

Verb Formation in Bodo and Koch Rabha Language: A Comparative Study

Bindu Basumatary, Research Scholar
Bodoland University, Kokrajhar
bindubasumatary0@gmail.com

Supervisor
Dr Indira Boro, Professor
Bodoland University, Kokrajhar.
indiraboro379@gmail.com

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Abstract

Northeastern States of India is a hub of various communities, ethnic groups and languages. Most of these languages have close affinities in the field of linguistic traits. These languages basically belong to the Sino-Tibetan language family. Among of these languages, Bodo and Koch Rabha belong to the cognate group of Tibeto-Burman groups of languages under the greater Sino-Tibetan Language Family. Linguistically, both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages have similarities in case of phonology, morphology, syntactic and semantically. The present paper intends to make a comparative study in the field of noun formation of Bodo and Koch Rabha languages and the similarities in its formation.

Keyword: Bodo, Koch Rabha, Language, Verb.

1.0 Introduction

Northeast India is the habitat of many tribes and ethnic groups with diverse ethnic origins. Linguists and scholars are of the opinion that the Bodo and Koch Rabha are known to be the cognate group of languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language under the greater Sino-Tibetan group of languages. The languages of Bodo and Rabha belong to the Bodo group of languages under the Bodo-Naga under the greater Assam-Burmese group of languages. There are different dialects in the Rabha group of languages viz. Rongdani, Koch, Maitori, Pati, Dahori,

Totla and Hana. From this point of view, it is observed that there are linguistic similarities between Bodo and Koch Rabha languages in verb formation.

1.1 Statement of the Problems

The languages of Bodo and Koch Rabha are independent languages which originated from the Bodo group of the Sino-Tibetan language family. In a similar way, Assam-Burmese group originated from the Tibeto-Burman and the Sino-Tibetan groups. The Bodo and Koch Rabha languages also originated from the Bodo-Naga group under the Assam-Burmese group. There are not only racial similarities between the Bodo and the Koch Rabha but also linguistic similarities. There are close similarities between the two languages in many respects. Therefore, the researcher has taken up this topic to make a comparative study on the similarities of verb formation.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are-

- (i) To study the formation of the Bodo verb.
- (ii) To study the formation of Koch Rabha verb.
- (iii) To study the linguistics affiliation and differentiation of verb formation of the Bodo and Koch Rabha.

1.3 Review of Literature

Researchers have done in different fields like culture, religion, customs and language of Boro, Rabha and Koch Rabha dialects. Some of these books related to this topic are-

- (a) Basumatary Pukhan Ch.: Boro Raoni Mohorkhanthi (2000), Gumur Publication, Dhirenpara, GHY-25.
- (b) Bhattacharya, P.C.: A Descriptive Analysis of the Boro Language (1977), Deptt. of Publication, Gauhati University.
- (c) Brahma, MusukaBala: Bodo Rabha Vocabulary
- (d) Brahma, MusukaBala: Comparative Study of Bodo, Garo and Rabha Phonology.
- (e) Koch, Jibeswar: Rabha Dialects: A Linguistics Study.

- (f) Lokobok, Romeo Rwtin: English-Koch Rabha Language (A learners' Handbook).
- (g) Rabha, Rupak Kumar: Language Shift and Language Maintenance Amongst the Rabhas of Meghalaya.

In reference to the present topic, the researcher has not seen any such specific book or study material on the comparative study of verb formation of Bodo and Koch Rabha languages.

1.4 Data Collection and Methodology

The work would be on the comparative study of noun formation of Boro and Koch Rabha languages from a linguistic perspective. The study would confine to the Kokrajhar district only. The study would be carried out by data collection from the primary and secondary sources.

2.0 Discussion

The term *Verb* denotes the meaning of action, state, or occurrence. It is an integral part of the parts-of-speech. Verb functions an important role in morphology and syntax. In Bodo and Koch Rabha languages, the verb may necessarily carry tense, aspect and negative markers. However, it is to be noted that the verb may be changed into the other class of words. This process may be called derivation. In both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages the verb may be classified into two categories:

- (i) Basic verbs, and
- (ii) Derivational verb.

2.1 Basic verb

Generally, the basic verbs are called verb roots. The verbs which are not fractioned in smallest meaningful segments are called verb roots or basic verbs. Structurally the phonemic structure of the verb both Bodo and Koch Rabha language can be found in the following phonemic structure-

- (i) Monosyllabic basic verb and
- (ii) Disyllabic basic verb

2.1.1 Monosyllabic Basic Verbs

The monosyllabic verbs of both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages are found in the following phonemic structures VC, CV, CVV, CVC in Bodo and CV' CVV' CVC in Koch Rabha. The examples are given below-

Bodo:

VC. un 'to reduce to powder'

or 'bite'

er 'to increase'

on 'to love'

CV. kha 'to plough'

za 'eat'

tha 'stay',

kha 'to bind'

CVV. zau 'to dig',

sau 'to burn',

mao 'do'

CVC. khar 'run',

bar 'to jump',

nar 'to press',

khon 'to collect'

Koch Rabha

CV. sa 'to eat'

so 'to measure'

si 'to die'

la 'to take'

phu 'to pour'

CVV. saa 'to pain'

sui 'to see'

lau 'to give'

phui 'to come'

lui 'to go'

CVC. ham 'to burn'

buth 'to pull'

zur 'run away'

luŋ 'to sing'

suŋ 'to ask'

From the above examples of both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages, it is seen that in Koch Rabha language there is no single verb beginning with vowel phoneme in comparison to Bodo language.

2.1.2 Disyllabic Basic Verb

In both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages the disyllabic verbs are found in the following morphophonemic structure- V-CV, V-CVV, V-CVC, VV-CV, VC-CV, CV-CV, CV-CVC, CV-CVC, CV-CVV, CVC-CVC etc. in Bodo and CV-CV, CV-CVV, CV-CVC, CVC-CV, CVC-CVV, CVC-CVC etc. in Koch Rabha language. Examples of both languages are given below-

Bodo-

V-CV. e-lo 'to take out'

u-si 'to overflow'

V-CVV.	a-luu ‘to spicy’
	u-khwi ‘to hungry’
V-CVC.	e-rɔn ‘to go out’
	a-zaw ‘to catch’
VV-CV	au-li ‘to melt’
	au-thi ‘to melt by boiling’
VC-CV.	er-lu ‘to poke’
	er-kho ‘to take out’
CV-CV.	si-gi ‘to
	phi-si ‘to make wet’
CV-CVC.	za-laj ‘to eat and go’
CV-CVV.	dugwi ‘to bath’
CVC-CVC.	khao-laj ‘to request’

Koch Rabha-

	uŋɔ
CV-CV.	la-sa ‘to accept’
	la-ha ‘to bring’
CV-CVV.	ma-nai ‘to obey’
	ba-khai ‘to throw’
CV-CVC.	la-laj ‘to take away’
	da-phakh ‘be light’
CVC-CV.	dil-la ‘loosen’
CVV-CVV.	phai-lau ‘to distribute’

sui-lau 'to watch'

CVC-CVV. dun-lau 'to inform'

If observed the above examples of disyllabic patterns both Bodo and Koch Rabha language that some syllable patterns are not available in Bodo or Koch Rabha, such that syllabic patterns are- V-CV, V-CVV, V-CVC, VV-CV, VC-CV, and VC-CVC are not available in Koch Rabha language, whereas the syllabic patterns CVC-CV, CVV-CVV and CVC-CVV are not available in Bodo language. It is also seen that in Koch Rabha like monosyllabic basic verb the disyllabic basic verb also not begin with the vowel phonemes.

2.2 Derivational Verb

In the case of derivational verb in Bodo and Koch Rabha language the verbs are formed by adding affixes with verb roots and by compounding with verb roots. In these regards in derivational verb the formation of verbs both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages can be discussed under the two heads-

- a) By Affixation and
- b) By Compounding

2.2.1 By Affixation

In this method of verb formation in Bodo and Koch Rabha language, there are lots of affixes to form the verb in both the languages. These affixes can be discussed under two heads.

- a) Prefixation and
- b) Suffixation

2.2.1.1 Prefixation

The prefix is an affix that is added before the root words to denote the meaning. Bodo and Koch Rabha both the languages have limited number of verbal prefixes in comparison to suffix. These are- {bi-}, {phɔ-}, {si-}, {su-} in Bodo and {da-}, {tha-}, {ma-} in Koch Rabha. As discussed in the below:

Bodo-

{bi-}: This prefix is added with limited numbers of verbs to form another new verb in Bodo language and when it is combined with the verbs it indicates the meaning of 'to make', 'to cause to'. As for examples-

bi- + v. si (to torn) > bisi (totear)

bi- + v. zir (to peel) > bizir (to make peel)

{pho-}: This prefix is also added to verb in Bodo language to form verb again. The examples are given below-

pho- + v. dom (to bent) > phodom (to make bent)

pho- + v. raj (to utter) > phoraj (to read)

pho- + v. zo (to sit) > phozo (to cause to sit) etc.

{si-}: This is also a prefix that attached to verb to form the new verb In Bodo language this prefix is added to verb to form new verb and it denote the meaning of 'to do', or 'to make'. As for examples-

si- + v. gi (to fear) > sigi (to make afraid)

si- + v. phaj (to bend) > siphaj (to make broken) etc.

{su-}: It is a prefix that is appended to a limited number of verbs in Bodo language. It is attached with verb to represent the meaning of 'to do' 'to make', 'to cause to'. As for examples-

su- v. gab (to cry) > sugab (to make cry)

su- v. maw (to tremble) > sumaw (to make move)

Koch Rabha-

{da-}: This prefix is added before a verb in Koch Rabha language to form another verb. Like {bi-}, {pho-} and {phu-} of Bodo language, {da-} prefix in Koch Rabha language is used to represent the meaning of 'to make', 'to cause to'. The examples are given below-

da- + v. phakh (light) > daphakh (be light)

da- + v. ban (to take in soldier) > daban (to forget)

{**tha-**}: This prefix is also appended before a verb to form the new verb. It is a negative marker of the Koch Rabha language. The examples are given below-

tha- + v. la (to take) > thala (don't take)

tha- + v. phui (to come) > haphui (don't come)

tha- + v. bakh (to speak) > thabakh (don't speak)

{**ma-**}: It is a prefix attached to the verb in Koch Rabha to form the verb again. The examples are given below-

ma- + v. naj (to move) > manaj (to obey)

ma- + v. raj (to roll) > maraj (to make round)

{**dun-**}: It is also a prefix of the Koch Rabha which is added with verb root to form a new verb. As for example-

dun- + v. lau (to give) > dunlau (to inform)

2.2.1.2 Suffixation

The suffixation method is also a kind of formation of verb in Bodo and Koch Rabha language. In comparison to Bodo language the verbal suffixes of the Koch Rabha is very limited in number. The details of suffixes are given below-

Bodo-

{**-kħo**}: The suffix is used to verb to form verb again. This suffix is used to denote the meaning of 'to release' and 'to separate'. Examples are given below-

v. er (to stir) -kħo > erkħo (to bring out)

v. kheb (to pinch) -kħo > khebkħo (to release by pinching out)

{-kha}: In Bodo this suffix is added after the verb to form another verb. The suffix {-kha} is used to convey a meaning separate from something else; it may be cutting, pulling, digging, etc. As for examples-

v. er (to stir) –kha > erkha (to stir out)

v. zaw (to dig) –kha > zawkha (to dig out)

{-khe}: It is the verbal suffix, attached to the verb to form the verb. When used with root it represents the meaning of ‘a side’. For example-

v. er (to pull) + –khe > erkhe (to take aside)

v. dan (to cut) + –khe > dankhe (to cut aside)

{-khu}: This suffix is appended after the verb to form other verb. The suffix is used to denote the meaning ‘upwards’. Examples are given below-

v. buu (to pull) + -khu > buukhu (to pull up)

v. khan (to comb) + -khu > khankhu (to dress hair)

{-khaŋ}: The suffix is added after the verb to form another verb. The suffix {-khaŋ} is used to express the meaning of ‘finished’, ‘completed’. In addition to the above mentioned ones, sometime the suffix {-khaŋ} is also used to express the meaning of ‘up’ and ‘increase’. The examples are given below-

v. la (to take) + –khaŋ > lakhaŋ (to have taken)

v. maw (to do) + –khaŋ > mawkhaŋ (to complete)

v. za (to be) + –khaŋ > zakhaŋ (to come up/to grow up)

v. zaw (to dig) + –khaŋ > zawkhaŋ (to dig out)

{-khrɔb}: This suffix is appended to form verb from new verb. When used with verb it represents the meaning ‘to make tight/to minimize’. As examples-

v. buu (to pull) + –khrɔb > buukhrɔb (to pull together)

v. kha (to tie) + –khrɔb > khakhrɔb (to tie together)

The suffixes mention in the above examples there are {-khran}, {-khlɔ}, {-khlaj}, {-khlej}, {-pha} and so on suffixes are appended with the verb roots in Bodo language to form new verbs.

Koch Rabha-

{-lan}: It is a verbal suffix of the Koch Rabha language which is added to verb root to form another new verb. When used with the verb it represents the meaning of ‘to take away’. Examples are given below-

v. la (to take) + –lan > lalan (to take away)

{-thɔkh}: This suffix is appended with verb roots to form another verb. After adding with verb it is denote the meaning ‘take out’ in Koch Rabha. For example-

v. dɔg (out) + –thɔkh > dɔgthɔkh (to take out)

{-khai}: This suffix is added to the verb root to form the verb in Koch Rabha. It is denote the meaning ‘taste’ in Koch Rabha language. For example-

v. sa (to eat) + –khai > sakhai (to taste)

v. ba (to carry on back)+ –khai > bakhai (to throw)

2.2.2 By Compounding

It is also a primary way of forming the verbs in Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. In this compounding, two or more words are combined to form a new verb in both languages. The formation verb by compounding in Bodo and Koch Rabha language can be expressed as given below-

(a) Verb + Verb

A verb can be formed by combining two verbs in the Bodo and Koch Rabha language. Examples are given below-

Bodo-

mawlaŋ (to do and go) < maw (to do) + laŋ (to take away)

zaphui (come and eat) < za (to eat) + phui (come)

ergar (to throw away) < er (to stir) + gar (to leave/to throw)

zalaŋ (to go after eating) < za (to eat) + laŋ (to take away)

khonza (to pick up and eat) khon (to pick up) + za (to eat) etc.

Koch Rabha-

suilau (to watch) < sui (to see) + lau (to give)

lausa (don't give) < lau (to give) + sa (to eat)

badalau (make prohibit) < bada (prohibited) + lau (to give)

sanaj (to eat and go) < sa (eat) + naj (take) etc.

As mentioned above in the examples of both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages, the two verbs are combined to form the verb again. If observed the above examples it can be found that sometimes both verbs are head words (co-ordinate) or neither head nor modifier words (exocentric), or either a head or a modifier word (endocentric) in both the languages. Taking two Bodo words 'ergar' and 'khonza' show that both have two base –'er-gar' and 'khon-za'; but there is no modifying word, both are found as head word.

b. Verb + Verb + Verb

It is possible in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages that a verb can be formed by combining three verb roots. For example-

Bodo-

lanphuizuub (to come and take all) laŋ (to take) + phui (to come) + zuub (to finish)

thanphuizuub (to come and go all) < thaŋ (to go) + phui (to come) + zuub (to finish)

zazublaŋ (to finish eating and go away) < za (to eat) + zuub (to finish) + laŋ (to take)

Koch Rabha-

lalaŋphuui (to come and take all) <la (to take) + laŋ (to take away) + phuui (to come)

sanaŋphuui (to come and eat all) <sa (to eat) + naŋ (to take) + phuui (to come)

In the above examples, it is seen that three verb roots are combined to form a new verb in both languages. If these examples are analyzed a semantic head and a modifier could be found. These are- ‘za, thaŋ, la, laŋ’ respectively used as head word in Bodo and Koch Rabha language because these are the principal key of the compound verb. Whereas other verb roots are attributes that modify the whole meaning.

3.0 Conclusion

Verb formation in Bodo and Koch Rabha languages has lots of similarities in the verb and verb formation. In the case of basic verbs in both the languages we find monosyllabic and disyllabic patterns. The derivational verb formation is found in two types- by affixation and compounding in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. From the above discussion we find that verbs in Bodo and Koch Rabha languages are formed by adding prefixes and suffixes with verb roots and also by combining two or three verbs. In Bodo language the verbs begin with both vowel and consonant phonemes. While in Koch Rabha, the verbs begin only with consonant phonemes.

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**Bindu Basumatary, Research Scholar
Bodoland University, Kokrajhar
bindubasumatary0@gmail.com**



**Dr Indira Boro, Professor
Bodoland University, Kokrajhar.
indiraboro379@gmail.com**