

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 ‘khai’ and ‘pu’, where ‘khai’ 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

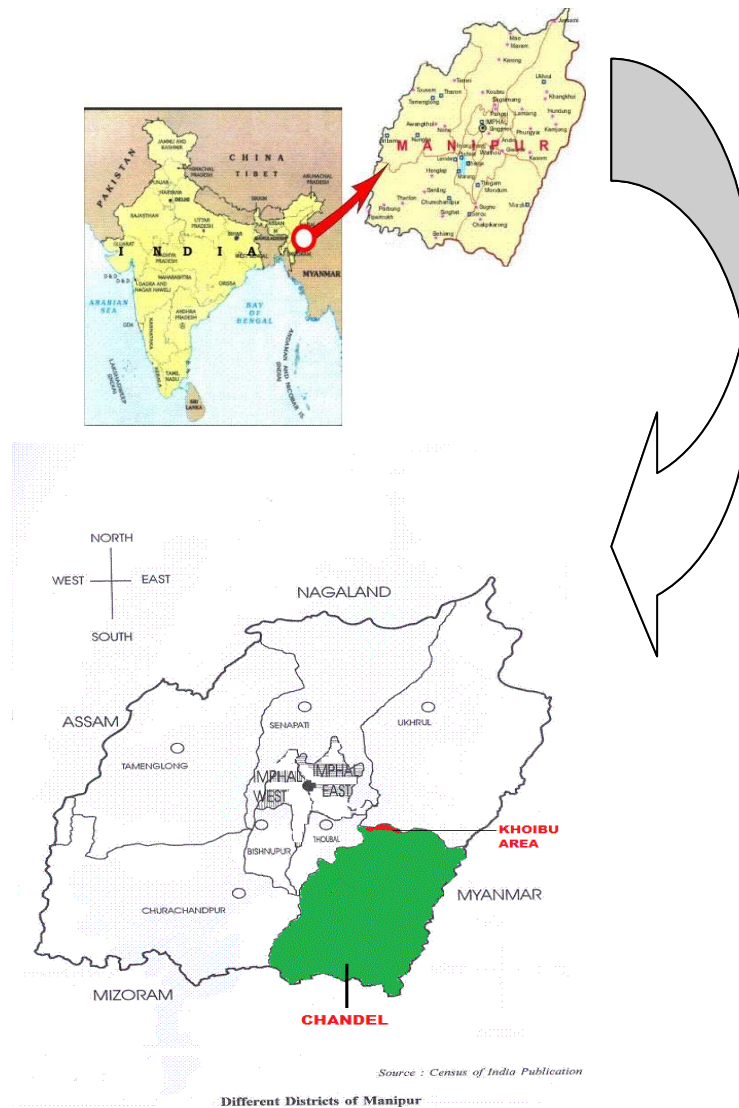
According to Grierson’s Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III part II (1903), Khoibu belongs to the Kuki Chin Naga group branch of the Tibeto- Burman Family which is an undocumented and highly endangered. It is spoken by approximately 2800 speakers in Manipur. *Khoibu* is mostly spoken in Chandel district 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, Thalle 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 mention 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 ə-

ə	+	kəča	>	əkəča	'mode of eating'
ə	+	kəpa	>	əkəpa	'mode of reading'
ə	+	kəča	>	əkəca	'mode of walking'
ə	+	kəson	>	əkəson	'mode of teaching'

ə + kəmən> əkəmən 'mode of drinking'

by prefixation of *kə-*

kə + ča > kəča 'to eat'

NZR eat

kə + kaN > kəkaN 'to burn'

NZR burn

kə + mən > kəmən 'to drink'

NZR drink

kə + son > kəson 'to teach'

NZR teach

kə + yon > kəyon 'to hide'

NZR + hide

3. Compound Nouns

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

1. Noun + Noun

čī	+	bun	>	čībun	‘thatch hut’
thatch		hut			
səkwa	+	ləpak	>	səkwaləpak	‘iron container’
iron		container			
ral	+	t ^h əmi	>	ral ^h əmi	‘soldier’
war		man			

2. Noun + Augmentative

həl	+	pui	>	həlpui	‘big cow’
cow		big			
həyoŋ	+	pui	>	həyoŋpui	‘big monkey’
monkey		big			
ui	+	pui	>	uipui	‘big dog’
dog		big			

3. Noun + Diminutive

ui	+	ča	>	uiča	‘puppy’
dog		small			

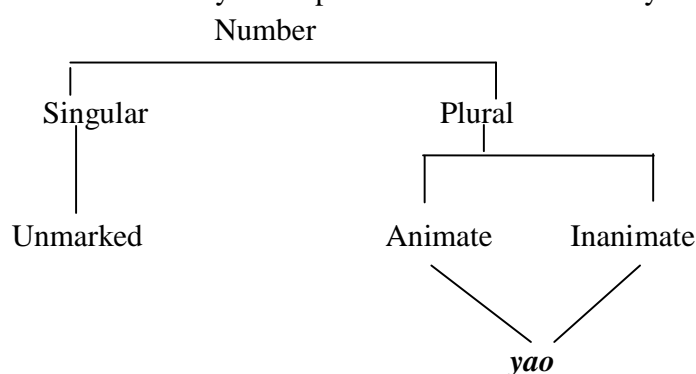
həl	+	ča	>	həlča	‘calf’
cow		small			
wa	+	ča	>	wača	‘chick’
hen		small			

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*.



Plural Formation of human and animate Nouns – *yao*

Singular		plural	
nəpača	‘boy’	nəpača yao	‘boys’
nəpuiča	‘girl’	nəpuičayao	‘girls’
wa	‘bird’	wayao	‘birds’
nəsan	‘child’	nəsanyao	‘children’
toNkən	‘cat’	toŋkənyao	‘cats’

Plural Formation of Inanimate Nouns – *yao*

Singular		Plural	
upu	‘box’	upuyao	‘boxes’
čim	‘house’	čimyao	‘houses’
kərok	‘bowl’	kərokyao	‘bowls’
čimk ^h ar	‘door’	čimk ^h aryao	‘doors’
huŋ	‘key’	huŋyao	‘keys’

Plural Formation in groups – *dəŋ* or *kol* or *bum*

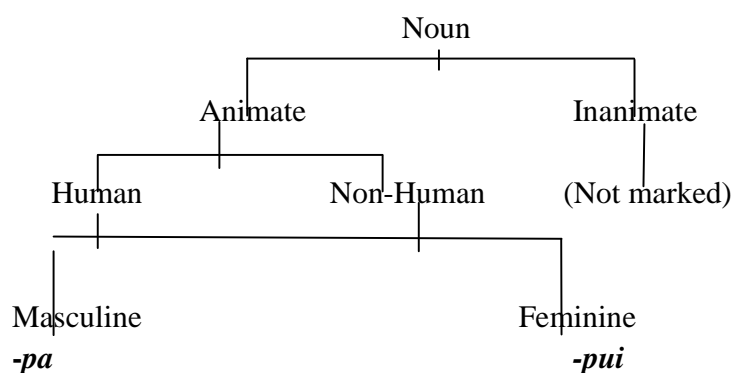
p ^h idəŋ	‘bundle of clothes’
čəydəŋ	‘bundle of sticks’
helkol	‘herd of cows’
yaokol	‘herd of sheep’
paɓum	‘bunch of flower’

Plurals of personal pronouns

Singular		Plural	
ŋei	‘I’	ŋi	‘we’
nəŋ	‘you’(sing.)	ni	‘you’(pl.)
a	‘he’	i	‘they’

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 *-pa* is used to indicate male while *-pui* is used to indicate female.



Male		Female	
nəpa	‘man’	nəpui	‘woman’
təteipa	‘old man’	təteipui	‘old woman’
p ^h ikəsupa	‘washer man’	p ^h ikəsupui	‘washer woman’

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

wapa	‘cock’	wapui	‘hen’
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uipa	'dog'	uipui	'bitch'
həlpə	'ox'	həlpui	'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

Sl.No.	Case	Case Suffixes
1.	Nominative	-nə
2.	Accusative	-ti
3.	Instrumental	-nə
4.	Locative	-raŋ
5.	Genitive	-yi/uŋ
6.	Associative	-pui
7.	Ablative	-rəy
8.	Vocative	-o

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-nə tomba ti kətən.*
he-NOM tomba ACC beat
He beats tomba.
- b) *pa-nə phi kəsū.*
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) *ŋəy zən ti kat^hi.*
I john ACU love
I love John.
- b) *ŋəy 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) *ŋəy wa nə ro kəsət.*

I axe INS bamboo cut

I cut bamboo with axe.

b) *ŋəy səwən nə nəwhəy 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) *ŋəy simla raŋ kəča uŋ.*

I shimla LOC. go FUT.

I will go to Simla.

b) *i ləwpuk raŋ ča k^hor.*

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) *ŋəy nə p^hərik k^hei t^hoibi 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) *ŋəy zon pui cinema kət^hui kəča.*

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 – rəy

The ablative case marker -rəy is used to give a meaning of source.

- a) ηəy a nə rəy on kəp^ha
I he-NOM. ABL.money got
I got money from him.
- b) a manipur rəy kouməη uη
he Manipur ABL. come prog.
He will be coming from Manipur.
- c) ηəy manipur rəy
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

From the present study it can be concluded 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.

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