

# CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF SYLLABLE IN BODO AND ASSAMESE

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**Abstract:** This study attempts to discuss, analyze and find out the similarities and dissimilarities of Syllable in Bodo and Assamese. The Bodo language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of Sino-Tibetan language family and Assamese belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of Indo-European language family. Both languages are standard language of Assam, state of India, and 8<sup>th</sup> Scheduled language of Indian Constitution. In this paper, concept of syllable, element of syllable, type of syllable on the basis of distribution of vowel and consonant phonemes in the initial (onset), medial (nucleus), and final (coda) positions, and structure of syllable in both the languages will be discussed.

**Keywords:** Contrastive, Syllable, Bodo, Assamese.

## 1. Introduction :

Bodo and Assamese belong to two different language families and having striking linguistic features of their own. The Bodo belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of Sino-Tibetan language family and the Assamese belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of Indo-European language family. Structurally these two languages have certain amount of similarities and dissimilarities in syllable. This study deals in the concept of syllable, element of syllable, position of syllable (i.e. onset, nucleus, coda) and the structure from the point of view of phonology and to find out the similarities and dissimilarities of both the languages.

## 2. Area of the Study:

The area of the study is based on the phonological view on syllable of both the languages. Syllable has its concept, element, position of phoneme, and syllabic structure. It is confined within the state of Assam, India on the syllable of Bodo and Assamese languages.

## 3. Aim and Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to find out the similarities and dissimilarities of the syllable in the Bodo and Assamese. The objectives of this study are-

- i. To study the element and position of syllable in Bodo and Assamese.
- ii. To study the syllabic structure of both the languages.
- iii. To study the similarities and dissimilarities of syllable in Bodo and Assamese.

## 4. Significance of the study:

This study has a great significance in the context of language and linguistics, especially in the area of phonological study of Bodo and Assamese. In the phonology, syllable is an indispensable part of supra segmental phoneme in both the languages. Due to belonging in two different language families, both languages have similarities and dissimilarities in case of syllable. It has also significance in the field of learning, understanding as well as in general and academic.

## 5. Data collection:

Data have been collected from the primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been gathered from the sources of questionnaire and observations. Secondary data have been collected from the textbooks and the published theses.

## 6. Methodology:

Comparative method is applied in this study and structural analysis is also taken into consideration. To find out and assess the similarities and dissimilarities, examples from both the languages are analysed. Primary and secondary source are gathered from different specifications.

## 7. Syllable in Bodo and Assamese:

The combination of one more phonemes, which is articulated in a single chest pulse is called syllable. The syllable is a unit of articulation consisting of a vowel alone or vowel with one or more consonants. In Bodo language, as for example, /i/ 'this', /aŋ/ 'I', /dam/ 'to play' and in Assamese e.g. /i/ 'he/she', /ai/ 'mother', /dam/ 'price'.

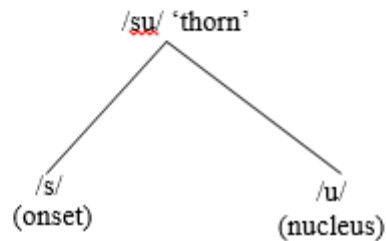
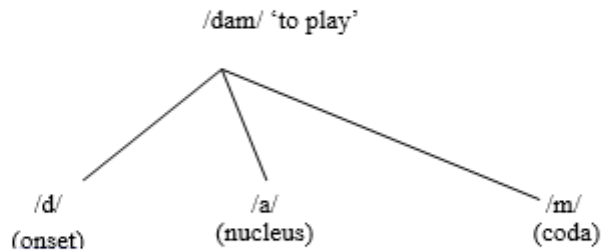
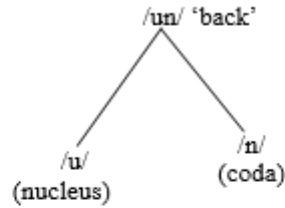
## 8. Element of Syllable in Bodo and Assamese:

There are two elements of syllable in Bodo and Assamese as nucleus element and marginal element. Vowels are the nucleus element and consonants are the marginal element in both the languages. In Bodo, nucleus elements are /i, u, e, ə, a/ and in Assamese /i, u, e, o, ε, ə, a, v./ vowel phonemes are the nucleus element. Besides these, diphthongs in Bodo as /iu, eu, ai, au, oi, ui, uɔ, uɟ/ are the nucleus elements and /iu, eu, ai, oi, ui, ou/ diphthongs are the nucleus elements in Assamese language.

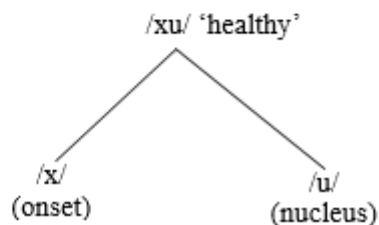
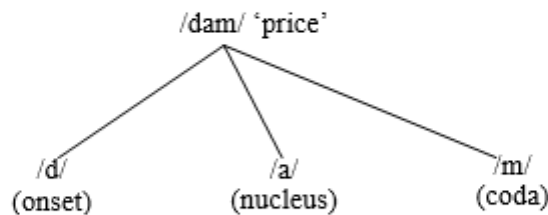
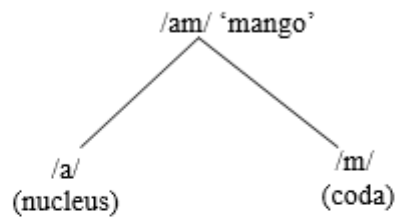
## 9. Positions of Phoneme in Syllable of Bodo and Assamese:

The phonemes are distributed in the three positions of a syllable. These are onset or releasing (initial position), nucleus or peak (medial position), and coda or arresting (final position). Vowels are distributed in all the three positions, but consonants are distributed only in the initial and final positions in both the languages. Vowels are obligatory and consonants are optional. The following are the examples of syllabic position in Bodo and Assamese.

Examples in Bodo:



Examples in Assamese:



### 10. Syllable Structure in Bodo and Assamese:

Syllable is a group of one or more sounds (vowel and consonant phoneme). The structure of syllable is based on the onset and the rhyme. 'Onset' consists of one or two (cluster) consonant and 'rhyme' consists of nucleus (monophthong and diphthong) and coda. Syllable structure is analysed by the syllabic pattern of vowels and consonants distributed in their respective positions in both the languages. The vowels are indicated with 'V' and consonants are indicated with 'C'. The following are the examples of syllabic structure in Bodo and Assamese.

Examples in Bodo:

<u>Syllable structure</u>	<u>Syllabic word</u>
V	/i/ 'this'
VV	/ai/ 'my mother'
VC	/aŋ/ 'I'
VCV	/ɔma/ 'pig'
VCCVC	/ʉŋk <sup>h</sup> am/ 'rice'
VCVVCVC	/ak <sup>h</sup> aizuŋ/ 'by hand'
CV	/za/ 'to eat'
CVC	/gan/ 'to put on'
CVCCVVCV	/ganduŋula/ 'dragon fly'

Examples in Assamese:

<u>Syllable Structure</u>	<u>Syllabic Word</u>
V	/i/ 'he/she'
VV	/ai/ 'mother'
VC	/am/ 'mango'
VCV	/ada/ 'ginger'
VCVCVCVC	/aponalok/ 'you ( plural)'
VCVCCVCVCVCVV	/ekhetxəkəlɔloi/ 'to them'
CVC	/b <sup>h</sup> at/ 'rice'
CVCVC	/bixal/ 'huge'
CVCCVC	/bandɔr/ 'mango'
CVCVCVCV	/haturare/ 'by hammer'
CVCVCCVCVCVCVV	/tekhethxəkəlɔloi/ 'to them'

### 11. Syllabic Word in Bodo and Assamese:

The distribution of vowel and consonant in the final position of syllabic word determines two kinds of syllabic word in both the languages. If vowel is distributed in the final position of a syllabic word or a syllable ends with a vowel is called open syllabic word or open syllable and consonant is distributed in the final position of a syllabic word or a syllable ends with a consonant is called closed syllabic word or closed syllable. Open syllables are often shown as VC, CVC (syllable pattern) and closed syllables are ever shown as CV (syllable pattern).

Examples in Bodo:

- (a) Open syllabic word: /za/ 'to eat'  
/su/ 'to wash'
- (b) Closed syllable: /er/ 'to increase'  
/bar/ 'to jump'

Examples in Assamese:

- (a) Open syllabic word: /ma/ 'mother'  
/xi/ 'he'
- (b) Closed Syllabic word: /ud/ 'colorless'  
/gan/ 'song'

It is seen from the above discussion that, there are similarities and dissimilarities in the syllable of Bodo and Assamese in case of concept, element, position, structure of syllable and syllabic word. The similarities and dissimilarities are as follow-

#### Similarities:

- The concept of syllable is similar in Bodo and Assamese.
- There are two elements of syllable as nucleus and marginal in both the languages.
- Vowels are the nucleus element and consonants are the marginal element in Bodo and Assamese.
- Syllable positions of phonemes are three in both the languages. These are onset (initial position), nucleus (medial position), and coda (final position).
- Vowels are distributed as nucleus and consonants are distributed as onset and coda in Bodo and Assamese.

- vi. The syllable structure on the basis of positions of the vowel and consonant is divided into two as (a) onset, and (b) rhyme (nucleus and coda) in both the languages.
- vii. The structure of syllable goes as VC, VCV, CV, CVC and onwards in Bodo and Assamese.
- viii. The syllabic word ends with vowel is open syllabic word and word ends with consonant is closed syllabic word in both the languages.

**Dissimilarities:**

- i. Belonging in two different language families, Bodo and Assamese show certain amount of dissimilarities in the syllable structure in Bodo and Assamese.

**1. Conclusion:**

From the above study, it is seen some similarities and dissimilarities in concept of syllable, element of syllable, position of syllable, structure of syllable, and syllabic word in Bodo and Assamese languages. The different aspects of syllable are shown with examples in both the languages.

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