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THE PROCESS OF NEGATION IN ASSAMESE AND BODO LANGUAGE OF NORTH EAST INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

GUDDU PRASAD BASUMATARY,

Guest Faculty
Department of Bodo, Gauhati University, Guwahati,

Abstract:

The Assamese language is originated from Indo-Aryan group of greater Indo-European language family and the Bodo language is originated from Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family. Both the language has special and common characteristics. According to the linguistics theory there should be a contrastive study between the languages but here trying to make a comparative study as both the language speakers have been staying in a same geographical surrounding since the day immemorial. In this paper I would like to discuss the negation process of both Assamese and Bodo language. As both the languages are agglutinating in character, prefixes and suffixes are used in negative formation. I do hope this paper will help the readers as well as the language researchers more about the languages which are spoken in the North East India

KEYWORDS:

Agglutinating, affixation, intonation, morphology, syntax

INTRODUCTION

Assamese and Bodo language possesses some common phonological, morphological or syntactical characteristics as the speakers of both the languages have been staying in a same geographical location since the time immemorial. In this paper the process of negation of both the languages is going to be discussed comparatively. The necessary data are collected from the secondary sources as both the languages have sufficient written materials.

Morphology is the science and study of the smallest grammatical unit of a language and their foundation into words including inflectional and derivational composition. The speakers of a language have to be well acquainted with the numerous ways in which words are formed. The most important method of word formation is the affixation, i.e. by adding prefix, infix or suffix to a base form. Apart from affixation there are several other ways such as compounding, reduplication, clippings etc. by which new words can be formed. Negative formation or negation is a part of morphology and can also be discussed based on the syntactic structure. Depending on these criterion the process of negation can be discussed under different aspects- i) Morphological aspect and ii) Syntactic aspect.

2.1 MORPHOLOGICAL ASPECT:

In the morphological aspect of negative formation there are two ways of making negation i.e. prefixation and suffixation. By these ways negative can be formed in the verb level and the word level. In the verb level prefixes or suffixes are added to the verb bases (regular and irregular verb) and in the word level with the nominal bases. Both Assamese and Bodo languages have the same system of making

negation. But in Assamese language some special characters can be seen e.g.- ase (have) a irregular verb has its own negative form nai which could not be discussed under any rules.

2.1.1 PREFIX:

In the verb level prefixes are directly added to the regular verb base to make negative. Both the Assamese and Bodo languages have the use of prefixes. Assamese language has only one negative prefix i.e. /nɒ-/ and Bodo has also only one negative prefix i.e. /da-/. The negative prefixes nɒ- represent negative in past and future context in Assamese but in Bodo the prefix da- is used in present and future context. The negative prefix comes with all the regular verb bases. In Assamse languages there are some rules regarding the use of the prefix nɒ- . If the verb base begins with any vowel then the prefix nɒ- directly added to the verb base and the vowel takes its secondary form. e.g.-

ɒkabi (draw by someone)	n-ɒkabi (do not draw by someone)
akilu (have drawn)	n-akilu (have not drawn)
ulal (get ready)	n-ulal (does not get ready)
erili (give up)	n-erili (do not give up)

But with the consonant beginning verb base the prefix n - takes different form because of regressive vowel assimilation. If the nearest vowel of the verb base is- ɒ, ɔ and diphthong ɒ i and ɒ u then the prefix nɒ- remains the same. e.g.-

nɒ (don't) -kɒra (do)>	nɒkɒra (don't do)
nɒ (dont) -gɔl (has gone)>	nɒgɔl (has not gone)
nɒ (don't) -gɒ isil (went)>	nɒgɒ isil (did not go)
nɒ (don't) -dɒ urile (has run)>	nɒdɒ urile (has not run)

With the nearest vowel a, i, e, o and u the prefix nɒ- takes their secondary forms respectively. e.g.-

nɒ (don't) -xai (eat)>	naxai/ nexai (doesn't eat)
nɒ (don't) -likhe (write)>	nilikhe (doesn't write)
nɒ (don't) -xune (hear)>	nuxune (doesn't hear)
nɒ (don't) -sue (touch)>	nusue (doesn't touch)
nɒ (don't) -loa (take)>	noloa (don't take)

But in case of Bodo language the prefix da- remains same there seems no change. e.g.-

da (don't)- za (eat)>	daza (don't eat)
da (don't)- mao (work)>	damao (don't work)
da (don't)- pha (close)>	dapha (don't close)
da (don't)- phɒ i (come)>	daphɒ i (don't come)
da (don't)- ran (divide)>	daran (don't divide)

In the word level prefixes are added to the noun bases. In Assamese language prefixes /ɒ-, be-, bi-, ni-, ao- / are added to the noun bases to indicate an opposite sense and by using the opposite words can make negation. But in case of Bodo the word level negation can be seen only in case of loan words basically from Indo-Aryan languages like Assamese, Bengali, Hindi etc. In Bodo prefixes /ɒ-, ɒpɔ -, be-/ are used to make negative, e.g.-

Assamese:

dhɒrmɔ (religion)	ɒ-dhɒrmɔ (anti religion)
xɒtjɒ (truth)	ɒ-xɒtjɒ (false)
prijɔ (favorite)	ɒ-prijɔ (unfavorite)
ɒdhikar (right)	ɒna-ɒdhikar/ɒnɒdhikar (no right)
abɔsjɒk (necessary)	ɒna- abɔsjɒx/ ɒnabɔsjɒk (unnecessary)
man (respect)	ɒpɔ-man (irrespective)
nam (name)	be-nam (assume false name)
xur (tune)	be-xur (without tune)
mɒn (mind)	bi-mɒn (sad heart)
pa (plan)	bi-pa (state of helplessness)

rɒx (juice)	ni-rɒx (dry)
lɒg (together)	ni-lɒg (separate)
kan (ear)	ao-kan (inattention)
bat (path)	ao-bat (the wrong path)

Bodo:

dhɒ rɒ m (religion)	ɒ - d h ɒ r ɒ m (anti religion)
sɒ ithɒ (truth)	ɒ-sɒ ithɒ (false)
man (respect)	ɒpɔ-man (irrespect)
santi (peace)	ɒ- santi (trouble)
ain (law)	be-ain (contrary to law)

2.1.2 SUFFIX:

By adding suffixes in both the languages can make negative. In Assamese language the numbers of negative suffixes are limited in comparison to Bodo language. In Assamese language suffixes like -hin, -bihin are added to nominal bases to make negative. This -hin, -bihin has partial meaning and can be said bound base which are used as suffix. But in case of Bodo language a lots of negative suffixes are there i.e. -a. -i, -ɒ i, -akhɒ i, -akhisɒ i, -la, -lia which are directly added to the verb bases to make negative. Difference is that in Assamese language suffixes or bound bases come with nominal bases and in Bodo with verb base.

Assamese:

mɒrɒm (love)	mɒrɒm-bihin (love less)
hija (heart)	hija-hin (heart less)
prem (love)	prem-hin (without love)

Bodo:

Negative suffix -a:

The negative suffix -a is used in habitual and simple statement in present or future time context. The suffix -a can be added to all regular and irregular verb bases. It has allomorphs -ja and -wa. Whenever the verb base ends with any consonants -a comes directly with the verb base, with vowel – i, e and diphthong ɒ i ending words the suffix -a takes -ja form, with the vowel ɒ, u and diphthong ɒ u ending words it takes -wa form and with the vowel ɒ ending word it remains the same, but due to morphophonemic alternation it takes -ja form, e.g.-

-a suffix with irregular verb form-

gɒ i (to have)- a> gɒ ija (have/has not)

na (need)- a> na a (need not)

nɒ (right)- a> nɒ a (wrong)

-a suffix with regular verb form-

mao (to work) -a> maoa (do not work)
kham (to burn)- a> khama (do not burn)
gi (to fear)- a> gija (do not fear)
phisi (to pet)- a> phisija (do not pet)
phe (to intoxicate)- a> pheja (do not intoxicate)
ne (to wait)- a> neja (do not wait)
thu (to poke)- a> thuwa (do not poke)
su (to stab)- a> suwa (do not stab)
zɒ u (to be high)- a> zɒ uwa (not going to be high)
sɒ u (to punch) –a> sɒ uwa (do not punch)
labɒ (to bring) –a> labɒ a/ labɒ ja (do not bring)
hɒ (to give)- a> hɒ a/ hɒ ja (do not give)

Negative suffix -i:

The negative suffix -i used to mean habitual and simple statement like –a and can be added to any verb bases (regular or irregular). It has allomorphs –ji and -ɒ i. Whenever the verb base ends with consonants –i directly come with verb base, with vowel - a, i, e, ɒ and diphthong ɒ i takes –ji form and with ɒ, u, and diphthong ɒ u ending bases it takes -ɒ i form.

The negative suffix –i is also used as -ɒ i in eastern Bodo dialect of the language basically Udalguri and

gɒ i (to have)- i> gɒ iji (do/does not have)

na (need)- i> na i (need not)

nɒ (right)- i> nɒ i (wrong)

Consonant ending words:

mao (to work)-i> maoi (do/does not work)
bam (to carry)-i> bami (do/does not carry)

Vowel ending words:

za (to eat)-i> zaji (do/does not eat)
tha (to have)-i> thaji (do/does not have)
phɒ i (to come)-i> phɒ iji (do/does not come)
sɒ i (to love)-i> sɒ iji (do/does not love)
phe (to intoxicate)-i> pheji (do/does not intoxicated)
ne (to wait)-i> neji (do/does not wait)
zɒ (to sit)-i> zɒji (do/does not sit)
gɒ (to pour)-i> gɒji (do/does not pour)
undu (to sleep)-i> unduwi (do/does not sleep)
bu (to expand)-i> buwi (do/does not expand)
sɒ u (to punch)-i> sɒ uwi (do/does not punch)
bɒ u (to sharp)-i> bɒ uwi (do/dos not sharp)
hɒ (to give)-i> hɒ ji (do/does not give)
gɒ mɒ (to astonish)-i> gɒ mɒ ji (do/does not astonish)

The suffix -ɒ i as negative-

za-ɒ i mansi-khɒ u manɒ zahɒ dɒ (why are you insisting him to take food if he is not interested.)

But the same suffix -ɒ i is used as adverbial suffix, e.g.-

za-ɒ i za-ɒ i udɒ ija gendra zabai (over eating has given rise to his protruded tummy.)

Negative suffix -lia:

-lia is also a verb suffix used to indicate negative with more definite manner than -a, -i or -ɒ i and can be added to any verb base (regular and irregular). It is used commonly in present and immediate future tense. It has the wide range of distribution. The negative suffix –lia has an allomorph –la used in different dialect of the language. e.g.-

With irregular verb base:

gɒ i (to have)- lia/la> gɒ ilia/gɒ ila (do/does not have)

na (need)- lia/la > na lia/na la (need not)

nɒ (right)- lia/la > nɒ lia/nɒ la (wrong)

With regular Verb Base:

mao (to work) -lia/la> maolia/maola (do/does not work)
za (to eat)- lia/la> zalia/zala (do/does not eat)
phɒ i (to come) - lia/la> phɒ ilia/phɒ ila (do/does not come)

bu (to say) - lia/la> bu lia/bu la (do/does not say)

Negative suffix -akhɒ i:

The suffix -akhɒ i is a negative verb suffix used to mean immediate past tense. It comes with all regular verb bases. It is also used as -akhisɒ i to indicate the same. It has allomorphs -jakhɒ i and -wakhɒ i. Whenever the verb base ends with consonants -akhɒ i directly come with verb base, with vowel - a, i, e and diphthong ɒ i it takes -jakhɒ i form and with ɒ, u and diphthong ɒ u ending words it takes -ɒ akhɒ i form and with vowel ɒ ending words phonetically it remains the same -akhɒ i, but due to morphophonemic alternation it becomes -jakhɒ i. e.g.-

kham (to burn) -akhɒ i> khamakhɒ i (have/has not burnt)

za (to eat)-akhɒi> zajakhɒi (have/has not eaten)

phe (to intoxicate) -akhɒi> phejakhɒi (have/has not intoxicated)

gi (to fear) -akhɒi> gijakhɒi (have/has not feared)

phɒi (to come) -akhɒi> phɒijakhɒi (have/has not come)

gɒ (to pour) -akhɒi> goɒ akhɒi (have/has not poured)

undu (to sleep) -akhɒi> unduɒ akhɒi (have/has not slept)

zɒu (to be high) -akhɒi> zɒuɒ akhɒi (have/has not been high)

hɒ (to give) -akhɒi> hɒ akhɒi/ hɒ jakhɒi (have/has not given)

The suffix -akhisɒi is also used as -akhɒi to make negative, only difference is that whenever someone was likely to do or come but not coming yet in this sense the suffix -akhisɒi is used. e.g.-

tha (to go) -akhisɒi> tha akhisɒi (have/has not gone)

ran (to divide) -akhisɒi> ranakhisɒi (have/has not divided)

hɒ (to give) -akhisɒi> hwakhisɒi/ hwjakhisɒi (have/has not given)

With the help of periphrasis also can make negative in some indirect contexts in present and past tense. Both the languages have the use of Periphrasis to make negation. The negative form of the verb as is nai and this nai is used as particle in Assamese language. This particle nai is used to make negation in present and past context. In Bodo also the negative verb base na a is used to make negation in past and present context. e.g.-

Assamese:

xua (to sleep) -nai> xua nai (have/has not slept)

dekha (to see) –nai> dekha nai (have/has not seen)

buza (to understand) –nai> buza nai (have/has not understand)

This particle nai is also used as na and nui. Though these two particles are seems to be same yet their use is different. e.g.-

na-　　na ase zɒn, na ase dhɒn (neither has person nor wealth)

　　tew mur kɒthaxar na korile. (he denied my request.)

nui-　　texetor kothaxar ami nui koribo nuaru. (we can not ignore his words.)

Bodo:

tha (to go) -na a (need not)> tha na a (need not to go)

ran (to divide) -na a (need not) > ran na a (have/has not divided)

3.1 Syntactic Aspect:

Besides morphological level of making negation, in the syntactic level also we can make negative. It depends on the mood of the speaker how he or she pronounces the words or the sentence. It depends on intonation and stress. In the sense a positive sentence may have a negative meaning or a negative may have a positive meaning depending on the mood of speaking, depending on stress or intonation. The Bodo language is a tonal language whereas the Assamese is a stress language, yet in both the languages have the use of intonation. e.g.-

Assamese:

mɒi na-zao neki ! (Would I not go?)

mɒi na-khao neki ! (Would I not take?)

Bodo:

a tha -a nama ! (Would I not go?)

a za-ja nama ! (Would I not take?)

In the above examples the sentences are negative but the meaning is between the positive and the negative dilemma.

In informal context whenever speaking to some close friends or juniors these negative sentences are used to mean positive. In Bodo also such type of sentences are used. e.g.-

beja kha-lu (I have taken a lot.)

beja mar-ilu (we have beaten him a lot.)

In the above examples beja kha-lu, beja mar-ilu, here beja indicates a negative meaning i.e. bad, but this bad

is used in these sentences to mean better way.

In some cases a positive sentence may have a negative meaning depending on stress or intonation in an informal manner when speaking to close friends or juniors. In the following examples intonation is used to get the negative meaning. e.g.-

Assamese:

bɒr bhalkɔi dim aha. (I am not going to give you.)

bɒr bhalkɔi zam de. (I am not going there)

Bodo:

zɒ bɒ r mɒ za zabai de. (Nothing is going to be fair.)

zɒ bɒ r mɒ za maobai de. (You have done nothing better.)

In some sentences the use of double negative words can be seen but the meaning is positive. e.g.-

Assamese:

mɒi talɔi nɒ-gɒi nuarilu. (I could not but go there.)

mɒi nu-xuakɔi thakibɔ nuarilu. (I could not but sleep.)

Bodo:

a bejao tha -a-lase thanɒ ha-jakhisɒ i.(I could not but go there.)

a bekhɒ u mao-a-lase thanɒ ha-jakhɒ i.(I could not but do this.)

4.1 CONCLUSION:

In the above discussion here can see the process of negation of both the Assamese and Bodo languages. The processes of negation found almost the same though the languages are originated from two different sources. But this is not enough for the development of the languages. So comparative or contrastive study, historical, genealogical study is required so that a good result can be found which help the readers as well as the researchers about the development of the languages. From global perspective many smaller languages are dying out due to the spread of a few world languages such as English, French, or Chinese etc. Besides that, in a particular domain the bilingual people use the language which is very easy to communicate with their neighbors. Thus many languages are in the position of extinction. So preserving the languages which are in the path of extinction is going to be very important in present day world. It is possible only, if the linguists and researchers are very sincere about the same. In case of Assamese or Bodo language also it is applicable.

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