Numerals in Thadou

Elizabeth Lamkhovah Haokip, Ph.D. Scholar

Abstract

An attempt is made here to study the numerals used in Thadou, which is spoken in Chandel and other districts of Manipur. Numbers are an integral part of a language. Thadou has a seven number system: cardinals, ordinals, aggregative, multiplicative, fractional, distributive and approximate numerals. The numbers from one to ten are the basic numerals that are used for the formation of higher numerals either by means of addition or multiplication.

Introduction

Thadou is one of the major tribes in Manipur. Of the total STs in Manipur, Thadou is the largest with 1.8 lakh population representing 24.6 per cent of the state's total ST population as per Census of Manipur 2001. The language spoken by this people is known as Thadou language. They are mainly found in the hill districts of Manipur namely, Churachanpur, Chandel, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul. Majority of the Kuki tribes (non-Nagas) know Thadou language.

Erstwhile civil and military officers of the British India, namely, John Stone (1896), Shaw (1929) and Parry (1932), wrote about the Kuki tribes including the Thadou, their origin, customs, language and social organizations. Most of the Kuki tribes, according to the above mentioned authors, trace their origin to a mysterious cave.

The term Kuki has been used for Lushai, Lakher and some other tribes of the North Eastern region of India (Shakespear 1912; Parry 1932), they are divided into two groups, viz., Old Kuki and New Kuki. During the post-independence period, Thirumalai of Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore and Shree Krishna of Anthropological Survey of India (1980) have done a very good work on Thadou language. It has the potential of developing into a major language among the Kukis of Manipur.

The language and the people

Thadou belongs to the Northern Kuki-Chin subgroups of the Tibeto Burman family and is one of the major recognized languages in Manipur. It has close affinities with many other languages of the Kuki-Chin groups like Paite, Gangte, Simte, Vaiphei, Zou, etc. The speakers of Thadou are widely scattered but mainly found in Manipur, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and some parts of Burma

Number

Number is a word or symbol used in a counting system or used to show the position or order of something. It is also a grammatical category, most often associated with nouns and pronouns, whose primary correlation is with the number of distinguishable entities.

In Thadou, numerals can be classified as follows.

i. Cardinals

ii. Ordinals

iii. Aggregative numerals

iv. Multiplicative numerals

v. Fractional numerals

vi. Distributive

vii. Approximate Numerals

Cardinals

According to David Crystal, Cardinal is a traditional term retained in some models of grammatical description, referring to the numerals one, two, etc., in contrast with the ordinal numbers first, second etc. The basic cardinal numerals of Thadou can be divided into two classes. They are:

    (i) Basic Cardinal numerals

    (ii) Compound Cardinal numerals

The basic cardinal numerals in Thadou are mono-morphemic and they are used to form the compound. The following are the cardinals of Thadou.

khət	'one'
ni	'two'
thum	'three'
li	'four'
ŋa	'five'
gup	'six'
səgi	'seven'
get	'eight'
ko	'nine'
som	'ten'

In Thadou the cardinal numbers from 'one' to 'nine' are independent as well as basic numerals and the numbers from 'eleven' to 'nineteen' are formed with the combination of 'ten' plus the basic numeral .

Compound Cardinal numerals

Language in India www.languageinindia.com
12 : 7 July 2012
Elizabeth Lamkhovah Haokip, Ph.D. Scholar
Numerals in Thadou   94

The compound cardinal numerals can be divided into two groups based on the formation methodology employed by the Thadou language. The two groups are:

    1. Additive compound

    2. Multiplicative compound

1. The additive compound numerals are formed by using the numeral 'ten' followed by the other basic numerals. In the following examples, /som/ stands for 'ten', /le/ 'and', and the final suffix is the basic numeral

somlekhat	'eleven'
somleni	'twelve'
somlethum	'thirteen'
somleli	'fourteen'
somleŋa	'fifteen'
somlegup	'sixteen'
somlesəgi	'eighteen'
somleko	'nineteen'

2. The multiplicative compounds are those numerals in Thadou that are formed by multiplying the numeral 'ten' by other basic numerals up to 'ninety'. For the formation of 'hundred and beyond', the numeral for hundred /za/ is suffixed by basic numerals. Examples are given below:

somni	'twenty'
somthum	'thirty'
somli	'forty'
somŋa	'fifty'
somgup	'sixty'
somsəgi	'seventy'
somget	'eighty'
somko	'ninety'
zakhət	'one hundred
za	'hundred'

Language in India www.languageinindia.com
12 : 7 July 2012
Elizabeth Lamkhovah Haokip, Ph.D. Scholar
Numerals in Thadou   95

zani	'two hundred'

Ordinals

Ordinal numerals are formed from the corresponding cardinal numerals by suffixing the lexical nominalizer *nə.*

khətnə	'first'
ninə	'second'
thumnə	'third'
linə	'fourth'
getnə	'eighth'
zəkhətnə	'hundredth'

Aggregative Numerals; This is formed by suffixing *jouse* 'all' to the base nouns.

cəpəŋjouse	'all the children'
numeijouse	'all the girls'
pəsəljouse	'all the boys'
sajouse	'all the animals'
mijouse	'all human/ everybody'

Multiplicative/Enumerative

The concept of twice, thrice, etc. in English are conveyed by suffixing *vei* to the base cardinal numbers.

khətvei	'once'
nivei	'twice'
thumvei	'thrice'
livei	'four times'
ŋəvei	'five times'

gupvei   'six times'

Fractional Numerals

In the formation of fractional numerals the bigger number precedes the smaller number.

hopniso hop khət   '1/2'

hoplisohopni   '2/4'

hopŋə laha hopthum   '3/5'

Besides these there are also lexicalized fractional numerals. They are

abon/apum   'whole'

akeh   'half'

nikeh   'half day'

akim   'mid'

jankim   'midnight'

Distributive Numerals

Distributives are formed by reduplicating the numerals and followed by morpheme *in* and *ceh* as in the following.

khət khət in   one by one

li li in   four by four

ni ni ceh   two each

gup gup ceh   six each

Approximative Numerals;

'About x-numerals' is said in Thadou by using /təbəŋ/

miŋətəbəŋ   'about five people'

lekhəlitəbəŋ   'about four book'

insomtəbəŋ   'about ten houses'

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is observed that Thadou has a neat pattern of number system. Seven types of number system can be identified in Thadou. In Thadou, the cardinal numbers from 'one' to 'nine' are independent and can be called the basic numerals. The numbers from 'eleven' to 'nineteen' are formed with the combination of 'ten' plus the other basic numerals. The numbers like 'twenty' to 'ninety' are formed by multiplication of *som* which stands for 'ten' by other basic numerals.

===

Colophon

===

For Futher Reading on Thadou

Grierson, G.A 1904.Linguistic Survey of India.Tibeto Burman Family Kuki Chin and Burma groups. New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas.

Hyman, with Haokip. T. (2004). Kuki-Thaadow grammar (draft)

Kishan, S.1980.Thadou: A grammatical Sketch. Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India

Parry, N.E. 1932. The Lakhers, Macmillan and Co.Ltd. London.

Shaw, William.1929. Notes on the Thado Kuki (ed. By J. H. Hutton) Govt. of Assam, Shillong.

Shakespear, Lt. Col. J. 1912.The Lushai Kuki Clans, Macmillan and co. London

Singh, Y.CH. 2000. Manipuri Grammar. Rajesh Publication, New Delhi.

Stewart, R. 1978. A slight notice of grammar of Thadou. Manipur: Hill printing.

Thirumalai, M. S. 1972.Thadou Phonetic Reader. Mysore, CIIL

==

Elizabeth Lamkhovah Haokip
Linguistics Department
Assam University
Silchar 788011
Assam
India
elizabethhaokip@gmail.com