

Chapter-2

Review of Literature

The language of the Toto tribe is still in infant stage in terms of its available written literature. No scientific or systematic study has been done on Toto language by any linguist or scholar. It should be mentioned here that Bimalendu Mazumder (1991) *A Sociological Study of the Toto Folk tales* the work describes the society and folk lore perspectives of the same tribe. However, his work did not give a detailed study of the structure of the language in the systematic way. Bimalendu Mazumder (1991), in his book made an interesting account of the culture and custom of the Toto.

According to Bimalendu Mazumder (1991), the Toto tribe is one of the indigenous as well as least populous tribes of West Bengal. They are one of the 6th recognized schedule tribes in West Bengal.

He also described some of the cultural aspects of Toto that the Totos are patrilineal. The marriage is strictly exogamous and proposal for marriage comes from boy's side after the boy chooses his life partner. Marriage within the clan is not permitted. The Toto are a very industrious tribe. Toto women are experts in weaving. They have a great heritage of traditional skills in weaving. Toto women traditionally wear the dresses made by them.

The traditional religion of the Toto is polytheism, where they worship a supreme god called *Ispha*. It is the creator of the whole universe including the human race. Besides *Ispha*, there is a village deity called *Mahakali* who is a kind and benevolent deity. Now-a-days, some of the Toto people have converted into Christianity. However, a large section of Toto people still

follows the traditional religion. He further describes the elements of folk literature like songs, incantation and spells, folktales and trend of Toto folk language, and folk tales, myths, legends, fables etc of the Totos.

Amitabha Sarkar (1993) *Toto: Society and Change* describes the area and the people where he depicts the village Totopara is located in Madarihahat Police Station under Alipurduar sub-division of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. It lies within altitude 89° 20' and longitude lays 26° 50' . The village is situated at the foothills of the Himalayas towards south of the border between Bhutan and West Bengal. Since the village is very close to the Himalayas, they experience a humid and cold climate. They have their own dialect. According to Grierson and Hodgson their dialect is classified under Tibeto-Burman family of sub-Himalaya group. The language of the Toto is a non-pronominalized. Their language is also influenced by the neighboring Bengali Language. Due to contact with outside world (i.e., through communication, market, mass media) they can speak Nepali, Hindi and a little bit English in a broken form. The author further describes that the socio-cultural life is highly influenced by the Bengali life and culture. Infact, this Bengali highly influenced the Toto in adopting paddy cultivation. The Toto girls are now wearing dresses/ sarees in Bengali style. Many vocabularies of Bengali language have influenced into Toto dialect. He further mentioned that marriage take place after attainment of some specific age. The first and foremost criteria of a material alliance is clan exogamy, they are agriculturist and they are nature worshipper. Lastly he mentioned that the changed situation may be ascertained through diachronic approach, through textual data and genealogical information instead of synchronic approach because Totos are found only in one locale i.e., in Totopara. The clan segmented society-Toto, now-a-days is fast changing to cope with the modernization.

There is another edited book by Debabrata Chaki (2012) 'Duwarser Bone Badare' here four Toto authors have written on Toto language in Bengali. The first author Dhoniram Toto has described about the introduction of Toto people, the creation of human beings, beneath the earth, the story of dog and pig, the stories of wild hen, rabbit and tiger, on ghost, some poems name: (i) Eda (ii) Naoa (iii) Gigi and (iv) saiyongkung. The second author name Bhakta Toto, has written on Toto language and Toto's known and unknown history. The third author name Satyajit Toto has pointed out on folk lore about Toto people and some modern songs on Toto language. The last poet Lakhankanta Toto has described on different versions of Toto, and many songs related to Toto culture.

The linguistic work on Toto is limited to few sources: Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India Vol. III part I*, (1903). In the Linguistic Survey of India (LSI), Grierson offers a brief introduction of Toto people and a scanty grammatical sketch of Toto along with some text data. He pointed out that the tribe Toto lives in the Sub-Himalyas, in the Baxa subdivision of Jalpaiguri. They are considered to have migrated from Bhutan. They are a very wild tribe and no non-Toto knows their language. There is a said to be one Toto in existence who knows a little Bengali besides his own language. The materials forward for the purposes of this survey have been put together with his assistance. They comprise an incomplete list of standard words and phrases, a version of the parable of the Prodigal Son, to which are appeal some numerals and pronouns. The parable was not accompanied by an interlinear translation and being much abbreviated in difficult to interpret. He has added a tentative translation of most of it. He does not, however he feels certain that it is correct.

During the preliminary operation of this survey the number of speakers in Jalpaiguri was estimated at 200. The corresponding figures at the last census of 1901 were as follows-

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The materials available are far from being sufficient for giving even the most superficial sketch of Toto grammar. He must content himself to make some scattered remarks on such points as seem tolerably certain.

Nouns, Adjectives and Numerals- The genitive is formed by adding the suffix *k*; thus, *dodong-be-k* of a man. The *ng* preceding the *b* of this word is probably pronounced as an *m*, for we find *dumdum-bi*, man. The latter form shows that *o* and *u*, *e* and *i*, respectively, are interchangeable.

Adjectives can one of the suffixes *na* and *ma*; thus *eta-na*, good; *chisai-ma*, younger; *disui-ma* elder. Other certain instances do not occur.

The numerals are most closely correspond to those in use of Lhoke. Higher numbers are, however, counted in twenties; thus, *nga kai*; five scores, hundred; *ni-kwai-ta se*, two-scores-ten, fifty.

Pronouns- The following forms of the personal pronouns occur in the specimens:

<i>ku-te</i> , I.	<i>naga</i> thou	<i>dea, ko</i> he
<i>ka-tek, na-tak, nat-ko</i> , my	<i>natak, ne-tak, i</i> , thy.	<i>dea</i> , his
<i>kai-piu</i> , me.	<i>modang</i> , you	<i>dea ha-ji nina</i> they.
<i>deninimi, denimam, na-te</i> , we	<i>modang-bi-ko, mo-be</i> your	
<i>nat-ko, kungu</i> , our		
<i>nimusa</i> , us.		

Interrogative pronouns are *ha*, who? *ha-rang-ga*, why?

Verbs- the base *ni* is used to form a verb substantive; thus, *dodang-be-k chai ni-sa ni-na*, man-of sons two-persons were, a man had two sons.

The present tense can be formed by adding the suffix *ro*; thus, *iung-ro*, thou livest.

Several suffixes are used to form a past tense. The base alone apparently occurs in *iii*, he run. A suffix *pur* is added in *hay-pur*, he went. The suffix *ro* is used in *chase-ro* he lived. It is perhaps connected with *lo* in *luang-lo*, he wasted. A suffix *cha* seems to occur in *pu-chha*, said; *pi-chha*, gave. A more common suffix is *na*; thus, *ting-na*, he saw; *pui-na*, he said; *iya-pu-na*, they made marry.

The suffix *mia* seems to occur in forms such as *pi-mia*, gave; *ho-mia*, he went etc.

The suffix *pur* is also used to form a future; thus, *lo-pur*, I will arise; *ha-pur*, I will go. At the end of the original manuscript of the Parable he finds the forms *ha-pura*, I shall go; *cha-pura*, I shall eat; *ambalilo*, I shall look.

The forms *cha-na*, let us eat; *iya-na* let us make marry, are futures or imperatives.

A verbal noun is formed by adding the suffix *e*; thus, *ku-e*, in order to tend; *pu-e*, to say.

A conjunctive participle is formed by adding *pu-na*; thus, *lui-pu-na*, having wasted; *hui-pu-na*, having gone; *cha-pu-na*, having eaten.

Lastly he mentioned that the negative particle is a prefixed *ma*; thus, *ma-ha-ro*, I will not go. *ma-cha-ro*, I will not eat; *ma-pu-e*, not to say; *ma-jang*, I am not.

Sudhirkumar Bishnu (2012) has written a grammar book in Toto entitled *A Descriptive Study of Toto Language* which is a brief description of Toto language with a little emphasis on its phonology, morphology and syntax. The grammar consists of introduction, phonology, morphology, syntax and basic vocabularies. He explained in the introduction about the land and ethnic identity, the village, marriage, religious life, scope of the book etc. In phonology he explained the vowel and consonant phonemes of Toto. He also discussed about the morphological construction like nouns, pronouns, gender, number, cases, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc. in syntax, he discussed types of sentence of Toto. But his work lacks the proper linguistic descriptions of Toto language. None of the above mentioned works make any attempt to study the descriptive analysis of Toto systematically. Hence, the proposed study attempts to describe the grammatical structure of Toto language spoken in Totopara of Alipurduwar district of West Bengal which includes phonological analysis, grammatical categories, grammatical functions, morphological processes, phrase structures, sentences structure and constituent order.