Some Aspects of the Nominal Morphology in Kakching Dialect

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Abstract

Manipuri, locally known as Meiteilon is one of the oldest and advanced Tibeto-Burman languages of the Northeast India (Grierson, 1903). Kakching dialect is a dialect of Manipuri and it is spoken among the people of Kakching district of Manipur. Kakching dialect being a dialect of Manipuri exhibits some of the common grammatical features of standard Manipuri, at the same time it has shown many grammatical features differerent from the standard Manipuri. Thus the present paper is a humble attempt to explore some aspects of the nominal morphology in Kakching dialect.

1.0. Introduction

Manipuri, locally known as Meiteilon, is one of the oldest and advanced Tibeto-Burman languages of the Northeast India. Manipuri is the only medium of communication among the 34 different tribes of Manipur. Hence, it is considered as Lingua Franca of the region. Manipuri has become the first Tibeto-Burman language to receive the recognition of the eight schedule of Indian constitution since 1992. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages of Northeast India, Manipuri has four major dialects i.e., Andro, Phayeng, Sekmai and Kakching. All these dialects are phonologically and lexically variance from the standard dialect of Manipuri spoken in Imphal valley. The people of Kakching use Kakching dialect within the town to communicate among themselves or for informal used and they use Standard Manipuri to communicate with others or for formal used. Kakching is situated in the Southeastern part of Manipur and it is about 44 km from the capital of Manipur, Imphal and 70 km from the border areas of India and Myanmar. In terms of population and development, Kakching is the second biggest town in Manipur next to Imphal. However, it has the highest literacy rate in the state of Manipur. According to 2011 Census of India, Kakching had a population of 33,170.

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2.0. Typological Features of Kakching

(1) Kakching dialect has no grammatical gender. The gender distinction in Kakching dialect is natural i.e., all the male comes under the masculine and all the female comes under the feminine. All inanimate things fall under the neuter gender.

(2) Numeral system in Kakching dialect is mainly of decimal type. However, the vigesimal system is also present in the numeral system of the language.

(3) In Kakching dialect, case relation is expressed by means of postpositions.

(4) Like many other Kuki-Chin languages, tense is not distinctive in Kakching dialect. So aspect commonly is an important part of the representation of time in Tibeto-Burman languages. Kakching dialect has four aspectual distinctions: (i) simple (ii) perfective (iii) irrealis or unrealized (iv) durative.

(5) Like many other south Asian languages, the basic order of the words in unmarked sentences in Kakching dialect is Subject, object, Verb (SOV).

(6) Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, Kakching dialect has no overt relative pronoun to form relative clause. So relativization in Kakching dialect is made by prefixing the nominalizer *-bə* to the verb of the nominalized clause.

(7) Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages/dialects, negation in Kakching dialect is expressed by means of affixation i.e., suffixation.

3.0. Nominal Morphology in Kakching Dialect
3.1. Nouns and Its Classifications

Noun in Kakching dialect may be defined as a class of words that can be affixed by morphemes i.e., by postposing plural markers *-siŋ, -khoi* and plural word *-məyam;* male and female markers *əmom* and *labə,* case suffixes *-na, -pu, -ta, -tagi,* etc. According to the structure of the nouns, they can be classified into the following types:

i)   Basic Nouns
ii)   Compound Nouns and
iii)   Derived Nouns.

3.1.1. Basic Nouns

Basic nouns are nouns which can occur independently of their own without any affixation i.e., either prefixation or suffixation. Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages in general and standard

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Manipuri in particular, most of the basic nouns in Kakching dialect are monomorphemic i.e., they cannot be further analyzed into different constituents. The basic nouns in Kakching dialect are illustrated below:

huy	'dog'
yum	'house'
ya	'teeth'
ceŋ	'rice'
kʰut	'hand'

3.1.2. Compound Nouns

Compound nouns are formed by the juxtaposition of independent morphemes. As many other Tibeto-Burman languages and their dialects, compound nouns are very common and productive in Kakching dialect. Structurally, compound nouns can be categorized in the following types:

(i) Noun + Noun

kʰoŋ + məkʰun > kʰoŋkʰun 'foot print'

leg   hole

tʰəw + məpu > tʰəwpu 'host'

program owner

yum + məpu > yumpu 'house owner'

house owner

It is observed that the above compound nouns *kʰoŋkʰun* 'foot print', *tʰəwpu* 'host', and *yumpu* 'house owner' in Kakching dialect are used as *kʰoŋgun* 'foot print', *tʰəwbu* 'host', and *yumbu* 'house owner' in Standard Manipuri. In other words, the voiceless stops /kʰ, p/ in Kakching dialect became voiced stops /g, b/ in standard Manipuri.

(ii) Noun + Augmentive

tʰaŋ + caw > tʰaŋcaw   'big knife'

knife   big

ciŋ + caw > ciŋcaw 'mountain'

hill   big

It is observed that the above compound nouns *tʰaŋcaw* 'big knife' and *ciŋcaw* 'mountain' in Kakching are used as *tʰaŋjaw* 'big knife', and *ciŋjaw* 'mountain' in Standard Manipuri. In other words, the voiceless stops /c/ in Kakching dialect became voiced stops /j/ in standard Manipuri.

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(iii) **Noun + Adjective**

 p^həm + len > p^hə$mlen$ 'right side of the verandah'

 place   head/great

 ŋəw + t^hoŋ > ŋəwt^hoŋ 'cataract'

 white wear

It is observed that the above compound noun *p^{h}əmlen* 'right side of the verandah' in Kakching dialect is used as *phamen* 'right side of the verandah', in Standard Manipuri i.e. the /*l*/ is being deleted from *phamlen* in standard Manipuri. Besides, the compound nouns *ŋəwt^{h}oŋ* 'cataract' is used as *ŋəwdoŋ* 'cataract' in standard Manipuri. In other words, the voiceless alveolar stops /*t^h*/ in Kakching dialect became voiced alveolar stops */d/* in standard Manipuri.

3.1.3. Derived Nouns

Like standard Manipuri, the derived nouns in Kakching dialect are mainly derived from the verb by suffixing derivational morpheme *{-pə}* to the verbal roots. It is interesting to note that standard Manipuri has allomorph in the forms of *{-pə ~ -bə}*. Similarly, Kakching dialect has two allomorph *{-pə ~ -bə}*, however, the occurrence of *{-pə}* is higher than the *{-ba}*. This morphological phenomenon of Kakching dialect is just opposite to the Standard Manipuri in which the occurrence of *{-bə}* is higher than the *{-pə}*. Some of the derived nouns in the dialect are shown below:

Verbs	**verbal nouns**
t^{h}ək 'drink'	*t^{h}ək-pə* 'drinking'
cət 'go'	*cət-pə* 'going'
cen 'run'	*cen-bə* 'running'

3.2. Gender

Being a dialect of Tibeto-Burman language, Kakching dialect has no grammatical gender. The gender distinction in the dialect is natural i.e., all the male comes under the masculine and all the female comes under the feminine. The basic gender distinction is between nouns referring to animate and inanimate. All inanimate things consider as neuter gender.

The gender distinction in Kakching dialect is categorized as below:

(i) By using *{–pa}* and *{-pi}*

Most of the kinship terms in Kakching dialect are made gender distinctions by using *{-pa}* and *{-pi}* indicating masculine and feminine respectively as shown in the following examples:

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nupa	'man'
nupi	'woman'
əboŋpa	'grandfather'
əboŋpi	'grandmother'
ica nupa	'son'
ica nupi	'daughter'

(ii) By using *{-labə}* and *{-əmom}*

In case of non-human nouns, the morphemes *{-labə}* and *{-əmom}* are used to indicate 'male' and 'female respectively as evidenced by the following examples:

sən-labə	'bull'
sən-əmom	'cow'
yen-labə	'cock'
yen-əmom	'hen'

(iii) By using opposite lexical items

Like many other languages and dialects in South East Asia, a number of lexical items are attested in Kakching dialect which is inherently denoting masculine and feminine gender as illustrated in the following examples:

ima	'mother'	*ipa*
	'father'	
pak^{h}əŋ	'bachelor'	*leisabi*
	'unmarried women'	
nupa	'boy'	
nupi	'girl'	

3.2.1 Neuter Gender

The inanimate nouns have no gender distinction as we have in animate nouns i.e., they cannot be classified as either masculine or feminine. Thus all inanimate things consider as neuter. Consider the following example:

t^{h}umuk	'basket'
cakk^{h}əm	'kitchen'
p^{h}i	'cloth'

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saun	'leather'		
tʰoŋcaw	'big door'		
sumsit	'broom'		

3.3. Number

Kakching dialect has two numbers, namely (i) Singular and (ii) Plural. As many other Tibeto-Burman languages, number in Kakching dialect is not grammatically significant. Morphologically, singular forms of nouns are unmarked however the plural forms of nouns are marked by the plural morphemes {*-siŋ}, {-məyam}* and *{-səŋgu}.* Consider the following examples:

nupa	'man'	*nupa-siŋ*	'men'
ucek	'bird'	*ucek-səŋgu*	'birds'
huy	'dog'	*huy-mayam*	'dogs'
u	'tree'	*u-siŋ*	'trees'

3.3.1. Pluralisation of Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns in Kakching dialect are pluralized by the marker *{-kʰoi}.*

Singular	**Plural**
əi 'i'	*əi-kʰoi* 'we'
nəŋ 'you'	*nə-kʰoi* 'you (pl)'
mə 'he/she'	*mə-kʰoi* 'they'

3.3.2. Pluralisation of Kinship Terms

The plurality of the kinship terms in Kakching dialect is expressed by suffixing *{-siŋ}* to the singular form of kinship terms. Considered the following examples:

əboŋpa-siŋ	'grandfathers'
əboŋpi-siŋ	'grandmothers'
icanupa-siŋ	'sons'
icanupi-siŋ	'daughters'

3.4. Numerals

In Kakching dialect, numerals can be classified into seven types namely (i) cardinal (ii) ordinal (iii) multiplicative (iv) fractional (v) indefinite (vi) distributive and (vii) restrictive numerals

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3.4.1. Cardinal Numerals

Numeral system in Kakching dialect is of decimal type. There are a few basic forms of cardinal numerals with or without affixes. The numerals denoting the numbers from one to ten, twenty, hundred, thousand and lakh are considered as basic forms. The rest of the numerals are derived from compounding the basic numerals. The following are the basic numerals found in Kakching:

əmə	'one'
əni	'two'
əhum	'three'
məri	'four'
məŋa	'five'
təruk	'six'
təret	'seven'
nipal	'eight'
mapəl	'nine'
təra	'ten'
kun	'twenty'
camə	'hundred'
lisiŋ	'thousand'
lak	'lakh'

The numerals from 11 to 19 are formed by compounding the basic numerals from one to nine to */-təra*/ meaning 'ten'

təra-mat^hoi	'eleven'
təra-nit^hoi	'twelve'
təra-humt^hoi	'thirteen'

3.4.2. Ordinals

In Kakching dialect, ordinal numerals are formed by adding the suffix */-subə/* to the cardinal numerals except in case of 'first' as shown below:

Kakching	Gloss
əhanbə	'first'
əni-subə	'second'
əhum-subə	'third'

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3.4.3. Multiplicative Numeral

Multiplicative numerals are formed by prefixing /-rək/ to the cardinal numerals.

əmu-rək	'once'
əni-rək	'twice'
əhum-rək	'thrice'
məri-rək	'four times'

3.4.4. Fractional numerals

The following are fractional numerals found in Kakching dialect. It is observed that *pəuwa* 'quarter' seems to borrow from Indo-Aryan languages particularly Bangla as illustrated below.

tankʰai/kʰaypɔk	'half'
pəuwa	'quarter'
məcet	'piece'

3.4.5. Indefinite Numerals

Indefinite numerals in Kakching dialect may be categorised into two types: (i) simple (ii) derived. The following are the indefinite numerals in Kakching dialect:

kʰərə/kʰittəŋ	'some/few'
əmə hekta	'any one'
kaŋbu	'group'
cəkʰom əmə	'morsel'
kʰuya əmə	'amount that one hand can grasp'
məpun	'heap'
cəbul	'bunch'

3.4.6. Distributive Numerals

Distributive numerals in Kakching dialect are formed by means of reduplication as shown below.

əmə məm	'one by one'
əni əni	'two each'
məpan məpan	'nine each'

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3.4.7. Restrictive Numerals

Restrictive numerals are formed by adding suffix */-təŋ/* to the cardinal numerals nevertheless in standard Manipuri, it is formed by suffixing */-kʰatəŋ/* to the cardinals. The examples of restrictive numerals in Kakching dialect are shown below:

əmə-təŋ	'only one'
əni-təŋ	'only two'
əhum-təŋ	'only three'
mapəl-təŋ	'only nine'
tərə-təŋ	'only ten'

4.0. Case

As many other Tibeto-Burman languages/dialects, case relations in Kakching dialect are expressed by means of postpositions. In other words, case relation in Kakching dialect is expressed by postposing the case markers to the nouns or pronouns. The case markers in Kakching dialect are suffixes which include (i) *-na*, nominative , (ii) *-pu ~ -bu,* accusative, (iii) *-ka ~ -ga,* associative, (iv) *-na,* instrumental, (v) *-ki ~ -gi,* genitive, (vi) *-tagi ~ -dagi,* ablative, and (vii) *-ta ~ -da,* locative. Undoubtedly, the same case markers are used both for animate and inanimate nouns. Generally, case markers are not marked for the number, and gender of nouns. Structurally, Kakching dialect has seven types of cases as illustrated in table 1:

Cases	Form	Function
Nominative	*-na*	Agent
Accusative	*-bu*	Experiencer
Locative	*-ta ~ -da*	Location of participants
Genitive	*-ki ~ gi*	Possessor
Instrumental	*-ta ~ -da*	Instrument of agent
Associative	*-ka ~ -ga*	Participants
Ablative	*-tagi ~ -dagi*	Source

Table 1: Case marking in Kakching dialect

In Kakching dialect different morphemes are suffixed to show the different relationship between the noun phrase and other constituents in a sentence. In all, seven case relationships are set up in the dialect as such,

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1. Nominative case

2. Accusative case

3. Locative case

4. Genitive case

5. Instrumental case

6. Ablative case

7. Associative case

1. Nominative Case

It is the case used to mark the subject of the sentences. In Kakching dialect, the nominative case is expressed by postposing the morpheme *{-nə}* to the noun or pronoun as exemplified in the following examples.

a)   *mə-nə   əi   u-i*

   he-NOM. I-ACC. see-SIM

   'He sees me.*'*

b)   *nəŋ-nə Thoi u-ram-i*

    you-NOM. Thoi see-EVI-SIM

   'You saw Thoi.'

c)   *məkʰoy –nə mə ◌ u-ram-i*
   they-NOM. you-ACC. see-EVI-SIM

   'They see him.'

2. **Accusative Case**

        The accusative case is used to mark the direct object of the transitive verb. In Kakching dialect, the accusative case is unmarked for nouns regardless of human-nonhuman however in the case of pronouns it is marked by *{-bu}*. Conversely, in standard dialect of Manipuri, the accusative case is expressed by postposing the morpheme *{-pu or-bu}* to the noun or pronoun except non-human nouns. Consider the following examples:

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a) *əi-na mə-bu kəitʰel-da u-ram-i*

   I-NOM. you-ACC. market-LOC. see-EVI.-SIM

   'I saw him in the market.'

b) *yoŋ-na lapʰoi ca-i*

   monkey-NOM. banana eat-SIM

   'the monkey eats banana.'

c) *mə-na   isəi   sək-lam-i*

   he-NOM. song sing-EVI.-SIM

   'He sang a song.'

d) *əŋaŋ-siŋ-na   chauba pʰu-ram-i*

   child-Pl.-NOM. chauba beat-EVI-SIM

   'Children beat Chauba'

3. Locative Case

It is a case which marks the location of both spatial and temporal reference, and the location of an item or person. The locative case in Kakching dialect is expressed by the morpheme *{-tə ~ -də}* as exemplified below:

a) *mə-gi   kʰut-tə   sok-le*

   he-NOM   hand-LOC   injure-PERF

   'He/she hurt his/her hand'

b) *əi kʰun-də   cət-kəni*

   I   village-LOC go-IRR

   'I will go to the village'

c) *əi puŋ   məŋa-də   haogat-li*

   I   hour   five-LOC   get up-SIM

   'I get up at five o'clock'

4. Genitive Case

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The genitive case is used to indicate possession. In Kakching dialect, it is expressed by post posing the morpheme *{-ki ~ -gi}* to the noun or pronoun. Consider the following examples.

a) *əihak-ki lairik-ni*

    I-GEN   book-COP

    'This is my book.'

b) *yum-gi   məcu-si   pʰajei*

    house-GEN   colour-PROX beautiful

    'The colour of the house is beautiful'

5. Instrumental Case

The instrumental case is used to denote the instruments or tools used for performing the action. In Kakching dialect, the instrumental case is expressed by post posing the morpheme *{-nə}* to the noun. Consider the following sentences:

a) *mə-nə   əŋaŋ-du   cəi-nə   pʰu-i*
    he-NOM. Child-PART   stick-INST   beat-SIM

    'He beats the child with stick'

b) *mə-nə   əŋaŋ-du   nuŋ-nə   tʰom-i*
    he-NOM child-PART   stone-INST   hit-SIM
    'He hit the child with the stone'

6. Ablative Case

The ablative case is used to express the source i.e., the place of origin. In Kakching dialect, it is expressed by post posing the morphemes *{-təgi ~ -dəgi}*, a combination of locative marker *ta~da* and genitive marker *-gi* which postposed to the nouns.

a) *u-dəgi   una   kel-i*

    tree-ABL leave   fall-SIM

    'The leaves fall from the tree.'

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(b) *ciŋ-dəgi   mə   lak-e*

    hill-ABL   he   come-PERF

    'He came from the hill.'

7. Associative Case

The associative case indicates the association or relationship of nouns or pronouns in the verb phrase with the nouns or pronouns functioning as the subject i.e., it has the comitative functions (in company with). In Kakching dialect, it is expressed by postposing morpheme *{-kə ~ -gə}* to the nouns or pronouns. Consider the following examples:

a) *əihak-kə   mə-gə   kʰətnə-rəm-i*
    I-ASSO   he-ASSO   quarrel-EVD-SIM
    'I quarrel with him'

b) *əi   mə-gə   kəitʰel   cət-lam-i*
    I   he-ASSO   bazaar   go-EVD-SIM
    'I went to market with him'

Conclusions

On the basis of the above illustration, the following conclusions can be drawn:

(i) Kakching dialect has no grammatical gender. The gender distinction in the dialect is natural i.e., all the male comes under the masculine and all the female comes under the feminine. The basic gender distinction is between nouns referring to animate and inanimate. All inanimate things consider as neuter gender.

(ii) Kakching dialect has two numbers, namely (i) Singular and (ii) Plural. As many other Tibeto-Burman languages, number in Kakching dialect is not grammatically significant. Morphologically, singular forms of nouns are unmarked however the plural forms of nouns are marked by the plural morphemes {*-siŋ}, {-məyam} and {-səŋgu}.*

(iii) The numeral system in Kakching dialect is decimal. There are a few basic forms of cardinal numerals with or without affixes. The numerals denoting the numbers from one to ten, twenty, hundred, thousand and lakh are considered as basic forms.

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(iv) The restrictive numerals are formed by adding suffix /-*təŋ*/ to the cardinal numerals nevertheless in standard Manipuri, it is formed by suffixing /-*kʰatəŋ*/ to the cardinals.

(v) As in many other Tibeto-Burman languages, case relations in Kakching dialect are expressed by means of postpositions. In other words, case relation in Kakching dialect is expressed by postposing the case markers to the nouns or pronouns. The case markers in Kakching dialect are suffixes which include (i) -*na*, nominative , (ii) -*pu* ~ -bu, accusative, (iii) -*ka* ~ -*ga,* associative, (iv) -*na,* instrumental, (v) -*ki* ~ -*gi,* genitive, (vi) -*tagi* ~ -*dagi,* ablative, and (vii) -*ta* ~ -*da,* locative.

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