



Code-Mixing In Select Bodo Novels: A Study

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Abstract

Code-Mixing is a very important part of sociolinguistics, the study of how language is used in social contexts. In this study examines the use of code-mixing in select Bodo novel, focusing on the blending of Bodo with Assamese, English, Hindi. It analyzes how authors use code-mixing to reflect cultural identity, social settings, and multilingual reality. The research identifies common patterns and functions of code-mixing, highlighting its impact on both language preservation and literary expression. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of language contact and its influence on contemporary Bodo literature.

Key Words: Code-Mixing, Sociolinguistics, Bodo, Literature.

Introduction

Language plays vital role in human life. It is the primary means of communication, allowing individuals to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas. Through language, people share knowledge, pass down traditions, and preserve culture. It helps in building social relationships, understanding others, and forming communities. Language is also essential in education, governance, literature, and media. Without language, human interaction and progress would be limited. Therefore, language is not only a tool for communication but also a foundation of civilization and cultural heritage.

India is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with the constitution recognizing 22 scheduled languages and hundreds of regional and tribal languages spoken across its vast territory. In such a multilingual environment, it is common for people to be fluent in two or more languages. This linguistic diversity naturally leads to the phenomenon of code-mixing, where speakers blend elements of different languages within a single conversation, sentence, or even phrase.

Code-mixing often occurs in both spoken and written forms as speakers shift between languages like Hindi, English, Assamese, Bengali, Bodo and others depending on the contest, audience, and topic. It reflects not only linguistic ability but also social identity, cultural background, and changing communication needs. In India, code mixing is especially noticeable in media, films advertisement, everyday conversation, and literature. It is a creative and practical way for multilingual speakers to express themselves more fully and effectively.

Aims and Objectives

The main aims and objectives of the study on proposed topic are as follows.

1. To identify and analyze instances of code-mixing in select Bodo novels.
2. To examine the functions and purposes of code-mixing in literary context.
3. To understand how code-mixing reflects the multilingual and cultural realities of Bodo society.
4. To examine the reasons and functions behind the use of code-mixing in the narrative.

Data Collection and Methodology

In this study, data has been collected from primary sources, including selected novels, as well as secondary sources such as articles, books, and theses. The analytical method has been applied for the purpose of this study.

Review of Literature

Some scholars have examined this topic from various perspectives. Notable among them those who have conducted studies on related subjects, as outlined below.

The thesis *“Use of stylistics in the short stories of Nilkamal Brahma”* in 2022 by Tanu Mashahary, she discussed the use of stylistic elements by the writer in select short stories. The researcher also discussed code-mixing and code-switching used in select short stories by the author.

The thesis *“Code-switching in Bodo: A Sociolinguistic Study”* (2022) by Jupitara Boro discusses code-switching in the Bodo language.

The dissertation, *“Code-mixing and Code-switching in Bodo Language: A Case Study of Kokrajhar District”* in 2021 by Samaina Bala Brahma, discussed the code-mixing and code-switching in Bodo language from different examples of other languages. Here, the researcher discussed some reasons of using code-mixing and code-switching in Bodo language.

“Code-mixing and Code-switching in Silingkhar and Srimoti Durlai Short Story Book: An analysis” in 2023, by Terisha Basumatary, a Ph.D. scholar of Bodoland University, Bodo department has published in the journal *“Insight- An international Multilingual Journal for Arts and Humanities”*, volume 3-issue2, 2023. In this journal, the researcher has discussed the code-mixing and code-switching in select short stories with the help of examples from the select books.

“Raobigianni Phora”(2017) Phukan Chandra Basumatary, there is a brief description of code-mixing and code-switching. According to him, “रायलायनाय समाव मोनफा रावनिफ्राय गुबुन मोनफा रावसिम बारस्लायनायखौनो राव-नेरसोन बारस्लायनाय (code-switching) बुडो आरो “गोबां रावारि थासारियाव माब्लाबा बाथा सावरायनायाव एबा रायलायनायाव राव-नेरसोन सोसननाय नुनो मोनो। बेबादि बिजौखौ राव-नेरसोन सोसननाय (code-mixing) बुंनाय जायो। बेबादि रावनि महाराव गुबुन रावनि सोदोब, सोदोब जरा, बाथा-फान्दाय, बाथा-फाव, बाथा सोसननाय नुनो मोनो। बुंनायावल नडा लिरनायावबो बेनि गोबां बिदिन्थि मोनो।

Discussion

Code

In Linguistics, the word “code” refers to a language or a variety of a language that is used in communication. In simple, A code is any system of communication used by people to interact with each other. In multilingual societies, each language or language variety is called a code.

Code-Mixing

Code-mixing is a linguistics phenomenon where speakers blend words, phrases, or clauses from two or more languages within a single conversation, sentence, or even phrase. It is common in multilingual societies like India, where people often speak more than one language.

According to marry W.I. Tay (1989-408), *“Code-mixing involves the embedding or mixing of various linguistic units i.e. morphemes, words, phrases and clauses from two distinct grammatical system or sub system within the same sentence and same speech situation.”*

Kachru (1978:28) uses this concept to refer to “the use of one or more languages for consistent transfer of linguistic units from one language into another and by such a language mixture developing a new restricted or not restricted code of linguistic interaction.”

Bokamba (1989:278) notes “code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (Bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from two distinct grammatical systems within the same sentence and speech event. That is code-mixing is intra sentential switching.”

In Bodo novels, many novelists frequently use code-mixing from other languages in their writings. In the selected works of Chittaranjan Mushahary and Monoranjan Lahary, there is a significant use of code-mixing, incorporating elements from languages such as English, Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, and others. This phenomenon is analyzed below with examples from the selected novels.

Mixing of English

In Bodo literature, many writers often incorporate English words into their writings. This typically happens when there is no suitable or equivalent word in Bodo to express a particular meaning, when they want to make a sentence sound more refined or expressive, or when they aim to clearly convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions—either consciously or unconsciously. Additionally, the use of English can also reflect the social status of the speaker or writer. In the selected novels of Chittaranjan Mushahary and Manoranjan Lahary, the highest number of English word usages can be found. Some examples are given below.

English noun mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. 1. बेयो दा कलेजाव फरायगासिनो दं। p-1 (Bikhaya Gaoyw Khugaya Geoya)

Eng. Rendering: She is now studying college.

2. ष्टेसननि साहा गनै गंथामसो रेलवे क'वार्टर। p-7 (Kharlung)

Eng. Rendering: A few railway quarters are located to the north of the station.

English verb mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. 1. बिष्टिरामआ गहेलनो सिगारेट अफार खालामो। p- 24 (Kharlung)

Eng. Rendering: Bistiram offered a cigarette to Gohel.

2. कल्पनाया गेरेजनिफ्राय Ambassador कार बहननानै शान्तिखौ फजनानै गावनो बोरलाखार बायदि Drive खालामो। p-15 (Bikhaya Gaoyw Khugaya Geoya)

English adjective mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. 1. अजितआ Brilliant गथ'। p-11 (Bikhaya Gaoyw Khugaya Geoya)

Eng. Rendering: Ajit is a brilliant boy.

2. आंहा मोनसे urgent खामानि दड दिल्लीयाव थांनांगौ। p- 13 (Bikhaya Gaoyw Khugaya Geoya)

Eng. Rendering: I have to go to Delhi for urgent work.

3. नाथाय सानखान्थियाव गहेलआ जोबोद उइकमोन। p- 8 (Kharlung)

Eng. Rendering: But Gohel was very weak in mathematics.

English noun phrase mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. केरानीनी हाबा। भेराइटि अफ ओवर्कस, खिसि हाबा। p-39 (Kharlung)

English rendering: A clerk's work includes a variety of tasks, and the job often involves a mix of responsibilities.

English adjective phrase mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. भेरि गुड, आं गाबोन आफाखौ बुंगोन। p-25

English rendering: Very good, I will tell my father tomorrow.

Mixing of Hindi

In Bodo literature, writers frequently incorporate Hindi words also into their works. This practice often arises due to the absence of suitable Bodo equivalents for certain terms or expressions. Using Hindi words can help construct smoother and more coherent sentences, especially when expressing abstract ideas, technical terms, or modern concepts that may not have direct Bodo translations. Additionally, it enhances clarity and emotional depth, enabling authors to communicate their thoughts and feelings more effectively. Sometimes, this blending of languages occurs consciously as a stylistic choice, while at other times it happens unconsciously, influenced by the bilingual environment in which many Bodo speakers live.

Hindi noun mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. 1 बे समाव सानजानिफ्राय गंसे **मालगारि** फैगौ। (Kharlung) p-58

Eng. Rendering: A goods train is coming from the east at this time.

Mixing of Assamese

The Bodos are an indigenous ethnic group native to Assam in Northeast India. Assamese and Bodo serve as the official languages of the state, with Bodo holding the status of an associate official language. Most people in Assam are fluent in Assamese. That is why, while writing Bodo novels, Bodo novelists often use code-mixing from other languages. Some examples are given below.

Assamese noun mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. सुशान्तआ एम. एस. सि. सिम फरायनानै सानसे समाव गुवाहाटी कटन कलेजाव **Natural science** **बिभागनि** professor जादोमोन। p-6 (Bikhaya Gaoyw Khugaya Geoya)

Eng. Rendering: After completing his M.Sc., once Susanta became a professor in the Department of Natural Science at Cotton College, Guwahati.

Bengali noun mixed into Bodo novel

Eg. कल्पना नौ जुदि आंखौ बंगप **सागरखौ** सानसिनानै बारनो थिनबा दानो दानो बारगोन आं, नौ आंखौल अनसायफिन। p-5 (Bikhaya Gaoyw Khugaya Geoya)

Eng. Rendering: Kalpana, if you ask me to cross the Bay of Bengal, I will do it right now, just accept me again.

The following are some reasons why authors use code-mixing in Bodo novels.

1 Multilingual Environment: Bodo speakers are living in a multilingual society since time immemorial, eg. Bodo, Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, and English and others. This multilingual environment leads to natural mixing of languages in daily communication of Bodo people and it reflected in literature too.

2 Lack of equivalent words: Some modern or technical terms (eg. Computer, mobile, interne and others) may not have direct Bodo equivalents. That is why novelists borrow words from others languages to fulfil the needs of words in native language. like English, Hindi, Assamese, and Bengali and other languages.

3 Stylistics choice: Novelists used code-mixing for stylistics effect to sound modern, humorous or relatable. It adds flavour and variety to the narrative, and also attract the readers or audience.

4.Character identify and social class: Different characters may speak in ways that reveal their background, education, or profession. For example, educated characters might use English phrases, doctors may use medical terminology, and lawyers may use legal jargon. Similarly, individuals from other professions or social classes may also use language specific to their field or community.

5. For emphasis or clarity: Sometimes words from other languages are used to emphasis a point or make the meaning clearer or better understanding.

6. To reflect realistic speech: In multilingual societies, people naturally mix languages when they speak. At the same time writer also use code-mixing to represent authentic dialogue and everyday conversations.

Conclusion

The study of code-mixing in select Bodo novels reveals a deliberate linguistics blending by the authors. The novelists intentionally incorporate words and phrases from other languages in their writing to make better writing. These are from English, Hindi, Assamese and Bengali languages. The code-mixing serves various function within novels. Like enhancing realism, expressing their ideas and thoughts clearly, filling lexical gaps, to create vivid imagery and attract the readers effectively.

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