



TAI PHAKE AN ENDANGERED LANGUAGE AN ANALYTICAL STUDY WITH ASPECT OF SOCIAL CONDITION IN ASSAM

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Abstract: Tai Phake people entered Assam in the later era of the 18th century. For multitude of years, they lived in the vicinity of the people of Assam. The Assamese language had great influence in their language. The old history is its magnificent example. At present times, the number of people speaking Tai Phakelanguage is very limited. Hence, it is in the phase of extinction i.e. its existence is endangered.

Keywords: Tai Phake, Language, Assam, endangered, community

I. INTRODUCTION:

Assam located in the north -eastern part of India, is multi-lingual and diversified state from pre-historical period. As every community of Assam has unique language and culture. The Tai Phake entered Assam in the latter half of the 18th century and started to live in the vicinity of Assamese people. As a minority tribe community in Assam their culture has been very much influenced by the Assamese language, the root of the aryan linguistic family. Tai Phake come from Chinese community of the Tibeto-Chinese family. To learn about how the Tai Phake entered Assam, we must read their traditional book named 'LIK MU MOU' and many other books. The Tai Phake people started to migrate into Assam during the reign of Ahom king Gaurinath Singha. In 1795 A.D. during the reign of Ahom King 'Gaurinath Singha' the Tai Phakes entered Assam, first they started to settle in different parts of Assam. Then gradually established their own village. But as they have been living in the vicinity of Assamese people from the first place, gradually their traditional Tai Phake language is going to be endangered because of Assamese or other language affect. This research paper focus about an analytical study to explore the reason of the Tai Phake as an endangered language. This paper also discusses our obligation to words resolving the problems of the Tai Phake language of Assam.

1. Geographical Background:

The Tai Phakes used to live in the district of upper Assam namely Tinsukia and Dibrugarh. Total nine villages are covered by Tai Phakes.

Dibrugarh District:	1. NamPhake
	2. Tipan Phake
Tinsukia District	1. BarPhake
	2. Man Mau
	3. Nanglai
	4. LangPhake
	5. Sunglang
	6. Ninggam
	7. Phaneng

3. Method:

The methodology followed in this study is analytical and descriptive. The necessary materials are collected from the field study, library, experimental archives, and internet.

4. Purpose:

- I. To discuss the principle problems of the Tai Phake as an endangered language of Assam
- II. To highlight the current as well future linguistic situation of the Tai-Phakelanguage.
- III. To discuss our obligation towards resolving the problems of the Tai-Phake language of Assam.

5. Limitation of Study:

Instead of discussing district the problems of individual Tai Phake language of Assam. A general discussion of problems all the Tai Phake language of Assam has been discussed in this study.

6. Endangered Language Situation in Assam:

North east is one of the most linguistically diverse regions in the world. It is known as heaven in earth of languages but at present time many of it is at the point of diminish. According to our North Eastern education system, students must receive their formal education in Assamese, Hindi, and English language. But most of the tribal language have unwritten literature, they used other language as a medium of instruction in education. Globalization, urbanization, and linguistic minority are the root cause of endangerment of tribal languages.

Among the tribal language 'Tai Ahom' language was not used as communication in the Ahom dynasty as Ahom's wanted to convert themselves as an Assamese community and that is why they left their 'Tai' language. They used Assamese language as their way of communication as they wished to established unity among the people of Assam. Assamese is an official language of Assam. They used Assamese language as a state language, and it is also used as the main medium of communication. Ahom's wrote their history and other literary works in Assamese language. That is why their own Tai language entirely lost their tonal system even though Tai language did not exist is spoken form. Bodo is a Sino-Tibetan language. It has been written using Devanagiri script, Bodo language has not any traditional script but with the help of Devanagiri language they used to their literary works and receive their education.

Rabha is also a Sino-Tibetan language of India's Rangdani, Maite and Koch people. They have not any script or written tradition.

Missing tribe is an important community of Assam. This tribe mostly used Assamese language to communicate. They do not have any kind of written script. Traditionally only a limited number of people speak missing language hence it almost lost the tonal system.

Language is the most precious element in human life. Before 8000BC there were 20,000 different languages in the world but according to language survey done by UNESCO in 2009, only 6909 language are left. Among them thousands of languages are now recognized as endangered language since in very few speech communities, they speak their own mother tongue. Mostly they use it in their private communication. By this way, most of the communities lost their mother tongue. To prevent language from becoming extinct UNRSCO, a branch of United Nations became aware and was functioning in the first place. In general language holds one's mother tongue or one's first or second language, as language is a best way of human interaction. In the situation of a mother tongue language preservation is most important thing. Using mother tongue helps to develop a child's personality, social and cultural identity. Even using mother tongue makes it easier and helpful for children to develop their critical thinking and own literary skills. That is why to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity UNESO first announced 21st February as International Mother Language Day on 17 November, 1999. Mother language day primarily helps to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world.

Endangered Languages of Assam as per Degrees of Endangerments (UNESCO, 2011)

Name of the Languages	No. of Speakers	Degree of Endangerment
Bodo	900000	Vulnerable
Mising	550000	Definitely endangered
Karbi	420000	Vulnerable
Rabha	150000	Vulnerable
Dimasa	112000	Vulnerable
Bishnupuria Manipuri (Creole)	72899	Vulnerable
Kachari	59000	Definitely endangered
Deori	28000	Definitely endangered
Tiwa	28000	Definitely endangered
Tai-Khampti	13000	Vulnerable
Bagani	12000	Critically endangered

Singpho	5000	Definitely endangered
Tai-Aiton	2000	Severely endangered
Tai-Phake	2000	Severely endangered

Degree of Endangerment of Language (UNESCO, 2011)

Sl. No.	Degree of Endangerment	Characteristics
1	Safe	The languages, which is used by all ages, from children to old.
2.	Vulnerable	Maximum number of children speak their language, but in the specific domain (e.g. home) it may be restricted.
3	Definitely endangered	Children may not be using their language in the home as 'mother tongue' in near future.
4	Severely endangered	Language is used by the older generations like grandparents; but the next generation e.g. mother, father generation may understand it only and they don't speak or use the language to their children or among themselves.
5	Critically	Only the grandparent and older generation can speak the language to a limited extent or occasionally.
6	Extinct	Nobody can speak nor understand the language. That means every speaker have passed away.

7. To analysis Tai-Phake as an Endangered Languages

According to UNESCO, more than 50% languages are endangered, Hence Tai Phake language is going to secure a position in the same.

In 1990, 5000 peoples belong to Tai community. But present time only 2000 Tai's left. Total number of Tai family is 216. The Tai Phakes lived in the vicinity of Assamese people that is why their languages was influenced by Assamese people. Moreover, they mostly use Assamese language, fourth-language policy. Language uses always comes to need. In tri-language situation tribe is inconvenience for medium of education. So, when it comes to unused it is natural for a language becomes endangered. Tai-Phake is in same situation.

On the other hand, influence of western culture or globalization eagerness for own traditional language of younger generation decreasing day by day. After all, for inferiority complex mentality of younger generation is one of the most important reasons for neglecting the language and become endangered. In education system tri-language policy of Assam got is one of the great pathetic reason of the language Tai-Phake is going to be endangered. There is given importance primarily to the state language Assamese, Bodo and for Barak Valley Bangla, national language Hindi and International English in the tri-language Assam got policy. In this situation there is no advantage of developing other tribe language, as all ethnic like Tai-Fake of Brahmaputra Valley has their own language. There will be a chance to developing Ta-Phake tribes mother tongue when it comes to as a medium of instruction in education. Many of Tai's married Assamese girl. The Tai didn't settle permanently they are changing their habitation in search of livelihood therefore Tai language gradually lost its identity.

Language preserve a culture also language resents the cultural identity of an individual community. Therefore, we should take some necessary steps to develop our language.

8. Endangered Tai-Phake language preservation:

The existence of a community depends on their language uses. Without a language the knowledge of the culture or customs, who hold it is going to be threatened. So, language preservation is the effort to protect one's cultural or community existence. In the Brahmaputra valley one of most endangered languages of Assam there are different ideas about the best ways to preserve the Tai-Phake language.

One way of preserving or developing the Tai-Phake language is to create various aspect of literature and try to publish as a writtendocument through their own traditional Tai script.

To try to collect and edit various folk literature from Tai-Phake ethnic society.

To encourage younger generation to learn or speak the Tai-Phake language, so they will teach the language to next generation and make them interested to learn or speak as well.

The Tai-Phake those who left over need some awareness to preserve their language. Now a day internet can be used to translate, catalog, store and provide information access to the issues of language extinction. Technologies such as audio tape recordings, video recordings podcasts, can be used to preserve the spoken versions of Tai-Phake language.

Written documents such as book or manuscript can hold the original script. Senior people of Tai-Phake community can help to survey the old manuscript and propagate to the young generation.

Whatever the way of preserving the endangered Tai-Phake language atleast the most important thing is to lovable or sensible to their own language. Awareness and consciousness is mostly enough to prevent the language from becoming extinct.

II. CONCLUSION:

The principal problems which are affecting on the language lack of written literature use of second language as a medium of instruction in education, impact of globalization and urbanization linguistic minority.

These factors are responsible for making Tai Phakean endangered language. The Tai Phake language is facing arduous challenges in the path of development and can be observed that the language has not developed in proper way. The Tai Phake language has reached in dangerous situation and while the maintenance and development will have required in upcoming future. The new generation mostly respective own language speakers.

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