

## 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.