Linguistic Index of Bondo Acculturation:
A Case of Symbolic Violence

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1. Introduction

Fascination with the study of circumstances and times when two cultures come in contact and their reaction to that contact is well pronounced in Anthropology (Herskovits, 1937). Culture contact can lead to three outcomes: colonization, cultural entanglement and symmetrical exchange (Cusick, 1998). In all these forms of contact, language of the ethnic minority groups/immigrants stands as a reliable indicator of change not just at the micro-level but also at the macro-structural strata of the minority group as well.

The present study utilizes the conceptual tool of acculturation to study the contact phenomena related to the protected tribe of the Bondo Highlanders in Odisha with the locus of investigation being their spoken language, 'Remo.' The first section of the paper situates the study in the context of assessing acculturation and the utility of language as a very useful tool for studying the same. The following section is a stanchion to the sections that follow, deliberating on the onto-epistemological paradigms and other theoretical underpinnings behind the use of language in the analysis of culture. Rudimentary information about the Remo-speaking Bondos and the taxonomical placement of Remo in the Austro-Asiatic family of languages is presented in the third section. A discussion on the framework for analysis of contact of the Bondos with other cultural centres is the subject of the fourth section. The fifth section accentuates the linguistic variations materialized in prominent linguistic domains due to contact with other cultures while underscoring the processes of linguistic borrowing, narrowing, widening and coinage. The concluding section analytically recalls the dynamics of linguistic

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acculturation among the Bondos and attempts to capture the complexities of contact revealing mild and aggressive symbolic violence as seen through the lens of language.

2.   Theoretical Warrants

This section addresses the issues of acculturation as part of culture change and the advantage of using the lens of 'language,' to assess the same. Questions of significance in the context of cultures coming in contact have a lot to do with the contact phenomena of acculturation and shifts in migrant/ethnic identity. These factors are incontrovertibly consequential to human development (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Acculturation discourse is in line with the dynamics of change resulting from continuous first-hand contacts between people who have different cultures of heritage (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Acculturational studies gather greater significance in anthropology as they occasion the documentation of diverse and versatile interactions between cultural groups. However, an appraisal of the onto- epistemological underpinnings of research in this field would give us a wider understanding of the viability of language as a domain of assessing acculturation in the backdrop of intercultural communication engendered by culture contact. This warrants a delineation of the very notion of 'culture,' in linguistic research. Contributions in this regard have poured in from scholars in the field of cross-cultural psychology and linguistic anthropology.

Busch (2009), summarizes Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's take on culture and social interaction and posits that culture furnishes an explicative connection between phenomena at a social macro-level and the micro-level of individual's actions. Appadurai (1996) supplies the 'primordialist,' and 'constructionist,' notions of culture as a rather handy analytical tool to decipher the manner of interventions by culture in social interactions, of which language is an essential element. The primordialist approach to the study of culture understands the latter and its influence on individuals to be a 'given,' resistant to any modification. Constructionist paradigm, on the other hand, in understanding culture highlights the capacity of the interactants to use different representational systems and 'construct,' meaning as and when situation demands by means of patterns of interpretation. The former notion therefore asserts universal validity of the elements of culture (language included) and the latter endorses the uniqueness and potential variation among cultures.

Given the primordialist and constructionist schools of conceptualizing culture, one is often confounded as to what importance can language wield in research on culture contact. What kind of a leverage would one have when the domain of language is the centre of investigation in a study on culture contact? The answer lies again in the wholistic understanding of culture.

Herskovits (1937), states that acculturation research facilitates the investigation of interrelationship between the elements of a given culture, including the manner in which the functioning whole influences the individuals who live under it. Acculturation is primarily concerned with the documentation of the interaction of parts of a single culture on a single time plane. A further elaboration

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of the same understanding of culture as a complex whole with interacting elements is given by Juri Lotman as reported by Zafiri & Kourdis (2017). To quote Lotman verbatim, "Culture, whilst it is a complex whole, is created from elements which develop at different rates, so that any one of its synchronic sections reveals the simultaneous presence of these different stages." Undeniably, language is one of the synchronic and predominant sections/elements of culture. But why should the semiotic domain of language among other psycho-social domains of culture, be given primacy in studies on contact phenomena? This principal position had been eloquently pointed out by the pioneer of European Semiotics and Linguistics Ferdinand de Saussure (1959), later corroborated by Roman Jakobson and Roland Barthes. Reason for precedence of language as the most reliable proxy for research in culture contact is best summarized by Li Sun (2013) in exalting language as one among the many significant carriers of culture. Culture, on this account, would not be possible without language.

In conjunction with the above, several scholars from anthropology, communication, psychology, and sociology, professing allegiance to both primordialist as well as constructionist paradigms for understanding culture, have pleaded to 'equate,' culture with language, calling for a congruency of culture and language. The reason being, according to them, the most visible and identifiable aspect of culture is language (Busch, 2009). In addition to this, inventorying the efforts made to operationalise and assess acculturation among ethnic minority individuals and groups, Zane & Mak (2003) list out three relevant psycho-social domains: language, social affiliation and cultural identity. They further disclose that the most frequently used domain for operationalization and assessment of culture contact is Language. Use of language as an analytical tool, in the given context, is multifarious and assorted and extensively seen in studies on intercultural contact through models of acculturation, world system and centre-periphery. The centre-periphery model of studying contact phenomena, for instance, considers language usage as one measurable element of cultural identity which is a reliable indicator of ethnic survival (Cartwright, 1991).

Language is investigated in terms several aspects like use (also frequency), preference, proficiency, identity and pragmatics for understanding the dynamics of culture contact. For the primordialist school, documenting and detailed description of selected linguistic aspects of a culture came to be certified as a dependable method not only for assessing change but also for understanding inter-cultural communication. Ngo (2008) after cataloguing influential schools of thought in intercultural contact studies, conclusively points to the presence of a manifest ontological affinity of these schools with the philosophical position of 'Realism,' which posits an observable, knowable, measureable and largely unchanging reality. An obvious extension of this primordialist ontological orientation is reflected in the 'empiricistic,' epistemological stance of these schools. It then follows that research in acculturation studies is more focussed on gathering 'facts' and 'quantification,' through global indicants and proxies, heavily leaning towards the primordialist understanding of culture. This would further mean language (owing to its primacy among other indicants) has been seen as a 'measurable' proxy for

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understanding inter-cultural dynamics (Peréa, 2008; Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 1994).

This dominant onto-epistemological comportment characteristic of research in acculturation, however, has courted controversy. The major allegation levelled is that this approach positing universal, quantifiable processes in the context of culture contact is incognizant of the concomitant socio-economic inequities directly affecting the ethnic minorities, not to mention the methodological difficulty of addressing the issue of of 'cultural identity,' linked to language.

As an obverse to the above, the constructionist paradigm, endorsed by linguistic anthropologists like Ward H Goodenough (1981), Dell Hymes (1964) and John J Gumperz (1964) variously holds that culture is situationally produced and activated in the context of speech events which are levels of analysis between language and action and where, by virtue of contextualization cues people absorb (culturally loaded) context into their speech acts to generate meaning. The 'culture as a product,' understanding consequently focuses on 'language use in context,' through use of qualitative methods to gather folk tales, fables, and native medicinal remedies, which are transmitted in the local language.

The current study is anchored in an integrationist research paradigm opting for a middle ground resting on the complementarity of the primordialist and constructionist paradigms of understanding culture. The focus is on enunciating and documenting the linguistic aspect of acculturation among the Bondos by integrating both the paradigms of understanding culture in relation to language and complimenting the study by use of a social justice and anti-oppressive lens to engage the issues of breach of cultural autonomy of the Bondos. The psycho-social and cultural domain of language is used in this study rather as an alembic out of which assumptions and conclusions are drawn about the general cultural integrity of the Bondos.

The core area of investigation in the current study is limited to 'language use in the face of 'culture contact.' Language proficiency and preference among the Bondos have also been looked into but are not included in this study. The primary technique of data acquisition was linguistic fieldwork.
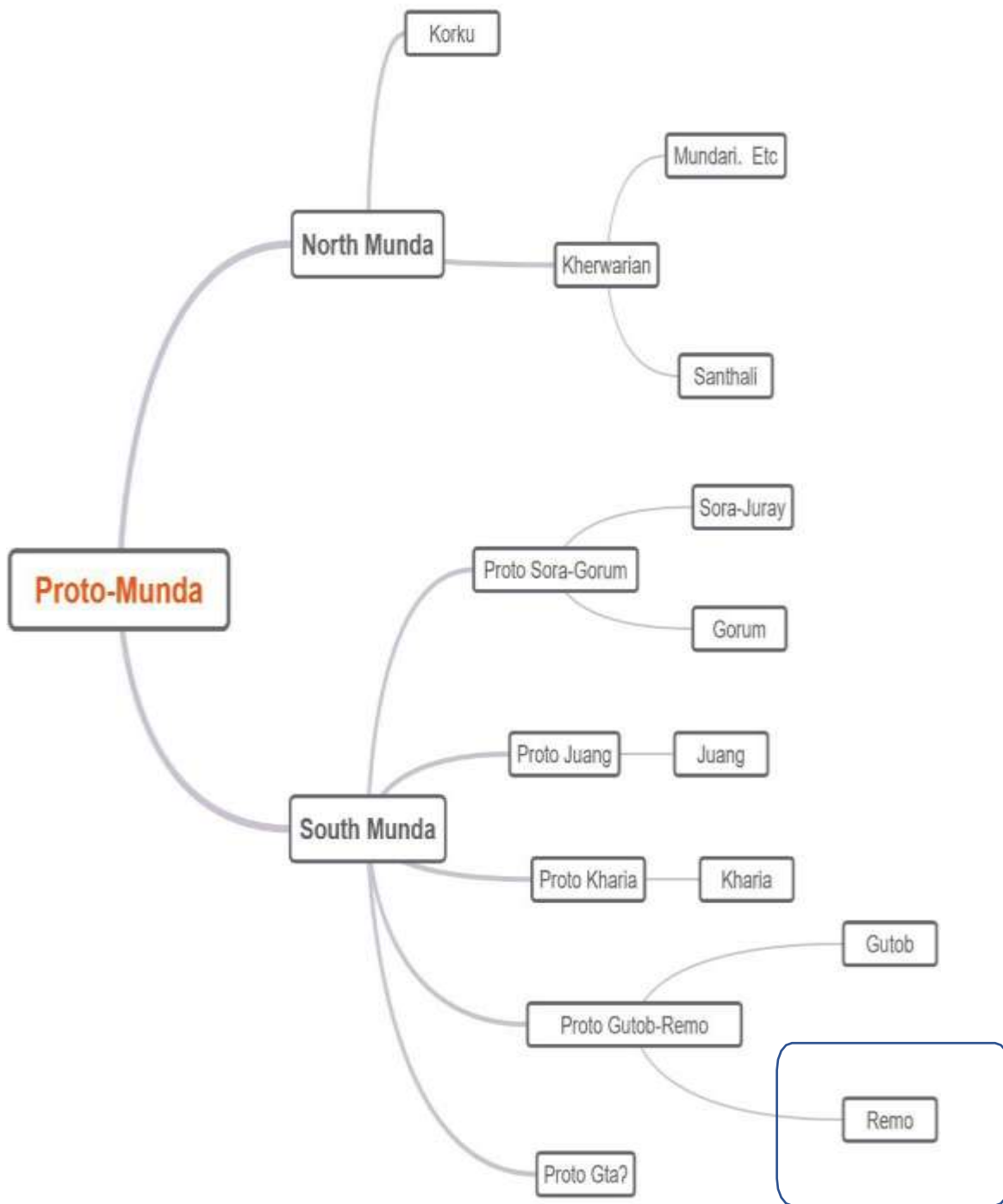
3.   Linguistic Environment and Taxonomy of 'Remo'

Four language families characterise the panorama of India's linguistic spectacle. Their geographical distribution, extending from north to south is as follows: the Tibeto-Burman, Indo-European (Indo-Aryan), Austro-Asiatic (Munda, Khasi) and Dravidian family. (Benedikter, 2013; Witzel, 2006). The speakers of Munda group are located in the Austro-

Asiatic language family, and they are reckoned to be, in all probability, one among oldest families of languages of the subcontinent.

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The Munda speech communities are generally thought to be the inceptive settlers in several locations in India, which are now home to them. Before inhabiting the hilly areas of Odisha and Jharkhand the Munda-speaking tribes spread out westwards to central India and down southern India. The presence of Munda languages-speaking people can be found in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra (Anderson, 2008). Major portion of the land occupied by the Munda-speaking people, however, is now occupied by people who speak in tongues from the Indo-Aryan family. This is eloquently evident in the linguistic landscape of the region. Anderson (2008), gives a taxonomic placement of Remo language in the genus of South Munda within the sub-family of Proto-Munda group of languages.

Tree Diagram of Classification of Proto-South Munda Languages (Anderson, 2008)

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Remo is variously called Bonda, Bondo, Bondo/Nanga Poroja, has about 12231 speakers as recorded in the 2011 Census of the Government of India and are subsumed under the administrative

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typology of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) (Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes In India, 2013). In the Malkangiri district of Odisha, Khoirput block generally two dialects of Remo are recognized: Hills Remo (also known as the language of the Bondo Highlanders) and Plains Remo (Language spoken by people at the foothills in Khoirput). The major objectives that stimulated the current study concern the Hills Remo dialect.

Remo, while being the spoken language of the Bondos, has several other characteristic features. For instance, Remo is a language with no script of its own and is, 'likely,' an endangered language (Anderson & Harrison, 2008). The linguistic landscape in and around the study area was exclusively dominated by Odia, the language of the state of Odisha in India. Remo, given its current demographic, geographical and cultural considerations, is a linguistic minority, as it is not dominant either numerically or in terms of command or power (Srivastava, 1984; Pandharipande, 2002).

The contributions of the Primary Research Consultants for the current study: Mongali Muduli, Mongala Muduli, Budha Dangdha-Majhi and Adambari are gratefully acknowledged. All the ethical stipulations coded in the Linguistic Fieldwork Ethical Guide were duly observed.

4.   A Framework of Analysis for Bondo Linguistic Acculturation

Variation Research in social sciences demands meticulous delineation of 'cultural subdivisions,' for analytical purposes. This becomes all the more imperative in the context of analysis of language as a cultural unit. Lack of suitable analytical frameworks for study of India, given its multicultural ethnic composition, was expressed as early as 1960 by Gerald D Berreman, in his critique of applying the concept of 'culture area,' to Indian society.

Gumperz (1961), alternatively proposes the approach adopted by Cohn & Marriott (1958), who (patterning after the model of Kroeber-Redfield) dismissed the idea of cultural 'wholes' to analyse 'cultural subdivisions,' and chose rather to critically engage the communicative processes criss-crossing through the multicultural matrix that India is. The study of cultural subdivisions is thus rebuilt around the themes of communicative processes in terms of levels that are national, regional, subregional and local. The integrative processes that bind these levels, additionally, are two: supra-local networks of relationships, like marriage, pilgrimage and trade networks, and centers, which are points of origin for innovations (Gumperz, 1961).

The linguistic aspect of Bondo acculturation can be negotiated neither by dismissing the fact that the Bondo highlanders 'locally,' are culturally a close-knit group nor by ignoring the assertive and sometimes vigorous communicative processes that juxtapose this linguistic minority with the supra-local levels or 'imposing,' centres of innovation, political dominance and cultural aggression. Thus, the grounds of contact for the Bondos at the intra-community level are the networks of local relationships and at the inter-group level the sporadic or sustained encounters with dominant culture centres. The

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current study convincingly states that the Bondos of the Mudulipada and Andrahal gram panchayat of Khoirput block have sustained exposure to the district headquarters of Malkangiri district and the neighbouring urban centres like Jeypore and Koraput. Linguistically, they come into frequent encounters with 'desiya,' a dialect of Odiya (from the Indo-Aryan family of languages), which is also the official language of the state. Remo, in fact, is written via the writing system borrowed from Odia.

5. Linguistic Index of Bondo Acculturation

Exposure to a contact-language and culture entails not only phonological changes but may carry morphological and syntactic changes as well (Sankoff, 2008). However, the current study looks at the fundamental changes in phonology, morphology and syntax (if present) in conjunction with another conceptual tool to study language change and variation in situations of contact. To attempt a description of the functional load of Remo in the verbal repertoire of the Bondo Highlanders as we all as to comprehend the general trends of language maintenance and shift, technique of domain analysis (first proposed by Schmidt-Rohr in 1932 and later developed by Joshua Fishman in 1972) proves to be of great analytical advantage (Sahgal, 1991).

As cited in Laurén, Myking, & Picht (2002), Fishman defines domains as clusters of social interactions that occur in multilingual contexts. Domains can differ and expand in terms of socio-psychological domains (intimate, informal, formal and intergroup domains) and the societal-institutional level (home, school, work place etc.) (Hohenthal, n.d.). In the following sections several such domains will be inspected for lexical borrowing.

However, issue of a 'caveat emptor' is apt here. It is being acknowledged that given the constraints of a scientific paper, an extensive analysis of the linguistic aspects of Bondo acculturation cannot be justified, but it can, perhaps, be presented in its most characteristic features anchored in the few principal linguistic domains alluded to above.

5.1 Arithmetic System

The ubiquitous practice in human communities of counting, measuring and quantifying the world has been ground for intense research cutting across disciplines, the focus now being on cultural and linguistic variation of the same (Sinha, Sampaio, & Sinha, 2017). The attention, especially, on exact and/or approximate arithmetic systems of indigenous communities is burgeoning. Remo too has its own indigenous system of representation of magnitudes, individuals, sets and units through numerals (Pica & Lecomte, 2008). The elementary cardinal numbers in Remo are as follows:

(1)   Mui   One
(2)   Mbaʔr   Two
(3)   Ingé   Three
(4)   Uɲuŋ   Four

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(5)	mɔlɔĭ, mɔʔlɔj, paŋʧ̣ə	Five
(6)	tiʔri, ʧ̣ə̣ṭə	Six
(7)	giʔri, satə̣ṭə	Seven

The above numeral system is record of abstract counting i.e., even when no particular objects are in view or referred to. During the fieldwork among the Bondos in Dumuripada village in Malkangiri district, in order to elicit indigenous numeral system from the locals an experimental method was adopted. In the village several locals from the age-groups of 60-70, 35-60, and 16-35 were given pebbles and requested to verbally count them. Almost all of the individuals in the age group of 60-70 stopped at four or five. Many others switched to numeral system from 'Desiya,' (a local dialect of the official language of the state of Odisha) and all those who were studying in residential schools in nearby towns didn't know of the indigenous numeral system and started counting straight away with *desiya* numbers. The ordinal numbers, however, couldn't be exclusively elicited. The researcher was then compelled to resort to an associative approach in eliciting the same. The local research participant was asked to imagine a situation, where a family had seven kids and how the parents would introduce the birth-order of each of their kids to an outsider. The expressions were interesting.

(8)	Kena	niŋna	munā/sendaʔku	uŋuŋ
	This	my	eldest/first	child
	This is my eldest child.			

When referring to the eldest child, the qualifying ordinals munā/sendaʔku are used interchangeably. The words for second and third are again derivative 'bunār sendaʔku,' and 'bār sendaʔku,' respectively. Also, any thing or individual between the first and the last is referred to as '*moinja*,' while the word '*tinli*,' is reserved to refer to the last. In the above scenario then the fourth, fifth and sixth child were simply referred to as 'moinja,' and the last one as 'tinli.'

A total attrition to 'desiya,' is seen in the usage of cardinal numbers but the ordinal numbers seem to remain largely unchanged. Probably, in the past Remo language did have specific words for numbers beyond five but disuse must be the cause of loss of its original numeral system. Another justifiable suspicion as to the cause of loss of Remo indigenous numeral system is the total percolation of the decimal system of the trade language of the region (desiya).

5.2   Kinship Terminology

Parkin (1985) informs that the kinship systems and terminologies of peninsular South Asia are divided into the north Indian or 'Indo-European' and the south Indian (including Sri Lankan) or 'Dravidian'. This division, however, excludes several other cultural minorities among the indigenous population in India. These groups have unique system of kin terms, for instance, lack of separate terms for collateral cousins unlike the Dravidian kinship system. This is visible among the Munda group of

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tribes inhabiting parts of southern Bihar and Orissa. The current study aims at looking at contact-induced shifts in kinship terms among the Bondo highlanders, one of the Munda group of tribes.

The lexical field of Kinship in the linguistic domain is crucial for several reasons. It is frequently inferred that kinship terms are a comparatively unalterable part of the lexical repertoire of any speech community (Borges, 2013). Principal among its objectives, for instance, the AUSTKIN project on Aboriginal Australian kinship terms, states the task of reconstructing the lexical wealth of earlier linguistic phases of the indigenous languages in Australia (Dousset, 2016). For realization of such a task kin terms of any language are indispensable as they demonstrate some degree of stability over time. In order to decipher the semantic import and traces of acculturation in Remo kin terms anthropological concepts introduced by L H Morgan (1870) have been used.

- Ego: the root of a kinship paradigm
- Parallel kin: kin related through a main line of descent.
- Collateral kin: kin outside the main line of descent.
- Affinal kin (affines): kin related by marriage
- 0, +1, -1 …generation: numbers indicate distance from ego – the 0 generation is ego's generation, the +1 generation is that of the parents of ego, and the -1 generation is the generation of the children of ego.

Parallel
(9)   Grandfather   tuta
(10)   Grandmother yā
(11)   Father baʔ
(12)   Motheryoŋ
(13)   Son   ɔ̃ʔɔ̃

(14)   Daughter   selani
(15)   Elder brother   māŋ
(16)   Younger Brother   meʔ
(17)   Elder Sister   miŋ
(18)   Younger Sister   kui
 Collateral
(19)   Father's brother   munā/daū
(20)   Father's Sister vāŋ

(21)   Mother's brother   māmuŋ
(22)   Mother's sister   mbuk/vāŋ

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Affinal

(23)　Wife　　　　kunuī
(24)　Husband　　 impar
(25)　Father in law　inkiŋ
(26)　Mother in law kĩyār
(27)　Wife's oB　　inkiŋ
(28)　Wife's yB　　giriŋ
(29)　Wife's oS　　kĩyār

(30)　Wife's yS　　giriŋuī
(31)　Husband's oB inkiŋ
(32)　Husband's yB ere
(33)　Husband's oS kĩyār
(34)　Husband's yS libuī

About 45 research participants, who were at least bilingual, were approached and asked to chart out the kinship terms in Remo, corresponding to the above list of terms provisioned in the field data guide. The participants' request to consult their monolingual kins/acquaintances in the village was refused. It was found that a majority of them struggled to remember the terms corresponding to the collateral and affinal kin in the Remo language. This was very much evident in the terminologies corresponding to +1 and +2 generations (parents' and grand parents' generation). The data columns were filled out through discussions held with other participants after they concurred on a particular kin term. The failure to recollect the kin terms is an indication of disuse of the same.

It is held that, studies on kinship terminology suggest the structures of kinship terminology show resistance to the influences of diverse political, economic or social circumstances. Historical evidence illustrates that kinship terminology is rather resistant to change (Trautmann, 2001). But, in the context of Remo, the situation seems to be changing gradually. The current study establishes that kin terms are unstable in the Bondo community. There is evidence of borrowing resulting from language contact (Odia). Through qualitative interviews it was also discovered that people choose between different forms of kin terms (from *desiya* and English) depending on their motive to be perceived in a particular way.

5.3.　Friendship

Deciphering every-day, commonplace, activities of communication in personal relationships is prefaced on profiling and understanding the communicative competencies in a culture (Bruess & Pearson, 1997). Communicative competency encompasses a whole repertoire of 'rituals,' characteristic in 'Friend-relationships,' which again can either be same-sex, cross-sex etc. These rituals are rituals of fellowship (recreational activities for pastime and so on), symbolic rituals (celebrations, joking, playing

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pranks on another, 'inside jokes,' etc.) and finally communicative rituals (maintaining a pattern of keeping in touch over time). The common thread running through all these friendship-rituals is of course language.

The Bondos denied the existence of cross-sex friendships among themselves. Same-sex friendship was very much valued and predominantly expressed through fellowship and symbolic rituals.

In the current study, data on competency in communication with focus on linguistic element among the Bondos was acquired through participant observation. These informal gatherings of friends (males – as researcher had no access to fellowship rituals of friendship among females) were held every evening in an open ground outside the village and in the village square as well. It was observed that in these informal gatherings the communication was carried out exclusively in Remo.

Of particular interest are 'terms of address/reference,' in the context of friendship in Remo. Consider the following two sentences:

(35)   Kena   niŋna   bailɔk
        He   my   friend
        He is my friend.

(36)   Mai   niŋna   mɔĭtɔr
        He   my   friend
        He is my friend.

There is more to read here than the apparent morphological variance and semantic convergence. 'bailɔk,' is the term ordinarily used to denote a friend. When it comes to, 'mɔĭtɔr,' the reference to friend is retained but with an evocative feeling of reconciliation achieved following a prior rift (which now holds no significance) in friendship ties. One of the first to have recorded the socio-cultural prejudices against the Bondos (both by Government personnel and those living in the plains) was Verrier Elwin (1950). Often words like 'savages,' and 'violent,' have been used to stereotype the Bondos' temperamental nature. However, going by Sapir's (1949) foundational premise, "…vocabulary is a very sensitive index to the culture of the people," the existence of a nuanced semantic cognate like 'mɔĭtɔr,' is indicative of the existence of a possibility of resumption of ties of friendship instead of resorting to perpetual severance of friendship at any provocation. It indeed is an index to existence of tolerance among the Bondos.

A unique practice among the Bondos is bestowal of nicknames, "kiyāli imi," translated as 'funny name.' Having nicknames in indigenous populations is considered to be a prevalent practice. Iteanu

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(2006), opines that these, "lesser" names reflect particularities in individuals' lives. For this very reason they can change several times in a lifetime. Almost all the research participants in the study had unique nicknames and it was also pointed out that these were bestowed not by primary kin but by friends. The fellowship rituals among friends and the assigning of nicknames to each other by friends showed no signs of attrition whatsoever to the language of contact i.e., *desiya*.

5.4.   Religion & Ritual Behaviour

Language and Religion constitute the 'primordial' aspects of our individuality in the sense that one is 'born,' into either one or both of these. Susanne Mühleisen (2007) identifies religion as a ready ground for language contact that could eventually lead to language spread, maintenance or revival. For a considerable conceptual clarity on the study of the interface between religion and language, ritualized performances have to be looked into.

Although, religion as a critical domain is not identified by Joshua Fishman, he does illustrate cases where religious bodies do exercise massive influence in either supporting maintenance of any language or applying pressure for language shift (Spolsky, 2011). Omoniyi & Fishman (2006), cite Ferguson (1982) in delineating a substantial link between the expansion of religion and that of language. It is crucial in this sense, to attempt an assessment of the domain of religion with respect to Remo under strong influence of the language of contact (*desiya*).

The current study indicates that there is the occurrence of domain expansion and also domain conquest when it comes to religious domain of Remo. Fürer-Haimendorf (1982), had pointed out the presence of language shift among the Bondos in 'many prayers and magical formulae,' towards Odia. The reason ascertained by Haimendorf was that the Bondos considered Odia to be a 'superior,' language. In this particular sense, what was observed by Haimendorf decades ago, has only precipitated to a precarious and unmanageable degree in the current times. The Bondos have the concept of 'supreme spirit,' (māpru, translated as 'one above'), who is supposed to be an agendered being. In conversation with the research participant Budha Mudili, who happened to be a spirit doctor (disari) in the village it was observed that the religious narrative contained names of many deities from the Hindu pantheon.

Besides, an instance of linguistic expansion, where there is linguistic borrowing but semantic superimposition of the local language on the borrowed term is seen. Let us consider the following sentences:

(37)   debtā   sɔbɔʔtā
        spirit   possessing
        the spirit has possessed
(38)   parāk   sɔbɔʔtā
one in the pond   possessing

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The one in the pond has possessed.

Sentence (38) is uttered by a research participant, who is monolingual, in the context of narrating a case of 'spirit possession.' Sentence (37) was spoken by the disari, who is also conversant in desiya, the language of contact. The Bondos do not have the concept of a 'debta,' by which one refers to spiritual beings with anthropomorphic persona, borrowed from religious repository of the Hindu culture. But, in spite of having an original term in their language to refer to possession, there is evidence of borrowing of the term debta from desiya with the retention of its original local meaning i.e., spirits who are agendered.

8. Conclusion

Modernization paradigm that dominated the West in the 1950s and 1960s and the Asian countries well in to the 90s, while being lucrative on the technological front had its own unwelcome exigencies. An overwhelming consequence of modernization paradigm was relegation of ethnic minorities to a plane of 'cultural non-entities,' which either inspired a supercilious demeanour from the mainstream societies or a fatalistic resignation that these cultural minorities are now 'misfits,' and moribund.

India is a unique case, for the reason that the ethnic minorities here have to carry the twin burden of the modernization paradigm and 'cultural and ritual othering,' which often are pretexts under which these groups are marginalized leading to environmental, physical and symbolic violence. Physical violence on simple societies often are linked to and a result of environmental violence. Devarapalli (2017) outlines the aggression and myopic vision with which external agents and government agencies, under the pretext of protecting, intrude and impinge on the sustenance practices of the autochthon populations leading to, 'denudation of the local resources.' Such disruption of the structural symmetry of the simple societies usually doesn't go unnoticed. It is the, 'symbolic violence,' to which these ethnic minorities are subjected to, that remains imperceptible till the changes become irreversible. Symbolic violence is the consequence of massive and aggressive cultural colonization of the ethnic minorities by the dominant societies. Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) outline the irreversible nature of symbolic violence as that which leads those who undergo it, to gradual internalisation and acceptance of those ideas that tend to subordinate them. It is 'violent' because it leads to subordination and is 'symbolic' because it is achieved indirectly. If commission of these 'violences,' on ethnic minorities is occasioned by the eventuality of 'culture contact' then the primary group-marker that often is the first fatality of contact is 'Language.'

Majority of the Bondos in Highlands in Malkangiri, while retaining their core cultural identity, have become proficient in the main regional dialect, i.e., desiya. Bilingualism, in many research works, has been observed as a precursor to decline and eventual extinction of the linguistic minority. Centuries of linguistic assimilation has resulted in the loss of languages of many tribal communities in India.

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Current linguistic vitality of Remo does not paint a promising picture either. Though, linguistic acculturation here is noteworthy with borrowing of Odia loanwords and expressions on the one hand, and presence of eloquent examples of drawing from the native linguistic deposit to accommodate concepts acquired through exposure to the Odia culture. Among the four socio-cultural domains studied, with the exception of the domain of 'friendship,' all the other domains (Arithmetic system, Kinship and Religion) show signs of acculturation with the looming threat of total assimilation. Besides the above, as Remo is a non-literal language, the linguistic landscape in the Bondaghati is replete with signboards only in Odia. Certainly, the current study on linguistic acculturation among the Bondos identifies a portent challenge to the ethnolinguistic vitality of this minority.

It can also be observed that in contact situations the native language of the Bondos seems to be at risk not just from circumstantial exposure to 'desiya,' but also 'collective indifference,' towards their language from the Bondos themselves. The reason very well could be the symbolic violence that this minority is facing. To use Fishman's (1991) assessment of threat to linguistic vitality of minorities, the Remo language is threatened equally by hostile outsiders inflicting symbolic violence and by unsympathetic insiders, who consider their language to be inferior to the language of contact. Revival of linguistic vitality of Remo would require not just intervention from the external agents but efforts from the Bondos themselves as well.

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