

# A SOCIOLINGUITIC ANALYSIS ON INDO-ARYAN LOANWORDS

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**Abstract :** The terms ‘loanwords’ ‘borrowed words’ ‘borrowing’ or ‘lexical borrowing’ are the same and synonyms. Hock (1986) has mentioned that “the term, ‘borrowing’ refers to the adoption of individual words or even large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect (p 380)”. Rongmei has borrowed a large number of loanwords from Indo-Aryan languages predominantly from Hindi and Bengali to fulfill their communication gaps. It should be mentioned here that before adopting Hinduism Rongmei was almost a pure or unmixed language which utilized its native resource to coin new words for new ideas and objects. The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the existing Indo-Aryan loanwords in the Rongmei Naga tribe.

**Index Terms** - Rongmei, Loanwords, Indo-Aryan, Borrowing etc.

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

Loanwords or borrowed words include emulating both the meaning and form. Furthermore, languages can increase their lexical items using lexical-creation (word formation) methods such as affixation, compounding, blending, and derivation processes. Through borrowing such expansion of vocabulary process from other languages with which they are in contact, can also be achieved.

### 1.1. Sociolinguistic Profile of Rongmei

The Rongmeis are one of the linguistic groups of Naga tribes of North Eastern India, which constitute an important ethnic group in the region. Rongmei is the name of the people as well as the community that speaks the language. Ethnically, they are of mongoloid origin and probably migrated from the western part of Tibet to North Eastern India. At present, Rongmei is mainly concentrated in the three states of North Eastern India viz., Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland. Rongmei Naga is also known as Kabui in Manipur and Assam particularly in the Barak-Valley by the Manipuris. Rongmei Naga of Barak Valley can be categorized into two main groups based on their religious belief namely Christian and non-Christian.

### 1.2. Typological Features of Rongmei

Most of the syllables in Rongmei are monosyllabic in nature. The velar nasal /ŋ/ is very prominent in Rongmei, No consonant cluster is noticed. There is no grammatical gender in Rongmei, only natural gender. Rongmei numerals are of decimal type. The noun and verb form a separate word class. Rongmei is a verb final language.

### 1.3. Review of Literature

The literary review entails that there are many works on loanwords on individual languages and theoretical bases. Some of the notable works on loanwords are:

Haspelmath. (2009). has stated in his book that “A broadly comparative (and ideally world-wide) perspective is essential if we want to go beyond the descriptive goal of identifying particular loanwords and their histories, towards the goal of explaining (at least partially) why certain words but not other words have been borrowed from one language into another language.”

Comrie. (2000). In his paper had mentioned that “In clear cases of borrowing, the borrowed lexical items are often limited to particular semantic domains, while the rest of the vocabulary of the borrowing language shows no similarity to that of the donor.” He further stated that “To be sure, there are many simple cases of culturally motivated borrowing where a cultural importation is accompanied by a lexical importation in a straightforward manner.” It is true that there are plenty of research works on loanwords and borrowing but none of them have work on present topic. Hence the study is proposed to work on the Indo-Aryan loanwords in Rongmei

## 2.0. Loanwords in Rongmei Naga

Rongmei has incorporated a number of Indo-Aryan loan words particularly from Sylheti Bengali and Hindi after migrating from Manipur to the plain of Barak Valley, Assam in the last part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since then the contemporary Rongmei has been continuing to incorporate Indo-Aryan loan words in different semantic domains such as words relating to name of animals, name of vegetables, food items, household objects, socio-political terms, trade and commerce etc. The present paper attempts to describe the common Indo-Aryan loanwords particularly from Sylheti Bengali and Hindi and their phonetic changes in Rongmei Naga spoken in Barak Valley of South Assam. It is to be noted here that all the following phonetic changes into recipient language are due to contact situation with the donor languages.

### 2.1. Vowel Shifting:

The long high front unrounded vowel /i:/ becomes short high front unrounded vowel

i: > i

*g<sup>h</sup>i:* > *g<sup>h</sup>i* 'clarified butter'

*gari:* > *gari* 'vehicle'

The long low central unrounded vowel /a:/ becomes the short low central unrounded vowel /a/

a: > a

*a:ta* > *ata* 'flour'

*ca:ka* > *caka* 'wheel'

The mid back rounded vowel /o/ becomes the high back rounded vowel /u/

o > u

*rosogula* > *rosugula* 'a kind of sweet'

The short low central unrounded vowel /a/ becomes the mid back rounded vowel /o/

a > o

*saban* > *sabon* 'soap'

The long high back rounded vowel /u:/ becomes the short high back rounded vowel /u/

u: > u

*mu:la* > *mula* 'radish'

*du:kan* > *dukan* 'shop'

### 2.2. Consonant Shifting

The voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ becomes the voiceless glottal fricative /h/

s > h

*sapta* > *hapta* 'week'

The alveolar nasal /n/ becomes the alveolar lateral /l/

n > l

*nila:m* > *lilam* 'auction'

The alveolar lateral /l/ becomes the alveolar nasal /n/

l > n

*kakrul* > *kakron* ‘cucurbitaceous’

### 2. 3. Consonant Addition

The alveolar nasal /n/ is added

0 (zero) > n,

*balti* > *baltin* ‘bucket’

### 2.4. Devoicing

The voiced bilabial stop /b/ becomes the voiceless bilabial stop /p/

b > p

*tolob* > *tolop* ‘wages’

*hisab* > *hisap* ‘calculation’

### 2. 5. Voicing

The voiceless bilabial stop /p/ becomes the voiced bilabial stop /b/

P > b

*zelapi* > *zelabi* ‘a kind of sweet’

### 2. 6. Deaspiration

The voiceless aspirated bilabial stop /p<sup>h</sup>/ becomes the voiceless unaspirated bilabial stop /p/

*borop<sup>h</sup>* > *borop* ‘ice’

The voiceless aspirated bilabial stop /k<sup>h</sup>/ becomes the voiceless unaspirated velar stop /k/

*tarik<sup>h</sup>* > *tarik* ‘date’

The voiced aspirated alveolar stop /d<sup>h</sup>/ becomes the voiced unaspirated alveolar stop /d/

*d<sup>h</sup>ubi* > *dubi* ‘washer man’

*gad<sup>h</sup>a* > *gadda* ‘ass’

### 2. 7. Aspiration

The voiceless unaspirated bilabial stop /p/ becomes the voiceless aspirated bilabial stop /p<sup>h</sup>/

p > p<sup>h</sup>

*napit* > *nap<sup>h</sup>it* ‘barber’

### 2.8. Loan Compounding

In the loan compounds, there is a combination of loan word (LW) and native ones in which the loan elements always precede the native elements

LW	NW	Gloss
<i>gamlā</i>	<i>k<sup>h</sup>uak</i>	‘tub’

*citol**k<sup>h</sup>a*

‘flat fish’

In addition to the above, Rongmei people of Barak Valley use some of the indigenous lexical items side by side with loan words are as follows:

NW	LW	
<i>kaniṅhaimai</i>	<i>calak</i>	‘cleaver’
<i>maruai</i>	<i>mosala</i>	‘spices’
<i>niṅṅai</i>	<i>p<sup>h</sup>irai</i>	‘unwilling to compromise’
<i>karummakmai</i>	<i>p<sup>h</sup>altu</i>	‘bogus’
<i>əzau</i>	<i>agarbati</i>	‘incense stick’
<i>rāca</i>	<i>prosad</i>	‘food items which is eaten after offering to God’
<i>buṅdai</i>	<i>petla</i>	‘fat man’
<i>zupinəbeṅ</i>	<i>narikol</i>	‘coconut’

### 3.0. Conclusion

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that when a minority language comes in contact with the majority language/ languages, borrowing takes place gradually and it can be seen in the case of the Rongmei Naga tribe of Assam. Rongmei has borrowed a good number of loanwords from dominant Bengali and Hindi languages due to long period of language contact between these linguistic communities. It has been observed that most of the loanwords in Rongmei are nouns rather than adjectives, verbs and adverbs. It is also to be noted here that loanwords borrowed from the donor language has to undergo some phonetic changes i.e. phonological structures are verified based on the phonological rules of the recipient language as it is seen in the above examples.

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