

Compound in Bodo: A Morphological View Point

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Abstract: *The paper aims at analyzing compound formation of Bodo, a language of Bodo-Garo group of Sino-Tibetan Speech family of North-East India. In the language among many processes of lexical composition compound formation bears a significant role and exhibits its productivity prominently. But this interesting compound formation of the language is so far neglected in the linguistic study of the language. Therefore, this paper intends to provide a new insight to the compound formation of the language.*

Key words: *Bodo language, lexis, compound, morphology, typology.*

I. Introduction

Bodo is a language of Tibeto-Burman group of Sino-Tibetan Speech Family spoken in North East India mainly in the state of Assam. The speakers of this language are found concentrated in the northern valley of mighty River Brahmaputra. They constitute a very important ethnic group with their rich cultural heritage among the heterogeneous group of people in the zone. Besides, a sizable number of speakers of this language are also found in neighboring foreign countries like Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh. At present it may be estimated that Bodo language is spoken as mother tongue by more than 2 million people in South-East Asia. Many scholars in linguistics place their origin mainland in Himalayan plateau in Central Asia mainly in Tibet-China. They are thought to have migrated to North-East India from Central Asia in around 5000 B.C. Reverend Sidney Endle (1997) attempted to account the origin of the Bodo Kachari by saying that *in feature and general appearance, they approximate very closely to the Mongolian type; and this would seem to point to Tibet and China as the original home of the race*[Rev. Sedney Endle, 1997:3].

Bodo language gained its scheduled language status of the Indian constitution in 2003. Morphologically this language is characterized by agglutinating typology. If bound morphemes are taken into account up to seven constituents are found to be joined together to construct new word in the language. The language uses mainly two types of tone namely- (a) High Tone and (b) Low Level Tone. Based on intonation a word of same orthography can represent two different meanings of different contexts in the language. It is a verb-ending language following S-O-V syntactic pattern.

II. A Conceptual Overview on Compound

In morphology compound is realized as a word formed by the combination of two or more independent words. In the opinion of David Crystal (2008) compound *refers to a linguistic UNIT which is composed of elements which function independently in other circumstances.* J.Toman (1992) is of the opinion that *'compound is a morphologically complex word containing at least two elements, which can otherwise occur as a free form'*. Straightly speaking compound is derived word formed by the combination of morphological units (elements) and it functions as independent word in the language.

In morphological study dealing with the compound word is not a new subject. The first study toward the compound words dates back to the 5th Century B.C. Panini, a scholar of ancient India was the oldest grammarian who dealt with the compound formation for the first time ever in the history of language study. He studied Sanskrit language and brought many compounding devices of the language to light. Another Sanskrit grammarian Patanjali also observed compound formation of the language in 2nd Century B.C. Both of them developed some mechanisms through their study which are still getting applied as technologies in studying words by many linguists. Bahuvrihi (exocentric compound), tatpuruṣa (determinative), dvandva (coordinative compound) are mentionable in this regard. Even today many linguists still take look and discuss from those perspectives in studying compound formation of languages.

III. Types of Compound in Bodo

Compounding is the most productive morphological process of word formation of Bodo language. The compound words of the language can be discussed classifying into the following compounding types.

1. Pure compound
2. Hybrid compound
3. Borrowed compound
4. Copulative compound
5. Bahuvrihi (exocentric) compound

3.1 Pure compound

Here, pure compound is used to refer to the type of compound that formed by languages' own words. Most of the words of Bodo language formed by compounding process are pure compounds in structure. Pure compound of the language are found to be of different word classes like noun, verb, adjective, etc. In the formation of pure compound words of those classes different words of different classes may take part as components in word syntagm. Pure compound of the language can be discussed classifying into the following compound formations.

3.1.1 Compound Noun

Compound noun is extensively used in the language. In the formation of compound noun the words which are combined together belong to different word classes. The combination of words which is taking place in the formation of noun in the language can be determined by the following compounding processes-

Noun + Noun: Noun

The process of combining noun with noun also constitutes a good number of nouns of Bodo vocabulary. Specimens are- n. gaŋ (wing)-n. guma (grasshopper)>n. gaŋgoma (one kind of winged grasshopper) sɔɔ (story)- k^hɔnt^hai> sɔɔ-k^hɔnt^hai (epic), ap^ha (foot)- n. k^hi (stool)> n. ap^hak^hi (footprint), n. hi (cloth)-n. sɔri (rag)> n. hisri (rag), n. ɔr (fire)- n. salai (tongue)> n. ɔrsalai (flame), etc.

Noun + Adjective: Noun

Combination of noun and adjective is also one of the processes that used in the formation of compound noun in the language. But the nouns formed by this process are not abundant in number in the language. Example- n. nɔ (house)- adj. blaŋ (wide open)> n. nɔblaŋ (auditorium), etc.

Adjective + Noun: Noun

Formerly, the language had not the noun formation process by combining adjective with noun. But presently this process has been accepted in the language through direct translation. Noun formed by this process is rare in the language. Here for illustration a term 'greenhouse' can be mentioned that has been translated in Bodo as gu^htaŋnɔ keeping the meaning and structure intact i.e.- gu^htaŋ (green)- nɔ (house)> gu^htaŋnɔ (greenhouse).

Verb + Verb: Noun

This is also a compounding process of noun available in the language. The noun formed by this process is rarest in example. The author has found only one example till date in this regard. That is **zanbuŋ**, a noun word coined for denotation of mobile (cell phone) which is composed of two different verbs. The initial verb is **zan** meaning *to distance* and final verb **buŋ** meaning *to say or tell*. Thus, v. zan (to distance)- v. buŋ (to say or tell)> n. zanbuŋ (mobile). Here, the word has been coined being laid emphasis on its action as it makes conversation possible of different distant places.

Noun + Verb: Noun

The noun coming out from the combination of noun and verb also constitutes a considerable amount of words to the Bodo vocabulary. For examples: n.dau (fowl)- v.dui (to lay egg)> n. dauui (egg), n. ha (soil)- v. zuu (be high)> n. hazu (mountain), n. ha (soil)- v. sib (to sweep)> n. hasib (broom), n. si (cloth)- v. ba (to take on back)> n. sibba (an wooden or bamboo frame used for keeping cloths), san (sun)-duŋ (to heat)> sanduŋ (sunlight), b^hum (earth)-su (to measure)> b^humsu (geometry) etc.

Verb + Noun: Noun

Verb plus noun is also one compounding process used in forming noun of Bodo. The noun formed by this process is abundantly found in the language. e.g. v. k^han (to comb)-n. zɔŋ (spear)> n. k^hanzɔŋ (comb), v. maɔ (to work)- n. t^haŋk^hi (aim)> n. maɔt^haŋk^hi (action plan), v. san (to imagine)-n. simaŋ (dream)> n. sansimaŋ (fantasy), v.za (to happen)-thai (fruit)> zathai (incident), v. dank^hɔ (to extract)-n, t^hai (fruit)> dank^hɔt^hai

(extraction). v. muzu (to spit)-n. dui (water)> muzudui (spit. It is also used as zumudui by mutually changing the two syllable of the verb.

Noun +Noun +Noun: Noun

The compound noun that contains up to three noun is also very few in number. To exemplify only one word has been found out till date. The word is- **barduisik^hla**. In Bodo, *bar* means wind, *dui* means water and *sik^hla* represents damsel or young girl. The combination of these three nouns forms the compound noun *barduisik^hla* (n.bar-n.dui-n.sik^hla) which denotes goddess of storm and wind. It is noteworthy that neighboring Assamese language has an etymological relation to this word *bar-dui-sik^hla* for its word *b̄r-d̄i-silā* whose meaning is storm in its language. Bar-dui-sik^hla is popularly known and believed to be a goddess having a power to create storm in the sky. According to a traditional belief of Bodo when she comes on earth, comes in the form of storm flying her black hair in the wind in devastating mood.

Noun + Verb + Noun: Noun

Though the noun plus verb plus noun compounding process is not widely seen used in forming compound noun in the language, some compound nouns appear to form the set of words following process. The one example can be mentioned in this regard is- ək^hahadui. The structure of the word is- n. ək^ha (rain)-v. ha (to rain)-n. dui (water)> n. ək^hahadui (rain water/ rain drop).

Pronoun + Verb + Noun: Noun

The noun formed by the combination of pronoun + verb + noun is rare of the rarest example in the language. One such language in the language is Pron.(3SG.) bi (he/she)- v. hui (to give)- n. t^hai (fruit)> n. bihut^hai (contribution). The pronoun here is 3rd person singular number pronoun. Here, it needs to be clarified that though this compound noun starts with the 3rd person singular number, it is used by all the persons when used in sentence in isolation. Let us consider the following sentences.

- Example-1: Aṅni/zuṅni bihut^hai
[My/our contribution]
Example-2: Nuṅni/ nwiṅsurni bihut^hai
[Your contribution]
Example-3: Bini/bisurni bihut^hai
[His/their contribution]

3.1.2 Compound Adjective

Compound adjective is very rare in example. The only one encountered example of compound adjective in the language is *dansraṅ* which is composed of two words. The compounding structure is noun plus adjective i.e.- n. dan(month)-adj.sraṅ (light)> adj.dansraṅ (moonlit). The word *dansraṅ* is constructed linking to the nature of the Moon. When the Moon appears in the form of full moon the light lit by it becomes bright and shiny. As moonlit is attributed by the cyclical nature (of a period of one month) of the Moon the two words *dan* (month) and *sraṅ* (bright) have been compounded to denote moonlit.

3.1.3 Compound Verb

Compound verb of this language strictly follows a rule in its construction. Compound verb in the language is formed by the combination of verb class of words; it never takes other classes of words in its formation. In the componential structure of compound verb of the language mono-morphemic verbs occur as constituents in a chain system being agglutinated one after another. A few specimens are given below-

Verb + Verb: Verb

za (to eat) + p^htui (to come)> v. zap^htui (come and eat)

Verb + Verb + Verb: Verb

mao (to do) + zuob (to finish) + p^htui (to come)> v. maozuobp^htui (come and do completely)

Verb +Verb +Verb +Verb: Verb

Za (to eat) + laṅ (to take away) + zuob (to finish) + p^htui (to come) > v. zalaṅzuobp^htui (come and eat completely) etc.

In this compounding structure the meaning of the compounded verbs are expressed collectively to denote different extended meanings of the newly constructed word.

3.2 Hybrid Compound

Bodo language also has accepted the process of hybridization to some extent to expand its vocabulary. *Mat^higaldab* is hybrid word that formed by the combination of two words – *mat^hi* and *galdab*. *Mati* is Assamese

word denoting soil and *galdab* is Bodo word which means flat. *Mat^higaldab* is that variety of edible leafy vegetables found rooted on soil spreading its flat leaves. In Bodo there is no use of unaspirated alveolar voiced stop 't' sound. That is why during hybridization in lieu of 't' sound the aspirated alveolar voiceless stop sound 't^h' has been used to suit their articulation (e.g. *mati-galdab*>*mat^hi-galdab*). *Narasiya* is another hybrid word that composed of *nara* (Bd. straw) and *siya* (Ass. to reap). *Narasiya* is the seasonal festival related to harvest of crop that performed in Bodo society during harvest. After this festival farmers do not have any work for harvesting again during the season. Because, at the time of *narasiya*, all crops are harvested successfully. Besides above mentioned hybrid words the language uses some hybrid words that contain two different words from two different languages. Neither of the components belongs to Bodo language. A few specimens are-

Sanskrit. *rasa* (liquid) + Bangla. *golla* (round shaped dish) > *rasagolla* (one kind of Indian sweet dish)

Hindi. *lat^hi* (stick) + Eng. *charge* (formal accusation)> n. *lat^hicharge* (an action taken by police personnel to scatter demonstrators by using *lat^hi* (stick) especially beating them)

3.3 Borrowed compound

Bodo language presently uses some words borrowed from English language which are compound in structure. The words like breakfast, bathroom, blackboard, etc. are good examples in this regard.

3.4 Copulative compound

Copulative compound is that type of compound where two components are joined by copula but the copula (i.e. 'or', 'and') does not occur in the compounding structure. Most of the copulative compound words are expressed being inserted hyphen in between its coordinate components. That is why such compound may be termed as hyphenated compound. The copulative compounds used in Bodo are found to be of noun + noun, adjective + adjective, verb + verb structures.

Noun + Noun:

[ha-dui] 'soil and water'
[san-hor] 'day and night'

Adjective + Adjective:

[muzaŋ-gazri] 'good and bad'
[undui-geder] 'small and big'

Verb + Verb:

[za-undu] 'eat and sleep'
[t^hui-t^har] 'do or die'

3.5 Bahuvrihi compound

Bahuvrihi compound is composed of two different components of different meanings. But neither the meanings of the components of bahuvrihi are retained after compounding. Instead, it denotes another meaning especially character of a person that he/she possesses. Some bahuvrihi compound of Bodo language may be illustrated with the following examples-

n. *ak^hai* (hand)- adj. *gulao* (long)> n. *ak^hai-gulao* (powerful)

n. *bik^ha* (heart)- adj. *guar* (wide)> n. *bik^ha-guar* (kind-hearted)

IV. Conclusion

Compounding is highly productive device of Bodo language. There can be found good number of compound words in the language. Compound words used in the language follow different structural processes in their construction. In this regard pure compound, hybrid compound, copulative compound, exocentric compound (bahuvrihi), borrowed compound, etc. are mentionable. Based on different structures compound words in this language sometime formed by contraction and sometime by morphophonemic alternation. In modern day Bodo language many more compounds are formed by different morphological processes to fulfill various needs occurred in the language. From the overall discussion of the topic it can be summed up that though the language has accepted different morphological processes in producing different type of compound words the language's peculiarity and purity is maintained to a great extent.

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