Functions of Pronominal Affixes in Sizang

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Abstract

This paper attempts to present the Functions of Pronominal affixes in Sizang. Sizang shows elaborate paradigms of person/number agreement with the subject of the sentence. It shows even the agreement for singular and plural numbers in persons, as well as for inclusive and exclusive persons in plural. For the most part the affixes involved are suffixed or prefixed directly to the verb stem. This type of grammatical features is referred to as verbal pronominalization, which is a common characteristic of Kuki-Chin languages of the Tibeto-Burman family.

Pronominalization in Sizang

Sizang is a Kuki-Chin language of the Tibeto-Burman family. Pronominalization is a common characteristic in Kuki-Chin languages of the Tibeto-Burman family. Sizang shows elaborate paradigms of person/number agreement with the subject of the sentence.

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It shows even the agreement for singular and plural numbers in persons, as well as for inclusive and exclusive 1st persons in plural.

For the most part, the affixes involved are suffixed or prefixed directly to the verb stem. This phenomenon as per Hodgson (1856) has been referred to as verb pronominalization or just simply as pronominalization (Bauman, 1974). Thus, in other words, pronominalization is referred to the use of pronominal affixes for indicating the person and number of the subject.

Two Types of Pronominalization

In Sizang, there are two types of pronominalization. They are: 1) Those pronominal prefixes found in written form and also in polite form of speech. 2) Those pronominal suffixes found in colloquial speech. Thus, it shows a unique distinction from other related Kuki-Chin languages.

Pronominalization is obligatory to verb showing the verb-agreement system in declarative sentences. The verb may have either agreement prefixes or suffixes but not both. The pronominal prefixes are kə- for the first person (1pp), nə- for the second person (2pp) and ə- for the third person (3pp). They are derived from the first person pronoun key 'I', second person pronoun nəŋ 'you' and third person pronoun əma 'he/she'. The pronominal prefix of third person is used for both the human and non-human.

Thus, when the pronominal prefixes are added to a verb, these denote a pronominalized or verb agreement.

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Pronominal Prefixes with Verb

For example:

1a)   First person singular number:

   key ən kə ne hi   'I eat rice'

   I+rice+1pp+eat+FP

1b)   First person plural number (Inclusive):

   ey ən i ne hi   'we (incl) eat rice'.

   We (incl)+rice+1pp(pl)+eat+FP

2)   Second person:

   nəŋ ən nə ne hi   'you eat rice'.

   you+rice+2pp+eat+FP

3)   Third person

   əma ən əne hi   'he/she eats rice'.

   h/she +rice+3pp+eat+FP

Further, the personal pronoun has pronominal suffixes for the first and second person but zero forms for third person. The following pronominal suffixes function similar to the prefixes of personal pronouns. They show verbal subject agreement. The verb may have either pronominal prefixes or pronominal suffixes but not both. The pronominal suffixes are commonly used in colloquial speech. They are illustrated below:

Pronominal Suffixes with Verb

   key pay tu khi hi   'I will go.'

   I +go+ unre.+1ps+FP

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nəŋ pay tu ni ziam   'will you (sg.) go?'

you (sg.)+go+unre.+2ps+QM

nəw pay tu nu ziam   'will you (pl.) all go?'

you (pl.)+go+unre.+2ps+QM

It is to be noted that in the case of exclusive first person it has pronominal suffix 'khu'.
For example:

kəw ən ne khu hi   'we (excl.) eat rice'.

We (excl)+rice+1pp(pl)+eat+FP

Similarly, the second person plural number has pronominal suffix 'nu'.
For example:

nəw pay tu nu ziam   'will you (pl.) go?'

you (pl.)+go+unre+2ps(pl.)+QM

Pronominal Prefixes with Noun

The pronominal prefixes (pp) of the three persons express person and number of the possessor. In other words, when these pronominal prefixes are used with nouns they indicate the possessor of the prefixed noun, as in the case of kinship terms.

Examples:

kənu   'my mother'.

1pp+mother

nənu   'your mother'.

2pp+mother

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ənu   'his/her mother'.

3pp+mother

It is noted from the examples, in kənu 'my mother', the pronominal prefix kə- indicates that the possessor is the speaker; in nənu 'your mother', the pronominal prefix nə- indicates that the possessor is the addressee; but in the case of ənu 'his/her mother', the pronominal prefix ə- indicates that the possessor is neither the speaker nor the addressee. On the other hand, the personal pronoun of the respective person, i.e., first and second can be added with the intensifier -ma along with the possessor of the prefixed noun for indicating the specificity and emphasis.

For example:

keyma kənu 'my (intensive) mother'.

nəŋma nənu 'your (intensive) mother'.

keyma zimasa 'my (intensive) first wife'.

Further, the first person singular and first person (excl.) plural have a particle iŋ (singular) and uŋ (plural). The pronominal prefixes/suffixes and the final particle hi is deleted if this pronominal particle is present. This is also commonly used in colloquial speech.

For example:

key sahaŋ khət mu iŋ   'I saw a tiger'.

I tiger one see pro.p(sg.)

kəw pasəl ni pha uŋ   'We have two brothers'.

We (excl.) brother two number pro.p.(pl)

key pay iŋ   'I go'.

I go pro.p

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kəw pay uŋ   'We (excl.) go'.

We (excl) go pro.p

Sentence in Sizang

Sentence in Sizang can be divided into four classes according to its formation. If a sentence indicates a statement of truth or statement of condition, then the sentence is regarded as a declarative sentence. Further, if a sentence has interrogative marker attached to the verb phrase and indicates a question, then the sentence is an interrogative one; if a sentence has imperative marker attached to the verb phrase and indicates a command or order, then it is an imperative one; and if a sentence has negative marker attached to the verb phrase, then it becomes a negative sentence.

Sizang is a verbal pronominalized language. It shows a subject-object-verb (SOV) word order. The occurrence of a sentence final particle 'hi' in declarative sentences is a peculiarity of Sizang.

The following examples are illustrative of the different types of sentences as stated above:

1.   Declarative sentence (statements):

key ən kəne hi   'I eat rice'.

I rice 1pp. eat FP.

nəŋ ən nəne hi   'You eat rice'.

You (sg) rice 2pp. eat FP

əma ən əne hi   ' He/she eats rice'.

he/she rice 3pp.eat FP.

2.   Interrogative sentence:

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nəŋ saŋ nə pay tu ziam	'Will you go to school?'.
You (sg.) school 2pp go unre. QM	

bəŋbəŋ kəw ŋa tu khu ziam	'How do we get it?'.
what redp. we (excl.) get unre. 1ps (pl.)QM.	

kim əmelhoy ŋol mo	'Kim is not beautiful, is she?'.
kim 3pp.complexion fair neg.tag.Q.	

3. Imperative sentence:

nəŋ pay in	'You (sg.) go'.
You (sg)go imp.	
nəŋil kiel-e	'You (sg) must be hungry'.
poss.stomach hungry polite imp.	

əma hoŋpay sək tən	'Make him to come'.
he deic.come caus.pers.imp.	

4. Negative sentence:

əma əpay ŋol tu hi	'He will not go'.
he 3pp.go neg.unre.FP.	

key zu hop boŋ	'I don't drink liquor'.
I liquor drink neg.	

əma he bəw	'He doesn't know'.
he know neg.	

It is interesting to note that the pronominal prefixes or suffixes are deleted when the verb

is followed by the imperative marker /-in, -un, -tən, -toŋ, -hiak, etc. in a sentence.

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For example:

əma ən huan sak in	'Let her cook.'
she rice cook caus.imp.	

əmate pay sak un	'Let them drink tea.'
He (pl.) go caus. imp	

nəŋ hoŋpay tən	'Please come again.'
you (sg.)deic.come imp.	

nəw hoŋpay təvun	'Please come again.'
you(pl) deic. come imp.	
key lasa phot toŋ	'Let me sing a song.'
I song sing polite imp.	

Similarly, as in the case of negative marker –boŋ, there are no pronominal affixes .But it is present with negative marker –ŋol in negative sentence. The negative marker –boŋ has an emphatic character. It is perhaps more typically used in colloquial speech than polite speech. In fact, the negative marker -boŋ is formed by the contraction of negative marker -bəw + iŋ (first person singular pronominal particle). Thus, it is exclusively used with first person singular.

For example:

key ŋil kiel məmma boŋ   'I have no appetite for food at all'.

I stomach hungry very neg.

key zu hop boŋ   'I don't drink liquor'.

I liquor drink neg.

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But the pronominal affixes are present with negative marker-ŋol in a negative sentence
For example:

nəŋ nəpay ŋol tu hi   'You will not go'.
You (sg)2pp.go neg. unre. FP.

əma əpay ŋol tu hi   'He will not go'.
he3pp.go neg. unre.FP

key za top ŋol khi hi   'I do not smoke'.
I cigar smoke neg.1ps.FP

Conclusion

From the above it is clear that Sizang shows elaborate paradigms of person/number agreement with the subject of the sentence. It shows even the agreement for singular and plural numbers in persons, as well as for inclusive and exclusive persons in plural. For the most part, the affixes involved are suffixed or prefixed directly to the verb stem. This type of grammatical features is referred as verbal pronominalization, which is a common characteristic as in other Kuki-Chin languages of the Tibeto-Burman family.

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Abbreviations

     1pp   First person pronominal prefix

     2pp   Second person pronominal prefix

     3pp   Third person pronominal prefix

     1ps   First person pronominal suffix

     2ps   Second person pronominal suffix

     sg   Singular   pl   Plural

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FP	Final particle	unre	Unrealized aspect marker
excl	Exclusive	incl	Inclusive
pro. P	Pronominal particle	QM	Question marker
imp	Imperative marker	neg	Negative marker
caus	Causative marker	deic	Deictic marker
tag Q	Tag question	redp	Reduplication
poss	Possessive	pers	Persuasive imperative

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