



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

WORD ORDER OF BODO: A NOTION

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1.0 Introduction:

Bodo people have been settling down from the ancient time which is very much old and it is not traceable the starting period. The people who speak Bodo language call themselves 'Boro'. The neighbouring Indic Assamese speakers call Bodo people and their speech as '*Kachari*' pronounced in Assamese as *kosar*. The western sections of the Bodos who live in adjoining areas of Goalpara (Assam) and Jalpaiguri of West Bengal are known to their neighbours as Mech which is pronounced *mes*. The Linguistic Survey of India of Grierson, 1903 states that the name '*Bodo*' which was used by Hodgson for the first time to this group of languages. The exact sound is better represented by spelling it *Bada* or *Bara*, quoted by P.C. Bhattacharya.

The Kacharis are the aborigines, or earliest known inhabitants, of Brahmaputra valley. These are the names given to them by outsiders. In Brahmaputra valley, the Kacharis called themselves Bodo or Bodo fisa (Son of the Bodo). In the North Kachar Hills, they call themselves Dimasa, a corruption of *Dima fisa* or "**sons of the great river.**"

As Edward Gait, (1905, Pp-236) mentioned as "the wide extent and long duration of Bodo domination as shown by the frequent occurrence of the prefix *di* or *ti*, the Bodo word for water, in the river names of the Brahmaputra valley and the adjoining country to the west e.g. Dibru, Dik^hu, Dihing, Dihong, Dibong, Disang, Diphang, Dimla, etc.

Another clarification about the early existence of the Bodos is made by Sunity Kumar Chatterjee (1951) in his books entitled “**Kirata-Jana-Kriti**”. He said that “the Boḍo tribes are linguistically connected with the Nagas, but whereas the Nagas have till recently remained isolated and primitive, one may say that the Bodos, who spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and North Bengal as well as East Bengal, forming a solid *bloc* in North eastern India, were the most important Indo- Mongoloid people in Eastern India and they form one of the main bases of the present-day population of these tracts.” (Chatterjee, 1951, P- 45-46.)

Noted Scholar and historian Pratap Chandra Choudhury (1959) mentioned Bodo as, “the origin of the word Assam is probable that the name was first applied to the land by the Bodos, a Tibeto- Burman people, as it may be derived from a Bodo formation like **Hā-com**, meaning low land. If this derivation is correct, the name **Asama** may go back to a period long before the coming of the **shāns** or the Ahoms; because the Tibeto- Burmans must have entered Assam long before them. It appears, therefore, reasonable to suggest that the Sanskrit formation ‘Asama’ is based on an earlier Bodo form, Hā- com.” Choudhury observed that the Bodos are none but the Kirāta, the termed ‘Kirāta’ was mentioned in the early ancient ages by the classical writers which can be quoted, “The Bodo have a close affinity with the Kirāta of ancient Indian literature.”

Interestingly, Chaoudhury, P. C. shown the evidences of “**The Geography of Ptolemy**”, a work of about A.D.150 where **Ptolemy**, the country of **Seres** mentions the country of the **Seres**, which stands, like **Thina** of the **Periplus**, for Assam, while the name **Seres** appears like **Thinae** to have been applied to the inhabitants of the plains and the hills.....the reference is probably to the hill tribes of Assam, such as the Bodos. (P-31-32)

1.2. Demography of Bodo People:

Assam is the North Eastern State of India, the ground of linguistics hunting of the linguists of the world. The area of Assam covers 78, 438 sq.km. and according to 2001 census of India, the total population of Assam is 26,655,528. The Assamese is the official language of Assam whereas Bengali, Bodo and Karbi are the co-official language of the Assam. According to 2001 census of India, total population of Bodo in Assam is **1,352,771** having 61.3% literacy rate. The Bodos are recognized as plans tribe in the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution.

1.3 Objectives of Study: The main aims of the proposed study are as the following:

- (i) To study how the word order of Bodo is used.
- (ii) To study the position of words in a sentence.
- (iii) To study how the word order of Bodo constituted.
- (iv) To study how and when the NP, VP, Adj. Phrase, Adv. phrase occurs in Bodo.

1.4 Methodology: The proposed study would be carried out by the descriptive and analytical methods. Through these methodologies, the proposed paper would observe and analyze the word order of the Bodo. The paper would highlight the syntactic features of Bodo language which is an SOV type of word order.

2.0 Word Order:

Word order refers to the linear sequence in which words occur in a sentence. The normal word order of Tibeto-Burman languages is **SOV**. Like other Tibeto-Burman languages, Bodo language shares the syntactic feature of the family i.e., the normal order of words in an unmarked sentence is **S (subject), O (object), and V (verb)**:

Subject (S) occurs in the sentence initial position.

Object (O) follows the subject and precedes the verb.

Verb (V) occurs in the sentence final position.

The following sentences show the order of words in the Bodo:

- i. /aŋ uŋk^ham za-yu/
 S O V
 I rice eat-Hab.

‘I eat rice.’

- ii. /nuŋ aŋ-k^huu nu-duumun/
 S O V
 you I-Acc. see-Past.

‘You saw me.’

- iii. /binoy-a k^hamani-k^huu maə-gun/
 S O V

binoy-Nom. work-Acc.do-Fut.

‘Binoy will do (the) work.’

- iv. /bi methai ruwab-gasinu dəŋ/
 S O V

He/she song sing-Prog. be

‘He/she is singing (a) song.’

From the above sentences, it is found that the **SOV** is the most common type of order in Bodo. But other than **SOV**, there are alternative orders as well, the following sentences that exhibit the flexibility of word order like:-

(a) /uŋk^ham za-yu aŋ/ (OVS)

rice eat-Hab.I

‘I eat rice’

(b) /aŋ za-yu uŋk^ham/ (SVO)

I eat-Hab. rice

‘I eat rice.’

From the above illustrations, the same sentence is given with a considerable amount of word order variation found illustrating that the Bodo is one of the moderately free word order languages, but the **OVS** and **SVO** sentences are rarely used for the reason of being unsystematic. However, the normal order is **SOV**. Thus, the Bodo language, as a Tibeto-Burman language representing the above word order pattern conforms to the characteristic features of the Tibeto-Burman family as discussed by Zograph (1982) which states that: “The normal order of words in the Tibeto-Burman sentence is **SOV**- Subject, Object, Predicate, though this is not always and everywhere rigorously observed.”

It is to be mentioned here that in case of the verbs which do not take an object: i.e. intransitive, the order of the sentences is **S+V** as exemplified in the following sentences.

(S+V)

i. /aŋ t^haŋ-gasinu/

S V

I go- Prog

‘I am going.’

ii. /nuŋ mini-gasinu/

S V

you laugh-Prog.

‘You are laughing.’

iii. /bisur t^haŋ-bai/

S V

they go-P.Perf.

‘They have gone.’

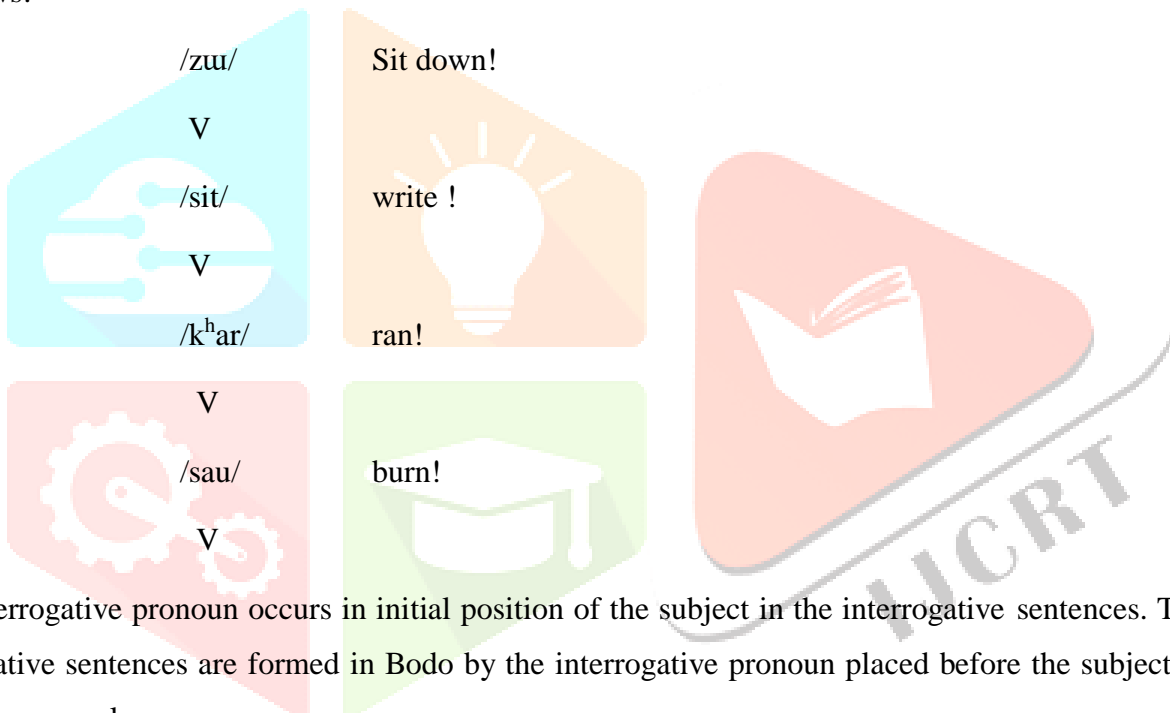
iv. /biyu undu-bai/

S V

he/she sleep-P.Perf.

‘He/She has slept.’

It is noteworthy that the Bodo has a sentence with only Verb where subject and object is not necessary which are as follows:



The interrogative pronoun occurs in initial position of the subject in the interrogative sentences. That means the interrogative sentences are formed in Bodo by the interrogative pronoun placed before the subject. Consider the following examples:

i. /sur p^hai-duŋ/

Int.Pro. V.

who come

‘Who comes?’

ii. /bɔbeau t^ha-yu/

Int. Pro.V

where live

‘Where do you live?’

iii. /manu t^han-guun/

Int.Pro. V Fut.

Why go

‘Why will you go?’

However, it is found that the interrogative pronoun is occurred in the final position of the interrogative sentences in this dialect which is used in their everyday conversations. The following example can be mentioned:

v. /nuŋni nam-a ma/

S V Int.Pro.

your name what

‘What is your name?’

vi. /be mansini nama ma/

S V Int.Pro.

This man name what

‘What is the name of this man?’

Another type of interrogative sentence is found in Bodo which is varying from the above mentioned statement. These types of interrogative sentence place the subject before the interrogative pronoun. Consider the following examples:

vii. /nuŋ bobeau t^han-duŋmun/

S Int.Pro V Past.

you where went

‘Where did you go?’

viii. /zuŋ mabala ruwab-guun/

S Int.Pro V Fut.

we when sing

‘When shall we sing?’

ix. /nuŋ manu k^har -duŋmun/

S Int.Pro V Past.

you why run

‘Why did you run?’

It is clear from the above that the consistency of verb in a word is noticed in the final position in the majority of the sentences in Bodo native speakers.

2.1. Constituents:

A simple sentence in Bodo consists of a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP). The following can be exemplified as:

i. /gɔt^hɔ gab-yu/

NP VP

'The boy cries'

ii. /bizab gugluibai/

NP VP

'The book has fallen'

2.2. Noun Phrase:

Noun phrase consists of the head noun which may be preceding by one or more modifiers in Bodo. Basically, modifiers may be an adjective, a possessive, a numeral or a quantifier. Consider the following examples-

i. /bulugura mansi/

Adj. + N

strong man

'(a) strong man.'

ii. /geder nɔ/

Adj. + N.

big house

'(a) big house.'

iii. {numeral quantifier}

/sanui p^hisazu-p^hur/

numeral + N +Pl.

two daughter-Pl.

'two daughters.'

iv. /gɔŋt^ham laot^hi-p^hur/

Quantifier + N

three stick-Pl.

'three sticks'

So, it is observed that the head noun is preceded by the demonstrative, numeral and adjective in simple sentence of Bodo as in the following examples:

- i. /be sase muzarj mansi/
Dem.+Nu + Adj. +N
This one good man
'This is a good man'
- ii. /be ese guza dui/
Dem.+ Qu +Adj. +N
'this is a little red water'

When the head noun is modified by an adjective and a classifier/quantifier, word order is that the head noun followed by the adjective, and the classifier as exemplified below-

- iii. /mansigeder sanui/
N + Adj. + Class.
man big two
'two big men.'
- iv. /no ph'isa gojnui/
N + Adj. + Class.
house small two
'two small houses.'

If the noun followed by postposition to express the case, the modifier gets pre-posed as shown below:-

- i. /guzuru mansi-nu/
Adj. + N+ Case
tall man- Dat.
'to (a) tall man.'
- ii. /guzuru mansi-nip^hrai/
Adj. + N + Case
tall man-Abl.
'from (a) tall man.'
- iii. /guzuru mansi-p^hur-ni/
Adj. + N + Pl +Case
Tall man-Pl.-Gen.
'of (a) tall man.'

- iv. /guzuu hazu-yau/
Adj. + N + Case
high hill-Loc.
'in (a) high hill.'

Likewise in the case of the possessive also, the modifier precedes the head noun. The order is possessive + noun phrase, as shown in the following examples-

- v. /aɲni bizab/
Poss. + N
my book
'my book.'

- vi. /bini bip^ha/
Poss. + N
His/her father
'his/her father.'

- vii. /zuɲni p^horaisali/
Poss. + N
our school
'Our school.'

Co-ordinate noun phrase is formed by joining two or more noun phrases. These head nouns are linked by a coordinator which may be a connective or a disjunctive. **/aru/** 'and' functions as a connective and **/nɔɲabla/** 'or' as a disjunctive, consider the following examples:-

(a) /aru/ 'and'

- i. /huuwa aru hinzau/
man and woman
'man and woman'
- ii. /bi aru nuɲ/
he/she and you
'he/she and you'
- iii. /aɲni apha aru ai/
my father and mother
'my father and mother'

(b) /nəɣabla/ :

- i. /bi nəɣabla nuŋ/
He/she or you
'he/she or you'
- ii. /musuu-zuɫa nəɣabla musuu-zu/
cow- male or cow- female
'bull or cow.'
- iii. /ram nəɣabla shyam/
Ram or Shyam
'Ram or Shyam'

From the aforesaid mentioned examples, we have found the structure of a noun phrase in Bodo as the following rule:

NP → ± Dem. ± Numeral ± Quantifier ± Adj. + N ± Case

2.3. Verb Phrase:

Verb phrase in Bodo is consist of a lexical verb, which must obligatory be present, and some other optional elements (verbs and adverbs) which the VP consists of as in the following examples-

- i. /za/ eat !
V
- ii. /undu/ sleep!
V
- iii. /t^hui/ die !
V
- iv. /musa/ dance !
V

In the simple sentence, generally noun precedes the verb in Bodo as the following:

- i. /bi zuu luŋ-yu/
NP VP
s/he wine drink-Pre. 'S/he drinks wine.'
- ii. /bizab guɣlui-dumun/
NP VP

book fall-Past.

‘The book fell down’

When the VP takes two Noun Phrases (NPs), the first NP₁ is the direct object and the NP₂ is indirect object i. e. the NPs function as direct object is the obligatory element as exemplified below.

i. /aŋ bi-nu kitab-k^huu hu-dumuun/

I he-Dat. book-Acc. give-Past.

NP₁ NP₂

‘I gave him (a) book.’

ii. /aŋ bizab-k^huu bi-nu hu-dumuun/

I book-Acc. he-Dat. give-Past.

NP₂ NP₁

‘I gave him (a) book.’

iii. /bi zuŋ-nu suima-k^ho dint^hi-guun/

he we-Dat.. dog-Acc. show-Fut.

NP₁ NP₂

‘He will show (a) dog to us.’

iv. /bi sima-k^huu zuŋ-nu dint^hi-guun/

he dog- Acc. we-Dat. show-Fut.

NP₂ NP₁

‘He will show (a) dog to us’

When an adverb occurs in a sentence, the adverb precedes the verb in Bodo as exemplified in the following sentences.

i. /bi lasuiyui uŋk^ham za-dumuun/

NP Adv. N V

VP

he slowly rice eat -Past.

‘He ate rice slowly.’

ii. /bi gabuun p^hwi- guun/

NP ADV. V

VP

He/she tomorrow come –Fut.

‘He/she will come tomorrow.’

The structure of the verb phrase in Bodo is to be formalized as follows:-

VP → ± (ADV) ± (NP₁-Case) ± (NP₂-Case) + V

2.4. Adjective Phrase:

The adjective is the nucleus in an adjectival phrase. The adjective phrase consists of at least one adjective and it may or may not be followed by an intensifier. The adjective of the adjectival phrase either precedes or follows the noun in Bodo.

- i. /muzaj mansi/
Adj. N
good man
'good man'
- ii. /zubur muzaj mansi/
Inten. Adj. N
very good man
'(a) very good man'
- iii. /geder muider p^hui- dumun/
Adj. N V
big elephant come -Past.
'Big elephant came.'
- iv. /eselə mansi-p^hur-a mit^hij-yau p^hui-dumun/
Adj. N -Pl.- Case N -Case V -Past.
'Few men came in the meeting.'
- v. /musa gusum/
N Adj.
tiger black
'black tiger.'

So, the structure of the adjective phrase in Bodo is formalized as follows:

Adj. Phrase → ± Inten ± Adj. + N ± Adj.

2.5. Adverb Phrase:

The adverb in an adverb phrase modifies the verb. An adverb always occurs before the verb in Bodo. Hence, it is called 'sentential adverb'. Consider the following examples.

- i. /sanp^hrambuu zayuu/
 Adv. V
 everyday eat 'eats everyday'
- ii. /lasuiyui za-duumun/
 Adv. V
 slowly eat-Past 'ate slowly'
- iii. /da p^hwui-guun/
 Adv. V
 now come-Fut. 'will come now'

The adverb of place always carries a case along with it. In fact, the case is suffixed to the adverb of place.

- iv. /baizuu -yɔ̃ dɔŋ/
 Adv. -Case V
 Outside be 'is outside'
- v. /guuzuuɔ̃-yau dɔŋ/
 Adv. -Case V
 above be 'is above'

From the above analysis, we can establish the structure of an adverb phrase in Bodo as the following: **Adverb phrase** → + **Adverb** ± **Case** + **V**.

3.0 Conclusion:

From the aforesaid discussion, it is clearly derived that the Bodo people are the inhabitant of the north east India and its language is the branch of the Tibeto- Burman language family. It is learnt that most of languages of the Tibeto-Burman languages are SOV word order. Like the other Tibeto- Burman languages, Bodo also contribute normal order of words in an unmarked sentence is S (Subject), O (Object) and V (Verb) in respect of the syntactic features. Word order of Bodo language is like that Subject (S) occurs in the sentence initial position. Object (O) follows the subject and precedes the verb. Verb (V) occurs in the sentence final position, so, verb occurs in the final position in the Bodo language which is called verb final language. The **SOV** is the most common type of order in Bodo. But other than **SOV**, there are alternative orders as well; the sentences that show evidence of flexibility of word order also found in this paper. In some cases the Bodo has a sentence with only Verb where subject and object is not necessary. It is clear from the above that the consistency of verb in a word is noticed in the final position in the majority of the sentences in Bodo.

The Constituents of Bodo language in a simple sentence consists of a noun phrase (NP) and a verb phrase (VP).

The following can be exemplified as:

(a) /gɔt^hɔ gab-yuu/ 'The boy cries'

NP VP

(b) /bizab gugluibai/ 'The book has fallen'

NP VP

Noun Phrase in a sentence of Bodo language is consists of the head noun which is preceding by one or more modifiers in Bodo. Basically, modifiers may be an adjective, a possessive, a numeral or a quantifier. Consider the following examples-

(c) /bulugura mansi/

Adj. + N

strong man

'(a) strong man.'

(d) /geder nɔ/

Adj. + N.

big house

'(a) big house.'

So, it is observed that the head noun is preceded by the demonstrative, numeral and adjective in simple sentence of Bodo as in the following examples:

(e) /be sase muzaŋ mansi/

Dem.+Nu + Adj. +N

This one good man

'This is a good man'

(f) /be ese guza dui/

Dem.+ Qu +Adj. +N

'this is a little red water'

When the head noun is modified by an adjective and a classifier/quantifier, word order is that the head noun followed by the adjective, and the classifier as exemplified below-

(g) /mansi geder sanui/

N + Adj. + Class.

man big two

‘two big men.’

(h) /nɔ p^hisa ɡɔŋnui/

N + Adj. + Class.

house small two

‘two small houses.’

If the noun followed by postposition to express the case, the modifier gets pre-posed as shown below:-

(i) /ɡuzuu mansi-nu/

Adj. + N+ Case

tall man- Dat.

‘to (a) tall man.’

So, Noun Phrase of Bodo language’s formula is found as:

NP → ± Dem. ± Numeral ± Quantifier ± Adj. + N ± Case

And the Verb phrase in Bodo is consist of a lexical verb, which must obligatory be present, and some other optional elements (verbs and adverbs) which the VP consists of as in the following examples-

i.	/za/	
	V	eat !
ii.	/undu/	
	V	sleep!

When the VP takes two Noun Phrases (NPs), the first NP₁ is the direct object and the NP₂ is indirect object i. e. the NPs function as direct object is the obligatory element. And when an adverb occurs in a sentence, the adverb precedes the verb in Bodo. The structure of the verb phrase in Bodo is formalized as follows: - **VP → ± (ADV) ± (NP₁-Case) ± (NP₂-Case) + V.**

The adjective is the nucleus in an adjectival phrase. The adjective phrase consists of at least one adjective and it may or may not be followed by an intensifier. The adjective of the adjectival phrase either precedes or follows the noun in Bodo. So, the structure of the adjective phrase in Bodo is formalized as: **Adj. Phrase → ± Inten ± Adj. + N ± Adj.**

The adverb in an adverb phrase modifies the verb. An adverb always occurs before the verb in Bodo. Hence, it is called ‘sentential adverb’ and its formula is as: **Adverb phrase → + Adverb ± Case + V.**

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