

CHAPTER-II PHONOLOGY

2.0 Introduction

Phonology is one of the important branches of linguistics that studies the sound system of a language. According to David Crystal, “*phonology is a branch of linguistics which studies the sound system of languages.*” (Crystal, 1978:268) Phonology includes two most important division viz. segmental and supra-segmental phonemes. In this chapter, focus on segmental phoneme will be made on vowel and consonant and in suprasegmental on tone and syllable. In this chapter, phonological variation between the Mech dialect and standard form will also be discussed.

2.1 Phonemic inventories

2.1.1 Vowel

Mech dialect has six distinct vowels depending on the position of tongue as found in standard form of Bodo language spoken in Assam. These are- /*i, e, a, ɔ, u, u*/. Normally these vowels are voiced. During articulation of these vowels, there is neither any obstruction nor narrowing of the passage. Following table shows the vowel phonemes of this dialect.

Table 1: Vowel of Mech dialect

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u u
Mid	e		ɔ
Low		a	

2.1.1.1 Definition of Minimal pair

“Minimal pairs are used in the discovery procedure in phonological studies in order to establish phonemes. Minimal pairs are formed by two words which differ only in one sound, whose presence or absence changes the meaning.” (Rajimwale, 2006:141)

2.1.1.2 Contrasting minimal pairs of vowel phonemes

<i>/i/ vs. /e/:</i>	si	cloth
	se	snatch
<i>/i/ vs. /a/:</i>	mi	animal
	ma	what
<i>/i/ vs. /ɔ/:</i>	bi	to beg
	bɔ	spread
<i>/i/ vs. /ʊ/:</i>	k ^h i	stool
	k ^h ʊ	to fill
<i>/i/ vs. /u/:</i>	si	open
	su	stab
<i>/e/ vs. /a/:</i>	ne	wait
	na	fish
<i>/e/ vs. /ɔ/:</i>	ze	net
	zɔ	sit
<i>/e/ vs. /ʊ/:</i>	se	one
	sʊ	insert
<i>/e/ vs. /u/:</i>	ne	wait
	nu	see
<i>/a/ vs. /ɔ/:</i>	dam	play

	dɔm	bend
/a/ vs. /ʊ/:	za	eat
	zu	kick
/a/ vs. /u/:	k ^h a	bind
	k ^h u	open
/ɔ/ vs. /u/:	bɔ	spread
	bu	beat
/ʊ/ vs. /u/:	lu	chain
	lu	pour

2.1.1.3 Description of vowel phonemes

/i/: It is a high front unrounded vowel phoneme.

/e/: It is a front mid unrounded phoneme.

/a/: It is a low central unrounded vowel phoneme.

/ɔ/: It is a back mid rounded vowel phoneme.

/u/: It is a high back rounded vowel phoneme.

/ʊ/: It is a high back unrounded vowel phoneme.

2.1.1.4 Occurrences of vowel phonemes

All the vowel phonemes of Mech dialect can occur in all three places i.e. initial, medial and final position in word. Following are the some examples of the occurrence of vowel phonemes.

/i/: Initial position:	insu	caterpillar
	isiŋ	inner part
	inzud	wall
	iyun	future
Medial position:	bigɔd	seed

	lid	write
	zid	peel
	sima	dog
Final position:	gidsi	wet
	gibi	first
	siri	silent
	k ^h uumsi	night
/ e /: Initial position:	enzɔd	rat
	emaɔ	rice-cake used for fermenting wine
	er	expand
	edaɔ	tease
Medial position:	bɛŋga	deaf
	bɛŋɛŋ	bone
	gedsaɔ	rotten
	k ^h eɔ	open
Final position:	de	pound
	se	snatch
	gele	to play
/ a /: Initial position:	aŋ	I
	ar	and
	abuɪ	grand mother
	ap ^h a	father
Medial position:	k ^h ad	run
	zab	file
	k ^h aɔ	stole

	nat ^h ej	foot
Final position:	bla	arrow
	ruza	thick
	na	fish
	lama	way
/ ɔ /: Initial position:	ɔsa	piglet
	ɔnt ^h ai	stone
	ɔn	to love
	ɔma	pig
Medial position:	bɔn	fire wood
	k ^h ɔn	pick up
	sɔŋ	cook
	rɔŋ	colour
Final position:	dɔk ^h ɔ	a kind of bamboo basket made for laying egg
	zɔ	sit
	bɔ	spread
	bɔk ^h ɔ	take out
/ u /: Initial position:	uŋa	not
	uŋk ^h am	rice
	urwiip ^h arwi	here and there
Medial position:	muut ^h aŋ	blue
	gudzam	old
	gudzza	red
	gumu	yellow

Final position: zu kick

bu pull

k^hu fill up

bɔɔ force

/ u /: Initial position: un back

udu stomach

udsu back yard

uk^hum roof

Medial position: du warm

bu speak

su shorten

du proud

Final position: su stab

bu beat

lu pour

zu wrap

2.1.1.5 Diphthongs

Eight types of diphthongs are observable in Mech. These are / *ai, ɔi, ui, ui, iu, ew, au, uu* /. Following chart shows the formation of diphthongs.

Table 2: Diphthongs of Mech dialect

	<i>i</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ɔ</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>i</i>	-	-	-	-	-	iu
<i>e</i>	-	-	-	-	-	eu
<i>a</i>	ai	-	-	-	-	au

ɔ	ɔi	-	-	-	-	-
u	ui	-	-	-	-	uu
u	ui	-	-	-	-	-

2.1.1.6 Occurrence of diphthongs

/ ai /:Initial position:	aimaɔ	woman
	ai	mother
Medial position:	zaiga	place
	nɔk ^h anaisi	dawn
Final position:	guai	betel nut
	bit ^h ai	fruit
	bisai	husband
	aɔt ^h ai	to insert
	aɔlai	to destroy
/ ɔi /:Initial position:	-----	
Medial position:	bɔibuu	all
	bɔiguma	owner
Final position:	bit ^h ɔi	thick blood
	k ^h at ^h ɔi	near
/ ui /:Initial position:	ui	it is used for addressing someone
Medial position:	duima	river
	guile	finished
Final position:	dui	water

sui	a kind of umbrella made of leaves
p ^h ui	come
/ ui /:Initial position: -----	
Medial position: duisin	smaller
Final position: rui	be soft
k ^h ui	hungry
/ iu /:Initial position: -----	
Medial position: -----	
Final position: ziu	life
miu	crying of cat
/ eu /:Initial position: eunai	
Medial position: meua	frying
Final position:	bamboo shoot
/ au /:Initial position:	
Medial position: laut ^h i	stick
dausari	martin
k ^h aulai	cheek
Final position: dau	bird
/ uu /:Initial position: uu	
Medial position: huua	ok
huu	male
Final position: zuu	give
gurduu	rice bear
duu	boiling
	feed

2.1.2 Consonant

Mech dialect has sixteen consonants including two gliding vowels which is similar to the standard variety of Bodo. These are- /*p^h, t^h, k^h, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, z, h, r, l, w, y*/. These consonant phonemes are articulated as bilabial, alveolar, palatal, velar and glottal. The manners of articulation of these consonant phonemes are stop, nasal, fricative, trill, lateral and gliding vowel. Following chart shows the consonant phonemes of this dialect.

Table 3: Consonants of Mech dialect

			Place of Articulation									
			Bilabial		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
			vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd	vl	vd
Manner of Articulation	Stop	Unaspirated		b		d				g		
		Aspirated	p ^h		t ^h				k ^h			
		Nasal		m		n				ŋ		
		Fricative			s	z					h	
		Trill				r						
		Lateral				l						
		Semi-vowel		w				y[j]				

2.1.2.1 Contrasting pairs of consonant phonemes

/ *p^h* / vs. / *b* / : p^han

sell

ban

carry on

p^haɔ

acting

baɔ

offering

/ *t^h* / vs. / *d* / : t^ham

guava

	t ^h aŋ	go
	daŋ	touch
	dam	play
	/ k^h / vs. / g / : k^haɔ	steal
	gaɔ	shoot
	k ^h eɔ	to open
	geɔ	to open
	/ m / vs. / n / : ma	what
	na	fish
	maɔ	do
	naɔ	boat
	/ m / vs. / ŋ / : lam	spread
	laŋ	take away
	bam	to carry in arms
	baŋ	to expand
	/ n / vs. / ŋ / : dan	cut
	daŋ	touch
	ban	carry
	baŋ	to be more
	/ s / vs. / z / : saɔ	roast
	zaɔ	dig
	se	one
	ze	net
	/ s / vs. / h / : su	stab
	hu	land

sər	filter
hɔr	night
/ r / vs. / l / : ru	boil
lu	pour
ra	to become mature
la	take
/ w / vs. / y / : gaɔ	shoot
gai	plant

2.1.2.2 Description of consonant phonemes

Stops: There are six stop phonemes. These are- / **b, d, g, p^h, t^h, k^h** /. These are articulated in the place of bilabial, alveolar and velar. The phonemes / **b, d, g** / are found as unaspirated voiced and / **p^h, t^h, k^h** / as aspirated voiceless.

Nasal: There are three nasal consonant phonemes. These are- / **m, n, ŋ** /. Their place of articulation is bilabial, alveolar and velar. The phoneme / **m** / is voiceless and / **n, ŋ** / are voiced.

Fricatives: There are three fricatives viz. / **s, z, h** /. The phonemes / **s h** / are voiceless and / **z** / is voiced. Their place of articulation is alveolar and glottal respectively.

Trill: The trill phoneme of this dialect is / **r** /. It is a voiced alveolar consonant phoneme.

Lateral: The lateral phoneme of this dialect is / **l** /. The place of articulation of this voiced consonant phoneme is alveolar.

Semi-vowel: There are two types of semi-vowels. These are- / **w, y** /. The phoneme / **w** / is voiced and / **y** / is voiceless, which are articulated in bilabial and palatal position of mouth cavity.

2.1.2.3 Occurrence of Consonant phonemes

(i) / b /: Occurrence of this phoneme is found in initial, medial and final position of word. Example-

Initial position:	banzud	chilli
	bar	wind
	bi	beg
	bemaduŋ	cobweb
Medial position:	dumba	maize
	bibar	flower
	bibɔ	elder sister
	zɔbra	illness
Final position:	bibu	intestines
	gab	to cry
	bɔrab	to angry
	gɔbrab	complex
	daɔdab	oven
	k ^h eb	pinch

(ii) / d /: Occurrence of this phoneme is found in all the places of word. Example-

Initial position:	dudu	milk
	dau	bird
	dan	cut
	daŋ	touch
	duduŋ	rope
	dadaɔri	girl having loose character
Medial position:	bader	garlic

	gudan	new
	t ^h aduŋ	arum
	randi	widow
	haduri	dust
Final position:	hadɔd	country
	bidɔd	meat
	zignad	a kind of small chilly
	gɔp ^h ɔd	white

(iii) / g /: It can occur in initial and medial position only. Example-

Initial position:	gan	wear
	guri	a piece of wood used in cutting meat
	gab	to cry
	gɔali	cowshed
Medial position:	agla	past
	nagsi	left hand
	nagda	hand
	ɔgra	pigsty
Final position:	

(iv) / p^h /: Occurrence of this consonant phoneme is also found in initial and medial positions only as found in the standard form of Bodo language. Example-

Initial position:	p ^h ua	fog
	p ^h uŋ	morning
	p ^h in	again
	p ^h unzi	heap of straw
	p ^h ran	to dry

Medial position:	ap ^h ed	baby nurse
	k ^h ap ^h al	forehead
	ap ^h a	father
	mup ^h ur	bear

Final position: -----

(v) / t^h /: Its occurrence is found in the positions of initial and medial of word as found in the standard form of Bodo language. Example-

Initial position:	t ^h emai	a kind of fishing object
	t ^h am	guava
	t ^h umul	papaya
	t ^h aŋ	go
	t ^h a	live
Medial position:	laot ^h ai	bottle gourd
	muut ^h aŋ	blue
	guut ^h aŋ	live
	t ^h at ^h i	fence
	hat ^h ai	teeth
Final position:	

(vi) / k^h /: The occurrence of this consonant phoneme is found only in initial and medial positions of word as found in the standard form of Bodo language. Example-

Initial position:	k ^h ɔga	mouth
	k ^h ɔr	head
	k ^h uma	ear
	k ^h aɔ	steal
Medial position:	mɔk ^h rui	curry

muuk ^h aŋ	face
nək ^h a	rain
nək ^h ap ^h ur	moon
bik ^h um	back

Final position:

(vii) / m /: Occurrence of this consonant phoneme is found in all the places i.e. initial, medial and final position in word. Example-

Initial position:	miya	yesterday
	maɔzi	cat
	man	respect
	mək ^h ra	monkey
	ma	what
	mai	paddy
Medial position:	t ^h emai	a kind of fishing object
	sabma	bad
	duima	river
	lama	way
	zamp ^h ui	canal
Final position:	gaŋgrim	earthquake
	bam	carry on
	t ^h am	guava
	k ^h lam	to make
	gussum	black
	lam	spread

(viii) / n /: Occurrence of this phoneme is also found in initial, medial and final position in word. Example-

Initial position:	na	fish
	nə	home
	nək ^h a	rain
	nasi	finger
	nək ^h ap ^h ur	moon
	nam	name
Medial position:	ak ^h undui	smoke
	mansi	man
	undu	sleep
	bana	flood
	simna	border
Final position:	gasin	all
	bən	firewood
	t ^h ək ^h ən	stick
	sigun	vulture
	iyun	future

(ix) / ŋ /: It cannot occur in initial position of word. Its occurrence is found only in medial and final position in word. Example-

Initial position:	
Medial position:	seŋgra	young boy
	seŋgri	young girl
	beŋga	deaf
	leŋgra	lame

Final position:	buŋ	speak
	suŋ	be short
	duŋ	be hot
	duduŋ	rope

(x) / s /: The occurrence of this phoneme is found in initial and medial position.

Example-

Initial position:	sa	to trap
	san	day
	san	to count
	sau	to burn
Medial position:	udsuŋ	backyard
	muusɔuk ^{hi}	cowdung
	gɔrsi	bean
	bisɔr	mustard
	dausa	chick
Final position:	-----	

(xi) / z /: Occurrence of this consonant phoneme is found in all the places in word.

Example-

Initial position:	zɔlaɔ	hero
	za	eat
	zuŋ	we
	zuu	be high
	zaɔ	dig
	zerba	chest
Medial position:	guzam	old

bazlo	dance
bazui	elder brother's wife
banzud	chilli
gezer	interval

Final position: -----

(xii) / h /: The occurrence of this consonant is found in two places i.e. initial and medial.

Example-

Initial position:	hu	land
	haŋ	breath
	haŋgar	ash
	hasiŋ	alone
	hat ^h ai	market

Medial position:	dahai	later
	gahai	short
	baha	nest
	gaham	good
	mahai	where

Final position: -----

(xiii) / r /: It occurs in all the places of word i.e. initial, medial and final. Example-

Initial position:	rao	language
	roza	priest
	ra	to become mature
	randi	widow
	rozɔ	grow
	rezeŋ	light

Medial position:	lambera	tomato
	muusram	eye brow
	muuk ^h ɔi	curry
	ɔri	that side
Final position:	nagar	release
	nasigur	finger nail
	ɔar	wide
	sɔmp ^h uɔr	day after tomorrow
	nɔk ^h ɔr	family

(xiv) / l /: Occurrence of this consonant phoneme is found in initial, medial and final position in word. Example-

Initial position:	la	take
	laizam	letter
	laŋ	take away
	lam	to dry in the sun
	lanzai	tail
Medial position:	mala	when
	t ^h umul	papaya
	k ^h almasi	next year
	k ^h ak ^h lou	pumpkin
	k ^h aɔlai	cheek
Final position:	dak ^h al	before

(xv) / w /: This consonant phoneme can occur in all the position of word. Example-

Initial position:	wad	bite
	wa	bamboo

Medial position:	laot ^h ai	bottle gourd
	baɔnai	forgetting
Final position:	maɔ	do
	zaɔ	dig
	k ^h eɔ	open
	gaɔ	shoot

(xvi) / y /: The occurrence of this phoneme is found in the medial and final position of word. Example-

Initial position:	-----	
Medial position:	siya	tea
	miya	yesterday
Final position:	dai	offence
	mai	paddy
	bai	break
	bilai	leaf
	gai	to plant

2.1.2.4 Consonant Cluster

Consonant cluster is a combination of two or more consonants coming together in a single syllable. In this dialect, the occurrence of consonant cluster is only found in initial and medial position of word.

2.1.2.4.1 Two initial consonant cluster

Mech dialect has a number of two initial consonant clusters. Their manner of articulation is found in the form of stop + liquid, stop + trill and fricative + liquid. It is observable that maximum number of first member of consonant cluster is found stop and fricative. The second member of cluster is found frequently as liquid and trill. These

initial consonant clusters are followed by a vowel phoneme in a single syllable of word.

Example-

(a) Stop + Liquid:

/ b + l- /	bla	arrow
/ k ^h + l- /	k ^h lam	make

(b) Stop + Trill:

/ b + r- /	brui	four
/ p ^h + r- /	p ^h ran	to dry
/ g + r- /	gran	dry

(c) Fricative + Liquid:

/ s + l- /	slat ^h ai	thunder
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2.1.2.4.2 Two medial consonant clusters

A variety of two medial consonant clusters are also present in this dialect. The structure of medial consonant cluster is found in the form of stop + trill, stop + liquid, fricative + trill and fricative + liquid, which are positioned between the last vowel of first syllable and third vowel of second syllable of word. Example-

(a) Stop + Trill:

/-b + r-/	habru	clay
/-d + r-/	budru	drag
/-g + r-/	ɔgra	pigsty
	sagrema	firefly
/-k ^h + r-/	mɔk ^h rui	curry

(b) Stop + Liquid:

/- g + l-/	agla	past
/- p ^h + l-/	t ^h ɔp ^h la	beg

/- k ^h + l-/	k ^h ak ^h luru	pumpkin
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(c) Fricative + Trill:

/-s + r-/	hisri	torn cloth
	dansraj	a night with the moon light
/-z + r-/	gabzri	shout

(d) Fricative + Liquid:

/-s + l-/	boslai	move
/- z + l-/	bazlo	dance

2.1.2.5 Consonant sequences

Mech dialect has also an extensive variety of consonant sequences. A consonant sequence usually occurs in medial position of word. In Mech, maximum number of first member of consonant sequences found often as per manner of articulation are stop, nasal and trill where fricative, lateral and semi-vowels engage as second member. In this dialect, consonants are found in the form of two and three sequences.

2.1.2.5.1 Two consonant sequences

Maximum number of two consonant sequences is found in the structure of stop + fricative, stop + liquid, nasal + stop, nasal + fricative, trill + stop, trill + nasal, liquid + stop and liquid + nasal. These sequences can be positioned in the medial place between vowels in word. Example-

(a) Stop + Fricative:

/-ds-/	udsurj	backyard
/-gs- /	nagsi	left

(b) Stop + Liquid:

/-dl-/	bisadla	son
	bodlai	change

/-t^hl-/ sit^hla yard

(c) Nasal + Stop:

/-mb-/ lambera tomato

dumba maize

dambudi a kind of bean

/-mp^h-/ emp^hɔu larva

bimp^haŋ tree

t^hamp^hɔi mosquito

/-nd-/ bandari a person who serves betel
nuts or liquor at wedding

rɔnda widower

rɔndi widow

p^henda thigh

dandise just a moment

/-nk^h-/ dank^hɔmsi moonless night

/-nt^h-/ gunt^huŋ nose

ɔnt^hai stone

sint^ha worry

dint^hi to show

dint^hiya a kind of green vegetable

/-ŋd-/ rɔŋdwi rice water

/-ŋg-/ haŋgar ash

haduŋgura leader

/-ŋp^h-/ t^haŋp^hin go back

/-ŋk^h-/ t^haŋk^hu tobacco

(d) Nasal + Fricative:

/-ms-/	lumsaɔ	to overflow
/-ns-/	hisansali	a place of weaving
/-nz-/	k ^h anzɔŋ	comb
	sanza	east
	senza	jute sticks
	p ^h unzi	a heap of rice hay
/-nh-/	t ^h ɔnhɔd	to send
/-ŋs-/	baŋsin	more
	gaŋsɔ	grass
	sɔŋsar	the world
/-ŋz-/	banzud	chilli
/-ŋh-/	liŋhɔd	to call

(e) Trill + Stop:

/-rb-/	arbaɔ	again
	zerba	chest
/-rg-/	sɔrgɔ	heaven

(f) Trill + Nasal:

/-rm-/	bɔrma	goat
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(g) Trill + Fricative:

/-rs-/	dɔrsi	quiet / lonely
	gɔrsɔk ^h a	sparrow
/-rh-/	barhuk ^h a	storm

(h) Liquid + Stop:

/-lt ^h -/	bisalt ^h i	sisters' husband
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(i) Liquid + Nasal:

/-lm-/	k ^h almasi	next year
/-ln-/	zalna	window

Two types of consonant sequences are also obtainable in Mech viz- (i) Homorganic consonant sequences and (ii) Geminate consonant sequences.

2.1.2.5.1.1 Homorganic consonant sequences

Homorganic consonant sequences are the consonants that articulated by the speech organs in the similar place of articulation in the mouth cavity. In Mech dialect, a few examples of homorganic consonant sequences are available which the place of articulation is found stop. These types of consonant sequences can occur between the vowel phonemes of first and second syllable in word. Example-

(a) Stop + Stop:

/-bt ^h -/	nubt ^h i	site where one lives
/-gd-/	nagda	right hand
/-k ^h t ^h -/	ak ^h t ^h am	ring

2.1.2.5.1.2 Geminate consonant sequences

In Mech dialect, a few geminate or doubled consonant sounds are also obtained in the medial position of word. A number of geminate consonants are articulated in the same places of mouth cavity like bilabial and alveolar and the manner of articulation is found frequently as stop, liquid and fricative. Like homorganic consonant sequences, geminate consonants are also can occur between the vowel phonemes of the first and second syllable. Example-

(a) Stop + Stop:

/-bb-/	gɔbbab	salty
/-dd-/	dudda	bachelor

	duddi	spinster
	baddaɔ	to be surprised

(b) Liquid + Liquid:

/-ll-/	silla	hawk
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(b) Fricative+ Fricative:

/-ss-/	bəssər	year
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2.1.2.4.5.2 Three consonant sequences

There are also a few consonant sequences obtained in Mech dialect which the last member of first syllable is seen uncluster and first and second member of second syllable is found cluster. In this study, such kind of arrangement of consonant is considered as three consonant sequences. Normally, this types of consonant sequences to be found in the medial position between the vowel phonemes of word. Example-

(a) Nasal + Stop + Trill:

/-mbr-/	dumbru	slightly hot
/-ŋdr-/	baŋdrai	much more
/-ŋgr-/	gaŋgrim	earthquake
	seŋgra	young boy
	seŋgri	young girl
/-ŋk ^h r-/	saŋk ^h ra	male dog
	saŋk ^h ri	female dog

(c) Nasal + Stop + Liquid:

/-mp ^h l-/	səmp ^h lɔ	lungs
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(d) Stop + Fricative + Trill:

/-bʒr-/	gabzri	to call
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2.2 Tone

Tone refers to the distinctive pitch level of a syllable. (Rajimwale, 2006:228).

Tone is an important trait of Tibeto-Burman languages. Bodo language is maintaining tonal characteristics from the remote past. However, in Mech dialect, one of the variations of Bodo language spoken in North Bengal, it is gradually diminishing due to the influence of neighbouring Bengali language. At present, their tonal distinction is not so evidently recognized by the speakers as found in other Bodo dialects spoken in Assam. Despite that it is assumed that they have two kind of tone system. These are high [/] and low [\]. Following are a few examples of tone with their occurrence.

Initial position:	ai	mother
	ai	income
Medial position:	hat ^h a'i	market
	hat ^h a`i	teeth
	wa ^d	bite
	wa`d	fire
	baí	to buy
	ba`i	to break
Final position:	za'	to eat
	za`	to be
	k ^h á	to pluck
	k ^h a`	to bind

2.3 Syllable

Syllable is a unit of pronunciation typically larger than a single sound and smaller than a word (Crystal, 1978-342). Mono-syllabic structure is a special character of this dialect. Even a single vowel can constitute a syllable. This is one of the

mentionable features found in this dialect. Apart from monosyllabic feature, a few disyllabic, trisyllabic, tetra syllabic and penta syllabic structure is also available in this dialect. Comparatively, these traits are less than monosyllabic words.

2.3.1 Mono syllabic structure

VC	aŋ	I
	ɔn	to love
	ar	again
CV	be	this
	ba	carry on back
	hu	land
	nɔ	home
	la	take
	za	eat
CVV	p ^h ɔi	come
CVC	zuŋ	we
	t ^h aŋ	go
	bar	jump
	bɔn	firewood
	k ^h ɔr	head
	bad	cross
	san	think
	gab	cry
	wad	bite

2.3.2 Di-syllabic structure

V-CV	ɔ-ma	pig
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	ɔ-sa	piglet
CV-CV	du-du	milk
	na-si	finger
	nɔ-k ^h a	rain
	bi-sa	child
	si-sa	puppy
	si-ma	dog
	gu-mu	yellow
	mi-ya	yesterday
CV-CVV	bi-lai	leaf
CV-CVC	du-duŋ	rope
	bi-bar	flower
	bi-dɔd	meat
	bi-gɔd	grain
	mɔ-t ^h aŋ	green
CVV-CV	dau-k ^h a	crow
CVC-CV	dum-ba	corn
	sab-ma	bad
CVC-CVC	ban-zud	chilli
	nai-gar	see and go

2.3.3 Tri-syllabic structure

CV-CV-CV	bi-si-gi	best friend
	gu-su-t ^h i	lips
CV-CV-CVC	na-si-gur	finger nail
	nɔ-k ^h a-p ^h ɔr	moon

	bi-na-nao	younger sister
CV-CV-CCV	bi-sa-dla	son
	ha-t ^h o-pla	ash
CV-CVV-CV	so-mai-na	beautiful
CV-CVC-CV	bi-k ^h un-zo	mother-in-law
CVC-CV-CV	gan-do-la	butterfly
	lam-be-ra	tomato
	k ^h al-ma-si	next year
CVC-CVC-CV	dan-k ^h om-si	moonless night
CVC-CV-CVC	zed-se-baŋ	much more
CVC-CCVC-CV	san-pram-bo	always

2.3.4 Tetra syllabic structure:

V-CV-CV-CV	o-ma-du-ri	mother pig
	o-ri-p ^h a-ri	surrounding
V-CVC-CV-CV	a-bad-t ^h i-li	crop field
CV-CV-CV-CV	du-k ^h u-t ^h i-a	grief
	la-zi-gu-su	shy
V-CV-CVV-CVV	a-p ^h a-dau-doi	heel
V-CVC-CVC-CV	o-boŋ-laɔ-ri	God
CV-CVV-CV-CV	so-bai-bi-ma	black pea
CVV-CV-CVC-V	gai-za-roŋ-i	poor person
CV-CVV-CV-CVC	go-dau-so-rao	helpless

2.3.5 Penta-syllabic structure

V-CVC-CVC-CV-CV	o-roŋ-dan-dal-i	dense forest
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2.3.6 Types of syllable

Like other languages, in Mech dialect syllable is found in two types.

- i. Open syllable
- ii. Closed syllable.

2.3.6.1 Open syllable

A syllable ending with a vowel is called open syllable. Following are a few examples of open syllable. Example-

VV	ai	mother
CV	na	fish
	za	eat
	nɔ	home
	ma	what
	zɔ	sit

2.3.6.2 Closed syllable

A syllable ending with a consonant is called closed syllable. A few examples are given below. Example-

VC	ɔn	to love
	aŋ	I
CVC	bɔn	firewood
	k ^h ɔn	pick up
	bar	wind
	k ^h ad	run
	lid	write
	t ^h aŋ	go

2.4 Morphophonemics

Morphophonemics also known as morphophonology-“*is the branch of linguistics that studies the interaction between morphological and phonological or*

phonetic processes. Its chief focus is the sound changes that take place in morphemes (minimal meaningful units) when they combine to form words.” (en.m.wikipedia.org)

2.4.1 Epenthesis

The word epenthesis comes from ‘epi’ (in addition to), ‘en’ (in) and ‘thesis’ (putting). That means epenthesis is addition of one or more sounds within a word. According to Yule, epenthesis *“is a sound change involving the addition of a sound to a word.” (Yule, 2009:241)*. Epenthesis is found in two types-

- (i) Excrescence or Vyanjanabhakti and
- (ii) Anaptyxis or Svarabhakti.

2.4.1.1 Excrescence

The addition of a consonant phoneme within a word is known as excrescence. Some examples of excrescence are available in Mech dialect, where voiced alveolar / d / is found inserted in the medial position of a word. In this dialect, the insertion of alveolar / d / is in between a vowel and an alveolar voiceless or voiced / s / and / l / respectively, forming the beginning of second syllable of disyllabic or trisyllabic word. In this insertion, / d / becomes a part of the first syllable and makes the articulation easier. Examples-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
usuŋ	udsuŋ	courtyard
belao	bedlao	leech
muzlai	mudzlai	a kind of insect
zesenuu	zedsen	more
p ^h isala	bisadla	son
gusuŋ	gudsuŋ	short

The bilabial voiced nasal / m / is also found inserted in the medial position within the word. Its occurrence is very rare and when inserted it becomes a part of the first syllable of the word, making beginning and ending of both syllables bilabial.

Examples-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
bip ^h aŋ	bimp ^h aŋ	tree

2.4.1.2 Anaptysis

The addition of a vowel phoneme within a word is known as anaptysis. In Mech, vowel phoneme / ɔ / is also found inserted in the medial position of word where a syllable is ending with a vowel and the other beginning with a consonant. Likewise, a vowel may be inserted between two consonant clusters in the language to make articulation easier. Both have also very rare occurrence.

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
biguma	bɔiguma	owner
gust ^h i	gusut ^h i	lip

Vowel phoneme / u / is also rarely found inserted in the medial position of Mech. Example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
mansi	mansui	person

2.4.2 Prothesis

According to '*A first Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*' of David Crystal, prothesis is "*a term used in phonetics and phonology to refer to a type of intrusion, where an extra sound has been inserted initially in a word.*" (Crystal, 1978:290) It is the addition of a sound or a syllable in the beginning of a word without changing its

structure or the meaning. A few examples of prothesis have been found in Mech dialect that can be displayed by comparing with standard form of Bodo language.

Words starting with / ɔ / in standard Bodo language starts with nasal consonant / n / in Mech. This prothesis occurs to make the articulation system easier. In the examples given below all words are beginning with / ɔ / and prothesis / n / is occurring before beginning of all the words.

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
ɔk ^h ap ^h ur	nɔk ^h ap ^h ɔr	moon
ɔ-k ^h a-nai-si	nɔ-k ^h a-nai-si	early morning
ɔk ^h a	nɔk ^h a	rain
ɔk ^h raŋ	nɔk ^h raŋ	sky

Words starting with / a / in standard form of Bodo language, starts with nasal consonant / n / in Mech dialect. These kinds of examples are only applicable in case of body parts related to the hand. For example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
asi	nasi	finger
ak ^h ai	nak ^h ai	hand
ak ^h ant ^h i	nak ^h ant ^h i	arm
agda	nagda	right hand
agsi	nagsi	left hand

Words starting with vowel / ɔ / in standard Bodo language sometimes starts with trill consonant phoneme / r / in Mech.

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
ɔza	rɔza	priest

2.4.3 Elision

Elision refers to the omission or drop of sounds or syllables in a word or the phrase. A few examples of elision are available in Mech vocabulary, where voiced alveolar trill / r / is found deleted from the medial position of word. In standard Bodo, this / r / is almost found before the voiceless / s /. Examples-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>gloss</i>
harsiŋ	hasiŋ	alone
barsin	basin	jump upon
barsum	basum	jump into the water
guurlui	gului	small
hat ^h ɔrk ^h i	hat ^h ɔk ^h i	star
derha	deha	win

Like deletion of medial consonant in the examples mentioned above sometimes the last vowel phoneme of a word is also found deleted and this phoneme is high back unrounded vowel phoneme / u /. It has very rare occurrence in the dialect. For example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>gloss</i>
aruu	ar	and
zesenuu	zedsen	more

Deletion of back mid rounded vowel / ɔ / of Mech dialect is rarely found deleted in standard form of Bodo language. Example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
k ^h ɔrɔ	k ^h ɔr	head

Deletion of a syllable in the final position of a word is also found rarely in Mech dialect where diphthong / uui / is found deleted keeping the same sense of meaning.

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>gloss</i>
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dak^halui dak^hal the day before yesterday

2.4.4 Sound shift

Sound shift is *a term used in historical linguistics to describe the changes in a language's sound system over a period of time. (Crystal, 2008:442)*

2.4.4.1 Changing from aspirated to unaspirated (voiceless to voiced)

Bilabial voiceless aspirated stop / p^h / of Bodo standard changes to unaspirated voiced / b / in Mech dialect. It is notable that both are bilabial and are easily changeable.

Example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
p ^h isak ^h ɔ	bisak ^h ɔ	womb
p ^h it ^h ai	bit ^h ai	fruit
p ^h isa	bisa	child
p ^h isazla	bisadla	son
p ^h isazw	bisazɔ	daughter
p ^h ip ^h aŋ	bimp ^h aŋ	tree
p ^h isai	bisai	husband

2.4.4.2 Changing from alveolar trill to alveolar unaspirated (voiced to voiced)

Some examples are also available where alveolar voiced trill / r / of Bodo standard corresponds to alveolar voiced / d / in the medial and final position of word in Mech dialect. It is noteworthy that both the phonemes are alveolar and voiced and are easily replaceable to each other. Example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
k ^h ar	k ^h ad	run
bar	bad	jump
det ^h ar	det ^h ad	to kill by hitting

zir	zid	to peel
bedər	bidəd	meat
geder	geded	big
ər	wad	fire
der	ded	to become big
k ^h arsən	k ^h adsən	elope

2.4.4.3 Changing from velar nasal to bilabial nasal (voiced to voiceless)

Velar voiced nasal consonant phoneme / ŋ / of standard form of Bodo language corresponds to bilabial voiceless nasal phoneme / m / in Mech dialect. Both are also easily changeable as they are nasal and voiced. Example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
bik ^h uŋ	bik ^h um	back
baŋgrin	gaŋgrim	earthquake

2.4.4.4 Changing from mid front to high front vowel (unrounded to unrounded)

A few examples are also available where mid front unrounded vowel / e / of standard form of Bodo language corresponds to high front unrounded phoneme / i / in Mech dialect. Example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
bedər	bidəd	meat
begər	bigəd	grain
besər	bisər	mustard

2.4.4.5 Changing from high back to mid vowel (unrounded to rounded)

Many instances are available where high back unrounded vowel / u / of standard form of Bodo language corresponds to back mid rounded vowel / ɔ / phoneme in Mech dialect. For example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
muuk ^h ra	mɔk ^h ra	monkey
muider	mɔided	elephant
k ^h uma	k ^h ɔma	ear
gudan	gɔdan	new
muuk ^h aŋ	mɔk ^h aŋ	face
t ^h amp ^h ui	t ^h amp ^h ɔi	mosquito
burab	bɔrab	angry

2.4.4.6 Changing from high back to mid back vowel (rounded to rounded)

It is also seen that high back rounded vowel / u / of standard form of Bodo language corresponds to mid back rounded vowel / ɔ / in Mech dialect. But such kind of example is found rarely. For example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
k ^h uga	k ^h ɔga	mouth
gup ^h ur	gɔp ^h ɔd	white
rua	rɔa	axe
daut ^h u	daut ^h ɔ	dove

2.4.4.7 Changing from high back to high front vowel (unrounded to unrounded)

Sometimes high back unrounded vowel / u / of standard form of Bodo language corresponds to high front unrounded phoneme / i / in Mech. Example-

<i>Bodo</i>	<i>Mech</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
sunab	sinab	west
suima	sima	dog
zuila	zila	masculine
muiya	miya	yesterday