



VEDA'S

JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (JOELL)

*An International Peer Reviewed (Refereed) Journal*

Impact Factor (SJIF) 6.018

<http://www.joell.in>

Vol.12, No.2

(April-June)

2025

RESEARCH ARTICLE

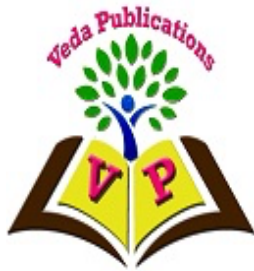


## KINSHIP TERMS OF THE BORO LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT



#### Article history:

Received on : 24-03-2025

Accepted on : 22-04-2025

Available online: 09-05-2025

The term Boro refers to the language and the people who speak it. They are one of North-East India's most important tribes. Boro people belong to the Mongoloid tribes, and their language is part of the Sino-Tibetan language family's Tibeto-Burman branch. They are mostly found in the five districts of Bodoland Territorial Region namely, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Odalguri and Tamulpur. Apart from these five districts, they are also found in the other districts of Assam such as Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Darrang, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong.

The terminology used in Boro kinship is quite structured and distinguishes between blood relatives and affinal (in-law) ties. This language has particular vocabulary to denote relationships based on age, gender, and generational hierarchy. The various titles for elder and younger siblings, paternal and maternal relatives, and marital partnerships emphasize the importance of certain social positions.

Furthermore, social values like reciprocity, respect, and accountability are frequently associated with Boro kinship terminology. A strong regard for elders and hierarchical systems within the family is demonstrated by the frequent use of honorifics and differentiated language depending on age and social standing. Additionally, these terminologies are essential to customs like collective decision-making, festivals, and marriage negotiations.

This study analyses the sociolinguistic and semantic aspects of Boro kinship words, illustrating how they reflect the social structure and worldview of the society. It is evident from the study of these phrases that language actively reflects and upholds the sociocultural norms and identity of the Boro people.

By exploring kinship terms, researchers can better understand how individuals perceive relationships and their roles within both traditional and modern societies.

**Keywords:** *Boro, kinship terms, relationships, societal norms, linguistics.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Boro language is part of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. The term Boro refers to both the language and the community that speaks it. It is one of the major plain tribes of Assam. It is majorly spoken in the five districts of Bodoland Territorial Region, namely, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, Odalguri and Tamulpur. Boro language is also the co-official language of Assam.

Apart from these districts, Boro people are majorly found in the districts of Assam such as Bongaigaon, Dhubri, Darrang, Sonitpur, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Karbi Anglong and Golaghat.

The terminology used in Boro kinship is quite organized and differentiates between blood relatives, affinal (in-law) ties, and fictive kinship. The language has specific terms to denote relationships based on age, gender, and generational hierarchy. The various titles for elder and younger siblings, paternal and maternal relatives, and marital partnerships demonstrate the importance of certain social positions.

Furthermore, Boro kinship language is often linked to societal principles like as accountability, respect, and reciprocity. The frequent use of honorifics and language that is differentiated based on age and social status demonstrates a deep respect for elders and hierarchical structures within the family. Furthermore, traditions like group decision-making, festivals, and marriage negotiations depend on these terms.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the study is to:

- Identify the kinship terms used in the Boro language.
- Study the kinship terms that are used for different kinds of relationships in Boro language

## 3. METHODOLOGY

For collecting data, both primary as well as secondary sources are being used. While collecting primary data, observation and interview are used for the purpose. In collecting secondary data, various books, newspapers, journals magazines are being used that are related to the topic.

## 4. KINSHIP TERMS OF BORO LANGUAGE

Kinship terms are the words where people of a particular society used it for the different purposes such as, for greetings and for the purpose of maintaining the relations among themselves. By using these kinship terms we can able to know the relationship between each and every member of our family or in our society.

Kinship terms differs from society to society. Depending upon the relations such as by birth, by marriage and by friendship, every linguistic society coins the different kinship terminologies.

Just like the other linguistic societies, the kinship terms of Boro language are also classified according to three categories. They are- by birth, by marriage and by friendship which are discussed below:

**4.1. BY BIRTH**

<b><u>Boro</u></b>	<b><u>Gloss</u></b>
/ai/	'mother'
/ap <sup>h</sup> a/	'father'
/ada/	'elder brother'
/abo/	'elder sister'
/p <sup>h</sup> onbai/	'younger brother'
/binanaw/	'younger sister'
/adui/	'uncle'
/abui/	'grandmother'
/abou/	'grandfather'
/amai/	'husband of father's elder/ younger sister or mother's elder/ younger brother.'
/anwi/	'father's elder/ younger sister or wife of mother's elder/ younger brother.'
/p <sup>h</sup> isazla/	'son'
/p <sup>h</sup> isazw/	'daughter'

**4.2. BY MARRIAGE**

<b><u>Boro</u></b>	<b><u>Gloss</u></b>
/p <sup>h</sup> isai/	'husband'
/bisi/	'wife'
/bazwi/	'sister in law'
/gumwi/	'brother in law'
/bihao/	'father in law'
/bik <sup>h</sup> unzw/	'mother in law'
/bihamzw/	'daughter in law'



/bizamdui/	'son in law'
/bizaozali/	'wife of husband's elder or younger brother'
/bibuwan/	'husband's younger brother or sister'
/bewai/	'husband's elder brother or younger brother's wife'
/salt <sup>he</sup> /	'husband of wife's elder or younger sister'

#### 4.3. BY FRIENDSHIP

<u>Boro</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
/lugu/	'friend'
/bisigi/	'boy's socially recognised friend'
/bilugu/	'girl's socially recognised friend'

4.4. In the Boro language, there are kinship terms that represent many different relations, which are discussed below:

<u>Boro</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
/aiyo/	'mother's elder sister'
/aiyo/	'husband of mother elder sister'
/aiyo/	'father's elder sister'
/aiyo/	'wife of father's elder sister'
/aiyo/	'great-grandson or granddaughter'
/bewai/	'wife's elder sister'
/bewai/	'younger sister's husband'
/bewai/	'husband's elder brother'
/bewai/	'younger brother's wife'
/bibuwan/	'wife's younger sister'
/bibuwan/	'husband's younger sister'
/bibuwan/	'husband's younger brother'



/amai/	'mother's younger or elder brother'
/amai/	'husband of father's younger or elder sister'
/anwi/	'wife of mother's younger or elder brother'
/anwi/	'father's younger or elder sister'
/adwi/	'husband of mother's younger brother'
/adwi/	'father's younger brother'
/madwi/	'wife of father's younger brother'
/madwi/	'mother's younger sister'

**4.5.** Boro language kinship terms are also seen to be used in two different ways by the Boro language speakers. Some Boro kinship terms are used as the terms of reference, and some kinship terms are used as the terms of address. These kinship terms are discussed below:

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE

<u>Boro</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
/bip <sup>h</sup> a/	'his or her father'
/bida/	'his or her brother'
/bima/	'his or her mother'

#### TERMS OF ADDRESS:

/ada/	'brother'
/abo/	'elder sister'
/ap <sup>h</sup> a/	'father'

**4.6.** A kinship word in Boro can have three distinct forms depending on the person. They are:

#### Ist Person

<u>Boro</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
/aŋni ada/	'elder brother'
/aŋni ap <sup>h</sup> a/	'my father'

**2<sup>nd</sup> Person****Boro****Gloss**

/nuŋni nuŋda/

'your elder brother'

/nuŋni nump<sup>h</sup>a/

'your father'

**3<sup>rd</sup> Person****Boro****Gloss**

/bini bida/

'his or her elder brother'

/bini bip<sup>h</sup>a/

'his or her father'

**4.7.** Kinship terms are also formed by adding words such as 'zu' and 'zula' to represent the masculine gender and feminine gender in the Boro language.

/p<sup>h</sup>isa + zu/

=

/p<sup>h</sup>isazu/

'daughter'

/p<sup>h</sup>isa + zula/

=

/p<sup>h</sup>isazula/

'son'

/p<sup>h</sup>iswo + zu/

=

/p<sup>h</sup>iswozu/

'granddaughter'

/p<sup>h</sup>iswo + zula/

=

/p<sup>h</sup>iswozula/

'grandson'

**4.8.** To show respect to the elder ones or for addressing multiple individuals, Boro people use plural suffixes like 'mun'.

**Boro****Gloss**

/adamun/

'referring to multiple elder brothers'

/aduimun/

'referring to the father's multiple younger brothers'

/abomun/

'referring to multiple elder sisters'

/maduimun/

'referring to mother's multiple younger sisters'



## 5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the kinship words in the Boro language are the subject of discussion. The extensive cultural and social systems of this community are reflected in the Boro language's kinship words, which place a strong emphasis on respect for hierarchy and family ties. The Boro kinship terms frequently use honorifics and make a distinction between maternal and paternal family members. These kinship terms not only explain the biological relationships but also plays an important role in maintaining social harmony and traditional values among the Boro people.

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