

## 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.