

## Plural Formation in Bodo

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**Abstract:** This paper attempts to highlight different ways of plural formation in Bodo, one of the important languages of Tibeto-Burman branch of Sino-Tibetan language family of Assam. In this language, there are three distinct ways of plural formation. To obtain plurality, different suffixes are added to the noun, pronoun and adjective; use of different collective terms and reduplicate noun, pronoun and adjective. This paper will explore these processes of plural formation.

**Keywords:** Bodo, plural formation, suffix, collective term, reduplication

### INTRODUCTION

The Bodos are one of the oldest communities among the Indo-Mongoloid origin and the largest single language speaking tribe in North Eastern India including entire North Bengal area which was known as Duars area [1]. According to Sailen Debnath, the Bodos are the largest in the Tista-Brahmaputra valley comprising western Assam and a pervasive tract of North Bengal specially the Dooars of Jalpaiguri, northern part of Cooch Behar and the plains of Darjeeling districts [2]. The term 'Bodo' signifies language as well as community. It is an official language of Bodoland Territorial Council and associate state language of Assam. The Bodo language can be considered as one of the developing languages of India, which was included in the eight schedule of Indian constitution in the year 2003.

Bodo has typologically close affinities with Garo, Rabha, Dimasa, Tiwa and Kokborok which are also languages of Tibeto-Burman branch of Sino-Tibetan language family found in North East India. That is why they are better known as sister languages. The Bodos are known by different name in different places. In the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, they are well known as Bodo~Boro; in Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Alipur Duar and Cooch Behar districts of North Bengal as Mech and as Meche in the Japha district Nepal. In history, they are well known as Kachari. Historian Debabrata Dutta says that the Kacharis are perhaps the earliest known inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley [3]. As per the census report of 2001, the total population of Bodo speakers in India is 13, 50,478.

### Methods

The data analyzed in this paper is mainly based on primary source which were collected from the native speakers of the language. During data collection observation method applied.

### DISCUSSION

Like other languages, Bodo has also some ways of plural formation. There are three distinct ways of plural formation in Bodo. This are-

- Plural formation by adding different suffixes
- Plural formation by using different collective terms and
- Plural formation by reduplicating or repeating
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### Plural formation by adding different suffixes

Generally suffixes are added to the ending of word in order to create a new word with different meaning. In Bodo, there are a few suffixes which are added to the noun, pronoun and adjective to get plurality. Thus suffixes like {-sur, -mun, -p<sup>h</sup>ur} are affixed to the noun, pronoun and adjectives through the morphological process. The functions of these suffixes are discussed below.

{-sur}: This plural suffix is added to second and third person of non-honorific personal pronoun, reflexive pronoun and demonstrative pronoun. For example-

*Singular*

*Plural*

nun̩ (you)	nun̩-sur (you)
bi (he)	bi-sur (they)
gaɔ (self)	gaɔ-sur (oneself)
bui (that)	bui-sur (those)

{-mun}: This plural suffix is commonly added to the kinship terms. Examples-

Singular	Plural
ai (mother)	ai-mun (mother and others)
ap <sup>h</sup> a (father)	ap <sup>h</sup> a-mun (father and others)
ada (brother)	ada-mun (elder brother and others)

It is also mentionable that, this plural suffix is also used during the expression of honorific form with second and third person personal pronoun. In Bodo, honorific form is expressed by {-t<sup>h</sup>aŋ}. During pluralisation {-

t<sup>h</sup>aŋ} is followed by suffix {-mun}. For example-

Singular	Plural
nun̩ (you)	nun̩-t <sup>h</sup> aŋ-mun (you)
bi (he)	bi-t <sup>h</sup> aŋ-mun (they)

{-p<sup>h</sup>ur}: This plural suffix is used with both human and non-human nouns. Example-

Singular	Plural
gɔt <sup>h</sup> ɔ (child)	gɔt <sup>h</sup> ɔ-p <sup>h</sup> ur (children)
p <sup>h</sup> it <sup>h</sup> ai (fruit)	p <sup>h</sup> it <sup>h</sup> ai-p <sup>h</sup> ur (fruits)
suima (dog)	suima-p <sup>h</sup> ur (dogs)

The plural suffix {-p<sup>h</sup>ur} can also be added to the demonstrative pronouns 'be' and 'bui'. For example-

Singular	Plural
be (this)	be-p <sup>h</sup> ur (these)
bui (that)	bui-p <sup>h</sup> ur (those)

### Plural formation by using different collective terms

Using different nouns of collective terms is also one of the important discussable ways of plural formation in Bodo. There are a few distinct collective terms which are basically found in free form. Following are the examples of collective terms used during expression of plurality in Bodo.

*gubaŋ (many)*: This term is used with human and non-human beings and it placed before the noun in sentence. Example-

gubaŋ hinzaɔ (many females)
gubaŋ mua (many objects)

*hanza (group)*: This term is used with human being. It follows the noun in sentence. Example-

mansi hanza (group of persons)
senngra hanza (group of boys)

*p<sup>h</sup>alu (group)*: Generally this is used with non-human beings like animals, birds, insects etc. It follows the noun.

mɔsuu p <sup>h</sup> alu (group of cows)
daɔ p <sup>h</sup> alu (group of birds)

Sometimes the collective term 'p<sup>h</sup>alu' is also used with human being. It depends upon speaker. For example-

Mansi p <sup>h</sup> alu (group of man)
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*damul (heap/collection)*: This collective term is used with objects like stone, wood etc. Example-

ɔnt <sup>h</sup> ai damul (heap of stone)
bɔn damul (heap of fire wood)

### Plural formation by reduplicating

In linguistics, reduplication or is a process of morphology in which the root of a word is repeated exactly or slightly. In Bodo, it takes an important role in word formation as well as in plural formation. Reduplication or repetition is also one of the ways of plural formation found in Bodo. By reduplicating or repeating nouns, pronouns and adjectives plurality is formed. Following are a few examples of this process.

(i) Noun:

ak <sup>h</sup> ai ak <sup>h</sup> ai ran	distribute hand to hand
lama lama t <sup>h</sup> abai	walk on the ways

(ii) Pronoun:

sur sur eating	who are eating ?(Interrogative pronoun)
gaɔba gaɔ maɔ	do oneself (Reflexive pronoun)

<i>k<sup>h</sup>aise k<sup>h</sup>aise gabduŋ</i>	some of them crying (Indefinite pronoun)
(iii) Adjective:	
<i>gusum gusum subuŋ</i>	black persons
<i>gudui gudui p<sup>h</sup>it<sup>h</sup>ai</i>	sweet fruits
<i>guza guza bibar</i>	red flowers

It is also notable that, the collective terms *p<sup>h</sup>alu* and *hanza* itself expresses plural form, although the terms can also be pluralized by the process of reduplication. For example-

<i>p<sup>h</sup>alu p<sup>h</sup>alu dao</i>	many groups of birds
<i>hanza hanza mansi</i>	many groups of persons

### CONCLUSION

Bodo, a member of Tibeto-Burman branch of Sino-Tibetan language family has peculiar characteristics which is very different from the languages of other families found in India. The above discussed ways of plural formation is also one of the morphological characteristics of this language. From the above discussion, it has been cleared that there are three distinct ways of plural formation in Bodo language.

### REFERENCES

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