

Appearance of Bodo Language in Social Media: A Case Study of Facebook Groups

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Abstract

This study examines the use of the Bodo language on Facebook, analyzing linguistic patterns across three distinct groups to assess script preference, grammatical integrity, and lexical influences. Findings reveal a persistent divide between the officially endorsed Devanagari script and the widespread use of Roman script, leading to phonetic inconsistencies, grammatical errors, and punctuation neglect. Hybridization, mixing Bodo with English, and unconventional spellings, further dilutes linguistic purity, particularly among younger users. While some groups maintain structured communication, others exhibit significant deviations, including code-switching, hashtag overuse, and distorted case markers, impairing readability. The study highlights the role of digital tools, social media trends, and generational shifts in shaping Bodo's online presence. To counteract erosion, it recommends promoting standardized scripts, AI-driven translation tools, youth engagement, and moderated online communities. These strategies aim to preserve Bodo's linguistic identity while adapting to digital demands, offering insights for safeguarding other minority languages in the social media era.

Keywords: Bodo language, Social media, Facebook, Language preservation, digital space.

Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of modern communication, revolutionizing how people connect, share, and engage with one another. Among the various platforms, Facebook stands out as one of the most widely used and influential social networks worldwide. Facebook came in existence in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his associates. Today, Facebook is the most popular and largely accepted social media site for teenager to old. Facebook has highest traffic at around 83 percent among social media platform across India in April 2020.¹ Facebook group platforms are used to share the information, knowledge, cultures, language any updates related to the forum. There are lot of Facebook groups representing the Bodo language, culture and literature.

India is a home of diverse of different ethnic languages. Different ethnic community of India tried to survive with their own language, culture and tradition. Indian constitution recognised 22 languages of India in eight schedules while Bodo language is one of them. Bodo defines both race and language. Racially mongoloid Bodo language is a branch of Sino Tibetan language family and one of the single largest communities of Assam. Since 1975 the language has been written using the Devanagari script. It was formerly written using Latin and Eastern-Nagari scripts. Some scholars have suggested that the language used to have its own now lost script known as Deodhai.(Wikipedia) Bodo language is use in Bodo dominated districts of Assam mainly in BTC (Bodoland Territorial Council) area and some major districts of Assam like Dhubri, Goalpara, Kamrup, Morigaon, Nogaon, Golaghat, Darrang, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Karbi Anglong etc. Aside Assam, it is use in many Indian states like West Bengal, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura etc. as well as neighbouring country Nepal, Bangladesh and few adjoining areas of Bhutan.

Literature Review

Most of the linguists and Bodo grammarians have discussed detail about the structure of Bodo language at different levels. Promod Chandra Bhattacharya' "A Descriptive Analysis of the Bodo Language" (1977) is the first scientific research works on the Bodo language with a linguistics perspective. This work has attempted to descriptive analysed with first hand linguistics materials spoken form of the Bodo language of Assam. He focused on Phonological, Morphological and Syntactic elements of the Bodo language. Before that, Rev Sydney Endle "An Outline Grammar of the Bara (Kachari) Language" (1884) was the first grammar and tried to described and analysed the Bodo spoken language of Darrang area. But all this were written in English rendering. So, Kamal Kumar Brahma's "gwzww Raokhanthi" was the first ever grammar book of Bodo language. In this book he attempted to described Bodo language in a grammatical structure. Madhura Baro "Gwzww Raokhanthi" is also a Bodo Grammar to focus on different linguistical feature of Bodo language. Swarna Prabha

¹ Deeksha S. Naik Talaulikar: Impact of Social Media on Society

Chainary and Phukan Chandra Basumatary's "Raoni Mohor" (Structure of Language) is a series of book to descriptively analysed the Bodo language and comparative study with the Bodo cognitive language. Phukan Chandra Basumatary has tried to analysed different morphological and syntactical linguistics perspective with the special refence to Bodo language in his book "Raobigiyanni Phoraphari". Swarna Prabha Chainary "Boro Raokhanthi" (Bodo Grammar) and Aleendra Brahma's "Raokhanthi" both the book has tried to described different grammatical structure of the Bodo language. In the paper "A Wordnet for Bodo Language: Structure and Development," Dr. Shikhar Kr. Sarma and his team present the development of a Wordnet for the Bodo language, modeled on the structure of the Hindi Wordnet. The primary objective of this work is to create comprehensive digital linguistic resources to support the Bodo language. The paper discusses the morphological and syntactic features of Bodo, outlines the methodology employed for the creation of synsets, and addresses the various challenges encountered during the development process, including the limited availability of vocabulary and linguistic resources. This initiative represents a significant step toward the integration of Bodo into digital tools and educational frameworks, contributing to the preservation and modernization of the language.²

From above review, it is clear that, there have been numerous studies on the Bodo language in various areas of linguistics. But, in the view of social media, a sufficient study has not been practices in Bodo language. So, the paper will be experience of preliminary study of this language. This remains a significant gap, presenting many opportunities for the Bodo language researchers. Discussing this aspect could therefore provide valuable insights and inspire further researchers on the Bodo language.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyse how Bodo Language is being utilized in social media, particularly in Facebook and how it can play a pivotal role in promoting and preserving this language;
2. To compare the structure of the uses of Bodo language among three Facebook groups;
3. To recommend strategies of using Bodo language for the cultural vitality of the community.

Methodology

² Sarma, Shikhar Kr, et al. "A wordnet for Bodo language: Structure and development." *Global Wordnet Conference (GWC10)*, Mumbai, India. 2010.

This study takes a qualitative research approach to explore how content is shared and communicated within online communities, particularly on Facebook. This method is well-suited for analyzing social media interactions, as it allows the researcher to interpret not just the words themselves, but also the tone, context, and intended meaning behind the messages. By focusing on how Facebook group administrators communicate publicly within their groups, the study aims to understand the role their messaging plays in shaping group dynamics and influencing community. This approach helps uncover the deeper social and communicative patterns that emerge in these digital spaces.

Data Collection and analysis

Data for this study was collected from three public Facebook groups, each of which had at least 1,000 members as of January 2025. These groups were intentionally chosen because their content is publicly accessible no membership or subscription was required to view the posts ensuring that the research adhered to ethical guidelines for using publicly available online data.

From each group, five public posts made by administrators were purposively selected, resulting in a total of 15 posts for qualitative analysis. These posts were chosen based on their relevance to the study and were copied exactly as they appeared, including the original text and special characters. The data were entered into MS Excel for further processing and analysis. Emojis were excluded from the analysis, and no private or user-specific information such as profile names or personal identifiers was collected or used at any point.

Each post was read multiple times to develop a clear understanding of its tone, message, and context before moving into deeper analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The data was collected solely from public Facebook groups and included only posts made publicly by group administrators. No private messages or personal information from individual users were collected or accessed at any stage. All data was used exclusively for academic purposes, and when specific examples were referenced in the study, they were paraphrased or adjusted when needed to further protect the privacy of those involved.

Data from Group (i)

- (a) Gwjwn mwnabili/ Gwtar mongolbar san/emoji/ Jai apha bwrai batwo/emoji
- (b) 10, 11, 12 जानुवारी 2025. बर' थुनलाइ आफादनि जथुम्मा। दहाय बोराइ बाथौ

- (c) बर' थुनलाइआ बाथौ बिथायावनो जोनोम। बेखौनो बावगारनाय बर'फ्रा मा रोखोमनि थुनलाइ सिबियारि
- (d) मुडावल' बाथौआरि जानानै गुबुननि देव-देवि फोरखौ आइ आफा होनना सिबिनाय थायोब्ला बाथौ सोदोमस्त्रिया थांना थाया
- (e) जोंनि गामियाव आघोननि से खालाराव हाबा दं। बेनिखायनो रिहासल होदों। दहाय बोराइ बाथौ

Data from Group(ii)

- (a) BODOLAND Mohotsav khow Delhi ao khungnaini main karon ah ma, BODOLAND ao bwtho khungnu haywmwn?
- (b) Mr Khampa Borgoyari आ BJP आव join जासिगोन। / News Source DY365
- (c) गाबोन्नि साना बर'हारिनि थाखाय जारिमिनारि सान जानानै थाथों, जै बर' हारिनि जै
- (d) “अ'मा थावख्रि” Festival
- (e) Merry Christmas to all of you

Data from Group(iii)

- (a) Twoada...../_bodogirl/emoji_bodoreels_bodotraditionalattire_bodool dsong_reelsvideo_fyp_viralreels_explore_explore
- (b) Lwgwpwr Be December rao Gao2ni raojwng bungnaieba trending song's jwnglo reels video pwrkwu hw. Content lirna hwnanwi upload hw.
- (c) #reelfbreels# reelsfacebook dwmwiya jolopi pitai jadng/emoji/ GD morning friends/
- (d) Very. Sweet. Song. And. Dance. Nepali.
- (e) 25th Addition of Hornbill Festival wao boro somaina romaina Bahagw lanai nutai Bodo trip

Analysis and Results

Use of Bodo Language in Facebook

In group (i) roman scripts has used only in no.(a). Aside this, all the content are written in Devnagari scripts. Excluding of two loan words one hindi coin word /देव-देवि/ (God-godesses) and one english word /रिहासल/ (rehearsal) respectively. Numeral, emoji and oblique have also used. In this group each sentence has been understandable to every netizens and emoji are also helping to express the deepest meaning of the content. In the group, ignoring the full stop there are eleven sentences, 56 words, four time numeral and (i) no. (a), (b) and (e) four-time emoji has used.

In group (ii) no.(a) roman scripts has used and no.(b) roman and devanagari both are used. No.(c) is completely used by devanagiri and no.(d) is mixing code but english word is error in spelling. No.(e) is completely in english. Case ending in Bodo language use as a suffix and it plays a very important role in sentence making and expressing its meaning. But case ending {-आव}, {-खौ} has been seen to be used as a free morpheme frequently. In the group (ii) ignoring the full stop there are eight sentences, 42 words, one numeral and no emoji has used.

In Group (iii) /bodogirl/ instead of Bodo girl, /bodoreels/ instead of Bodo reels, /bodotraditionalattire/ instead of 'Bodo traditional attire', /bodooldsong/ instead of 'Bodo old song', /reelsvideo/ instead of reel video, /viralreels/ instead of 'viral reels' /fyp/ without any meaning, used hypen and emoji to attract the content. No.(b) code switching is used. /Lwgwpwr Be December ao Gao2ni raojwng bungnai eba trending song's jwnglo reels video pwrkwu hw./ this is a compound sentence and here is /trending song's/ and /reels video/ both english words are switching in sentence. /Content lirna hwnanwi upload hw./ here in another sentence /content/, /upload/ both English words are also switching in sentence. Used unconventional word by including numeral /Gao2ni/ instead of /gao-gaoni/. No.(c) used character and /reelfbreels/, /reelsfacebook/ /jadng/, /GD/ four unconventional spelling and used emoji. No.(d) Content is fully error. There are six words; each word started with capital letter and end with full stop. But linguistically all are free morpheme. In no.(e) content is code mixing with Bodo and English words. /nutai/ and /wao/ both are wrong spelled; in Bodo it will be /nuthai/ and /ao/ in pronounced. In this group it has been noticed that, all the five contents are affected by the social media. Unconventional word and spelling are often used. The structure of the grammar is fully avoided. In the group no.(a) couldn't count in sentence due to using maximum character and combining two three words. So, excluding no.(a) there are six sentences, 68 words, two numeral and no.(a) and (c) three-time emoji has used.

Comparison of the uses of Bodo Language in Facebook Groups

As we have seen in the collected data all the posted posts are very short. In comparison it has been noticed that, in all the group has used Roman script instead of Devnagari script after being recognised to write the Bodo language. In case of using the Roman script, the words in /batwo/, /karon/, /lwgwpwr/, /pwrkwu/, /jolopi/, /pitai/, /nutai/ there are /t/ replaced /th/, /k/ replaced /kh/, /p/ replaced /ph/ constantly. So, this

type of writing in such a platform has somehow missed the sweetness of the language. On social media, users do this without knowing or unaware of certain aspects. Punctuation makes a sentence completely meaningful and controls the beauty of the sentences. But, in this study it reveals that emojis are replacing the place of full stop in group (i) no.(a), (b) and (e) whereas there is no full stop in (c) and (d). Aside this emoji, hyphen are replacing the full stop it replaced the coma, interrogative, and exclamatory symbols. In group (iii) no.(d) is completely wrong sentence, where there is exist of full stop in end of each word. In group (i) out of five, four posts have been written in devanagiri and one is written in roman script. Similarly in group (ii) out of five posts three are written in devanagiri, one is in roman Bodo and one in an english respectively. But, in group (iii) all the posts are fully avoided the devanagiri script and also full of error, breaking the structure of grammar excluding the no.(e). In this group, maximum number of 'hashtag', unconventional words, misused of small & capital letters has been used frequently. This can be reveals that excluding no.(e) all the content has influenced by language of social media.

Comparison among the three groups; group (i) tried to maintains the Devanagiri script along with the structure of grammar, basic vocabulary and spelling. Group (ii) maintains both the Devanagari and Roman script. Aside this, writing in English and hybrid words i.e. Bodo and English have also used frequently. But, group (iii) is totally unique among the collected groups. These types of content writing and posting posts makes the readers puzzle in understanding the meaning of the objects.

Strategies of using Bodo Language in social media

Living in a fast-paced, social media-driven world can be challenging, but it's definitely not impossible to keep our language and culture alive. To stay engaged, informed, and expressive, we need to adopt some smart strategies. Tools like Google and Microsoft Translate and other AI-driven tools can help us translate content quickly and easily in the meantime. Many social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly known as Twitter) already offer automatic translation features for posts and comments, which makes it easier to communicate and share across languages. At the same time, it's important to work closely with government bodies and community leaders to support the digitalization and promotion of the Bodo language. We should also encourage major social media platforms to include Bodo as a language option in their features. That way, we can create more inclusive spaces for Bodo speakers online and ensure that our language thrives in the digital age.

To prevent the erosion of the Bodo language, it's really important to involve the younger generation in speaking, writing, and enjoying content in Bodo. When young people use the language in everyday life especially online it keeps it alive and relevant. We should encourage Bodo speakers to create and share content in Bodo, even if it's just a simple caption or short video. When people post on social media in Bodo thoughtfully and respectfully it not only shows pride in their roots but also helps others become familiar with the language. This kind of everyday use can make Bodo more visible and accessible to a wider audience, including those who may not speak it fluently but are curious to learn.

Group admin play an important role in shaping how the Bodo language and culture are shared online. They should stay updated and thoughtful about the kind of content being posted, making sure it truly helps in promoting and preserving the language in a positive way. At the very same time, every user should be polite when it comes to using words. If someone chooses to act outside the forum guideline, they should be able to make decisions against it such as disciplinary action, punishment according to the forums' rules and so on.

There should be more Facebook groups actively dedicated to promoting and preserving the Bodo language, culture, and literature. These groups can become lively and welcoming spaces where people come together to share traditional knowledge, explore Bodo literature, celebrate cultural events, and connect with others who deeply care about their roots. By posting stories, photos, discussions, and creative content, these communities can help keep the Bodo identity alive.

Discussion

In many cases, users tend to overlook the grammatical structure, vocabulary, and correct spelling of the Bodo language. There is a frequent blending of Bodo and English syntactic structures, and users often incorporate words from other languages to reinforce their intended meaning or to demonstrate multilingual proficiency. Additionally, the use of hybrid words or unconventional spellings, emojis, special characters, and stickers is quite common in their communication.

Although the Devanagari script has been officially adopted for writing the Bodo language, the parallel and extensive use of the Roman script by users remains prevalent. This dual-script practice has given rise to several linguistic challenges, including phonetic distortions, misinterpretation of grammatical case markers, and the frequent elision of punctuation, all of which contribute to reduced clarity and consistency in written communication. These reasons may be attributed to the availability of compatible Bodo or

Devanagari fonts and typing tools for electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets, and computers.

The frequent mixing of Bodo and English in social media posts has a noticeable impact on the strength and development of the Bodo vocabulary. While it might seem like a way to make communication easier or more modern, this habit often leads to the replacement of native Bodo words with terms from other languages. Over time, this can slow down the natural growth of the language and gradually weaken its distinct identity.

Conclusion

The above study highlights how Bodo language has facing challenges in competing in the social media and it also helps to those languages which are facing in the contemporary days. The study clears it that, some of the content shared in the facebook groups is not able to accomplish the meaning of the aspects. So, to preserve the beauty of the Bodo language, conscious efforts must be made to use basic vocabulary, maintain proper grammatical structure and promote accurate spelling. Encouraging linguistic purity and awareness in both oral and written forms is vital to safeguarding Bodo language in future. Aside it, digital platforms should be utilised to promote the language in a way that respects its legitimacy rather than compromising its integrity. Social media is a vast area. So, there are linguistically lot of scopes to work in social media in social media for promoting and publishing Bodo language. The present study is limited to three public Facebook groups. Further research can expand the scope by including more groups and a larger dataset, which may present more comprehensive findings.

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