



# Kokborok kokni kokthai swnamjakmung

( Word Formation):

**SMT.RAJLAXMI CHAKMA**

**Assistant Professor**

**Department of Kokborok**

**Bir Bikram Memorial College**

**Agartala, Tripura(West),India**

## **Abstract:**

The world has many different languages. A language is composed of numerous words.

Word formation is what those invented words are known as. Word formation is the process of forming new words or developing old words by adding or deleting syllables.

Many terms in many languages around the world are changing significantly, and many more are going extinct. In addition to this, however, a lot of new terms are being created.

There are now a lot of new words being created or coined, even within the Kokborok language. A language evolves through word development, and concurrently, its culture advances through this language. However, there are differences in the ways these words are formed. One way to create new words or add something to existing ones is by using affixes. For example, Phw/Prefix-rwng/Root-nai/Suffix= Phwrwngnai(Teacher). We can form a new word by combining words with different meanings. For example, mai/rice-dul/round=maidul, tok/bird-thu/Sleep=tokthu(A kind of bird), thai- pung=thaipung. Creating words in this way can be called compounding. There are many such compounding words in the kokborok language. The process of forming a new word by repeating a word or part of it, sometimes with a slight change in sound or vowel is called Reduplication. Ex, Philik-Phalak(naughty and such), Siring-Siring(silence). In the Kokborok language, the number of native words is limited compared to more widely developed languages and because of this, many borrowed words are used especially from Bengali.

**Keywords:** Affixes, Reduplication, Lone words, Compounding, root verb etc.

**1.Introduction:** Kokborok, one of the Tibeto-Burman languages of Northeast India, is spoken in Tripura, Assam, and Mizoram as well as in bordering Bangladesh and Myanmar. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages of North Eastern India, Kokborok has its regional dialects. According to Binoy Debbarma (2003), there are eight distinct dialects namely Bru, Debbarma, Jamatia, Koloi, Murasing, Rupini, Tripura, and Uchoi. However, the classification of dialects is not so much satisfactory as there is no such sociolinguistic works to determine dialectal variation of Kokborok. It is worth to mention here that the phonological variation is one of the significant feature of the dialects of Kokborok. However, such phonological variations do not show the mutual unintelligibility among the dialects. Hence, all the dialects are mutually intelligible.

According to data from the 2011 census, 8,80,537 people in Tripura speak Kokborok, making up 23.97% of the total population. The Kokborok people do not have a distinct alphabet for writing their language, like other tribal languages in Northeast India. They adopted Bengali script even though the younger generation wanted to write their language in Roman script. This may be the reason why most of the younger generation was educated in English.

On January 19, 1979, Kokborok was acknowledged as a state language. At present there are two official languages in Tripura Government, one is Bengali and the other is Kokborok. In Kokborok, Tripura University has been offering six-month certificate programs since 1990. In 2010, it also launched a one-year diploma program. Kokborok has been presented as a subject at the primary level, from class I to class V, under ADC 2 categories. In certain government-run schools in Tripura, Kokborok is also taught to students in Classes VI through XII. Kokborok is currently operational in 70/75 government Higher Secondary School and 180 High School at Tripura. Additionally, it has been offered as a degree-level elective at Tripura University from 2012. Master Degree on Kokborok started at Tripura University (a central university) from 2015. And in two private universities of Tripura, a master's degree in Kokborok was started. Since 2012, the Kokborok language and other minority languages of Tripura have had a separate directorate.

Traditionally, Kokborok did not have its own widely used script. Historically, oral tradition dominated, and written forms were often borrowed from Bengali script (and more recently Roman script). Because of the absence of a native script, and due to historical marginalization, there has been insufficient academic research. There are very few reference books, grammatical descriptions, or comprehensive dictionaries available. Many existing works are scattered or unpublished

**2. Aims and Objectives:** The aims and objectives of Kokborok word formation usually refer to the linguistic, cultural, and educational purposes behind developing and standardizing the vocabulary of the Kokborok language (the language of the Tripuri people in Tripura and neighboring regions).

- Maintain the unique cultural and linguistic heritage of the Tripuri community.
- Create new words to express modern concepts while keeping the language relevant.

- Ensure clarity and precision in expressing ideas across all fields (education, governance, science, etc.).
- Develop standardized vocabulary for textbooks, teaching, and examinations.
- Encourage use of native Kokborok roots instead of excessive borrowing from Bengali, English, or Hindi.
- Assist in the process of Kokborok being effectively used as a state and administrative language.
- Use Kokborok root words, affixes, and compounding rules.

**3.Methodology:** Kokborok is one of the oldest languages in the region, belonging to the Sino-Tibetan language family, under the Tibeto-Burman sub-branch. Traditionally, Kokborok did not have its own widely used script. Historically, oral tradition dominated, and written forms were often borrowed from Bengali script (and more recently Roman script). Because of the absence of a native script, and due to historical marginalization, there has been insufficient academic research. There are very few reference books, grammatical descriptions, or comprehensive dictionaries available. Many existing works are scattered or unpublished. For this reason, I used both primary and secondary sources to gather Kokborok word formation content. However, priority should be given to primary sources. Fieldwork with native Kokborok speakers in a number of dialect regions. Direct elicitation of morphological patterns, words, and phrases through dialogue and interviews. Natural speech observation in social, cultural, and educational settings. Secondary sources, word lists, and current Kokborok dictionaries. Published scholarly articles, conference papers, books on Kokborok language and grammar etc.

## 4. Result and Discussion:

### 4.1 Word Formation in Kokborok language:

The process of word formation is an essential component of linguistics. Both in descriptive linguistics and traditional grammar, word formation means the creation of a new word either by changing the form of a base or by adding affixes to the base or both. In this sense, word creation is generally referred to by the term “derivation”. The word formation in Kokborok language refers to the various processes by which new words are created. These processes can involve modifying existing words, combining them, or even inventing entirely new ones. In the Kokborok language, word formation has various methods. But common methods include affixation (adding prefixes and suffixes), compounding (combining words), and reduplication (repeating words).

There are many ways in which word formation occurs within a language. But in the case of the Kokborok language, the methods or ways in which word formation can be formed are discussed below:

**4.2. Affixation:-** Affixes are word parts added to a base or root word to change its meaning or grammatical function. On the other hand when you add something before or after a root verb (or any root), it's called affixation. Affixation in general has four types: a. Prefixation b. Suffixation c. Infixation d. Circumfixation. But

in kokborok word formation, as you said, the system mainly uses prefixes and suffixes. That means new words (or different grammatical forms) are created by attaching elements before or after the root.

**4.2.a Prefix(Wasa):** When we add a word element before a root verb(or root word) to create a new word, and the element itself is called a prefix.

Ex:

Ko+som(black-adj)=kosom(black-n)

Sw+bai(break)= Swbai(broken)

Phi+yok(spicy)=phiyok(open)

Mo+sok(rot)=mosok(red deer)

Bw+lai(leaf)=bwlai (leaf)

**4.2.b Wakhwlai(suffixes):** A letter or group of letters added at the end of a word/root to form a new word or alter its meaning/grammar.

#### Noun making suffixes-mung

Verb	Noun	Gloss
Lok-To grow tall	lokmunw	tallness
Phob-burial	phobmung	bury
Per-to be born	permung	birth
Sum-to be rotten	summung	rottenness
Koi-to bend	koimung	curved

#### Noun making suffixes-nai

Verb	Noun	Gloss
Kok-to disperse	Kok-nai	dispersal
Khok-steal	Khok-nai	theft
Chong-to determine	Chong-nai	determination
Bok-serve	Bok-nai	service
Mok-to be sad	Mok-nai	sadness

**Noun making suffixes-ma**

Verb	Noun	Gloss
Khui-to be hungry	Khui-ma	hunger
Dul-to include	Dul-nai	included
Pai-finished	Pai-ma	finished
Khar-escape	Khar-ma	escape

**Noun making suffixes-mari**

Verb	Noun	Gloss
Tung-hot	Tung-mari	heat
Kha-to build	Kha-mari	Boundary sign
Nuk-see	Nuk-mari	sight
Sal-day	Sal-mari	date

**Noun making suffixes-thai**

Verb	Noun	Gloss
Suk-to bite	sukthai	bite
Thwng- exercise	thwngthai	play
Khwlai-do	thwlaithai	duty
Ri-give	rithai	due

**Adjective making suffixes-jak**

Vreb	Adjective	Gloss
Gosi-agree	Gosi-jak	agreeable
Phui-uproot	Phui-jak	uprooted
Mok-to be sad	Mok-jak	sad
Soi-to endure	Soi-jak	tolerant

**4.3 Compounding:** 'Compounding' is a word formation process whereby two or more independent words are combined to create a new word with a specific meaning. In the Kokborok language, the majority of word formation occurs through compounding.

**Noun Compound**

N+N=N

Nok-home+ari-boundary=nokari- Neighbours

Tok-bird+twi-water=toktwi-egg

Aming-cat+bolong-forest=amingbolong-jungle cat

N+V=N

Nok(house)+kha(build)=nokhka(sky)

V+N=N

Ka(step)+lam(way)=kalam(steps)

N+A=N

Phola(soul)+kwthar(holy)=pholakwthar(holy spirit)

**Verb Compound**

V+V=V

Khorok(head)+bom(accept)=khorokbom(respect)

Nai(look)+khwlai(do)=naikhwlai(looking down)

V+A=V

Cha(eat)+lok(tall)= chalok(manage)

Chw(packing)+kap(cry)=chwkap

N+V=V

Nung(drink)+hor(carry)=nunghor(summoned)

**Adjective Compound**

V+A=A

Tong(to stay)+kaham(good)=tongkaham(politely)

Tong(to stay)+kosong(simple)=tongkosong(simple living)

N+A=A

Twi(water)+tung(hot)=Twitung(hot water)

Phan(strength)+kwrak(hard)=phankwrak(forced coercion)

V+V=A

Nai(look)+thok(be tasty)=naithok(beautiful)

**4.4 Reduplication** :- Reduplication is the process of forming a new word by repeating a word or part of it, sometimes with a slight change in sound or vowel. Reduplication is a common and interesting feature of the kokborok language and it can occur in both full and partial forms.

**o4.4.a Full reduplication:** Full reduplication is a word-formation process in which a whole word(or root)is repeated exactly, to create a new meaning or to give emphasis.

Ex-siring – siring(silence)

kwchang – kwchang(cold)

philik – philik- naughty

Bisi-bisi(year)

Nok-nok(house)

Som-som(black)

Chak-chak(Red)

Naithok-naithok(beautiful)

Keram-keram(thin)

Bara-bara(sort)

**4.4.b Partial Reduplication:** partial reduplication is a word- formation process in which only part of a word(not the whole word) is repeated, usually with a slight change in sound or structure, to create new meaning or expression.

Ex:Philik- phalak-naughty and such

Kisa-misa(something)

Nok-nak(house and such)

Cha-chu-Eat-pack

Mwnam-swnam-Bad smell

Thwi-thai-Death and place

Hik-hak-Wife and such

Bwrwi-twrwi-girl and such

Bupra-sapwra-beating

Thwng-thang-game-go

**4.5 Derivation :-** Derivation involves adding prefixes or suffixes (affixes) to a base word to create a new word with a different meaning or grammatical category.

A significant amount of the Kokborok language uses derivation, the most fundamental linguistic method for creating new word items, to create new words.

Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth are all driven by this process, as we can see.

4.5.a Adjective words can be made by adding prefixes before verbs.

Khwlai(Verb	Goron(Adj)	Gloss
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Phek(to be intoxicated)	Ke-phek	intoxicated
Phung (fatten)	ku-phung	fatter
Ram(thin)	ke-ram	thin
Ran(dry)	Kw-ran	dry

4.5.b Adjective words can be formed by adding “suffixes or –jak” to verb.

<b>Khwlai(verb)</b>	<b>Goron (adj)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
Aji (to earn)	Aji -jak	earned
Kiri (scare)	Kiri-jak	<b>scary</b>
Khui(hunger)	Khui-jak	hungry
Phan(surround)	Phan-jak	surrounding

4.5.c Noun words can be formed by adding “–mung, -ma, -nai” to verb.

<b>Khwlai(verb)</b>	<b>Mung (noun)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
Tan (to cut)	Tan-mung	Cut/wound
Rik (to draw)	Rik-mung	drawing
Pori(to read)	Pori-nai	reading
Thu(to sleep)	Thu-ma	sleep
Nwng(to drink)	Nwng-ma	drink

4.5.d Verb words can be formed by adding –ri , -su, -rwu to noun.

<b>Mung(noun)</b>	<b>Khwlai(verb)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
Motom(fragrance)	Motom-rwo	fragrance
Usta(kick)	Usta-ri	kicked
Yakung(feet)	Yakung-su	foot

4.5.e Adverb words can be formed by adding –hai to adjective.

<b>Goron(adj)</b>	<b>Khwlai Goron(adv)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
Kobor(mad)	Kobor-hai	madly
Naithok(beautifull)	Naithok-hai	beautifully
Keram(thin)	Keram-hai	thinly
Kwchwnng(bright)	Kwchwnng-hai	brightly
Gwnang(rich)	Gwnang-hai	richly

**4.6 Borrowing :-** Borrowing is the process of taking words from other languages and incorporating them into ..Though most kokborok vocabulary is derived from Bengali, Sanskrit, contact with other cultures has introduced many loanwords into the language.

**Table.1 Loaned words from Sanskrit:**

Sl no	Sanskrit	Kokborok	Gloss
1	Mula	<b>Mulai</b>	radish
2	Potol	<b>potol</b>	Pointed gourd
3	aluka	<b>alu</b>	Potato
4	yuj	<b>yoga</b>	yoga
5	Guru	<b>guru</b>	teacher
6	Prasada	<b>prasad</b>	grace
7	Ladduka	<b>ladu</b>	Spherical sweet

**Table.2 Loaned words from Hindi:**

Sl.no	Hindi	Kokborok	Gloss
1	Lungi	longgi	Sarong
2	Basmati	Basmati	Basmati rice
3	Guli	Guli	A bullet
4	Rotee	Roti	Bread
5	Chakka	chaka	A wheel
6	Aaloo	Alu	Patato
7	Puree	Puri	one kind of cake
8	Baranda	Baranda	veranda
9	Kaichi	Kenchi	Scissors
10	Panchaayat	Panchayat	Panchayat

**Table 3. Loaned words from Bengali:**

Sl no	Bangali	Kokborok	Gloss
1	Dut	<b>dut</b>	milk
2	Badhakopi	<b>badakopi</b>	Cabbage
3	Sasa	<b>sosa</b>	Cucumbar
4	Dakat	<b>dakat</b>	thief
5	kerani	<b>kerani</b>	clerk
6	banan	<b>banan</b>	spelling
7	Phulkophi	<b>phulkopi</b>	cauliflower
8	Batasha	<b>batasa</b>	Sugar drops
9	Singara	<b>singgwra</b>	Shinghara
10	Doi	<b>doi</b>	Dadhi

**Table. 3 Loaned words from English:**

Sl.no	English	Kokborok	Glossary
1	Internet	internet	Internet
2	Cooler	kolar	cooler
3	Glass	gulas	glass
4	Bank	benk	bank
5	Fridge	firij	fridge
6	Bottle	botal	bottle
7	Pencil	pensil	pencil
8	Machine	mesin	machine
9	Bulb	balph	bulb
10	Nurse	nas	nurse

**Table.4 Loaned words from Arabic:**

Sl no	Arabic	Kokborok	Gloss
1	Hisab	hisab	<b>calculation</b>
2	Baki	baki	<b>Remaining</b>
3	Amol	amol	Alcohol
4	Asol	asol	Real
5	Elem	elem	knowledge

**Table.5 Loaned words from Portuguese :**

Sl no	Portuguese	Kokborok	Gloss
1	Chabi	chabi	key
2	Armario	almari	Almirah
3	Estiar	istiri	iron
4	Janela	janala	window
5	Caju	kaju	cashew
6	Mistri	mistri	mechanic
7	Saban	saban	soap

**Table.6 Loaned words from Persian:**

Sl no	Persian	Kokborok	Gloss
1	Ayna	Ayna	mirror
2	aram	Aram	Comfort
3	côshma	Chosma	glasses
4	Pardeh	Porda	Curtain
5	nôkol	Nokol	Fake/copy
6	Jadu	jadu	magic
7	Balance	baki	Balance
8	Ojon	Ojon	Weight
9	Tabesh	Tabis	Radiance
10	Hindi	Hindi	Hindi

**4.7 Blending :-** Blending creates a new word by combining parts (usually the beginning of one word and the end of another) of two or more words.

Ex - Wak(Pig) + bahan(meat) = wahan(Pork)

Pun(goat) + bahan(meat) = puhan(mutton)

Tok(bird)+bahan(meat)=tokhan(Chicken)

Sal(Sun)+kutung(hot)=satung(sunshine)

Sal(sun)+kwchak(red)=salchak(sunny day)

Sak(body)+bukur(skin)=sakur

**4.8 Acronym:** Acronym are words formed by taking the initial letters of a phrase and pronouncing them as a singal word.

T.T.A.A.D.C = Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council

W.H.O= World Health Organiazation

KHM= Kokborok Hukumu Mission

KBSS=Kokborok Bhasha Sahitya Songsod

**4.9 Back formation :-** Back-formation is the process of creating a new word by removing a real or supposed affix from an existing word. In other words, it's the opposite of affixation: instead of adding prefixes/suffixes, we subtract them.

Swrwngnai (learner)-> swrwng(learn)

Phwrwngnai(teacher) -> phwrwng(teach)

**4.10 Coinage :-** Coinage is the invention of a completely new word, often a brand name that becomes widely used. To remain relevant, new coinage words have also been created in the Kokborok language.

Ex:Kokkhok(mobile)

Soisimung(science)

Koksilam(linguistic)

**4.11 Conversion :-** Changing a words grammatical category without changing its form.

Ex :- water (noun)

Water(verb)

Black – blackened

Civil –civilized

**4.12 Clipping :-** Clipping is cutting the beginning or the end of a word or shortening a word by deleting one or more syllables. The deletion of a part of a word resulting in a new and shorter word .Clipping mainly consists of the following types:

Back clipping

Fore clipping

Middle clipping.

Ex- laboratory – lab

Photograph – photo

Telephone – phone

**5.Conclusion:** The methodology and classifications of word formation in the Kokborok language have been co-apprehensively explored above. The examination of word formation processes, in accordance with linguistic principles, reveals that affixation plays a pivotal role in Kokborok word construction. Many words can be generated by adding suffixes through derivation. But the number of words generated through prefix derivation is relatively limited. But if we study the structure of Kokborok word formation, we see that compounding is also widely used. Compounding involves nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and the words that emerge are either nouns or adjectives. Compound nouns, compound verbs, and compound adjectives are formed in a variety of ways. For instance,  $V+V=V$ ,  $V+A=A$ , and  $N+N=N$ . Every language in the world borrows, adapts, and reshapes terms from other languages. Kokborok, like all languages, has borrowed extensively, particularly from Bengali, given Tripura's long history of social, political, and cultural ties with Bengali. Every language has its own ways of creating new words, but not all types of word formation that exist in the world are available in every language.

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