

Moon Dot: The Supra segmental phoneme of the Assamese Language.

Pankajyoti Borah

Research Scholar, Assamese Department Dibrugarh University.

ABSTRACT: Moon dot has special characteristics in Assamese language. It is important to use the moon dot in words, as it is a special phoneme. It must be used in a proper way if it will not be used correctly it will change the meaning of words and also the language will lost its characteristics. The moon dot symbol in Assamese language is '◌̣'. This symbol is used to express the nasalization.

KEY WORDS: Moon dot, Segmental, Supra segmental, nasalization, language.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Linguistics is the systematic study of language. It deals with the sounds or phones which are produced by human vocal organs. And it studies about the internal structure of words, which are created by the combination of sounds. The study of linguistics can be divided into various types: Phonetics, morphology, syntax and semantics.

Phonetics is the main branch of linguistics. It studies about the sounds, phoneme quality and auditory quality of sounds; it gives descriptions about the organs of speech, types of sounds, nasalization, shortening and lengthening of sounds and tells more about other phonetic elements. Phonetics can be classified into three kinds on the basis of – Production, Transmission and Reception. These three kinds are as follows:

1. Articulatory phonetics
2. Auditory phonetics
3. Acoustic phonetics.

The phonemes that are pronounced in languages are two types: Supra segmental and Segmental phoneme. The segmental phoneme can be segmented or fragmented accordingly into smaller parts. On the contrary the supra segmental phoneme can't be segmented into smaller parts. As for example: The Assamese word 'ল'ৰা' 'lara' (boy) can be segmented into different parts- ল+অ'+ৰ+আ (l+ α + r + a). And the word 'খাওঁ' 'khao~' (eat) it can't be segmented into smaller parts. So we call the Chandra Vindu or moon dot (◌̣) as Supra segmental phoneme. Stress, Tone, Nasalization, Syllable- these can't be segmented so these elements are called supra segmental phoneme.

The moon dot (◌̣) plays a vital role in various aspects. So, in this prospect the above topic has been chosen for study.

II. OBJECTIVES:

- To discuss the uses of moon dot.
- To discuss the importance of moon dot in Assamese language.
- Moon dot has special characteristics in Assamese language. It is important to use the moon dot in words, as it is a special phoneme, if we don't use it in proper manner it will change the meaning of a word. In this paper the characteristics of moon dot will be enlightened.

III. METHODOLOGY:

In this paper descriptive and analytical method has been adopted for study. While discussing the uses of moon dot descriptive method is used.

Sphere of the study:

The area of the paper entitled **Moon Dot: The Supra segmental phoneme of the Assamese Language** is limited. Here only a brief description of moon dot and uses has been described.

1.0 Moon Dot: The Supra Segmental phoneme

The moon dot symbol in Assamese language is '◌̣'. Moon dot is a special phoneme. This symbol is used to express the nasalization. Nasal sounds are produced by escaping air through the nose during the production of the sound by the mouth. In this process of articulation the velum is in lowered position. Nasalization can change the pronunciation and meaning of a word. As for example: গাঁও 'ga~o' (village), গাওঁ 'gao~' (sing). Moon dot can never be used as single form. It is used with vowels like- ওঁঠ 'o~th' (lip), সঁচা 'xasa~' (truth), অঁকা 'aka~' (drawing). Moon dot is used with vowels, so it is called supra segmental phoneme. The vowel which is associated with the moon dot is nasalized and if the nasalized vowel is followed by consonants like- য় 'y', ব 'w', হ 'h', ব 'r', ল 'l' these phonemes are also nasalized. So, that we can say moon dot plays an important role. In Assamese language such nasalization is known as light nasalization. Example: In the word অঁহত 'a~hata' (a kind of tree) the nasalized vowel অঁ 'a~' is followed by the consonant 'h' so here the word is nasalized. The phoneme 'h' takes light nasalization. And the nasalized vowel which is associated with the moon dot is called heavy nasalization. Example: অঙ্কন > অঁকা 'angkan>a~ka' (drawing).

2.0 The Uses of Moon Dot: The moon dot (◌̣) is used as special phoneme. It is used with the initial or middle vowel of a syllable or a word. In other position its uses is limited. A little illustration can be discussed as follows. Here some words associated with moon dot can be discussed with phonetic analysis as follows –

অঁকা = অঁ+ক+আ (a~+k+a) (Drawing)

অঁহ = অঁ+হ (a~+h), (Fibre)

ঘিঁউ = ঘ+ইঁ+উ (gh+i~+u), (Butter)

হেঁচি = হ+এঁ+চ+ই (h+e~+s+i), (Press)

বেঁকা = ব+এঁ+ক+আ (b+e~+k+a), (Bend)

কঁইট = ক+আঁ+ই+ট (k+a~+i+t), (Thrown)

কুঁহি = ক+উঁ+হ+ই (k+u~+h+i), (Sprout)

গাঁও = গ+আঁ+ও (g+a~+o), (Village)

খাওঁ = খ+আ+ওঁ (kh+a+o~), (Eating)

গাওঁ = গ+আ+ওঁ (g+a+o~), (Singing)

Some important features in the uses of Moon dot (◌̣) in Assamese language are as follows:

- The moon dot is pronounced or attached with the vowel. So, the symbol of moon (◌̣) must be used with the vowel. Ex–

অঁকৰা 'a~kara' (foolish), উঁই 'u~i' (termites), বাঁহ 'ba~h' (Bamboo) etc.

- When a vowel is attached with a consonant in hidden form, the moon dot sign must be used above of the particular consonant. Ex– সঁচা 'xa~sa' (truth), কঁকাল 'ka~kal' (wrist), দঁতাল 'da~tal' (a tusker elephant) etc. Though in these words the moon dot (◌̣) sign seems to be used with the consonants but it is used with the vowels. By segmenting the above words into smaller phonetic unit, the hidden vowel will come out. Ex–

সঁচা = স+অঁ+চ+আ (x+a~+s+a)

কঁকাল = ক+অঁ+ক+আ+ল (k+a~+k+a+l)

দঁতাল = দ+অঁ+ত+আ+ল (d+a~+t+a+l) etc.

- The secondary form of আ 'a' is া used after consonants and the secondary form of ও 'o' is ো used both sides of the consonant. So, the moon dot must be used with the consonant. Likewise the moon dot does not used with the secondary form of ই 'i' - ি, উ 'u' - ু, এ 'e' - ে, ঊ 'u:' - ূ. So, the moon dot should be used above of the consonant. Example –

আ 'a' - া = গাঁজ 'ga~z' (Bamboo shoot)

ই 'i' - ি = ঘিঁ 'ghi~' (Butter)

উ 'u' - ু = কুঁৱা 'ku~wa', (Well)

এ 'e' - ে = খেঁকা 'khe~ka' (Phlegm) etc.

- In Assamese language the moon dot is always used with the plural suffix-hot. Ex-

ইহঁত 'iha~t' (You), তহঁত 'taha~t' (You) সিহঁত 'xiha~t' (They) (Pronoun)

লৰাহঁত 'laraha~t' (Boys), জীয়াৰীহঁত 'ziyareeha~t' (Girls) (Noun)

আহহঁত 'ah-ha~t' (Come), কৰহঁত 'kar-ha~t' (Do) (Verb)

- The moon dot is always used with the personal affix of first person in present and past tense. Ex-

খাওঁ 'khao~' (Eating) Present.

খালোঁ 'khalo~'(have eaten) Past, etc.

- Moon dot is always used with the present participle form- 'o~te'. ex-

কওঁতে 'kao~te' (was calling),

থওঁতে 'thao~te' (was keeping) Etc.

- If the moon dot will not use in a proper manner, it will change the meaning of a word. Such words like:

বাঁহ 'ba~h'(Bamboo)

বাহ 'bah'(Nest)

কাঁহ 'ka~h'(One kind of metal)

কাহ 'kah'(Cough)

ধোঁৱা 'dho~wa'(Smoke)

ধোৱা 'dhowa' (Wash) etc.

IV. CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion we came to know that the moon-dot (◌◌) has great importance in Assamese language. It must be used in a proper way if it will not be used correctly it will change the meaning of words and also the language will lost its characteristics. So, we must keep attention in the proper use of 'Moon Dot'(◌◌).

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