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Compounding in Bodo

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1.0 Abstract:

Compounding is one of the major processes of the word formation in the Bodo language. It combines two or more words to form a linguistic element which is called *compound*. A compound has several characteristics in its spelling, stress, morphology, etc. Compounds are of four types on the basis of their semantic point of view, namely, *endocentric*, *exocentric*, *copulative* and *appositional*. Again, they can be sub-grouped into several different classes on the basis of structural point of view, namely, Noun-Noun, Adjective-Noun, Verb-Noun, Noun-Verb, Verb-Verb, Pronoun-Noun, etc.

The compounds in Bodo are also sub-grouped into the same four classes from the semantic point of view; and, at least, into eleven subtypes from the structural point of view, namely, *Pronoun-Noun Compound*, *Verb-Verb Compound*, *Noun-Noun Compound*, *Noun-Noun-Noun Compound*, *Noun-Verb Compound*, *Noun-Adjective Compound*, *Verb-Adjective Compound*, *Verb-Noun Compound*, *Noun-Onomatopoeia Compound*, *Noun-Noun-Verb Compound* and *Noun-Verb-Adverbial Suffix Compound*. Of them, the first three structures are very much productive whereas the last two structures are very much rare.

The Bodo language is usually left-branching (the modifiers come before the head) when it comes to noun phrases. But, right-branching is also found in Bodo. Worth-mentioning that, if we look at some traditionally used compounds such as *hinazao gudan* ‘bride’, *huowa gudan* ‘bridegroom’, *got^ho gurului* ‘baby’, etc. right-branching is found to see as usual. Thus, in Bodo, compound nouns are often formed by left-hand heads.

1.1 Introduction:

A linguistic compound element is a combination of, at least, two already existing roots, which can, otherwise, occur as free forms separately (i.e., as independent words) or bound roots (in some languages)¹. It is formed by a process called *compounding* which is one of the different processes of word formation, in which a stem is formed with two or more

¹ Aleendra Brahma, Modern Bodo Grammar (Guwahati, N.L. Publications, 2012) 164.

roots or stems, the resultant stem belonging to the class of at least one of the constituent roots. But the word formed by such process can be either endocentric or exocentric i.e., ‘a subtype of the type denoted by its head’ or ‘whose meaning does not follow from the meaning of its parts’ respectively. Compounds can be formed from other compounds because compounding rules are recursive i.e., it can apply to its own output.

1.2 Some Properties of Compounds²:

1. Unreliable spelling (sometimes as one word, sometimes with a hyphen, sometimes in two words).

2. In Adj+N compounds, pronunciation is, sometimes or in some languages, important: in compounds the stress is on the first element, but in non-compounds it is on the second element: *greénhouse* versus *green house*.

3. Tense and plural morphemes cannot typically be attached to the first element, but can be attached to the second element: **dropped kick* vs. *drop kicked*.

1.3 Types of Compounds:

Compound word can be subcategorized into different types on the basis of two grounds, namely, semantic and structural. On the basis of the change in meaning in the process of compounding, the compound words can be sub-grouped into the following types.

1.3.1 Endocentric Compounds:

It denotes a subtype of the type denoted by its head. For example- spoon feed (feed with a spoon), teaspoon (spoon for tea).

1.3.2 Exocentric Compounds:

Their meaning does not follow from the meaning of the parts. For example- *redneck*, *redhead* (not a red head, but a person with red hair). Thus, from a semantic point of view, exocentric compounds are opaque like idioms; they are not subject to compositionality. So, there is a case for listening their meanings in the lexicon as we do for idioms. However, a compound differs from an idiom in that the former is a term based on structure whereas the latter is a term based on meaning. Again, the former is an -eme of lexicon of a language while the latter is a phrase structurally.

1.3.3 Copulative Compounds:

They have two semantic heads which are coupled together. They are also known by their Sanskrit name of *dvandva* compounds.

² Simona Herdan, <http://sp.uconn.edu/~sih01001/202/fall2005/lecture12hdout.pdf> (2005).

1.3.4 Appositional Compounds:

They refer to lexemes that have two (contrary) attributes which classify the compound.

Type	Description	Examples
Endocentric	A+B(+C) denotes a special kind of A or B (or C)	<i>spiderman, talktime</i>
Exocentric	A+B(+C) denotes a special kind of an unexpressed semantic head	<i>skinhead, butterfingers, blockhead</i>
Copulative	A+B(+C) denotes 'the sum' of what A and B (and C) denote	<i>girlfriend, bittersweet, northeast, sleepwalk</i>
Appositional	A and B(+C) provide different descriptions for the same referent	<i>actor-director, nation state, maidservant</i>

Table 1: Types of compounds³

Again, on the basis of their structures the derived compound words can be subgrouped into different classes such as Noun-Noun, Adjective-Noun, Verb-Noun, Noun-Verb, Verb-Verb, Pronoun-Noun, etc.

1.4 Compounding in Bodo:

Compounding is one of the most productive morphological processes in Bodo. There are almost all the kinds of compounding in Bodo, discussed here. According to Madhu Ram Baro, compounds in Bodo are of six types as those of the Sanskrit and Assamese languages; viz., Copulative compound, Relative compound, Determinative compound, Appositional compound, Numeral compound and Indeclinable compound⁴. These sub-types are found on the basis of both structural and semantic point of views. However, the possible subclasses/ sub-processes of compounding with respect to the Bodo language are discussed with appropriate examples below.

1.4.1 Semantic Classification:

All the four types, namely, *endocentric*, *exocentric*, *copulative* and *appositional* compounds are found in the Bodo language. Of them, copulative compounds constitute the bulk of the Bodo compounds whereas only a few exocentric compounds are found in Bodo. Examples follow-

1.4.1.1 Endocentric Compounds:

SN	Structure	Compound
1	bar 'wind' + dui 'water' + sik ^h la 'girl'	barduisik ^h la 'weather goddess'
2	sik ^h ri 'butterfly' + sik ^h la 'young girl'	sik ^h ri-sik ^h la 'a young girl like a butterfly'

Table 2: Bodo endocentric compounds

³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compound_\(linguistics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compound_(linguistics)) (with slight modification).

⁴ Madhu Ram Baro, *Gwjwo Raokhanthi* (Hajo, Kamrup, Priyadini Brahma, 1996) 110.

1.4.1.2 Exocentric Compounds:

SN	Structure	Compound
1	daok ^h a 'crow' + k ^h amp ^h ai 'flat seat'	daok ^h a-k ^h amp ^h lai 'a kind of creeper fruit'
2	suima 'dog' + sik ^h ari 'hunter'	suma-sik ^h ari 'a kind of bee which makes its nest with clay'

Table 3: Bodo exocentric compounds

1.4.1.3 Copulative Compounds:

SN	Structure	Compound
1	sa 'north' + sanza 'east'	sa-sanza 'northeast'
2	gusuu 'mind' + muduum 'body'	gusuu-muduum 'mind and body'
3	su 'pierce/stab' + t ^h ar 'kill'	sut ^h ar 'kill by piercing/stabbing'
4	k ^h wiirum 'sour' + duirum 'sweet'	k ^h wiirum-duirum 'sour and sweet'

Table 4: Copulative compounds

In Bodo, there are a set of good number of copulative compounds which denote collective meaning along with the sum of the elements participated in compounding. This type of compound can be said to be *Collective Copulative Compound*. For example- raᅇ 'rupee' + rup^ha 'silver' = raᅇ-rup^ha 'property'. Here, the participating elements make a sum of meaning which is more than the mere sum of their meaning.

1.4.1.4 Appositional Compounds:

SN	Structure	Compound
1	alasi 'guest' + seᅇgra 'young boy'	alasi-seᅇgra 'young boy guest'
2	p ^h isa 'descendent' + hinza'o 'female'	p ^h isa hinza'o 'daughter'
3	seᅇgra 'young boy' + luᅇuu 'friend'	seᅇgra luᅇuu 'young boy friend'

Table 5: Appositional compounds

1.4.2 Formal Classification:

There are more than ten formal types of compound words in Bodo. Following are some possible structures of compound words in Bodo.

1.4.2.1 Pronoun-Noun Compound:

It is a combination of a pronoun and a noun. Usually, this combination derives a compound noun. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	aᅇni 'my' + p ^h a 'father'	ap ^h a 'my father'
2	bini 'his/her' + ma 'mother'	bima 'his/her mother'
3	nuᅇni 'your' + bᅇ 'elder sister'	numbᅇ 'your elder sister'

Table 6: Bodo pronoun-noun compounds

p^ha and ma are bound roots and they always co-occur with pronominal prefixes and nouns like bᅇrᅇ as in bᅇrᅇma 'mother of the Bodos'.

1.4.2.2 Verb-Verb Compound:

It is a combination of two different lexical verbs which derives a compound verb. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	gao 'shoot' + t ^h ar 'kill'	gaot ^h ar 'kill by shooting'
2	bar 'jump' + su ^l ai 'change'	barslai 'change by jumping'
3	za 'eat' + p ^h ui 'come'	zap ^h ui 'come and eat'

Table 7: Bodo verb-verb compounds

Like p^ha and ma, t^har is also a bound root which can occur only with another verb as a suffix.

1.4.2.3 Noun-Noun Compound:

It is a combination of two different nouns that derives a compound noun. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	bɔɾɔ 'Bodo' + ma 'mother'	bɔɾɔma 'mother of the Bodos'
2	lai 'leaf' + p ^h aŋ 'tree'	laip ^h aŋ 'leafy plant'
3	suima 'dog' + gɔn 'stick'	suima gɔn 'a post supporting wall'
4	duik ^h ɔŋ 'riverine' + k ^h uli 'place'	duik ^h ɔŋ-k ^h uli 'riverbank'

Table 8: Bodo noun-noun compounds

1.4.2.4 Noun-Noun-Noun Compound:

It is a combination of three different nouns, which derives a compound noun. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	bar 'wind' + dui 'water' + sik ^h la 'girl'	barduisik ^h la 'a nymph'

Table 9: Bodo noun-noun-noun compound

1.4.2.5 Noun-Verb Compound:

It is a type of compound which is a combination of a noun and a verb that derives a compound noun or a compound verb. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	lama 'road' + gidin 'turn'	lamdin 'Lamdin (name of a place in Assam)'
2	ha 'land/soil' + p ^h ɔlɔŋ 'penetrate'	hap ^h lɔŋ 'Haflong (name of a place in Assam)'
3	sɔm 'time' + bao 'forget'	sɔmbao 'forget a recent tragedy'
4	ha 'land/soil' + sib 'sweep'	hasib 'broom'
5	mi 'animal' + swo 'butt/gore'	muswo 'cow'

Table 10: Bodo noun-verb compounds

1.4.2.6 Noun-Adjective Compound:

It is a combination of a noun and an adjective, which is a compound noun or a compound adjective. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	mi 'animal' + geder 'big'	muider 'elephant'
2	ganda 'rhinoceros' + gageb 'flat'	ganda-gageb 'a fish resembling rhinoceros'
3	dao 'bird/fowl' + zuula 'male'	daozla 'cock (especially of domestic fowl)'
4	gɔn 'stick' + p ^h isa 'small'	gɔnsa 'a bamboo made long stick used in weaving'
5	p ^h ant ^h ao 'brinjal' + bilat ^h i 'hybrid'	p ^h ant ^h ao bilat ^h i 'tomato'

Table 11: Bodo noun-adjective compounds

1.4.2.7 Verb-Adjective Compound:

It is a type of compound adjectives, which is a combination of a verb and an adjective. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	za 'eat' + guudan 'new'	zaguudan 'neweaten'
2	p ^h ui 'come' + guudan 'new'	p ^h uiguudan 'newcoming'

Table 12: Bodo verb-adjective compounds

1.4.2.8 Verb-Noun Compound:

It is compound noun which is derived from a verb and a noun. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	t ^h un 'draft' + lai 'leaf/page'	t ^h unlai 'literature'

Table 13: Bodo verb-noun compound

1.4.2.9 Noun-Onomatopoeia Compound:

It is combination of a noun and onomatopoeia, which is a compound noun. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	dao 'bird' + k ^h a 'noises of crow'	daok ^h a 'crow'
2	dao 'bird' + sri 'noises of house moina'	daosri 'house moina'

Table 14: Bodo noun-onomatopoeia compounds

1.4.2.10 Noun-Noun-Verb Compound:

It is a compound noun which is a combination of two different nouns and a verb. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	muiɔŋ 'green vegetable' + dui 'water' + ru 'boil'	muidrui 'boiled green vegetable'

Table 15: Bodo noun-noun-verb compound

1.4.2.11 Noun-Verb-Adverbial Suffix Compound:

It is a combination of a noun, a verb and an adverbial suffix, which forms a compound noun. For example-

SN	Structure	Compound
1	san 'sun' + zuo 'become high' + p ^{hu} 'continuing state of an action'	sanzuop ^{hu} 'midday'

Table 16: Bodo noun-verb-aspect compound

1.4.3 Order of Elements in the Bodo Compound Words:

Most natural languages have compound nouns though the word order parameter varies according to the language. The Bodo language is usually left-branching (the modifiers come before the head) when it comes to noun phrases. But, right-branching is also found in Bodo. Worth-mentioning that, if we look at some traditionally used compounds such as *hinazao gudan* 'bride', *huowa gudan* 'bridegroom', *got^ho gurlui* 'baby', etc. right-branching is found to see as usual. Thus, in Bodo, compound nouns are often formed by left-hand heads.

1.5 Conclusion:

Compounding occupies a considerable area in the formation of in the Bodo language. The compounds in Bodo are sub-grouped into four classes from the semantic point of view; and, at least, into eleven subtypes from the structural point of view, namely, *Pronoun-Noun Compound*, *Verb-Verb Compound*, *Noun-Noun Compound*, *Noun-Noun-Noun Compound*, *Noun-Verb Compound*, *Noun-Adjective Compound*, *Verb-Adjective Compound*, *Verb-Noun Compound*, *Noun-Onomatopoeia Compound*, *Noun-Noun-Verb Compound* and *Noun-Verb-Adverbial Suffix Compound*. Of them, the first three structures are very much productive whereas the last two structures are very much rare.

The typical compounds of the Bodo language are found in the derivation of kinship terms (both address and general terms) which take personal pronouns as their prefixes, species, class or category names such as name of fishes, animals, birds, etc. These compounds, in general, are of copulative type.

The Bodo language is usually left-branching (the modifiers come before the head) when it comes to noun phrases. But, right-branching is also found in Bodo. Worth-mentioning that, if we look at some traditionally used compounds such as *hinazao gudan*

‘bride’, *huowa gudan* ‘bridegroom’, *gɔt^hɔ guɾlɯi* ‘baby’, etc. right-branching is found to see as usual. Thus, in Bodo, compound nouns are often formed by left-hand heads.

Reference:

Baro, M.R., (1996). *Gwjwu Raokhanthi*. Priyadini Brahma, Hajo, Kamrup, Assam, India.

Brahma, A., (2012). *Modern Bodo Grammar*. N.L. Publications, Guwahati, India.

Online Resources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compound_\(linguistics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compound_(linguistics))

<http://sp.uconn.edu/~sih01001/202/fall2005/lecture12hdout.pdf>

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