

Numeral System of Mao

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Abstract

Mao is a language of the Naga-Kuki groups of Tibeto-Burman language family and spoken mainly in the Senapati district, the Northern part of Manipur. The Speaker of Mao language is known as Mao. This paper is attempted to study about the Mao numeral system. Like other Tibeto-Burman language, Mao also has decimal numeral systems. Generally, numeral is a word denoting a number. It can be considered as an integral part of a language which is used in everyday life and mainly in higher mathematics also. The way of constructing higher number system is of multiplication and addition type. The Mao numeral can be classified as Cardinal, Ordinal, Multiplicative, Aggregative, Approximate, Fractional, Indefinite and Restrictive. But cardinal numbers have more complex and more formal structure than ordinal numbers.

Keywords: Numeral, Cardinal, Ordinal, Multiplicative, Aggregative.

Introduction

The Speaker of Mao language is known as the Mao. It is a small tribe inhabiting in the Northern hill district of Manipur. They belong to the Mongoloid racial group. The language they speak is one of the Naga-Kuki groups of the Tibeto-Burman language family. The villages lie in a compact group on the Manipur Naga hill frontier. It is 62 miles far away from Imphal by road on the National Highway 39. It is one of the oldest hill stations of Manipur and its area is blessed with a rich flora and fauna. They live in a simple life very close to nature. The total population of Mao tribe is 69,131 according to the 2001 census report.

Few scholars like G.A. Grierson (1903), Mao included in the Naga-Kuki group of Tibeto-Burman language family. Benedict P.K (1972) described that Mao belongs to the Naga group of Sino-Tibetan family. And Robert Shafer (1974), also describe Mao as in the Luhupa unit in the Eastern Branch under the old Kukish section of Burmic division of Sino-Tibetan. According to Scott Delancy (1987), Mao belongs to the Naga group under the Assam-Burmese section of the Tibeto-Burman family. Ethno culturally, Mao is with the Nagas of Nagaland being closely related to the Angami-Nagas (P.P.Giridhar 1994).

Literature Review

The Mao language is the one of the Naga-Kuki group of language. It is closely connected with the western Naga languages. More than thirty three (33) Tibeto-Burman languages are found in Manipur. Out of these languages a few of them have officially recognized. There are a few written works on Mao languages such as 'Mao Naga Grammar' by P.P.Giridhar (1994). In his

work, he mentions about the grammar of Mao languages. Grammar is divided into three major parts i.e. (a) the phoneme, its phonetics realization and its graphic representation (b) the word, its internal structures and external functional and (c) the phrase and sentences into phonology, morphology and syntax respectively. Another work on Mao languages is 'Mao phonology' a dissertation paper under Manipur University by Th. Jamuna Devi (1991). In her dissertation only Mao phonology of this language is discussed.

Methodology

In this present paper, primary data is incorporated. To avoid error in transcription of the sounds from the native speakers, questionnaires and tape-recorder are also scientifically used. The collection of primary data from different informant of various age group both educated and uneducated from different sexes. The interviewing and questionnaire methods are also used for this paper.

Numeral

A numeral is a word denoting a number. It can be classified into two categories i.e. (i) Cardinal number and (ii) Ordinal number.

Cardinal Numbers

Cardinal is a traditional term retained in some models of grammatical description referring to the class of numerals- one, two, three, four, five etc. It may be divided into two types. They are (a) Basic cardinals (b) compound cardinals.

Basic cardinal number

Basic cardinal numbers are those numbers which are used in counting and showing specifics as one, two, three etc. The basic cardinal in Mao is as follows.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|------|---------|
| kəli | one |
| kəhe | two |
| kosa | three |
| pəde | four |
| poŋo | five |
| cəro | six |
| cəne | seven |
| cəca | eight |
| coko | nine |
| cia | ten |
| kəre | hundred |

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| t ^h u | thousand |
| ṅa | lakh |

Compound cardinal

Compound cardinals are formed by compounding the basic cardinals. It may be divided into two types. They are (i) Additive compound and (ii) Multiplicative compound.

Additive compound

Additive compounds are formed by adding the basic expression of numerals from one to nine to the decade numerals or multiplicative compounds. In Mao, they are formed by adding the basic numerals with the word /cia/ means 'ten', /mæke/ means 'twenty' i.e. ten plus one(10+1), ten plus two(10+2), twenty plus one(20+1) etc.

Examples

| Mao | | | Gloss |
|----------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| cia 'ten' | kəli 'one' | ciakəli | eleven |
| cia 'ten' | kəhe 'two' | ciakəhe | twelve |
| cia 'ten' | kosa 'three' | ciakosa | thirteen |
| cia 'ten' | pəde 'four' | ciapəde | fouteen |
| mæke 'twenty' | kəli 'one' | mækekəli | twentyone |
| sia 'thirty' | kosa 'three' | siakosa | thirtythree |
| repono 'fifty' | pono 'five' | reponoṅo | fiftyfive |

Multiplicative compounds

Multiplicative compounds are formed by compounding the basic cardinals to each other. It may be divided into two types.

- (i) Lower multiplicative compounds and
- (ii) Higher multiplicative compounds.

Lower multiplicative compounds

The lower multiplicative compounds are twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty, up to ninety. But in this forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety are formed by adding prefix /re-/ 'it gives the meaning of ten' to the basic numerals. However, in the case of twenty, thirty the prefix /re-/ is not because they have their distinct form.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|------|--------|
| mæke | twenty |

| | |
|--------|---------|
| sia | thirty |
| repəde | forty |
| repoŋo | fifty |
| recəro | sixty |
| recəne | seventy |
| recəca | eighty |
| recoko | ninety |

Higher multiplicative compounds

Higher multiplicative compounds may be expressed as the multiples of hundred and thousand by placing /kəre/ means ‘hundred’ and /t^hu/ means ‘thousand’ before cardinals.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|----------------------|---------------|
| kərekəli | one hundred |
| kərekəhe | two hundred |
| kərekosa | three hundred |
| t ^h ucia | ten thousand |
| t ^h upoŋo | five thousand |
| t ^h ucəro | six thousand |

Ordinal number

In Mao, ordinal numbers are formed by adding the suffix /-na/ to the cardinal numbers. But there is an exception for the word /kərena/ ‘first’. This is a separate word used instead of /kəlina/.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|--------|-----------|
| kərena | first |
| kəhena | second |
| kosana | third |
| pədena | fourth |
| poŋona | fifth |
| cokona | ninth |
| məkəna | twentieth |

Multiplicative numeral

The multiplicative numeral can be denoted by prefixing marker /kəvu-/ to the numerals. The first syllable of the numeral is loss.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|----------------------|--------|
| kəvu + kəli > kəvuli | once |
| kəvu + kəhe > kəvuhe | twice |
| kəvu + kosa > kəvusa | thrice |

In the above examples, the initial sounds of the numerals are lost morphophonemically when it is combined to form the multiplicative numerals.

Aggregative numeral

Aggregative numerals are formed by suffixing /-no/ ‘together’ to the cardinal numerals.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|--------|----------------------|
| kəheno | two together or both |
| kosano | three together |
| poŋono | five together |
| ciano | ten together |

Approximate numeral

In Mao, approximate numerals are formed by suffixing /-p^ha/ means ‘about’ to the cardinal numerals.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|--|--------------|
| kəli + p ^h a > kəlip ^h a | about one |
| kəhe + p ^h a > kəhep ^h a | about two |
| kosa + p ^h a > kosap ^h a | about three |
| cia + p ^h a > ciap ^h a | about ten |
| məke + p ^h a > məkep ^h a | about twenty |

Fractional numeral

Fractional numerals in Mao can be divided into monomorphemic and dimorphemic fractions.

Monomorphemic numerals:

| Mao | Gloss |
|-----|-------|
|-----|-------|

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| əda | half |
| opoli | piece |
| t ^h ofre | full |

Dimorphic numerals are formed by adding /-hino-/ to the cardinals.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|----------------|-------------|
| kosa-hino-kəli | one third |
| pəde-hino-kəli | one forth |
| poŋo-hino-kəhe | two fifth |
| poŋo-hino-kosa | three fifth |

Indefinite numerals

| Mao | Gloss |
|-------------------|----------|
| kotuta | some/few |
| pə□i | many |
| kətara | anyone |
| ome | group |
| k ^h ru | bunch |

Restrictive numerals

Restrictive numerals in Mao are formed by adding the suffix /-lik^hri/ ‘only’ to the cardinal numerals.

Examples

| Mao | Gloss |
|-------------------------|------------|
| kəlik ^h ri | only one |
| kəhəlik ^h ri | only two |
| kosalik ^h ri | only three |
| cialik ^h ri | only ten |

Conclusion

Numeral is an integral part of a language which is used in everyday life. It has sometime been considered as part of core vocabulary. It is also an important role in the construction of syntactic and morphology. The way of constructing higher number is by multiplication and addition. Overall, the numeral system in Mao is a decimal system. However cardinal numbers are more complex and more formal structure than ordinal numbers.

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