

Lexical Borrowing from English into Bodo

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Abstract

Borrowing from one language to another is common in every language around the world. It is an outcome of language and cultural contact. Lexical borrowing (loanword) in linguistics is a term that defines a process of speakers adopting words from a source or donor language into their native language vocabulary. Bodo (Boro), a Boro-Garo (BG) language of the Tibeto-Burman (TB) language family largely spoken in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, India, has a huge number of English borrowed words used in their daily livelihood. English borrowing in Bodo is found in the form of words with no change in meaning and structure, words with partial phonetic change, loan translation and alphabetic loanword. For many reasons, the Bodo speakers borrowed many English words for better communication. British colonialism resulted in the establishment of English medium schools by the missionaries in Bodo dominated areas which encouraged rise of English medium education among the Bodos. Other factors include learning English as the second language regarding its prestige as a global language, the impact of globalization, the impact of electronic and social media and also the development of science and technology played an important role in borrowing English words into Bodo. Borrowing of English established a relationship between English (a language of the Indo-European language family) and Bodo (A language of the Tibeto-Burman language family) which are linguistically from different sources. This paper is an attempt to highlight the words borrowed from English into Bodo vocabulary. This paper also emphasizes the different causes for borrowing English into Bodo.

Keywords : *Bodo language, Lexical borrowing (loanword), Bodo vocabulary, English words, Causes of the Borrowing*

1. Introduction

The Bodo, the term which also signifies the name of the community, is a language of the Boro-Garo (BG), a group of languages of the Tibeto-Burman (TB) language family primarily spoken in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam of Northeast India (Jacquesson 2008:14-15), (Wood 2008:iv). The generic term 'Bodo' was first applied by B.H. Hodgson in 1847 during the study of BG group of languages (Grierson 1903:1). Endle (1911: xvi) stated that the river names of the whole Brahmaputra valley are Bodo names, and it is demonstrable that the Bodos were the aborigines of the valley. Besides Assam, the Bodo speakers are also found in the bordering states of Assam of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, West Bengal, and in the country of Nepal. Bodo was introduced as a medium of instruction in

the year 1963 by the government of Assam and included in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution in 2003. As per the census report of the Govt. of India in 2011, there are 14, 16125 Bodo (mother tongue) speakers in India (census report, 2011).

English belongs to the Endo-European family of languages. English is a global language (Crystal, 2003:47). It has been accepted worldwide as the lingua franca in the field of global industries and adopted by the people of the world as the most popular language during second language learning. As a global language, it plays a special role in business and travelling. One of English's significant roles is opening entrances to the academic world. It is a language that gives opportunities to access entertainment, media, and the internet world. In this regard, English as a global language is valued by international business, academic, and entertainment organizations.

2. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this paper is to bring to light the words borrowed from English into Bodo vocabulary. This paper also emphasizes the different reasons for borrowing English into Bodo.

3. Methodology

The researcher as a native speaker of Bodo language used the observation method and collected the primary data from his knowledge as well as informants from different sex, age and profession. Secondary data are collected from the books and journals. The researcher described the data using a descriptive method.

4. What is Borrowing?

Borrowing is a linguistic term and borrowed words are also known as loanwords. Borrowing from one language to another is a common linguistic phenomenon happening every day around the world. It is usually used in comparative and historical linguistics to refer to a linguistic form taken over by one language or dialect from another (Crystal 2008:58). Borrowing is also considered as a type of transfer of linguistic elements or features from one language to another and this happens due to the process of language contact (Kuteva 2017:165).

Borrowing is a process, in which one language replicates a linguistic feature from another language either wholly or partially (Durkin 2014:3). This process might occur at any time when two cultures come into close contact over a period of time (Hoffer 2002). This process might also be called an adoption as the speakers do adopt linguistic elements or ideas from a second language i.e. source language into their own (Haugen 1950), (Hoffer, 2005).

Borrowing is a consequence of language or cultural contact. This contact might be direct or indirect. In direct contact, people borrow linguistic elements depending on different verbal situations and bilingual situations. In indirect contact, people borrow linguistic elements via books or writing documents. Electronic media- radio and television also play

indirectly an important role in language contact. Hoffer (2002:2) explained that the invention of the radio and television took another type of role in language and cultural contact in the spread of linguistic elements. According to him the globalization of markets for products from around the world has resulted in advertisements that often carry not only foreign names but foreign terms. Most recently, social media also played a significant role in indirect contact which resulted in linguistic borrowing from one language to another. According to Donald Winford (2002), language may contact depending on three kinds of linguistic situations- language maintenance, language shift and creation of new contact languages.

The language from which linguistic elements are borrowed is known as the donor or source language and the language into which these linguistic elements are borrowed is known as the recipient (Alvanoudi 2018:3).

Researchers classified borrowing in different ways. Haugen (1950), classified five different types of borrowing- (1) Loanword (the word and the meaning are borrowed) (2) Loan-translation (literal word-for-word translation of both parts of the lending compound) (3) Loan-rendition (the translation vaguely captures the original meaning) (4) Loan-blend (one part of the compound is borrowed, the other one translated) (5) Semantic loan (only the meaning is borrowed, not the word). Tania Kuteva (2017:165), traditionally classified borrowing into two major types- (1) lexical borrowing and (2) structural borrowing. She sub-divided lexical borrowing into Loanwords and loan translation, and structural borrowing into phonetic/phonological features, morphological features, and syntactic features. M.P. Sinha (2005:173-174), who studied loanwords classified them into three types- (1) Pure Loanwords (the form and meaning are borrowed with no or some modifications). (2) Loan Blend (the meaning and part of the word are borrowed with the addition of native syllables), and (3) Loan shift (words that are a combination of foreign and native morphemes are called loan shifts).

5. English borrowed words into Bodo

Borrowing is a common phenomenon happening among languages around the world. Bodo, a TB language also has many borrowed words from a wide range of different sources. The Bodo vocabulary is rich with loanwords from different languages of the country and from foreign languages. It has many borrowed words from the Indian languages like Assamese, Bengali and Hindi. Lots of foreign words from English, Portuguese and Persian are also directly or indirectly found incorporated in Bodo.

Borrowing of English into Indian languages might have started from the colonial age. In India, the British administration was started in the early 19th century (Isaka, 2004). They came to India mainly for the purposes of the trade and business, however, ruled India for a long period nearly 200 years (Mastoi, Ali Lohar & Ali Shah, 2018). They introduced English as a language of administration and also established English medium schools. This indirect impose of English language to the Indians changed the linguistic situation of India and subsequently, lots of English words were incorporated into the Indian language's vocabulary.

At present, English, an Indo-European language is a widely spoken language of the world; as a result, it has become one of the main sources of loan words in many languages. In Bodo vocabulary also many English words are adopted. Being a global language, it has had an impact on the Bodo for a long period. Lexical borrowings from English to Bodo are found in four types. These are :

- (1) Lexical borrowing without any change
- (2) Lexical borrowing with partial phonetic change
- (3) Loan translation and
- (4) Alphabetic loan words

5.1 Lexical Borrowing without any Change

Lexical borrowing without any change of borrowing is also known as a pure loan word (Sinha, 2005). Bodos borrowed lots of English words without any change or modification and use in their daily conversation. Such kinds of words are usually noun words. For example, the words *hotel, town, address, committee, business, agenda, salary, doubt* are commonly used by them as borrowed words without any change of meaning, pronunciation and structure.

Pursuing of education in English medium schools is increasing day by day. The thought of English as a global language and learning English as a second language influenced borrowing of words. As a result, many educational terms are directly included in Bodo. For example, the words- *College, hostel, principal, admission, class, degree, warden, certificate, research* etc. are used as native words by the Bodo speakers.

A set of time and measurement, medical and sports related terms are also adopted by the Bodo speakers without any change in the case of meaning and word structure. Time and measurement terms- *time, second, litre, gram, kilogram, kilometre*; medical terms- *hospital, nurse, pharmacy, operation, caesarean, medicine, tablet* and sports-related terms- *cricket, football, volleyball, basketball* etc. are a few words adopted by the Bodo speakers.

Similarly, many words related to electronic devices, transport and communication and finance are also borrowed by the Bodos to fulfill their needs for words. Electronic devices terms- *computer, laptop, printer, charger, camera, telephone, mobile, battery*; transport and communication-related words- *bus, train, cycle, motor, tyre, bike, car, station*; financial terms- *bank, cheque, transfer, customer, loan, bill, manager* are also used by the Bodo speakers without any change of its meaning and structure.

Likewise, many administrative terms- *officer, police, military, office* and household related articles *cup, bottle, basin, ceiling, bathroom, toilet, kitchen, gate, toothbrush, fan, dustbin, cooker* etc. are also frequently used as borrowed words in their daily life.

Apart from the noun words, a few verbs are also borrowed by the Bodos. For example- *target, pass, fail* etc. These words are used as lexical borrowing in different verbal situations and purposes. Interestingly, verbs like *received, called, cut, send, download* and *delete* are also frequently used by the speakers during the use of the mobile phone and computer. As

such, a few adjective words like *normal*, *ideal*, *tasty*, *out*, *urgent* etc. are also commonly used by the Bodos as loan words in their conversation. These terms are usually used by new generations of literate persons.

5.2 Lexical Borrowing with partial phonetic change

A huge number of borrowed words with partial phonetic change are available in the vocabulary of the Bodo. Such kinds of words are mainly used by those having insufficient knowledge of the English spelling system and pronunciation. In some words, phonemes are dropped as easy means of communication. The terms- *t^hibsɔn* (tuition), *ext^hra* (x-ray), *ziyal* (jail), *dɔr* (door), *gelas* (glass), *ridiɔ* (radio), *unis^hpect^hɔr* (inspector), *dak^ht^har* (doctor) are some examples of partial phonetic change used by the Bodos.

It is worth mentioning here that, Bodo has no use of phonemes /t/, /k/, and /tʃ/. As a result, in many verbal situations alternatively, they use /t^h/, /k^h/ and /s/ respectively during pronunciation. It could be seen that, in a few words the English phoneme /t/ corresponds to /t^h/ in Bodo. For example- *t^hibul* (table), and *met^heŋ*-(meeting). A few examples are also available where the English phoneme /k/ corresponds to /k^h/ in Bodo. For example- *k^herasin* (kerosene). It could also be seen that in many words the English phoneme /ch/ corresponds to /s/ in Bodo. For example- *t^hɔs* (torch), *suis* (switch), *iŋ-si* (inch), *siyar* (chair) etc. Depending on the verbal situation, the English phoneme /t/ also corresponds to /d/ in Bodo. For example- *minid* (minute). In some selected words, English words started with /s/ inserted /i/ in the initial position of the word in Bodo. For examples- *isik^hɔl* (school), *ist^hudend* (student) etc. Some examples are also available where the correspondence of English phoneme /f/ to /p^h/ in Bodo could be seen. Examples- *p^hud* (feet) *p^his* (fee), *p^hrɔm* (form) etc. In this category of borrowing words, it could be observed that many words are used as easy means of communication. The cause might be due to the lack of proper knowledge about the actual spelling system and pronunciation of English. This type of borrowing is usually seen among uneducated Bodo speakers.

5.3. Loan Translation

Apart from the lexical borrowing without any change and lexical borrowing with partial phonetic change, a few English loan translations are also found in the vocabulary of the Bodo. To fulfill their need for words for better communication they translated many English words into Bodo. For example- *p^hɔrap^hari*, *mulugswlwŋ-sali* and *subuŋ-t^hunlai*. These three words are loan translations of the words 'syllabus', *university* and *folk literature* respectively. To fulfill the need for words and for academic purposes, the translation of selected words from English to Bodo has been done. This type of initiative taken by the speakers enriched the vocabulary of the Bodo language.

5.4 Alphabetic Loan Words

A few words consisting only of letters are also found as borrowed words in the vocabulary of the Bodo language. For example- *PIN*, *TV*, *ATM*, *DTP*, *PDF* etc. Such kinds of borrowed

words are very limited in number as compared to other types of borrowing.

6. Causes of the English Borrowing into Bodo

After close observation, some causes could be seen in the borrowing of English words into Bodo. These are— (i) British colonization indirectly brought the missionaries with the aim of spreading their religion and hence established many English medium schools which resulted in the borrowing of English words into Bodo. (ii) Most of the people of the world consider English as a global or international language. Because this language is widely spoken and written for the purpose of business, academics, and politics by the majority of the population in almost every corner of the world. Due to the prestige of the English language as a global and international language, many Bodo parents sent their children to English medium schools. This new trend of pursuing education through English also pushed borrowing of many English words into Bodo. (iii) To communicate well with others, many Bodo people learn English as a second language or foreign language which resulted in borrowing different English words with diverse meanings. (iv) Modern day influence of media, travelling and education has played a mighty role in the flow of English words into Bodo. (v) To fulfill their needs or lack of words, the Bodo speakers borrowed many English words. (vi) Today, social media and electronic media as a platform of cultural or language contact play an important role in importing new words and the new generations easily accepted it and used these words among their friend circles. This is also one of the causes of the borrowing. (vii) Advances in modernization and globalization played an important role in carrying many new English terms from different corners in day to day life of the Bodos and (viii) Advance in science and technology is also one of the causes for the borrowing of English.

7. Conclusion

Languages borrow words from different languages primarily for the purpose to communicate. Like other languages, Bodo, a TB language is also not free from borrowing words from other languages. Lots of borrowed words from different languages make Bodo vocabulary rich, thereby expanding scope of communication. From the above discussion, it has been clear that many English words have been borrowed without any change such as *motor*, *cup* etc.; there are many words which have been borrowed with phonetic changes such as *p^hud* (*feet*), *isik^hɔl* (*school*) etc. There are many words which have been translated into a Bodo term such as *subuŋt^{hi}* (*personality*), *subuŋharimu* (*folklore*). A few alphabetic loanwords also have been directly adopted such as *PIN*, *DTP* etc. Language is ever evolving and hence we can convincingly say that enrichment of a language will always carry on and borrowing will play an important role in it.

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