

CHAPTER -VI CONCLUSION

The present research work entitled “*A STUDY ON THE MECH DIALECT OF NORTH BENGAL*” is fundamentally a study on the Mech dialect mainly spoken in the districts of Alipur Duar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Cooch Behar districts of North Bengal in the state of West Bengal. In this study, Mech is considered as one of the western Bodo dialects spoken in Assam. From linguistic point of view Mech or Bodo is a language of Tibeto-Burman under the Sino-Tibetan language family. Anthropologically, they are people of Mongoloid group. The present work is mainly based on linguistic levels of phonology, Morphology, syntax and vocabulary. The data were mainly collected from primary source. Primary data were collected through interview and observation from a section of informants belonging to the native speakers. A few data are also gathered from secondary source i.e. collected from different books, journals written on Mech and Bodo respectively.

Chapter-I provides general introduction on Bodo known by different names in different provinces. This chapter gives information about Mech dialect, which is one of the notable Bodo dialects spoken in Alipur Duar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Cooch Behar districts of North Bengal area of West Bengal in India. Besides, this chapter also provides information about the classification of Bodo dialects by different scholars, origin of the term ‘Mech’, short note on culture, review of literature, aims and

objectives of the study, importance of the study, area of the study and methodology used in data collection.

Chapter-II discusses on phonology of Mech dialect. In this chapter vowel and consonant have been shown as two main division of segmental phoneme. There are six vowel phonemes in Mech dialect. These are- / i, e, a, ə, u, u / . These vowels can occur in all the positions i.e. initial, medial and final in word. Eight types of diphthongs / ai, əi, ui, ui, iu, eə, əə, uu / are also available in this dialect. There are sixteen consonant phonemes -/ b, d, g, p^h, t^h, k^h, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l, w, y / . Out of sixteen consonants/ b, t^h, d m n r, l w / can occur in all the positions of a word. Phonemes / p^h, k^h, g, s, z, h / cannot occur in the final position and phonemes / ŋ, y / cannot occur in initial position of word. Consonants / b, d, g, n, ŋ, z, r, l, w, y / has been found as voiced and / p^h, t^h, k^h, m, s, h / as voiceless phonemes. In Mech, consonant clusters are found in initial and medial position only. In case of consonant sequences two and three sequences are available. The majority of first member of consonant sequences are mainly stop, nasal, fricative and trill in character. Tone and syllable are the two key parts of supra-segmental phonemes discussed in this chapter. Though in the present situation, it is very difficult to find out distinct tonal character of the dialect, yet it can be assumed that they have two kinds of tones viz. high and low. The patterns of syllable of this dialect have been found as—monosyllable, disyllable, tri-syllable and tetra-syllable. One of the mentionable features of this dialect is that even a single vowel can be formed as a syllable. Two types of syllables i.e. close and open have also been discussed. This chapter also emphasises on morphophonemics. In morphophonemics, discussion have been made on epenthesis (excrescence and anaptyxis), prosthesis, elision and different types of sound shift.

Chapter-III discusses on morphology of Mech dialect. Different types of grammatical categories like noun, gender, number, pronoun, case, adjective, numeral, verb, tense and adverb have been discussed in detail. Noun is one of the significant sub-classes of word which have been discussed in detail in this chapter. Generally noun of this dialect is found in the form of common noun, proper noun, collective noun, abstract noun, material noun, countable and uncountable noun. Structurally noun of this dialect can be classified into two types, basic and derived. Basic nouns are generally found in independent form. Structurally basic nouns are found in the form of monosyllabic and disyllabic. Derived nouns are normally derived from verb and noun. Class changing derived nouns and class maintaining derived nouns are available in this dialect. Nouns can be formed by compounding noun + noun, noun + adjective, verb + noun and noun + bound form. The gender of Mech dialect has been found in the form of natural gender as found in standard form of Bodo language and other Bodo dialects. Two types of gender, masculine and feminine have been observed. Gender distinction in Mech dialect occur via three method, viz. by using opposite lexical terms, by placing different attributive words before or after noun and by adding different bound base and suffixes to the noun and pronoun. A few unique masculine and feminine genders have also been observed. Number is one of the mentionable parts of grammatical category. Number in this dialect is related to nouns and pronouns. Singular and plural numbers are the two types of number. Using different plural suffixes, by reduplicating and using collective terms numbers can be pluralized. There are five types of pronouns in Mech dialect. These are personal pronoun, demonstrative pronoun, interrogative pronoun, reflexive pronoun and indefinite pronoun. Personal pronouns of this dialect are *aŋ* (*I*) (first person), *nunŋ*(*you*)(*second person/non-honorific*), *nunŋ-t^haŋ*(*you*) (*honorific*), *bi* (*he/she*) (third person/ non honorific), *bi-t^haŋ* (*they*) (*honorific*). The plural form of these pronouns are

zuŋ, (we), *nuŋ-sur* (you, non-honorific), *nuŋ-t^haŋ-mun* (you) (honorific), *bi-sur* (they) (non-honorific) and *bi-t^haŋ-mun* (honorific). There are two types of demonstrative pronoun viz. *be* and *habui*. It has been seen that there are many interrogative pronouns in this dialect viz. *sur* (who), *ma* (what), *bɔbe / ɔbe* (which) and *bese* (how many). Many interrogative pronouns are also found which are derived from *ma* interrogative pronoun. These are *ma-hai* (where), *ma-be* (which), *ma-la/ mɔ-bla* (when), *ma-rui* (how) and *ma-zuŋ* (by which). These interrogative pronouns are pluralized by the process of reduplication. It has also been seen that, in Mech dialect when asking the number of a human and non-human being, the interrogative pronoun is formed with the classifier. Important observation is that consonant / *b* / is inserted in the middle position between classifier and numeral. For example, *sa-b-se* (how many persons?). The reflexive pronoun in this dialect is *gaɔ*. By reduplicating it is pluralized. *Raɔbu* (nobody), *k^haɔba* (somebody) and *k^haise* (some) are indefinite pronouns. By reduplicating this, pronouns can also be pluralized except indefinite pronoun *raɔbu*. This chapter also discusses case which is one of the grammatical categories. It has been seen that there are eight types of case in this dialect. These are nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, locative and possessive. The case markers of these cases are *-a*, *-k^huu/ak^huu*, *-zuŋ*, *-nu*, *-nip^hra*, *-ni*, *-aɔha* respectively. Two types of adjectives of Mech dialect have been discussed in this chapter i.e. adjective of quality and adjective of quantity. Structurally, adjective of this dialect is found in the form of basic and derived adjective. Basic adjectives are in free form i.e. do not add any prefixes or suffixes. Derived adjective adds prefixes or suffixes to the verb root. It has been seen that numeral system of Mech dialect is not same as standard form of Bodo language. Traditionally numerals are formed by prefixing the classifier. Numeral classifiers of Mech dialect has been discussed by classifying it into three types i.e. nominal, verbal

and common classifier. But comparatively nominal classifier has been found to be more than other types of classifiers. Structurally verb of Mech dialect is found in the form of simple, complex and compound. The majority of simple verb is monosyllabic in character. Complex verb is formed by combining prefixes and suffixes to the verb. Compound verbs are made by combining two or more verbs. On the basis of function, three types of verbs- transitive, intransitive and causative are found. Like other languages, three types of tense- past, present and future tense have also been discussed. It is seen that *{-bai}*, *{-a}*, *{-mun}* are past tense marker. Past tense marker *{-bai}* indicates immediate past and *{-a}*, *{-mun}* indicates remote tense. It is notable that tense marker *{-a}* is not present in the standard form of Bodo language as well as other Bodo dialects. It is also notable that to express past progressive, tense marker *{-gadsen}* is suffixed to the verb which is followed by *doηmun*. To express past conditional tense, marker *{-naimun}* is added to the verb which is followed by *t^hanai*. Present tense is found in two type viz. present indefinite and present continuous tense. Tense marker *{-u}* functions as present indefinite tense marker and *{-gadsen}* as present continuous tense. The future tense markers of this dialect are *{-naisui}* and *{-nai}*. Future tense marker *{-naisui}* is used for near future and *{-nai}* is used for remote moment. Remarkable thing is that the future tense marker *{-nai}* has no use in standard form of Bodo language as well as other Bodo dialects found in Assam. Instead of *{-nai}* they use *{-gun}* for remote future. To express progressive future, like progressive tense marker, *{-gadsen}* is added to the verb, which is followed by *t^hanai*. Three types of adverb have also been discussed. These are- adverb of time, adverb of place and adverb of manner. Adverb of place and adverb of manners were found in derived form.

Chapter-IV discusses on different types of sentences found in Mech dialect. The chapter highlights many phrases viz. noun phrase, adjective phrase, verb phrase and

adverb phrase. Structurally sentences of Mech dialect is found in the form of simple, complex and compound. Formation of simple sentence is obtainable in the form of S-O-V. Without verb it can also form a simple sentence. It is also observable that a single word without other qualifying words also rarely can express a complete simple sentence. Complex sentence consists of one principal and one or more subordinate clauses. Generally subordinate clause depends on principal clause. Compound sentences are formed by combining simple sentences with conjunctions. Depending on meaning the sentence of Mech dialect have also been found in assertive, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory and optative sentence. Besides, equi-deletion, kernel sentence and IC have also been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter-V contains a comparative vocabulary of the Mech dialect with standard form of Bodo language of Assam. Vocabulary is mainly discussed by classifying into three parts viz. intact form, slightly variant and completely variant lexis. Many borrowing words from diverse languages into Mech dialect and standard form of Bodo language have also systematically discussed. It is seen that the Meches of North Bengal are surrounded by the Bengali speakers and the Bodos of Assam are also surrounded by the Indo-Aryan language speakers since remote past. Accordingly they assimilated in the aspects of cultural and linguistic traits. As a result many Bengali and Assamese words incorporated in the vocabulary of Mech and Bodo. It is also observed that rapid increase of English education, development of science and technology, industrialization, influence of electronic media take a pivotal role in carrying different English words into Mech and Bodo vocabulary. Beside English words, different Arabic, Persian, Portuguese and Japanese words also have enriched their vocabulary which has been shown in this chapter.

Thus it can be seen that phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and in case of lexical elements the Mech dialect have many similarities to the standard form of Bodo language, yet it also diverges from standard form of Bodo language in many noticeable aspects. After considering all the aspects, it is observed Mech as a dialect of Bodo language.