

Numerals in Chiru

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Abstract

This paper attempts to discuss the numerals in Chiru. Chiru belongs to the Kuki-Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman language family (Grierson 1904). Chiru is one of the thirty-three recognised tribal languages of Manipur. The total population of Chiru speakers is only 8599 (census of India: 2011). Numeral system in Chiru is of decimal type like most of the Tibeto-Burman languages. The numerals in Chiru can be classified into seven types viz. cardinal, ordinal, fractional, multiplicative, distributive, restrictive and approximate numerals.

Keywords: Chiru, Kuki-Chin, Numerals, decimal

1. Introduction

Chiru is name of the language spoken by the Chiru people. It belongs to the Kuki-Chin group of Tibeto-Burman language family (Grierson 1904). Chiru is one of the thirty-three recognised tribal languages of Manipur. The total population of Chiru speakers is only 8599 (census of India: 2011). The language has close affinities with other Kuki-Chin languages like Ranglong, Aimol, Kom, Chorei, Darlong, Hrangkhoh, Sakachep, etc. These languages share the similar terms with Chiru for most of the basic lexical items. They differ only in the level of syntactic constructions due to which Chiru is not mutually intelligible with the speakers of these languages. Chiru language in Manipur is influenced by Meiteilon and by Hmar in Assam. Thus, the language is considered highly endangered.

2. Numerals

Numeral is a symbol or name that stands for a number (e.g. one, five, twelve, hundred) while number is a grammatical category distinguishing between singular and plural.

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Linguistically, a numeral is a member of a word class designating numbers. Numerals in Chiru function most typically as adjectives. The numeral system in Chiru is of decimal type. Vigesimal system is not found in the language. The numerals in Chiru may be classified into 7 types as follows:

1. Cardinal Numerals,
2. Ordinal numerals,
3. Fractional numerals,
4. Multiplicative numerals,
5. Distributive numerals,
6. Restrictive numerals and
7. Approximate numerals.

2.1 Cardinal Numerals

Cardinal numerals in Chiru can be further classified into two types: 1. Basic cardinal numerals and 2. Compound cardinal numerals.

2.1.1 Basic Cardinal Numerals

The numerals denoting the numbers from one to ten are considered as the basic forms. The basic cardinal numbers in Chiru are provided in table 1.

Table 1. Basic cardinal numerals in Chiru

Chiru	Gloss	Chiru	Gloss
<i>ək^hat</i>	‘one’	<i>urup</i>	‘six’
<i>idi</i>	‘two’	<i>siri</i>	‘seven’
<i>ut^húm</i>	‘three’	<i>eret</i>	‘eight’
<i>milí</i>	‘four’	<i>okó</i>	‘nine’
<i>rəŋə</i>	‘five’	<i>ɔsɔm</i>	‘ten’

2.1.2 Compound Cardinal Numerals

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Two or more basic or other cardinal numerals combine to form compound cardinal numeral. Compound numerals in Chiru can be sub-classified into the following categories: (i) Additive compound numerals (ii) Multiplicative compound numerals and (iii) Multiplicative cum additive compound numerals.

2.1.2.1 Additive Compound Numerals

The numerals from 11 to 19 are in additive compound numerals. They are formed by combinations of ten and one, two, three etc. which are conjoined by the conjunctive suffix *lei*. Additive compound numerals in Chiru are provided in the table 2.

Table 2. Additive compound numeral in Chiru

Additive rule	Chiru	Gloss	Additive rule	Chiru	Gloss
[10+1=11]	<i>sɔmléik^hàt</i>	‘eleven’	[10+6=16]	<i>sɔmléirùp</i>	‘sixteen’
[10+2=12]	<i>sɔmléidi</i>	‘twelve’	[10+7=17]	<i>sɔmléisiri</i>	‘seventeen’
[10+3=13]	<i>sɔmléit^hùm</i>	‘thirteen’	[10+8=18]	<i>sɔmléirèt</i>	‘eighteen’
[10+4=14]	<i>sɔmléimili</i>	‘fourteen’	[10+9=19]	<i>sɔmléikò</i>	‘nineteen’
[10+5=15]	<i>sɔmléirəḡə</i>	‘fifteen’			

2.1.2.2 Multiplicative Compound Numerals

Multiplicative compound numerals are very productive in Chiru. Infinitely large numbers are formed by this rule. All the numerals ending in zero starting from 20 and beyond are in multiplicative compound numerals in Chiru. Table3 illustrates the multiplicative compound numerals in Chiru.

Table 3. Multiplicative compound numerals in Chiru

Multiplicative rule	Chiru	Gloss	Multiplicative rule	Chiru	Gloss
[10x2=20]	<i>sɔmdi</i>	‘twenty’	[100x1=100]	<i>rəzək^hat</i>	‘one hundred’

[10x3=30]	<i>sɔmt^húm</i>	‘thirty’	[100x2=200]	<i>rəzàdi</i>	‘two hundred’
[10x4=40]	<i>sɔmmilí</i>	‘forty’	[1000x1=1000]	<i>bɔpk^hat</i>	‘one thousand’
[10x5=50]	<i>sɔmrəḡá</i>	‘fifty’	[1000x2=2000]	<i>bɔpdi</i>	‘two thousand’
[10x6=60]	<i>sɔmrup</i>	‘sixty’	[1000x3=3000]	<i>bɔpt^húm</i>	‘three thousand’

2.1.2.3 Multiplicative cum Additive Compound Numerals

All the numerals ending in 1 to 9 from 21 and beyond such as 21 to 29, 31 to 39, 91 to 99, 101 to 109, 1001 to 1009 etc. in Chiru are formed through multiplication of first two numerals and addition of the third one. Table4 shows the multiplicative cum additive numerals in Chiru as follows:

Table 4. Multiplicative cum additive numerals in Chiru

Rule for multiplicative cum additive	Chiru	Gloss	Rule for multiplicative cum additive	Chiru	Gloss
[10x2+1=21]	<i>sɔmdiléik^hàt</i>	‘twenty-one’	[10x2+8=28]	<i>sɔmdiléirèt</i>	‘twenty-eight’
[10x9+1=91]	<i>sɔmkóleik^hàt</i>	‘ninety-one’	[100x1+1=101]	<i>rəzak^hat-ə^hàt</i>	‘one hundred one’
[10x9+9=99]	<i>sɔmkóleikò</i>	‘ninety-nine’	[100x2+9=209]	<i>rəzadi-okó</i>	‘two hundred nine’

2.2 Ordinal Numerals

The ordinal numerals in Chiru are formed by prefixing *a-* and suffixing *-caḡna* to the cardinal numerals. Table5 provides the ordinal numerals in Chiru.

Table 5. Ordinal Numerals in Chiru

Chiru	Gloss	Chiru	Gloss
<i>ák^hatcaṇṇà</i>	‘first’	<i>səmdicaṇṇa</i>	‘twentieth’
<i>ádicaṇṇà</i>	‘second’	<i>səmretléidicaṇṇà</i>	‘eighty-second’
<i>át^humcaṇṇà</i>	‘third’	<i>səmkóleik^hàtcaṇṇà</i>	‘ninety-first’
<i>ámilicaṇṇà</i>	‘fourth’	<i>rəzək^hatcaṇṇa</i>	‘one hundredth’
<i>səmléirəṇəcaṇṇà</i>	‘fifteenth’	<i>bəpdicaṇṇa</i>	‘two thousandth’
<i>səmléirupcaṇṇà</i>	‘sixteenth’	<i>bəpdi-razadi- səmdiléidicaṇṇà</i>	‘two thousand two hundred twenty second’

2.3 Fractional Numerals

Fractional numerals are not common in Chiru. The only fractional numeral commonly used in Chiru is *ok^hoi* ‘half’. A few basic fractional numerals can be formed by compounding. The formations of the basic fractional numerals in Chiru are given in the table6.

Table 6. Fractional numerals in Chiru

Chiru	Gloss
<i>ok^hói</i>	‘half’
<i>k^hatlek^hoi</i>	‘one and half’
<i>milîà-ak^hat</i>	‘quarter’
<i>raṇá-à ak^hat</i>	‘one fifth’
<i>ɔsəm-a ak^hat</i>	‘one tenth’
<i>rəzək^hat-a ak^hat</i>	‘one in hundred’

2.4 Multiplicative Numerals

Multiplicative numerals in Chiru are formed by prefixing *voi-* to the cardinal numerals. Table7 provides a few examples of multiplicative numerals in Chiru.

Table 7. Multiplicative numerals in Chiru

Chiru	Gloss
<i>voik^hat</i>	‘once’
<i>voidi</i>	‘twice’
<i>voit^húm</i>	‘thrice’
<i>voisəm</i>	‘ten times’
<i>voisəmléidì</i>	‘twelve times’
<i>voirəzək^hat</i>	‘one hundred times’

2.5 Distributive Numerals

Distributive numerals are very common in Chiru. These numerals are formed by both complete and partial reduplication of the cardinal numerals. The two types of distributive numerals are discussed in the following sub-section.

2.5.1 Distributive Numerals Formed by Partial Reduplication

A few numerals from 1 to 10 employ partial reduplication to form distributive numerals in Chiru. Table 8 provides the distributive numerals formed by partial reduplication.

Table 8. Distributive numerals formed by partial reduplication

Chiru	Gloss
<i>ək^hát-k^hàt</i>	‘one each’
<i>idí-dì</i>	‘two each’
<i>ut^húm-t^hùm</i>	‘three each’
<i>urúp-rùp</i>	‘six each’
<i>osəm-səm</i>	‘ten each’
<i>erét-rèt</i>	‘eight each’
<i>okó-kò</i>	‘nine each’

2.5.2 Distributive Numerals Formed by Complete Reduplication

Distributive numerals formed by complete reduplication are very common in Chiru. Any two numerals, excepting those formed by partial reduplication, can form distributive numerals by complete reduplication. Table 9 gives the distributive numerals in Chiru formed by complete reduplication.

Table 9. Distributive numerals formed by complete reduplication

Chiru	Gloss
<i>mílí-milì</i>	‘four each’
<i>rəŋá-rəŋà</i>	‘five each’
<i>sirí-sirì</i>	‘seven each’
<i>səmleidí-səmleidi</i>	‘twelve each’
<i>səmdí-səmdí</i>	‘twenty each’
<i>rəzəmilí-rəzəmilì</i>	‘four hundred each’
<i>bəpk^hát-bəpk^hàt</i>	‘one thousand each’

2.6 Restrictive Numerals

Restrictive numerals in Chiru are formed by suffixation of *-bakte* ‘only’ or *-te* ‘only’ to the cardinal numerals. Table 10 provides the restrictive numerals in Chiru.

Table 10. Restrictive numerals in Chiru

Chiru	Gloss
<i>k^háttè</i>	‘only one’
<i>rəzək^háttè</i>	‘only one hundred’
<i>idibáktè</i>	‘only two’
<i>ul^humbáktè</i>	‘only three’
<i>milibáktè</i>	‘only four’

<i>rəŋəbáktè</i>	‘only five’
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2.7 Approximate Numerals

Approximate numerals in Chiru are formed by suffixation of *-dər* ‘approximate’ to the cardinal numerals. Table 11 provides the approximate numerals in Chiru.

Table 11. Approximate numerals in Chiru

Chiru	Gloss	Chiru	Gloss
<i>osəmdər</i>	‘about ten’	<i>səmléirupdər</i>	‘about sixteen’
<i>səmdidər</i>	‘about twenty’	<i>rəzək^hatdər</i>	‘about one hundred’
<i>səmrəŋádər</i>	‘about fifty’	<i>bəpdidər</i>	‘about two thousand’

3 Conclusion

The numeral system of Chiru is of decimal type. The numerals in Chiru are broadly classified into 7 types viz. cardinal, ordinal, fractional, multiplicative, distributive, restrictive and approximate numerals. Cardinal numerals have two types- basic and compound cardinal numerals. Compound cardinal numeral is further discussed as additive compound, multiplicative compound and multiplicative cum additive compound numeral. Ordinal numerals are marked by suffixing *-caŋna* to the cardinal numerals. Fractional numerals are not common in Chiru. The only commonly used fraction is *-okhói* ‘half’. Multiplicative numerals in Chiru are formed by prefixing the numerals with *voi-* ‘times’. Distributive numerals are formed either by partial or complete reduplications of the numerals. The restrictive numerals are formed suffixing *-báktè* ‘only’ or *-tè* ‘only’ and the approximate numerals by suffixing *-dər* ‘approximately’ to the numerals.

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