

CHAPTER 5

THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH LOANWORDS ON CONTEMPORARY BODO LINGUISTIC COMMUNITY

The third chapter of the dissertation discussed the various reasons behind the practice of borrowing words from one linguistic community to another. Most of the reasons presented by Edward Sapir and other linguists as the reason behind the practice of borrowing is also applicable to 'Bodo' Linguistic community.

India was a British colony for a very long time; ever since the East India Company set foot on Indian shores Indians have been in touch with the English language. British ruled India for over 200 years which has led to considerable influence of English on Indian languages. The Bodos too has had their historical contact with the British which have possibly influenced the community in certain way. The Indian history as well as Assam history narrates about many Bodo rulers who fought against the British, which suggests that Bodos too had close contact with the Britishers (Brahma A 2). However, the influence of English language on the Bodo linguistic community seems to arise more dominantly from other sources. For instance the Influence of internet, Mass media and communication has influenced the Bodo community linguistically in a much bigger way. It wouldn't be wrong to suggest that not only the Bodos but Indians by and large are influenced by the British culture as well as language. Another source of great influence of English vocabulary could be from Missionary Education. Most of the Christian Missionaries established English Medium Schools and Colleges to educate the locals. This in a way has had great impact on the students.

It is not easy to point out when exactly the Bodos started adopting English words in their conversations. However, the fact is that most Bodos of today use English words in their conversations in native Bodo language. Sometimes Bodo speakers use English words even to describe household tools and furniture. One of the surprising realizations is that Bodos do not seem to have another term for ‘Sun.’ in all probability the word ‘sun’ used by the Bodos is a case of borrowingⁱ from the English word. However, further etymological research on the topic to throw great light on some of these linguistic issues.

In the following section of the chapter we shall see the analysis of the English words used by the native speakers of the Bodo language. These interactions and interviews were conducted in the native Bodo language. However, most of them ended up using many English words in their conversations. The words they used are documented in the following section of the chapter.

5.1 Analysis of the use of English words among the Bodos

In his interview (in Bodo language) with a local Bodo journalist of ‘Bodoland Radab’ YouTube (News) Channel on 22nd February 2021 Mr. Biswajit Daimary the former Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament from Kokrajhar (ST) Constituency and the present speaker of the Assam legislative Assembly used over one hundred and forty five English words in his thirty minutes interaction. The English words he used in this interview were as follows:

Bodoland, MP, BJP, actually, August, turning point, BPF, Autonomous, council, bill, pass, chief Minister, Doctor, BTC, accord, 2003, January, BTR, third, day,

implement, Government, expel, BKWAC, resign, party, November, provision, Rajya Sabha, carrier, minister, file, by-pass, interference, act, cabinet, pass, ordinance, assembly, direct, commissioner, secretary, instruction, cabinet, notification, interim, officer, election, chief executive officer, permanently, establish, without, contest, guarantee, decision, satisfied, agenda, only, MLA, BLT, accord implementation, policy, develop, ration, planning, Assam Government, program, department, normally, school, building, interim, notify, constituency, without, report, first, terms and conditions, free, divide, interfere, definitely, model, act, under, budget, 700 something, central, culture, artist, facility, scheme, planning, Home Minister, Education Minister, Central Government, issue, time, next actively, platform, All India, competition, deputy, speaker, priority, social media, meeting, alliance, test, local party, sentiment, knowledge, nominated, department, sharing, record, 50, 55, regional, group, Assembly election, GSP, candidate, partner, notification, issue (BODOLAND रादाब, 22 Feb. 2021).

On 6th October 2020 Mr. Promod Boro the present Chief Executive Member of the Bodoland Territorial Council used over two hundred and eleven English words in his twenty eight minutes interaction with the ‘Bodoland Radab’ Channel The following were the words he used in his conversation:

Bodoland, UPPL, group, BTR, BKWAC, BTC, seat, Whatsapp, agenda, BAC, tragedy, 2006, forest dwellers act, ABSU, easiest centre, government, army, police, execution, torture, emotional attachment, emotionally, anytime, autonomous council, ST Hills, tribal act, accord, towards, 27th January, close,

officer, parliament, demand, movement, congress, Home Minister, closest, assembly, decision, WPT Minister, proposal, BTC Election, politically, commitment, BTR accord, national, commitment, implement, agenda, major, individual, loss, golden opportunity, chance, central, scope, interest, important, UBPO, set, completely, failure, police, military, torture, jail, day by day, leader, apart, decision, natural decision, parent body, leader, close, important, agenda, permanent, capacity, system, only self benefit, meeting, major decision, social media, MLA, MCLA, NDFB, school, provincialize, forest, power, situation, satisfied, main, role, confuse, contribution, schemes, supply, expect, recently, role, secretary, BTC accord, manage, maser, management, party, powerful, clear, autonomous council, dangerous, forest dwellers act, revolutionary, pure politics, school, college, separate directorate, official, office, officer, survey, right thinking, corona Virus, colour, group, affect, part, article, election, cabinet, resign, pass, postpone, 20th March, first case, April, march, position, team, CM, team, election commission, delay, DC, rally, awkward position, normal, dharna, rally, job, VCDC, high level, worker, party, candidate, engage, activity, best, motivate, situation, government, position, cabinet, mislead, best, activity, district, block, democratic country, responsibility, process, continue, governor, rule, constitution, normalcy (BODOLAND रादाब, 6 Oct. 2020).

The former Chief Executive Member of Bodoland Territorial Council and a well known Bodo politician Mr. Hagrama Mohilary used over two hundred and forty nine English words in his thirty seven minutes interview on 26th February 2020 with the

‘Engkhong Television’ Channel. The following were the English words he used in his interview:

Bodoland, television, forest, party, group, college, life, BTC, scope, agreement, Bodo accord, BPF, LP School, Higher Secondary, matric, pass, college, government college, second year, engineering college, class seven, 1986, 1983, ABSU conference, president, secretary, Movement, separate state, conference, school, pass, LP School, admission, 12, B. Sc, class XII, second, student, I. Card, television, talent, science, graduation, acceptable, next, year, mass movement, pressure group, police, army, protection, Indian government, Assam government, protection, March, 1987,1993, 25, experience, time pass, jail, first Bodo accord, surrender, volunteer force, fail, witness, line, BLT, pressure group, military, protection, leadership, experience, problem, first, crisis, meaningless, ceasefire, statement, ceasefire, under, war, solution, 2003, separate state, present, step by step, direct, February, Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, 6th Schedule, model, amendment, legislative power, executive, department, electricity, communication, telephone, developments, department, political, accept, at least, election, congress, business, central, ruling, opposition, activity, alliance, political party, AJP, office, comparatively, argument, ruling, state assembly election, factor, candidate, role, already, January, NDFB, witness, separate state, issue, develop, development, surrender, 100 percent, MLA, MP, lecture, ABSU president, UPPL, direct, sentiment, historic, Prime Minister, peace, automatic, present, infrastructure, industry, student, MCLA, average, UPSC exam, line area, industry, tourism, comparatively, university, campus, BTAD, implement, achievement, conference,

schedule, medical college, cancer hospital, understand, NIT, proposal, at least, communication line, success, ST, progress, plain side, tribal, status, hills, media, preparation, accuse, declare, alliance, seat, undisputed, private, original, request, opposition, claim, CBI, case, politics, general, OBC, rights, enjoy, equal right, business, concept, politician, family, political carrier, governmental (Bodoland Engkhong Television, 26 Feb. 2020).

Mr. Ranjit Basumatary (formerly known as B.R. Ferenga a strong NDFB leader) and the present Executive Member (EM) of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) used about fifty one English words in his nine minutes interaction with a popular Bodo YouTube channel (Bodoland Mission Swdwb Channel) on 24th April 2020. The following were the words he used in the interview:

UPPL, candidate, opposite, party, question, national, democratic, promote, Bodoland, safety, country, already, question, 14 no., ST, native place, response, COVID 19, September, January, angle, democratic, non-democratically, public, first time, MCLA, opposite, response, accord, okay, election, important, BTR agreement, Political, candidate, back, response, support, country, chance, important, support, guarantee, Sir, election, video. (Bodoland Mission सोदोब, 24 Apr. 2020).

On 4th March 2021 local Bodo news anchor of 'Bodoland Engkhong Television' channel used over fifty nine English words in ten minutes of his Bodo news presentation. The following were the English words he used:

Bodoland, BJP, election committee, doctor, petrol, diesel, congress, covid19, lockdown, boxing, AJP, UPPL, MP, March, election, mail, sharing, AIUDF, report, litre, duty, excise duty, model code of conduct, petrol pump, poster, congress, party, ministry of job, sale, complex, lakh, short circuit, bed, national, council, health secretary, wood, CRPF, police, operation, professional boxer, oriental, super model week championship, boxer, colour. (BODOLAND ENKGHONG TELEVISION, 4 Mar. 2021).

The present Deputy Chief Executive Member of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Mr. Gobinda Basumatary used about two hundred and eighty two English words in his twenty four minutes interaction with Mr. Prakash Narzary a local journalist in 'Bodoland Mission Swdwb Channel' on 1st February 2020. The following were the English words he used:

BTR, confuse, video, Sir, question, channel, Bodoland Mission, non, Facebook, Whatsapp, yotube, apart, like, comments, number, collection, Bodoland state, Liberation, Tiger, Force, direct, district, 2014-15, extra, 50/50, Territorial region, agreement, area and power of BTC, memorandum, settlement, NDFRB, UPPL, commission, extension, exclusive of BTC, extension, area, originally, demanded by the movement group, organization, originally demanded area, union, continuous area, tribal villages, private areas, inclusion, committee, report, study, report, include, within 6 months, state government, central government, decision, result, doubt, acceptable, map, list, boundary, area, leader, we agreed, district, state, proposal, sub division, headquarter, implement, liberation, innocent, surrender, start, within, positive, proposal, survey, estimate, unless, news, power,

inner line, act, automatically, possibility, impossible, border, gate, constituency, forty, sixty, upgrade, inclusive, March, election, election commission, final, time, April, declare, February, last week, the existing, forty constituency, re-organize, report, final, demand, strategic, list, area, already submit, whole, specific, seven, Prime Minister of India, seriously, specially, public meeting, army, strong, under, imaginary, practical, baseless, impractical, democratic process, arms, police raid, survive, arms free, positive, founder of NDFB, comment, what is truth try to find out, sixty, terrorist, criminal, recording, stop, significant, sign, legally, process, court, pressure, innocent, declare, guilty, convicted, terms of, period, totally release, guarantee, life imprison, twenty years, fourteen years, three years, legally, appeal, public, politician, what is fact, totally, total, guarantee, Bodo autonomous council, 2003, record, ABSU, pass out, movement, strong, government of India, discussion, last year, progress, discussion, properly, last, actual reality, media, Bodoland demand, vote, leadership, process, control, fraction, ok, last, so, sorry, only for BTR, job, scope, Bodoland Welfare council, 6th schedule, non-tribal, business, tribal, restriction, suffer, confused, final list, submit, already, final, meeting, busy, Sir thank you so much (Bodoland Mission सोदोब, 1 Feb. 2020).

Sibi Rani Brahma from 'SB Bodo news' used about seventy six English words while presenting a 'Bodo news' programme on 19/03/2021. The following were the English words she used:

Video, BPF, UPPL, nomination, March, additional SP, Police, Pistol, congress, gypsy, bike, wrestling, state level sub-junior women and men wrestling, final, case, common wealth games, medal, subscribe, bell icon, notification, MLA,

tourism, PNRD, transport, department, vote, district, headquarter, BTR, BJP, GSP, MCLA, voter card, phone, computer, download, election commission of India, January, National voter, electronic, electoral, photo, identity card, programme, print out, digital, description, link, voter helpline mobile app, journalists, association, rotary club, sanitary pad, channel (SB Bodo News, 19 Mar. 2021).

Mr. Lingsar Basumatary a popular Bodo artist (Actor) in an interview with ‘AB news’ on 11th May 2020 used over one hundred and twenty three English words in a sixteen minute interview. The following were the English words he used in his interaction:

AB News, welcome, actor, interview, life, 2014, first movie, act, start, eleven, film, talented, career, album, video album, comments, states, tribe, reaction, country, upgrade, acting, direct, approach, martial arts, special, dance, movies, first time, programme, just enjoy, photo, nervous, first interview, actually, award, function, question, prepare, commonly, actress, relation, video, viral, girlfriend, rumour, production, RB production, highlight, technical, Bodo film industry, favourite, respect, talent, production house, time, India, highest number of likes, second, Tikok, Youtube, overtake, most, like, artists, problem, deduct, lockdown, at least, maximum, steps, hundred, mobile, app, active, healthy, family, time, spent, T.V, enjoy, festival, party, waste, New year, fans, chance, support, rest, favourite, colour, yellow, similar, favourite dish, main, taste, qualities, relation, negative, experience, dreams, future, ready, prepare, mention, best (AB News, 11 May 2020).

Mr. Dhwrwm Khungur Swargiary (Mr. Global) a Bodo model and actor too used about two hundred and seventy English words in 30 minute interview with 'Meet the Bodos' channel on 28th September 2020. The following were the English words he used:

Public, figure, represent, proud, please, welcome, channel, public, district, schooling, high school, class, science, H.S, dropped, coaching, cracked, architecture course, totally, construction, modeling, future, plan, graduation, extra, guitar, professional, hobby, perfect, specific, gym, start, without trainer, Mr. North East, 2016, 2017, Mr. Indian, competition, audition, selection, Mr. Global, starting, modeling, acting, public, support, categories, part, winner, depend, Miss. World, Miss. Universe, male pageant, step by step, journey, advised, suggestion, campus, workout, improve, no doubt, proper line, beneficial, profession, maintain, health, luckily, end, semester, May, June, approximately, last week, black, T-Shirt, blue jeans, dress, oversized, mummy, even, motivation, family, support, already, discuss, modeling line, ramp model, show, events, designer, showcase, physic, work, stay, group, communicate, Mr. Popular, Mr. Loving, Mr. Smile, confusion, modeler, Models, international, male models, self motivate, improve, starting, just, shape, posing, mention, 2017, tribal, beard, confidence, local, uncomfortable, enjoy, experience, talent round, ramp walk, well groomed, stylish, puzzle, questions, solve, tasks, passed, medium, school, readymade, finish, next, best, dance, last, distance, achievement, bouquet, chocolate, funny, cash, prize, hostel, party, 50%,coupon, state level, inter-college, Bodoland, respect, expectation, automatically, mental, stability, expression, communication, skills, learning, academic year, achievement, journey, international level, border,

channel, interested, doubt, contact, free, guide, story, kurta, basic, normal, problem finally, theme based, effort, modeling career, construction, busy, profession, interest, pause, film industry, first music video, production, independent, financial, director, choreographer, experience, already, concept, Scooty, public, story line, sudden plan, expression, cut, action, timing, practice, retake, cinematography, Bollywood, actor, skills, industry, grow, production house, output, artists, stage, youth educational qualification, must, print, categories, study, lifetime, health, by chance, rejection, knowledge, position, last, support, corona situation, safe, busy (Meet The Bodos, 28 Sept. 2020).

In the Baksa district of Assam a Bodo journalist was covering a news item wherein he was showing the pathetic plight of the people due to a broken bridge. In his five minute interaction with two villagers they used thirteen English words. The following were the English words used by them:

College, Student, Business, Media, Chief, Sir, budget, repairing, estimate, JCB, pillar, UPPL, BPF (“मोनाबिलिनि BODOLAND रादाब”).

A villager of Kachugaon village under Kokrajhar district of Assam had a four minute interaction with a media person wherein, he was describing about the dilapidated bamboo bridge connecting his village with other villages and requesting the government for a new one. He used eighteen English words. The words he used in his interaction with the media person were as follows:

Road, forest department, BTC, boulder, protect, machine, Janata college, high school, ME School, LP School, BTR, government, RCC (“कचुगाव ओनसोलनि थागिबि राज्यो-राजाफोरा गडिया दैसानि सायाव दालां गैयैनि जाहोनाव गोबां जेनायाव।”).

A local journalist was covering the victims of the floods and soil erosion at Koila Moila Sisubari area on 22nd August 2021. In his seven minute interaction with a local political leader as well as a villager the following English words (forty three) were used by them:

August, population, buy, BTR, Chief, solution, founder, president, Sir, EM, Agenda, Sir, department, government, party, permanent, area, population, ninety eight, life, family, media, through, relief, highlight, chairman, NDRF, UPPL, Minister, solution, individual, private, 3 bags, date, central, 40 kgs, 110 kgs, 30 kgs (“सिलिंखार जानांनाय सुबुंनि दुखु-खैफोदनि समाव मदद होफैदों बिना गयारीआ”).

The phenomenon of use of English words does not happen only in day to day conversations but it is also found in some contemporary Bodo songs and films. For instance in the recent popular Bodo film ‘Jwlwi the Seed’ directed by Rajni Basumatary the following English words (forty three English words in one hour and thirty minute film) were used:

Phone, six, balance, article, cake, dead body, postmortem, school, Matric, distinction, education, court, date, case, motorcycle, result, research, computer course, commission, bazaar, rehearsal, college, function, underground, result, music, practice, audience, band, graduation, help, rail, admission, date, reservation, MLA, situation, gas, ideology, sacrifice, video shoot (“JWLWI -

THE SEED | FULL MOVIE | Rajni | Shimang | Kanyakorn | Pansy | Jeffrey | Queen | Romilaswari”).

5.2 Consequences of the use of Loanwords/Borrowing

Analysis and close observation of the above mentioned interviews, discussions and news presentations in native Bodo language reveal how Bodo speakers of today have become dependent on English loanwords in expressing themselves. There could be both positive as well as negative consequences to this practice. But the fact is, like most other languages of the world Bodos of today have become partially dependent on English words. Mostly the native speakers of the language use the borrowed English words due to convenience as well as due to absence of certain terms in the native language. The Bodos have no choice but to use English words to talk about electronic gadgets, new scientific discoveries, newly invented machinery etc.,

On the one hand the practice of borrowing makes a linguistic community more global and understandable to the second language learners. However, on the other hand it could lead to loss of some of the already existing vocabulary within the language; in other words the linguistic community could become lexically poor over the years if borrowing is practiced excessively.

ⁱ There doesn't seem to be another word for 'Sun' in Bodo language. It's not seen in the literature as well. Thus, in all probability it was borrowed from English at some point of time in the past.