Khoibu Nouns

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Abstract: The present paper entitled “Khoibu Nouns” is an attempt to describe the nouns and its categories of Khoibu, a Tibeto-Burman language being spoken by Khoibu tribe. The literal meaning of this tribe is derived from ‘khoi’ and ‘pu’, where ‘khoi’ means ‘bee’ and ‘pu’ means ‘owner’. Thus the term refers to the speakers of this language as the ones who own ‘bee’, ‘beehives’ and ‘honey’ in the indigenous land of Khoibu territory. Khoibu is also known as Uipo and it belongs to the Kuki Chin Naga group of Tibeto-Burman family (Grierson LSI, Vol III, part II, 1903), Khoibu is mostly spoken in Chandel district of Manipur. It is spoken by approximately 2800 speakers in the Machi sub-division of Chandel district and some small numbers in the pockets of Imphal city, Manipur and there are eight Khoibu villages which are confined to Chandel district of Manipur which is the area where this language is being spoken. This paper linguistically analyses the nouns of Khoibu and its categories. Khoibu nouns can inflect number, gender and case.

Key Words: Khoibu, Nouns, Tibeto-Burman, Gender, Case.

Introduction

According to Grierson’s Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III part II (1903), Khoibu belongs to the Kuki Chin Naga group branch of the Tibeto-Burman Family which is an undocumented and highly endangered. It is spoken by approximately 2800 speakers in Manipur. Khoibu is mostly spoken in Chandel district of Manipur. It is spoken by approximately 2800 speakers (according to Mosyel Syelsaangthyel Khaling, a native speaker of Khoibu, Khamsing village) in the Machi sub-division of Chandel district, Manipur. There are eight Khoibu villages in Manipur viz. Khoibu Khullen, Biyang, Yamolching, Nungourok, Khamsing, Salemram, Thallem and Thawai.

The present paper is an attempt to describe the nouns and its categories in Khoibu. In this language, nouns can be divided into three type viz. Simple, derived and compound. Khoibu nouns can inflect number, gender and case.

Review of Literature

There is no available literature on this language which can be dealt and analysed for the description of the language. The present study is also a part of my ongoing Ph.D which is a pioneer work on this language. No descriptive study has been done except one comparative study by Yumnam Nungshitombi Devi, “A Comparative Study of Maring Dialects (Lamlong Khunaw...
and Khoibu)” M.phil dissertation, Manipur University, 1990 and a booklet “Khoibu (Uipo) Tribe : A Profile” compiled and published by Uipo(Khoibu) Maruo Assembly. Khoibu don’t have their own script but they have their own distinct culture and custom. For writing purposes they used Roman script.

Methodology

As there are no previous descriptive works that can be taken as reference for secondary data, this study mostly rely on primary data which I have elicited from native speakers of Khoibu Mr. Mosyel Syelsaangthyel Khaling (50 years), a native speaker of Khoibu from Khamsing village and some additional data from Mr. Donyaisen Hongsha (37 years) a native speaker of Khoibu
from Khoibu Khullen. The present study is based on around 300 words and a multiple number of sentences which I elicited from the above mentioned speakers.

Nouns

From the traditional view of grammarians, noun is defined as a word class which is used to indicate ‘name of a person, place or thing’. But linguistically nouns are items which can show certain types of inflection on number, gender, case and perform a specific syntactic function (e.g. as subject or object of a sentence).

Nouns in Khoibu can inflect number, person, gender and case. In Khoibu noun is divided into three types. They are
1. Simple Nouns
2. Derived Nouns
3. Compound Nouns

1. Simple Nouns

Simple nouns in Khoibu are those nouns which can occur as an independent morpheme without any prefix or suffix.

lu ‘head’
boN ‘cheek’
ha ‘tooth’
uk ‘chest’
caN ‘cupboard’
čim ‘house’

2. Derived Nouns

Derived nouns in Khoibu are formed by the process of prefixation, formation of derived nouns by the process of suffixation is absent in Khoibu. Khoibu derived nouns can be classified into two categories as given below.

by prefixation of ǝ-

ǝ + kǝča > ǝkǝča ‘mode of eating’
ǝ + kǝpa > ǝkǝpa ‘mode of reading’
ǝ + kǝča > ǝkǝca ‘mode of walking’
ǝ + kǝśon > ǝkǝśon ‘mode of teaching’
by prefixation of $kø-$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefixation</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$kø$ + $ča$</td>
<td>$ča$</td>
<td>$kča$</td>
<td>‘to eat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$kø$ + $kaN$</td>
<td>$kaN$</td>
<td>$køkaN$</td>
<td>‘to burn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$kø$ + $mæN$</td>
<td>$mæN$</td>
<td>$kømæN$</td>
<td>‘to drink’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$kø$ + $son$</td>
<td>$son$</td>
<td>$køson$</td>
<td>‘to teach’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$kø$ + $yon$</td>
<td>$yon$</td>
<td>$køyon$</td>
<td>‘to hide’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Compound Nouns**

Generally compound nouns are formed by combining two or more nouns. They are shown below.

1. **Noun + Noun**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$či$</td>
<td>$bun$</td>
<td>$čibun$</td>
<td>‘thatch hut’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thatch</td>
<td>hut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$sakwa$</td>
<td>$lapak$</td>
<td>$sakwalapak$</td>
<td>‘iron container’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iron</td>
<td>container</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ral$</td>
<td>$tʰæmi$</td>
<td>$raltʰæmi$</td>
<td>‘soldier’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>war</td>
<td>man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Noun + Augmentative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$hal$</td>
<td>$pui$</td>
<td>$halpui$</td>
<td>‘big cow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cow</td>
<td>big</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$hayŋ$</td>
<td>$pui$</td>
<td>$hayŋpui$</td>
<td>‘big monkey’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monkey</td>
<td>big</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ui$</td>
<td>$pui$</td>
<td>$uipui$</td>
<td>‘big dog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog</td>
<td>big</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Noun + Diminutive**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ui$</td>
<td>$ča$</td>
<td>$uiča$</td>
<td>‘puppy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog</td>
<td>small</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Categories of Noun

There are three categories of Noun in Khoibu. They are Number, Gender and Case.

#### Number

In Khoibu there are two numbers only; singular and plural. There is no grammatical agreement in number. Singular number is not marked overtly while plural number is marked by a suffix –**yao**.

![Number Diagram](image)

#### Plural Formation of human and animate Nouns – **yao**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nopača ‘boy’</td>
<td>nopača <strong>yao</strong> ‘boys’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>napuiča ‘girl’</td>
<td>napuičayao ‘girls’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wa ‘bird’</td>
<td>wayao ‘birds’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasan ‘child’</td>
<td>nasanyao ‘children’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toNkən ‘cat’</td>
<td>toŋkənyao ‘cats’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Plural Formation of Inanimate Nouns – **yao**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>upu ‘box’</td>
<td>upuyao ‘boxes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čim ‘house’</td>
<td>čimyao ‘houses’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karok ‘bowl’</td>
<td>karokyao ‘bowls’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čimkʰar ‘door’</td>
<td>čimkʰaryao ‘doors’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huŋ ‘key’</td>
<td>huŋyao ‘keys’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plural Formation in groups – *dəŋ or kol or bum*

- pʰidəŋ ‘bundle of clothes’
- čəydəŋ ‘bundle of sticks’
- helkol ‘herd of cows’
- yaokol ‘herd of sheep’
- parbum ‘bunch of flower’

Plurals of personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nəi ‘I’</td>
<td>nəi ‘we’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nəŋ ‘you’(sing.)</td>
<td>ni ‘you’(pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a ‘he’</td>
<td>i ‘they’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

In Khoibu there is no grammatical gender. Gender is realised as masculine or feminine on the basis of natural sex. Only human and animate nouns are referred as masculine and feminine gender. For human being, the suffix –pə is used to indicate male while –pui is used to indicate female.

![Gender Diagram](attachment:gender-diagram.png)

- Male
  - napa ‘man’
  - tateipa ‘old man’
  - pʰikəsupa ‘washer man’
- Female
  - nəpu ‘woman’
  - tateipui ‘old woman’
  - pʰikəsupui ‘washer woman’

For animals and birds also in the same way, the two suffixes –pə and –pui are used to indicate male and female.

- Male
  - wapa ‘cock’
- Female
  - wapui ‘hen’
uipe ‘dog’  uipui ‘bitch’
halpa ‘ox’  halpui ‘cow’

Case
Case is “a grammatical category used in the analysis of word-classes (or their associated phrases) to identify the syntactic relationship between words in a sentence, through such contrasts as nominative, accusative, etc” (Crystal, 2008).

There are eight cases in Khoibu. They are given below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Case Suffixes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>-nə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>-ti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>-nə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>-ray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>-yi/ŋiŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Associative</td>
<td>-pui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ablative</td>
<td>-ray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Vocative</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1-Case Suffixes

1. **Nominative Case – nə**
   In Khoibu the nominative case marker -nə is assigned to a noun or pronoun to indicate the subject of a sentence.
   a) a-na  tomba ti  kətən.
      He-NOM tomba ACC beat
      He beats tomba.
   b) pa-na  phi  kəsu.
      He-NOM cloth wash
      He washes clothes.

2. **Accusative Case – ti**
The accusative case marker -ti is used to indicate noun or pronoun as direct object to a verb of a sentence.
   a) ŋə  zoŋ  ti  kəʔi.
      I  john ACU love
      I love John.
   b) ŋə  meri  ti  kəpam
I marry ACU like
I like Marry

3. **Instrumental Case – nə**
   The instrumental case marker -nə is used to indicate instrument that the agent uses while carrying an activity.
   a) ŋəywənəro kəsat.
   I axe INS bamboo cut
   I cut bamboo with axe.
   b) ŋəysawənənəwhay kəkəm
   I knife INS mango cut
   I cut the mango with knife.

4. **Locative Case - raŋ**
   The locative case marker -raŋ indicates the location of an object or event.
   a) ŋəysimlarayǎ kəčə uyə.
   I shimla LOC go FUT.
   I will go to Simla.
   b) i lwpukraŋca kəor.
   They field LOC go PRF
   They went to field.

5. **Genitive Case – yi/uŋ**
   The genitive case marker –yi/uŋ denotes possessiveness or to express belongingness. –yi is used with a personal pronoun and –uŋ is used with a proper noun.
   a) hət-tə kəy-yi lailik.
   This my GEN book
   This is my book.
   b) ŋəynəphərik kəei əoibi uŋ kəlo.
   I NOM shirt one thoibi GEN buy
   I buy a shirt for thoibi.

6. **Associative Case – pui**
   The associative case marker –pui denotes the action which has been performed in association with another.
   a) ŋəyzon puien əcinema kətəui kəčə.
   I john ASS cinema watch go
   I go with john to watch the cinema.
   b) i nəsan yao pui mərək kənei.
   They children PL ASS play PROG.
7. Ablative Case – *ray
The ablative case marker -ray is used to give a meaning of source.

a) ŋə a na ray on kap ʰa
   I he-NOM. ABL.money got
   I got money from him.

b) a manipur ray koumŋ ʊŋ
   he Manipur ABL. come prog.
   He will be coming from Manipur.

c) ŋəy manipur ray
   I manipur ABL.
   I am from Manipur.

8. Vocative Case – *o
The vocative case marker –o is employed for calling a person from a distance and another for addressing.

a) o nu
   VOC. mother
   o mother!

b) o jon
   VOC. john
   o john!

Conclusion
Form the present study it can be conclude that nouns in Khoibu play a vital role in the morphology of Khoibu. As the data reveals nouns in Khoibu can be classified as three types viz. Simple, derived and compound. Derived nouns are formed by the process of affixation by prefixing -ə- and -kə- to the bound verb roots. Three categories of nouns are found i.e. number, gender and case. In Khoibu singular number is unmarked and plural number is marked by –yao. There is no number differentiation for animate and inanimate. Grammatical gender is absent in this language, gender is marked by the natural sex and it is indicated by –pa for male and –pui for female. Khoibu uses eight case markers which I have shown in the above examples.

References