Research Paper

Affixation in Naro Molok: an Ao vernacular novel

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Abstract
Affixation is a morphological process whereby a bound morpheme, an affix, is attached to a morphological base. It is the most form for derivation of new word or word form.
A curriculum for MA linguistics in NEHU requires a dissertation to be made so that we can gain knowledge. For the required purpose I have submitted a dissertation on "Affixation in Naro Molok : an Ao vernacular novel. The novel is a translated version by P. Alem Jamir of the orginal novel "Basket of Flowers" by . The major focus of the dissertation is the affixation process in Chungli Ao.
Keywords: Chungli Ao, Tibeto-Burman, Naro Molok, Basket of Flowers, Affixes, prefixes, suffixes.

I.   Ao Language

1.1.   Introduction

Chungli Ao is the prestige dialect of Ao language, a Tibeto-Burman language of Northeast India, spoken by the Ao Nagas of Nagaland. It is the official language of religion and has a Bible translation and used in church and for public announcements in gatherings of the Ao community. It became a prestige dialect under the influence and patronage of the American Baptist missionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

According to 2011 census report of India, there are approximately 130,000 speakers who reported Chungli Ao as their mother tongue. It is spoken in majority of the Ao villages.

1.2.   History

The Ao Nagas refer to themselves as 'Aoer' which means "those who came" from across the Dikhu river. The word 'Ao' is from Chungli dialect.

During the American Bapist Mission to Naga Hills, Dr. E.W. Clark first came in contact with Molungkimong village that paved the way for a common Ao language. Chungli Ao is spoken in 2 Molungkimong and Molungyimsen and other village throughout Ao territory by roughly 50% of the Ao speaking population.

Ao folklore holds that the tribe comes from the east, the first ancestors having emerged from the earth at the site of some sacred stones known as luŋtəɹuk 'six stones' located near present day village of Chungliyimti. Thus, having six Ung chiefs symbolic to the six stones (ung meaning chief i.e., six ancestors from six stones). From Chungliyimti, tradition says, the Aos came to Aongyinden and on their arrival, ten sons were born. Hence the place was called Soyim. While at Soyim, one of the Ung was killed by a tiger and so Soyim became Ungma, meaning, Ung/chief is lost. Therefore, they left the place and came to Koridang, a new site, and from Koridang to the various parts of the present Ao territory.

1.3.   Genetic Classification

The genetic sub-groupings of the languages of north-east India remains based on lexical comparisons and geographic proximity.

As per as Grierson's classification, Ao language is a central Naga language of the Tibeto-Burman language family and is the major language of the Mokokchung district, one of the eleven administrative districts of the hill state of Nagaland, in North-Eastern India. It has two major dialects Chungli and Mongsen. Chungli is the prestige dialect and about 50% speaks Chungli language as their first language.

Tibeto-Burman languages in South Asia are not extensively studied or documented; hence the classification of these languages is a herculean task. Tibeto-Burman languages are a branch of Sino-Tibetan

language family. The name "Tibeto-Burman" was first applied to this group in 1856 by James Logan who added Karen in 1858.

The Tibeto-Burman languages have evolved from the ancestral language, Proto-Tibeto-Burman, in vastly different ways and at their own pace.

Grierson classified Tibeto-Chinese family into the Siamese-Chinese sub-family of which Khamti is spoken in India, and the other branch is Tibeto-Burman. He further sub-divided Tibeto-Burman into; (a)Tibeto-Himalayan branch,(b) the North Assam branch and (b)the Assam-Burmese branch. Tibeto-Himalayan branch is further divided into the Tibetan group, the pronominalized Himalayan group which is further divided into the western sub-group and the eastern sub-group and the nonpronominalized Himalayan group.

Shafer (1995;1974) classified the Sino-Tibetan family into six divisions: Sinitic, Daic, Bodic, Burmic, Baric, Karenic – with the latter four divisions constituting what is generally accepted as the Tibeto-Burman family. Each division subsumes sections that spilt into hierarchically arranged branches and lower level units.

The Naga languages falls under Shafer's Burmic and Baric divisions. Specifically, the Ao languages is located in the Northern Naga branch of Shafer's Kukish section of the Burmic division together with Lotha, Yimchunger, Sangtam and Rong.

Hale (1982:5-6) reports that Shafer's method received critisim from a number of quarters and consequently gained a little following.
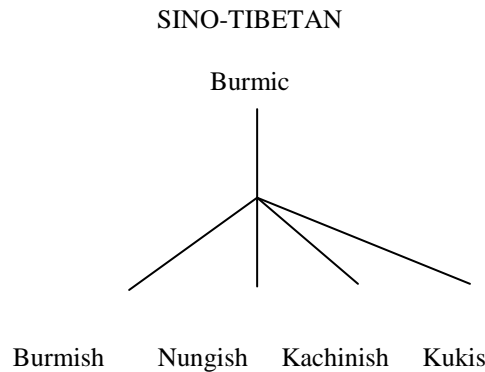

Figure 1: Classification of Ao in relation to Sino-Tibetan by Shafer (1955;1974)

Benedicts (1972) classification excludes Tai languages (Shafer's Daic) completely from SinoTibetan and classifies Karen as being coordinate with Tibeto-Burman. This forms a higher level grouping called Tibeto-Karen. Benedit identifies two main sub-types of Naga languages in the Kuki-Naga nucleus: Northern Naga, of which Ao is posited to be a member, and Southern Naga.
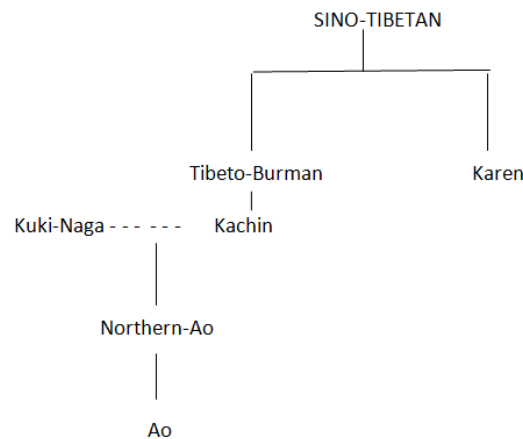

Figure 2: Classification of Ao in relation to Sino-Tibetan by Benedict (1972)

The classification of Marrison (1967) is limited to the Naga languages. This recognizes three types – A, B, C - subsuming groupings sharing phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical similarities. Ao is classified as belonging to Type B1, which includes Yacham-Tengsa, Chungli Ao, Ao Mongsen and Sangtam.

At the level of three main groupings, Type A consists of the Konyak languages and has affinities with the Kachin and Boro groups, Type B, the Ao-Tangkhul group, Type C, demonstrates affinities with Manipuri, the Kuki languages and, to a lesser degree, Burmese.
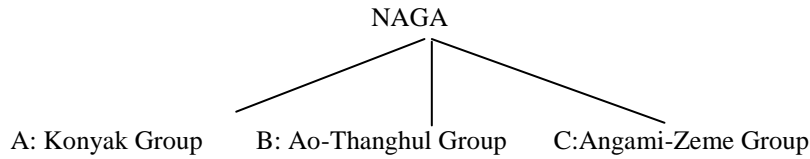
NAGA

A: Konyak Group   B: Ao-Thanghul Group   C:Angami-Zeme Group

Figure 3: Classification of Naga languages by Morrison (1967)

Bradley (1997) proposes four main groups of Tibeto-Burman languages: North-eastern India (or Sal languages, after Burling 1983), Western, South-eastern and North-eastern. Some of these Naga languages are classified as belonging to the North-eastern India division and others are classified as members of the South-eastern division, with shared lexical and morph syntactic features suggestive of a link between the two divisions.
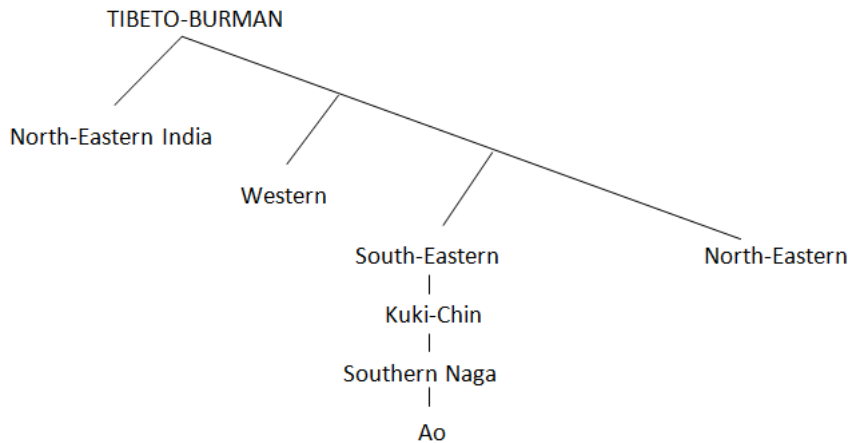
TIBETO-BURMAN

North-Eastern India

Western

South-Eastern   North-Eastern
|
Kuki-Chin
|
Southern Naga
|
Ao

Figure 4: Classification of Tibeto-Burman Languages by Bradley (1997)

1.4. Morphology of Ao

Chungli Ao is an agglutinative language where the verbs lacks person and number marking.

Morphology: it is commonly defined as the scientific study of the internal structure of words. Morphology is the branch of linguistics that studies the word structure.

Morpheme: it is the minimal linguistic unit of meaning in word building with grammatical function.

Morpheme are divided into free morpheme and bound morpheme. Morpheme which are free in nature, which can stand on their own or in isolation and does not depend on other words and bound morpheme which refer to the morpheme which cannot stand on their own or in isolation but needs to be attached to other morpheme to derive the meaning. Bound morphemes are classified into Affixes, clitics, portmanteau morphemes, empty morphemes.

Morphemes in Ao

Based on the place of occurrence, affixes are classified into four types.

Prefix: a prefix is an affix which is attached to another morpheme at the beginning of a morpheme. The process of adding prefixes to free morpheme is called prefixation.

Examples in Chungli Ao:

m-/ me-/ma- prefix indicating negation

Pela (happy) – mepelai (unhappy)

Jenbutettsu (escape or able to escape) – mejenbutettsu(cannot escape)

te – prohibitive prefix

Pela (happy) – tepela (happiness while referring others)

Mulung (agreeable) – temulung (its deep inside, happy hearted)

Sufix: a suffix is an affix which is attached to another morpheme at the end of the morpheme. The process of adding suffix is called suffixation.

Examples in Chungli Ao
–la feminine suffix
Tameren(prince) – tamerentsurla(princess)
Chiden (escort) – chidentsurla (women escort)
-ji suffix meaning 'that', 'this'
tetsur (girl) – tetsurlaji (that girl)
tejak(face) – tejakji (this face)

II.   Literature Review

Griersons (1967:281-283; 292-327, first published in 1903) provides a comparative vocabulary lists of varieties of the Chungli dialects. Shafer (1974) gives extensive comparative word lists of varities of Ao.

The first grammar of Chungli Ao is being written by an American Baptist Missionary, E.W. Clark (1981, first published 1893). This constitutes forty-nine pages of grammatical description, thirty eight pages of illustrative phrases and an English-Ao dictionary of ninety-four pages. The section on grammar consists of a discussion of word classes, verbal inflections and aspectual suffixes.

Reverend E.W. Clark, also published an Ao-Naga dictionary of Chungli (1990, first published 1911). The dictionary (977 pp.) is useful for its detailed description.

A brief grammatical description of Chungli is also included in Grierson (1967:265-283) and is based on Clark (1981).

Reverend E.W Clark's wife Mary M. Clark makes references of suffixes and prefixes along with other units in her book 'the Ao-Naga Grammar'.

Wolfden (1929) makes references to the prefixes of Chungli in a comparative study of TibetoBurman morphology; the source for this work is also Clark (1981) and Clark (1990). Marrison (1967) makes lexical, morphological and syntactic comparisons of all Naga languages for which there is available data; this work is mostly based on secondary sources, but it is also augmented by original field research of Chungli as well as number of other Naga languages.

The most recent publications dealing with the Chungli dialect are Gowda (1972), a phonetic reader (60pp.) written for the purpose of teaching pronunciation to non-native speakers, and Gowda (1975), which gives a brief sketch of the Chungli dialect (71pp.) with chapters on Morphology, phonology and syntax.

Naro Molok
'Naro Molok', a novel in Ao vernacular is the translation of the novel originally published in English under the title 'The Basket of Flowers'. The translation process is done by P. Alem Jamir. The novel is a kind of Christian ministry through literature because the story is very much in line with the Biblical teachings.

III.   Critical Analysis

Three chapters from the Ao vernacular novel 'Naro Molok' (translation of 'The Basket of Flowers' by P. Alem Jamir).

Chapter 19: ANO JANGRATEMTSU TATALOKBA KA

Morphological analysis (Affixation)
Prefixes
te- prohibitive prefix
".....Aya, iba tepela nung ya pa densema lir ta-ang südaktsünüali....." (101)
- pela – happy, glad, to rejoice…
- te-pela (tepela) – happiness while referring others…

"......dangbo tali tepelaba aser temulung tesüngzükba nung....." (101)
- pela – happy, glad, to rejoice…
- te-pela-ba (tepelaba) – feel happy; ba – suffix nominalizer.
- mulung – agreeable…
- te-mulung (temulung) – it's deep inside, happy hearted…
- süngzük – relief…
- te-süngzükba – calming down; ba – suffix nominalizer…

".....ni tesünep nung iba....." (102, 103)
- sünep – peace…
- te-sünep (tesünep) – calm, silent…

".....aser tejaoker takar tulur......" (100)
- jaoker – inviting…
- te-jaoker (tejaoker) – I have invited you…

"...jagi temaitsu ka sayu ...." (100)
- maitsu – sign…
- te-maitsu (temaitsu) – sign, talking to someone else...

"....lima nung teti tatem...." (101)
- ti – eight…
- te-ti (teti) – always, oldest son…

me-/m- prefix indicating negation

"....dang tatok meshi...." (100)
- shi – different types of tuber, meat…
- me-shi (meshi) – three stones used as oven, demand….

"....akhidang memesük kanga pelaa...." (102)
- mesük – likely…
- me-mesük (memesük) – not alike, not the same…

".....senzüka meyutsütsü ta asenok...."
- yutsütsü – leave, left….
- me-yutsütsü (meyutsütsü) – will not leave…

"....num medangi nongnanga..." (100)
- dang-(i) – only
- me-dang-i (medangi) – not now

ki- prefix referring house

"...agi kidang nungi la...." (100)
- dang – now
- ki-dang (kidang) – in the house

"....tamarener kidanji paa kibur..." (101)
- dang-(ji) – now
- ki-dang-ji (kidanji) – at home
- bur – rodent
- ki-bur (kibur) – owner, lord

yim- prefix referring 'village'

".....maketba yimjak nung....." (102)
- jak – face or in front
- yim-jak (yimjak) – in front of people

".....ya alima yimya ka..." (102)
- ya – this
- yim-ya (yimya) – moral, customs, characteristics, habit.

sü- prefix referring clothes

"....sarasaden sülenji kü dangi...." (102)
- len-(ji) – path
- sü-len-ji (sülenji) – after that

chi- prefix referring basket

".....akum, chiyung tenzuktsü...." (100)
- yung – to eat
- chi-yung (chiyung) – to dine

"....liasü chiyunger!..." (100)
- yunger – smashed rice water
- chi-yunger (chiyunger) – eating

Suffixes

-ji : demonstrative suffix; also signifies true and mine

"...Anungji mezungkuba...." (100,102, 103)
- anung – sky, left behind, bamboo
- anung-ji (anungji) – so therefore

"....otsu ajakji, tesüngmangtsüka....." (101)
- ajak – all, showoff, deaf
- ajak-ji (ajakji) – this all

"...jagi timtemji pai kokteta..." (102)

- timtem – struggle
- timtem-ji (timtemji) – that struggle

"....ta shi tamarentsürlaji table nungi...." (102)

- tamaren-tsür-la – princess
- tameren-tsür-la-ji (tamarentsürlaji) – that princess

-la: feminine suffix

-tsür: female gender marker

"....asoshi Tamarentsürla jagi temaitsu...." (100,102)

- tamaren – prince
- tamaren-tsür-la (Tamarentsürla) – princess

"..... Amelia-i la mulungjang...." (100)

Amelia-i la – female name so feminine suffix is attached.

-ba: masculine suffix

-er: male gender marker

"...yangibo la tamarener kidang....." (100, 101, 102)

- tamaren – prince
- tamaren-er (tamarener) – noble

-er : suffix referring present tense or is

"....altisü ta nibo bilemer...." (101)

- bilem – to think
- biem-er (bilmer) – thinking

Chapter 20: FARMHOUSE SEMDANGER

Morphological analysis (Affixation)

Prefixes

te- prohibitive prefix

"..kü den teti alitsü...." (104, 108,109)

- ti – eight
- te-ti (teti) – always, oldest son

"...temulung nungbo teti ...." (106,108)

- mulung – agreeable
- te-mulung (temulung) – few, undecided

"...den ano temeimtsü par jala…" (106, 107)

- meimtsü – love
- te-meimtsü (temeimtsü) – loveable

"...jashibaji telung nung ..." (107,109)

- lung – stone
- te-lung (telung) – inside

"... salem aser tenüngsang agüja ...." (106)

- nüngsang – fame
- te-nüngsang (tenüngsang) – praise

me-/m- prefix indicating negation

"....nati mepelai bilemtsü aser...." (109)

- pela-(i) – rejoice, glad, happy
- me-pela-(i) – unhappy

'mepelai' is used in sentences like; 'if she is unhappy (mepelai)', otherwise the word for unhappy is 'mepela'.

sü- prefix referring clothes

'....iba sülen aluyimer tantsü...." (109)

- len – path
- sü-len (sülen) – after, afterwards

Suffixes

-ji : demonstrative suffix; also signifies true and refers mine

"....dak maketla chidentsürlaji yakta...." (105)

- chiden-(tsür-la) – escort, not good

chiden-tsür-la-ji (chidentsürlaji) – woman escort ; tsür – female gender marker, la- feminine suffix

"...arutsüba süoshiji la asoshi...." (104)

- süoshi – clothing
- süoshi-ji (süoshiji) clothes

"... Lai ola adokbaji, aoksa…" (106)

- adok-(ba) – to come out from

- adok-ba-ji (adokbaji) – to come out, evolve ; ba- suffix nominalizer

"...Aluyimer tambusangji atsü nung..." (106)

- tambusang – eldest, the oldest, old man
- tambusang-ji (tambusangji) – eldest son, eldest among male.

"... arutem ajakji parnok lenmangi..." (109)

- ajak – all, show off, deaf
- ajak-ji (ajakji) – this all

"... atsüki nungji senzüa, nena…" (108)

- nung – in
- nung-ji (nungji) – onto

"…… bener arutsübaji sobuang ta…" (104)

- arutsü-(ba) – rebuke
- arutsü-ba-ji (arutsübaji) – have to come; ba- suffix nominalizer

-la : feminine suffix

-tsür : female gender marker

"...mapang, tangar kilitsür ama dang…" (104)

- kilir – servant
- kili-tsür (kilitsür) – female servant

"...ta Tamarentsürla o lar jala…" (104)

- Tamaren – prince
- Tamaren-tsür-la (Tamarentsürla) – princess

-er : suffix referring present tense or is

"...nung oa noktaker repranga ali...." (107)

- noktak – stand
- noktak-er (noktaker) – standing

".....ta ni bilemer....." (108)

- bilem – to think
- bilem-er (bilemer) – thinking

Chapter 21 :TANTSULA O TAMBUSANG NA ANIR AOTSU YOKER

Morphological analysis (affixation)

Prefixes

ki- prefix referring house

"....aser la kidang nunjagi..." (114)

- dang – now
- ki-dang – in the house

me- prefix indication negation

"...mejenbutettsü ta lai apitet...."

- jenbutettsü – escape or able to escape
- me-jenbutettsü (mejenbutettsü) – cannot escape

"...mepelai akum aser lar....." (114)

- pela-(i) – happy, glad, to rejoice
- me-pela-i (mepelai)– unhappy

i – suffix used in sentences like s/he is unhappy, otherwise the term for unhappy is mepela.

yim- prefix referring villages

"....aliba yimti nungi doctor...." (115)

- ti – eight
- yim-ti (yimti) – large village or eight village

Suffixes

-er : male gender marker

-ba : masculine suffix

-pu : masculine suffix (mainly old man)

"...tashi nung tamarener jagi ashiba…" (110)

- Tamaren – prince
- Tamaren-er (tamarener) – noble

"..yokdi ta kinüngpu jagi ashi…" (112)

- Kinüng-pu – husband

-tsür : female gender marker

-la : feminine suffix

"..chidentsürla jagibo iba…" (110,115)
- chiden – escort, not good
- chiden-tsür-la – women escort

"..o tantsüla na anitsü yok..." (110)
- tantsü – matured, old lady, old lady
- tantsü-la (tantsüla) – elder women, old woman

IV.   Findings and Conclusions

Findings

Affixation is a morphological process whereby a bound morpheme, an affix, is attached to a morphological base. It is the most common form for the derivation of new word or word forms.

Ao (Chungli) is very rich in affixes and have a complex affixation process. In Ao (Chungli) the derivational affixes are more prominent compared to the inflectional affixes. Ao (Chungli) does not have infix and Circumfix.

In Chungli Ao, affixes can stand alone; for instance the prefix mei- /məi/ (noun), it means 'summer'. When it is prefixed with mapang /mà. pàŋ/ (noun) meaning time, it becomes 'meimapang' /məi.mə.pàŋ/ (verb) meaning 'season'. An affix in Ao does not have single meaning, in some cases it may have one or more meaning, for instance the suffix dang-, it is a time (dative suffix) and also means 'only'.

There are two gender suffixes in Chungli Ao; the masculine suffix -ba and the feminine suffix – la. There is also another masculine suffix –po which is only used to refer to older man. It also has gender marker; the male gender marker –er and the female gender marker –tsür. Both the gender marker and the gender suffixes are used together in any particular word; example – tamaren-tsürla (princess).

To refer to various tense, different affixes are used. For indicating present tense the suffix –er is used and when used it simply means 'is'. A progressive form is indicated by adding the suffix – dage or – daka. The future tense is formed by suffix – di or –tsũ .

To demonstrate Ao (Chungli) makes uses of the demonstrative suffix –ji, which was once identical with suffix –zi. The demonstrative suffix may be attached to any numeral, to an adjective, to an adverb, to a conjunction or to a verbal form.

Comparisons in Ao are expressed by affixing the suffix –dang to that with which the comparison is to be made, followed by the adjective. The same suffix also acts as an time or dative suffix.

Negation in Ao (Chungli) is expressed by prefixing me-/m-. However, the negative prefix is never used in imperative, which is formed by prefixing te- to the verb stem. Prefix te- is frequently prefixed to the infinitive mode, to participle or tense forms of the indicative form, but never has a negative force except in the imperative mode.

The prohibitive prefix in the language is te- . The prefixing of te- frequently adds more attributes or force (Mary M. Clark, 1983) to a word like 'tepela' means happiness, to feel good; is a stronger from than 'pela' which means happy, glad, rejoice. More intensity to the word is expressed by adding the suffix nominalizer –ba i.e. tepelaba which means happiness, to feel happy.

The inflectional element, the suffix –tũm is in plural, and it is seldom used in normal conversations.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, analysis of affixes in Chungli Ao is done with reference to three chapters from the Ao vernacular novel 'Naro Molok'. Chungli Ao exhibits a complex affixation process. It only includes prefix and suffix but it is rich in it.

In Chungli Ao the words passes from one part of speech to another. Nouns are formed from other parts of speech; for instance the verb stem 'pela' meaning to rejoice, happy; the future form of which is 'pelatsy' meaning will rejoice and 'tepelaba' or 'peleba' meaning joy, here –ba is the suffix nominalizer.

There are no complete formal distinctions between nouns, adjectives, verbs. Each in its root form is indistinguishable from the others; and even the suffixes of derivation, which nouns often assume, are in great part common to all three.

Affixes are one of the important element of word construction.

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