riju-e    xudh-is-e    [ rima-i    ki    ni-l-e ]  
 Riju-nom ask-perf -agr Rima-nom what take-pst-agr  
 ‘Riju has asked what Rima has taken.’  
 \* ‘What has Riju asked Rima has taken?’

In (2:100) the matrix verbs *zana* ‘know’ and *xudha* ‘ask’ select a *null*-Prt CP. The wh-phrases *kone* ‘who’ and *ki* ‘what’ move at LF to the [Spec - C’] of the *null*-Prt CP which gives only narrow scope reading..

We have already noted that the *buli*-CP in section 2.2 and the peripheral *ze* - CP in section 2.3 are obligatorily verb final. The sentences in (2:101) show the *null* - Prt CP is obligatorily verb final.

2:101a. \*[ kon-e    ni-l-e    kitap khon ] riju-e    zan-e  
 who-nom take-pst-agr book-Cl    Riju-nom know-agr  
 ‘Riju knows who has taken the book.’

b. \* [ rima-i    ni-l-e    ki ] riju-e    zan-e  
 Rima-nom take-pst-agr what Riju-nom know-agr  
 ‘Riju knows what Rima has taken.’

We have already noted in section 2.3.2, that in Assamese, the internal *ze*, a focus marker, can occur inside a *null*-Prt CP. See (2:81a) repeated here as (2:102).

2:102. riju-e    kitap khon ka-k ze di-l – e    (xeito)    ne-zan-u  
 Riju-nom book Cl who-dat Prt give-pst-agr that neg-know-agr  
 ‘I don’t know TO WHOM Riju gave the book.’

The internal *ze* can occur inside the *null*-Prt CP on two conditions, see (2:103) below.

- 2:103 a) when the matrix verb agrees with the Subject in First Person, and  
 b) when the matrix verb is in the negative form.

When these conditions are not met the sentences are ill-formed. See (2:104) and (2: 105) below:

2:104a \* [ kon- e ze kitap khon ni-l-e ] riju-e zan - e  
 who-nom Prt book Cl take-pst-agr Riju-nom know-agr  
 ‘Riju knows WHO has taken the book.’

b. \*[ kon-e kitap khon ze ni-l-e ] riju-e zan-e  
 who-nom book Cl Prt take- pst-agr Riju-nom know-agr  
 ‘Riju knows who took THE BOOK.’

2:105a \* [ kon-e ze kitap khon ni-l-e ] zan-a  
 who-nom Prt book Cl take-pst-agr know-agr  
 ‘You know WHO took the book.’

- b. \* [ kon-e kitap-khon ze ni-l-e ]    zan-a  
 who-nom book-Cla    Prt take- pst-agr know-agr  
 ‘You know who took THE BOOK.’

The sentences in (2:104) and (2:105) are bad because the matrix verb agrees with the subject in the Third and Second Persons and the matrix verb is in the positive form. The ill formed sentences in (2:104) and (2:105) improve when the conditions in (2:103) are met in (2:106).

- 2:106a [ kon-e ze kitap khon ni-l-e ]    (xeito) na-zan-u  
 who-nom Prt book Cl    take-perf-agr    neg-know-agr  
 ‘I don’t know WHO took the book.’

- b. [ kitap khon ze kon-e    ni-l-e ]    (xeito) na-zan-u  
 book Cl    Prt who-nom take-perf-agr    neg-know-agr  
 ‘I don’t know who took THE BOOK.’

In (2:106b) the object argument *kitapkhon* followed by *ze* occurs as the leftmost constituent of the matrix clause. In this example we have two focusing strategies operating at the same time. The *wh*-word occurs in the preverbal position in the lines of Jayaseelan (1996) and the object argument undergoes morphological focusing. The ill formed sentences in (2:104) and (2:105) indicate that the internal *ze* can occur inside a *null*-Prt CP only when it is licensed by a negative element. Hence the obligatoriness of the negative verb in (2:102) and (2:106). Whenever the internal *ze* occurs in a *null*-Prt CP it obligatorily moves to the left of the matrix clause. Compare (2:104) and (2:107). In this the *null*-Prt CP behaves like the *buli*-CP (see 2.2.0). In specific context, the *null*-Prt CP may occur inside the matrix clause. Normally there is a contrastive (heavy) stress on the subject argument of the matrix clause when

the *null*-Prt CP is embedded as in (2:107). The sentence in (2:107) is an instance of prosodic strategy of contrastive focusing.

2:107. riju-e [ kon-e kitap khon ni-l-e ]        zan-e  
Riju-nom who-nom book Cl take-pst-agr know-agr  
'Riju knows who has taken the book.'

The Assamese the *null*-Prt CP has the following properties :

- a) the *null* - Prt CP is verb final
- b) the *null*- Prt CP allows the particle *ze* to occur inside the clause conditionally
- c) wh-phrase is obligatorily present in a *null* - Prt CP , and ,
- d) the *null*- prt CP allows only narrow scope reading

#### 2.4.1 The *null* -Prt CP in Bangla

Let us examine the *null*-Prt CP in Bangla.

2:108 = Dasgupta's 20

2:108. ora [ dilip prodipke khun korbe ] jante perechilo  
they Dilip Prodip-obj kill will to-know had come  
'They had come to know that Dilip would kill Prodip'.

The *null*-Prt CP in Bangla is obligatorily verb final. See (2:109) below:

2:109 = Dasgupta's 22

2:109\* ora [prodipke khun korbe dilip ] jante perechilo  
they Prodip-obj kill Dilip will to-know had come  
'They had come to know that Dilip would kill Prodip.'

In the *null*-Prt CP the internal *je* is obligatorily absent. See (2:110) below:

2:110 = Dasgupta's 25

2:110a ora [ dilip-je khun korbe prodipke] jante perechilo  
 they Dilip-prt kill will Prodip-obj to-know had come  
 ‘They had come to know that Dilip would kill Prodip.’

b. ora [ dilip prodipke khun korbe] jante perechilo  
 they Dilip Prodip-obj kill will to-know had come  
 ‘They had come to know that Dilip would kill Prodip.’

In (2:110a), the verb *khun korbe* is not clause final, therefore it allows the internal *je* to cliticize to the subject argument dilip. In (2:110b), since the verb *khun korbe* is clause final, the internal *je* is obligatorily absent. Whenever a wh-phrase occurs inside the *null*-Prt CP it allows both wide scope and narrow scope reading. See (2:111) below:

2:111a = Dasgupta’s 31

2:111a. ora [ dilip kake khun korbe ] jante perechilo  
 they Dilip whom kill will to-know had come  
 ‘They had come to know whom Dilip would kill ?’

2:111b = Dasgupta’s 32

2:111b. ora [ dilip kake khun korbe ] janta perechilo?  
 they Dilip whom kill will to-know had come  
 ‘They had come to know whom Dilip would kill ?’

The *null*-Prt CP in Bangla has the following properties.

- a) it is verb final,
- b) the particle *je* is obligatorily absent, and
- c) it allows both wide and narrow scope reading.

The differences between the *null* particle CPs in Assamese and Bangla are as shown in (2:112) below:

2:112	Assamese <i>null</i> -Prt CP	Bangla <i>null</i> -Prt CP
	a) internal <i>ze</i> occurs conditionally	a) internal <i>je</i> obligatorily absent
	b) wh-phrase obligatory	b) wh-phrase optional

c) wh-phrase gives only narrow scope reading

c) wh-phrase gives both wide and narrow scope reading

Dasgupta (1990a) claims the *null*-Prt CP is the true complement CP in Bangla. Dasgupta claims the *je*-CP in Bangla is an adsentential relative clause. The *bole*-CP and the *null*-Prt CP have similar properties but differ on scopal facts. See (2:113):

2:113	<i>bole</i> -CP	<i>null</i> -Prt CP
	a) it is verb final	a) it is verb final
	b) particle <i>je</i> is obligatorily absent	b) particle <i>je</i> is obligatorily absent
	c) wh-phrase is optional	c) wh-phrase is optional
	d) wh-phrase gives wide scope reading	d) wh-phrase gives both wide and narrow scope reading.

Dasgupta (1990a) claims that a wh-phrase inside a *bole*-CP gives a wide scope reading because the quotative *bole* moves and merges with the T of the matrix clause. Once the quotative *bole* moves and merges with the matrix T, the wh-phrase LF moves to the [Spec-CP] of the matrix clause giving a wide scope reading.

In section 2.2, we had noted the Assamese *buli*-CP and the Bangla *bole*-CP have similar properties. Thus in the lines of Dasgupta (1990a), we may assume the same phenomenon occurs in the Assamese *buli*-CP. The quotative *buli* moves and merges with the matrix T and the wh-phrase inside the *buli*-CP LF moves to the [Spec-CP] of the matrix clause giving it a wide scope reading.

## 2.5 Conclusion:

The properties of the *buli*-, *ze*- and the *null*- Prt CP are shown in the table in (2:114) below:



2:114.	<i>buli</i> - CP	<i>ze</i> - CP	<i>null</i> -Prt CP
<b>verb final</b>	+	+	+
<b>presence of wh</b>	±	-	+
<b>presence of <i>ze</i></b>	-	+	±
<b>left peripheral</b>	+	-	+
<b>right peripheral</b>	+	+	+
<b>embedding</b>	+	-	
<b>scope</b>	wide	-	narrow

From the table in (2:141) we find the *buli*-, *ze*-, and the *null*-Prt CPs have two properties in common. One, they are obligatorily verb final. Two, *ze*- (obligatorily), *buli*- (in specific context) and the *null* - Prt CPs occur on the right periphery of the matrix clause. The *ze*- CP has movement restriction, it can occur only in a post-verbal position and it does not allow a *wh*-word to occur inside its clause. The *buli*-CP is obligatorily left peripheral and allows a *wh*-word inside the clause when the matrix verb is like *ko* and *bhab*. The *null*-Prt CP obligatorily takes a *wh*-word and can occur as the leftmost constituent of the matrix clause. It can conditionally allow the internal *ze* to occur inside the clause. The *buli*-CP allows only wide scope reading while the *null*-Prt CP allows only narrow scope reading. With regards to the presence of a *k*-word in the complement clauses we find that the complementizer particle *ze* is not compatible with a *k*-word. *ze*, a *wh*-operator moves to the [Spec- C'] position, a *k*-word cannot occur inside the *ze*-CP as it results in PCC violation. The complementizer particle *buli* normally does not co-occur with a *k*-word. The complementizer particle *buli* is opaque to *wh*-movement. This opacity breaks when the finite verbs *ko* and *bhab* are present in the matrix clause. There is a possibility that the non-finite verbal particle and the finite verbs *ko* and *bhab*

undergo some kind of a merger and operate as a verbal complex. *buli* moves from the C position of the embedded clause and merges with the matrix verb. Dasgupta (1990a) claims the *bole*-CP undergoes a TP / CP merger and this permits the *k*-word to move to the [Spec-C'] position of the matrix clause. In the lines of Dasgupta, the Assamese *buli*-CP with a *k*-word undergoes a TP /CP merger after the verbal particle *buli* and the finite verb *ko / bhab* undergo a reanalysis. The non-interrogative *buli*-CP does not undergo the TP / CP merger. In case of the *null*-Prt CP, the *k*-word can freely move to the [Spec-C'] of the embedded clause since there is no overt complementizer particle to block its LF movement to give a narrow scope reading. Coming to Dasgupta's (1990a), we find that the *buli*-, *ze*- and the *null*-Prt CPs in Assamese do not conform to the properties of the true complement CP in Bangla. The complement CPs have their specific functions: the [+ decl] *buli*-CP for focusing, the [-decl] *buli* - CP for wide scope reading, the *ze*-CP as typical declarative construction and the *null* -Prt CP for narrow scope reading.

## Chapter Three

### *Yes-No Questions in Assamese*

#### 3.0 Introduction:

In this chapter we shall examine the direct *yes-no* question in Assamese. In chapter One, section 1.4.1, we have seen that direct *yes-no* questions in English are derived when an auxiliary verb or a modal auxiliary obligatorily moves to the clause initial position, i.e. to the COMP position as shown in (3:1) below:

- 3:1a John will come.  
b. Will John come?

The simple declarative sentence in (3:1a) is transformed into a direct *yes-no* question in (3:1b) when the modal auxiliary *will* obligatorily moves to the COMP position. In case of sentences without an auxiliary verb, the dummy verb *do* is inserted which obligatorily moves to the COMP position. See (3:2) below:

- 3:2a John went home.  
b. Did John go home?

The obligatory movement of the auxiliary is an instance of *aux-NP* inversion. UG specifies that all natural languages are sensitive to grammatical structures. The auxiliary inversion in (3:1) and (3:2) are instances of this sensitivity. In sentences where there are no auxiliary, as in (3:2a), the dummy verb *do* is inserted in the I head as in (3:2b). Thus the auxiliary verb, modal or the dummy verb *do* moves to the COMP position or the C head by *to head movement*. This is an example of structure dependence.

In the preceding chapter we have observed that the [+wh] COMP in Assamese is obligatorily empty in the derivation of a direct wh - question. This is true for both simple and complex interrogative constructions. In this chapter we intend to find out the status of the COMP position when a *yes-no* question is derived. The chapter is divided as follows: in section 3.1 we look at the data of *yes-no* questions in Assamese. In section 3.1.2, we look at the status of the particle *ne*. In section 3. 2 we examine disjunction in English, Kannada and Malayalam. In section 3.3 we analyse the properties of the particle *ne* in complex constructions. In section 3. 4. we posit the Disj. Phrase in Assamese and in section 3.5 we conclude on our observation of the *yes-no* questions in Assamese.

### 3.1. Data

*Yes-no* interrogative clauses are derived when the particle *ne* occurs in the clause final position in root clauses. The overt presence of *ne* transforms a declarative sentence into a *yes-no* type interrogative construction. See (3: 3) and (3: 4) below:

3:3a riju azi ah – ib – o  
 Riju today come – fut – agr  
 ‘Riju will come today.’

b riju azi ah – ib – o ne  
 Riju today come – fut – agr prt  
 ‘Will Riju come today?’

3:4a kam – tu ho - l  
 work –cl be - past  
 ‘The work is done.’

b. kam – tu ho – l ne  
 work –cl be –pst prt  
 ‘Is the work done?’

The declarative sentences (3:3a) and (3:4a) are transformed into *yes-no* interrogatives (3: 3b) and (3: 4b) when the particle *ne* occurs in the clause final position. The interrogative marker *ne* is a free morpheme. In speech *ne* is normally dropped. The concomitant change in the intonation pattern gives the clause the *yes-no* interrogative status. In our study of the *yes-no* type of interrogatives, we ignore the concomitant change in the intonation pattern. In certain contexts, a negative element *nai*<sup>1</sup> 'is not' follows the particle *ne*. See (3:5) below

3:5.a. riju ah - ib - o ne n - a - i  
 Riju come - fut - agr prt neg - be - agr  
 'Will Riju come or not?'

b. kam - tu ho - l ne n - a - i  
 work - cl be - pst prt neg - be - agr  
 'Is the work done or not?'

In some cases, the negative form of the matrix verb follows the interrogative marker *ne*. In (3: 6a) the negative form of the finite verb *ah* 'come' follows *ne* and in (3: 6b) the negative form of *hol* 'is done' follows *ne*.

3:6a. riju ah - ib - o ne n - ah - e  
 Riju come - fut - agr prt neg - come - agr  
 'Will Riju come or not come?'

---

<sup>1</sup> The Assamese verbs *ho* and *as* are equivalent to the English *be*. The negative verb *nai* is derived when the negative morpheme *n-* prefixes to *as* 'be'. See (1) below.

1. n- + as = na

The negative verb *na* takes the agreement marker *-i*, allophonic variation of *-e* (3<sup>rd</sup> Person) to form *nai*. The agreement marker *-i* occurs as a default marker for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Persons also. See (2) below.

2a. moi khua n - a - i  
 I eaten neg - be - agr  
 'I have not eaten'.

2b. tumi khua n - a - i  
 you eaten neg - be - agr  
 'You have not eaten'.

- b. kam – tu ho – l ne no - ho - l  
 work – cl be – pst prt neg - be - pst  
 ‘Is the work done or not done?’

In some contexts *ne* is followed by the question word *ki* ‘what’, as shown in (3:7) below:

- 3:7.a. riju ah - ib - o ne ki  
 Riju come – fut – agr prt what  
 ‘Will Riju come or what?’

- b. kam – tu ho - l ne ki  
 work – cl be – pst prt what  
 ‘Is the work done or what?’

The overt presence of the negative element *nai* in (3: 5) and the negative verb forms in (3: 6) and the question word *ki* in (3: 7) brings about a subtle change in the interpretation of these sentences, which is context specific.

The data from (3:3b) to (3:7b) are instances of positive *yes-no* question sentences. In negative *yes-no* type constructions the question word *ki* obligatorily occurs after *ne*. See (3: 8) below:

- 3: 8 a. riju ahi pua n - a - i ne ki  
 Riju coming got neg-be -agr prt what  
 ‘Hasn’t Riju come (or what)?’

- b. kam – tu hua n - a - i ne ki  
 work – cl done neg – be -agr prt what  
 ‘Isn’t the work done (or what)?’

From the above data (3: 3) to (3: 7) we find that the overt presence of the particle *ne* transforms the declarative sentences into interrogatives. Syntactically the particle *ne* appears to be an interrogative element. But semantically it has the interpretation of a disjunct. This is evident from the gloss of the English equivalents (3: 5) - (3: 8). Before we move onto to examine the properties of the *yes-no* questions it becomes imperative to examine the status of *ne* in Assamese. In the next section we shall examine the status of the particle *ne*.

### 3.1.1 The Status of the Particle *ne*

In the preceding section we have observed that the particle *ne* is syntactically interpreted as an interrogative marker. Semantically, however, it signals disjunction. In this section we examine the disjuncts in Assamese.

#### 3.1.1.1 Disjuncts in Assamese:

Disjunction in Assamese can be expressed by lexical words like *notuba*, *naiba*, *othoba*, *kimba*, *nichet* as well as by the disjunctive particle *ba*. These disjunctives are free morphemes and are equivalent to the English disjunctive 'or'. Normally, disjunction takes place when the disjunct particle *ba* conjoins phrasal categories as in (3: 9) below:

- 3: 9a. ma    ba    dueta  
         'mother or father'
- b. azi    ba    kali  
         'today or tommorow'
- c. bhal    ba    beya  
         'good or bad'
- d. tabul-ar upor-at ba tabul-ar tol- ot  
         table-gen up-loc or table-gen under-loc  
         'on the table or under the table'.
- e. porh    ba    xu  
         study or sleep  
         'Either you study or sleep.'

The disjunct *ba* ‘or’ conjoins the phrasal categories: NPs (3: 9a), adverbials (3: 9b), AdjPs (3: 9c) and PPs (3: 9d). But in (3: 9e) *ba* conjoins two clauses. This is evident from the gloss in English. The underlying structure of (3:9e) is shown as in (3:10) below:

3:10. (toi) porh ba (toi) xu  
 you study or you sleep  
 ‘Either you study or you sleep.’

Normally, languages with overt verbal inflections drop the pronominal subjects. This is true for Assamese too. In (3: 10) the pronominal subject *toi* ‘you’<sup>2</sup> is obligatorily dropped. In (3: 10) the lexical verbs *porh* ‘read’ and *xu* ‘sleep’ are in the simple present tense. There is no overt tense marker for the simple present and the corresponding agreement marker too is non-overt. In Chapter Two, we have seen that pronominals in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person have three forms: *tumi* (casual), *apuni* (honorific) and *toi* (non-honorific) Whenever *tumi* / *apuni* is in the subject position, the agreement marker *-a/-e* is overt.

In disjunct constructions with nominal subjects, we find the subject NP of the second clause is obligatorily dropped. See (3:11) below:

3:11. rima -i gaan - ga - i ba (rima - i) nas - e  
 Rima -nom song - sing - agr or Rima - nom dance - agr  
 ‘Either Rima sings or dances.’

The examples (3: 9) to (3: 11) are instances of [+ declarative] disjunction. In the next section we examine disjunction in interrogative sentences.



### 3.1.1.2. Disjunction in Interrogative clauses

Disjunction in interrogative sentences takes place when the particle *ne* conjoins two clauses. See (3: 12) below:

- 3:12a. ma    ne    dueta  
         mother or father  
         ‘Is it mother or father?’
- b. azi    ne    kali  
         today or tomorrow  
         ‘Is it today or tomorrow?’
- c. bhal    ne    beya  
         good or bad  
         ‘Is it good or bad?’
- d. tabul–ar upor-at ne tabul-ar tol-ot  
         table-gen up-loc or table-gen under-loc  
         ‘Is it on the table or under the table?’

In the disjunct constructions (3:12) the copular verb *ho / as* ‘be’ is obligatorily dropped. The underlying structure of the sentences in (3:12) are shown in (3: 13) below:

- 3: 13a ma    (ho - i) ne dueta    (ho - i)  
         mother be –agr or father    be -agr  
         ‘Is it mother or father?’
- b. azi    (ho - i / as - e) ne kali    (ho - i/as - e)  
         today be –agr    or tomorrow    be -agr  
         ‘Is it today or tomorrow?’
- c. bhal    (ho - i) ne beya    (ho - i)  
         good    be – agr or bad    be - agr  
         ‘Is it good or bad?’

---

<sup>2</sup> In Assamese the status of the pronominal subject is identified by the agreement marker (for detail, see foot note: 2 in chapter 2). In 3.10 we find an exception, for the non-honorific 2<sup>nd</sup> person *loi* ‘you’ there is no overt agreement marker.

- d. tabul – ar upor - at (as – e) ne tabul - ar tol – ot (as – e)  
 table-gen up - loc be – agr or table- gen under – loc be - agr  
 ‘Is it on the table or under the table?’

In (3: 13) the copular *ho / as* ‘be’ is obligatorily dropped. in both the conjoined clauses. However, when we have a lexical verb in the disjunct construction we find that it is overt. See (3: 14) below:

- 3:14a. ( moi ) porh – u ne (moi) xu – u  
 I study – agr or I sleep – agr  
 ‘Do I study or sleep?’

- b. (tumi) porh–a ne (tumi) xu–a c. (xi) porh–e ne (xi) xu–e  
 you study-agr or you sleep –agr he study-agr or he sleep–agr  
 ‘Do you study or sleep?’ ‘Does he study or sleep?’

From our observation of the [ $\pm$  declarative] disjunct constructions in Assamese we find the disjunct particles *ba* and *ne* have the following properties:

- |        |                                 |                                  |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3: 15. | <b>ba</b>                       | <b>ne</b>                        |
|        | a) occurs with a [+decl] C head | a) occurs with a [- decl] C head |
|        | b) conjoins phrases & clauses   | b) conjoins only clauses         |

The disjunct particles *ba* and *ne* occur in mutually exclusive environments. The disjunct particle *ba* occurs with a [+ declarative] COMP head and the disjunct particle *ne* with a [- declarative] COMP head. Before we move on to examine the disjunct phrase in Assamese it is imperative that we examine the background as to how the Disjunct Phrase was posited.

## 3.2 Background

In this section we shall examine disjunct constructions in English, Kannada and Malayalam. We shall first look at disjunction in English in sections 3. 2.1, this is followed by disjunction in Kannada and Malayalam in section 3. 2.2.

### 3. 2.1 Disjunction in English

In English disjunction takes place when the disjunct particle *or* occurs in constructions as in (3:16) below:

3: 16 = Larson's 1

3: 16. Mary is looking for a maid or a cook.

Larson (1985) states that the disjunct element *or* has scopal properties. The sentence in (3:16) is ambiguous. This ambiguous sentence can be interpreted in three ways. In the lines of Rooth and Partee (1982), Larson states the disjunct sentence in (3:16) has the following interpretations: One, Mary is searching for a servant and would be satisfied with any individual who is either a maid or a cook. Two, there is some particular individual who is either a maid or a cook and Mary is searching for such an individual, and three, either Mary is looking for an individual who is a maid or else she is looking for an individual who is a cook. These three interpretation can be schematised as in (3:17) below:

3: 17.a Mary is looking for (( a maid) or (a cook)).

b. Mary is looking for (a maid or a cook).

c. Mary is looking for (a maid) or Mary is looking for (a cook).

The first interpretation (3:17a) shows that the scope of the disjunct element *or* is narrow. The second interpretation (3:17b) indicates that the scope of *or* is intermediate and that in (3:17c) the scope of *or* is wide. Larson (1985) further states: “the interpretation of the disjunct element *or* and the scope of disjunction is tied in an intimate way to the syntax of *either* and *whether*. *Either* and *whether* are *scope indicators* (SIs). Both *either* and *whether* are optional and are analyzed as an optional part of a ‘discontinuous constituent’ of disjunctions.”(p.220) *Either* can appear immediately adjacent to its associated disjunction *or*. See (3:18) below:

3:18 a= Larson’s 5a

3:18a. Mary is looking for either a maid or a cook.

*Either* can also occur ‘displaced’ to some other site, for instance to a sentence (S -) initial site. See (3:19b) below:

3:18b = Larson’s 5b

3:18b. Either Mary is looking for a maid or a cook.

Larson argues: the presence and the distribution of *either* affect the interpretation of the sentences in (3:18). The position of discontinuous constituent *either* in (3:18) helps in determining the scope of the disjunct *or*. When *either* appears dislocated from *or* it takes a clausal scope – more precisely *or* takes as its scope the clause within which *either* appears at the surface form. In (3:18a) *either* is not dislocated hence the scope is within the domain of the verb *look for*. In (3:18b) *either* is dislocated, thus the scope is outside the domain of the verb *look for*.

The ‘discontinuous constituent’ *whether* occurs as a scope indicator in a [- declarative] disjunct construction. See (3: 19) below:

3:19 = Larson's 11a

3:19 I know [<sub>S'</sub> whether John reads fiction.]

In (3:19) the disjunct particle *or* is not overt. But the semantics of *whether* indicates that it bears a close relation to disjunction. Historically *whether* is considered as the wh-counterpart of *either*. In modern use *whether* is analyzed semantically as involving a disjunctively specified set. Thus the semantics of *whether* involves disjunction of a proposition and its negation and this is evident in the syntax of English. The sentence in (3:19) has a fully synonymous variant in which *whether* is replaced by the disjunctive phrase *whether or not* that contains an overt negation. See (3: 20) below:

3:20 = Larson's 14a

3:20 I know [<sub>S'</sub> whether or not John reads fiction]

The sentences in (3:19) and (3:20) can be interpreted as follows: *either John reads fiction or John does not read fiction*. The scope of the disjunct constituent *whether* is limited to the tensed boundary of S. Thus the function of *whether* like *either* is to indicate scope of the disjunct element *or*. However the scope marking ability of *whether* is somewhat broader than that of *either*.

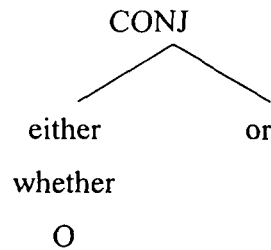
Larson (1985) assumes that the category of conjunction (CONJ) includes elements like *and*, *but* and the like. CONJ consists of two sub-parts: the item *or* and one of the 'scopal indicators' i.e. elements like *either*, *whether* or a phonologically null indicator (O)<sup>3</sup>. This is represented in (3:21) below:

---

<sup>3</sup> Kayne (1994:143, n2) suggests that English *both*, *either*, *neither* occur in the specifier of the conjunction or disjunction.

3:21 = Larson's 19

3:21



Larson assumes that the scope of *or* is assigned through the rule of Move Alpha applied either at S-structure or LF to the [-WH] indicator *either*, the [+WH] indicator *whether*, or a phonologically null indicator O. The SI leaves a trace in the base generated or inserted position. The moved SI is co-indexed with the trace. Larson further assumes that the syntactic scope assignment always involves movement to a non-argument position i.e. an A' position. The SI *either* may adjoin either to the INFL or to S itself. While the SI *whether* moves to COMP. The phonologically null SI in a [+declarative] disjunct construction may adjoin to the INFL or to S itself and in a [-declarative] disjunct construction moves to the COMP position. The disjunct constructions show that the [+wh] *whether* (3: 19) has a broader scope than the [-wh] *either* (3: 20). Larson (1985) argues that *whether* is able to give a broader scope to *or* because it moves to COMP rather than being adjoined to S like *either*. The [-wh] *either* adjoins to S (see 3:18b) when it moves out of its base generated position. In case of the null scope indicator its movement depends on the kind of disjunct construction it occurs. When it occurs in a [+declarative] construction the null indicator adjoins to S or INFL. When it occurs in a [-declarative] construction the null indicator moves to the COMP position.

Higginbotham (1991) states that disjunction in English, may have a conjunctive interpretation. See (3:22) below.

3:22 = Higginbotham's 1

3:22 John plays (either) chess or checkers.

The conjunctive interpretation of disjunction is paraphraseable as 'John plays both chess and checkers', or as 'John plays either of chess or checkers,' or as 'John plays any one of chess or checkers'. He argues that in English, "every *or* is an *either / or*, i.e., part of a larger constituent headed by *either* or its interrogative counterpart *whether*" (p.1) The [+declarative] SI *either* itself offers two meanings. On one interpretation *either* is that of an existential quantifier. The second interpretation is that of a universal quantifier. The conjunctive interpretation of disjunction arises due to the universal interpretation of *either*. Thus the ambiguity in (3: 22) between the 'conjunctive' and 'disjunctive' readings is due to the ambiguity of *either*. We have seen in the English [- wh] disjunct constructions *either* is not always overt. Higginbotham states: 'when *either* is not phonologically realized, it is substantially free in its existential interpretation; in its universal interpretation it remains restricted and it needs a modal or a generic environment (p.2)'. Thus the covert *either* is usually licensed by a covert *neg* in English. Since the licenser remains covert, the covert *either* appears to be substantially free in its existential interpretation.

Giannakidou (1997) states that *either* is a "sensitive" expression. According to Giannakidou, a sensitive expression is an item that is semantically "deficient" and it cannot be properly interpreted except in the environments that fulfil (its) interpretational demands. *Either* as a quantifier is

semantically dependent on one of the elements Neg, Modality or Genericity, which function as its licensors, and which determine its interpretation as existential or as a universal quantifier.

### 3.2.2 Disjunction in Kannada and Malayalam

In this section we shall examine disjunction in Kannada and Malayalam. In section (3: 3.3.2.1) we examine the Kannada disjunction and in section (3: 3.3.2.2) we examine the Malayalam disjunction.

#### 3.2.2.1 Disjunction in Kannada

Amritavalli (2000) states the disjunctive element *oo* in Kannada conjoins phrases as in (3: 23) below.

3:23 = Amritavalli's 1(a-b)

3:23a bekk - oo naay - oo	b. doDDa bekki-g-oo chikka naayi-g-oo
cat - oo dog - oo	big cat-dat-oo small dog-dat-oo
'cat or dog'	'for a big cat or a small dog'

Interestingly *oo* cannot connect two declarative sentences. See (3: 24) below:

3:24 = Amritavalli's 2

3:24 \* avanu bar-utt-aan-oo, naavu hoog-utt-iiv-oo  
he come-non pst-agr-oo we go-nonpst-agr-oo  
'Either he comes or we go.'

Amritavalli points out that the sentence in (3: 24) is not uninterpretable. It has an interpretation as a disjunction of questions. The example in (3: 25a)



shows disjunction of matrix questions and (3: 25b) illustrates disjunction of an indirect question complement to the matrix predicate *gotilla* 'do not know'.

3:25 = Amritavalli's 3

3:25a. *avanu bar-utt-aan-oo, naavu hoog-utt-iiv-oo?*

he come-non pst-agr-oo we go-nonpst-agr-oo

'Does he come, or do we go? / Will he come, or will we go?'

b. [*avanu bar-utt-aan-oo, naavu hoog-utt-iiv-oo*] (pro) *gotilla*

he come-non pst-agr-oo we go-nonpst-agr-oo know not

'One does not know whether he comes or we go/he will come or we will go?'

The disjunct element *oo* can occur in the absence of sentential coordination. See (3: 26) below:

3:26 = Amritavalli's 5

3:26a. (*illa*) *trainu leeT-oo?*

not train late oo

'(Or else) is the train late?'

b. (*illa*) *naaLe bar-utt-aan-oo?*

not tomorrow come-nonpst - agr oo

'(Or else) is he coming tomorrow?'

Disjunction of declarative clauses in Kannada is signalled by the negative element *illa* 'not'. See (3: 27) below:

3:27 = Amritavalli's 6a

3:27 *prati shanivaara illa avanu bar-utt-aane, illa naavu hoog-utt-iivi*

every Saturday not he come-nonpst-agr not we go-nonpst-agr

'Every Saturday either he comes, or we go.'

According to Amritavalli the *illa* 'not' in (3: 27) is not the *illa* of sentential negation. The former occurs in clause initial adverbial position and

the latter in a clause final position. The sentence initial *illa* of disjunction and the sentential negation *illa* can co-occur. See (3: 28) below:

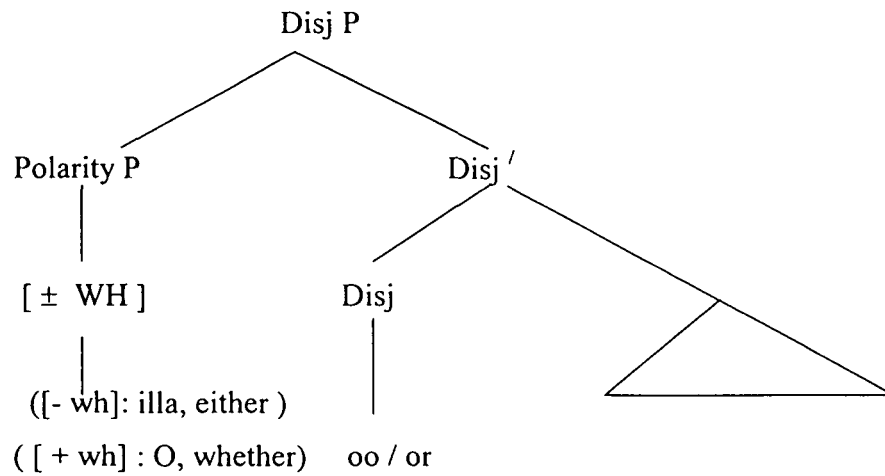
3:28 = Amritavalli's 7a

3:28 *illa avanu baruvud – illa , illa naavu hooguvud – illa*  
 not he come-ger neg not we go – ger neg  
 'Either he does not come, or we do not go.'

The sentence initial *illa* allows scope of disjunction, it is reiterated in a disjunct construction and it occupies parallel position in the conjoined clauses. Based on these differences, Amritavalli states the Disjunct Phrase in Kannada consists of *illa .....oo*. In the lines of Larson (1985), Amritavalli assumes the left element *illa* 'not' to be a scope indicator. The disjunct *oo* 'or' occurs at the phrasal level. At the clausal level there is a split of the disjunctive phrase *illa ... oo*. In a [+wh] disjunct construction the disjunct element *oo* 'or' is overt and in a [-wh] disjunct construction the SI *illa* 'not' is overt. Thus in the lines of Kayne (1994) Amritavalli (2000) postulates a Polarity Phrase in [Spec-Disj.P] which hosts one of the elements *wh* and *neg* in Kannada and English respectively. See (3: 29) below:

3:29 = Amritavalli's 12

3:29



In the lines of Larson (1985: 230), Amritavalli assumes *illa* and *either* move into adverbial positions to indicate the scope of disjunction, while *whether* and [wh] move into the COMP. In the lines of Higginbotham (1991), Amritavalli (2000) states that conjunctive interpretation of disjunction can be obtained with the disjunct *oo* but not with the scope indicator *illa*. See (3: 30) below:

3: 30 = Amritavalli's 15

3: 30a. nannu ninna jotey–alli chess–oo checkers–oo aaD–utt–lini  
 I your pair–loc chess oo checkers oo play–nonpst–agr  
 ‘I shall play chess or checkers with you.’

b. nannu ninna jotey–alli illa chessu, illa checkerssu aaD–utt–lini  
 I your pair–loc not chess not checkers play–nonpst–agr  
 ‘I shall play chess with you; if not, I shall play checkers.’

According to Amritavalli, (3: 30a) gives a conjunctive reading, i.e., an offer to play whichever game you choose, whereas in (3:30b) the offer is just to play just one of the two games, chess or checkers. Amritavalli explains why *illa* blocks the conjunctive reading. According to Higginbotham *either* allows two meanings: that of an existential quantifier and of a universal quantifier. The conjunctive reading arises due to universal interpretation of *either*. The ambiguity between ‘conjunctive’ and ‘disjunctive’ reading is due to the ambiguity of *either* in sentences as in (3: 22 = Higginbotham's 1) repeated here as (3: 31).

3: 31. John plays (either) chess or checkers.

On its interpretation as an existential quantifier, *either* is a negative polarity item. Whereas in its universal interpretation, *either* is like (free-choice) *any*: It needs a modal or a generic environment to license it. In (3: 31) *either* is

licensed by a generic environment, evidenced in the present tense of the sentence. Thus *either* in (3: 31) is a universal quantifier. The semantic structure of the quantifier *either* is as shown in (3: 32) below:

3:32 = Amritavalli's 20

3:32 Licensor (Neg/Modality/Genericity) ---- Quantifier (*either*) ----- Head (*or*)

According to Amritavalli, the *illa* of disjunction in Kannada is the *neg* element in the semantic structure in (3: 32). Kannada has no lexically realized counterpart of *either*. Since it is *oo* itself that is interpreted with the *neg*, what surfaces is the *neg* licensor *illa*. The interpretation licensed by *illa* is that of the existential quantifier. The overt *illa* thus blocks the conjunctive reading of disjunction.

Coming to the interrogative disjunct constructions, Amritavalli states:

“ the Kannada *oo* has the distribution of English *whether*. Where English *or* has for its default partner a [-wh], Kannada *oo* exhibits a default link with a [+wh] element which never surfaces overtly”(p.12 ). In the Polarity Phrase (see 3: 29) of the English disjunction, the *neg* that licenses *either* is never overt; while in the Polarity Phrase of Kannada disjunction, the wh-phrase is never overt. Kannada has no wh-movement in the syntax. The wh-feature in this language is not morphologically strong. In English the wh-feature is strong and must be checked in syntax. Thus the English *whether* is present at Spell - Out, whereas in Kannada the weak wh-feature need not be present at Spell - Out. The lack of strength of the wh-feature in Kannada disjunction is balanced by the corresponding strength of its *neg* feature. Just as in English the strong wh-feature in the disjunction is paired with a weak *neg* feature, in Kannada the strong *neg* feature is paired with a weak wh-feature. This explains why the matrix clausal disjunction with *oo* gets an interrogative interpretation. It is only when *illa* is overt, disjunction is interpreted as declarative.

Coming to the scope facts, we find the Kannada interrogative disjunction always takes clausal scope. Following Larson (1985), Amritavalli assumes that the *wh* moves to a position in COMP. Since the weak *wh* is not overt in Kannada in disjunction with less clausal scope, *wh* is either not generated or if it is generated it is uninterpretable. Therefore *oo* disjunction with less clausal scope does not get interpreted as *wh*-disjunction. Checking of *illa* rules out the conjunctive reading for disjunction but the absence of *illa* does not entail a *wh*-disjunct. In disjunction with clausal scope *wh* must always be taken to be present. Amritavalli reiterates that the various interpretations of question word may be obtained by the appropriate specification of the Force P<sup>4</sup>. The sentences in (3: 30) show that the overt presence of *oo* (3: 30a) gives a conjunctive reading but when *illa* is overt (3: 30b) there is no conjunctive reading. Amritavalli points out that when *oo* occurs as sentence adjunct and as a *wh*-complementizer the conjunctive reading is missing. See (3: 33) and (3: 34) below:

3: 33 = (Amritavalli 23a)

3: 33. bisil - oo    maLe - noo ,    avaLu kelasakke    bar - utt - aaLe  
 sunny - oo    rain - oo            she    work - dat    come nonpst fsg  
 'Rain or shine, she comes to work.'

3: 34 = Amritavalli's 28

3: 34.a. nanage [ yeenu    aagutte                            anta ] bhaya ?  
           I - dat    what            happen nonpst 3pl    that    fear  
 'What do I fear (that) will happen?'

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4 Rizzi (1995) posits the CP, i.e., the complementizer phrase as a layer which encodes clause internal information like force and finiteness. The complementizer tier is assumed to be an interface between the clause internal and external units whereby it becomes a site which encodes information necessary for both the levels. Apart from the force -- finiteness specifications, the complementizer layer also specifies the position of constructions like topicalization and focus in the complementizer layer. The structure of the CP according to Rizzi (1995) is as shown in (1) below.

Force.P .....(TopP).....(FocP).....(TopP)..... FinP

- b. nanage [ yeenu aagutt - oo anta ] bhaya ?  
 I – dat what happen nonpst 3pl oo that fear  
 ‘I am afraid (about) what will happen.’

The disjunct *oo* in (3:33) and (3:34) operates as an adjunct and a wh-complementizer respectively. From (3: 34) it is evident the *oo* can introduce wh- interrogative complements. Amritavalli states that Kannada *yes-no* question complements are treated as disjunctive with *or not* (Larson 1985). Whereas wh-question complements with Kannada *oo* are in disjunction with the wh-word *yeenu* ‘what’ and with *illa* ‘not’. In other words *oo* can co-occur with the wh-word like *yeenu* ‘what’ and a negative *illa* ‘not’. See (3: 35) below:

3: 35 = Amritavalli’s 29

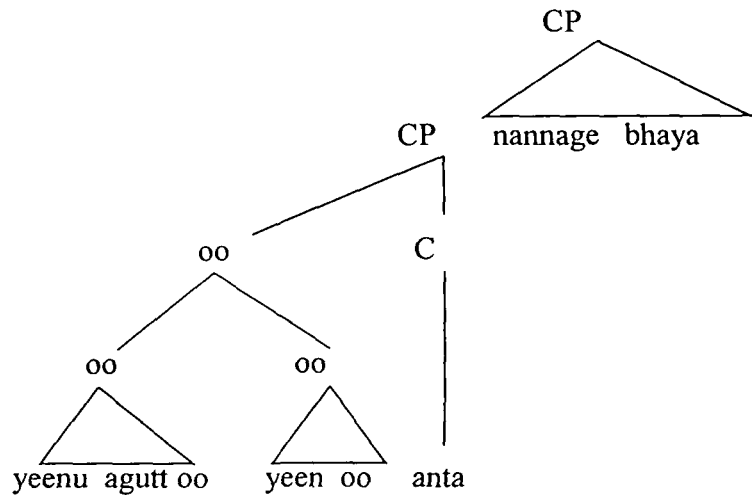
- 35a. [ avaru bandar – oo illa – voo anta ] (pro) vichariside  
 they came oo not oo that pro inquired 1 sg  
 ‘I enquired whether they came (had come) or not.’

- b. [ avaru bandar – oo yeen – voo anta ] (pro) vichariside  
 they came oo what oo that pro inquired 1 sg  
 ‘I enquired whether they came (had come) or what.’

There is a subtle semantic difference between (3: 35a) and (3: 35b). This difference corresponds to English matrix *yes-no* question disjunctions (cf. “Is he hungry or not?” vs “Is he hungry, or what?”). From these evidence, Amritavalli posits the structure of (3: 34b) in (3: 36) below:

3: 36 = Amritavalli’s 31

3:36.



In (3: 36) *bhaya (ide)* ‘fear is’ takes as the complement the disjunction *yeenu agutt – oo anta* ‘ what will happen or what’ Amritavalli states: “the first disjunct is itself a CP, with *oo* as a [+ wh] complementizer. This *oo* does not allow movement of the wh-phrase out of its domain” (p.15). Hence in sentences like (3: 34b), the scope is limited within the embedded CP. To make this observation clearer, Amritavalli cites examples of more deeply embedded question complements. See (3: 37) below:

3: 37 = Amritavalli’s 32

3: 37a. [[ DakTaru [yaava auSadi koDabeeku anta] andaru anta] niinu ande ? ]  
 doctor which drugs should give that said that you said  
 ‘Which medicines did you say the doctor said that (pro) should give (pro)?’

b. [[DakTaru [yaava auSadi koDabeeku anta ] andar oo anta] niinu ande ? ]  
 doctor which drugs should give that said oo that you said  
 ‘You said that (i.e you expressed a doubt about) which medicines the doctor said that (pro) should give (pro).’

In (3:37a) the question word embedded three clauses down takes matrix scope with *anta* as the complementizer. In (3:37b) the clause intermediate between the matrix and that containing the question word has *oo*. The

embedded wh-word can get scope out of its own clause, but it cannot get scope out of the *oo* clause. The [+wh] specification of *oo* is also attested by its ability to induce a dummy wh-word in the clause it introduces. See (3: 38) below:

3:38 = Amritavalli's 35a

3:38. nanage [ (naanu) yelli biLuttiin – oo anta ] bhaya  
 I – dat I where fall 1 sg oo that fear  
 'I fear whether (lit. where) I will fall.' (= I am afraid that I will fall.)

The sentence in (3:38) can be interpreted as *whether* – complements. But the wh-word *yelli* 'where' receives no interpretation. The fact that *oo* is the head of a [+wh] COMP explains a persistent puzzle about matrix constituent questions with *oo* in Kannada. These sentences have the status of an indirect question. See (3: 39) below:

3:39 = Amritavalli's 36

3: 39a. nannu adanna yelli iTTe?  
 I it – acc where put – pst – 1sg  
 'Where did I put it?'

b. nannu adanna yelli iTTe - noo ?  
 I it – acc where put – pst – 1sg oo  
 'Wonder where I put it.' (Lit. whether I put it where)

From our observation of the disjunct constructions in Kannada we find that the disjunct particle *oo*, a bound morpheme, can conjoin phrases (3:23) and clauses (3:25). Whenever *oo* conjoins clauses it gives the interpretation of a direct *yes-no* question. The disjunct particle *oo* also operates as a question particle. This is evident in (3:26) where the particle *oo* in the root clause gives the interpretation of a direct *yes-no* question. In Kannada a question word can co-occur with the complementizer *anta* complex constructions as in (3: 34). Whenever a question word occurs with *anta* it gives a wide scope reading.



When *aanta* occurs with the question particle *oo* as in (3: 35a) we get an indirect question with narrow scope reading.

### 3.2.2.2 Disjunction in Malayalam

Babu (1997) states Malayalam has two question particles *-oo* and *-ee*. The former occurs in affirmative sentences and the latter in negative. See (3:40) below:

3: 40 = Babu's 4: 36

3:40a *bassu vann -oo*  
*bus came - Q*  
 'Did the bus come?'

3:40b. *bassu vann - ill - ee*  
*bus came - not - Q*  
 'Didn't the bus come?'

The question particles *-oo* and *-ee* have other functions too. *-oo* is a disjunctive coordinator and *-ee* is an emphatic marker<sup>5</sup>. Babu (1997) states that though *-oo* functions both as a disjunction and question particle, the environment in which either can occur is clearly demarcated in Malayalam. To get a question reading *-oo* has to be outside the scope of tense. If it is within the scope of tense, it can only be interpreted as a disjunctive coordinator. In Malayalam finite verbs do not co-ordinate. The strategy resorted to is the coordinating particle gets attached to the infinitival form and tense gets attached to a dummy verb. See (4: 41) below:

3:41 = Babu's 4:39

3:41 *kutti pattau paat - uka - yoo ciṭram varak'k - uka - yoo ceyy - um*  
*child song sing - INF-DISJ picture draw-INF-DISJ do - MOD*  
 'The child will either sing songs or draw pictures.'

In (3: 41) *-oo* gets attached to the infinitives *paatuka* 'to sing' and *varak'kuka* 'to draw'. The modal suffix *-um* gets attached to the dummy verb *ceyy* 'do'. A

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<sup>5</sup> For detail see Babu (1997).

*yes-no* question is formed when the particle *-oo* gets attached to the dummy verb *ceyy* 'do'. See (3: 42) below:

3: 42 = Babu's 4: 40

3:42 kutti pattau paat – uka – yoo ciṭram varak'k - ukka -yoo cey – t - oo  
 child song sing – INF–DISJ picture draw–INF–DISJ do–PAST-Q  
 'Did the child sing songs or draw pictures?'

In (3: 42) the particle *-oo* gets attached to the lexical verbs function as disjunctive co-ordinators. Tense gets attached to the dummy verb *ceyy* 'do' and the question particle *-oo* gets attached to the dummy verb to give the sentence a question reading. In (3: 43) below, we have an instance of disjunction in a complex construction.

3:43 = Babu's 4: 41

3:43 kutti paat – um enn – oo matt – oo amma parannu  
 child sing – Mod COMP –Disj other – Disj mother said  
 'The mother said that the child sings or something like that.'

In (3: 43) *-oo* gets attached to the complementizer *ennu* 'that'. Babu points out, since the complement clause is within the scope of the matrix tense, *-oo* can only have the reading of a disjunctive coordinator when it is attached to *ennu*. The only way for *-oo* to get the question particle reading is by clefting the whole clause, whereon *-oo* gets attached to the copula. See (3: 44) below:

3: 44 = Babu's 4: 42

3:44. kutti paat–um enn–ann- oo amma parann - aṭu  
 child sing – Mod COMP – is - Q mother said - Non  
 'Is it that child sings that the mother said?'

In (3: 44) – *oo* gets attached to *annu* ‘is’, which is the finite verb in the matrix clause and is outside the scope of tense. This gives the sentence a question reading of the *yes-no* type. In (3: 44) thus – *oo* functions as a question particle and not a disjunctive coordinator. The Malayalam – *oo* then is a disjunctive particle. Within the scope of tense it is a disjunctive co-ordinator (3: 41) and (3: 43); and outside the scope of tense it is a question particle (3: 40), (3: 42) and (3: 44). The disjunctive operator – *oo* and the question particle –*oo* are in complementary distribution.

The particle – *oo* can co-occur with the quotative *ennu*. See (3: 45) below:

3: 45 = Babu’s 4: 35

3: 45. [ *kutti vann – oo ennu* ] *amma – k’ k’ u ariyaam*  
 child came –Q COMP mother – DAT know  
 ‘The mother knows whether the child came.’

In the lines of Rizzi (1995), Babu assumes *ennu* occurs in the Fin<sup>o</sup>. The problem is the position of – *oo* in the complementizer system<sup>6</sup>. If – *oo* is not a part of the complementizer system where is its base-generated position? Babu argues – *oo* is a part of the verbal inflectional system. – *oo* has to obligatorily attach itself to the verb.

Therefore it has to be generated as an affix on the verb. Since the clause periphery has to encode all the relevant features of the clause, Babu assumes

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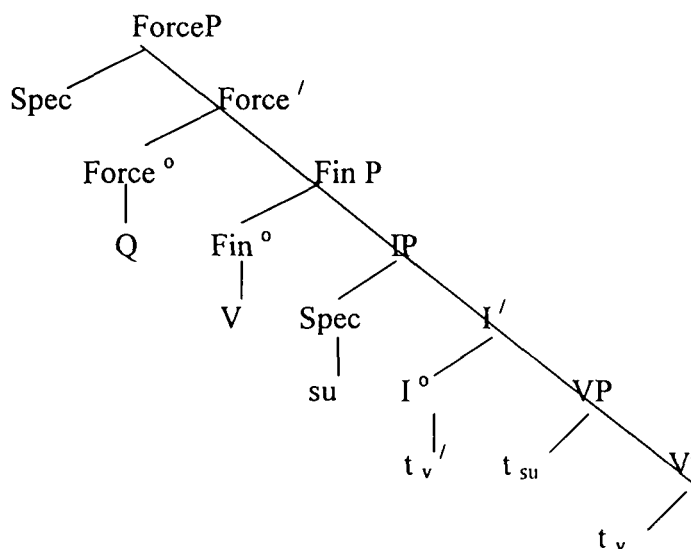
<sup>6</sup> For detail see Rizzi (1995)

there in an abstract Q operator, in the lines of Aoun & Li<sup>7</sup> (1993), in the Force<sup>o</sup> in Malayalam. Unlike in the case of “pure” insitu languages, tense creates an opaque domain in Malayalam since the Q operator cannot bind the question particle – oo, if it occurs within the scope of tense. Finite verbs in Malayalam move (covertly) into the C for feature checking of the finiteness feature (Babu: 162). As a result of this movement, once the verb is outside the scope of tense –oo may move covertly and get adjoined to Force<sup>o</sup> for feature checking. This explains why –oo has to be necessarily affixed to a verb to get a question reading. Thus a simple question as in (3: 40a) repeated here as (3: 46), has a configuration as in (3: 47) below.

3:46. bassu vann –oo  
 bus came – Q  
 ‘Did the bus come?’

3:47 = Babu’s 4: 36

3:47



From our observation of the Malayalam disjunct constructions we find that it has two question particles – oo andn –ee. The question particle – oo occurs in

<sup>7</sup> Aoun & Li (1993) argue that in in-situ languages like Japanese and Chinese there is a question operator Q in the [+wh] COMP.

positive construction (3:40a) and - *ee* occurs in negative construction (3:40b). The question particles are affixal in nature. In root clauses the question particle attaches to the matrix verb as in (3:40) and in complex constructions it obligatorily attaches to the dummy verb *ceyy* 'do' (3: 42). The particle - *oo* has the status of a disjunct within the scope of tense. Outside the scope of tense it operates as a question particle. The particle - *ee* has the status of an emphatic marker. Like the Kannada - *oo*, the question particle - *oo* in Malayalam can cooccur with the complementizer *ennu*. When - *oo* cooccurs with *ennu* it gives a reading of a [- wh] disjunctive coordinator (3: 43) . To get an interrogative reading the particle - *oo* has to obligatorily attach itself to the copular *aanu* 'be' (3: 44). In (3: 48) below we summarise the properties of the question particle - *oo* in Malayalam and Kannada.

3:48	<b>Kannada - oo</b>	<b>Malayalam - oo</b>
	a) bound morpheme	a) bound morpheme
	b) at phrasal level a disjunctive	b) within the scope of Tense a disjunctive
	c) at clausal level a Q particle	c) outside the scope of Tense a Q particle
	d) disjunctive - <i>oo</i> and Q particle - <i>oo</i> co-occur	d) disjunctive - <i>oo</i> and Q particle - <i>oo</i> co-occur
	e) <i>ennu</i> and Q particle - <i>oo</i> co-occur	e) <i>aanta</i> and Q particle - <i>oo</i> cooccur
		f) Q particle - <i>oo</i> co-occur with <i>illa</i> and <i>yeenu</i>

In this section we have examined disjunction in English, Kannada and Malayalam in root and complex disjunct constructions. In section 3.1.2 we have

examined disjunct constructions in root clauses in Assamese. In the section to follow we shall examine disjunct constructions in complex clauses.

### 3. 3 Disjunction in Complex Clauses

In section 3.2 we have noted that Assamese has two disjunct particles *ba* [+declarative] and *ne* [- declarative]. *ba* and *ne* occur in mutually exclusive environments. *ba* conjoins phrases and clauses while *ne* conjoins only clauses. We observed these facts in root clauses. In section 3.3.1 we shall examine the disjunct particles *ba* and *ne* in complex clauses.

#### 3. 3.1 *ba* in Complex Clauses

As in the root clauses (3:9) the [+ declarative] *ba* conjoins phrases and clauses in complex sentences too. See (3:50) and (3:51) below:

3:50a \* ma- e ko - is - e ze riju ba rima ah - ib - o  
 mother say - perf - agr that Riju or Rima come - fut - agr  
 ‘ Mother said that either Riju or Rima will come.’

b. riju ba rima ah - ib - o buli ma- e ko - is - e  
 Riju or Rima come - fut - agr that mother say - perf - agr  
 ‘ Mother said that either Riju or Rima will come.’

3.51a \* ma- e ko - is - e ze riju function - at nas - ib - o ba ga - b - o  
 mother say - perf - agr that Riju function - loc dance - fut - agr or sing - fut - agr  
 ‘ Mother said that Riju will either dance or sing in the function.’

b. *riju function-at nas-ib-o ba ga-b-o buli ma-e*  
*Riju function-loc dance-fut-agr or sing-fut-agr that mother-nom*  
*ko-is- e*  
*say - perf - agr*  
 ‘ Mother said that Riju will either dance or sing in the function.’

The ill-formed sentences in (3:50a) and (3:51a) show the [+ declarative] *ba* cannot co-occur with the complementizer particle *ze*. The disjunctive *ba* in (3:50b) and in (3:51b) is compatible with the quotative *buli*. In chapter 2, we have observed that the complementizer particle *ze* subcategorises for a [+ declarative] complement clause and *buli* subcategorises for [ $\pm$  declarative] complement clauses. In section 3.2, we have seen that the disjunct particle *ba* is compatible with a [+ declarative] COMP. From these observations we expect the [+declarative] complementizer *ze* and the [+declarative] disjunctive *ba* to be compatible. The ill-formed sentences in (3:50) and (3:51) show that it is not so. We shall look into this problem later in the chapter. The ill - formed sentences improve when the left peripheral *ze* is obligatorily dropped. See (3:52) below:

3:52a *ma- e ko-is- e riju ba rima ah - ib - o*  
*mother-nom say-perf-agr Riju or Rima come - fut - agr*  
 ‘ Mother said that either Riju or Rima will come.’

b. *ma-e ko-is-e riju function-at nas-ib-o ba ga-b-o*  
*mother say-perf-agr Riju function-loc dance-fut-agr or sing-fut-agr*  
 ‘ Mother said that Riju will either dance or sing in the function.’

In Kannada, the disjunctive *illa* can co-occur with the *illa* of sentential negation (3:28). This normally happens when a negative disjunct construction is derived. In our analysis of the [+ declarative] disjunctive *ba* we have looked at only the positive constructions. In (3:53) we have the Assamese equivalent of the Kannada negative disjunct example in (3: 28).

3: 53 \* xi n - ah - e ba ami na - za - u  
 he <sup>e</sup> neg - come - agr or we neg - go - agr  
 ' Either he does not come or we do not go.'

The ill-formed sentence in (3: 53) shows that *ba* is not compatible with sentential negation. Like the Malayalam negative disjunctive - *ee* (see 40b), a negative disjunct construction is derived when the emphatic marker -*u* attaches to a lexical category. See (3: 54) below:

3:54a. riju - u n - ah - e ami - u na - za - u  
 Riju - disj neg - come - agr we - disj neg - go - agr  
 ' Neither riju comes nor do we go.'

b. ma - e ko - is - e riju - e na - nas - e - u na - ga - i - u  
 mother - nom say - perf - agr Riju - nom neg - dance - disj neg - sing - agr - disj  
 ' Mother has said Riju neither dances nor sings.'

In (3: 54) we find that the disjunct particle -*u* 'nor' is affixal in nature. When disjunction is at the phrasal level it attaches itself to the category under disjunction. In this case it attaches to a nominal category (3: 54a). When disjunction is at the clausal level it attaches to the matrix verb as in (3: 54b). Like the Kannada and Malayalam disjunctives - *oo* (positive) and - *ee* (negative) it reiterates. In other words the negative disjunctive - *u* attaches



itself on both the lexical items under disjunction. The sentence in (3:55) below shows the particle *-u* operating as an emphatic marker. See (3:55) below.

3: 55    *moi - u    guwahati - loi    za - m*  
           *I - u        Guwahati - to    go - fut*  
           ‘ I too will go to Guwahati’.

The negative disjunctive *- u* does not co-occur with the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli*. See (3:56) and (3: 57) below:

3:56a \* *ma-e    ko-is-e    ze    riju-e    na-nas-e- u    na-ga-i-o*  
           mother-nom say-perf-agr that Riju-nom neg-dance-u neg-sing-agr-o  
           ‘ Mother has said that Riju neither dances nor sings.’

          b \* *ma-e    zan-e        ze    riju-e    na- nas-e- u    na-ga-i-o*  
           mother-nom know-agr    that Riju-nom    neg-dance-u    neg-sing- o  
           ‘ Mother has said that Riju neither dances nor sings.’

3:57a \* *riju-e    na-nas-e-u    na-ga-i-o    buli    ma-e        ko-is-e*  
           Riju-nom neg-dance-u neg-sing-agr-o that mother-nom say-perf-agr  
           ‘ Mother has said that Riju neither dances nor sings.

          b.\* *riju-e    na- nas-e-u    na-ga-i-o    buli    ma-e        zan-e*  
           Riju-nom neg-dance-agr- u    neg-sing-agr-o that mother-nom know-agr  
           ‘ Mother has said that Riju neither dances nor sings.

From our observation so far, we find the following properties in a [+ declarative] disjunct construction. See (3:58) below:

3: 58	<b>Positive <i>ba</i></b>	<b>Negative - <i>u</i></b>
	a) free morpheme	a) bound morpheme
	b) co-occurs with <i>buli</i> not with <i>ze</i>	b) does not co-occur with <i>ze</i> or <i>buli</i>

### 3. 3.2 *ne* in Complex Clauses

We have observed in section 3:3.1 a [+ declarative] sentence is transformed into a direct *yes-no* question when the particle *ne* occurs in the clause final position. See (3:59):

- 3.59a riju azi ah – ib – o  
Riju today come – fut – agr  
‘Riju will come today.’
- b riju azi ah – ib – o ne ( nai / ki)  
Riju today come – fut – agr prt  
‘Will Riju come today?’

The particle *ne* optionally cooccurs with a negative element *nai* and the question word *ki*. In complex interrogative clauses the particle *ne* normally follows the negative element *nai*. See (3:60a) below:

- 3:60a ma – e zan – e riju azi ah – ib – o ne n – a – i  
mother – nom know – agr Riju today come – fut – agr or neg – be – agr  
‘ Mother knows whether or not riju will come’.

We have observed in section 3.1.0 that in root clauses the question word *ki* occurs after the disjunctive *ne* in specific contexts. In complex *ki* may occur after *ne* when the matrix verb is *xudha* ‘ask’. See (3:60b) and (3:60c) below.

3:60b\* ma – e     zan – e     riju     azi     ah – ib – o     ne     ki  
 mother–nom know–agr Riju today come–fut–agr or what  
 ‘ Mother knows whether or not riju will come’.

c. ma – e xudh–is–e     riju     azi     ah–ib–o     ne     n–a–i / ki  
 mother–nom ask–perf–agr Riju today come–fut–agr or neg–be–agr/ what  
 ‘ Mother knows whether or not riju will come’.

The ill-formed sentence in (3:60b) shows the matrix verb *zane* ‘know’ does not subcategorise a disjunct construction when the question word *ki* is overt. The matrix verb subcategorises a disjunct construction when the negative element *nai* is overt as in (3:60a). The sentence in (3:60c) is well formed, the matrix verb *khudha* ‘ask’ subcategorises, a disjunct construction with either *nai* or *ki*. We shall examine why (3:60b) is ill formed in section 3.4.1. From (3:60) two things are evident: one, when *ne* occurs in a complex construction it gives a reading of an indirect question and its scope is limited within the embedded clause, and two, the negative element *nai* normally occurs in the indirect questions. The presence of the question word *ki* is limited to finite verbs like *khudha* ‘ask’.

In root clauses i.e., in the direct *yes-no* questions the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are optional. In the indirect questions without the overt presence of the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki*, the constructions are incomplete therefore ill-formed. See (3:61) below:

3:61a. \* ma – e     zan – e     riju     azi     ah – ib – o     ne  
 mother–nom know–agr Riju today come–fut–agr or

b.\* ma – e xudh–is- e riju azi ah–ib–o ne  
 mother–nom ask – perf–agr Riju today come – fut – agr or

In section 3.1.0 we have noted that the question word *ki* obligatorily follows the disjunct particle *ne* in the negative *yes-no* questions (see 3: 8). In complex constructions too *ki* obligatorily follows the disjunctive *ne*. Without the overt presence of *ki* the sentence remains incomplete. See (3: 62):

3: 62a ma – e xudh–is– e riju azi n- ah – e ne ki  
 mother–nom ask–perf–agr Riju today neg – come or what  
 ‘Mother is asking whether Riju isn’t coming today?’

b. \* ma – e xudh – is – e riju azi n –ah– e ne  
 mother–nom ask–perf –agr Riju today neg – come or

The complex constructions (3:60) to (3:62) give the interpretation of an indirect *yes-no* question of the *whether* type in English. Comparing the direct *yes-no* questions and the indirect *yes-no* questions in Assamese we find they have the following properties. See (3: 63) below:

3: 63 direct <i>yes- no</i> question	indirect <i>yes-no</i> question
a) <i>nai /ki</i> optional in positive sentences	a) <i>nai / ki</i> obligatory in positive sentences
b) <i>ki</i> obligatory in negative sentences	b) <i>ki</i> obligatory in negative sentences

In the previous section we observed that the disjunctive *ba* can co-occur with the quotative *buli* and not with *ze* (see 3:50) and (3:51). The disjunctive *ne* cannot co-occur with the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli*. See (3:64) below:

3:64a \* ma - e    zan - e    ze    riju    azi    ah-ib-o    ne    n-a-i  
 mother-nom know-agr that Riju today come-fut-agror neg-be-agr  
 ‘ Mother knows that whether or not Riju will come.’

b.\* riju    azi    ah - ib-o    buli    ne    n - a - i    ma - e    zan - e  
 Riju today come-fut-agr that or neg-be-agr mother-nom know-agr  
 ‘ Mother knows that whether or not Riju will come’.

The sentences in (3:64) are ill formed. So are the English translations (see gloss). From our observation of the *yes - no* questions in Assamese (3:63) it is clear that we do not get the interpretation of a direct *yes-no* question in complex constructions. *ne* followed by the negative element *nai* gives the interpretation of an indirect *yes-no* question like the English *whether* type . We have noted in section 3.2.1 that *whether* can be replaced by a disjunct phrase *whether or not* (see 3:21). According to Larson (1985) CONJ constitute two subparts: the item *or* and a scope indicator. In [+wh] disjunct construction the scope indicator is *whether* and in [- wh] disjunct constructions the scope indicator is *either*. In the Assamese disjunct constructions, we have seen that there is no lexical word equivalent to *either* or *whether*. In the lines of Larson we may then assume that the scope indicator in Assamese is null (O). Larson argues in [+declarative] disjunct sentences the null SI adjoins either to S or INFL and in [- declarative] sentences it moves to the COMP position. From the ill-formed sentences in (3:64) we may then assume the null (O) scope indicator of the disjunctive *ne* moves to the COMP position.

### 3.4 The Disjunct Phrase in Assamese

From our study of the disjunct constructions in Assamese, we have observed that [+ declarative] disjunct constructions have the following properties:

- a) the particle *ba* occurs in positive disjunct constructions,
- b) the particle - *u* occurs in negative disjunct constructions
- c) there is no overt scope indicator
- d) the particle *ba* co-occurs with *buli* but not with *ze*

The [- declarative] disjunct constructions have the following properties:

- a) the article *ne* occurs in *yes-no* questions
- b) *nai* and *ki* are optional in positive direct *yes-no* questions
- c) there is no overt scope indicator
- d) *ne* does not co-occur with *buli* and *ze*
- e) *nai* / *ki* is obligatory in indirect (positive) *yes – no* questions
- f) *ki* is obligatory in negative *yes-no* questions (direct & indirect)

In the sections to follow we intend to find out whether the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are constituents of the Disjunct Phrase or not.

#### 3.4.1 *nai* and *ki* in Disjunct Phrase

The negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are optional in direct *yes-no* questions and obligatory in indirect *yes-no* questions. In section 3.4.1.1 we examine whether the negative element *nai* is a constituent of the Disjunct Phrase and in section 3.4.1.2 whether the question word *ki* is a constituent of the Disjunct Phrase.

### 3.4.1.1 *nai* in Disjunct Phrase

Larson (1985) states the *whether* constructions optionally may allow the disjunct phrase *or not* in sentences as in (3:65) below.

3:65 = Larson's 51

3:65 I know whether John claimed that Bill left or not.

The sentence in (3:65) has two distinctive readings. In other words it is ambiguous. When the disjunct phrase *or not* is a constituent of the higher clause, the reading is: *I know that either that John claimed that Bill left or else that John didn't claim that Bill left*. When the disjunct phrase is a constituent of the lower clause, the reading is as follows: *I know either that John claimed Bill left or I know that John claimed that Bill didn't leave*. The underlying structure of the two readings are as shown in (3:66) below:

3:66 = Larson's 53

3:66a. [<sub>s</sub> / [ comp whether <sub>i</sub> ] e <sub>i</sub> [<sub>s</sub> John claimed [ that Bill left ] or not ]  
b. [<sub>s</sub> / [ comp whether <sub>i</sub> ] [<sub>s</sub> John claimed [ [ e <sub>i</sub> Bill left or not ] ] ] ]

From (3:65) it is evident that the disjunctive *or* and the negative element *not* together constitute the disjunctive. In section 3.1.0 we observed that the negative form of the matrix verb replaces the negative element *nai* in direct *yes – no* questions. See (3:5a) and (3:6a) repeated here as (3:67a) and (3:67b) respectively.

3:67a. riju ah - ib - o ne n - a - i  
Riju-nom come-fut-agr prt neg-be-agr  
'Will Riju come or not?'

- b. riju ah-ib-o ne n - ah - e  
 Riju-nom come-fut-agr prt neg - come - agr  
 'Will Riju come or not come?'

Let us find out if the negative element *nai* in indirect *yes-no* questions can be replaced by the negative form of the matrix verb. See (3:68) below:

- 3:68a ? ma - e zan-e riju azi ah-ib-o ne n - ah - ib - o  
 mother-nom know-agr Riju today come-fut-agr or neg-come-fut-agr  
 ' Mother knows whether or not riju will come'.

- b. riju azi ah-ib-o ne n-ah-e ma - e zan - e  
 Riju today come-fut-agr or neg-come-agr mother-nom know-agr  
 ' Mother knows whether or not riju will come'.

The sentence in (3:68a) is not well formed. It improves when *nahibo* 'will not come' is replaced by *nahe* 'not come'. The sentential negative *nahe* is used in default <sup>8</sup>. This is an idiosyncratic behaviour in the language. Secondly, when the embedded disjunct clause is moved to the left of the matrix clause the sentence is well formed. Sentences like (3:68b) are used in specific context. The interpretation is somewhat like this: *it is mother who knows whether Riju*

<sup>8</sup> To indicate the future tense in negative constructions, the present indefinite form is normally used. See the examples in (1) and (2) below:

- |                                    |                                     |                                      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1a * moi n-ah-im<br>I neg-come-fut | 1b. tumi n-ib-a<br>you neg-come-agr | 1c. ?xi n-ah-ib-o<br>he neg-come-agr |
| 2a moi n-ah-u<br>I neg-come agr    | 2b. tumi n-ah-a<br>you neg-come-agr | 2c xi n-ah-e<br>he neg-come-agr      |
- 'I don't come.' / 'I will not come.' 'You don't come.' / \* 'You will not come.' 'He doesn't come.' / 'He will not come.'

The sentences in (2a) and (2c) show that the present indefinite form *nahui* and *nahe* is used in default to mark the future tense in Assamese.



*will come or Riju will not come.* There is an intonational pause after *ahibo* and *nahe*. Normally the negative element *nai* is overt in the *yes-no* questions. Consider the following indirect *yes-no* question in (3:69) below:

3.69 ma-e xudh - is - e riju - e bhat kha - l - e ne n - a - i  
 mother-nom ask-perf-agr Riju-nom rice eat-pst-agr or neg-be-agr  
 ‘Mother has asked whether Riju has taken his meal or not.’

The underlying structure of (3:69) is as shown in (3:70) below:

3.70 ma-e xudh-is-e [<sub>IP</sub> riju-e bhat kha-l-e ] ne [<sub>IP</sub> riju-e bhat  
 mother-nom ask-perf-agr Riju-nom rice eat-pst-agr or riju-nom rice  
 khua n-a-i]  
 eaten neg-be-agr

The *yes-no* questions in (3:67 – 3:69) show that the negative element *nai* is a sentential negation and not a constituent of the disjunct phrase. In (3:69) the disjunctive *ne* conjoins at the clausal level. In other words it conjoins a positive sentence with a negative one. In the positive sentence the verb *kha* ‘eat’ is in the past tense. In the negative sentence the verb *kha* is in the participial form *khua* ‘eaten’. Tense and agreement features i.e. the [+finiteness] features are realised in the copular *as* ‘be’. The negative morpheme *n-* affixes to the finite verb form.

#### 3.4.1.2 *ki* in Disjunct Phrase

We have observed in sections 3.1.0 that in direct *yes-no* questions the question word *ki* is optional with positive constructions (3:7) and obligatory with the

negative constructions (3:8). In complex constructions the question word *ki* is obligatory too. We repeat the *ne-ki* constructions in (3:71) below.

3:71a. *riju ah – ib – o ne (ki)*

Riju come-fut-agr or what

‘Will Riju not come or what?’

b. *riju n – ah – ib – o ne ki*

Riju neg – come – fut – agr or what

‘Won’t Riju come or what?’

In section 3.1, we had observed that the question particle *ki* occurs in a specific context (3:7). The overt *ki* gives the interpretation of a polite enquiry. The question word *ki* is obligatory in negative *yes-no* questions as in (3:71b). In complex constructions too, the question word *ki* is obligatory. See (3:72) below:

3:72a *ma – e xudh – is – e riju azi ah – ib – o ne ki*

mother–nom ask–perf–agr Riju today come–fut–agr or what

‘Mother had asked whether Riju will come today?’

b. *ma – e xudh–is–e riju azi n- ah – ib – o ne ki*

mother–nom ask– perf–agr Riju today neg-come–fut–agr or what

‘Mother had asked whether Riju will not come today?’

In section 3.2.2.1, we have observed that [+wh] specification of *oo* can be attested by the presence of a dummy wh-word like *yelli* ‘where’. Amritavalli (2000) states the dummy wh-word *yelli* ‘where’ receives no interpretation. See (3:38) repeated here as (3:73) below:

3:73 . nanage [ (naanu) yelli biLuttiin – oo anta ] bhaya  
 I – dat I where fall 1 sg oo that fear  
 ‘I fear whether (lit. where) I will fall.’ (= I am afraid that I will fall.)

The dummy wh-word *yelli* occurs to the left of the disjunctive *oo*. In our examples in (3:71) and (3:72) the question word *ki* occurs to the right of the [+wh] disjunct particle *ne*. In other words, it follows the disjunctive *ne*. In the preceding section we have noted that the negative element *nai* is not a constituent of the disjunctive *ne*. The sentence in (3:74) shows that the question word *ki* too is not a constituent of the disjunctive *ne*. See (3:74) below:

3: 74a [ riju ah– ib–o ] ne [ pro ki kor – ib – o]  
 Riju come-fut-agr or what do – fut - agr  
 ‘Will Riju not come or what he will do?’

b. [ riju n – ah – ib – o ] ne [ pro ki kor – ib – o]  
 Riju neg–come–fut–agr or what do–fut- agr  
 ‘Won’t Riju come or what he will do?’

The underlying structures of the indirect questions in (3:72) are shown in (3:75) below:

3:75a ma – e xudh–is – e [ riju azi ah – ib – o ] ne [ pro ki kor – ib – o]  
 mother–nom ask–perf–agr Riju today come–fut–agr or what do–fut- agr  
 ‘Mother had asked whether Riju will come today (or what he will do)?’

b. ma – e xudh – is – e [ riju azi n- ah – ib – o ] ne [ pro ki kor–ib– o]  
 mother–nom ask–perf–agr Riju today neg-come–fut–agr or what do–fut- agr  
 ‘Mother had asked whether Riju will not come today (or what he will do)?’

The underlying structures in (3:75) show that the question element *ki* ‘what’ is not a dummy wh-word unlike the Kannada *yelli* ‘where’. In section 3.3.2, we observed that the question word occurs in the embedded disjunct construction when the matrix verb is *khudha* ‘ask’ (3:60c). With finite verbs like *zana* ‘know’ the question word *ki* is not compatible. The underlying structures in (3:75) show that the disjunctive *ne* conjoins at the clausal level where the clause to the left of *ne* is [+ declarative] and the one to the right is [- declarative]. We have seen in chapter Two that finiteverbs like *zana* subcategorizes for only [+ declarative] complement clauses. *zana* ‘know’ can subcategorise for a [- declarative] clause when the [+wh] COMP has a *null*-Prt. This explains why (3: 60b) is ill formed.

In section 3.2.1 we have noted that the English *either* is a sensitive expression, i.e, an expression that cannot be properly interpreted, except in the environments, which fulfills its interpretational demands (Gianuakidou 1997). *Either*, thus is dependent on one of the elements: *neg*, *modality*, *genericity* which functions as its licensor and which determines its interpretation as an existential or universal expression. We have observed in this section that the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* have to be overt in indirect *yes-no* questions. Their overt presence may be for licensing reasons. In the next section we examine the scope facts and interpretation of the Assamese disjunct constructions. This will throw light on the licensing facts in the Assamese disjunct conatructions.

### 3.4.2 Sope Facts and Interpretations

In section 3.2.1 we observed that the English [ $\pm$  wh] disjunct constructions give more than one interpretation. This happens because the disjunct particle *or*

has inherent scopal properties and the scope of disjunction of *or* is indicated by the overt presence of the scope indicators (SI) *either* [-wh] and *whether* [+wh]. The interpretation of the [-wh] disjunct construction depends on the distribution of *either*. See (3:17) and (3:19), repeated here as (3:76).

- 3:76 a. Mary is looking for a maid or a cook.  
b. Mary is looking for either a maid or a cook.  
c. Either Mary is looking for a maid or a cook.

The SI *either* is an optional constituent of the [+declarative] disjunct phrase. In indirect *yes-no* questions the SI *whether* is not an optional constituent of the disjunct phrase.. In section 3.4.1, we saw that the scope of disjunction in a double embedded indirect question (3:66) gives two readings. The two readings result from the overt presence of the disjunctive *or* and the negative element *not*. Depending on the overt presence and the distribution of *or not*, we get two interpretations in (3:66). Thus the interpretation of the disjunct constructions depends on the presence of the discontinuous constituents *either* [-wh] and *or not* [+wh].

In section 3.2.1 we have also noted that disjunction may have a conjunctive interpretation (see 3:23). This conjunctive interpretation arises from the disjunctive phrase *either / or* (Higginbotham 1991). The discontinuous constituent *either* offers two meanings: one, that of an existential quantifier and two, that of a universal quantifier. The ambiguity between the conjunctive and the disjunctive readings is due to *either*. In [+declarative] disjunct constructions *either* is not always overt. When *either* is not phonologically realized, it is substantially free in its existential interpretation. To get universal interpretation it needs a modal or a generic environment. Let us

examine the scope facts and the interpretation of the disjunct constructions in Assamese.

### 3.4.2.1 Scope facts in Assamese Disjunct Constructions

In Kannada, we saw the negative element *illa*, a polarity item allows scope of disjunction. The negative element *illa*, which occurs to the left of the disjunct particle *-oo* is not the same as the sentential negation *illa*. Amritavalli (2000) assumes the left element *illa* in a disjunct construction to be a scope indicator like the English *either*. Amritavalli argues that the scope indicator *illa* moves to into an adverbial position to indicate the scope of disjunction. In the [+wh] disjunct constructions the question particle *-oo* does not allow the wh-word to move out of the *-oo* clause (see 3:34b & 3:37b). In the sub-sections to follow we shall look into the scope facts of the [+declarative] *ba* in sub-section 3.4.2.1.1 and that of the [- declarative] *ne* in sub-section 3.4.2.1.2.

#### 3.4.2.1.1 Scope Facts of *ba*

In the lines of Larson (1985), we have assumed that in [+ declarative] disjunct constructions the scope indicator is phonologically null (O). In colloquial Assamese, however, the conditional *nohole* ‘if not’ is used to signal disjunction. See (3:77) below:

3:77 (moi) azi nohole kali kam – tu kor – i di - m  
 I today or tommorow work – cl do – prog give – fut  
 ‘ I will get the work done either today or tommorow.’

In (3:76) the conditional *nohole* conjoins the adverbials *azi* ‘today’ and *kali* ‘tomorrow’. In certain dialects, the conditional *nohole* and the disjunctive *ba* do co-occur. See (3:78) below:

3:78a ? (moi) azi nohole ba kali kam – tu kor – i di – m  
 I today or tomorrow work – cl do – prog give – fut  
 ‘I will get the work done today if not tomorrow.’

In formal Assamese (3:78) is not acceptable. Hence the question mark. From the example in (3:78) we may then assume that *nohole* operates as a scope indicator like the Kannada *illa*. However, this observation is refuted by the example in (3:79) below.

3:79 tumi hoi porh - a nohoi (tumi) xu – a  
 you is read – agr is not you sleep – agr  
 ‘Either you read or you sleep.’

In (3:79) *hoi* ‘is’ gets the interpretation of *either*, and *nohoi* ‘is not’, that of *or*. When *hoi* is displaced we get the following interpretations. See (3:80) below:

3:80a. ma – e ko – is – e riju hoi azi nohoi kali ah – ib – o  
 mother – nom say – perf – agr Riju is today is not tomorrow come – fut – agr  
 ‘Mother has said that Riju will come either today or tomorrow.’

b. ma – e ko – is – e hoi riju azi ah – ib – o nohoi  
 mother–nom say–perf–agr is Riju today come–fut–agr is not  
 kali ah – ib - o  
 come–fut –agr

‘Mother has said that either Riju will come today or he will come tomorrow.’

In (3:80a) the disjunctive *nohoi* conjoins the adverbials *azi* ‘today’ and *kali* ‘tomorrow’. In (3:80b) the disjunctive *nohoi* conjoins at the clausal level. This results from the displacement of the discontinuous constituent *hoi*. In (3:80a) the scope of *nohoi* is within the phrasal category and in (3:80b) the scope is within the clausal level. Larson (1985) states languages with a null (O) SI allow the SI to move either to S or INF for scope reasons. Amritavalli (2000) argues that *illa* in Kannada adjoins to an adverbial position. In the lines of Larson (1985), we may then assume the null (O) SI adjoins to an adverbial position in (3:80a) and in (3:80b) the null (O) SI adjoins to S. In (3:81) we find *nohole* along with *ba* gives the disjunctive reading ‘or’. Most native speakers agree that *ba* in *nohole ba* has no semantic interpretation. The semantically empty *ba* in (3:81) operates as an emphatic marker rather than a disjunctive. Consider the sentence in (3:81) below:

3: 81 tumi amar - taloi ah – ib – a dei – ba  
 you our – there - to come – fut – agr emph  
 ‘Please do visit us.’ (lit: Please come to our house.)

The particle *dei* along with *ba* semantically gives the interpretation of a request equivalent to the English ‘please’. We have observed in chapter Two, section 2.3.2.1, the particle *dei* operates as an emphatic marker. Since our



focus is not on particles like *dei* in our study of disjunct construction, we shall ignore it as for now.

In section 3.3.1, we noted that disjunction in negative construction is signalled by the emphatic marker *-u* (see 3:54). From (3:80) it is evident that the [+ declarative] disjunct particle *ba* also operates as an emphatic marker. In section 3.3.1, we saw the disjunctive *ba* does not cooccur with the complementizer particle *ze* in (3:55a) and (3:56a). The same is true for the disjunctives *nohoi*, *nohole* and the like. See (3:82) below:

3:82a \* ma- e ko-is- e ' ze riju function-at hoi nas-ib-o  
 mother-nom say-perf-agr that Riju function-loc is dance-fut-agr  
 nohoi ga - b - o  
 is not sing - fut - agr  
 ' Mother said that Riju will either dance or sing in the function.'

b. riju function-at hoi nas - ib - o nohoi ga - b - o buli  
 Riju function-loc is dance - fut - agr is not sing-fut-agr that  
 ma- e ko - is - e  
 mother-nom say - perf - agr  
 ' Mother said that Riju will either dance or sing in the function.'

In section 3.1, we have observed that the disjunct particle *ba* is compatible with a [- wh] COMP. We have observed in chapter Two, section 2.3.3.1, that the complementizer particle *ze* has undergone reanalysis. Originally a relative pronoun *ze* has undergone reanalysis and it functions as X<sup>0</sup> category. However, it has retained its wh-operator status. The disjunctive *ba*

can occur only in [- wh] environment. The particle *ze* with its wh-operator status blocks the movement to the null (O) scope indicator of the [+ declarative] disjunctives *ba*, *nohole*, *nohoi* and the like.

#### 3.4.1.1.2 Scope Facts of *ne*

Amritavalli (2000) assumes that the null (O) scope indicator in the [+ wh] disjunct constructions in Kannada moves to the COMP position. In section 3.2.2.1, we have observed that the disjunctive – *oo* does not allow a wh- word to have scope outside the –*oo* clause. In section 3.3.2, we noted that the scope of indirect *yes-no* questions are limited within they occur as conjoined clauses. In other words, the indirect *yes-no* questions have a narrow scope reading. See (3:60a) and (3:60c) repeated here as (3:83).

3:83a ma – e    zan – e    riju    azi    ah – ib – o    ne    n – a – i  
 mother–nom know–agr Riju today come–fut–agr or neg–be–agr  
 ‘ Mother knows whether or not riju will come.’

b. ma – e    xudh–is–e    riju    azi    ah–ib–o    ne    n–a–i / ki  
 mother nom ask-perf–agr Riju today come–fut–agr or neg–be–agr/what  
 ‘ Mother knows whether or not riju will come.’

In section 3.4.1, we observed that the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are not constituents of the disjunctive *ne*. Unlike the Kannada and the Malayalam –*oo* that operates both as a disjunctive and a question operator, the particle *ne* in Assamese has only the status of a disjunctive. The disjunctive *ne* is compatible with a [+wh] COMP. In chapter Two, section 2.4, we have observed that the [+wh] complement clause is compatible with a null –Prt in the COMP position. See (2:99) repeated here as (3:84) below.

3:84 riju – e    zan - e    [ kon    ah - ib - o ]  
 Riju - nom know - agr    who    come-fut-agr  
 ‘Riju knows who will come’.

The indirect question in (3:84) shows that the wh-word *kon* gets a narrow scope reading. Wh-words are not compatible with the complementizer particle *ze*. The quotative *buli* allows a wh-word within the embedded clause only when the matrix verb is a finite verb like *ko* ‘say’ *bhab* ‘think’ and the like. We have assumed in the lines of Dasgupta (1990) the quotative *buli* undergoes a CP / TP merger. This enables the wh-word to co-occur with the non-finite *buli*. In section 3.3.1 we have noted that the disjunctive *ne* is not compatible with the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* (see 3:64). In the lines of Aoun & Li (1993) we may assume the [+wh] COMP position has an abstract Q morpheme. This explains why the disjunctive *ne* cannot co-occur with the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli*. The null (O) scope indicator of the [+wh] disjunct constructions moves to adjoin to the abstract Q morpheme in the COMP position.

#### 3.4.2.2 Interpretations in the Assamese Disjunct Constructions

From our observation of the Assamese disjunct construction we find that there is no ambiguity in these constructions. According to Higginbotham (1991), ambiguity in disjunct constructions in English arises because the scope indicator *either* is inherently ambiguous. As noted earlier, *either* allows two meanings that of an existential quantifier and universal quantifier. The universal interpretation of *either* gives the disjunct construction a conjunctive reading. See (3:23) repeated here as (3:85).

3:85 John plays (either) chess or checkers.

The conjunctive interpretation is paraphraseable as: ‘John plays both chess and checkers’, or as ‘John plays either of chess or checkers.’ Or as, ‘John plays any one of chess and checkers’. Amritavalli (2000) states the conjunctive interpretation of disjunction can be interpreted with the disjunctive – *oo*. See (3:30) repeated here as (3:86)

3:86a. nannu ninna jotey–alli chess–oo checkers – oo aaD – utt – lini  
I your pair – loc chess oo checkers oo play – nonpst - agr  
‘ I shall play chess or checkers with you.’

b. nannu ninna jotey –alli illa chessu , illa checkerssu aaD – utt – lini  
I your pair – loc not chess not checkers play–nonpst- agr  
‘ I shall play chess with you; if not, I shall play checkers

(3:86a) gives a conjunctive reading, i.e., an offer *to play whichever game you choose*. Higginbotham (1991) states that the universal interpretation is like a free choice *any*. This reading is achieved in (3: 86a). The scope indicator *either* needs a modal or a generic environment to licence the universal interpretation (see 3:32). Let us find out how conjunctive interpretation is realised in the Assamese disjunct constructions. See (3:87) below:

3: 87a riju – e nas – e ba ga – i  
Riju–nom dance–agr or sing– agr  
‘Riju either dances or sings.’

- b. riju – e    nas – ib – o    ba    ga – b – o  
 Rij- nom    dance– fut - agr    or    sing – fut - agr  
 ‘Riju will either dance or sing.’

In (3:87a) we get an existential interpretation and in (3:87b) we get universal interpretation. The conjunctive reading in (3:87b) is brought about by the tense marker *-ib / -b*. In the generic environment we get an existential reading and in a modal <sup>9</sup> environment we get a universal interpretation, which allows the conjunctive reading. However when the disjunct phrase *hoi – nohoi* occurs in disjunct constructions the conjunctive reading is available in both the generic and modal environment. See (3:88) below.

- 3.88a. tumi    hoi    nas – a    no hoi    ( tumi)    go – a  
 you    is    dance – agr    is not    you    sing – agr  
 ‘ Either you dance or you sing.’

- b. tumi    hoi    nas – ib - a    no hoi    ( tumi)    go – ib - a  
 you    is    dance – fut - agr    is not    you    sing – fut - agr  
 ‘ Either you will dance or you will sing.’

The disjunct constructions in (3:87) and (3:88) show conjunctive interpretations need a modal environment when the scope indicator is null as in (3: 87b). When the scope indicator *hoi* is overt, the conjunctive interpretation is available in both generic (3:88a) and modal (3:88b) environment.

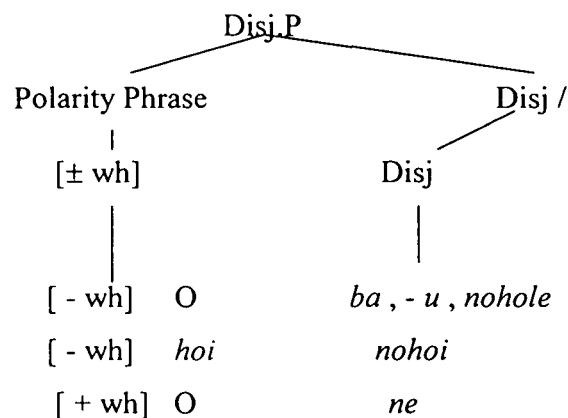
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<sup>9</sup> Modality in Assamese is indicated by the future tense markers *-im/-m* (1<sup>st</sup> Person) and *-ib/-b* (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Person).

From our observation of the [-declarative] disjunct constructions, i.e., direct and the indirect *yes-no* questions, we find that there is no ambiguity in the interpretations of these constructions. In section 3.4.1 we noted that the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are not a constituent of the disjunctive *ne*, unlike the English ‘or not’. Larson (1985) argues that the interpretation of the *whether* type constructions in English depends on what the disjunctive ‘or not’ conjoins (see 3:66). In the Assamese [- declarative] disjunct constructions, the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* are outside the scope of the disjunctive *ne*. In the [+ declarative] disjunct constructions the modal or the generic environments determine the interpretation. In the lines of Giannakidou we may assume that the modal and the generic environments function as the licensors for the [- declarative] disjunct constructions. In the case of the [- declarative] disjunct constructions where there is no scope for ambiguity, the negative element *nai* and the question word *ki* function as the licensors. The [- declarative] disjunct constructions have a null scope indicator. Larson (1985) assumes that the null SI “has the movement privileges of both the overt [-wh] either and the overt [+wh] whether. Thus it can adjoin to S (or INFL). Alternatively it can move to COMP” (p: 243 - 4).

Having looked at the properties of the disjunct constructions, we may now posit the Disjunct Phrase in Assamese. See (3:89) below:

3:89



In (3:89) we find that in [+ declarative] disjunct constructions, the polarity item is not overt when the head of the Disjunct Phrase is *ba*, *- u* and *nohole*. In section 3.2.2.1, we have noted that negative polarity item is base generated in the [Spec-Disj ] (see 2:29) . The negative polarity item is *either* in English and *illa* in Kannada. Amritavalli (2000) points out that the negative element *illa* is a negative polarity item and is the *neg* element of the semantic structure in 3:32. The English *either* inherently possesses negative feature. It is an optional item of the Disjunct Phrase. In Kannada the negative element *illa* is obligatory in the [+ declarative] disjunct construction.

From the configuration in (3:89) we may assume that the polarity item in [+ declarative] disjunct construction is not a neg element but a generic item. This is evident in the *hoi- nohoi* disjunct phrase (see 3:79). In the Assamese Disjunct phrase the neg feature is inherent in the disjunctives *ba*, *- u*, *nohole*, *nohoi*. So whenever a polarity item surfaces it is the generic element of the semantic structure. In (3:77) we find that the disjunctive *ba* combines with the conditional *nohole* ‘if not’ to form the head of the Disjunct Phrase. In (3:54) the disjunctive *-u* occurs only in a negative environment. The disjunctive phrase *hoi-nohoi* shows that the scope indicator is *hoi* a generic item.

Coming to the [+wh] disjunct construction we find that the polarity item in these constructions is not overt. Like the [+ declarative] disjunctives *ba*, *- u*, *nohole*, *nohoi*, we assume that the disjunctive *ne* has inherent negative features. We have observed in chapter Two, section 2:3.3.1 that the complementizer particle *ze* once a wh- operator has been reanalyzed into a functional category  $X^0$  retaining its wh- operator status. In the lines of Bayer (1995), we may assume that the disjunctive *ne*, once a negative operator, has

been reanalyzed as a functional category  $X^0$  retaining its negative operator status. The disjunctive *ne* is a ‘sensitive expression’ and it requires a negative element or a question word for proper interpretation. In the lines of Giannakidou (1997) we assume that the negative element *nai* (or a negative verb form) and the question word *ki* have to be overt to give full interpretation of the indirect *yes-no* questions (see 3:61) and (3:63). In direct *yes-no* questions the licensors *nai* and *ki* are optional in positive constructions. In negative *yes-no* questions the question element *ki* is obligatory.

### 3.5 Conclusion

Our analysis of the *yes-no* question in Assamese brings before us the following facts: the particle *ne* is a disjunctive and is outside the scope of Tense. *ne* does not operate as a question particle. An abstract Q morpheme is base generated in the [+wh] COMP position. The null scope indicator moves to the COMP position and adjoins to the abstract Q morpheme. The scope of the disjunctive *ne* is limited within the embedded clauses that *ne* conjoins. The negative element *nai* is a sentential negation. The question word *nai* and *ki* are constituents of the second conjoined clause. *nai* and *ki* are overt or non overt licenses the disjunctive *ne*. Direct *yes-no* questions in Assamese are complex constructions. See (3: 90) below:

3:90 a. riju – e    kha – l – e            ne    n – a – i  
           riju – nom   eat – pst – agr   or   neg – be – agr  
           ‘ Did Riju eat or not?’

b. [riju – e   kha – l – e ]   ne   [ riju – e    khua    n – a – i ]  
           riju – nom   eat – pst – agr   or   Riju – nom   eaten   neg – be – agr  
           ‘Did Riju eat or did riju not eat?’



In (3:90b) the disjunctive *ne* conjoins two clauses. The null scope indicator (cf. Larson 1985) or the non - overt polarity item (cf. Kayne 1994) moves and adjoins to the abstract Q morpheme in the COMP of the first clause. We have already noted that the scope of the [+ wh] disjunct construction is limited within the conjoined clauses. This results in the direct *yes-no* questions.

In indirect *yes-no* questions there is multiple embedding. See (3: 70) repeated here as (3:91):

3:91 ma – e            xudh – is – e [IP riju – e bhat kha - l - e ] ne  
          mother–nom ask- perf –agr Riju – nom rice eat – pst–agr or  
          [IP riju –e bhat khua n – a - i ]  
          riju–nom rice eaten neg-be-agr  
          ‘ Mother is asking whether Riju had lunch or Riju did not have lunch?’

In (3:91) the scope of the disjunctive *ne* is limited to the conjoined clauses. The null (O) scope indicator adjoins to the Q morpheme of the first clause of the conjoined sentences. Since the null (O) scope indicator cannot move to the matrix COMP the disjunct construction gets an indirect *yes-no* question status. In the *ne- ki* disjunct constructions too the scope facts give us the same result, (see 3:74) and (3:75) in section 3.4.1.2. The study of the *yes-no* question was mainly to examine what elements are base generated in the [+ wh] COMP. In chapter Two we have observed that the [+ wh] COMP is compatible with a null-Prt CP. In other words, the [+wh] COMP does not allow an overt complementizer under its head. In the lines of Aoun & Li we assume the null – Prt CP has an abstract Q morpheme base generated under its C head. The null-Prt CPs allows only narrow scope reading. It is only with the quotative *buli* a [+ wh] complement clause gets a wide scope reading. The wide scope reading results from the CP / TP merger of the quotative *buli* from the embedded clause with the matrix verb.

## Chapter Four

### Acquisition of Direct *wh*- and *yes-no* questions

#### 4.0 Introduction:

In chapter One, we had observed that acquisition of a second language (L2) is not as straightforward as that of a first language (L1). When child learners acquire their L1, UG is in the initial state ( $S_0$ ). When children and adults acquire their L2 (formal / informal), they already undergo the experience of acquiring their first language. In other words the language faculty of the L2 learner has the grammar of L1. The main objective of research in L2 acquisition is to find out if the L1 grammar plays a role in the acquisition of a second language. Clahsen and Muysken (1986), Clahsen (1988), and Bley-Vroman (1989), proponents of the *no-access* hypothesis, argue that cognitive faculties that are separate and distinct from the domain - specific language faculty, UG governs L2 acquisition.. Their observation is based on adult L2 acquisition. According to them child L1 and adult L2 acquisition are fundamentally different cognitive processes, the former deriving from the language faculty, the latter determined by non-linguistic processes. The proponents of the *no-access* hypothesis often appeal to Lenneberg's (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis (see section 1.1.2.2). However, empirical studies show that there is a gradual shift in the focus of researchers on issues like biological behaviour and brain maturation of a learner. Researchers, who support the *full -access* hypothesis (Epstein et al,1996), consider issues like

biological behaviour and brain maturation as ‘sensitive’ rather than ‘critical’ periods. They agree that there are differences in the language learning processes in child and adult learners but these differences do not necessarily depend on the accessibility and inaccessibility of UG. They do not deny the existence of differences between L1 and L2 acquisition, but these differences, they argue, arise mainly due to the following factors:

- a) assignment of parameter value in L1 versus assignment of additional parametric values in L2;
- b) the way children and adults acquire the lexicon and integrate UG with the grammar external performance system.

These factors bring about “major” differences between L1 and L2 acquisition, but this does not imply that UG has no role in the L2 acquisition process.

In contrast to the *no-access* hypothesis, the supporters of the *partial – access* hypothesis claim that UG knowledge is not totally unavailable, but that it is limited in very specific ways. Only L1 instantiated UG remain available to the adult i.e., only those invariant principles of UG that characterize grammars of all languages are accessible to the L2 learner. Schachter (1989) argues that UG as it is available to a child L1 learner does not constrain the L2 learner’s hypotheses. Grammar construction by the L2 learner is constrained not by the principles and parameters of UG but by the principles and the immutably set parameters of the particular L1 grammar. In other words, UG fails to constrain those aspects of L2 acquisition where there is a mismatch between L1 and L2 grammars. Empirical studies made by Flynn (1983, 1987, 1991) Flynn and Martohardjono (1992, 1994) show that Japanese speaking L2 learners are able to assign new parametric values in the construction of the L2 grammar when there is a mismatch between L1 and L2. Japanese is a head final language, in that the head of a phrase comes at the end and that English is head- initial in

that the head of a phrase comes first. For instance in the Japanese verb phrase (VP) the object complement precedes the verb and in the English VP, the verb precedes the object complement. These empirical studies show that there is *full-access* toUG.

In support of the *partial-access* hypothesis, Vainikka and Young Scholten (1991) claim that functional categories are initially absent from the grammars of L2 learners and that these categories progressively emerge in discrete and ordered stages. The first stage is the VP stage, the second the IP stage and the third stage the CP stage. Vainikka and Young Scholten's study on the acquisition of German (L2) by Turkish (L1) and Korean (L1) learners led to this claim. The data for this study were collected from five elicited "naturalistic" production tasks each involving descriptive narration on the part of the learner. Epstein et al (1996) argue that this kind of "naturalistic" production tasks make increased performance demands, and in all likelihood the subjects make use of incorrect syntactic constructions. They argue that functional categories are available in the early grammar of both child and adult L2 learners. The subjects of their study were native Japanese speakers who learned English (L2) in a formal set up. The child learners aged 6 – 10, had three years of formal English and the adult learners aged 22-36 had seven years of formal English. Fukui (1988) claims that functional categories are not present in Japanese. " So far, to the best of my knowledge, no strong argument has been given for the postulation of Infl(ection) as a syntactic entity in Japanese. The same remark appears to apply to the other two functional categories (COMP[lementizer] and DET[erminer] ) as well" (p.259). Epstein et al argue that if Japanese lacks functional categories and if the subjects show evidence of the functional categories in their early grammar; it would go against explanations of L2 acquisition based solely on transfer of the grammatical knowledge from L1 to L2. The Japanese speakers were tested on

a wide range of complex syntactic factors including structures involving functional categories IP and CP. The subjects were given examples of stimulus sentences exemplifying the tenses, modals, the progressive and negation (IP), topicalization, relative clauses and wh-question (CP). One difference between the elicitation tasks given by Epstein et al and those given by Vainikka and Young –Scholten, was that these tasks were able to control the syntactic factors that the researchers wanted to isolate. And this directly revealed the L2 learner's syntactic competence. Epstein et al (1993) point out that the use of elicited imitation task assumes that if a learner's grammar is not capable of generating a given syntactic structure the learner will have difficulty in repeating the structure. Their findings showed that that children and adults had the ability to produce sentences containing XPs in Spec-CP position and sentences containing X<sup>0</sup> in I<sup>0</sup> position. The overall result showed 59% for children and 60% for adults. Their results clearly showed that functional categories are available in the early grammar in L2 acquisition. Grondin and White's (1996), study too show that functional categories are available in the early grammar of child L2 learners. They examined the recorded utterances collected by Lightbown (1977) of two English – speaking child L2 learners, Kenny age 4.9 and Greg age 4.5. Both the subjects had no exposure to French until they were enrolled in a bilingual nursery program. They participated in activities that were conducted in both French and English. At the end of the program the children produced very few spontaneous utterances in French. They were subsequently enrolled in a French immersion kindergarten class and then transferred to a regular French kindergarten, with French peers. An analysis of the data showed that the functional categories, determiner, inflection and complementizer and their projections were available in their earliest utterances. Whatever changes were observed were largely quantitative rather than qualitative in both the children, with no radical shifts in the grammars as regards the functional projections. Lakshmanan (1993), Lakshmanan and Selinker (1994), Schwartz and Sprouse (1994), argue that

functional projections are present from the beginning of both adult and child L2 acquisition. According to these researchers, as in the L1 learners<sup>1</sup>, in the L2 learners too the functional categories are available in their early grammar.

The acquisition studies we have discussed so far are based on child and adult learners who have migrated to some foreign country for academic or professional reasons. The L2 learners in these studies have had formal teaching of the target language in total immersion classes, with native peers and teachers to interact with. In such situations the learners get ample exposure to the target language and this facilitates the acquisition process. In chapter One, our discussions on the position of English in Assam, in section 1.4.2, and, the background of the Assamese medium schools and the English medium schools in section 1.4.2.1, we had observed that:

- a) the learners learn / acquire their L2 in their home state Assam
- b) the peers of the L2 learners are native Assamese speakers like them
- c) the teachers, i.e., the direct input source, are non native speakers of English, and
- d) L2 learners from the Assamese medium, do not attend immersion classes

In the English medium schools the learners are exposed to the target language during the school hours (see 1:19). But it is only the learners from AVS who

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<sup>1</sup> Hyams (1994), Deprez and Pierce (1994), Stromswold (1995) argue that the functional categories: D(eterminer), I(nfl) and C(omplementizer) are available in the early grammar of child L1 learners.

get the opportunity to interact with native English speakers, normally the headmaster and the gap students (see 1.4.2.1). The learners from Assamese medium schools and the missionary run English medium schools do not get any opportunity to interact with native speakers. This disparity definitely has a telling affect in the acquisition process.

Keeping in mind the disparate background from which the L2 learners come, we had to devise production tasks that would not make 'extra performance' demands on the subjects but get spontaneous response from them (see section 4.1.2.3), especially, the subjects from the Assamese medium schools who hardly get any opportunity to interact in the target language. Since the learners from the Assamese medium schools are introduced to English relatively late than the learners from the English medium schools, we assume that the relative dominance of the mother tongue may influence the acquisition process. In other words, the L1 grammar may mediate the L2 acquisition process. Alternatively if the L2 grammar of the learners from the Assamese medium and English medium schools is constrained by similar underlying principles, then we assume that they have similar linguistic competence and there is full access to UG in the grammar of the learners from both the mediums. Whatever difference there may be is due to the lack of exposure to qualitative input. In the lines of Epstein et al (1993), we assume that what differs is the manner in which the learners set-up the parametric values of the L2 grammar and the way they acquire the lexicon and integrate UG with the grammar external performance system.

With this hypothesis in mind, our objective is to find out at what level of the acquisition process, the functional category C and its projection CP (Complementizer Phrase), are available in the grammar of L2 learners of English. In order to facilitate our study, we examine to what extent the L2

learners have acquired the movement rules in the derivation of the direct *wh-* and *yes-no* questions of English. In this chapter we examine the interrogative sentences in root clauses, in chapter Five, we examine the acquisition of the finite complement clauses. In other words the extraction of *wh-* words from embedded clauses. The chapter is divided as follows: in section 4.1 we look at the parametric differences between the Assamese and English interrogatives in root clauses. In section 4.2 we briefly describe how the data were collected. In section 4.3 we analyse the data obtained from the preliminary tasks. These tasks were given to the participants to find out the level at which the functional projections VP and IP are available in their L2 grammar. In section 4.4 we analyse the data of the main tasks. In section 4.5 we conclude on our observations on the acquisition of direct *wh-* and *yes-no* questions in English by native Assamese speakers.

#### **4.1 Interrogatives in English and Assamese**

In chapter One, section 1.1.4.1, we have observed that direct *wh-* questions in English are derived by two movement rules: the operator movement and the head to head movement. Object and adjunct *wh-* words like *what*, *who(m)*, *why*, *where* and the like are moved from their base generated (inserted) positions to the [Spec-CP] by the operator movement rule and auxiliaries and modal verbs are moved from their base generated (inserted) positions i.e. the I head to the C head by the head to head movement rules. In the derivation of a direct *yes-no* question, the head to head movement rule is obligatory. In sentences where an auxiliary or modal verb is not present, the dummy verb *do* is inserted in the I head and is raised to the C head by head to head movement (see 1:11). The operator and the head to head movements take place because the [+wh] C head is strong in English. The strong features of the [+wh] C head have to be checked in syntax for Full Interpretation, hence the movements.



In chapter Three, in our discussion of the direct *yes-no* questions in Assamese, we have observed that the disjunct particle *ne* does not move to the [+ wh] C head. This is because the [+ wh] C head in Assamese is weak. Chomsky (1995) assumes that language variation takes place because of the difference of the strength of the C head. In any L2 acquisition study it is crucial to know the parametric differences between the learner's L1 and L2. As our aim is to find out how the learners reset the parametric values of their L2 grammar, it becomes imperative to examine in detail the interrogative sentences of the L1 as well as the L2. In section 4.1.1 we examine the interrogatives in English and in section 4.1.2 we examine the interrogatives in Assamese.

#### 4.1.1 Interrogatives in English

In English an interrogative sentence is derived:

- a) when a wh- word moves to the left of the root clause and
- b) when a modal or an auxiliary verb moves to the immediate right of the wh- word

See (4:1) below:

4:1a. John will buy the book.

b. What will John buy?

The sentence in (4:1b) is an instance of direct wh - question. The movement of the wh- word in the direct wh- questions in (4:1b) and (4:3b, below) is an instance of an Operator movement. The wh-word *what* moves to the [Spec-CP] position from its base generated position i.e. the object argument position inside the VP. Direct *yes-no* questions are derived when a modal or an auxiliary verb moves to the clause initial position as in (4:2) below:

4:2 Will John buy the book?

The movement of the modal *as* in (4:1b) and (4:2) is obligatory in both *wh-* and *yes-no* questions. In sentences where an auxiliary verb is not present, the dummy verb *do* is inserted in the clause structure. See (4:3) below:

4:3a. John bought a book.

b. What did John buy?

c. Did John buy a book?

The declarative sentence (4:3a) does not have an auxiliary verb. In (4:3b) the dummy verb *do* is obligatorily inserted to derive a *wh-* question, in (4:3c) the *yes-no* question is derived when the dummy *do* moves to the clause initial position. The movement of the modal / dummy *do* in these sentences is an instance of head – head movement.

In English, object and adjunct *wh-* words undergo overt Operator movement. The subject<sup>2</sup> *wh-* word does not undergo overt Operator movement. See (4:4) below:

4.4a. Who will buy the book?

b. Who bought the book?

The direct *wh-* questions in (4:4) show that the subject *wh-* word *who* does not undergo overt movement. The modal *will* in (4:4a) does not move out of its

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<sup>2</sup>Stromswold (1995) points out that not all *wh-* questions behave identically. The subject *wh-* word and the object *wh-* word differ in subtle ways. These differences are observed in: *that* – trace effect, subject and object parasitic gaps, *wh-islands*, subject and object relatives and the *do*-support rule. These asymmetries have been of prime interest in L1 acquisition.

base generated position i.e. I head. In (4:4 b) there is no insertion of the dummy verb *do* as in (4:3c).

From our observation of the direct *wh-* and *yes no* questions in English, we find that it has the following properties:

- a) head to head movement from I - C
- b) overt operator movement of object and adjunct *wh-*words, and,
- c) covert movement of subject *wh-* word.

Chomsky (1995) argues that the subject *wh-* words undergo covert movement.

“ In the case of *wh-* movement, if the operator feature [*wh-*] is unchecked, it raises to an appropriate position, covertly if possible (by Procrastinate)” (p. 272). The formal features of the functional category C determine the clause type. Interrogative has the feature Q in the C head. The Q feature in English is strong and must be checked before Spell-Out. In case of object and adjunct *wh-* word the strong Q features are checked by the overt raising of the operator to the [Spec-CP] position. “The strong feature of Q, is satisfied by a feature  $F_Q$ ” (p.289). In case of subject *wh-* words, Chomsky assumes Q is introduced covertly. The feature Q is strong in English and so this feature has to be satisfied by covert adjunction. “ The structure must therefore contain a *wh-* phrase with a *wh-*feature that adjoins covertly to Q” (p.293). A subject *wh-* phrase gets interpreted as a *wh-* question at LF.

#### **4.1.2 Interrogatives in Assamese**

Coming to the direct *wh-* questions in Assamese, we find that the *wh-* (or *k-*) words do not undergo operator movement i.e., the *k-* word does not move to the [Spec-CP], nor does the auxiliary undergo head to head movement i.e., I - C movement. Assamese is a *wh-* in-situ language. See (4:5) below:

4.5a riju – e      kitap- e-khon kin – il – e  
 Riju – nom book - one – cl buy – pst – agr  
 ‘Riju bought a book.’

b. riju – e      ki      kin – il – e  
 Riju – nom what buy – pst – agr  
 ‘What did Riju buy?’

The declarative sentence in (4:5a) is transformed into a direct wh-question when the *k-* word *ki* ‘what’ replaces the object argument *kitab ekhon* ‘a book’. In (4:5b) the *k-* word *ki* is to the immediate left of the verb. Jayaseelan (1996) states that question words are inherently focussed their movement to the immediate left of the verb is an instance of movement of question words to the Focus position (see section 2.3.2.1). In Assamese, question words can occur in its base generated position as well as to the immediate left of the verb. See (2:65) repeated here as (4:6) below:

4:6a rima - k      kone      mar – il – e  
 Rima – acc who beat – pst – agr  
 ‘Who beat Rima?’

b.      kone      rima - k      mar – il – e  
 who      Rima – acc beat – pst – agr  
 ‘Who is it that beat Rima?’

The movement of the *k-* word *kone* in (4:6a) is within the IP. Jayaseelan (2000) posits the Topic and the Focus Phrase inside the IP<sup>3</sup>. When the *k-* word is in its base-generated position the interpretation of the sentence changes. To

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<sup>3</sup> For detail see Jayaseelan (200)

derive a direct wh- question, the *k*- word has to be to the immediate left of the verb. Consider the interrogative sentences in (4:7) and (4:8) below:

4:7a riju – e rima – k ki di – l – e  
 Riju – nom Rima – acc what give – pst – agr  
 ‘What did Riju give Rima?’

b. riju – e ki tap – khon kak di – l – e  
 Riju – nom book – cl who(m) give – pst – agr  
 ‘To whom did Riju give the book?’ / ‘ Who did Riju give the book to?’

4:8a riju ketiya ah – ib – o  
 Riju when come – fut – agr  
 ‘When will Riju come?’

b riju – e rima – k ketiya log- pa – is – il – e  
 Riju – nom Rima – acc when meet – perf - pst – agr  
 ‘When did Riju meet Rima?’

The direct wh- question in (4:7) and (4:8) show that the *k*- words occur to the immediate left of the verb. The overt movement of the subject wh- word (4:6a) and the object wh- word (4:7b) are instance of focus movement.

The main differences between the direct wh- questions in English and Assamese are shown in 4:9 below:

4:9	English	Assamese
	a) wh- word moves to [Spec-CP], an operator movement	a) <i>k</i> -word moves to Focus position, a head-head movement within IP
	b) modal / auxiliary moves from I – C, head to head	b) no I – C movement
	c) insertion of dummy verb <i>do</i>	c) no insertion of dummy verb <i>do</i>

According to Chomsky (1995) language variation can be determined by the feature strength of the functional category C. English has a strong [wh-] C feature, while, Assamese has a weak [wh-] C feature. This feature strength determines the operator movement i.e., the movement of a wh- word to [Spec-CP]; and the head to head movement i.e., raising of the modal / auxiliary verb from I- C. An object wh- word undergoes overt movement to check the strong [wh-] C feature before Spell-Out. Along with the operator movement, raising of a modal / auxiliary verb from I – C is obligatory. In cases where, there is no modal / auxiliary, the dummy verb *do* is inserted in I, which then moves to the C head for the Full Interpretation of the direct wh- question. In Assamese, the *k-* words being inherently focussed obligatorily moves to the Focus position for feature checking. However, this movement is not outside the IP, The feature Q in an interrogative construction is weak. Therefore the *k-*words need not check the feature F<sub>Q</sub> before Spell-Out. The feature F<sub>Q</sub> is checked at LF covertly.

In chapter Three, we observed that direct *yes-no* questions are derived in Assamese when the particle *ne* ‘or’ occurs in the clause final position. The particle *ne* is a disjunct and is compatible with a [+ wh] C head. The disjunctive *ne* conjoins at the clausal level. In the underlying structure *ne* conjoins two clauses. The negative element *nai* ‘is not’ and the *k-* word *ki* ‘what’, which optionally follows the disjunctive *ne* are constituents of the second clause and are overt for licensing reasons. The abstract Q morpheme in the [+wh] C head is compatible with the disjunct particle *ne* and its overt presence gives the disjunct constructions a *yes-no* interrogative reading.

The particle *ne* in direct *yes-no* questions in Assamese has the following properties:

- a) *ne* is a conjoiner
- b) *ne* is compatible with a [+wh] C head
- c) *ne* does not move to the [+ wh] C head

From our observation of the direct *yes-no* questions in Assamese we find that there is no head to head movement in these constructions as in the English direct *yes- no* questions. English is an SVO language and Assamese an SOV. The linear orders in both the languages are not the same. The movement rules involved in the derivation of the direct *wh-* and *yes-no* questions are not same. There is a mismatch in the grammar of both the languages. In L2 acquisition, researchers claim when the parameters of the L1 and L2 differ, learners take time to reset the values of the target language. Uzeil (1993), following Flynn (1983, 1987) assumes that when a parameter value in the native language (NL) and the target language (TL) match there is no need to reassign a value in the NL to match the TL. However, when the NL and the TL do not match, a process of parameter value reassignment is necessary. In the former case, the L2 learner will be able to consult the L1 parameter value in guiding his / her acquisition of the L2. In the latter case, acquisition will be disrupted, and might take longer as a result of reassigning the parameter-value of the L1 to match that in the L2. In our case, the parameter value of Assamese (L1) and English (L2) do not match. In our analysis of the acquisition of the direct *wh-* and *yes-no* questions of English (L2), by native Assamese (L1) speakers, we shall find out if these observations hold true in our situation as well.

#### **4.2 Data Collection**

In any language acquisition research, the data corpus plays a crucial role. In most of the research work discussed in section 4.1, we find that the data are collected in different ways. Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1991) collected

data from “naturalistic” production tasks. Epstein et al (1993) collected data by providing the subjects stimulus sentences exemplifying tenses, modals, progressive tense, negation at the IP level, and, topicalization, relative clauses, wh- questions at the CP level. Grondin and White (1996) conducted a longitudinal study on the utterances of two English-speaking children who learned French (L2) in immersion kindergartens.

In section 4.0, we have seen that there are disparities in the formal L2 situations. While devising the production tasks we had to keep these disparities in mind. The L2 learners in the Assamese medium schools barely get 30 / 40 minutes of English during the school hour (see table 1:17). Out of the 30 / 40 minutes of English class, only 5 – 10 minutes of English is used in the class. The input source for the learners is the English teacher and the prescribed textbook<sup>4</sup>. The lessons are designed on the structural approach. Till class 7, the learners are exposed to simplex constructions. From class 8 onwards, the learners are exposed to complex constructions. The structures of the lessons are simplified and the language paraphrased to help the learners understand the lessons. What most learners get to hear, are the simplified language from the textbook, when the teacher reads the lessons before explaining. Explanations are done in Assamese. A list of mother tongue equivalents are given for the difficult words in the lessons. There is no interaction in the target language between the teacher and the students. Consequently there is hardly any exposure to the target language. Most teachers claim that the students are comfortable when they teach in Assamese. Students on the other hand, claim that they want to converse in the target language but the teachers hardly ever encourage them to use English (L2) in the classroom. This is an old story in the English teaching situation in Assam. Lack of adequate exposure of the target

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<sup>4</sup> Board of Secondary Education, Assam (SEBA) designs the syllabus and text books. The text-book meant for class V has now been modified incorporating language-using activities in each lesson.



language, inhibits the learners from interacting in the target language. Outside the English classroom there is hardly any opportunity to interact in the target language. This problem persists even at the advance level. Advanced learners of English at the college and university level too avoid speaking in English. The learners prefer to write in English rather than converse in English. While collecting the data we had to keep this factor in mind. Our objective in carrying out this comparative study is primarily to find out to what extent there is similarity in mental representation of the L2 learners from the Assamese and English medium schools. So we had to devise production tasks that would elicit response from the learners from both type of schools. We discuss the production tasks in the next sub-section.

#### **4.2.1 Production Tasks**

We have already mentioned that the main objective of our study is to find out at what level the functional projection CP is available in the L2 grammar of our learners. Before giving them the main production tasks, the participants had to take two preliminary tasks. From these two tasks we wanted to find out at what level the functional projections VP and IP are available in the L2 grammar. The participants had to arrange two sets of jumbled sentences in the right word order: Task 1 on positive (assertive) sentences and Task 2 negative sentences.

For the main production task, the participants were given three tasks. The tasks are:

- a) arrangement of jumbled words in the right word order
- b) eliciting questions from pictures
- c) filling in gaps in incomplete questions

In Task 1, the subjects had to arrange a set of jumbled sentences into direct wh- and *yes-no* questions. The researcher read out jumbled sets, three

times, and the subjects had to frame the interrogative sentences accordingly. In Task 2, the learners had to produce direct *wh-* and *yes-no* questions by looking at a painting. A list of lexical items were given to the subjects and they had to choose the appropriate *wh-* word, main verb, auxiliary verb, and other lexical items while framing the direct questions. Task 3 had four incomplete passages. In each of these passages, the subjects had to fill in the blanks with words missing to form complete interrogative sentences. The clue words for this exercise were given in the passages. As in the preliminary tasks, from Task 1 we wanted to find out if the participants could place the words in the jumbled sets in the linear order of a direct *wh-* and *yes-no* question. From Task 2, we wanted to find out whether the participants could frame direct questions by using subject, object and adjunct *wh-* words with verbs in different tense forms. From Task 3, we wanted to find out how in a given situation or context the participants made queries. From these multiple tasks we wanted to find out if the participants relied only on the conscious knowledge of the L2 grammar or whether these rules were a part of their mental representation.

#### **4.2.2 Participants**

In this cross-sectional study, we took participants from three schools in and around Tezpur. These schools are the Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Donbosco High School, and the Assam Valley School (AVS). The Government Boys Higher Secondary School is an Assamese medium school and Donbosco and the AVS are English medium schools. In chapter One, in our discussion of the Assamese and English medium schools (see section 1.4.2.1), we had observed that the teaching / learning environment in the Assamese and English medium schools differ vastly. These differences are mainly due to the kind of exposure the learners have of the target language. We also noted that within the English medium schools too, differences lie with regard to the quality of input. In chapter One, we had mentioned that the

amount of exposure and the quality of the input available to the learners might be the main factors that may affect the L2 acquisition process. In order to find out how much these differences influence the acquisition process, we included the two English medium schools, namely Donbosco High School and the AVS. Donbosco High School is a missionary run school. The entry point in Donbosco is from class 1. AVS is run by a Trust under the management of a group of tea companies. It is a residential school and the entry point to this school is from class 5.

In our selection of the participants, we had one criterion. The learners had to have a minimum of 2 – 3 years of exposure to English. Since English is introduced in class 5, in the Government Boys Higher Secondary School, we selected participants from class 7 onwards for the study. In AVS, the entry point is from class 5, so the participants are from class 5 onwards. In case of Donbosco, we took participants from class 3 onward. In chapter One, we had mentioned that the learners in the English medium schools are exposed to the target language from the day they join school i.e. from the nursery level (kindergarten). In practice it is not so. Most of the activities in the Nursery classes are conducted in the L1, Assamese. The child learners hardly get to hear English at this level. Since classes in Donbosco are from class 1, we selected participants from this school from class 3 onwards. From each class, we took two participants. We were not able to get participants from the following classes: class 8 (Government Boys), Class 4 (Donbosco), and classes 6 and 10 from AVS. In (4:10) below, we have specified the class, age and the number of participants taken from each class. The age of the participants shown in (4:10) is a general divide. The participants were asked to mention their age on the handouts given to them. In most cases it was found that the age of the participants did not tally with the age as shown in (4:10).

4:10	Govt Boys		Donbosco		AVS		
	Class	Age	Number	Age	Number	Age	Number
	3			8	2		
	5			10	2	10	2
	6			11	2		
	7	12	2	12	2	12	2
	8			13	2	13	2
	9	14	2	14	2	14	2
	10	15	2	15	2		
	11	16	2			16	2

For collecting data, we went to the respective schools. On our request, the headmasters / principals of the respective schools selected the participants for our study. From each class we had two students each. Government Boys Higher Secondary and the AVS have plus 2 level classes too. From both the schools we had two participants each from class 11. In total there were 32 participants, 8 from Government Boys, 14 from Donbosco and 10 from AVS. The entire exercise took a period of eight months. The tasks were phased out over this period of time. Before the main production tasks were given to the participants, they had to take two preliminary tasks. These tasks were given mainly to find out at what level the functional projections VP and IP are available in their L2 grammar. The main task comprised three production tasks. The first task was in three sets. Each task was given to the participants with a gap of fifteen days each. Before the tasks were given, the researcher interacted with the participants. From these interactions the researcher could discern how familiar they were with the target language. It also brought to light how much

of explicit teaching of the grammatical rules is done in the English classroom. The participants from both the mediums had one thing in common. They all said that did not have much of grammar in their classes. Whatever formal grammar they had in class was mainly classifications and definitions of the grammatical categories within the traditional framework.

#### **4.2.3 Production Task Analysis**

Production data is not free from problems. Grondin and White (1996) mention three problems with regard to production tasks. The first problem is that the production data may lead to the underestimation of the linguistic competence of the learner. Vainikka and Young Scholten (1994), Radford (1990) assume that production data provides a direct reflection of the linguistic competence, absence of certain forms indicating the absence of certain properties. Epstein et al (in press) argue that one should be wary of concluding that if something does not occur in production it is absent from the grammar. White (1992) states the reverse situation is less problematic; that is, if categories are used productively, one can reasonably conclude that they are present in the grammar. The second problem is of observation. How many observations of a category are required to justify the conclusion that the category has been acquired? Brown (1973) points out that a form must be produced correctly in 90% of the obligatory contexts to count as having been acquired. Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994) took 60% of correct usage as an indication of acquisition. Epstein et al (in press), Meisel, Clashen, and Pienemann (1981), White (1992), Grondin and White (1996), argue if language learners show evidence of using a category, although not necessarily using it consistently, this suggests that the category is, in fact present in the grammar and other factors are responsible for the inconsistent usage. The third problem is of accuracy. Does a learner's use of agreement, for example, have to be accurate for one to conclude that I(nfl) is present in the grammar? Poeppel and Wexler (1993) proposed that accuracy of

forms is indeed a crucial criterion (for L1 acquisition); if agreement is accurate when it occurs in production, this indicates the presence of the functional projections relevant to agreement. Grondin and White (1996) agree that accurate use of properties such as agreement provides compelling evidence for the existence of the associated functional categories; however, they do not accept that inaccuracy necessarily implies a lack of categories in question.

The problems discussed here are related mainly to spontaneous utterance production tasks. In our case the production tasks are not spontaneous utterances. We have explained that we had to devise our production tasks keeping in mind the teaching / learning environment of our participants, particularly the L2 learners from the Assamese medium schools. Whatever may be the type of production task, the problems of analysis remain the same. While analysing the data, we intend to work on the lines of Epstein et al (in press) and Grondin and White (1996). That is to go by the evidence that the participants used a particular linguistic item consistently.

#### **4.3 Analysis of the Preliminary Tasks**

In this section we shall analyse the preliminary tasks that were given to the participants. We gave these preliminary tasks mainly to find out at what level the functional projections like VP and IP are available in the L2 grammar of the participants. The participants were given two sets of jumbled sentences, which they had to rearrange in the right word order. The participants were instructed to write down the sentences in the right word order as the sentences were read out. The jumbled sentences were read out three times. While reading out the sentences, we found that the participants from the English medium schools had no problem in grasping the sentences. However, the participants from the Government Boys, needed time to grasp the sentences. The researcher had to

go slow while reading out the jumbled sentences to this group of participants. The jumbled sentences in Task 1 were positive sentences and those in Task 2 were negative sentences.

#### 4.3.1 Analysis of Task 1:

The set of jumbled sentences given to the subjects are shown in (4:11) below:

- 4:11 a. sleeping John is  
b. ate apple Mary an  
c. saw duck Mary a  
d. hear John talk will our  
e. park the Mary will in John meet  
f. Mary gave book a John to

The jumbled set included intransitive and transitive sentences. From this task, we wanted to find out if: (a) the participants could place the subject and object arguments in the linear order (SVO), (b) place the determiners: *a*, *an*, *the* (articles); *our* (possessive) and (c) place the prepositions *in*, *to* in the right position within the DP and PP. The main verbs in the jumbled set were in the simple present, simple past and the progressive tense forms, the modal *will* and the auxiliary verb *be* in the present tense form.

The VP structures of English and Assamese, in their linear word order are shown in (4:12) below:

4:12	<b>English (SVO)</b>	<b>Assamese (SOV)</b>
intransitive	[ <sub>VP</sub> V ]	[ <sub>VP</sub> V ]
mono-transitive	[ <sub>VP</sub> V – NP ]	[ <sub>VP</sub> NP -V ]
di-transitive	[ <sub>VP</sub> V – NP – NP ]	[ <sub>VP</sub> NP – NP – V]

In (4:12) the sequence of the linear word order in the English VP structure is from left to right and that of the Assamese VP structure from right to left.

Having looked at the main differences in the sequence of the linear word order, we now come to the data analysis of Task 1. In our analysis of the data in Task 1, we found the subjects had no problem in arranging the intransitive and mono-transitive sentences in the right word order. Most of the participants, could rearrange the linear word order of the ditransitive sentence in (4:11f), except for one participant from the Government Boys. This participant was from class 7. The problem sentence is shown in (4:13) below:

4:13 John gave a Mary book

In (4:13) the preposition *to* is missing, and the article ‘a’ is placed before the indirect object ‘Mary’. The expected word order of the jumbled sentence in (4:11f) is as shown in (4:14) below:

4:14 John gave a book to Mary.

English ditransitive sentences in (4:14), has an alternative construction as shown in (4:15) below:



4:15 John gave Mary a book.

In (4:15), the indirect object *Mary* precedes the direct object *a book*. Comparing (4:15) with (4:14) we find the position of the direct object *a book* is determined by the overt presence of the preposition *to*. When the preposition *to* is not overt the indirect object precedes the direct object as in (4:15) and when the preposition *to* is overt, the direct object precedes the indirect object as in (4:14). The problem sentence in (4:13) shows that the indirect object *Mary* precedes the direct object *a book* as in (4:15). The subject does not place the direct object before the indirect object as in (4:16) below:

4:16 John gave a book Mary.

The equivalent of the English ditransitive sentence, in Assamese, is shown in (4:17) below:

4:17 a. jon- e    mari - k    kitap - e - khon    di - l - e  
John-nom    Mary-acc    book - one - cl    give - pst - agr  
'John gave Mary a BOOK.'

b. jon- e    kitap - e - khon    mari - k    di - l - e  
John-nom    book - one - cl    Mary - acc    give - pst - agr  
'John gave MARY a book.'

In (4:17a) the indirect object *marik* precedes the direct object *kitab ekhon*, in (4:17b) the direct object precedes the indirect object. The word order of the sentence in (4:17a) is normally considered standard. The sentence in (4:17b) is an instance of scrambling. Scrambling usually takes place for focus reasons (see section 2.3.2.1). The sentence in (4:17a), is in response to a question like *what did John give Mary?* and (4:17b) is in response to a question like *Who did John give a book?* There is a subtle difference in the interpretation of both the sentences and this difference occurs with the change of position of the object arguments. Assamese does not have an equivalent to the ditransitive sentence in (4:14). When a post-position occurs, after the indirect object the sentence is not well formed. See (4:18) below:

4:18 a. \* jon- e     mari – k     loi kitap e - khon   di – l – e  
           John-nom Mary – acc for book one – cl   give – pst – agr  
           ‘John gave a book for Mary.’

b. ? jon- e     mari – r     loi kitap e - khon   di – is – e  
           John-nom Mary – gen for book one – cl   given – perf – agr  
           ‘John has given a book for Mary.’

The ill formed sentence in (4:18a), show that postpositions like *loi* ‘for’ do not occur with the indirect object *marik*. The post-position *loi* ‘for’ assigns Genitive case to the indirect object, see (4:18b). When the post-position *loi* ‘for’ occurs in the sentence, the interpretation of the sentence changes.

From our analysis of the problem sentence in (4:13), we find that if L1 mediates (4:17), the participant has two alternatives to choose from. We find that he chooses the first alternative (4:17a) and not the second (4:17b). This

indicates that there must be some kind of knowledge in the participant that makes him choose (4:17a), some kind of knowledge about the local relation between the head and the complement. If this observation holds good how do we explain why the article 'a' in (4:13) is placed before the indirect object and not before the direct object.

In Assamese there are no articles. Definiteness and specificity in Assamese are expressed by the classifiers *khon*, *zon*, *zoni*, *tu* and the like. In language acquisition idiosyncratic features of the target language (L1 / L2) have to be learnt. This can take place when a learner is constantly exposed to the target language. In section 4.2, we have seen that the learners in the Assamese schools, do not get a chance to interact in the target language. In our interactions with the participants from the Government Boys, we found that in the grammar class while teaching a particular grammatical item the teachers provide only the rules of the concerned grammatical item with a few examples. These examples are not adequate because explanations are done in Assamese and this subsequently leads to the problem of overgeneralization. The participants from AVS informed they too did not have much of explicit teaching of the grammatical rules in the classroom. But these learners are constantly exposed to the target language. In case of the participants from Donbosco, we find that though they too are exposed to the target language, their problems indicate that the kind of input available to them affects their acquisition process adversely. In chapter One, we had mentioned that one of the factors that deter the acquisition process is fossilization. In most of the participants from this school, we found they had problems with the use of the correct tense form. In this task too, two of the participants from this school used the wrong tense form. See (4:19) below:

4:19. Mary eat an apple.

In our analysis of the data of the participants from Donbosco, we found that in both the preliminary as well in the main production tasks, some of them had problem in using correct tense form. This problem was observed in participants from class 3 –10. Epstein et al (in press) and Grondin and White (1996) point out that absence of a grammatical feature in the data does not necessarily imply that the feature is not present. In the lines of Epstein et al and Grondin and White, we may assume that this observation applies to the data *obtained from Donbosco participants also. But when the problem persists, the environment in which the acquisition process takes place needs to be looked into.*

#### 4.3.2 Analysis of Task 2

Sentential negation in English takes place when the negative element *not* occurs to the immediate left of the main verb and the auxiliary verb / modal obligatorily occurs to the left of the negative element *not*. i.e., on the I head. In sentential negation, tense features are attached to the auxiliary verb / the modal. The structure dependence rule demands that this position is occupied by an auxiliary / modal. In sentences where an auxiliary / modal is not present, the dummy verb *do* is inserted in I head. The obligatory presence of the dummy verb *do* is an instance of structure dependence rule. The rule of structure dependence is a universal one. See (4:20) below:

4:20a. John did not meet Mary.

b. John didn't meet Mary.

Negative sentences in English can have two alternatives as shown (4:20a) and (4:20b). In the first alternative (4:20a), the negative element *not* is in its base generated position. In the second alternative (4:20b), the negative element *not* contracts and its enclitic form *-n't* moves from its base generated position and attaches itself to the auxiliary verb in the I head.

In Assamese, sentential negation takes place when the negative marker *n-* prefixes to the verb that carries the tense. See (4:21) below:

4:21a. jon- e    mari – k    kitap- khon    di – l – e  
           John-nom Mary – acc book – cl    give - pst – agr  
           ‘John gave the book to Mary.’

b. jon- e    mari – k    kitap – khon    ni - di – l – e  
           John-nom Mary – acc book - cl    neg – give – pst – agr  
           ‘John did not give the book to Mary’.

In the positive sentence (4:21a) the past tense marker *- l* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person agreement marker *- e* attaches to the main verb *di* ‘give’. In the negative sentence (4:21b) the negative morpheme *n-* attaches itself to the main verb as it carries the tense. In (4:21) we have an instance of the negative morpheme prefixing to an auxiliary verb. See (4:22) below:

4:22a    jon- e    mari – k    dekh - is - e  
           John-nom Mary – acc see - perf – agr  
           ‘John has seen Mary.’

- b. jon- e    mari -k    dekha   n - a -i  
 John-nom Mary - acc see   neg -be - agr  
 'John has not seen Mary'.

Tamuly (1999) states that when a positive sentence as in (4:22a) undergoes sentential negation, the main verb in the positive sentence takes the status of an *adnominal* as in (4:22b). In which case the negative morpheme prefixes to the copular *as* 'be'.

From our observation of sentential negation, in Assamese (L1) and English (L2) we find that the negative element *not* and the negative morpheme *n-* have the following properties as shown in (4:23) below:

4:23	English	Assamese
	a) <i>not</i> is a free word, an adverb	a) <i>n-</i> is a bound morpheme
	b) <i>not</i> contracts and the enclitic - <i>n't</i> attaches to the auxiliary	b) <i>n-</i> prefixes to a tensed verb
	c) negation contraction optional	

From (4:23), we find that the negative element *not* may contract to form the enclitic *-n't* and then attach itself to the auxiliary verb *do* on I. In Assamese, the negative morpheme *n-* prefixes to the tensed verb and the verbal complex moves to the corresponding projections in the IP to check the strong tense (TP) and agreement (AgrP) features for Full Interpretation. Head to head movement takes place in the derivation of negative sentences in both the languages. Movement of a category, according to the Minimalist Program takes place because of strong features of the concerned heads in the clause structure. For an

L2 learner, the rule of negation contraction is a marked feature that has to be learnt.

The set of jumbled negative sentences given to the subjects is shown in (4:24) below:

- 4:24 a. eat apple not Mary an did  
b. see duck did Mary a not  
c. sleeping not I in the class am  
d. not Mary give John to a book did  
e. not you come here will  
f. eat not fried food do  
h. rain not go do in the

Our analysis of the jumbled sentences in Task 2 shows that the participants from both the mediums had no problem in handling this exercise. The participants were able to place the negative element *not* and the auxiliary verbs *be* and *do* in the right sequence; except for one participant from Donbosco (class 8), who dropped the dummy verb *do* while rearranging the word order of the jumbled sentences in (4:24a) and (4:24b). The problem sentences are shown in (4:25) below:

- 4:25a Mary not eat an apple.  
b. Mary not saw a duck.

This problem was identified in a learner with nearly 8 years of exposure of English. In all likelihood this may be a performance lapse on the part of the

participant. But we cannot rule out that there may be some influence of literal translation i.e., the L1 interference. These problems are identified in the first two sentences of the set, the rest of the jumbled sentences are arranged in the right order. In section 4.2.3, we have observed that researchers like, Epstein et al (1993), Meisel et al (1981), White (1992) and Grondin and White (1996), argue that if the language learners show evidence of using a category, although not necessarily using it consistently, it suggests that the category is present in the grammar and that other factors are responsible for the inconsistent usage. In the lines of these researchers we assume that this problem arises due to the influence of the mother tongue. This problem we expect to find more on the participants from the Assamese medium schools rather in the English medium schools. We shall examine this problem in detail in section 4.5. In (4:23) we observed that the negative element *not* may contract to the enclitic form *-n't* and optionally affix it to the dummy verb *do*. In our analysis, we found that none of the participants from the three schools used the enclitic form while arranging the jumbled negative sentences in (4:24).

In this task three participants, two from Government Boys (class 7) and one from Donbosco (class 6) had problem with the pro-drop sentences in (4:24d) and (4:24e). See (4:26) below:

- 4:26a In the rain do not go out.  
b. Fried food do not eat.  
c. rain do not go out in the.

In (4:26a) the adjunct *in the rain* and in (4:26b) the object argument *fried food* is moved to the clause initial position. In (4:26c) the nominal *rain* is extracted



from the PP<sup>5</sup> and moved to the clause initial position. In English, the pro-drop phenomena is evident in imperative sentences, where the pronominal subject ‘you’ is obligatorily dropped. Pro-drop is a marked feature in English. See (4:27) below:

- 4:27 a. Do not go out in the rain.  
b. Do not eat fried food.

In Assamese pro-drop is an unmarked feature. The Assamese equivalent of these sentences are shown in (4:28) below:

- 4:28a. baraxun – ot olai na – za – b – a  
rain – loc out neg – go – fut – agr  
‘Do not go out in the rain.’
- b. bhoza bastu na – kha - b – a  
fried things neg – eat – fut – agr  
‘Do not eat fried food.’

If L1 grammar mediates the L2 acquisition process, the pro-drop phenomena should have helped the subjects in arranging the linear sequence of the negative

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<sup>5</sup> Most learners from Assamese medium schools have problem with placing the constituents within a DP and PP. This problem arises mainly because possessives like *amar* ‘our’ precedes a nominal and the classifiers like *tu, khon* follows it and postpositions are marked by the Locative case marker. Literal translation of the English sentences leads to this kind of problem.

sentences. But the ill-formed sentences in (4:26) belie this fact. The participants know the subject position in English has to be obligatorily filled. The problem in (4:27) is that of overgeneralization. In (4:26a) and (4:26b) the PP *in the rain* and the NP *fried food* are moved to the clause initial position. In (4:26c) only the noun *rain* is moved to the clause initial position.

The participant from Donbosco, with nearly 6 years of exposure to English has the same problem as the participants from the Government Boys who have 2-3 years of exposure to the target language. If errors as in (4:26a) and (4:26b) continue even after six years of exposure to the target language, then this problem has to be an individual learner problem. If it is not so then, it has to be a problem of the environment in which the learner learns / acquires English. In case of the participants from Government Boys, the second assumption holds true. We have observed in chapter One, that the L2 learners in the Assamese medium schools hardly get to hear English. What they get to hear of English is literal translation of the text. Without constant interaction in the target language, the learners have to work out the possible grammatical constructions from whatever evidence they get from the limited input. A lack of adequate input and also of constant exposure to the target language leads to problems as in (4:26c).

#### **4.4 Analysis of the direct wh- and yes-no questions**

In this section, we are going to analyze the data collected from the main task. For the main task, three production tasks were given to the participants. From these tasks we wanted to find out at what level of the acquisition process, the functional category CP is available in the L2 grammar of the participants. The three production tasks mentioned in section (4.3.1) are repeated here in (4:29) below.

- 4:29        a) arrangement of jumbled words in the right word order  
              b) eliciting questions from pictures  
              c) filling in gaps of incomplete questions

#### **4.4.1 Arrangement of Jumbled Words in the Right Word Order**

As in the preliminary test in (4.3), the participants had to rearrange the jumbled words in the linear order of direct *wh-* and *yes-no* questions in English. The task was divided into three sets of questions. Task1a, on direct *wh-* questions, Task1b on direct *yes-no* questions (positive) and Task 1c on direct *yes-no* questions (negative). From Task 1a, we wanted to find out if the participants could place the subject, object and adjunct question words in the clause initial position and the auxiliary verb / modal to the immediate right of the *wh-* word. From Task 2a we wanted to find out if the rule of auxiliary movement was consistent amongst the participants, and from Task1c, we wanted to find out if the participants used the enclitic form *-n't* while forming the negative *yes-no* questions.

##### **4.4.1.1 Task 1a. Direct *wh-* questions**

Our analysis of Task1a shows that the participants had no problem in arranging the words of the sentences with subject and the object (direct) *wh-* words in the right order (see Appendix). In (4:30), we have the sentences that the participants had problem in arranging in the linear order of a direct *wh-* question in English. See (4:30) below:

- 4:30a did come when John?  
      b. John bring for whom did a book?  
      c. book to whom give a John did?

In (4:30a), the question word *when* is an adjunct. In (4:30b) the question word *who* is an indirect object and (4:30c) the question word *whom* is an indirect object. In arranging these sentences we wanted to find out if the participants knew about the asymmetry between the subject and the object wh- words *who* / *whom*. We also wanted to find out if and at what level the rule of preposition stranding is available in the L2 learners. In our analysis of the data we found that the participants had problems of the following kind:

- a) adjunct question words like *when* placed in its base generated position
- b) participants were not aware of the subject / object asymmetry
- c) problem of auxiliary inversion

The first two problems are related to operator movement and the third problem to the head to head movement. The first problem was observed in one of the participants from Government Boys (class 7). See (4:31) below:

4:31. John did come when?

Sentences as in (4:31) are evident in the early grammar of child L1 learners too. Occasional questions (cf. de Villiers et al 1978) are evident in the early grammar of child L1 learners. The examples in (4:32) are from de Villiers et al (p.105)

- 4:32 a. Who is singing?
- c. She is going where?
- b. He is doing what?
- d. They are leaving when?

Based on evidence of this kind, researchers have argued that in the early grammar of the child L1 learner, functional projections like CP are not available. Hyams (1994) argues that children begin with minimal as well as with maximal projections, that is IP and CP. Evidence for this comes from the child's use of the null argument<sup>6</sup>. If a certain constituent, say a complementizer is missing it 'largely depends on the selectional properties of particular verbs' (p.45). Hyams states that selectional properties must be learned. Going back to our problem sentence in (4:31) we find that the participant fails to move the adjunct *when* not because the functional projection CP is not available in his L2 grammar but due to lack of interaction in the target language. In fact the ill-formed sentence in (4:31) is a result of literal translation. We have mentioned in section 1.4.2 that in the Assamese medium schools there is more of Assamese than English in the L2 classroom.

The second problem i.e., the subject – object wh- word asymmetry was found in majority of the participants. These participants were from the Government Boys and Donbosco. Came up with constructions as in (4:33) below:

- 4:33 a. Who did bring a book for John?  
b. Who did bring for John a book?

The participants from AVS (class 5 – 11) could arrange the jumbled words in (4:30b) in the linear order of a direct *yes-no* question as shown in (4:34) below:

4:34. Who did John bring a book for?

Comparing the well-formed sentence in (4:33) and the ill-formed ones in (4:34) it is evident that the participants had problem in identifying the status of the wh word *who*. They mistook *who* to be a subject wh- word and not an indirect object wh- word. This kind of problem is evident in child L1 acquisition also. Stromswold (1995) states this problem arises mainly because of the subject – object asymmetries (see foot note 2). The asymmetry between subject and object wh- words is an idiosyncratic feature of the language that must be learnt. We found that apart from the problem of subject – object asymmetry, the participants from the Government Boys and Donbosco had problems with the preposition *to* in (4:30c). See (4:35) below:

4:35 Whom did John give a book?

In (4:35) the preposition *to* is dropped. This problem was found mostly amongst the participants from Government Boys (class7 – 10). In present day English it is natural to use the wh- word *who* for indirect objects. The wh- word *who* is in wider use and is considered acceptable by native speakers. Whenever the indirect object *whom* is used, a verb or a preposition precedes it. The linear word order of the jumbled sentence in (4:30c) is as shown in (4:36) below:

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<sup>6</sup> Hyams (1994) states in pro-drop languages like Spanish & Italian, the null subjects move to the [Spec-IP]. In languages like German, Dutch and English, the null subject moves to the [Spec-CP]. This provides evidence that CP is available in the early grammar of English child L1 learners.

4:36 To whom did John give a book?

In the jumbled sentence (4:30c) we used the interrogative pronoun *whom* and not *who* as in (4:30b) to find out if the participants did know where to position the preposition *to* in (4:30c) and *for* in (4:30b). In case of the jumbled sentence in (4:30b) most of the participants did not know the asymmetry between the subject and object wh- word *who*. This led to problems as in (4:34). In case of (4:30c), the learners identified *whom* as an indirect wh-word, but did not know where to position the preposition *to*. In fact one of the participants from Government Boys (class 9) used the formal *whom* instead of *who* for the jumbled sentence (4:30b). See (4:37) below:

4:37 For whom did John bring a book?

These problem sentences provide evidence that the quality of the input is questionable. This is true of the participants from Government Boys and Donbosco. The third problem of auxiliary inversion is shown in (4:38) below:

- 4:38 a. Why you are angry?  
b. Where Mary will meet John?  
c. Where has gone Mary?

The sentences in (4:38) were found in the participants from Government Boys (class 7). Hyams (1994) states that the early grammar of child L1 learners show that they do not move the auxiliary verb<sup>7</sup> from I to C in direct wh-question. This is a cross-linguistic phenomenon. In (4:39) we have examples of direct – wh questions of English speaking children. The examples in (4:39) is from Hyams (1994: 5)

4:39a. What he can ride in?

- b. Which way they should go?
- c. Where the other Joe will go?

Sentences like (4:39) have made researchers argue that the functional category C and its projection CP is not available in the early grammar of the L1 learners. If available it comes in different stages. Hyams argues: “English speaking children do invert the auxiliary systematically in *yes-no* questions. This provides *prima facie* evidence that children do have a functional projection above the subject in Spec-IP, namely COMP” (p.27). In section 4.4.1.2 on the basis of our analysis of Task1b on *yes-no* questions we will find out if the same holds true for the L2 learners of English.

Going back to the problem sentences in (4:38), we find that in (4:38c) the entire verbal group is moved to the immediate right of the verb. This sentence was found in the participants from the Government Boys. The ill-formed sentence in (4:38c) is a result of literal translation. In Assamese, tense and aspectual markers normally get affixed to the main verb as in (4:40) below:



4:40 mari koloi go – is – il – e  
Mary where go – perf – pst – agr  
'Where has Mary gone?'

The English teacher while giving word to word translation of the English words in Assamese do not explain the difference in the formation of the verbal complex in the target language. During our interaction with the participants, we found that in the Assamese class too, the teachers do not give any explicit explanation on the grammatical rules involved in structures as in (4:40). Lack of interaction in the target language is the reason for such a construction.

#### 4.4.1.2 Analysis of Task1b

Hyams (1994) in support of the presence of the functional category C and its projection the CP, argues that in *yes-no* questions child learners systematically move the auxiliary verb from the I head to the C head. Our analysis of the *yes-no* sentences also show that the participants had placed the auxiliary verb in the clause initial position i.e. the C head.

As in Task1a, a set of jumbled sentences, were read out to the participants in this task (see Appendix 1). The participants had to arrange the words in the linear sequence of a direct *yes-no* question in English. Almost all the participants were able to arrange the jumbled sentences in the right word order. The participants had no problem in placing the auxiliary verb in the

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<sup>7</sup> Klima & Bellugi (1967) were the first to observe that English-speaking children go through a stage in the development of questions in which they front the *wh-* word but fail to invert the auxiliary. The examples in (4:43) are cited by Hyams from Klima & Bellugi (1967).

clause initial position. However the learners had the following problems: (i) placing the determiner in the right position, (ii) placing the direct and indirect object arguments in the right word order and (iii) accurate use of the tense form

The problem sentences are shown in (4:41) below:

- 4:41 a . Did Mary give a book John?  
b. Did Mary gave a book to John?  
c. Did Mary saw a duck?  
d. Did Mary ate an apple?

The problem sentence in (4:41a) was observed in the participants from the Government Boys (class 7) and those in (4:41b-d) were found in the data of the participants from Donbosco. In our analysis of the preliminary task and Task 1a, we have observed the participants from Government Boys had problems with di-transitive constructions. In (4:41), the problem is with the arrangement of the direct and indirect object arguments. In our previous analysis we have observed that the participants from Donbosco had problems in using the correct tense form, the same problem is observed in the ill-formed sentences in (4:41b) to (4:41d).

#### **4.4.1.3 Analysis of Task1c.**

In our analysis of the preliminary Task2 in section 4.3.2, we had observed that none of the participants had used the enclitic *-n't* while arranging the words in the linear order of a negative sentence (see Appendix2). In this task we want to find out if the participants use the enclitic *-n't* or not. Our analysis shows that none of the participants from Government Boys use the enclitic form. The

participants from AVS and Donbosco used the enclitic *-n't* but not systematically. In (4:42) below:

4:42	Donbosco	AVS
	class 5	class 7
	class 7	
	class 10	

In (4:42) we find that the participants from Donbosco from classes 5, 7 and 10 used the enclitic *-n't*, while in AVS only the participants from class 7 used it. It was also observed that the participants used the enclitic *-n't* with the auxiliary verb *be* and the dummy verb *do* but not with the auxiliary verb *have* or the modal *will*. In the sentences where the contracted form was not used the negative element *not* was placed in its base generated position as in (4:43)

- 4:43 a. Did you not touch my book?  
b. Have you not seen my car?  
c. Will you not be late?

The participants from Government Boys (class 7) did not attempt this task. The participants from (class 9 and 10) placed the negative element *not* to the immediate right of the auxiliary verb / modal as shown in (4:44).

- 4:44 a. Did not you touch my book?  
b. Have not you seen my car?  
c. Will not you be late?

One of the participants from Donbosco (class 8), came up with constructions as in (4:44). The ill formed sentences in (4:44) show that the negative element *not* is raised in its full form. Comparing (4:43) and (4:44), we find that the participants from the English medium schools do not move the negative element *not* from its base generated position. The sentences in (4:44) are not grammatical but one thing is evident from these ill-formed sentences; the participants somehow know that the negative element moves to adjoin itself to the auxiliary verb. What they don't know is that when the negative element *not* moves out of its base generated form it takes the shape of the enclitic *-n't*. In section 4.3.2, we have observed negation contraction is optional in English (see 4:23). It is a marked feature that must be learnt. Adequate input and interaction in the target language are needed to know the marked features of a target language. We know this does not happen in the Assamese medium schools. Let us find out why there is a sporadic use of the enclitic *-n't* amongst the participants from Donbosco and AVS. One possible reason would be that the participants know that negation contraction is optional in English so they use both the forms i.e., *not* and *-n't* alternatively. If that is so why didn't the participants from the senior classes from AVS use the enclitic form? While reading out the task no instruction was given to use the enclitic *-n't*. Those who used the enclitic form *-n't* did it spontaneously. This spontaneous response was found more in the participants from the intermediate level (class 6 – 8) than in the participants from the senior level (class 9 –11). At the senior classes in most likelihood the learners are conscious of the formal instructions they receive in the classroom.

#### 4.4.2 Analysis of Task 2

In this task, the participants had to elicit direct *wh-* and *yes- no* questions by looking at a painting. A word list was provided to the participants. The list

contained words of the characters and objects present in the painting. The list is shown in (4:45) below:

4:45. Wh- words	Nouns	Verbs	Preposition	Articles
who	baby	climb	on	a / an
what	books	doing	in	the
who(m)	bottle	is	from	
where	corner	did		
how	floor	are		
why	chest of drawers	do		
when		open		
		hanging		

Before the participants worked on the task, the researcher discussed the painting with them. They were asked to select words from the given list and to frame direct *wh-* questions and *yes-no* questions. In (4:46) we have the data of the participants from Government Boys (class7):

- 4:46a. Where is the baby?  
b. What is that?  
c. here is baby's book?  
d. What do the baby on the drawer?

In (4:47) we have the data of the participants from Donbosco (class 3 - 5).

- 4:47a. Where is the baby?  
b. To whom does the baby belong?  
c. When did the baby climbed up?

- d. Why does the baby climb?
- e. How does the baby climb?
- f. What is the baby doing?
- g. How did the baby got into the room?

Comparing the two sets of data, we find that the participants from both the schools use the auxiliary verb *be* and the dummy verb *do* to form the questions. The participants from Government Boys use more of the auxiliary verb *be*, while those from Donbosco, use more of the dummy verb *do*. The ill formed sentence in (4:46d) show the participants use the main verb *do* as a dummy verb. The expected structure of (4:46d) is as shown in (4:48) below:

4:48 What is the baby doing on the drawer?

The ill formed sentence in (4:46b) shows that the participants from Government Boys move the main verb *do* to the I head. The problem the participants from Donbosco have is in the use of the correct tense form as in (4:47d) and (4:47e). One thing is noticeable, the participants from Donbosco use words not given in the list. The phrasal verb *climb up* is one such example. Most of the participants from Donbosco and AVS used words that were not given in the word list in (4:45).

In both the sets (4:46) and (4:47), the participants use object wh- words *what*, *whom* and adjunct wh- words *why*, *how*, *when*, *where* to frame the wh- questions. Stromswold (1995) states that questions as in (4:46b) are routine questions and they cannot be considered as a question proper. In section 4.4.1.1, we had observed that the participants had problem in arranging the jumbled sentences with indirect objects (see 4:30). In (4:47b) we find that participants from the beginner level are able to frame questions with the wh-

phrase *to whom*. From evidence in (4:47b), we find that the even if the language learners does not use a category consistently it does not indicate that that particular linguistic item is not present in the learner (cf. Epstein et al (1993), Meisel et al (1981), White (1992) and Grondin and White (1996)).

In (4:49) we have the problem sentences found in the participants from Donbosco (classes 6 –10).

- 4:49a. How did the baby climbed?  
b. How did the baby reached the top?  
c. Why the bottle is kept there?  
d. Whom does this room belong to?

The sentences in (4:49) show that the participants had problems with the use of the correct tense form, auxiliary inversion and preposition stranding. The uses of tense as in (4:49a) and (4:49b), preposition stranding as in (4:49d) have to be learnt. From (4:49c) we assume it is a performance error problem.

Let us now examine the problems found in the data of the participants from the Government Boys. See (4:50) below:

- 4:50a. How can she climb on the chest of drawers?  
b. What ~~did~~ does the baby find in that box?  
c. Where does the baby climb?  
d. How does the baby climb?

The problem sentences in (4:50) show that the participants from Government Boys had problems in choosing the right auxiliary verb in (4:50a) and in the use of the correct tense form as in (4:50 b – d). So far in our analysis, we have come across errors in the use of tenses in the data of the participants from Donbosco. In (4:53 c - e) we find that the participants from the Government Boys, too, have tense problems. The ill-formed sentence in (4:50a) is a result of literal translation. See (4:51) below:

4:51 tai kenekoi chest of drawarsar upor - at boga - bo par- is-e  
she how chest of drwers top – loc climb – infin can- perf –agr  
How did she climb on the chest of drawers?  
( lit: How can she climb on the chest of drawers?)

In our analysis of the data of the participants from Government Boys, we have seen that lack of interaction in the target language has been the main hurdle in the L2 acquisition process. In our analysis of Task 3 we will see if the same holds true in this exercise too.

#### **4.4.3 Analysis of Task 3**

In Task 3, the participants were given five short passages (see Appendix 3). In each of these passages there were words missing from the interrogative sentences. The participants had to read the passages and find the clue for the missing words from the passage. The contexts of the passages were daily events and situations where one has to make queries for information and communication. The participants were instructed to complete the incomplete interrogative sentences in (4:52) to (4:56) with appropriate words. The passage would provide clue of the right words. In (4:52) to (4:56, the underlined words had to be filled in.



**Passage 1**

- 4:52 a. What are you looking for?  
b. Where did you find it?

**Passage 2.**

- 4:53a. Is the train on time?  
b. When will the train arrive?

**Passage 3.**

- 4:54a. Why are you crying?  
b. Where is your home?  
c. Will you take me home?

**Passage 4**

- 4:55a. Can I have a glass of water?  
b. Will you have a glass of Pepsi?

**Passage 5**

- 4:56 a. What are you doing?  
b. How are you?  
c. Don't you recognize me?  
d. What have you done to yourself?

The analysis of the task showed that the participants had problem with the right choice of auxiliary verb, resorted to literal translation and could not interpret some of the passages. The first problem was cited in the data of the participants from Government Boys and Donbosco. The participants from Government Boys (class 9) came up with the sentences as in (4:57a) and the participant from Donbosco (class 8) came up with the sentences as in (4:57b).

4:57a Does the train on time?

- b. Will the train on time?

The ill-formed sentences in (4:57) are in response to the *yes-no* question in (4:53a) Grammatically, these sentences are not acceptable. From the acquisition point of view we can say that the participants are aware that the verb (in this case the main verb) must move obligatorily to the clause initial

position. But their choice of the verb leads to the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (4:57). This problem again points to the fact that lack of exposure and inadequate input create problem of this kind.

In our analysis of the data so far we have observed that the participants resort to literal translation. In our analysis of Task 3, we came across the same problem. See (4:58) below:

4:58a Can you recognize me?

b. Will you give me a glass of water?

c. Would you give me a glass of water?

The ill- formed sentence in (4:58a) is in response to (4:56c), those in (4:58b) and (4:58c) are in response to (4:55a). The sentence in (4:58a) is a literal translation of the sentence in (4:59) below:

4:59 tumi mo – k sini – bo par – is -a ne n - a – i  
you me –acc know – infin can – perf – agr or neg – be – agr  
'Can you recognize me?'

The sentences in (4:58b) and (4:58c) are literal translation of the Assamese sentence in (4:60) below:

4:60. (apuni) mo - k pani e- gilás di – bo ne ki  
you me – acc water one – glass give – fut or what  
'Will you give me a glass of water?'

The third problem that of interpretation, was found in most of the participants from the three schools. In (4:61) below, we have the problem sentences from Passage 3.

4:61a Please take me home.

- b. Give me a glass of water.
- c. Give me a glass of Pepsi

The declarative sentence in (4:61a) was found in one participant from Government Boys (class 9) and in one participant from AVS (class 9). The one in (4:61b) was observed in two participants from Government Boys (classes 7 and 9) and the one in (4:61c) was observed in one participant from Government Boys (class 9).

Most of the participants from the three schools had problem in interpreting the negative *yes-no* question in Passage5 i.e., (4:56c). Only one participant (class 10), from Government Boys came up with the expected construction as in (4:56c). Five participants (class 7 – 10) from Donbosco and four from AVS (class 5 – 8) came up with the negative *yes-no* question as in (4:56c). All of them used the enclitic form - *n'*. However, one participant from AVS (class 11) used the negative element *not* instead of the enclitic - *n'*. See (4:62) below:

4:62 Did you not recognize me?

The rest of the participants came up with a positive *yes-no* question as in (4:63) below:

4:63a Do you recognize me?

b. Did you recognise me?

Besides the problem of interpretation, two participants from Donbosco (classes 8 and 10) had problems with the tense form as in (4:63b). Two participants from Donbosco (classes 7 and 10) used the modal *can* in place of the dummy verb *do* for the negative *yes-no* contraction as in (4:64) below:

4:64 Can't you recognize me?

In Passage 1 i.e., in the sentence (4:52b), participants from Donbosco (class 10) used the question word *how* in place of *where*. See (4:65) below:

4:65 How did you find it?

One participant from AVS (class 11) used *could* (past tense) in place of *can* in the incomplete sentence in (4:54a). See (4:66) below:

4:66 Could I have a glass of water?

From the same school, a participant from class 5, used the past tense form of the modal *will* (4:54b). See (4:67) below:

4:67 Would you like to have a glass of Pepsi?

In (4:66) and (4:67), in the past tense form of the modal *will* and *can* gives it a formal interpretation. In (4:58c), a participant from Government Boys used the past tense form of the modal *will*. This is another instance of interpretation, in case of the AVS participants the interpretation is within the context, in case of the participant from Government Boys, the problem arises not from the interpretation but from the literal translation.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

In section 4.0, we had mentioned that our objective was to find out at what level the functional category C and its projection are available in the grammar of the L2 learners. Our study showed that the functional category C and its projection CP is available in the early grammar of the projections are available in the early grammar of the L2 learners. The presence of the CP in the early grammar provides evidence that UG operates independently in the L2 acquisition process. We have evidence of the presence of UG in the L2 acquisition process from the problem sentences in (4:27). We have seen that the participants from Government Boys are exposed to degenerate input, yet they under-determine the L2 acquisition process. The degree of success of the participants from the three schools vary because of the relative dominance of the mother tongue {L1}, the teaching / learning environment and the quality of input available adversely affect the L2 acquisition process. Lack of quality input leads to problems like fossilization and overgeneralization.

## Chapter Five

### Acquisition of Finite Complement Clauses

#### 5.0 Introduction

In chapter Four, we had examined the data relating to the acquisition of the direct *wh-* and *yes-no* questions. In this chapter we shall examine the acquisition of the finite complement clauses. From our analysis of the data in chapter Four, we had observed that the functional category C and CP is available in the early grammar of the L2 learners. This we found in the participants, from the three schools namely, Government Boys, Donbosco and the AVS. In this chapter, we shall examine the acquisition of the finite complement clauses. We shall continue with this study on the same assumptions we made in section 4.0, that the L2 acquisition process is mediated through the L1 grammar; alternatively the L2 acquisition process operates independently. In this study we will examine the acquisition of the [+declarative] finite complement clause and the [+wh] finite complement clause. The chapter is divided as follows: in section 5.1, we shall examine the parametric differences between the Assamese and English [ $\pm$  wh] finite complement clauses. In section 5.2, we shall discuss on how we went for the data collection. In section 5.3 we shall analyze the data of the [+ declarative] finite complement clauses. In section 5.4, we shall analyze the data of the [+ wh] finite complement clauses. In section 5.5 we shall conclude by making certain observation on the L2 acquisition process in a formal set-up.

## 5.1 Finite Complement Clauses

In chapter One, section 1.1 in our discussion of the input problems in L1 acquisition we had observed that the complementizer *that* is optional in a variety of structures in English (cf: White 1989). We repeat the examples in (1:3) and (1:5) here as (5:1) and (5:2) below:

5:1a I think that John is a fool.

b. I think John is a fool.

5:2a. Who do you think that Mary met yesterday?

b. Who do you think Mary met yesterday?

The examples in (5:1) are declarative sentences, in (5:2) interrogative sentences. In each of these examples the complementizer *that* is optional. There are however sentences in which the deletion of the complementizer *that* is obligatory (cf: White 1989). We repeat (1:6) here as (5:3) below.

5:3a Who do you think arrived yesterday?

b. \* Who do you think that arrived yesterday?

The interrogative sentences in (5:3) show that the complementizer *that* is obligatorily dropped when the subject wh- word *who* of the lower clause moves to the left periphery of the complex structure as in (5:3a). However, when the object wh- word *who* is moved from the lower clause (5:2) there is no such restrictions. In (5:2) the complementizer *that* is optionally present when the object wh- word *who* moves from the lower clause to the [Spec-CP] position of the matrix clause. The examples in (5.2) and (5:3) are instances of subject – object asymmetry. In chapter Four, we saw that the subject- object asymmetry of the wh – word *who* in root clauses, occurs because the subject

wh- word *who* does not undergo overt movement. The complex sentences in (5:2) and (5:3) show that though the subject and object wh- word *who* moves to the [Spec-CP] of the matrix clause, the asymmetry between the subject and object wh- word *who* is because of the restriction on the presence of the complementizer *that*. The examples in (5:2) and (5:3) are instances of long-distance extraction of subject (5:3) and object (5:2) wh- words. Having looked at the [ $\pm$  wh] finite complement clauses in English, we now move onto examine the [ $\pm$  wh] finite complement clauses in Assamese.

### 5.1.2 Finite Complement Clauses in Assamese

In chapter Two, we had observed that [+ declarative] finite complement clauses have two complementizer particles *ze* and *buli*. We repeat (2:1a) and (2:7a) in (5:4) and (5:6) below.

5:4 riju – e    zan – e    ze    rima    ah – ib – o  
      Riju – nom know – agr    that Rima come – fut – agr  
      ‘ Riju knows that Rima will come.’

5:5 rima    ah – ib – o    buli    riju – e    zan – e  
      Rima come – fut – agr    that Riju – nom know – agr  
      ‘ Riju knows that Rima will come.’

In both the sentences, the English equivalent has the same reading (see gloss). In our discussion of the finite complement clauses in chapter Two, we had observed that the sentences as in (5:4) are used when a statement is made and the sentences as in (5:5) are used for focussing reasons. Unlike the English [+ declarative] finite complement clauses in (5:1), in Assamese, the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* have to be obligatorily present. The ill-



formed sentences, in (5:6), indicates the obligatoriness of the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli*.

5:6a \* riju – e      zan – e      rima    ah – ib – o  
        Riju – nom know – agr Rima come – fut – agr

b. \* rima    ah – ib – o      riju – e      zan – e  
        Rima    come – fut – agr Riju – nom know – agr

In English, the [+wh] finite complement clauses may optionally allow the complementizer *that* to be present as in (5:2) or obligatorily drop the complementizer *that* as in (5:3). In Assamese, we find that the complementizer particle *ze* is not compatible with *wh-* (*k-*) words. We repeat (2:9) in (5:7) below:

5:7 riju – e    zan – e      kon    ah – ib – o  
        Riju – nom know – agr who come – fut – agr  
        ‘Riju knows who will come.’

When the complementizer *ze* is overt, the sentence is ill-formed. We repeat (2:8) as (5:8) below:

5:8 \* riju – e    zan – e      ze    kon    ah – ib – o  
        Riju – nom know – agr that who come – fut – agr

The complementizer *buli*, a quotative, is infinitival. The quotative *buli* normally does not co-occur with a *k-* word. However, certain matrix verbs like *ko* ‘say’, subcategorize only for a [+wh] *buli* - CP. Finite verbs like *ko* and *buli*

are synonyms, the quotative undergoes a CP /TP merger (cf: Dasgupta 1990) and the k-word in the lower clause gets a wide scope reading. See (5:9) below:

5:9    kon    ah – ib – o    buli    ma – e   ko – is – e  
       who    come – fut – agr    that mother – agr    say – perf – agr  
       ‘Who did mother say will come?’  
       (lit: ‘Who has mother said will come?’)

Interrogative sentences in Assamese do not have an overt complementizer in the C head. In other words, interrogative sentences in Assamese normally have a null particle in the C head as in (5:7). The null-Prt CPs give narrow scope reading. See (5:10) below.

5:10a. ma – e    xudh – is – e    riju – e    rima – k    ki    di – l – e  
       mother – nom    ask – perf – agr    Riju – nom    Rima – dat    what    give – past – agr  
       ‘Mother has asked what Riju gave to Rima.’

b.    ma – e    xudh – is – e    riju – e    kak    kitap – khon    di – l – e  
       mother – nom    ask – perf – agr    Riju – nom    what    book – cl    give – past – agr  
       ‘Mother has asked who did Riju give the book to.’  
       ‘ Mother has asked to whom did Riju give the book.’

c.    ma – e    xudh – is – e    kon – e    rima – k    kitap – khon    di – l – e  
       mother – nom    ask – perf – agr    who – nom    Rima – dat    book – cl    give – past – agr  
       ‘Mother has asked who gave the book to Rima.’

To get wide scope reading, the [+wh] finite complement clause must obligatorily have the quotative *buli* present as in (5:9). We look into some more [+wh] *buli* – CP examples in (5:11) below.

5:11a. *ma-e bhab-is-e riju-e rima-k ketiya log-pa-is-il-e*  
 mother-nom think-perf-agrRiju-nom Rima-acc when meet-get-perf-past-agr

‘Mother is thinking when Riju met Rima.’

b. *riju-e rima-k ketiya log-pa-is-il-e buli*  
 Riju-nom Rima-acc when meet-get-perf-past-agr that  
*ma-e bhab-is-e*  
 mother-nom think-peragr

‘When does mother think Riju met Rima?’

In (5:9) we had mentioned that finite verbs like *ko* ‘say’ subcategorise only the [+wh] *buli*-CP. In (5:11) we find that finite verbs like *bhab* ‘think’ can subcategorise a null-Prt CP as in (5:11a) as well as the [+wh] *buli*-CP as in (5:11b). In (5:11a) we get a narrow scope reading and in (5:11b) we get a wide scope reading.

The parametric differences between the English (L2) finite complement clauses and the Assamese (L1) finite complement clauses are as enumerated below:

- a) the complementizer *that* is optional in [+declarative] finite complement clauses in English, while the complementizer particles *ze* and *buli* are obligatory in Assamese

- b) the complementizer *that* is optional in [+wh] finite complement clause in English, but when the subject wh- word is extracted from the lower clause the complementizer *that* is obligatorily dropped. Whereas in Assamese, the complementizer particle *ze* is obligatorily dropped. The complementizer particle *buli* is obligatorily present in a [+wh] finite complement clause to give it a wide scope reading.
- c) unlike the direct wh- questions in root clauses, in [+wh] finite complement clauses, both the subject and object wh- words can be extracted from the lower clause;
- d) in a wh- insitu language like Assamese, there is no overt movement of the question words. In [+wh] finite complement clauses, the question words move to the [Spec-CP] of the lower clause when there is a null particle in the [+wh] C head; in constructions where the complementizer *buli* is present in the [+wh] C head, question word moves to the [Spec-CP] of the matrix clause. In both cases the movement takes place at LF.

Earlier in Chapter Four, we had observed that mismatch between the L1 and L2 grammars make the acquisition process slower. This we found to be true for the participants from Government Boys and to some extent for the participants from Donbosco. In our analysis of the data in this chapter too we expect to find that the marked differences between the L1 and L2 grammars affect the acquisition process.

## 5.2 Data Collection

In Chapter Four, we had to devise production tasks that would not make extra demands on the student performance ability. This we did keeping in mind the situation in which the L2 learners from the Assamese medium schools are

exposed to the target language. Our analysis of the data showed that the functional projection CP is available in the early grammar of the participants. The differences in the result were mainly because of the difference in the teaching / learning situations of these schools. Our analysis of the data showed that the participants did not violate the word order of their L2 grammar. They resorted to their L1 only when there was a mismatch between the L1 and the L2 grammar. This problem was found mainly in the participants from Government Boys and to a large extent in the participants from Donbosco. Amongst the participants of AVS the influence of L1 was found to be sporadic.

In the previous chapter most of the production tasks involved arrangement of jumbled sentences in the right word order. In our data collected on the [+ declarative] finite complement clauses we gave a similar production task. The participants were given a set of jumbled words that they had to arrange in the linear sequence of a [+declarative] finite complement clause. Production Task 4, on [+ declarative] finite complement clauses was given to the participants from the three schools as enlisted in (4:10). We continued with the same set of participants for this cross-sectional study primarily because we found that the functional projection CP is available in the early grammar of the L2 learners. We proceeded with this argument: if the CP is available in the early grammar and if UG operates independently, the participants would be able to place the complementizer *that* in its base generated position in the complex structure. In section 5.1, we have noted that in the L1 grammar the complementizer particle *ze* occurs to the left of the embedded clause. In other words, the [Spec-CP] position is its base generated position. The quotative *buli* occurs to the right of the embedded clause, in other words, in the C head which is its base generated position. If UG does not operate independently, we expect to find the participants place the complementizer *that* in either of the positions

while arranging the jumbled words in production Task 4. In order to ascertain that the participants know that the complementizer *that* is not obligatory in English [+ declarative] finite complement clauses, the participants were given a grammaticality judgement test. In production Task 5, the participants were given sets of [+ declarative] finite complement clauses, where the complementizer *that* was dropped in the first sentence and was retained in the second sentence. The participants had to judge whether the sentences were correct or not.

For collecting data on the [+wh] finite complement clauses, we gave the participants two tasks: Task 6, a grammatical judgement task and Task 7, a transformational task. These tasks were given mainly to find at what level the participants knew the idiosyncratic features of the [+wh] finite complement clauses. Through these tasks we wanted to see if the participants knew when the complementizer *that* had to be obligatorily dropped while extracting the wh- word. In the previous chapter, we had observed that most of the participants from Government Boys and some from Donbosco had problems with the extraction of the indirect object wh- word *who / whom*. Since complex constructions are introduced in the classroom from class 8 onwards, we included participants who had a minimum of one year to two years of exposure to the English complex constructions. For production task 6, we therefore collected data from the participants of class 9 to 11 from Government Boys, and class 9 and 10 from Donbosco. Our analysis of Task 2 had shown that the participants from AVS had not much problem with the subject / object asymmetry of the wh- word *who* and they were able to extract the indirect object *who / whom*. Keeping in mind these facts we decided to include participants from class 7 to 11 for the data collection for Tasks 6 and 7.

### 5.3 Analysis of the [+ declarative] Finite Complement Clause

In this section we shall examine the data of the [+declarative] finite complement clauses. We have mentioned in the previous section that two production tasks were given to the participants. In production Task 4 the participants had to rearrange the jumbled words in the linear sequence of a [+ declarative] finite complement clause. In production Task 5, the participants had to give their judgement on the grammaticality of the [+ declarative] finite complement clauses. Through this task, we wanted to find out if the participants had the knowledge that the complementizer *that* does not have to be obligatorily present in a complex construction unlike the Assamese complementizer particles *ze* and *buli*, which have to be obligatorily present in a [+ declarative] complex construction.

#### 5.3.1 Analysis of Task 4

Production task 4 included the following set of jumbled sentences shown in (5:12) below.

- 5:12a know come you will that I
- b. problem John has that heard Mary a
  - c. think John mad that is we
  - d. a gave saw I book John that Mary
  - e. told London mother that I should go

The expected word order of the sentences in (5:12) is as shown in (5:13) below:

- 5:13 a. I know that you will come.
- b. John heard that Mary has a problem.
  - c. We think that John is mad.
  - d. I saw that John gave Mary a book.
  - e. Mother told that I should go to London.

The complex sentences in (5:13) show that the matrix verbs are: *know, heard, think, saw* and *told*. In the lower clause the main verbs are *come, has, is, gave,* and *go,* and the modal auxiliaries are *will* and *should*. Through this task we want to find out if the participants are able to differentiate between the matrix verbs and the main verbs in the embedded clauses from the jumbled sentences.

We will analyse the jumbled sentences in (5:12) one at a time. Our analysis shows that the participants from Government Boys (class 7) came up with the following sentences as shown in (5:14) in response to (5:12a).

5:14a. You will know that I come.

b. I ~~know~~ will know ~~that~~ you come.

In both the ill-formed sentences, the auxiliary *will* is in the matrix clause. In (5:14a) the complementizer *that* conjoins the matrix and the lower clause. In (5:14b) the participant places the complementizer *that* between the matrix clause and the lower clause but strikes it off. The confusion in the participants is also evident in the choice of the pronominal subject. In (5:14a), *you* is placed in the subject position of the matrix clause and *I* in the subject position of the embedded clause. In chapter Four, we had observed that the participants resorted to literal translation when they were not able to arrange the jumbled sentences in the right word order. Let us find out if that is true for the ill-formed sentences in (5:14a) too.

5:15a \* tumi zan – ib – a      ze    moi ah – u  
          you know – fut – agr that    I come – agr



- b. \* tumi zan – ib – a buli moi ah – u  
you know – fut – agr that I come – agr

In (5:15a) the complementizer particle is *ze* and in (5:15b) the complementizer particle is *buli*. In chapter Two, we had observed that the complementizer *ze* occurs in the clause initial position and the complementizer *buli* in the clause final position of the embedded clause. The *ze*-CP has movement restrictions, whereas the *buli*-CP can move to the left periphery of the matrix clause. Keeping in mind these differences then in (5:15a) the first clause is the matrix clause and in (5:15b) the second clause is the matrix clause. But we find that both the constructions are bad in Assamese. From our evidence in (5:15), we find that the ill-formed sentence in (5:14a) is not a case of literal translation. The problem is lack of adequate input of the target language. The rest of the participants had no problem in arranging the jumbled sentence in (5:12a). Two participants from Donbosco (class 8) had some problem with the tense form. See (5:16) below:

5:16 I knew that you will come.

The complex sentence in (5:16) is otherwise well formed, but the jumbled sentence in (5:12a), has the matrix verb *know* in the simple present tense form.

Most of the participants from Government Boys from class 7 –10, had problems with the jumbled sentence in (5:12b). The responses of the participants are shown in (5:17) below.

- 5:17a. John heard that Mary has problem.  
b. John heard that Mary problem.  
c. John has heard that Mary has problem.

- d. John heard that Mary has problem.
- e. John has problem that Mary heard.

The ill-formed sentences in (5:17) show that the participants had problems with the use of the article in (5:15a-e), confusion between the main verb *have* and the auxiliary verb *have* leading to literal translation in (5:15c) and, extraposition of the embedded clause to the left periphery of the matrix clause in (5:15e). These problems arise because of the difference in the idiosyncratic features of the target language and the native language of the learners. We have already discussed the problem involved in the use of the articles in chapter Four. The problem in (5:15c) arises because the participant uses the finite verb *have* as an auxiliary in the matrix clause and as a main verb in the embedded clause. This problem is mainly because of the lack of interaction in the target language. This finally leads to literal translation of the jumbled sentence (see 5:18). The problem sentence in (5:17e) shows the embedded clause is extraposed to the left periphery of the matrix clause. Here we have an evidence of L1 influence. In Assamese *buli*-CP constructions, the embedded clause is obligatorily moved to the left of the matrix clause. The ill-formed sentence in (5:17e) has the following equivalent as shown in (5:18).

5:18 jon- ar oxubidha ho – is – e buli mari – e xun – is – e  
 John-gen problem be – perf – agr that Mary – nom hear – perf – agr  
 ‘Mary has heard that John has problem.’  
 ( lit: ‘John has problem that Mary heard.’)

The literal translation of (5:18) and the ill-formed sentence in (5:17e) are one and the same.

Amongst the participants from Donbosco, two participants had problems with the jumbled sentence in (5:12b). One from class 5 (5:19a), and, the other from class 8 (5:19b). See (5:19) below.

5:19a Mary has heard that John problem.

b. John has heard that problem of Mary.

In both the ill-formed sentences, the finite verb *have* is used as an auxiliary verb. In (5:19a) the embedded clause does not have verb. In (5:19b) we find that the participant rearranges the words in the linear sequence of a simplex construction. In (5:19b) we find that the participant adds the preposition *of* to give a complete sentence, whereas in (5:19a) the participant leaves the sentence incomplete. In both the ill formed sentences the article *a* is dropped. Most of the participants from Donbosco had problems with the indefinite article *a*. Among the participants from AVS, one from class 5, had problem with the use of the indefinite article. The rest of the participants had no problem in arranging the jumbled sentence in (5:12b), (see Appendix 3).

The participants from the three schools had no problem with the jumbled sentence in (5:12c). This was one construction, which all the participants got correct. In case of the jumbled sentence in (5:12d), we observed that the participants had the same problems with the ditransitive constructions in the production tasks given in chapter Four. See (5:20) below.

5:20a. I saw that Mary gave a book John.

b. Mary saw that I gave a book.

The problem sentences in (5:20) were observed in the data of two participants from Government Boys from class 7 and 9. In (5:20a) the

participant places the direct object *a book* before the indirect object *John*. In (5:20b) the participant drops the indirect object *John*. This we assume to be a performance error. In the jumbled sentence (5:12d), the preposition *to* is not present. This has led to the confusion amongst the participants. We observed the same problem amongst the participants from Donbosco class 5, 7 and 8. Unlike the participant from Government Boys, they added the preposition *to*. Amongst the participants of AVS, it was seen that all of them added the preposition *to* while rearranging the jumbled sentence in (5:12e). See (5:21) below.

5:21 I saw that John gave a book to Mary.

In case of the jumbled sentence in (5:12e), we observed that most of the participants dropped the preposition *to* while arranging the words. This was found mostly among the participants from Government Boys class 7 and 9 and Donbosco class 3 to 6. We have the problem sentences in (5:22) from the participants of Government Boys.

5:22a Mother told that I should go London.

b. Mother told that I will go London.

c. I should go London mother told.

d. I told that London mother should go.

In all the ill-formed sentences in (5:22) the preposition *to* is dropped. Besides that, we find that the modal *should* is replaced by the modal *will* (5:22b). In all likelihood the learners are exposed to the modal auxiliary *will* more often than *should*. In (5:22c) we find the embedded clause is extraposed to the left periphery of the matrix clause. The L1 equivalent of (5:22c) is as shown in (5:23) below.

5:22 moi london-loi za-bo lag-ib-o buli ma-e ko-is-il-e  
 I London- to go-infin must-fut-agr that mother-nom say-perf-pst-agr  
 ‘ Mother told that I should go to London.’

In (5:22) we have the Assamese equivalent of (5:13e). In Chapter Two, we had observed that the finite verb *ko* ‘say / tell’ subcategorises for a *buli*- CP and not for a *ze*- CP. With the *ze*-CP, the sentence is ill formed. See (5:23) below.

5:23 ? ma-e ko-is-il -e ze moi london-loi za-bo lag-ib-o  
 mother-nom say-perf-pst-agr that I London-to go-infin must-fut-agr

The Assamese sentences in (5:22) and (5:23) show that the participant resorts to his L1 knowledge in rearranging the jumbled sentences in (5:12e).

Amongst the participants from Donbosco, we found that the participants from the lower classes i.e., from class 5 and class 6 had also dropped the preposition *to* while rearranging the jumbled words in (5:12e). One of the participant from class 6 replaced the modal auxiliary *should* with *will*.

Our analysis of Task 4 showed that though most of the participants were able to arrange the jumbled sentences in the linear sequence of a complex sentence. They had problems with the idiosyncratic features of both their L1 and L2. These problems we know is due to the manner in which the parameter of the L2 is set as against the parameters of the L1. The problem with articles, preposition, and extraposition of the embedded clause is an influence of the L1

grammar. The problem with the main verb *have* and auxiliary verb *have* comes from the marked features of the L2 grammar. In English perfective is indicated when the finite verb *have* functions as an auxiliary verb. The dichotomy between the main verb *have* and the auxiliary verb *have* is not there in Assamese. In Assamese, perfective is marked by *-is* and the copular *ho / as* 'be' operate as the equivalent of the main verb *have*. In Chapter Four, we have dealt with it in detail.

### 5.3.2 Analysis of the Task 5

From Task 5, we wanted to find at what level of the acquisition process the participants are aware that the complementizer *that* is optional in the [+declarative] finite complement clauses in For Task 5, the participants were given the following set of sentences as shown in (5:24).

- 5:24a. I think John is a fool.
- b. I think that John is a fool.
  - c. We know Mary is the culprit.
  - d. We know that Mary is the culprit.
  - e. I know you will come.
  - f. I know that you will come.
  - g. I heard John was ill.
  - h. I heard that John was ill.

In this task, the participants had to judge whether the sentences were grammatically correct or not. Our analysis showed that the most of the participants from Government Boys considered the sentences without the complementizer *that* (5:24a), (5:24e) and (5:24g) to be ill formed. Two participants, one from class 7 and the other from 10, considered the sentences without the complementizer *that* to be correct. Amongst the participants from Donbosco, those from classes 7 – 10 judged the data set in (5:24) to be well

formed, while the participants from classes 3 to 6, were inconsistent in their judgement. Amongst the participants from AVS, it was noted that most of the participants considered (5:24b) to be ill-formed. Two participants from class 7 and 8 considered (5:24e) to be ill formed, while one from class 8 considered (5:24f) to be ill formed. In (5:24a) and (5:24f) the complementizer *that* is overt and in (5:24e) the complementizer *that* is not overt. From the analysis of Task 5, we once again come to the conclusion that variation in the performance of the participants is mainly due to lack of adequate exposure to the target language.

#### **5.4 Analysis of [+wh] finite complement clauses**

In section 5.1, from our discussion of the Assamese and English [+wh] finite complement clauses, we found the following parametric differences: in English, wh- words can be extracted from the embedded clauses. In Assamese, there is no extraction of the wh- (k-) words from the embedded clauses in a null-Prt CP. In the null-Prt CP, the k- word, LF moves to the [Spec-CP] of the embedded clause. It is only in the [+wh] *buli* –CP, that the k- word LF moves to the [Spec- CP] of the matrix clause. This takes place because the quotative *buli* and the matrix verb undergo a CP / TP merger. In the [+ wh] *buli*-CP, the complementizer is obligatorily present. In English, we have observed that the complementizer *that* can optionally occur in the C position, when an object wh-word is extracted from the embedded clause. When a subject wh- word is extracted from embedded clause, the complementizer *that* is obligatorily dropped.

For collecting data, we gave the participants two tasks. In Task 6, the participants had to judge the grammaticality of the complex constructions. In Task 7, the participants had to transform declarative sentences into

interrogatives. In section 5.4.1, we shall analyse Task 6 and in section 5.4.2, we shall analyse Task 7.

#### 5.4.1 Analysis of Task 6

The participants were given the following sentences as shown in (5:25).

5:25 a. Who do you think that Mary met yesterday?	Correct
b. Who do you think that arrived yesterday?	Incorrect
c. What did Mary believe that John saw?	Correct
d. What did Mary think that John brought for her?	Correct
e. What does Lizi think we know?	Correct
f. Where did you say that he met you?	Correct
g. Where did you say he met you?	Correct

In (5:25) we have the expected response given along with the sentences. We shall provide the analysis of the data in accordance with the order of the sentences in (5:25). In (5:25a), the *wh-* word *who* is a direct object. In [+*wh* finite complement] clauses in English the complementizer *that* occurs optionally, when an object is extracted from the lower clause. Our analysis of the data from Task 5 showed that most of the participants from Government Boys considered the complex sentences with the overt complementizer *that* to be grammatical. Going by our observation, we expected the same response from the participants for (5:25a). It was seen that the participants from class 9, except one considered (5:25a) to be ungrammatical. Those from class 10 and 11 considered it to be grammatical. In other words 50% of the participants considered it to be grammatical and 50% considered it to be ungrammatical. In case of the participants from Donbosco, it was observed that except for three participants, the others considered (5:25) to be grammatical. This means that 30% considered it to be ungrammatical and 70% considered it to be



grammatical. In case of AVS too, we found that most of the participants considered that sentence to be ungrammatical, except for two participants from class 9. Here too we found that 30% considered it to be grammatical and 70% considered it to be ungrammatical. Before we ponder on the response of the participants, analyse the rest of the sentences.

In (5:25b), the subject wh- word *who* is extracted from the lower clause. When the subject wh- word is extracted, the complementizer *that* is obligatorily not present. This makes (5:25b) an ungrammatical construction. Our analysis of the sentence showed that 50% of the participants from Government Boys considered the sentence to be ungrammatical and 50% considered it to be grammatical. In case of the participants from Donbosco, it was observed that only two participants considered the sentence to be grammatical, two did not respond and the rest considered it to be ungrammatical. In other words 25% considered it ungrammatical, 25% did not respond and the remaining 50% considered it to be grammatical. In case of AVS, it was observed that all the participants considered this sentence to be ungrammatical.

In the complex constructions in (5:25c – e), the direct object *what* is extracted from the lower clause. In (5:25d) the complementizer *that* is overt and in (5:25c) and (5:25e) it is not overt. Going by our discussion of the presence / absence of the complementizer *that* in [+wh] finite complement clause in section 5.1, the sentences in (5:25 c-e) are grammatical. Our analysis of the sentences showed the following result. The response of the participants for the complex constructions in (5:25 c –e) was inconsistent. 90% of the participants from Government Boys considered (5:25c) to be ungrammatical, only 10 % considered it to be grammatical. The response of the participants from Donbosco was more or less the same. 80% of them considered the

sentence to be ungrammatical, only 20% considered it to be grammatical. Amongst the participants from AVS, it was found that 50 % considered it to be grammatical and 50 % considered it to be ungrammatical.

The response for (5:25d) showed that 50 % of the participants from Government Boys considered it to be grammatical, 25% did not respond to it and 25% considered it to be ungrammatical. Those from Donbosco responded as follows: 70% considered it to be grammatical and 30% considered it to be ungrammatical. In case of the participants from AVS, 50 % considered it to be grammatical and 50% considered it to be ungrammatical. The response for (5:25e) patterned more or less the same way as (5:25c). 50% of the participants from government Boys considered it to be grammatical, 25% did not respond and the rest 25% considered it to be ungrammatical. In case of the participants from Donbosco, 50 % considered it to be grammatical and 50% considered it to be ungrammatical. In case of the participants from AVS 100 % considered it to be grammatical.

In (5:25f) and (5:25g), the *wh-* word *where* extracted from the lower clause is an adjunct. When complements of the VP are extracted, the complementizer *that* is optionally present. This makes both the constructions grammatical. The responses of the participants from the three schools were as follows: 70% of the participants from Government Boys considered (5:25f) to be grammatical, 10 % considered it to be ungrammatical and 20% did not respond. 90% of the participants from Donbosco considered it to be grammatical, 10 % did not respond. In case of the participants from AVS, 80% considered it to be grammatical and 20% considered it to be ungrammatical. The analysis of (5:25g) showed that 90% of the participants from Government Boys considered it to be ungrammatical, only 10% considered it to be grammatical. Amongst the participants from Donbosco, 75% considered it to be grammatical and 25%

considered it to be ungrammatical. In case of the participants from AVS, 90% considered it to be grammatical only 10 % considered it to be ungrammatical.

From the analysis of Task 6, we find that the responses of the participants from the three schools vary with the kind of complex constructions they are exposed to. In sentences (5:25a) and (5:25b) we find the participants from the three schools are confused with the extraction of the subject and object wh- word *who* from the lower clause. This problem we have already noted in Chapter Four, in our analysis of Task 2. In sentences (5:25c –e), the response of the participants from Government boys show they are not aware of the fact that the complementizer *that* can be optional when the object wh- word is extracted from the lower clause. In case of the participants from AVS, their response shows that they are aware the complementizer *that* can be optional. This difference comes mainly from the kind of input that is available to the learners in their schools. The same is true for the sentences in (5:25 f-g).

#### 5.4.2 Analysis of Task 7

In this task the participants were given a set of [+ declarative] finite complement clauses. The participants were instructed to replace the underlined words with appropriate wh- words and transform the sentences into interrogatives. The participants were given the following sets of sentences as shown in (5:26) below:

5:26a Mary heard that John gave the book to Jane.

b. Mary heard that John gave the book to Jane.

c. Mary heard that John gave the book to Jane.

d. Karen thinks that Jane is feeding the rabbits.

e. Karen thinks that Jane is feeding the rabbits

f. John saw that Mary took the book.

g. John saw that Mary took the book.

The expected response to (5:26) is as shown in (5:27) below.

5:27a Who did Mary hear gave the book to Jane?

- b. What did Mary hear (that) John gave to Jane?
- c. Who did Mary hear (that) John gave the book to?  
(or) To whom did Mary hear (that) John gave the book?
- d. Who does Karen think is feeding the rabbits?
- e. Who(m) does Karen think (that) Jane is feeding?
- f. Who did John see take the book?
- g. What did John see (that) Mary took?

The analysis of the data showed that the participants from Government Boys from class 9 failed to extract the *wh-* words from the lower clause. In (5:28), we have some examples.

5:28a. \* Mary heard that who gave the book to Jane?

- b. \* Karen thinks that what is Mary feeding?
- c. \* Karen thinks that who is feeding her rabbits?

The ill formed sentences, show that the *wh-* words *who* and *what* are moved to the [Spec-CP] position of the lower clause and the complementizer *that* is obligatorily present. From this it is evident that the participants are not aware of the idiosyncratic features of the English finite complement clauses. In Task 6, we had observed that 50% of the participants from Government Boys had considered the complex construction in (5:25b) to be ungrammatical. Yet while transforming the declarative construction into an interrogative, we find these participants have some problem with the extraction of the *wh-* words from the embedded clause. Some of the participants from class 9, did not attempt this task. The participants from class 10 and 11, were able to extract

the *wh-* words from the lower clause. While transforming the declarative sentences into interrogatives the complement *that* was obligatorily dropped by the participants.

Amongst the participants of Donbosco, it was observed that not all participants from class 9 attempted the task. In most cases the complementizer *that* was obligatorily present as shown in (5:29) below.

5:29a \* Who did Mary hear that gave a book to John?

b.\* Who does Karen think that is feeding the rabbits?

Some of the participants from Donbosco failed to use the correct tense form.

5:30. \* What did John saw Mary give to Fred?

One participant from class 10, had some problem in using the appropriate *wh-* words for the complex constructions in (5:26d) and (5:27e). In both the sentences the direct object *wh-*word *whom* was used. See (5:31) below:

5:31a Whom does Karen think Mary is feeding?

b. \* Whom does Karen think is feeding the rabbits?

(5:31a) is in response to (5:26e), here the direct object *whom* is extracted from the lower clause. (5:31b) is in response to (5:26d). Here the subject *wh-* word *who* is replaced by the direct object *wh-* word *whom*. In Task 2, we had observed the asymmetry between the subject and the object *wh-* word. The problem sentence in (5:31b) apparently is a result of the confusion between the

use of the wh- word *who* as subject / object. In (5:31b), the object wh- word *whom* is used in place of the subject wh- word *who*.

The participants from AVS, class 7 –11, were able to extract the wh- words from the lower clause. The participants had faced problem with (5:26c). While extracting the indirect object wh- word *who(m)*, they had problem with preposition stranding. This problem was observed in some participants from class 7 - 11. See (5:32) below:

5:32a To whom did Mary hear John give the book to?

b. Whom did Mary hear John give the book to?

The problem sentences in (5:32) show that preposition stranding is redundant. In (5:32a) the preposition *to* is moved along with the wh- word to the clause initial position as well as stranded. In (5:32b) the preposition *to* does not move along with the wh- word to the clause initial position. In Task 2, we had observed when the wh- word *whom* is used the preposition *to* moves to the clause initial position too. In Task 2, the participants from AVS had no problem in the extraction of the indirect object wh- word from root clauses. In this task, we find that the participants have confusion with the use of the indirect object wh- word *whom*. Further instances of confusion comes from the ill-formed sentences in (5:33) below:

5:33 \*Whom did Mary hear Jane was given a book from?

The ill formed sentence in (5:33) is in response to (5:26a). This ill formed sentence was found in a participant from class 7. In (5:33) we find the following problems: firstly, there is confusion between the subject wh-word *who* and the object wh- word *who(m)*, secondly, the preposition *to* is replaced

by *from* and thirdly, the lower clause is passivised. We have observed in (5:31), that participants have problems with the use of the subject / object wh- word *who* and the object wh- word *whom*. The object wh- word *whom* is formal and is used more in the traditional grammar books., whereas the object wh- word *who* is used in present day English, i.e., by the native speakers. We know that the participants from AVS get ample scope to hear the present day English when they interact with native speakers in school. The participants from schools like Donbosco and Government Boys do not get the chance to interact with native speakers. In case of the participants from these schools we may assume that the problem arises mainly because of the lack of exposure. If the lack of exposure is the reason of the confusion, why do participants with maximum exposure to the target language face the problem? Here we have to take into account the formal classroom teaching. This confusion arises mainly because the learners are not provided with explicit teaching of the grammatical rules. In chapter Four, section 4.2, we had observed that there is hardly any teaching of grammar in the schools. Idiosyncratic features of the target language must be explained to the learners, mere exposure to the target language does not help in learning the marked features of the target language. This observation we have made in our analysis of the data of the participants from Government Boys and Donbsco. From our analysis of the problem sentence in (5:33), we find the same applies to the participants from AVS. The other two problems, we assume, are a direct result of the lack of explicit teaching of the marked features of the target language.

### **5.5. Conclusion**

In our study of the acquisition of the finite complement clauses, we found that the acquisition of the complex constructions largely depends on the kind of input the students are exposed to as well as the kind of interaction they have inside the classroom. In chapter four, we had already observed that the

functional category C and its projection the CP are available in the early grammar of the L2 learners. The difference in the level of acquisition mainly depends on the influence of extra-linguistic factors. The same holds true in this chapter too. In Chapter Four, we had evidence that the L2 grammar operates independently. A learner takes cue from the L1 grammar only when there is lack of adequate exposure to grammatical categories or structures of the target language. This we have observed in our analysis, like for instance, in Task 4, the participants from Government Boys had some problem with arranging the modal auxiliaries. In the same task, participants from Donbosco and Government Boys had problems with the main verb *have* (5:12b). This was mainly because of the lack of exposure to the use of *have* as a main verb and as an auxiliary. The participants from AVS, had problems with the transformational task. Like the participants from Government Boys and Donbosco, the dichotomy between the subject and object wh- word *who* and the formal *whom* led to the problems as in (5:32) and (5:33). This kind of empirical evidence shows that mere exposure to the target language may not always facilitate the acquisition process. In order to make the acquisition process faster and easier, the idiosyncratic features of the target language must be explicitly taught.

We began our study of the acquisition of the direct wh- and *yes-no* questions in Chapter Four, and the acquisition of the finite complement clauses in this chapter, on the assumption: *the relative dominance of the mother tongue, may lead to the mediation of the L1 grammar in the L2 acquisition process; alternatively, the L2 grammar, operates independently, i.e., the biological endowment, UG, directly mediates in the L2 acquisition process.* Whatever differences are noticed in the level / degree of acquisition are mainly due to the manner in which the parameters are set for the L2 grammar in comparison to the parameters of the L1 grammar. From our analysis of the data



in these two chapters, we found that there are evidences of the L2 grammar operating independently of the L1 grammar. Participants take cue from their L1 grammar only when they do not have adequate exposure to the target language.

In this cross linguistic study, we took participants from Government Boys, Donbosco and AVS, mainly to find out what effect the teaching / learning environment has in formal L2 acquisition. Our study showed that the environment and the input available to the learners play a crucial role in the acquisition process. More than the quantity of input available, it is the quality of the input which make the acquisition process faster. Of the three schools, we found that the participants from AVS have maximum exposure to quality input. The problems discerned amongst the participants from Donbosco indicate that they have exposure to the target language but the quality of the input available to them is questionable. The participants from Government Boys lack both quality and quantity of exposure to the target language. However, it is this lack of input, which gives us evidence that UG operates independently in the formal L2 acquisition process. But it is the relative dominance of the mother tongue that slows down the acquisition process. In case of the participants from AVS, though the L2 is relatively dominant, the degree of success slows down too because of the idiosyncratic features of the target language.

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(iv) John will <sup>Appendix</sup> ~~hear~~ talk

संस्कृत  
गोवर्तन 8  
Class 7

(v) ~~Give a~~ Did John give a Mary book

(vi) Did John give Mary to book

(vii) Mary will meet John in the park.

(i) I will you came that know

(ii) That Mary John problem heard

(iii) John we think meal is

(iv) I John that Mary give a sow

(v) I told that should London mother go

(i) John is sleeping

(ii) Mary an apple ate

(iii) ~~Mary a duck saw~~

(iii) Mary saw a duck

(iv) John talk, chew, row will

(v) John gave a Mary book

(vi) Mary will in John the meet, park

(1) I am not sleeping not in the class

(ii) Did not Mary give to a John book

(iii) You come <sup>not</sup> will have not

(iv) I not fried food - do eat

Part 1.

I saw you saw park the

I saw you in the park

Mary give look a John

Mary gave a look to John

tomorrow will John meet I

will meet John, tomorrow

how you find

What are you you are find

John is eating an apple

John is eating an apple.

Sheeping not I in class the can

I am not sleeping in the class

not Mary give John the a book did

John did not give Mary a book,

Mary did not give John a book

Did you come to school  
Did you not come to school?

Did you work hard last year?

Did you not work hard last year?

John will not go to the

John will not go to the school.

11  
12

is with you not a waste?  
is coming with will not be with

13

when, how, where, what

1. when is the best time to go?

2. why in the bottle kept most

in the first of answers?

3. when will the work kept?

4. how is the work changing?

5. where is the work done?

6. how will the work be done?

7. what will the work be?

8. how to return up?

9. when is the best time to go?

10. what will the work be?

11. how will the work be done?

12. when will the work be done?

13. how will the work be done?

14. when will the work be done?

15. how will the work be done?

is coming with will not be with

is with you not a waste?

when, how, where, what

1. when is the best time to go?

2. why in the bottle kept most

in the first of answers?

3. when will the work kept?

4. how is the work changing?

5. where is the work done?

6. how will the work be done?

7. what will the work be?

8. how to return up?

9. when is the best time to go?

10. what will the work be?

11. how will the work be done?

12. when will the work be done?

13. how will the work be done?

14. when will the work be done?

15. how will the work be done?

16. when will the work be done?

17. how will the work be done?

18. when will the work be done?

19. how will the work be done?

20. when will the work be done?

21. how will the work be done?

22. when will the work be done?

23. how will the work be done?

24. when will the work be done?

25. how will the work be done?

Name ⇒ Uparayan / Uparayan

Womboco

Class 3

Sub  
Topic  
Does  
not  
are  
hanging  
doing  
Open

Noun

Baby

room

Bottle

Chest of drawers

Corner

Floor

Question

Who

How

What

Where

Why

When

Whom

X

1. What is the ~~bad~~ baby doing?
2. Where is the baby hanging?
3. Why is she climbing on the chest of drawers?
4. Where are the books?
5. Where is the bottle?
6. Who is climbing on the chest of drawers?
7. Who is in the room?
8. How ~~many~~ many books are there on the chest of drawers?

II

1. Is the ~~bad~~ <sup>second</sup> bottle in the corner?
2. Is the ~~chest~~ drawer open?
3. ~~Are~~ <sup>are</sup> the books on the chest of drawers?
4. Is the bottle on the floor?
5. Is the baby on the chest of drawers?
6. Is the bottle on the corner of the floor?



Dumbosco  
Class 5

the baby wants to climb the top of  
the chest of drawers  
the bottle is near the chest of drawers  
one of the drawers is open  
the bottle is still lying at  
the corner

1. the baby
2. the baby wants to climb the top of drawers?
3. How → How are you? does the baby climb?
4. Whom → To whom does the baby belong?
5. Bottle → The bottle is near the chest of drawers
6. Why - Why does the baby climb?
7. When - When did the baby climb up?

II

1. Baby = Does the baby go to the top of the chest of drawers
2. Open = Is one of the drawers open?
3. Corner = Is the bottle still lying at the corner?

- task 3

Read the following:

Julia was searching for her spectacles she turned her stool upside down looking for it. Her mother walked into the room and asked "What ... looking for?" Julia replied "I am looking for my spectacles" Just then her brother walked in and said "Here are your spectacles" Julia turned round and exclaimed "... find it?"

"What are you looking for?"

"Where did you find it?"

"Station Master is the train on time?"

"When will the train arrive?"

B "Why are you crying?"

"Where is your home?"

"Sir, would you take me home?"

H "May I have a glass of water?"

"Would you have a glass of Pepsi?"

7 "What are you doing?"

"Hello John! How are you?"

"John! don't you recognize me?"

Niraj Das.

CLASS 10

School - Igapur Grant, H.S. School

Assamese

Task 6

Following passages and fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the incomplete sentences. The context of the passage will give you the clue of the sentence type.

Julia was searching for her spectacles. She turned her room upside down looking for it. Her mother entered the room and asked "What are you looking for? Julia replied "I am looking for my spectacles". Just then her brother walked in and said "Here are your spectacles". Julia turned round and exclaimed " Where did you find it?"

Mrs. Robins was all excited. Her grandchildren were coming to spend their vacation with her. Before she left for the station she called up the station master to check if the train was on time. She asked "Station is the train on time?" "The train is late", replied the station master. "When will the train arrive?" "Can't say. Call after some time we may know something by then" said the official.

A small boy was standing near the bus stop crying. A policeman came to him and asked " Why are you crying?" The boy sobbed and said he had lost his way home. The policeman asked "Where do you live?" The small boy stopped crying and looked at the policeman hopefully "Sir, will you leave me home?"

John was feeling thirsty. He wanted to have a glass of water. He walked into a fast-food joint and said "Please bring me a glass of water?" The manager looked up and said "We serve only soft drinks here. He smiled and asked " Will you bring me a glass of Pepsi?" John smiled back and said "A glass of Pepsi will do."

Someone tapped on my shoulder. I turned round annoyed and said "What are you doing?". The man smiled and said "Hello John! How are you?" The voice sounded familiar. I looked at him closely his smile broadened. Once again he said "John do you recognize me? This time I did recognize him. But he looked so different. The man was same but he had put on so much of weight. Who could imagine the handsome dashing Jake could one day become so fat and ugly. I smiled back and asked "What have you done yourself?"

class 9 AVS

Task 6

Read the following passages and fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the incomplete sentences. The context of the passage will give you the clue of the sentence type.

Julia was searching for her spectacles. She turned her room upside down looking for it. Her mother walked into the room and asked "What is she looking for? looking for? Julia replied "I'm looking for my spectacles". Just then her brother walked in and said "Here are your spectacles? Julia turned round and exclaimed " How did you find it? find it?"

Mrs. Robins was all excited. Her grandchildren were coming to spend their vacation with her. Before leaving for the station she called up the station master to check if the train was on time. She asked "Station master is the train on time? on time? "The train is late", replied the station master. "When will it arrive? arrive?" "Can't say. Call after sometime we may know something by then" said the official.

A small boy was standing near the bus stop crying. A policeman came to him and asked " What is the matter with you? crying?" The boy sobbed and said he had lost his way home. The policeman asked "Where do you live? live?" The small boy stopped crying and looked at the policeman hopefully "Sir, please take me home? me home?"

John was feeling thirsty. He wanted to have a glass of water. He walked into a fast-food joint and said " Can I have a glass of water? of water?" The manager looked up and said "We serve only soft drinks here. He smiled and asked " Can I have a glass of Pepsi? a glass of Pepsi?" John smiled back and said "A glass of Pepsi will do."

Someone tapped on my shoulder. I turned round annoyed and said "What is that? is that?" The man smiled and said "Hello John! How are you? are you?" The voice sounded familiar I looked at him closely his smile broadened. Once again he said "John do you recognize me? recognize me? This time I did recognize him. But he looked so different. The face was same but he had put on so much of weight. Who could imagine the handsome dashing Jake would one day become so fat and ugly. I smiled back and asked "What has happened to you? done to yourself?"

Answers

Government By  
Class 7

I knew that you will come.

Mary has heard that Joan problem.

We think that John is mad.

I saw that John gave book to Mary  
told mother that I would go  
London.

'Who took the book?', John said, asked.

'What did Mary take?', John asked.

Task 4.

I. Read the following interrogative sentences carefully and state whether they are correct or not. Put C for the correct sentences and I for the incorrect ones. Note down the time, you took, to complete the task.

1. What you are unhappy about? I
2. When you think John will come? I
3. Has John a car? C
4. Do you know when the next bus will come? C
5. What Sheela will say? I
6. Who(m) you met in the office? C
7. What you have in your pocket? I
8. Where you keep your books? I
9. How you solve the problem? I
10. You are having fever? C I

→ give the answers to complete this task.

II Give the correct sentences for the incorrect sentences in question I. Note down the time you took to complete the task.

1. Why are you unhappy?
  2. When will you think John will come?
  3. Does John have a car?
  4. Do you know when the next bus will come?
  5. What will Sheela say?
  6. Who did you meet in the office?
  7. What do you have in your pocket?
  8. Where do you keep your books?
  9. How do you solve the problem?
  10. Are you having a fever?
- I -> mine  
→ I -> these

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, including the name "Lizbeth" and the number "11".

Handwritten text: "Lizbeth" and "Task 5."

Read the following complex sentences and state whether they are correct or not. Put C for the correct sentences and I for the incorrect ones. Note down the time, you took, to complete the task.

- 1. You will come that I know. C |
- 2. You know what John will say. C |
- 3. Do you like the present that I gave you? C
- 4. Did John hear that Mary will come today? C
- 5. Tell me what your problem is. |
- 6. John asked me that when I was coming. C — X X
- 7. I think John is a fool. C
- 8. Who do you think that Mary met yesterday? C
- 9. What did Mary believe John saw? |
- 10. I think that John is a fool. C
- 11. What did Mary think that John brought for her? C C
- 12. Where did John say that he met you? C
- 13. We know Mary is the culprit. \
- 14. Who do you think that arrived yesterday? \
- 15. What did John believe Mary saw? \
- 16. I know that you will come. C
- 17. You know that what John will say. C
- 18. Where did you say he met you? C
- 19. What does Lizi think we know? \

Task 5.

Read the following complex sentences and state whether they are correct or not. Put C for the correct sentences and I for the incorrect ones. Note down the time, you took, to complete the task.

1. You will come that I know. I
2. You know what John will say. I
3. Do you like the present that I gave you? I
4. Did John hear that Mary will come today? I
5. Tell me what your problem is. I
6. John asked me that when I was coming. I
7. I think John is a fool. I
8. Who do you think that Mary met yesterday? I
9. What did Mary believe John saw? I
10. I think that John is a fool. C
11. What did Mary think that John brought for her? C
12. Where did John say that he met you? I
13. We know Mary is the culprit. C
14. Who do you think that arrived yesterday? I
15. What did John believe Mary saw? I
16. I know that you will come. I
17. You know that what John will say. I
18. Where did you say he met you? I
19. What does Lizi think we know? I

→ correct sentences are 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19  
incorrect sentences are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15



13 yrs AVS  
T.T → 1 min 30

Task 5.

Read the following complex sentences and state whether they are correct or not. Put C for the correct sentences and I for the incorrect ones. Note down the time, you took, to complete the task.

1. You will come that I know. I
2. You know what John will say. C
3. Do you like the present that I gave you? C
4. Did John hear that Mary will come today? C
5. Tell me what your problem is. I
6. John asked me that when I was coming. I
7. I think John is a fool. C
8. Who do you think that Mary met yesterday? I
9. What did Mary believe John saw? I
10. I think that John is a fool. C
11. What did Mary think that John brought for her? C
12. Where did John say that he met you? C
13. We know Mary is the culprit. ~~by~~ I
14. Who do you think that arrived yesterday? I
15. What did John believe Mary saw? I
16. I know that you will come. C
17. You know that what John will say. I
18. Where did you say he met you? C
19. What does Lizi think we know? C

Government Boys  
class 10

Sheela said that we are macroscopic  
(2) How did sheela and any other characters?

They heard sheela was the captain  
of the old school boys' sheela was?

John that thinks that I give you the book?

John - Decide John that thinks I don't give the book?

John thinks that I gave they want

What did John think I give they

Many thinks that she will be late

She does want that will be late

John thought that find some (man)

John and John think that find out

John thought that was, can they

Who

1) Had sheela any other characters?  
2) Had sheela and any other characters?  
3) Had sheela and any other characters?  
4) Had sheela and any other characters?  
5) Had sheela and any other characters?

(iii) think John made, that ~~we~~ we = To we think ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> that John is mad. <sup>by</sup>

(iv) a game saw <sup>look</sup> I, John that Marry = I saw that <sup>do!</sup> John gave Marry a book.

(v) told London mother that should I go = Mother told that I should go London.

6) Transform the ~~l~~ Substitute the underlined words with a wh question and transform the following declarative sentences into interrogatives

(i) (a) John knows Marry took the book = ~~John~~ John knows who took the book  
Does John know who took the book?

(b) John knows Marry took the book = What does John know Marry took?

(ii) Marry heard that John gave the book to Jane =

(a) Who did Marry hear ~~at~~ gave the book to Jane?

(b) What did Marry hear ~~at~~ John gave <sup>to</sup> Jane?

(c) To whom did Marry hear ~~at~~ John gave the book?

(iii) John saw that Marry gave a flower to Isred =  
What did John see Marry give to Isred?

(iv) Kerim thinks that Marry is feeding her rabbits =  
= What does Kerim think Marry is feeding?

= Who does Kerim think is feeding Marry's rabbits?