Chapter I

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1 Contrastive Analysis

Jacek Fisiak defines Contrastive Linguistics as a sub-discipline of linguistics which is concerned with the comparison of two or more languages (or a system of languages) in order to determine both the differences that hold between them. The term contrastive linguistics has been referred to as "kontrastative linguistik" by German linguists (L. Zabrocki 1976, and others); Ellis (1966) calls it "comparative descriptive linguistics"; whereas, Akhmanova & Melencuk (1977) call it 'linguistic confrontation'. However, the term contrastive analysis or contrastive study is the most frequently used in the context of this kind of investigation.

The history of contrastive linguistics goes back to the last decade of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. A systematic and scientific comparison of languages, as it is known today, had its beginning in the forties. It was B.L. Whorf who used the term Contrastive Linguistics (CL) for the first time in the year 1941.
1.1 Contrastive analysis hypothesis

This hypothesis has two versions: (a) the strong version, and (b) the weak version. The strong version is the one which most of the supporters of this theory base their claims, although it was unrealistic and impracticable. However, the weak version does have possibilities for usefulness, although even this is suspect to some linguists.

The strong version

It is possible to contrast the system of one language (the grammar, phonology and lexicon) with the system of a second language in order to predict the difficulties which a speaker of the second language will have in learning the first language, and to construct reading materials to help her learn that language.

This theory makes a lot of demand to linguists. For example, the theory requires linguistics to have:

a. set of linguistic universals formulated within a comprehensive linguistic theory which deals with syntax, semantics and phonology.

b. theory of contrastive linguistics in which they can “plug in” linguistic descriptions of the two languages to be compared.
Wardhaugh (1974) calls this a "pseudo-procedure" - a procedure which linguists claim they could follow, in order to achieve definitive results, if only there were enough time.

The weak version

The linguist uses the best linguistic knowledge available to him in order to account for the observed difficulties in second-language learning.

This approach makes fewer demands of contrastive theory than the strong version. The starting point of this approach is provided by real evidence from such phenomena as faulty translation, learning difficulties and residual foreign accents.

According to the popular assumptions of the contrastive study, the structural similarities will lead to facilitation and differences will cause interferences in learning a foreign language. This is however only a prediction and a partial understanding of the problems of a foreign language situation. The learner's problems are not always predictable through a contrastive study. Teachers' competence, motivation of learners, teaching methods and instructional materials are the other variables that can influence foreign language teaching. However, a contrastive grammar is useful for a teacher and a learner for the effective process of teaching and learning.
1.2 The need for contrastive study of English and Manipuri

English and Manipuri are the official languages of Manipur. English is the medium of instruction for many high schools. It is the only medium of examination for higher level like college and university. However, English and Manipuri have their own independent structure. Keeping in view the importance of English in Manipur, the learning of it is important not only for education but also for employment. In order to know more about English and to avoid errors in writing and speaking English, the contrastive study of the two languages is an essential task to the linguists.

1.3 The English language

1.3.1 The language

English is a relatively uninflected language. Nouns have separate endings only in the possessive case and the plural number. Verbs have both a strong conjugation—shown in older words—with internal vowel change, for example, sing→sang→sung, and a weak conjugation with dental suffixes indicating past tense, as in play→played. The latter is the predominant type. The third person singular has an “-s” ending, as in does. The structure of English verbs is thus
fairly simple, compared with that of verbs in similar languages, and includes only a few other endings, such as "-ing" or "-en" as in *singing* and *taken*; but verb structure does involve the use of numerous auxiliaries such as *have*, *can*, *may*, or *must*. Monosyllabic and some disyllabic adjectives are inflected for degree of comparison, such as *happier* or *happiest*; other adjectives express the same distinction by compounding with *more* and *most*. Pronouns, the most heavily inflected parts of speech in English, have objective (accusative) case forms, such as *me* or *her*, in addition to the nominative (I, he, we) and possessive forms (my, his, hers, our).

1.3.2 Language family

English belongs to the Anglo-Frisian group within the western branch of the Germanic languages, a subfamily of the Indo-European languages. It is related most closely to the Frisian language, to a lesser extent to Netherlandic (Dutch-Flemish) and the Low German (Plattdeutsch) dialects, and more distantly to Modern High German.

English is a Germanic language, according to the genetic method of classification. But from other points of view, the picture alters, culturally, it displays many similarities with Romance, in view of the large number of loanwords it has taken in from French and
Italian, and the way these languages have even exercised some influence on grammar (e.g. chicken supreme) and phonology (e.g. the final /zl/ in words like garage /'gær.əzl/).

From a typological viewpoint, English is in fact more similar to isolating languages like Chinese than Latin; there are few inflectional endings, and word-order changes are the basis of the grammar (David Crystal, 1996).

1.3.3 Status

English is the chief medium of communication of people in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and numerous other countries. It is the official language of many nations in the Commonwealth of Nations and is widely understood and used in all of them. It is spoken in more parts of the world than any other language. The United Nations uses English not only as one of its official languages but also as one of its two working languages.

1.3.4 Dialects

There are many dialect areas in England and Scotland. There are newer dialect differences also, such as in the United States,
including regional varieties such as Southern English, and cultural varieties, such as Black English. Standard forms of English differ also; thus, the standard British ("the king's English") is dissimilar to the several standard varieties of American and to Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, and Indian English.

1.4 The Manipuri language

1.4.1 The language

Manipuri is spoken mainly in Manipur. It is also spoken in Assam, Tripura, Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh. It shares some features of the Tibeto–Burman languages. It includes phonemic tone, SOV word order, agglutinative verb morphology and tendency to reduce disyllabic forms to monosyllabic ones. It has nominal pronominal markers, extensive verb morphology and extensive suffix. In this language, the suffixes play the most important role in the structure of the language.

1.4.2 Language family

In the classification of T.B. languages of the Sino–Tibetan family, Manipuri is placed in Kuki–Chin Proper separately by Grierson (1904), in Meitei Branch of Kukish section by Robert Shafer

1.4.3 Status

Manipuri is the link language in the state of Manipur. This is the official language of Manipur and it has been used as official language before Manipur got independence and merged with the Indian Union. Manipur became part of Indian Union only in the late part of the year 1949. Manipuri is the medium of instruction in all levels of education while English is another language, which is also used in the courts, offices, etc. and as the medium of instruction.

Since 20th August 1992 Manipuri became the first T.B. language to receive recognition as a scheduled VIII language of India. But, it is not yet planned properly. Much work needs to be done for its development and standardization. The language needs proper planning: codification and standardization.

1.4.4 Dialects

Manipuri has several dialects. These are Kakching, Sekmai, Andro, Phayeng, Kwatha, Thanga etc. But now, improved transport and communication has made free mixing among the various groups
or clans, making the differences negligible. Even the varieties of speech in the Cachar district of Assam and Jiribam of Manipur have become almost similar with the Imphal dialect, which is considered the standard form of speech. However, the forms of speech found in Tripura, Myanmar and Bangladesh still show clear dialectal variation. Many foreign words are found in the Manipuri vocabulary. However, it is also found that many borrowed vocabularies are gradually disappearing from modern Manipuri. They are being substituted by the newly coined words or by the Manipuri archaic forms or by the English words.

1.5 The present study

The present study *A Contrastive Analysis of English and Manipuri Grammatical Categories* aims to provide the points of similarities and dissimilarities underlying English–Manipuri grammatical categories which can be used by different interested individuals and parties in different applications. A secondary goal is to revise/extend or alter the existing notion of these categories in Manipuri.

This research work will also help in teaching English to Manipuri speakers, acquisition of English, and also for the descriptive study of the languages.
1.6 Data for the analysis

Illustrated examples of English are taken from texts collected from reliable and authoritative books and data from the published or unpublished works collected. Data for the Manipuri are collected from the newspapers, published or unpublished works, and material elicited during field work and various discussions held in the university and other academic places.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of nine chapters. In the introductory chapter, some general remarks are given about the contrastive analysis and the two languages – English and Manipuri.

In chapter two, English tense system is discussed. This chapter considers the relevant facts and shows that Manipuri is a tenseless language. Then the aspect systems of English and Manipuri are discussed and contrasted.

In Chapter three, the contrast of mood and modalities between English and Manipuri are brought out. This discussion shows that modality in English is signaled to a greater extent by modal system of modal verbs, and to a very minor extent by mood while in Manipuri, modality is mainly signaled by suffixes and to a little extend by modal
verbs.

Chapter four shows that English has nominative accusative case pattern and explores that Manipuri has ergative absolutive case pattern. The chapter then discusses the oblique cases in Manipuri.

In chapter five, English passive voice is discussed. It presents the argumentation to justify that there is no passive voice in Manipuri.

Chapter six explores the contrast on gender between English and Manipuri. It shows that gender in both the languages are not grammatical. It also discusses the few gender agreement found in these languages.

In chapter seven, the contrast on the category of person between English and Manipuri are discussed.

Chapter eight discusses the contrast on number between English and Manipuri. It also shows that the nouns are inflected for number in English. It also depicts the varieties of ways in which the plurals are formed in both the languages.

In chapter nine, the concluding remarks of the above contrastive studies and also some of the problems that a Manipuri speaker may face while learning English language have been outlined.
This thesis uses parallel organization in arguing points of analysis. Everything about English is said in the first half of a chapter and about Manipuri is in the second half of the chapter of this thesis. Similar structure of the analysis is employed wherever possible for both the languages.