CHAPTER 4

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BODO LANGUAGE

4.1 Introduction

Language is a very convenient and powerful means of communication for human beings. It is a very complex human phenomenon. Language may be used in different forms like spoken language, facial expression or body language. These different forms of language can be used in combination or alone and it is a powerful means of communication in human beings. [31]. In normal circumstances all the different forms of languages are all used at the same time but the spoken language is the most efficient form to convey any information while the other forms are used to support the spoken language. According to Patanjali, it is the human expression expressed with the help of speech organs [36].

The basic unit or the building block for any language is called phonemes. Phonemes are combined together to form words, combination of words form phrases and sentences which are used to form the spoken language. Spoken language is a result of a process called **coarticulation**- a phenomena in which the ending phoneme of a word is merged with the starting phoneme of the next word so as to form a meaningful sentence or word.

Assam is a land where people from many culture and multi-ethnic groups live together. People in different parts of Assam speak many different languages other than Assamese. One of the prominent languages is the Bodo language which is spoken by the people of Bodo population. This has been the prominent reason for choosing the Bodo language for recognition and synthesis. This language is now spoken in many states of

North-east India like Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur. It is also spoken in the northern part of Bihar and west Bengal as well in neighboring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan [35].

The Bodo's belong to the Bodo-Kachari, a large group of ethnicity. Racially, they belong to the Mongoloid stock of the Indo-Tibetans or Indo-Mongoloids. According to Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, a famous historian, mythologically, the Bodos are "the Offspring of son of mother Earth and Vishnu", who are also known as Kiratas in the epic period. The constitution of India recognizes the Bodo's as a plain tribe in the sixth schedule.

4.2 Hierarchy of the Bodo Language

The origin of the present Bodo language can be traced to the Sino-Tibetan family of language [32]. As depicted in **Fig 4.1,** there are many sub-branches in the Sino-Tibetan family namely the Tibeto-Burman, Assam-Burmese, Bodo-Naga and Bodo [33]. The people belonging to the Tibeto Burman group were living in the North-East region of India and the group consisted of many tribes. Some of these tribes were – **Bodo, Koch, Deuri, Tiwa, Rabha, Garo, etc** [35]**.** The language which is spoken the most in Assam after "Assamese" is the Bodo language. It is also the official language in the BAC (Bodo dominated area). Many rivers from the North-East region like Dihong, Dihing, Dibru, Dikarai etc. were named after some Bodo words. This reveals that spatial distribution pattern along with the cultural traits of different but related ethno-cultural groups.
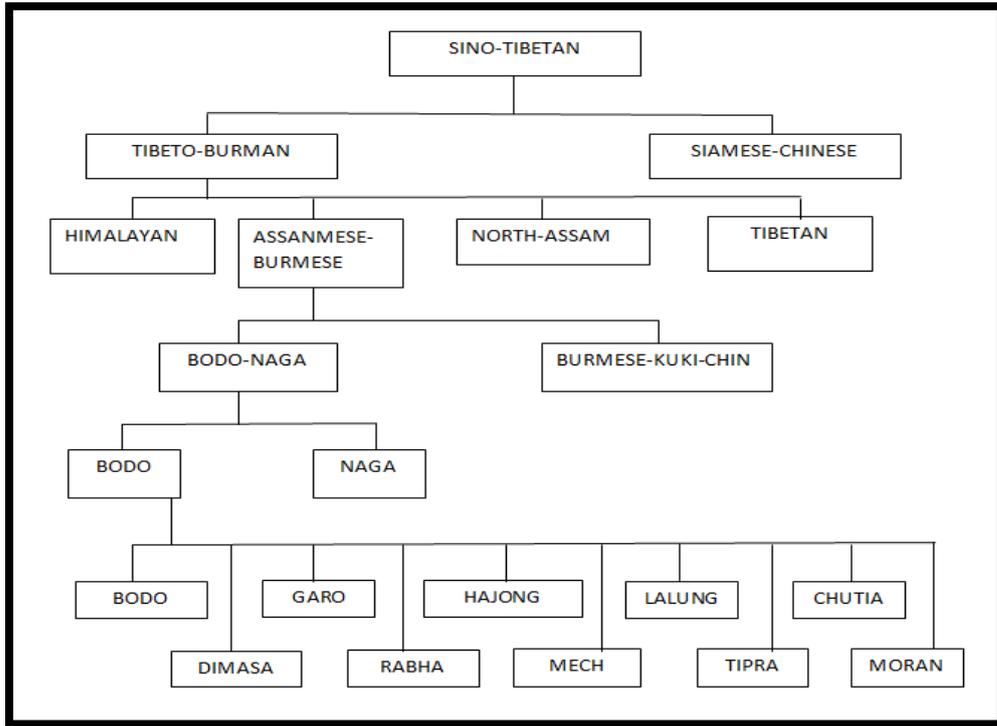
Fig 4.1: Structure of the Bodo Family

4.3 History of the Bodo Language

The Bodo language is a very rich and ancient language. But the literary development of the Bodo language was very slow. The written form of the Bodo language was found in the latter part of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century [38]. The development phase of the Bodo language started since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1913, the Socio-political movement which was started by some Bodo organizations was a revolutionary point in the progress of the Bodo language. In 1963, the Bodo language was introduced as medium of instruction in schools in those areas where the Bodo people lived in majority. In 2005, the language also received recognition in the Indian constitution as a scheduled language. The Bodo language also became one of the official languages of Assam.

4.4 Script of the Bodo Language

The Bodo language did not have a standard written form until 1953. It had a history of using **Roman, Deodhai,** and **Assamese** scripts. At present, the Bodo's have adopted the **Devanagari** script. In 1976, an apex body of the Bodo literary society - the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, took the decision to use the **Devanagari** script instead of the script called Purbalipi [34]. However, there is a significant difference in the way the Bodo letters are used in this scrip from that of the Devanagari script. The Bodo language has some similar features with that of other languages belonging to the group. These features are similar in morphology, syntax, phonology and vocabulary. Bodo language is similar to the Dimasa language of Assam, Garo language of Meghalaya and with the Kokborok language of Tripura. Bodo language is mainly spoken in four districts of Assam namely, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri. However, the language is heard in its purest form only in the Udalguri district. The language is also affected by other communities of Assam like Assamese, Hindi and Bengali speaking communities.

4.5 Dialects of the Bodo Language

A dialect is defined as a variant of any given language, spoken by a specific group in some particular area or location. It is a fact that the distinctive features such as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are not enough to recognize the dialect as a separate language. It is the regional variety of a particular language. Moreover, there are variations in dialect associated within ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes, or other cultural and social groups. Speakers of the particular language can understand each other's dialect. However, they may not be familiar with the use of some definite words or their pronunciation. Some people make the use of the word dialect to signify "an

accent". But an accent is the phonological aspect for the dialects spoken in any language. Dialects of any language also vary in their vocabulary, grammar, vocabulary and lexicons [39].

4.5.1 Bodo Dialect Region

The Bodo's have different dialects in different regions of Assam. Areas where Bodo speaking people reside extends from **Dhubri** in the **west** of Assam to **Sadiya** in the **east** of Assam. One of the prominent dialects outside Assam is the **Mech dialect** spoken in the northern part of **West Bengal**. According to Dr. Pramod Chandra Bhattacharjya's doctoral thesis [40], there are four different dialect areas of the Bodo language namely:

   I. **North-West** area covering areas of North Goalpara and North Kamrup district.
  II. **South-West area** covering Garo Hills and South Goalpara Districts.
 III. **North-Central Assam area** covering Lakhimpur and Darrang district along with a few places of Arunachal.
  IV. **Southern Assam area** covering North-Cachar, Mikir Hills, Nowgong, Cachar and adjacent districts (the names of the districts and the areas are as per then Assam).

4.5.2 Present Bodo Dialect Area

The dialect areas of the Bodo speaking in Assam, as divided by Dr. Promod Chandra Bhattacharjya, has been restructured as per the changes in the prevailing districts. The dialects presently spoken in Assam can be broadly classified into three major groups according to grammarian Phukan Basumatary [41].The dialects are:

1) **Swnabari - The Western Bodo dialect**: This dialect is spoken in the district of Bongaigaon, Chirang, Kokrajhar, and Dhubri district of Assam.

2) **Sanzari - The Eastern Bodo dialect**: This dialect is found mainly in the district of Baksa, Kamrup, Barpeta, Nalbari and some parts of Darrang.

3) **Hazari - The Southern Bodo dialect**: This dialect is mainly found in the district of Goalpara which includes Rani and Krishnai that lies on the southern bank of the river Brahmaputra.

There is slight phonological and lexical variation between the eastern Bodo and western Bodo dialect. But they are different to some extent in the phonological context from the southern Bodo dialect. These dialects vary with respect to the structural features i.e. morphology, phonology and vocabulary.

4.5.3 Bodo Language - Lexical variation

One of the important aspects of dialectal diversity that people take note of and comment is the differences in the lexical items. The Lexical variations are not important in distinguishing the different of speech for various social or socioeconomic classes. They have played a relatively smaller role in social dialectology i.e the study of the social dialects. Lexical variation is rather concentrated on the differences in morphology and phonology.

4.5.4 Phonological Variation in Bodo language

The differences in the pronunciation within the dialects of any language are called the Phonological variation. The variations in phonology play an important role as markers in the regional dialects. Currently, there are phonological variation in the

dialects of Dhubri and Kokrajhar districts from those spoken in Barpeta, Baksa, Nabari and Kamrup districts areas.

4.5.5 Grammatical Variation in the Bodo language

The variation in the grammar of any language is a common marker in social dialects and the formal and informal styles than that of regional dialects. The grammatical variation in the Bodo language involves two sub-types: s**yntax** and **morphology**. Morphology in Bodo language refers to the structure of words which includes the minimal unit of meaning or the morphemes that makes up words. Syntax of the language refers to the structure of units like sentences or phrases including the rules for combining the words in a sentence.

4.6 Structure of the Bodo Language

The scientific study of the human language is called linguistics [42]. Linguistic can be sub divided as **historical, structural** and **comparative** linguistics. Structural linguistics deals with the structure of a language. The structure of Bodo language [33] can be categorized into the following:

- Phonological Structure
- Morphological Structure
- Syntactic Structure

Each of the categories is discussed in brief below.

4.6.1 Phonological Structure

The Phonology is the study of speech sound of the language and their functions. Phonemes are the basic unit of any language.

The phonemes of the Bodo language consist of sixteen numbers of consonants and six numbers of vowels. Two out of the sixteen consonants are semi vowel. They are shown as below:

a. Consonants   : ख, ग, ङ, ज, थ, द, न, फ, ब, म, र, ल, स, ह
b .Vowels   : अ, आ, इ, उ, ए, औ
c. Semi Vowels   : य, व

The phone-set for the Bodo language along with the IPA code is given below in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Phone-Set for Bodo Language

Sl. No.	Label	IPA	Bodo phone
1	a	/o/	अ
2	Aa	/ə/	आ
3	I	/i/	इ
4	U	/u/	उ
5	E	/e/	ए
6	O	/ɯ/	ओ
7	Y	/w/	य
8	W	/y/	व
9	Kh	/kʰ/	ख
10	G	/g/	ग
11	~g	/ŋ/	ङ
12	J	/z/	ज
13	Th	/tʰ/	थ
14	D	/d/	द
15	N	/n/	न
16	Ph	/pʰ/	फ
17	B	/b/	ब
18	M	/m/	म
19	R	/r/	र
20	L	/l/	ल
21	S	/s/	स
22	H	/h/	ह

4.6.1.1 Bodo Vowels

In any spoken language, vowels are usually produced by the vibration of the vocal cords with quasi-periodic pulses of air. The manner in which the cross-sectional area varies along the vocal tract determines the formants i.e the resonance frequencies of the vocal tract and thereby the sound that is being produced. The vowel sound that is produced is determined mainly by the positions of the tongue. But the positions of the lips, the jaw, and to some extent, the velum also control the resulting sound [60]. In the Bodo language, there are six monophthongs or pure vowels. All the vowels of the Bodo language have a few common characteristics i.e they are short and voiced but are longer in duration as and when they occur in their final position, they are orally released, and also occur in the syllabic stress positions of the Bodo words. When the vowels occur after any nasal consonant, then they are nasalized. Normally, in the Bodo language vowels are tense in stressed and closed syllables and lax elsewhere.

A simplified and convenient way to classify vowel articulatory configuration is with respect to the tongue hump position (i.e. back, front, mid) and tongue hump height (low, high, mid). The mass of the tongue with its narrowest constriction within the vocal tract is called the tongue hump [60]. Accordingly the Bodo vowels have been classified into the following three classes.

1) **High**: a) Front unrounded /i/ b) Back unrounded /ɯ/ c) Back rounded /u/

2) **Mid**: a) Front unrounded /e/ b) Back rounded /ɔ/

3) **Low**: a) Central unrounded /a/

Close and open vowels may be termed as high and low vowels depending on the part of the tongue raised or lowered in their articulation. The individual vowel along with their allophonic variations can be described in the following ways [33]:

1) **/i/** - is a high unrounded front vowel. It can occur in any position of the word. It becomes longer in duration when it occurs in final and stressed positions of the word and gets nasalised when it occurs after any nasal consonant.

2) /ɯ/ - is a high unrounded back vowel. It occurs in any position of the word. It becomes longer in duration when it occurs in final and stressed positions of the word and gets nasalised when it occurs after any nasal consonant.

3) /**u**/ - is a high rounded back vowel. It occurs in any position of the word. It becomes longer in duration when it occurs in final and stressed positions of the word and gets nasalised when it occurs after any nasal consonant.

4) /**e**/ - is a mid unrounded front vowel. It occurs in any position of the word. It becomes longer in duration when it occurs in final and stressed positions of the word and gets nasalised when it occurs after any nasal consonant.

5) /ɔ/ - is a mid rounded back vowel. It occurs in any position of the word. It becomes longer in duration when it occurs in final and stressed positions of the word and gets nasalised when it occurs after any nasal consonant.

6) /**a**/ - is a low central unrounded vowel. It occurs in any position of the word. It becomes longer in duration when it occurs in final and stressed positions of the word and gets nasalised when it occurs after any nasal consonant. Vowels in Bodo language can occur in any three positions of the word namely initially, medially and finally.

Table 4.2: Table showing some Bodo vowels with respect to their positions

Bodo Phone	I.P.A code	Type of articulation	Bodo words and their English meaning					
			Intial	English meaning	Middle	English meaning	Final	English meaning
इ	/i/, /इ/	High, front, unrounded	इनाइ /inai/	evil	गिबि /gibi/	First	बोराइ /Burai/	old
उ	/u/, /उ/	High, back, rounded	उन्दु /undu/	sleep	गुसु /gusu/	Cold	दुखु /dukhu/	
ए	/e/, /ए/	Mid, front, unrounded	एनजर /enzor/	rabit	बै /be/	this, it	बेसे /base/	how much
अ	/o/, /अ/	Mid, back, rounded	अमा /oma/	(pig)	—		—	
ओ	/ɯ/, /ओ/	High, back, unrounded	ओंखाम /uŋkʰam/	(rice)	जोंनि /zuɯni/	(our)	वोलो /bulu/ गोसो /gɯsu/	force mind
आ	/ə/, /आ/	Low, central unrounded	आं /aŋ/	I	जाथाइ /zatʰai/	Incident	आदा /ada/	elder brother

4.6.1.2 Consonants of the Bodo language

There are 16(sixteen) consonants in the Bodo language including two semi vowels. The un-aspirated stop consonants are some transient and non-continuant sounds. These are produced by building up pressure by a total constriction somewhere along the oral tract and then suddenly releasing that pressure. For some consonant like /b/, the constriction is at the lip whereas for consonant like /d/, the constriction is found at the back of the teeth. On the other hand for consonant like /g/ it is found near the velum. In the period when there is total constriction in the oral tract, no sound is produced from the lips. However, there is often a small amount of low-frequency energy radiated through the walls of the throat. This occurs when the vocal cords are able to vibrate even though the vocal tract is closed at some point. Since the stop sounds

are dynamical in nature, their properties are highly influenced by the vowel that follows the stop consonant. The aspirated stop consonants /p^h/,/t^h/ and /k^h/ are similar to their unaspirated counterparts /b/,/d/ and /g/, with one major exception. During the period of total closure of the tract, as the pressure builds up, the vocal cords do not vibrate. Then, following the period of closure, as the air pressure is released, there is a brief interval of friction due to sudden turbulence of the escaping air followed by a period of aspiration which means that a steady air flow from the glottis excites the resonances of the vocal tract, before voiced excitation begins. The nasal consonants /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ are produced with glottal excitation and the vocal tract totally constricted at some point along the oral passageway. The velum is lowered so that air flows through the nasal tract, with sound being radiated at the nostrils. The oral cavity, although constricted toward the front, is still acoustically coupled to the pharynx. Thus, the mouth serves as a resonant cavity that traps acoustic energy at certain natural frequencies. As far as the radiated sound is concerned, these resonant frequencies of the oral cavity appear as anti-resonances, or zeros of the transfer function of sound transmission. Furthermore, nasal consonants and nasalized vowels (i.e, some vowels proceeding or following nasal consonants) are characterized by resonances that are spectrally broader, or more highly damped, than for vowels. The three nasal consonants are distinguished by the place along the oral tract at which a total constriction is made. For /m/ the constriction is at the lips; for /n/ the constriction is just behind the teeth; and for / ŋ / the constriction is just forward of the velum itself. The fricatives /s/, /z/ and /h/ are produced by exciting the vocal tract by a steady air flow, which becomes turbulent in the region of a constriction in the vocal tract. The location of the constriction serves to determine which fricative sound is to be produced. Trill, lateral and semi-vowel /r/, /l/, /w/ and /j/ are quite difficult to

characterize. They are generally characterized by a gliding transition in vocal tract area function between adjacent phonemes. The acoustic properties of these phonemes are highly influenced by the manner in which they are used. /w/ and /j/ are called semi-vowels because of their vowel like nature. Individual Bodo consonants with their description and distribution are given below:

1) /p^h/ is a voiceless bilabial aspirated stop. It has fricative nature while occurring before high vowel /i ɯ u/. It occurs initially before any vowel in isolation and before consonants /r l/ in clusters. Though it occurs word medially between two vowels in isolation it can occur before /n r l/ only and after any consonant to form two medial consonant clusters. It never occurs in the final position of the word.

2) / t^h/ is a voiceless alveolar aspirated stop. It gets fricative nature while occurring before high vowel in isolation and before consonants /r l/ in clusters. Though it occurs in a word medially between two vowels in isolation it can occur before /n r l/ only and after any consonant to form two medial consonant clusters. It never occurs in the final position of the word.

3) /k^h/ is a voiceless velar aspirated stop. It gets fricative nature while occurring before high vowel /i ɯ u/. It occurs in a word initially before any vowel in isolation and before consonants /r l/ in clusters. Though it occurs in a word medially between two vowels in isolation, it can occur before /n r l/ only and after any consonant to form two medial consonant clusters. It never occurs in the final position of the word.

4) /b/ is a voiced bilabial non-aspirated stop. It gets devoiced before voiceless consonants. It occurs in a word initially before any vowel, word medially between two vowels in isolation. It can occur word initially before / r l/ only. It can occur word

medially before / pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l/ and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h / to form two medial consonant clusters. It occurs in the final position of the word also.

5) /**d**/ is a voiced alveolar non-aspirated stop. It becomes devoiced when it occurs before voiceless consonants. It can occur in a word initially before any vowel, word medially between two vowels in isolation. It can occur in a word initially before / r l/ only. It can occur in a word medially before / pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l/ and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h / to form two word medial consonant clusters. It occurs in final position of the word also.

6) /**g/** is a voiced velar non-aspirated stop. It becomes devoiced when it occurs before voiceless consonants. It can occur in a word initially before any vowel, word medially between two vowels in isolation. It can occur word initially before / r l/. It can occur word medially before / pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l/ and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h / to form two word medial consonant clusters. It occurs in the final position of the word also.

7) /**m**/ is a voiced bilabial nasal consonant. It occurs word initially before any vowel and inter vocalically between two vowels and finally after any vowel. It occurs before / r l/ as initial consonant clusters and before / pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l/ and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l / as word medial two consonant clusters.

8) /**n/** is a voiced alveolar nasal consonant. It occurs word initially before any vowel and inter vocalically between two vowels and finally after any vowel. It occurs before / r l / as initial consonant clusters and before / pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l / and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l / as word medial two consonant clusters.

9) / **ŋ** / is a voiced velar nasal consonant. It occurs word medially in between two vowels and finally after any vowel, but never occurs word initially in isolation. It occurs before / p^h, t^h, k^h, b, d, g, m, n, s, z, h, r, l/ to form two word medial consonant clusters.

10) / **s** / is a voiceless alveolar fricative consonant. It gets voiced character when it occurs before voiced consonants. It become slightly palatalized when it occurs before high vowels /i ɯ u /. It can occur word initially before any vowel and inter vocalically between two vowels and finally after any vowel in isolation. It occurs before / r l / to form two word initial consonant clusters and before / p^h, t^h, k^h, b, d, g, m, n, r, l / and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, r, l / as word medial two consonant clusters.

11) / **z** / is a voiced alveolar fricative consonant. It become voiceless when it occurs before voiceless consonants and slightly palatalized when it occurs before high vowels / i ɯ u /. It can occur word initially before any vowel and inter vocalically between two vowels and finally after any vowel in isolation. It occurs before / r l/ to form two word initial consonant clusters and before / p^h, t^h, k^h, b, d, g, m, n, r, l/ and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, r, l / as word medial two consonant clusters.

12) / **h /** is a voiced pharyngeal fricative consonant. It can occur word initially before any vowel and inter vocalically between two vowels and but does not occur finally after any vowel in isolation. It occurs before / r l/ to form two word initial consonant clusters and before / p^h, t^h, k^h, b, d, g, m, n, r, l/ and after / b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l / as word medial two consonant clusters.

13) / **r** / is a voiced alveolar rolled consonants. It becomes flapped when it occurs after falling tone. It can occur word initially before any vowel and inter vocalically between two vowels and finally after any vowel. It occurs after/ p^h, t^h, k^h, b, d, g, m, s, z, h/ to

form two word initial consonant clusters, after/ b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h / and before / pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, n, s, z, h / to form two medial consonant clusters.

14) / **l** / is a voiced lateral consonants. It occurs word initially before any vowel and inter vocalically in between two vowels and finally after any vowel in isolation. It occurs after/ pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, s, z / to form two word initial consonant clusters, after/ b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l / and before / pʰ, tʰ, kʰ, b, d, g, m, n, s, z, h / to form two medial consonant clusters.

15) / **w** / is a voiced bilabial frictionless continuant. It is a restricted phoneme occurring only in between the transition of vowels from back rounded / u ɔ / to front unrounded / i / and central / a /.

16) / **j /** is a voiced palatal frictionless continuant. It is a restricted phoneme occurring only in intervocalic position in between the transition of vowels from back rounded /i e/, central / a / to back unrounded / ɯ/ and central / a / and front / i /.

4.6.1.3 Diphthongs

In the Bodo language, a gliding speech sound that is monosyllabic is known as a Diphthong. It begins near the vowel's articulatory position and glides towards another. The smooth variation of the vocal tract produces the Diphthongs near the vowel configurations. The gliding transition that occurs between adjacent phonemes in the vocal tract is called Semi-vowels. Some of the characteristics of diphthongs are similar to vowels because of which they are also known as semi-vowels. Hence, the acoustical characteristics of these speech sounds are highly influenced by their occurrence

environment. The Bodo language has a sufficient number of diphthongs. They are shown below:

Table 4.3: The Diphthongs of the Bodo Language

Diphthong	Bodo Example	English Meaning
/ai/	ai	Mother
/eo/	eo	to fly
/ou/	ou	Yes
/iu/	thiu	Suddenly
/ua/	rua	Axe

4.6.1.4 Juncture and Contour in the Bodo language

In the linguistic study of a language, the mode of transition from one sound to another is known as a **juncture**. A relation is established between two consecutive syllables by a juncture. There are three types of juncture in the Bodo Language. They are:

i.   Close: It takes place between the segments of phonemes forming a syllable or word.

ii. Open: It takes place between the phonemic words and

iii. Terminal: It takes place between the phonemic clauses which is indicated by a pause in their termination.

The terminal juncture which occurs as transition and rhythm on phonemic clauses at their termination due to the intonational pattern of the sentence is called **contour**. In the Bodo Language, there are three types of contours namely:

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i.   Rising: It occurs with the interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences.

ii.   Falling: It occurs with the sentences of simple statement and

iii.   Neutral: It occurs with the principal clause in a complex sentence.

4.6.1.5 Tones in the Bodo Language

In some languages, sometimes there is pitch difference between words having same phonetic structure but contrastive meaning. It helps to differentiate one word from the other. The pitch difference is called the tone of the language. If the pitch of a word can alter the meaning of the word, then that language is called a tonal language. The tones used in the words are essential and important features for the meaning of the words. In the Bodo language, tone variation has a very important role. The Bodo language is one of the major tone languages of the Tibeto-Burman family [78]. Tone patterns in the Bodo language are reliant on the syllable types. It also depends on the consonantal arrangement of the syllable coda. According to Weidert (1987) the smooth and the stopped syllable types results in different pitch patterns [79].

Prosody is a significant aspect of speech and helps to characterize pure tone. Tone of a language expresses linguistic information like sentence type and phrasing. It also portrays paralinguistic information such as the emotional content of the sentence. It is mainly characterized by three parameters: duration, fundamental frequency and intensity. Prosodic phonology establishes the relation between segments and prosodic units and also examines the grammar of the prosody. Prosodic units are distinguished by the use of phonetic markers and they form part of the hierarchical schema.

In the Bodo language, there are basically two types of tones. They are High and Low Tones. In the Bodo language, an acute accent signifies a low tone and a grave

accent denotes a falling tone over the vowels of the particular syllable where the tone occurs. Some examples of Bodo Tones are given below in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Some examples showing Tones in Bodo Language

Sl.No	Low tone		High tone	
	Bodo	English meaning	Bodo	English meaning
1	zà	*'be' or 'happen'*	zá	*'eat'*
2	sèŋ	*'respond'*	séŋ	*become smaller in number'*
3	hùɯ	*'give'*	hɯ́ɯ	*'hasten'*
4	saù	*'curse'*	saú	*'roast'*
5	gaù	*'shoot'*	gaú	*'break into two'*
6	zɯù	*'rice beer'*	zɯú '	*hundred'*
7	baì	*'buy'*	baí	*'break (vi)'*

4.7 Morphological Structure of Bodo Language

The structure of formation of words in a language is called the morphology of the language. In Bodo language, a significant grammatical unit is considered as a word. It is a part of the sentence that has some meaning. It is usually pronounced by using a pause. One or more than one morphemes together make a word. It is the smallest unit of the language that has some semantic meaning.

Morphemes are associated with **morph** and **allomorphs**. The phonological depiction of a morpheme is called a morph. The substitute representation that can be used for morphs are known as allomorphs. It forms the class of morphs that is identical in both the semantics and phonetics.

In any language, when the word classification is done grammatically into various classes, it is known as 'part-of-speech'. The classification may not be identical

for all the languages. The grammatical classification or part-of-speech for the Bodo language is discussed below.

4.7.1 Noun

The name of some abstract ideas and concrete objects is defined as a noun. Nouns in the Bodo language are generally monosyllabic such as /dau/ 'bird', /ai/ 'mother', /dɯi/ 'water', etc. Some are di-syllabic such as /bipʰa/ 'father', /sɯima/ 'dog', /mansi/ 'person', /phuŋkʰa/'source', /muluɡma/ 'universe', etc. However, some derived nouns such as /bisaikʰɔtʰi/ 'election', /pʰinzatʰai/ 'reaction', /ɔnnai/ 'love', /saŋɾaŋtʰi/ 'conciousness', etc. are also frequently used.

4.7.2 Pronoun

A substitute word for a noun phrase or noun is called a pronoun. Pronouns in the Bodo language are classified into the following categories:

(a)   Personal pronoun

(b)   Interrogative pronoun

(c)   Reflexive pronoun

(d)   Indefinite pronoun

4.7.3 Number of Bodo language

The Bodo language has two numbers, singular and plural. The Singular number is not marked morphologically. But plural is marked by using various suffixes like /-mɯn/, /-pʰɯɾ/ and /-sɯɾ. Hence, they can be differentiated by the affix or the suffix which indicates one or many.

4.7.4 Gender

      The gender is that class of grammar which deals with the division of sex. In the Bodo language, gender cannot be classified for inanimate objects. In Bodo language, gender is found only in the noun class of animate objects. It is marked in the following different ways:

In certain cases gender formation is realized by using different sets of words. Sometimes feminine and masculine genders are distinguished by /-i/ and /-a/ suffixes. In the Bodo language, a significant way to distinguish between male and female is the addition of some words like suffixing the sex to the noun. Some typical example are shown the following table

Table 4.5: Some examples of Masculine and Feminine gender in Bodo Language

Masculine		Feminine	
Bodo	**English**	**Bodo**	**English**
Ada	*'brother'*	bazɯi	*'sister-in-law'*
apʰa	*'father'*	Ai	*'mother'*
bisai/pʰisai	*'husband'*	Bisi	*'wife'*
pʰagla	*'mad man'*	pʰagli	*'mad woman'*
beŋga	*'deaf man'*	beŋgi	*'deaf woman'*
sɯima baŋɾa	*'dog'*	sɯima baŋɾi	*'bitch'*
ɔma bunda	*'pig'*	ɔma bundi	*'sow'*
mauzi bunda	*'he-cat'*	mauzi bundi	*'she-cat'*
bɯrma pʰantʰa	*'he-goat'*	bɯrma pʰantʰi	*'she-goat'*

In addition, the Bodo language has some nouns which are uniquely feminine and masculine.

4.7.4.1 Unique Masculine

The following nouns in the Bodo language are always masculine and there exists no corresponding feminine nouns.

Table 4.6: Some examples of Unique Masculine Noun in Bodo Language

Unique Masculine Noun		
Sl. No.	**Bodo**	**English**
1	badaɾi	*'wood-cutter'*
2	barɔlampʰa	*'a traditional folk dancer who participates in the marriage ceremony'*
3	dɯɯuri	*'priest'*
4	laukʰaɾ	*'cowboy'*

4.7.4.2 Unique Feminine

In the Bodo language, some nouns are always feminine and there exist no corresponding masculine nouns. Examples are:

Table 4.7: Some examples of Unique Feminine Noun in Bodo Language

Feminine Noun		
Sl No.	**Bodo**	**English**
1	dɯɯudini	*'a woman folk dancer who participates in Kherai puja'*
2	bɔkʰali	*'a baby's nurse'*
3	aduŋgaɾi	*'an aged unmarried lady'*
4	sundauɾi	*'a naughty girl'*
5	Randi	*'widow'*

4.7.5 Verbs

In the Bodo language, verbs are used to describe a state, an action or an occurrence. Some examples of verbs are: i) lɯŋ (drink) and ii) gɯzɯn (be happy).

4.8 Syntactic Structure of Bodo Language

Syntactic structure describes the rules which control the way in which the words of the Bodo language are combined to make a sentence. They are discussed below:

1) **Word Order**

In the Bodo language, the basic word order Subject-Object-Verb i.e SOV. But, as the Bodo language has a rich case system, other kinds of word order i.e. OSV, OVS, SVO, VSO and VOS can lead to the same meaning as an SOV structure. Out of these, the OSV order is the more frequently used one by the native speakers.

2) **Sentence Types**

In the Bodo language, the sentences are classified into three different types based on the structure. It may be i) simple, ii) complex and iii) compound. Examples are cited below:

(a)   Simple Sentence:

Simple Sentence:*The baby has fallen asleep.'*					
gɔtʰɔ	gɯɾlɯi	-a	Undu	-laŋ	-bai
child	small	-NOM	Sleep	-take away	-PRF

(b)   Complex Sentence:

Complex Sentence: *'The baby who was playing has fallen asleep.'*									
gele	-gasinɯ	tʰa	-nai	gɔtʰɔ	gɯɾlɯi	-a	Undu	-laŋ	-bai
play	-PROG	AUX	-ADJL	child	Small	-NOM	Sleep	-take away	-PRF

(c) Compound Sentence:

Compound Sentence: *'The baby played and slept.'*							
gɔtʰɔ	gɯɽlɯi	-a	gele	-dɯŋmɯn	aɾɯ	Undu	-dɯŋmɯn
Child	small	-NOM	play	-PST	and	Sleep	-PST

3) Voice

In the Bodo Language sentences, voice are of two types-passive and active.

(a) Active Sentence:

Sentence: 'I eat rice.'			
aŋ	ɯŋkʰam	Za	-jɯ
1SG	Rice	Eat	-PRES

(b) Passive Sentence:

Sentence: 'Rice is eaten by me.'						
ɯŋkʰam	-a	aŋ	-zɯɯŋ	za	-za	-jɯ
Rice	-NOM	1SG	-INS	eat	-PASS	-PRES

4) Negation

In the Bodo language, negation is depicted by using both suffixes and prefixes. Suffix is used both for interrogative and declarative sentences. Pefix is used for imperative and optative sentences. Example :

Declarative (statement):

Positive statement: 'Alari cooks rice.'					
Positive	alaɾi	-ja	ɯŋkʰam	sɔŋ	-ɯ
	Alari	-NOM	Rice	Cook	-PRES
Negative statement: 'Alari does not cook rice.'					
Negative	alaɾi	-ja	ɯŋkʰam	sɔŋ	-a
	Alari	-NOM	Rice	Cook	-NEG

4.9 Intonation Pattern in the Bodo Language

The act of intoning when speaking a sentence is called intonation. The variation in pitch levels within an utterance and system of noteworthy levels is due to difference of Intonation. Intonation is the result of different moods like excitement, surprise, politeness, grief, anger etc. expressed in a sentence by the different suprasegmental features used in a sentence. So, intonation portrays the speaker's idea in the sentence. Intonation can reveal the information structure by highlighting the constituents of importance in an utterance. In phonology, intonation plays a very significant role by referring to the unique use of pitch. Intonation has several functions in a language. Intonation conveys linguistic information as well as plays a key role in regulating discourse and is an important indicator of speaker identity, reflecting factors such as physical state, age, gender, psychological state and sociolinguistic membership. Intonation is also important for intelligibility. It has to signify the grammatical structures such as statements, questions, etc. by the use of its different patterns. Again intonation contour gives the listeners idea about speaker's emotion [45]. Intonation patterns vary from language to language.

4.10 Summary

The Bodo language is a widely spoken language of Assam and thus has great significance. It is also spoken in many parts of North-eastern India, some parts of Nepal and West Bengal and belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages. In this chapter, the history and the hierarchy of the Bodo language has been discussed. Also, the structure of the Bodo language has been briefly discussed. The Bodo vowels and consonants have also been discussed in brief. The Bodo language has been chosen for study in the present research work because of its significance to the North-Eastern area.