An Analytical Study of Hybrid Words and Slang Words used in Select Bodo Novels.

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Abstract: Language in literary texts often reflects ongoing social, cultural, and linguistic change. The Bodo language, like many indigenous languages, has undergone significant transformation due to prolonged contact with dominant regional and global languages. This study presents an analytical examination of the use of hybrid words and slang words in select Bodo novels, with the aim of understanding their formation, functions, and sociolinguistic implications. Hybrid words—formed through the blending of Bodo with languages such as Assamese, Hindi, and English—and slang expressions are analysed to identify patterns of code-mixing, lexical innovation, and informal language use within fictional narratives. The study employs a qualitative textual analysis of selected novels, focusing on frequency, contextual usage, and thematic relevance of these linguistic forms. Findings suggest that hybrid and slang words play a crucial role in representing contemporary Bodo society, particularly in portraying urbanization, youth culture, identity negotiation, and realism in dialogue. The use of such words not only enhances narrative authenticity but also reflects the dynamic and adaptive nature of the Bodo language. This study contributes to Bodo literary criticism and sociolinguistic research by documenting evolving linguistic practices and highlighting the interaction between language, literature, and society.
Key Words: Bodo Language, Slang Word, Hybrid Word, Bodo Novel, Code-Mixing.

Introduction:

Language is a dynamic and evolving system that constantly adapts to social, cultural, and historical changes. In multilingual societies, this evolution often results in the emergence of hybrid words and slang expressions that reflect contact between languages, communities, and modes of communication. Such linguistic forms are not merely casual deviations from standard language but serve as significant markers of identity, creativity, and socio-cultural interaction. Literary texts, particularly novels, provide a rich site for examining these evolving language practices, as authors consciously or unconsciously incorporate contemporary speech patterns to represent lived realities.

Bodo, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken primarily in Assam and neighbouring regions, has undergone notable transformation in recent decades due to increased contact with Assamese, English, Hindi, and other regional languages. This contact has contributed to the formation of hybrid words—lexical items created through the blending of elements from two or more languages—as well as the growing use of slang words in everyday communication. Modern Bodo novels, especially those depicting urban life, youth culture, and socio-political change, increasingly reflect these linguistic shifts.

Hybrid words in Bodo literature often emerge as a result of code-mixing and borrowing, where lexical items from dominant or prestigious languages are adapted into Bodo phonological and morphological structures. Slang words, on the other hand, function as informal, context-specific expressions that

convey emotions, attitudes, and social belonging. Together, these linguistic forms enrich narrative realism while simultaneously challenging conventional notions of linguistic purity and standardization. The select novels for the study are Bikhaya gaoyw khugaya geoya by Chittaranjan Mushahary, Kharlung by Manoronjan Lahary, Fanshari nwng angnisw by Sumeeron Jwhwlao Bodosa and Great Mountain hajwmayao rojeni dengkhw by Ashok Basumatary.

Aims and Objectives of the study:

The aims and objectives of the study are to analyse the nature, types, and functions of hybrid words and slang words used in select Bodo novels. By situating these linguistic features within their socio-cultural and literary contexts, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of language evolution in Bodo literature and to highlight the role of contemporary fiction as a mirror of changing linguistic realities.

Methodology:

This study adopts an analytical method to examine and interpret instances of hybrid words and slang words as they appear in the select Bodo novels.

Discussion:

1. Use of Hybrid words in select Bodo novels

According to Jespersen, a hybrid word is a word that is formed by combining elements taken from different languages, especially when a foreign prefix or suffix is attached to a native word, or when elements from two different linguistic sources are blended in a single word.[1] Cuddon (2014) defines hybrid word as 'A word formed from a stem or word in one language plus a suffix or prefix from another.'[2] The use of hybrid words in selected novels is discussed below.

Example-1

आखायनि आसियाव **न'कपलिस** फुनदों आगसि आखायाव फिसा **लेडिजघरि**। p-88 (Fanshari Nwng Angnisw)

English rendering: Nail polish is applied to the fingernails, and a small ladies' watch in the left wrist.

Hybrid word: न'कपलिस (nail polish), लेडिजघरि (ladies watch)

Linguistics Analysis

This is a sentence from the Bodo language. In it, the author has used hybrid words such as न'कपलिस (*nail-polish*) and लेडिजघरि (*ladies-watch*). The word न'कपलिस is a combination of two languages: Bengali and English. Here, न'क means *nail* in Bengali, and पलिस comes from the English word *polish*, meaning *burnish*. The novelist uses the hybrid word न'कपलिस instead of the English term *nail polish* to fulfil a lexical need, as there is no equivalent word in Bodo.

Another hybrid word used is लेडिजघरि (*ladies-watch*), which is also formed from two root words: the English root लेडिज (*ladies*), referring to women, and the Hindi noun घरि (*watch*). The novelist uses this hybrid word to fill a lexical gap in Bodo, where there is no appropriate equivalent for *ladies' watch*.

In both cases, the use of hybrid words from other languages demonstrates a creative linguistic strategy to meet vocabulary needs in Bodo.

Contextual Analysis

The above-mentioned example is cited from the social novel '*Fanshari Nwng Angnisw*' by Sumeeron Jwhwlao Bodosa. In this scene, the novelist describes the costume and cosmetics of

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[1] Jespersen, Otto. *Growth and structure of the English Language.* 10th ed., Oxford University Press, 1954, p-85.

[2] Cuddon, J.A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory.* 5th ed., The Penguin Group, 2014, P-344.

Fanshari, the female protagonist of the novel. She is portrayed as a modern college girl living in the contemporary era. At this moment in the story, she is preparing to meet her beloved, Suburun, after a long time apart. Therefore, she dresses in a beautiful outfit and applies cosmetics to enhance her appearance.

Example-2

बास स्तेण्डआव ओंखारनानै गंसे **रिक्साआवलाखौ** लेंहरनानै बुंबाय बियो माघुरी दीधित गेस हाउस चोलो भाइ। p-88 (Fanshari Nwng Angnisw)

English rendering: After getting off at the bus stand, she called a rickshaw wala and said, 'Let's go, brother, to Madhuri Dixit Guest House.

Hybrid word: रिक्साआवलाखौ (rickshaw wala)

Equivalent English word: Rickshaw puller.

Linguistics Analysis

This is an imperative sentence from the Bodo language. In it, the author uses the hybrid word रिक्साआवला as a case of code-mixing, instead of the native Bodo term *Rickshaw salaigra*. The term *rickshawwala* is commonly used in South Asia, particularly in India and Pakistan. It combines the word *rickshaw*, which refers to a traditional mode of transport either manually pulled or motor-driven originally derived from the Japanese word *jinrikisha* and adapted into English as *rickshaw* with the suffix *-wala*, derived from Hindi and Urdu, meaning "one who does" or "a person involved in."

Thus, *rickshawwala* refers to a person who operates or drives a rickshaw. In this sentence, the novelist uses the hybrid word *rickshawwala* to enhance the realism and authenticity of the scene. Since the character is in a city setting, where the rickshaw pullers belong to another linguistic or cultural community, the use of this hybrid term helps situate the narrative more naturally in that urban context. The choice reflects a stylistic and contextual adaptation by the author, making the dialogue more relatable and vivid for the reader.

Contextual Analysis

This example is taken from the social novel '*Fanshari Nwng Angnisw'*. It describes a scene in which Fanshari goes to Suburun's lodging. After getting off the bus, she takes a rickshaw to reach the lodging. In this context, the novelist uses the hybrid word रिक्साआवला (*rickshawala*) to align with the character and setting. In the novel, the rickshaw puller is a Hindi-speaking person. Therefore, the novelist uses this hybrid term to make the dialogue more natural and relatable, adjusting it to suit the linguistic and cultural background of both the characters and the readers.

Example-3

थिक है **मेदामजी।** p-88

English rendering: Alright Madamji.

Hybrid word: मेदामजी (Madamji)

Linguistics Analysis

This is a Hindi sentence found in a Bodo novel. In it, the novelist uses the hybrid word मेदामजी (*Madamji*), which can be considered a code-mixed or hybrid expression. The term is a combination of "Madam", an English word used to address a woman respectfully, and "-ji", a respectful suffix from Hindi and other South Asian languages. Together, मेदामजी (*Madamji*) forms a polite and respectful way to address or refer to a woman, especially someone of higher social status or in a position of authority.

Khwmta Narzary

The use of this hybrid word adds cultural nuance and reflects the blending of languages commonly seen in everyday South Asian communication.

Contextual Analysis

This example is taken from the social novel '*Fanshari Nwng Angnisw*'. In this scene, when Fanshari asks the rickshaw puller to drop her at the Madhuri Dixit Guest House, he replies, "थिक है मेदामजी", which means *"Okay, Madamji"* in English. Here, the novelist uses the hybrid word मेदामजी (*Madamji*) to convey politeness and respect toward the woman. The use of this term reflects both cultural norms and linguistic blending, emphasizing respectful address in a socially appropriate context.

Example-4

सोनाबनिफ्राय फेंफा फे गाबबोयो। **रेलगारिनि** फेंफा । p-7

English rendering: The sound of horn coming from west. Train horn.

Hybrid word: रेलगारि (Railgari)

Linguistics Analysis

This is a sentence from the Bodo language. In it, the novelist has used or inserted the hybrid word रेलगाड़ी (*railgari/railgadi*). This word is a combination of two nouns: *rail*, referring to the railway system, and *gadi/gari*, a term from languages like Hindi that means vehicle or carriage. Therefore, *railgari* essentially means a "rail vehicle" or "train." This blend of English and Hindi elements reflects a commonly used and practical term in India to describe railway transportation. The use of this hybrid word demonstrates linguistic adaptation and reflects the multilingual context of Indian society.

Contextual Analysis

The above example is cited from the social novel '*Kharlung*' by Manoranjan Lahary. In this scene, the novelist describes the setting and narrative context from which the male protagonist, Gohel, begins his journey. The location is a small railway station named Goibari, situated in Kokrajhar district. Gohel has left his home to travel to an unknown destination by train, and he is waiting at the Goibari railway station. At that moment, a train approaches from the west, blowing its horn as it arrives.

In this passage, the novelist uses the hybrid word रेलगाड़ी (*railgari*) to fill a lexical gap. Since there is no appropriate equivalent for *train* in the Bodo language, the author uses this hybrid term to convey the concept effectively. The use of *railgari* a blend of the English word *rail* and the Hindi word *gari* (meaning vehicle) demonstrates the author's creative adaptation of language to suit the context and communicate clearly with readers. This choice reflects a practical and stylistic use of code-mixing to enhance realism and accessibility in the narrative.

Example-5

बिब्दिखायनो बियो **बिघाथाम** गायग्रा हाखौ बन्धक होबावनानै कक्राझार कलेजाव पि. इउ. आव भर्तिक लानो गहेलखौ थिनहरासै। p-9

English rendering: For that, he leased out his three bighas of paddy field and sent Gohel to Kokrajhar College for admission into the P.U. course.

Hybrid word: बिघाथाम

Equivalent English word: Three acre.

Linguistics Analysis

This is a sentence from the Bodo language. In it, the novelist uses the hybrid word बिघाथाम, which means "three bighas" or "three acres" of land. It is a compound formed from two words from different languages: बिघा, a Hindi noun referring to a traditional unit of land measurement, and थाम, a Bodo numeral meaning "three." Therefore, the term बिघाथाम denotes "three bighas of land." This hybrid usage reflects linguistic blending and serves to convey a specific cultural and contextual meaning within the narrative.

Contextual Analysis

The above-mentioned example is extracted from the social novel *'Kharlung'*. Through this passage, the novelist explains the family condition of Gohel, the male protagonist of the novel. Gohel is the only son in his family, and his parents love him deeply. His father is a farmer who supports the family through agriculture. However, their economic condition is not very stable. Despite financial struggles, Gohel's father managed to educate him up to matriculation by borrowing money from others.

Now that Gohel has passed his matriculation, he wants to pursue higher education and take admission in a P.U. course. However, due to their poor financial situation, his mother discourages him from continuing his studies. Still, Gohel is determined to study further. Not wanting to crush his son's dream, his father decides to mortgage his three bighas of land to raise money for Gohel's education and admission.

In this context, the novelist uses the hybrid word बिघाथाम, which is equivalent to the English phrase "three bighas (or acres) of land." It is a compound of two words from different linguistic origins: बिघा, a Hindi word referring to a traditional unit of land measurement, and थाम, a Bodo numeral meaning "three." The word *बिघा* entered the Bodo language through Assamese, which also uses the same term with no native alternative. Similarly, the Bodo language lacks an indigenous word for *bigha*. Therefore, the novelist uses this hybrid word to convey a clear and culturally relevant meaning in the narrative, highlighting both linguistic adaptation and the socio-economic realities of the characters.

Example-6

बियो लामानि साखाथियाव सासे मानसिनिफ्राय **मोसौगारि** बिनानै गहेलखौ गारियाव थिखांनानै उदालगुरि डिसपेन्सारीयाव लाङासै। p-48

English rendering: He took Gohel to the Udalguri dispensary by taking an ox cart from someone nearby.

Hybrid word: मोसौगारि

Equivalent English word: Ox cart or Bullock cart

Linguistics Analysis

This is a sentence from the Bodo language. In it, the novelist uses the hybrid word मोसौगारि, which is equivalent to the English term "ox cart" or "bullock cart." It is a compound word formed from two different languages: मोसौ, a Bodo noun meaning "ox," and गारि, a Hindi noun meaning "vehicle." Therefore, the term मोसौगारि refers to an ox-drawn cart or bullock cart. The use of this hybrid word reflects linguistic blending and serves to convey the meaning more effectively within the cultural and contextual setting of the novel.

Contextual Analysis

The mentioned example is extracted from the social novel '*Kharlung*'. In this scene, the novelist describes a critical moment in the story. The male protagonist, Gohel, is attacked by Ramu Goonda in the jungle while returning to his quarters from a friend's place. Ramu Goonda assaults Gohel as an act of revenge, leaving him unconscious in the middle of the jungle. After the attack, Gohel is transported to the hospital for treatment using an ox cart or bullock cart.

To depict this situation, the novelist uses the hybrid noun मोसौगारि in the Bodo language. This word is formed by combining two nouns from different languages: मोसौ, a Bodo word meaning "ox," and गारि, a Hindi word meaning "vehicle" or "cart." The use of this hybrid term reflects the lack of an equivalent word in the Bodo language. Therefore, the novelist employs मोसौगारि to effectively convey the meaning and context within the narrative.

2.

3. Use of slang word in select Bodo novels

Slang word or phrase is an informal or nonstandard words that is often used in specific group or culture. According to Chen Linhua- "an informal style of speech often sees the frequent occurrence of slang, which may be a single word, a group of words or a sentence. Slang is highly informal and is often used in colloquial speech. It is a part of a language that is usually outside of conventional or standard usage and that may consist of both newly coined words and phrases and of new or extended meanings attached to established terms."[3] Slang words are used in literature to create realistic dialogue, capture a specific cultural setting, or reflect a character's personality and background. Some examples of selected novels are discussed bellows.

Example-1

होगार होगार, **लांसुनिया, गुन्दा, लम्पट, बदमाइस** हनै हनै रांरासिया गुन्दाजों बोलो हागौमानि नारा नाथार जायो। p-43

English rendering: Leave! Leave me, **You Immoral, thug, lecher, miscreant,** look Ransgrasi is trying to fight the goon with all her might.

Slang word: लांसुनिया, गुन्दा, लम्पट, बदमाइस

Equivalent English word: Goon, naughty or miscreants,

In the above-mentioned sentence, लांसुनिया, गुन्दा, लम्पट, and बदमाइस are slang words in the Bodo language. These terms are generally not used in formal contexts or literary works. The word बदमाइस (Bodmaish) is a Bengali term that typically translates to "naughty" or "miscreant" in English. The word गुन्दा (Gunda) originates from Hindi, meaning "rascal" or "thug," and its English equivalent is "goon." These words are used in a particular novel written in *Kharlung* to describe the character of a man who attempted to rape a girl in the jungle. The example mentioned above is part of a dialogue spoken by the novelist during the scene depicting the attempted rape.

Example- 2

नंगौ सिनेमा-थियेथारफोराबो Blue film थां-माथां कमन फिल्मफोराबो लुन्दा लुन्दी लंथं-फाथं फेन्दा खिथा-नुजालायनाय, गोजौना ब्लाउस गोजौजों बारन लायनाय बिब्दियावखि मानसिफोरा थानो हायो ? हाया। p-86

English rendering: Yes, even normal films in the cinema-theatre are also like blue film, too much revealing of body parts, how can one control himself by watching films like this? No, no one can.

Slang word: Blue film

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[3] Linhua, Chen. *An Introduction to Linguistics*. Jilin: Jilin University Press, 2006, p-260.

Equivalent in English: Pornographic Film.

In the above-mentioned example, "blue film" is a slang term, commonly used in South Asian English (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh) to refer to a pornographic film. This term is used in the Bodo novel '*Fanshari Nwng Angnisw*' to describe pornographic content, which has contributed to the slang's contextual usage. The novelist employs this slang term through the dialogue of Juli, a supporting female character in the novel, during a conversation with Haina, the sister of the male protagonist Suburun.

In their conversation, they comment that modern cinema and theatre are increasingly resembling blue films. They point out that actors and actresses often wear outfits designed to attract attention through sensuality rather than meaningful substance. This makes contemporary entertainment feel similar to what is seen in pornographic films.

The novelist has used this slang term in the dialogue due to the absence of an equivalent word in the Bodo language.

Example-3

साला पाजि, आखल गैजायै। नोंनि मोसौखौ जाहोनोसो आं खोथिया खुबैयासै ? नोंनि खर'खौ खदालजों जावख्लाबगोन आं **हारामजादा।** p-19

English rendering: Nonsense, mannerless. Did I plant my seedlings only to have them eaten by your cow? **Bastard** I will slice your head with my spade.

Slang word: हारामजादा (Haramjada**)**

Equivalent English word: Illegitimate.

In the above example, हारामजादा (*Haramzada*) is considered a slang word in Hindi and Urdu. Its literal meaning is "illegitimate child." This slang is used to insult someone's character, typically in anger or during heated arguments. It is especially known for being vulgar and offensive.

The term is also used in the Bodo language as a borrowed slang word to insult someone's character. For instance, in the Bodo novel '*Kharlung*', the word हारामजादा (Haramzada) is used by the character Lesa to insult Ransrem. Both Lesa and Ransrem are male characters in the novel. The incident occurs when Ransrem's pair of oxen begin to eating paddy, prompting Lesa to scold Ransrem using the aforementioned slang term.

Example-4

जागोन **बाल** धीरे धीरे, घबरा मत। p-18

English rendering: Don't panic, it will happen slowly steadily.

Slang word: बाल

Equivalent English word**:** Pubic hair.

In the above-mentioned example, the word बाल (baal) is used as a slang term in the Bodo language. While its literal meaning in Hindi is "hair", in Bodo it refers to pubic hair. In Bodo, this word is generally used as slang to abuse someone, express anger, or show friendliness, depending on the context. It is mostly used among people of the same age group or within a circle of friends.

In the story '*Fanshari Nwng Angnisw*', the word is used to express friendliness. The main protagonist, Fanshari, uses it while talking to her friend Sitra. Sitra, who doesn't have a boyfriend while all her friends do, expresses her desire to have one as well. She asks Fanshari to find a boyfriend for her. In response, Fanshari uses the slang word बाल (baal), playfully addressing Sitra.

Although बाल is a Hindi word, it is used in Bodo as a slang term with a different, more vulgar meaning.

Example-5

साली, नोंनो फिसाखौ खालामबाय बैथालि, मानदाउली, सुनसुनि-बेस्या। p-77

English rendering: You have turned your daughter into a disgrace.

Slang word: साली, बैथालि, मानदाउली, सुनसुनि-बेस्या

equivalent English word: sister-in-law, prostitute.

In the above-mentioned example, the words 'साली, बैथालि, मानदाउली, सुनसुनि-बेस्या' are all slang terms used by the novelist in the novel *"Fanshari Nwng Angnisw."* These words are used to insult or degrade a female character in the story.

Literally, the word 'साली' means *sister-in-law* in Hindi, but in Bodo it is used as a slang term with the vulgar meaning of *'bitch'*. The terms 'बैथालि, मानदाउली, सुनसुनि-बेस्या' are colloquial Bodo expressions referring to a *prostitute*, particularly one who is seen as being sexually involved with multiple men or unsatisfied with just one partner. The word 'बेस्या', though originally from Hindi, is also used in Bodo as a vulgar term meaning *sex worker* or *prostitute* a woman who engages in sexual acts for money.

These words are derogatory and deeply insulting, often used in Bodo society to shame women. In the novel, a female character the mother of Hangma is scolded and verbally abused with these terms by another villager during a community meeting. This confrontation occurs because Hangma gave birth to a child outside of marriage, which is considered socially unacceptable in Bodo culture. The villagers convened the meeting to address what they saw as a violation of social norms.

Through these characters and their language, the novelist reflects the harsh and judgmental reality of Bodo society, particularly its treatment of women and unmarried mothers.

Conclusion:

From the above study, it can be understood that Bodo novelists have extensively used hybrid and slang words drawn from various languages in their novels. The incorporation of hybrid and slang expressions from other languages serves to create a sense of realism and to present characters in a more authentic and relatable manner. This linguistic strategy functions as a deliberate narrative technique, enabling writers to capture contemporary speech patterns and engage readers more effectively. In this study, the use of hybrid and slang words is mostly found to be derived from English, Hindi, Assamese, and Bengali.

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