



Kinship Terminology Of Rabha And Bodo Language: A Comparative Study

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Abstract: The Bodo and Rabha language are related in several ways including their origin, linguistic similarity and kinship system. Both Bodo and Rabha languages originated from the Bodo Naga group of the Assam-Burmese group which is the part of the Sino-Tibetan language family. Kinship is the expression of social relationship. Kinship may be defined as connection or relationship between person based on marriage and blood.

The Bodo and Rabha people are mainly found in Assam and its adjacent areas. As these communities are from the same group, their language shares similarities in many aspects like language culture, social system and so on.

Keywords: Rabha Kinship term, Bodo Kinship term, Similarities of Bodo and Rabha Kinship term.

Methodology: The present study of “Kinship terminology of Rabha and Bodo language : a comparative study” is mainly presented in descriptive and comparative method. Data collection process has been done through primary and secondary data collection source. For primary data collection I conducted some field work in some Rabha and Bodo areas. Books, Documents, Articles and other references were reviewed as a part of secondary data collection.

Introduction: Rabha and Bodo language originated from Tibeto-Burman group of greater Sino-Tibetan Language family. The Bodo and Rabha people are found mainly in Assam and its adjacent areas, North-Bengal part of West Bengal, Nepal and Bangladesh. As these communities are from the same Group, their languages share similarities in many aspects like language, culture, social system and so on. Both the languages are spoken in the same geographical area of Assam and its neighboring areas and the language duo influence each other.

The fact is that kinship plays a pivotal role in a society and foundation of kinship is the familial relation. In fact, family is the fundamental unit of the society. Without family a society cannot be imagined. Family is something that shapes the behaviour of its member, inculcate social values in them and teaches the members its language. It is observed that both the Rabha and Bodo people share some similarities in addressing familial and social relation. The speakers of these two languages use some similar terms to address various kith and kin. This is, may be, on account of same origin of both the languages.

Thus similarities between the two languages also exist. The similarities and dissimilarities between these two languages observed in case of morphological terms of the language. Kinship terms is a small category of morphology but an integral part of morphological terms for each and every language. Along with the language importance of kinship terms for society is also significant. Kinship terms strengthen the social boundary of the society.

Kinship terminology of Rabha and Bodo language:

Kinship terminology differs from society to society, but kinship terminology used in patriarchal and matriarchal society are profoundly different. Even if two societies use same language but follow different languages, their kinship terminology also differ. Every society and linguistic group coins kinship terminology depending upon three things that are birth, marriage and social relation.

The kinship terms in a society are classified according to by birth, by marriage and by friendship. These terms are used mainly for terms address and terms references.

Here in this paper it is trying to discuss similarities and dissimilarities of kinship terms in Rabha and Bodo language in a comparative manner.

The kinship terms in Rabha and Bodo language are classified into three categories- by birth, by marriage and by friendship. E.g.

By birth:-

Rabha Kinship Terms

Aya	Mother
Baba	Father
Juju	Grandfather
Dada	Elder Brother
Fojongbra	Younger Brother
Bibi/Janong	Elder Sister
Jinong	Younger Brother
Bang-Bang	Uncle, Father's younger brother
Fajong	Uncle, Father's elder Brother
Bidi	Grandmother
Mami	Wife of Mother's elder/younger brother/ Father's elder/younger sister
Mama	Mother elder/younger brother/husband of father's elder/younger sister
Sabra musa	Son
Sabra mecha	Daughter

Bodo Kinship Terms

Ai	Mother
Apha	Father
Ada	Elder brother
Aba	Elder sister
Adwi	Father's younger brother
Abwi	Grandmother
Abuo	Grandfather
Amai	Mother's elder/younger/husband of father's elder/younger sister
Anwi	Wife of mother's elder/younger brother/father's elder/ younger sister

By marriage:-**Rabha Kinship Terms:**

Ewmba	Husband
Michik	Wife
Nebramusa	Father-in-law
Nebra mecha	Mother-in-law
Jajibra	Wife & husband's elder/younger brother
Jonkhobra	Husband's younger brother
Nwnwngebra	Husband's younger sister
Nusibra	Wife's sister
Khusibra	Wife's brother
Fobra	Husband's elder brother
Baibugila	Younger brother's wife
Sadu	Husband of wife's younger sister
Da	Husband of wife's elder sister
Bwibra	Daughter-in-law
Jongbra	Son-in-law

Bodo Kinship Terms:

P ^h isai	Husband
Bisi	Wife
Bihao	Father-in-law
Bik ^h unjw	Mother-in-law
Bijaojali	Wife of husband's elder/younger brother
Bibwnang	Husband's younger brother/sister
Bewai	Husband's elder brother/younger brother's wife
Bihamjw	Daughter-in-law
Bijamdwi	Son-in-law
Salthe	Husband of wife's elder/younger sister

By Friendship Rabha Kinship Terms:

Sikhi	Socially recognized friend, girl
Lwga	Friend
Sokha	Socially recognized friend, boy
Tawai	Father's socially recognized friend or socially recognized father's friend
Amoi	Father's socially recognized friend's wife or socially recognized mother's friend

By Friendship Bodo Kinship Terms:

Bisigi	Boy's socially recognized friend
Bilw gw	Girl's socially recognized friend
Lw gw	Friend

In Rabha kinship terms in a family can represent six generations starting from juju-chung/bidi-chung(great grandmother/father) to 'Thebra'. These are:-

1. Juju-chung/ Bidi-chung (great grandfather/grandmother)
2. Juju/bidi (grandfather/grandmother)
3. Aya/Baba (mother/father)
4. Sabra-buribra/sabra mecha-jangbra (Son daughter-in-law/daughter son-in-law)
5. Subra musa-mecha (grandson-daughter)
6. Thebra masa-mecha (great grandson-daughter)

On the other hand in Bodo it is nine generation. In Bodo language there is kinship terms that represent relation beyond juju-chung/bidi chung. The kinship terms in Bodo starting from Siayong(mother/father of great grandfather/mother) to Siayong(son/daughter of great grandson/daughter). The Siayong represents both genders. These nine generations are:-

1. Siayong (mother/father of great grandfather/mother)
2. Ayong (great grandmother/father)
3. Abuo-abwi (grandfather/grandmother)
4. Ai-ap^ha (mother-father)
5. Gao/ang (self/I)
6. P^hisazla-p^hsazw(son-daughter)
7. Phiswuzla-p^hishwuzw (grandson-granddaughter)
8. Ayong (great grandson/great grand daughter)
9. Siayong (son/daughter of great grandson/granddaughter)

In Bodo to specify one or more precisely some adjective words such as genderdersin(elder), gejer (middle) and undwi (young) are used before kinship terms. These words are also found in Rabha language such as chungkai (elder), majarkai(middle) and mwlkai(young). They are used after kinship terms. E.g.:-

Rabha	Bodo	English
Dada mwlkai	Ada undwi	Youngest elder brother
Bibi majarkai	Abo gejer	Middle elder sister
Bujichunkai	Bajwigeder	Elder sister-in-law

In fact Bodo language has a kinship terms representing many relations. But in Rabha language has kinship terms for each and every relation. For example:-

Rabha	Bodo	English
Fajong	Ayong	Father's elder brother
Aichung	Ayong	Wife of father's elder brother
Aichumg	Ayong	Mother's elder sister
Fajong	Ayong	Husband of mother's elder sister
Jujuchung	Ayong	Great grandfather/grandmother
Thebra	Ayong	Great grandson/granddaughter
Fobra	Bewai	Husband's elder brother
Baibugila	Bewai	Younger brother's wife
Anang	Bewai	Wife's elder sister
Bunjangai	Bewai	Younger sister's husband
Jongkhobra	Bibwnang	Husband's younger brother
Nwmungbra	Bibwnang	Husband's younger sister
Nusibra	Bibwnang	Wife's younger sister

Rabha and Bodo also have similarities in kinship terms. The Rabha language also have kinship terms which represent many relationships. But do not have such kinship terms. These are as follows:-

Rabha	Bodo	English
Mama	Amai	Mother's elder/ younger brother
Mama	Amai	Husband of father's elder/younger sister
Mani	Anwi	Father's elder/younger sister
Mani	Anwi	Wife of mother's elder/younger brother
Bangbang	Adwi	Father's younger brother
Bangbang	Adwi	Husband of mother's younger sister
Amang	Madwi	Mother's younger sister
Amang	Madwi	Wife of father's younger brother
Fajong	Ayong	Father's elder brother
Fajong	Ayong	Husband of mother's elder sister
Aichung	Ayong	Wife of father's elder brother
Aichung	Ayong	Mother's elder sister

In Rabha based on person a kinship terms takes three different forms. In Rabha language 1st person, 2nd person, 3rd person are added as prefix to make kinship terms. For example:-

Baba (Father)		
1 st person	2 nd person	3 rd person
Angi baba	Nangi baba/nang baba	Uni babra

Aya (Mother)		
1 st person	2 nd person	3 rd person
Angiaya (my mother)	Nangiaya/nangaya (your mother)	Uni jibra (his/her mother)

In Rabha language kinship terms takes two forms based on person. 1st and 2nd person has some kinship terms, on the other hand 3rd person are added a prefix (-bra) to make kinship terms.

In Bodo based on person a kinship terms takes three different forms. For example:-

Ada (Elder Brother)		
1 st person	2 nd person	3 rd person
Angniada(Elder brother)	Nwngninwngda (Your elder brother)	Bini bida (His/her elder brother)

Apha (Father)		
1 st person	2 nd person	3 rd person
Angniap ^{ha} (my father)	Nwngninwmp ^{ha} (your father)	Bini bip ^{ha} (his/her father)

In Bodo by adding words zw, zwla, kinship terms are formed to represent masculine gender and feminine gender. In Rabha too, adding mecha, musa, kinship terms to represent different gender. These are as follows:-

In Bodo:-

Phisa + zwla = phiszwla (son)

Phisa + zw = Phisazw (daughter)

In Rabha:-

Subra + musa = subramusa (grandson)

Subra + mecha = subramecha (granddaughter)

Sabra + musa = sabramusa (Son)

Sabra + mecha =sabramecha (daughter)

In Bodo too make kinship terms for showing of respect/humble, some plural suffixes like ‘-mwn’ and ‘-phwn’ are added. For example:-aphamwn, amaisw-mwn, jwmng-phwn, e.t.c.

But in Rabha no such kinship terms are found.

In Bodo language, there are some relation, which are represented by more than one kinship terms. E.g. Father(ap^ha) which is shown by ‘ap^ha’ and ‘baba’. But in Rabha no such word are found.

From the above discussion it is seen that kinship terms in Rabha and Bodo languages has similarities more than dissimilarities. It is natural because Rabha and Bodo languages emerged from one language family. Kinship terms of Bodo like ada (brother), ap^ha/baba (father), ai (mother), bajwi (wife of elder brother) are seen as similar to kinship terms of Rabha language dada (brother), baba (father), aya (mother), buji (wife of elder brother) e.t.c.

The Bodo language has kinship terms to represent different age groups of relations. These are as follows:-

Elder Brother	Ada
Younger Brother	Phongbai
Elder Sister	Abo
Younger Sister	Binanao
Father's Elder Brother	ayong
Father's Younger Brother	Adwi/daduri etc.

On the other hand, the Rabha language has also kinship terms to represent different age groups of relations. For example:

Elder Brother	Dada
Younger Brother	Fajongbra
Elder Sister	Bibi
Younger Sister	Jinibra
Father's Elder Brother	Fajong
Father's Younger Brother	Bang Bang

In this way both Rabha and Bodo language from ancestor not only in case of kinship terms but also in various aspects like literature, culture, language through the medium of give and take maintains a sweet relation with each other.

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