CHAPTER III
CHAPTER-III
COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN COGNATES OF RABHA

3.0 : Cognates of Rabha:

As per linguistic term is concerned, a comparative study is generally carried out with the same cognate languages, which... have developed from a common ancestor....(Mathews : 2007 : 62)\(^1\).

Generally cognates bear a ‘genetic relatedness, having configured from the same stock of languages’.

The immediate cognates of Rabha are Bodo (Boro – Kachari), Garo and Tiwa.\(^2\) These, ..., Testify to the obvious similarities .... having each six contrasting vowels. (Burling : 2008 : 65)\(^3\), and their original sources are the common : Sino - Tibetan family of languages. Besides, as ethnic affinities concern, the far aside cognates of Rabha are said to be Limbu, Lepcha and Dukpa (Dzongkha)\(^4\)

It is noteworthy that in comparative studies of S.T. languages have been inadequately reported have been made fragmentory (Kloss et al : 730)

3.0.1 : Rabha and Bodo :

Both Rabha and Bodo have 6 common contrastive vowel phonemes and they occur in the initial, medial and final positions.

The two languages are tonal language having two prominences, high and low. Both of them retain the same degree of tonal prominences in their dialectal varieties, too.

Rabha has most de-aspirated phonemes remarkably in Kocha variety, while conversely Bodo retains the aspirated consonant phonemes in rigid forms ; as in
Porha Porai Phorai 'to read'
Pothar Pathar/Patar Phwthar 'field'
Palon Palai Phali 'to observe as fests etc’.
Zati Zwti Zathi ‘nation’
Kalam Kolom Khulu:m ‘pen’
Kapal Kapal Khaphal fate, destiny

Rabha retains labio-dental /F/ and palatal /C/, while Bodo retain bilabial /ph/ and lateral /s/-

fu:i/ ‘Phai’ in Rong-Mai phai ‘to come’
fan/Phaj phaj phaqq ‘tree, herbs etc’
celak su:la ‘to lick’

The most common shifting /r/>/L/, sometimes /h/ or vise versa, into T.B. language stock are also common in Rabha and Bodo. According to Benedict, the final –r-1 are also common in many T.B. languages eg5:

Lam (ram in Rong-Mai: lam Road
Bibar(Garo,Bibal) ‘flower’, blossom etc.
Rampar Bar(Garo,bal) ‘wind’
3.0.2: Rabha and Garo:

The other immediate cognate of Rabha is Garo and both in phonology and Morphology, there lies a great similarities. The inhabitance of these speech communities are not for distant, but quite near. In the foothills of Garohills of Meghalaya state are the common inhabitance of these dialect speaking people. As stated earlier stating that the other Kocha variety is quite identical with that of Atong dialect, and which is also identical with Maitory dialect of Rabha language.

It is noteworthy that the dialect variety of Garo was adopted as standard variety, that is Ruga variety was also a close inhabitance of one of the Rabha varieties, Rongdani dialect. That inhabitance is the ideal place for Garo nationality, Damra. That is to say, Ruga variety was synchronized with that of other prominent dialects. Atong, chisag and matabeng.

Rabha and Bodo are tone language, but Garo exhibit a glottal stop, and thus it differentiates the meaning of words⁶, as in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cha:a</th>
<th>to eat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cha</td>
<td>to grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu:a</td>
<td>deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thua</td>
<td>to sleep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2: Rabha and Tiwa:

As estimated, the other important cognate of Rabha is Tiwa, which was called ‘Lalung’ as an exonym. Tiwa is spoken in TAC (Tiwa Autonomous Council: 1995) areas, and sparsely in other parts of Assam, too.

It is crystal clear that the areas of Tiwa dialect speaking people are fairly far from that of the Rabhas, but these lies a quite similarities between the languages.
A special mention is to be made here that both Rabha and Tiwa are gradually losing their numbers of speakers in ‘a unstable bilingual position’. The total population of Tiwa is 1,75,000 as per 2010 census report and only 26,000 people speak their dialects, and in regard to the Rabha, only 50% population speak their dialects.

Father Jose has done a good study in the ample diffusion of Indic words, invariably Assamese into Tiwa.

3.2.1 : A comparative vocabularies Rb-Bd-Gr-T

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rabha</th>
<th>Bodo</th>
<th>Garo</th>
<th>Tiwa</th>
<th>English version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aŋ</td>
<td>aŋ</td>
<td>aŋa</td>
<td>aŋ</td>
<td>“I”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čiŋ</td>
<td>zu:ŋ</td>
<td>čiŋ</td>
<td>čiŋ</td>
<td>“we”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuːu, to</td>
<td>dao</td>
<td>Toːo</td>
<td>tu</td>
<td>“bird”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuŋ/nuŋ</td>
<td>nuːŋ</td>
<td>naca</td>
<td>ra</td>
<td>“you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nok</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>nok</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>“house”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sek</td>
<td>Se</td>
<td>saːa</td>
<td>se</td>
<td>“snatch”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sok</td>
<td>sok</td>
<td>sok</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>“to reach”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>muːn</td>
<td>muːn</td>
<td>muːn</td>
<td>“to get”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fui/phai</td>
<td>phai</td>
<td>phui,riba</td>
<td>fai</td>
<td>“to come”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purun</td>
<td>burma</td>
<td>doːbok</td>
<td>purun</td>
<td>“goat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thanŋ</td>
<td>biphanŋ</td>
<td>bipanŋ</td>
<td>shanŋ</td>
<td>“tree”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musu</td>
<td>musu</td>
<td>mac’cu</td>
<td>masu</td>
<td>“cow”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated earlier, the far aside cognates of Rabha are Lepeha, Limbu and Dukpa (Dzong-kha) and there lies an obvious similarities among them.
The North-East region is conducive to all its linguistic situations, and can be rightly termed as an “epitome of multi-lingual India”. There are an interethninc communication, linguistic identity, and growth of ethnic consciousness on the basis of linguistic affiliation and its fascinating and awesome in its variety”." In such situation, more specifically in the Brahmaputra valley, Assamese and Bengali like speech, (Deshi Bhasa), that is patois of Assamese was active as lexical correspondence, and as a result, most of the section of each ethnic group adopted Assamese and given up their dialects. The Sonowal-Kochary, Thengal-Kochary, Tai-Ahom, Moran, Muttock, some sections of Dewri, Mising, Rabha, Karbi and
Rajbongshi (Koch-Rajbongshi-Kshatriya) speak the patois of Assamese, with peculiar phonology and morphological traits. Even, in the hilly areas, as a link-language, Nagamese was formed in Nagaland.

Thus, it has been crystal clear that a substantial numbers of Tibeto-Burman speech family have adopted the Indic form extant in the region, and subsequently, some Indic origin words undergo into their speech, through anaptaxis process as in —

- dhormmo > dhormo > dormo, dohrom (religion): both in Bd & Rb
- caroa > carai > ‘carai (to hard a flock of cow) in Rb.
- dhar > dhar > dar, dahar (loan) in Bd & Rb.
- Bhita > bhitha > bita (foundation) in Rb
  Bitha’ in Bd.
- Kalam > khmlum (pen) in Bd.
- Kumbha > Kumbwi (earthan pot) in Rb.

Some foreign words have been entered into these T.B. languages through Indic words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indic</th>
<th>T.B. family</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Komity</td>
<td>Kumuti,(Rb)</td>
<td>Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bance</td>
<td>Banco</td>
<td>Bench</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noteworthy that Sino-Tibatan languages in N.E. regions do not possess abstract words, which can signify the philosophical traits: such words are directly loaned from Indic or Sanskritik offshoot, with their nativized phonemes as an outcome of linguistic diffusion into them. Goswani 10 explored such words, as follows:
Pap (skt) : ‘phap’ in Bd
‘pap’ in Rb

Punya : ‘phuino’ Bd,
Puino’ Rb

Isor : ‘iswr’ Bd,
isor Rb
isol Gr

mukti : mukthi ‘bd, ‘salvation’.

These are the outcome of linguistic diffusion from Indic into T.B. language groups. But this process could not effect their speech, as because “language, like a thermostat, is self regulating, constantly re-adjusting itself in an attempt to maintain an equilibrium.”
Notes and references: