

Onomatopoeia Words in Bodo

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Abstract: Onomatopoeia is the domain of morphological reduplication and it belongs to lexical reduplication. The term Onomatopoeia has the variant forms like onomatopoeic, onomatopoeic, onomatopoeias etc. Onomatopoeia takes a vital role in the formation of a language. There are numerous onomatopoeia words in Bodo which are being used by this language speaker of their day-to-day social life. Structurally, most of the onomatopoeia words can be found in reduplicative form either full or partial. The uses of onomatopoeia can be found in child language acquisition, and also in many Bodo folk-songs.

Key Word: Onomatopoeia, Definition of onomatopoeia, Structure and function of onomatopoeia, Onomatopoeia in child language acquisition.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Bodos are the single largest ethnic group among the tribal in Assam, India. The term Bodo, generally represents the Bodo language as well as the Bodo community both. Linguistically, the Bodos belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan speech family, and racially, they belong to the Mongoloid Stock.

The research work which taken to be study here is the Onomatopoeia Words that are being used in Bodo language largely in communicating and exchanges of views. In this paper it also aims to be focusing on the structures and functions of onomatopoeia words of Bodo language. There is no available previous work on this specific topic in Bodo. Therefore, keeping in mind the call of the time the researcher thinks that it is needful to undertake this job in order to explore and analyse the structure and functions of onomatopoeia in Bodo. It is also needful to mention here that this study will also enrich in the academic sphere of the society as well as the language learners/researchers a lot.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are to focusing the onomatopoeia words that are largely used in the language, their structures, and their functions in the language.

III. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

The term 'Onomatopoeia' means the use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to. Onomatopoeia may also refer to the use of words whose sound suggests the sense. The term has the variant forms like onomatopoeic, onomatopoeic, onomatopoeias etc. Onomatopoeia words take a vital role in the formation of a language. A large number of onomatopoeia words are used in Bodo language. Onomatopoeia words that are used in Bodo language is chiefly found in nouns and adjectives. But, all the onomatopoeias have adverbial functions when using in the sentences. The onomatopoeias may be simple, complete and partial reduplication in structure.

A. Definition of Onomatopoeia

Alibha (2003) defines-

*"The term onomatopoeia means formation and use of words to imitate sounds. Ex: dong, crackle, moos, etc. It is a figure of speech in which sound reflects the sense."*¹

According to T. Murugarathanam (1994):

*"the sound of Onomatopoeia is only, that indicating the thing of the sound. That means the sound of the thing is the word. Like this the words which have some similarity with sounds is the reason for calling them onomatopoeia"*²

¹Extracted from: A. Parimalagantham.(2008). A Study of Structural Reduplication in Tamil and Telugu. Unpublished Thesis, P.S. Telegu University, Hyderabad.p. 286.

² Ibid.

“Onomatopoeia is a word that is considered by convention to be *acoustically similar* to the sound, or the sound produced by the *thing* to which it refers.” (Pharies, 1979: 84).³As for examples in Bodo- *tiη-tηη* (ringing sound of calling bell), *dub-dab* (beating or falling sound of objects), *sri-srai* (silently), *hui-ha* (sound of shouting) etc.

B. Structure of Onomatopoeia

Structurally, the Bodo onomatopoeias have a single structure composed of one or two syllables. Thus, most of the onomatopoeias may found either mono syllabic or disyllabic form. Onomatopoeia as polysyllabic may found very rare in this language. Usually, they are reduplicative in character. The onomatopoeia words which are being used in Bodo language are mostly beginning with consonant phonemes. A few structures may found beginning with /ɔ/ and /e/ vowel; e.g.-ɔη ɔη (sound produced by bees), ɔ ɔ (vomiting sound), eb ɔη eb ɔη (croaking). Onomatopoeias occur in both reduplicated and non-reduplicated forms in the language.

(i) Simple or non-reduplicative Onomatopoeia

Monosyllabic:

- k^hriη (ringing sound of bell)
- k^hrem (breaking sound)
- mew (mewing of a cat)
- p^hus (sound of gas)
- t^hem (breaking sound of a stick)
- groom (thundering or shooting sound)
- dub (falling or beating sound)

Disyllabic:

- k^huu-uu (cooing of cuckoo)
- ha-siu (sneezing sound)

Polysyllabic:

- gɔ-gre-gɔ (sound produced by cock)
- la-p^ha-sai-k^hɔ (sound produced by bird, a bird which uses to come in spring season)

It is worth mentioning that, the simple or non-reduplicated onomatopoeia words can be found in reduplicated form. When these will be reduplicated they represent the meaning of continuation.

(ii) Reduplicative Onomatopoeia

Monosyllabic:

- sraisrai (in an orderly manner)
- zrawzraw (with rustling sounds)
- zruuzruu (very sharp)
- p^hɔsp^hɔs (hissing sound of snake)
- mewmew (mewing of cat)

Disyllabic:

- zu-guzu-gu (sound produced by dove)
- si-ridsi-rid (sound produced by sparrow)
- k^huu-uuk^huu-uu (cooing of cuckoo)
- zi-rizi-ri (with weak flow)

Polysyllabic:

- zu-gu-rubzu-gu-rub (fishing sound with bamboo net)

The onomatopoeias may either be simple or complete and partial reduplication. In Bodo, maximum of the onomatopoeia words are found in complete reduplicated form. On the contrary, a few partial reduplicated forms of onomatopoeia words may also found in the language. These are given below with examples-

(i) Simple:

- ɔ “vomiting sound”
- zraw “falling sound”
- dub ‘beating or falling sound of things’

(ii) Complete reduplication:

- p^hɔsp^hɔs ‘hissing sound of snake’
- t^hɔkt^hɔk ‘knocking sound’

³Browsed from: <http://ifa.amu.edu.pl/sap/files/23/02Sobkowiak.pdf>

riŋriŋ	‘sound produced by worm/cricket’
bruŋbruŋ	‘sound produced by housefly’

(iii) Partial reduplication:

grum gram	‘heavy thundering sound’
zrumzram	‘falling sound of heavy things’
dub dab	‘beating sound or falling sound of objects’
gɔgere gɔ	‘sound produced by cock’
tiŋ-tɔŋ	‘ringing sound of calling bell’

C. Functions of Onomatopoeia

In most cases, the onomatopoeias functions as noun or adjectives. But, while forming sentences, the onomatopoeia words have primarily an adverbial functions; as the following examples can show.

- (a) suima-a p^huu p^huu suŋ-ʉ
 dog-NOM bow-wow RED bark-HAB
 (The dog is barking bow-wow.)
- (b) bar-a siu siu bar-duŋ
 wind-NOM harsh RED to blow-Pr.CONT
 (Wind is blowing harshly.)
- (c) dui-a srai srai buhui-duŋ
 water-NOM nice RED to flow-Pr.CONT
 [Water is flowing in an orderly manner (nicely).]

Onomatopoeia as Noun

Bodo language possesses a large number of noun words used as onomatopoeia. In Bodo, these kinds of words are found in reduplicated forms. In addition, such types of sounds are produced by animate or inanimate. As the sounds produced by them or the thing and their nature or character, onomatopoeia words used as nouns may be discussed classifying in to the following heads-

(a) Sound produced by birds

There are large numbers of onomatopoeia words that are closely associated with birds. These kinds of onomatopoeia words are found in full reduplication in the languages and are repetitive in character. The specimens’ are-

gaga	‘cawing of crow’
siridsirid	‘sound produced by sparrow’
k ^h uuuuuk ^h uuuu	‘cooing of cuckoo’
miumiu	‘the call of owls’
sibsib	‘sound produced by poultry’

(b) Sound produced by animals

Animals also produce different sounds to express their feelings, hunger, thirst and anger. A good number of onomatopoeia words that are produced by animals are found in Bodo language. They are also repetitive in character. For examples-

p ^h uuup ^h uu/huuuuuu	‘barking of dog’
mewmew	‘mewing of a cat’
mleml/be be	‘sound produced by goat’
mɔmɔ	‘the call of cow’
ɔweɔwe	‘sound produced by pig’

(c) Imitative sound produced by insects

Different kinds of insects living over ground and underground produce their sounds differently. The sounds produced by them are also considered as onomatopoeia in Bodo. Imitative sounds produced by them are repetitive in character. The common examples are as follows-

riŋriŋ	‘sound produced by worm/cricket’
bruŋbruŋ	‘sound produced by housefly’
t ^h igt ^h ig	‘sound produced by house lizard’
ɔŋɔŋ	‘sound produced by bumble bee’
breŋbreŋ	‘sound produced by bee’
brɔŋbrɔŋ	‘sound produced by black bee’

(d) Sound produced by human beings

Human beings also produce some onomatopoeia words in certain conditions. These kinds of sounds come out during the time of vomiting, sneezing, swallowing and the like. Consider the following examples-

ɔɔ	‘vomiting sound’
p ^h ep ^h e	‘sound of blowing nose’
grɔdgrɔd	‘swallowing sound’
p ^h enp ^h en	‘sound of passing gas’

(e) Words imitative of Sound produced by instruments

Bodo language has a large number of onomatopoeia words that are imitative of sounds produced by instruments (these instruments may be either manual or mechanical). These kinds of onomatopoeia words are also repetitive in character. e.g.-

t ^h ɔŋt ^h ɔŋ	‘ringing sound of bell’
t ^h an ^h an	‘beating sound of hammer’
k ^h riŋk ^h riŋ	‘ringing sound of cycle bell’
p ^h riu da gum p ^h riudagum	‘beating sound of drum’

(f) Sound produced by environment or natural sound

Sounds are produced in the environment also. A good number of onomatopoeia words have their origin in imitation of some natural sounds, produced by different kinds of actions. These kinds of sounds are produced in different natural environments like blowing of wind, raining, water sounds coming out from stream, waterfall etc. For example-

siusiu	‘blowing sound of wind’
rara	‘flowing sound of water’
dubdub	‘the jingling sound’
dramdram	‘heavy raining sound’
zramzram	‘heavy raining/beating sound’
t ^h ɔt ^h ɔ	‘sound of cutting tree’

Onomatopoeic as Adjective

Most of the words used as noun onomatopoeia in the above examples could be used as adjectives in Bodo. So, some onomatopoeia words may be a noun or adjective, but it will depend on use by the speakers in the sentences. Consider the following examples-

t ^h ɔt ^h ɔdannaj	‘cutting sound of hard things/objects’
zrawzrawsuduwb	‘sound of dry leaves’
grungrunmaj	‘large number of paddy’
glabglabmininaj	‘loudly/boisterously laughing’

D. Onomatopoeia in Children Language Acquisition

Onomatopoeias may found in the children language acquisition. Mother teaches their children in the early stages at around 0-24 months to make understand them in more easy languages, which we call children language. At this stage, babies practice articulation without intending to produce concrete words, but this acquired skill of producing polysyllables is later applied to express meanings. This kind of children language we actually found in reduplicative system. So, it has commonly been stated that ‘children like reduplication’. Such types of reduplications are used to make the child language acquisition simpler and easier and the reduplications employed by children take the forms of bi-syllabic words comprising one reduplicated syllable. e.g.-

hawhaw	‘fire’
gɔgɔ	‘water’
gɔgɔ	‘bird’
dɔdɔ	‘meat’
tete	‘fish’
zeze	‘bad and dirty things’
mammam	‘rice’
mawmaw	‘any kind of animals’
mewmew	‘cat’
mɔ mɔ	‘cow’
dudu	‘moon’
dudu	‘mother’s breast’

In the examples, onomatopoeia like “gogo” and “dudu” both can have double meaning “water or bird” and “moon or mother’s breast” respectively based on their tonal variation and contextual use in the sentences. Onomatopoeia in the children language, have reflected in the many folk songs of the Bodos, particularly in the nursery rhymes. Here, have quoted a song collected by Mohini Mohan Brahma where onomatopoeias have seen. The song is:

Ói du duphõiphõi
Ói du duphõi
Nõnphõiyabõlathalirthaycehor,
Thalirthaycehorablathalirthaynõihor
Ói du duphõiphõi.

(Folk-songs of the Bodos: 1960, p. 5)

English rendering:

Come down, oh moon,
Come down to us,
Or else send a banana
Or two,
Oh moon, come down to us.

(Folk-songs of the Bodos: 1960, p. 136)

In the above song, the onomatopoeia word *du du* (the general term is $\text{ɔk}^h\text{ap}^h\text{ur}$) ‘moon’ is a child language arising several times in the rhyme functioning as noun.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the above discussions, it is well proved that a large number of onomatopoeia words are being used in Bodo. Generally, onomatopoeia words are reduplicated in structure. These onomatopoeia-reduplicated words are found to occur in imaginative texts, informative texts, literary texts, mass media, science fiction, literature, advertisements, songs, music, children literature, poems and popular culture etc. The following points are the findings of onomatopoeia words-

- (a) Onomatopoeia words used in Bodo can be found in mono-syllabic, bi-syllabic and poly-syllabic in structure;
- (b) Onomatopoeia words can be found reduplicated and non-reduplicated forms;
- (c) Onomatopoeia words may be simple, complete and partial reduplication in the language;
- (d) Onomatopoeia takes a vital role in the formation of word/words in the language;
- (e) Generally, onomatopoeia words have adverbial functions, but sometime it also seems that they work as noun or adjectives.

ABBREVIATIONS:

HAB	- Habitual
NOM	- Nominative Case
Pr. CONT	- Present Continuous
RED	-Reduplication

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