A Brief Sketch of Interrogative in Sukte (Salhte)

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Abstract

As reported in my earlier article (http://languageinindia.com/may2019/arambamsuktecasepostposition.pdf), Sukte is one of the unwritten, undocumented, and undescribed languages of Manipur spoken by a tribe in the same name. The Sukte is the name of the language and community.

The term *Sukte* is derived from Sokte in the form of compounding such as sok 'to go down or southward' and te 'the plural suffix roughly indicating persons' literally 'people of the southward or low land'. This language is placed under the Kuki-Chin group of Tibeto-Burman sub-family of languages (Grierson, 1903). It is closely related to many other languages or dialects of Kuki- Chin group of languages namely Baite, Chorai, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Guite, Kaipeng, Ranglong, Rangkhol, etc. except Manipuri and are mutually intelligible with Chothe, Gangte, Guite, Simte, etc. They are commonly referred to as Tiddim Chin by neighbouring communities in Manipur; however, they prefer to call themselves as Sukte. The total population of Sukte (Salhte) in Manipur was 1905 according to 2001 Census report of Manipur.

The present paper presents a brief sketch on Interrogative in Sukte language spoken in Churachandpur district of Manipur.

Keywords: Sukte language, Interrogative, Manipur, Tibeto-Burman.

Introduction

Sukte is one of the unwritten, undocumented, and undescribed languages of Manipur spoken by a tribe in the same name. The Sukte is the name of the language and community.

The term *Sukte* is derived from Sokte in the form of compounding such as sok 'to go down or southward' and te 'the plural suffix roughly indicating persons' literally 'people of the southward or low land'. This language is placed under the Kuki-Chin group of Tibeto-Burman sub-family of languages (Grierson, 1903). It is closely related to many other languages or dialects of Kuki- Chin group of languages namely Baite, Chorai, Chiru, Chothe, Gangte, Guite, Kaipeng, Ranglong, Rangkhol, etc. except Manipuri and are mutually intelligible with Chothe, Gangte, Guite, Simte, etc. They are commonly referred to as Tiddim Chin by neighbouring communities in Manipur; however, they prefer to call themselves as Sukte. The total population

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of Sukte (Salhte) in Manipur was 1905 according to 2001 Census report of Manipur.

Sukte is primarily spoken in Moreh sub-division of Chandel district and New Lamka-G, Simbuk, Tanglon(T), Tonglon(P), Rakwal, Sum Cheavum, Tanggnuam, Pangzwl, Lanka, Singhat, Suangdai, behiang, Behiang(T), Suangphuk and Tingkangphai villages of Churachandpur district of Manipur. They are commonly referred to as Tiddim Chin by neighbouring communities in Manipur; however, they prefer to call themselves as Sukte. The total population of Sukte (Salhte) in Manipur was 1905 according to 2001 Census report of Manipur.

Typologically, Sukte is a tonal language. Gender distinction in Sukte is determined on the natural recognition of sex i.e., gender is not grammatically marked in this language. Sukte exhibits the typical feature of the Kuki-Chin languages as subject-verb agreement is present for different persons. Sukte is a verb final language, with dominant SOV word order.

Interrogatives
In Sukte, interrogative may be classified into following categories viz., (i) yes-no questions, (ii) Wh-questions, (iii) Alternative questions and (iv) Tag questions.

Yes-no Question
In Sukte, the yes-no questions are formed by using the question particle *hiam or diam* which is postposed to the verb or nouns or adjectivals as can be seen in the following examples:

(1) *nəŋ   nə   zoŋ   hiam?*
     you   2SG   poor   QM
     'Are you poor?'

(2) *nəŋ   nə   həuʔ   hiam?*
     you   2SG   rich   QM
     'Are you rich?'

(3) *ən   nə   ne   ta   hiam?*
     rice   2SG   eat   PST   QM
     'Did you take rice?'

(4) *pak   nə   hoiʔsə   hiam?*
     flower   2SG   like   QM
     'Do you like flower?'

(5) *nə   lam   diam?*
     2SG   dance   FUT.QM
     'Will you dance?'

(6) *əməʔ   ə   hoŋ   pai   diam?*
     he   3SG   DIR   come   FUT.QM
     'Will he come?'

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(7)   *nəŋ*   *nə*   *sək*   *diam?*
        you   2SG   sing   FUT.QM
        'Will you sing?'

Wh-Question

In Sukte, wh-question is formed by using *wh*-pronouns along with the question particle ***hiam/diam***, as can be seen from the following examples:

(8)   *ə*   *kuə*   *hiam?*
        3SG   who   QM
        'Who is he?'

(9)   *kuə*   *in*   *tʰei*   *hiam?*
        who   NOM   know   QM
        'Who knows?'

(10)   *kuə*   *don*   *hiam?*
         who   drink   QM
         'Who drinks?'

(11)   *kuə*   *pai*   *ta*   *hiam?*
         who   go   PST   QM
         'Who went?'

(12)   *kuə*   *əməʔ*   *toʔ*   *pai*   *diam?*
         who   he   with   go   FUT.QM
         'Who will go with him?'

(13)   *kuə*   *bol*   *hiam?*
         who   do   QM?
         'Who does this?'

(14)   *kuə*   *saŋ*   *əʔ*   *kəʔ*   *ta*   *hiam?*
         who   school   LOC   go   PST   QM
         'Who has gone to the school?'

(15)   *kuə*   *nə*   *mudəʔʔ*   *hiam?*
         who   2SG   hate   QM
         'Whom do you hate?'

(16)   *kuə*   *toʔ*   *nə*   *ne*   *nuəm*   *hiam?*
         who   with   2SG   eat   want   QM
         'With whom do you want to eat?'

(17)   *hiʔ*   *kuə*   *sabuəi*   *hiam?*
         this   who   table   QM
         'Whose table is this?'

(18)   *huə*   *kuə*   *puənnak*   *hiam?*
         that   who   shirt   QM
         'Whose shirt is that?'

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(19) hiʔ   kuə   laikuŋ   hiam?
      this   who   pen   QM
      'Whose pen is this?'

(20) lolai   əʔ   bəŋ   kituʔ   hiam?
      field   LOC   what   grow   QM
      'What is grown in the field?'

(21) əməʔ-in   bəŋ   ə   sem   hiam?
      he-NOM   what   3SG   do   QM
      'What does he do?'

(22) nəŋ   nə   min   bəŋ   hiam?
      you   2SG   name   what   QM
      'What is your name?'

(23) əmau   koi-əʔ ə   om   uf   hiam?
      they   where 3PL   stay   PL   QM
      'Where do they live?'

(24) john   koi-əʔ ə   teŋ   hiam?
      John   where 3SG   live   QM
      'Where does John live?'

(25) əməʔ   koi   ləm   pən   ə   hoŋ   kipən   hiam?
      he   where place from   3SG   DIR   start   QM
      'Where has he come from?'

(26) bəŋhunə   hoŋ   tuŋ   hiam?
      when   3SG   DIR   reach QM
      'When does he come?'

(27) bəŋhunə   pai   ta   hiam?
      when   3SG   go   PST   QM
      'When did he go?'

(28) nə   ləivuənnə   cikciəŋ hiam?
      2SG   exam   when   QM
      'When is your exam?'

(29) kum   bəŋzəʔ hiam?
      year   many   QM
      'How many years?'

(30) sum   bəŋzəʔ deiʔ nə   hiam?
      money   many   want   2SG   QM
      'How much money do you want?'

(31) nə   in   koi   hiam?
      2SG   house which QM?
      'Which is your house?'

(32) john   bəŋ   saŋ   əʔ   ə   kəʔ   ta   hiam?

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	John	which school LOC	3SG	go	PST	QM

'Which school did John go to?

(33) *tai*   *kidemnə*   *kuə*   *in*   *zo*   *hiam?*
race   competition   who   NOM   win   QM
'Which boy wins the race?'

Alternate Question

The alternate question in Sukte is expressed by using disjunctive marker *əhiʔkeileʔ*, which is used to form alternate question particularly in the case of clausal construction as can be seen in the following examples:

(34) *nə*   *don*   *əhiʔkeileʔ*   *nə*   *ne*   *diam?*
2SG   drink   or   2SG   eat   FUT.QM
'Will you drink or eat?'

(35) *ən*   *əhiʔkeileʔ*   *meʔ*   *bek*   *nə*   *ne*   *diam?*
rice   or   curry   only   2SG   eat   FUT.QM
'Will you take rice or curry?'

Tag Question

In Sukte, tag question is formed by using the taq question particle **mate**. It is worth mentioning here that Sukte is one of the TB languages which has special particle for expressing taq question. It is also observed that the tag question particle occurs sentence final position as can be seen in the following examples:

(36) *əməʔ*   *ə*   *niəm*   *hi,*   *mate?*
he   3SG   short   DECL   QM
'He is short, isn't it?'

(37) *əməʔ*   *ə*   *mipil*   *hi,*   *mate?*
he   3SG   learned   COP   QM
'He is learned man, is not it?'

(38) *nəŋ*   *mənipuri*   *nə*   *pau*   *tʰei*   *hi,*   *mate?*
you   Manipuri   2SG   speak   can   DECL   QM
'You can speak Manipuri, can't you?'

(39) *shyam*   *mi*   *hoiʔ*   *ə*   *hi,*   *mate?*
Shyam   man   good   3SG   COP   QM
'Shyam is a good man, is not he?

(40) *huə*   *puən*   *ə*   *hoiʔ*   *hi,*   *mate?*
that   cloth   3SG   beautiful   DECL   QM
'That shirt is beautiful, is not that?'

Reference

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