

Adjectives in Nambashi

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Abstract

The paper intends to investigate the way how adjectives are formed in Nambashi and their various kinds. Nambashi is the name of the language as well as the name of the community who speaks the language. It is one of the dialects of Tangkhul language. Adjective is a small part of the study of the whole language but it may lead to the various word formation processes and also the structure of the language and the relationship with other Tibeto-Burman languages. The techniques involved for the study are the set of questionnaires followed by interview and the analysis of the data collected.

Key words: Adjective, Dialect, Lingua-franca, Tibeto-Burman.

1. Introduction:

Nambashi is one of the Tibeto-Burman languages mainly spoken in Nambashi Khullen, Nambashi Khunuo, Nambashi Valley, Nambashi Horton and Nambashi Ashang Khullen in the Ukhrul district of Manipur which is 80 km away from Imphal comprising of 1500 speakers (according to the census report of 2011). It is the name of the language as well as the community that speaks the language having its own distinct culture. It is grouped under Tangkhul-Naga of Tibeto-Burman language family. However, it is not ascertained according to the classification made by Grierson, Shafer and Benedict (Devi, H. Kenny 63:2013). It is mainly spoken in the Ukhrul district of Manipur. It uses Roman Alphabet as their own script. It is known by various names as Dardouy (local name), Leimasel (by the Manipuri king) and Nambashi (by the British). In one of his visits to the village the then Manipuri king left his bag full of money. The people handed over the bag to the king. The king called them 'Leimasel' (meaning possessor of wealth) as the sign of their gratitude. However, the British faced problem in pronouncing this word and

they preferred to call Leimasel as 'Nambashi'. Since then it is popularly known as 'Nambashi'. To retain their originality, they could call themselves as 'Dardouy' or 'Indoi' groups. There are also some groups in Tamenglong district which they call themselves as 'Puimei' groups having the same culture as that of Nambashi groups. It is grouped under Tangkhul-Naga of Tibeto-Burman language family. However, it is not ascertained according to the classification made by Grierson, Shafer and Benedict. It is related to Khulmul sub-tribe of Maring, Sarbung, Sorbe and Khambi languages.

Nambashi is the name of the language as well as the community that speaks the language. There is no historical written text to be analysed linguistically and it is mainly based on oral tradition of communication which is inherited from the ancestors and transmitted to their youngster and which is still kept continuing. And in this process there is a loss of meaning of some lexical items. Furthermore, Nambashi has no original script of their own. They use Roman alphabet as their script in writing songs, poetry, journals, etc. Tangkhul dialects can be broadly classified into three main groups. They are Tishilelo group, Yangkome group and Yangtamtame group. Nambashi dialect is a part of Yangkome group of Khambi in the Phungyar sub-division. (Shimreingam, H &Horam Ringkahao:109). There are seven villages which speak Nambashi but they use Tangkhul as their lingua-franca because each village has its own dialect. It means that there is not much mutual intelligibility between the dialects used by these villages.

2. Adjective

David Crystal defines Adjective as "A term used in the grammatical classification of words to refer to the main set of items which specify the attributes of nouns". Simply adjective is something which is added to modify or strengthen the meaning of noun and pronoun. In English adjectives are not affected by number or gender or case because they do not have to agree with the noun they modify. According to P. N. Gopalakrishnan, "an adjective is a part of speech which modifies a noun, usually making its meaning more specific. They can be used in a predicative or attributive manner. In some languages, attributive adjective precedes the noun. This is the case in the Germanic languages, to which the English language belongs. In other languages, example, the Romance languages, the adjective follows the noun."

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3. Adjectives in Nambashi

Nambashi has seven types of adjectives and they are

- 3.1 Adjective of Quality (Descriptive Adjective)
- 3.2 Adjective of Quantity
- 3.3 Adjective of Number (Numeral Adjective)
- 3.4 Demonstrative Adjective
- 3.5 Interrogative Adjective
- 3.6 Emphasizing Adjective
- 3.7 Exclamatory Adjective

3.1. Adjective of Quality (Descriptive Adjective)

It shows or describes the quality of a person or a thing in terms of shape, size, colour, etc.

For example,

1. hi k^həmət^hə lairik ək^hə nə
This good book one COP
'This is a good book'

2. hi khəmət^hə worsim ək^hə nə
It good school one COP
'It is a great school'

3. acu kəsikə jinaikso nə
Today cold day COP
'Today is a cold day'

4. nəŋ niŋkarfəŋ mjə k^het-e
you honest person one COP
'You are an honest person'.

3.2. Adjective of Quantity

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It tries to answer how much of a thing is meant.

1. əwi əmtəu t^hamai
 He/she manners NEG
 ‘He/she has no manners’

2. umen kacju umai
 They fear NEG
 ‘They have no fear’

3. kəi-tə laibuŋ kərəl əme
 i-GEN friend many ASP
 ‘I have many friends’

3.3. Adjective of Numbers

It generally shows how many persons or things are meant. Adjective of number or numeral adjective can be further sub-divided into three main kinds as Definite Numeral adjective, Indefinite Numeral and Distributive Numeral Adjective.

3.3.1. Definite Numeral Adjective

It denotes an exact number. And under this Definite Numeral Adjective, two sub-heading can be found as Cardinal and Ordinal Numeral Adjective.

3.3.1.1. Cardinal Numeral Adjective

Cardinal Numeral denotes how many.

Example for Cardinal Numeral Adjective is shown below:

- umə-tə əsa kuppə kainjə əme
he-GEN child male two ASP
‘He has two sons’

3.3.1.2. Ordinal Numerical Adjective: It denotes the order of things in a series.

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Example for Ordinal Numeral Adjective is shown below:

umə examination re umkop taju wai
he/she examination LOC first got COP
'She got first in the examination'

3.3.2. Indefinite Numerical Adjective

It does not indicate an exact number.

For instance,

kəi on k^həttina mai
I money absent/no NEG
'I have no money'

3.3.3. Distributive Numerical Adjective

It denotes each one of a number.

For instance,

tombə le caobə karbop juwai
Tombə CONJ Caobə fight each other
'Tomba and Chaoba fight each other'

/wai/ simply indicates aspect marker but if it is preceded by the prefix /ju/ it carries the meaning of distributive (each other).

Again, kainə win k^həttinə cim-mai

Two NOM no one correct NEG
'Neither one of this is correct'

3.4. Demonstrative Adjective

A demonstrative adjective is used to indicate which person or thing is meant for. Generally demonstrative pronouns are used as adjective if placed before a noun.

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For example,

pen wi kəi-tə- e
Pen this I-GEN COP
'This pen belongs to me'

wilo kəsakin kəi pampiŋ-ŋe
such food I like ASP
'I like such food'

3.5. Interrogative Adjective

It tries to modify the noun by asking question what, which or whose in conjunction with the noun. /təmme/ is used as an interrogative marker in Nambashi.

For example,

ruŋŋa kare tu karsaŋ təmme?
Girl super who tall INT
'Which girl is the tallest?'

Wi tu in təmme?
This who house INT
'Whose house is this?'

3.6. Emphasizing Adjective

An emphasizing adjective tries to denote a stress or emphasize to modify the noun.

kəi mit men kəmu-e
i eyes own see ASP
'I see with my own eyes'

3.7. Exclamatory Adjective

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The word *what* is used as an exclamatory adjective which is əja in Nambashi.

For instance,

əja ruŋŋa kət^ha k^het-e

What girl lovely one-ASP

‘What a lovely girl!’

əja kənə kət^hə k^het-e

What day beautiful one-ASP

‘What a beautiful day!’

4. Position of Adjective

Adjectives can be used attributively as well as predicatively. And both the structure can be found in Nambashi.

For example,

1. kətək rəməi kətəp-e

Fat-girl-cry-PROG

‘The fat girl is crying’

2. rəməi kətək-e

Girl fat-ASP

‘The girl is fat’

In the first sentence, the adjective fat is used along with the noun ‘girl’ as an attributive. It is therefore said to be used attributively. In the second sentence, the adjective fat is used along with the verb ‘is’ and forms the part of the predicate. It is therefore, said to be used predicatively.

Some adjectives can be used only predicatively.

Example;

əmə crao cəcjə- e

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She/he ghost afraid-ASP

'She is afraid of ghost'

The position of adjective can be studied into two categories. The first category is the adjective placed before the noun and the second condition is the adjective placed after the noun. Generally it is understood that adjectives are placed before the noun to modify the noun but there are conditions found sometimes adjectives to be used after the noun. The conditions are discussed below with the help of examples.

Adjective before Noun

Where a single adjective used attributively is generally placed immediately before the noun. This is the general structure of adjective.

For example,

1. əmə in-kələu lək si-e

He house old PAST visit-PER

'He visited the old house'

2. kəi əmʃu kət^ha k^huŋgrau pampin-ŋe

I colour good pants like ASP

'I love colourful pants'

Adjective after Noun

When several adjectives modify a single noun, they are generally placed after it for emphasis.

Example:

oʃa k^het əme kəsij kwar-re

teacher one lived wise talent-ASP

'There lived a teacher, wise and talented'

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When some word or phrase is joined to the adjective and clarifies its meaning, the adjective is placed after its noun.

Example:

nə kəpawəwe ese karəktə kəp^hau-we

he man essay write famous- ASP

'he is a man famous for his essays'

In certain phrases, the adjective always comes after the noun.

Example:

winə jəŋrəu nə ciŋnənəmak-mai culota əmə siŋga karək mjə-e

doubt-no that he real writer person-ASP

'There is no doubt that he is the real writer'

Adjective of quality comes after the linking verb.

Example:

nao injəu cat-e

baby sleep seem-ASP

'The baby seems asleep'

əmə riŋ əme

He/she silent ASP

'he kept silent'

Sometimes, a linking verb takes an adjective as its complement.

For instance,

kəi bu tamjaŋ

i food hungry

'I feel hungry'

wi t^haira kəcjə kət^hum-e

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This mango tastes sweet-ASP

'This mango tastes sweet'

In some sentences the adjectives denote result.

Example:

əmə ink^har k^hoijai

He door broke

'he broke the door open'

əmə əmtin kəan kəsəŋ-ŋe

She nail red paint -ASP

'She painted her nails red'

5. Degree of Comparison

Adjectives are used to compare things, person etc. There are three degrees of comparison. They are positive, comparative and superlative degree of comparison. They are discussed below with the help of example.

5.1. Positive Degree

Positive degree of adjective is similar with the adjective of quality where no comparison is made. It is used to express some quality of what we speak about.

For example,

mira kudon rəməi k^het-e

Meera rich girl one-COP

'Meera is a rich girl'

Rahul hiŋkok ʒeket kalu k^het-e

Rahul blue jacket wear one-ASP

'Rahul wears a blue jacket'

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5.2. Comparative Degree

It is used to denote a higher degree of the quality than the positive and is used when two things are compared. The word /k^hil/ is generally used in comparative degree.

For instance,

Mira wi nitu re k^hil kudon-ne

Meera NOM Nitu ABL COM rich-ASP

‘Meera is richer than Nitu’

menrəi rek^hil mə uipə-e

of the two ABL COM she old-ASP

‘She is older of the two’

k^hoi waniṅ cjənə re k^hil-le

honey better sugar ABL COM-ASP

‘honey is preferable to sugar’

However, the presence of /k^hil/ may not be found in some construction as shown below:

əmə wi kəi re t^huimjə-e

She NOM I ABL junior-ASP

‘She is junior to me’

5.3. Superlative Degree

It is used to denote the highest degree of quality and is used when more than two things are compared. /re/ is the superlative marker used in Nambshi.

For instance,

mə we clas retə t^ha-re satrə-e

she NOM class LOC good-SUP student-ASP

‘She is the best student in the class’.

mə tə kət^hare əmno əme

she GEN beautiful-SUP mother ASP

‘She has the most beautiful mother’.

6. Conclusion

Nambashi is a dialect of Tangkhul language mainly spoken in the Ukhrul district of Manipur. In this paper the various aspects of the formation of adjective in Nambashi have been discussed with examples. The different types of adjectives, their position and degree of comparison have been discussed. It is a small community with only 1500 speakers. Adjective has been taken as a small part of the language for the study. There is no written grammar for this language and there is no dictionary published. In another way, it can be said that the language needs the study of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, the four main areas of linguistics.

Abbreviation

ABL	-	Ablative
ASP	-	Aspect
COM	-	Comparative
CONJ	-	Conjunction
COP	-	Copula
GEN	-	Genitive
INT	-	Interrogative
LOC	-	Locative
NEG	-	Negative
NOM	-	Nominative
SUP	-	Superlative

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