Phonological Features of Assamese in Boro

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Abstract - The Assamese language belongs to the Indo- Aryan language family. It is the official language of the state of Assam along with two other co-official languages, i.e, Boro and Bengali. It is adopted as the common language among the communities that are used to speak different languages in the state of Assam.

Boro is the major plain tribe of the state of Assam. The term Boro refers to both the language as well as the people that speak the language. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. The Boros are mostly bilingual. They use their mother tongue in every domain while speaking to the people of their community. The majority of the Boro speakers can speak Assamese fluently. They use Assamese as the contact language while communicating with people having different language mother tongues. As they come into contact with the Assamese speakers daily and frequently, they use the Assamese language, and as a result of it, many Assamese words are used in the Boro language with slight phonological changes.

This paper discusses the phonological features of Assamese that are used in Boro.

Keywords: Assamese, Boro, phonological features.

Introduction:

Assam is the most populous state among the states of North-East India. People from three different language families such as Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic live here. The majority of the people speak their mother tongue. Assamese is the official language of Assam along with two other co-official languages, namely, Boro and Bengali. Assamese is used as the lingua franca among people from different language families. The Assamese language belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family.

Boro language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino–Tibetan language family. The term Boro refers to the language as well as the community that speaks the language. It is one of the major plain tribes of Assam. It is majorly spoken in the four districts of Bodo land Territorial Region, namely, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, and Odalguri. Itistheco-official language of Assam.

Boro speakers are found in many districts of Assam namely, Bongaigaon, Dhubri,

Darrang, Sonitpur, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Karbi Anglong, Golaghat. They are also found in some North Eastern states such as Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

Boro speakers use their mother tongue in all the domains. They use their language while communicating with the people of their community. They are mostly bilingual. The majority ofthe Boro speakers can speak Assamese fluently. They use the Assamese language as the contact language while interacting with people from different language communities. As they come into contact with Assamese speaking people and continue to interact with them in the Assamese language, gradually they use some Assamese words while speaking in their mother tongue. Boro speakers use the Assamese words with some changes in the phonological features. And these phonological features are discussed below.

Objectives:
The main purpose of the study is to:

- Identify the phonological features of Assamese in Boro.
- Discuss the changes that occur in the phonological features of Assamese in Boro.

Methodology:
For collecting data, both primary, as well as secondary sources, are being used. While collecting primary data, observation and interview methods are used for the purpose. In collecting secondary data, various books, newspapers, journals, magazines are being used.

Phonological features of Assamesein Boro:
Boro language encompasses many Assamese words which they use in their day to day conversation. Boro speakers use these Assamese words with slight changes or modifications in their day to day conversation. They use these Assamese words because they don't have their native terms in their language or they may have lost those words long time back due to the in fluence of Assamese. These slight changes or modifications in Assamese words while used by the Boro speakers are discussed below:

Aspiration:
In the native Boro word, voiceless bilabial un-aspirated stop, voiceless alveolar un-aspirated stop and voiceless velar un-aspirated stop do not exist. So, the word borrowed from the Assamese language changes from voiceless bi-labial unaspirated stop /p/ to voiceless bi-labial aspirated stop /pʰ/, voiceless alveolar un-aspirated stop / t/ to voiceless alveolar aspirated stop /tʰ/and voiceless velar un-aspirated stop /k/ changes to voiceless velar aspirated stop /kʰ/ in the Boro language.

/p/>/pʰ/
/t/>/tʰ>
/k/>/kʰ/
/p/>/pʰ/

Assamese	**Boro**	**Gloss**
/pukʰuri/	/pʰukʰri/	'pond'
/paŋkʰa/	/pʰaŋkʰa/	'fan'
/putɔla/	/pʰutʰla/	'doll'
/puli/	/pʰuli/	'seedling'
/ɔpɔman/	/ɔpʰɔman/	'insult'
/upai/	/upʰai/	'way'

/t/>/tʰ/

Assamese	**Boro**	**Gloss**
/tukura/	/tʰukʰra/	'piece'
/tamasa/	/tʰamsa/	'prank'
/tema/	/tʰema/	'can'
/sinta/	/sintʰa/	'thought'
/zota/	/zutʰa/	'shoe'
/mɔntri/	/mɔntʰri/	'minister'

/k/>/kʰ/

Assamese	**Boro**	**Gloss**
/kɔm/	/kʰɔm/	'less'
/kɔmɔla/	/kʰɔmla/	'orange'
/kɔna/	/kʰana/	'amblyophia'
/ɛkɛ/	/ekʰe/	'same'
/bakɔli/	/bakʰli/	'skin'
/sakɔr/	/sakʰɔr/	'servant'

De-aspiration:

Native Boro word does not have the voiced velar aspirated stop, voiced alveolar aspirated stop and voiced bi-labial aspirated stop. So, the word borrowed from Assamese language changes from voiced velar as pirated stop / gʰ / to voiced velar un-aspirated / g /, voiced alveolar aspirated stop

/ dʰ / to voiced alveolar un-aspirated stop / d / and voiced bilabial aspirated stop / bʰ / changes to voicedbilabial un-aspirated stop / b / in the Boro language.

/gʰ/>/g/

Assamese	Boro	Gloss
/gʰɔtɔna/	/gɔtɔna/	'incident'
/gʰɛhu/	/gehu/	'wheat'
/gʰora/	/gɔra/	'horse'
/gʰɔri/	/gɔri/	'clock'

/dʰ/>/d/

Assamese	Boro	Gloss
/dʰari/	/dahra/	'bamboomat'
/dʰɔn/	/dwhwn/	'wealth'
/gadʰa/	/gadɔ/	'donkey'
/badʰa/	/bada/	'interrupt'
/dʰar/	/dahar/	'lend'
/bɔndʰɔ/	/bɔndɔ/	'vacation'

/bʰ/>/b/

Assamese	Boro	Gloss
/ɔbʰɔdrɔ/	/ɔbɔdrɔ/	'impolite'
/bʰara/	/baʰra/	'rent'
/bʰag/	/bahag/	'part/portion'

Consonant substitution:

In the Boro language, the Assamese voiceless velar fricative / ħ / does not exist. So, the word borrowed from the Assamese language changes from voiceless velar fricative / ħ / to voiceless alveolar fricative / s / in the Boro language.

/ħ/>/s/

Assamese	Boro	Gloss
/ħibir/	/sibir/	'camp'
/ħɔman/	/sɔman/	'equal'
/ħima/	/simna/	'limit/border'
/ħamuk/	/samu/	'oyster'
/ɔħur/	/ɔsur/	'demon'
/aħa/	/asa/	'hope'
/biħ/	/bis/	'pain'

Vowel substitution:

In the Boro language, Assamese higher mid back vowel / o / changes to mid-back vowel / ɔ /, lower mid front vowel / ɛ / changes to mid front vowel / e / and lower mid back vowel / ɔ / changes to low central vowel / a / in the Boro language. /o/> /ɔ/

Assamese	**Boro**	**Gloss**
/gʰora/	/gɔra/	'horse'

Assamese	**Boro**	**Gloss**
/kɔpal/	/kʰapʰal/	'forehead'
/dɔlɔŋ/	/dalaŋ/	'bridge'
/nɔra/	/nara/	'stubble'
/kɔna/	/kʰana/	'amblyophia'

/ɛ/>/e/

Assamese	**Boro**	**Gloss**
/tɛzpat/	/tʰezpʰatʰ/	'Bayleaf'
/gʰɛhu/	/gehu/	'wheat'
/pʰɛsa/	/pʰesa/	'owl'
/kɛsi/	/kʰemsi/	'scissors'
/dɛh/	/deha/	'body'
/rɛl/	/rel/	'train'

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that due to frequent interaction with the Assamese speaking people many Assamese phonological features are incorporated in the Boro language. These features are used in the Boro language with slight phonological changes or modifications. These Assamese phonological features are used by the Boro speakers while speaking their mother tongue as they may not have their own native words of such words in their language. Many Assamese words are incorporated into Boro language in order to fulfil their needs. Apart from Assamese language, many words are also incorporated in the Boro langauge from many cognate and non-cognate languages.

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