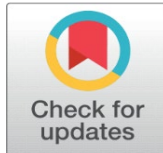
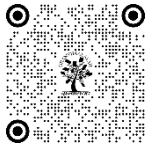


CLASSIFIERS OF BODO AND KOCH RABHA LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

The use of classifiers is a significant linguistic feature in many Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman languages, including Bodo and Koch Rabha languages spoken in North East India, mainly in Assam. Basically classifiers are grammatical elements used with numerals and numbers or quantifiers to categorize and quantify nouns based on their inherent characteristics such as shape, size or function. This abstract explores in Bodo and Koch Rabha languages, highlighting their similarities and unique aspects within the two linguistic systems. with the comparative methods of study.

Keywords: Bodo, Koch Rabha, language, Classifiers

1. INTRODUCTION

Bodo and Koch Rabha languages are belong to Sino-Tibetan language family. Both Bodo and Rabha spoken predominantly in Assam, India, are significant branches of the Bodo-Naga sub group of the Tibeto-Burman family under the greater Sino-Tibetan language family. Primarily Bodo is spoken by the Bodo people and Rabhais spoken by the Rabha people in Assam and other North Eastern states of India. There are different dialects in the Rabha group of languages viz. Rongdani, Koch, Maitori, Pati, Dahori, Totla and Hana. But, here the researcher wants to discuss the classifiers of Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. Generally, Bodo and Rabha languages are known as the cognate or sister languages because both the languages do belong to Tibeto-Burman branch of greater Sino-Tibetan language family. North East India is the habitat of many tribes and ethnic groups with diverse ethnic origins.

1.2 Statement of the problems: The exploration of the classifier systems in Bodo and Koch Rabha languages may provide valuable insights into their typological features and cultural underpinnings. This may reveal how these languages encode information about the physical world and social interactions. Furthermore, the study may contribute to the broader understanding of the Tibeto-Burman languages and may keep up in preserving the linguistic heritage of these two communities. Therefore, the researcher has taken up this topic to make a comparative study on the similarities and differentiation of classifiers of both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages.

1.3 Objectives of the study: The objectives of the study are:

- (i) To study the classifiers of Bodo language.
- (ii) To study the classifiers of Koch Rabha language.
- (iii) To study the similarities and differentiation of classifiers of both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages.

1.4 Review of Literature: A good number of researchers of both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages have done in different fields like culture, religion, customs and language. Some of these books related to the 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, Musuka Bala: (i) *Bodo Rabha Vocabulary* (ii) *Comparative Study of Bodo, Garo and Rabha Phonology*.
- (d) Koch, Jibeswar: *Rabha Dialects: A Linguistics Study*.
- (e) Lokobok, Romeo Rwtin: *English-Koch Rabha Language* (A learners' Handbook).
- (f) 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 classifiers of Bodo and Koch Rabha languages.

1.5 Data Collection and Methodology: The study would be carried out by data collection from the primary and secondary sources and the collected data of both the languages are discussed in comparative method. The researcher would collect the sources by visiting libraries and from the villagers of both the languages.

DISCUSSION

Classifiers are words or morphemes used with nouns to denote their type, shape, size or other inherent characteristics. Generally, it refers to grammatical or lexical markers used to categorize nouns based on their semantic or physical characteristics. Classifiers are particularly common in certain languages. The study of classifiers in Bodo and Koch Rabha languages delves into the linguistic phenomenon of noun classification system, which play a vital role in structuring and organizing linguistic expressions in these Tibeto-Burman languages.

The classifiers of both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages are classified in to two types:

- 1) General Classifiers and
- 2) Noun Classifiers

2.1.1 General Classifiers: There are lots of classifiers in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. These are completely dependent on numerals. Without numerals the classifiers can't denote their meaning in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. The details are discussed below with their examples:

- i) **{bɔza-}**: The classifier {bɔza-} is used in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages to represent and calculate the bundles of stick like objects like jute, paddy, sugarcane, fire wood etc. these are called as bundles of jute, bundles of paddy, bundles of sugarcane, bundles of fire wood. For examples-

Bodo,

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------|
| 1) phatʰu-kʰuu | bɔza-/atʰi-se | labu |
| Jute-ACC | CLS-one | bring |
| Bring one bundle of jute. | | |

Koch Rabha,

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| 1) aŋ-na | kʰɔɔpʰaŋ | bɔza-niŋ | lapʰa |
| I-DAT | sugarcane | CLS-two | bring |
| Bring me two bundles of sugarcane. | | | |

- ii) **{gaŋ-}** and **{kʰaraŋ-}**: These two classifiers are used to count or calculate the leaves of the trees, blades of the grasses, papers, cloths etc. in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. For examples-

Bodo,

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|
| 1) | ai-ja | aŋ-nu | gɔsla | gaŋ-nui | labu-duŋ |
| | Mother-NOM | I-DAT | shirt | CLS-two | bring-PRO |
| | Mother has brought twoshirts for me. | | | | |

Koch Rabha,

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-------|------------|-------|-----------|
| 1) | amai-ɔ | aŋ-na | kʰaraŋ-niŋ | bisil | la-uu |
| | Mother-NOM | I-DAT | CLS-two | shirt | bring-PRO |
| | Mother has brought two shirts for me. | | | | |

{duŋ-} and {tʰuŋ-}: The classifier *{duŋ-}* in Bodo and *{tʰuŋ-}* in Koch Rabha languages do indicate the same meaning. In both the languages these two classifiers are used to count or calculate the long and thin objects like hair, ropes, road, threads etc. For examples-

Bodo,

- | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|----------|---------|-------------|
| 1) | nuŋ-ni | khanaj-a | duŋ-se | muŋ-baj |
| | You-GEN | hair-NOM | CLS-one | to grey-PST |
| | Your one hairhas turned grey. | | | |

Koch Rabha,

- | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------------|---------|-------------|
| 1) | nuŋ-ni | huŋruŋkʰ-ɔ | tʰuŋ-sa | muŋ-uu |
| | You-GEN | hair-NOM | CLS-one | to grey-PST |
| | Your one hairhas turned grey. | | | |

iii) {bidan-} and {haisɔŋ-}: These classifiers are use to count or calculate bunches of the rice, bananas, coconut etc. in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. For examples-

Bodo,

- | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| 1) | aŋ-nu | tʰalir | bidan-se | nanɣuu |
| | I-DAT | banana | CLS-one | need |
| | I have needed one bunch of banana. | | | |

Koch Rabha,

- | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|------|
| 1) | aŋ-na | luŋtʰuŋi | haisɔŋ-sa | niga |
| | I-DAT | banana | CLS-one | need |
| | I have needed one bunch of banana. | | | |

iv) {swi-} and {sir-}: To calculate the slices of fruits these two classifiers are used before the numerals in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. For examples-

Bodo,

- | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---------|---------|------|
| 1) | bi-nu | tʰaizuu | swi-se | hɔr |
| | He-DAT | mango | CLS-one | give |
| | Give him a slice of mango. | | | |

Koch Rabha,

- | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------------|---------|------|
| 1) | u-na | bɔsɔrtʰuŋi | sir-sa | law |
| | He-DAT | mango | CLS-one | give |
| | Give him one slice of mango. | | | |

v) {gɔŋ-} and {gɔ-}: These two classifiers are used when calculated the some items and equipments like house, furniture, sticks etc. in both the languages. For examples-

Bodo,

- | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------|
| 1) | bi-ju | hatʰaj-nipʰraj | siphuŋ gɔŋ-se | labu-duŋ |
| | He-NOM | market-ABL | flute | CLS-one |
| | bring-PRE | | | |
| | He has brought one flute from market. | | | |

Koch Rabha,

- 1) u-ᳵ guᳵri phdan gᳵ-sa p^huᳵruᳵi-uᳵu
 He-NOM car new CLS-one buy-PST
 He has bought a new car.

vi) {p^haᳵ-}: The classifier {p^haᳵ-} is used both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages to calculate the trees. It is used before the numerals in both the languages. Examples are given below-

Bodo,

- 1) aᳵ p^haᳵ-se p^hiᳵp^haᳵ gaj-baj
 I CLS-one tree plant-PST
 I have planted a tree.

Koch Rabha,

- 1) aᳵ p^haᳵ-sa p^haᳵ k^haj-uᳵu
 I CLS-one tree plant-PST
 I have planted a tree.

{zᳵra-} and {zar-}: These classifiers are used before the numerals to calculate the pairs of goods, birds, flowers etc. in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. For examples-

Bodo,

- 1) aᳵ-nuᳵ gᳵi zᳵra-nui hᳵr
 I-DAT betel nut CLS-two give
 Give me two pairs of betel nut.

Koch Rabha.

- 1) aᳵ-na gᳵi zᳵra-niᳵ law
 I-DAT betel nut CLS-two give
 Give me two pairs of betel nut.

It is observed from the above examples that to indicate the separate characters of the nouns the classifiers of both the languages are attached before the numerals as prefix. In both the languages these classifiers can be applied either before or after the noun, but it can't be used after the numerals in neither the languages.

2.1.2 Noun Classifiers: Some nouns can be used as classifiers in both Bodo and Koch Rabha languages. It is used or attached before the numerals. It is discussed with examples in the preceding chapter.-

a) bᳵᳵᳵᳵ: It is a noun word representing the 'bottle' and it is used to calculate the items of the bottle in both the languages. Examples are given below:

Bodo,

- 1) aᳵ-nuᳵ bᳵᳵᳵᳵ-nui zuu labuᳵ
 I-DAT bottle-two wine bring
 Bring for me two bottle of wine.

Koch Rabha,

- 1) aᳵ-na bᳵᳵᳵᳵ-niᳵ sᳵk^hᳵr lap^ha
 I-DAT bottle-two wine bring
 Bring for me two bottle of wine.

b) k^hada: It is one kind of agricultural tool. Agriculturist of Bodo and Koch Rabha communities make a kind of container for grains or other kinds of objects by bamboo. The noun word 'k^hada' is also used as classifier adding by numerals in both the languages. It is used to calculate the seeds, paddy, rice, soil etc. Examples are given below.

Bodo,

- 1) aᳵ-nuᳵ k^hada-se ha naᳵguu-nuᳵ
 I-DAT basket-one soil need-SUF
 I have needed one basket of soil.

Koch Rabha,

- 1) aŋ-na kʰada-briŋ mai law
 I-DAT bucket-four rice give
 Give me four buckets of rice.

c) dan and mas: These two noun words of Bodo and Koch Rabha languages represent the 'month'. In both the languages it is also used as classifiers to calculate the months by adding before the numerals. For examples-

Bodo,

- 1) mawkhɔ-a dan-se-ni tʰakʰaj bɔndɔ
 Office-NOM month-one-GEN for close
 The office is closed for one month.

Koch Rabha,

- 1) Ram-ɔ Delhi-ai mas-buŋ pʰaŋ-tʰuŋna
 Ram-NOM Delhi-LOC month-five live-PAST
 Ram has lived for five months at Delhi.

From the above examples, it is clear that the noun can be used as classifiers by adding before the numerals in both the languages. There are many more noun words in both the languages which are used as classifiers by adding before the numerals and these kind of language are used in their everyday life.

3.1 Conclusion: From the above discussion of classifiers of Bodo and Koch Rabha languages, it is found that there are lots of similarities. The analysis has revealed some close similarities in the structure and function of classifiers in both the languages. Both the languages exhibit a shared typological feature of using classifiers to categorize nouns based on attributes such as shape, size, animate or inanimate distinctions. Additionally, certain classifiers in both the languages are corresponding in form and usage, reflecting a possible shared linguistic heritage. In conclusion, the close similarities between the classifiers in Bodo and Koch Rabha languages underscore their shared linguistic traits, reflecting a potential common origin interaction. These parallels not only highlight the typological richness of the Tibeto-Burman language family but also open avenues for further historical and comparative studies to unravel the intricate relationships among these two languages.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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