

Nominal Morphology in Inpui

Waikhom Pinky Devi, Ph.D. Research Scholar

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to study Nominal morphology in Inpui, a Tibeto-Burman language of the Naga-Bodo subgroup of Naga group (Grierson LSI, vol III part II, 1903). The term *Inpui* refers to 'In' means 'house' and 'Pui' means 'big or large'. So the literal meaning of the name of the language is 'Big House'. It has a population of about 11,000 approximately which is mainly concentrated in 15 villages of Manipur, i.e., 9 in Tamenglong district and 3 each in Imphal district and Senapati district. The present analysis is based on the data collected from Haochong village of Tamenglong district which is situated in the northern side of National highway 37 (Noney) at a distance of 37 kms from Imphal city. Zeme, Liangmei and Rongmei tribe neighbours with Inpui tribe. The present paper attempts to show that nominal morphology plays an important role in the morphological structure of Inpui. First a description of the noun in this language is presented followed by a brief discussion of nominal classes i.e. person, number, gender and case which constitute the nominal morphology in the language.

2. Typological Characteristics

Inpui is a language having SOV structure. This language is an agglutinative language. The process of suffixation is very rich. It has post verbal negative. The direct object precedes the indirect object in this language. Adjective and demonstrative precedes the noun while determiner and numeral follows the noun; the order of Adverb precedes the verb. Like many other Tibeto-Burman language, Inpui is also a postpositional language. It is a tonal language.

3. Nature and Characteristics of the Noun in the Language

The present study describes the morphological analysis of Nouns in Inpui. Inpui Nouns can inflect for gender, number, person and case. Compound nouns are formed by the combination of more than one noun.

3.1.1 Noun

Nouns are classes of words which are characterized by members denoting concrete entities, whose basic role in syntax is in phrases representing arguments of a verb (P.H Mathews, 2007). Traditional grammarians explained noun as a parts of speech that assigns to each of its subjects, bodies, or things or proper quality. Inpui Nouns can be classified into three types which are illustrated below:

3.1.1.1 Simple Noun

Simple nouns are associated with single free root and cannot be further divided into simpler form.

Example:

| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| mik | | ‘eye’ |
| ui | | ‘dog’ |
| in | | ‘house’ |

3.1.1.2 Derived Noun

Inpui derived nouns are formed by suffixation of *-goŋ* (manner), *-riək* (place) and *-nu* (nominalizer) to the verbal root, which is described below with examples.

Suffixation of *-goŋ*

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| pək | + | goŋ | > | pək-goŋ | ‘the manner of one’s running’ |
| run | | manner | | | |
| p ^h aŋ | + | goŋ | > | p ^h aŋ-goŋ | ‘the manner of one’s looking’ |
| look | | manner | | | |

Suffixation of -riək

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| t ^h in-nu | + | riək | > | t ^h inriək | ‘place of dying’ |
| die-NMZR | | place | | | |
| bəca-nu | + | riək | > | bəcariək | ‘place of making’ |
| make-NMZR | | place | | | |

Suffixation of nominalizer -nu

| | | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|---|------|------------|
| sa | + | nu | > | sanu | ‘to eat’ |
| eat | | NZR | | | |
| in | + | nu | > | innu | ‘to drink’ |
| drink | | NZR | | | |

2.1.1.3 Compound Noun

Compound Nouns are formed by the combination of two or more nouns. Some Inpui compound nouns are given below:

Noun +Noun

| | | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|--------|-----------|
| bu | + | swəŋ | > | buswəŋ | ‘kitchen’ |
| rice | | hut | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------|---|----------------------|---------|
| t ^h əl | + | cəy | > | t ^h əlcəy | ‘arrow’ |
| bow | | stick | | | |

Noun+Augmentative

| | | | | | |
|------------------|---|-----|---|---------------------|--------------|
| k ^h u | + | pui | > | k ^h upui | ‘big monkey’ |
| monkey | | big | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|-------|-----------|
| ui | + | pui | > | uipui | ‘big dog’ |
| dog | | big | | | |

Noun+Diminutive

ink^han+ swən > ink^hanswən ‘door’
 door small

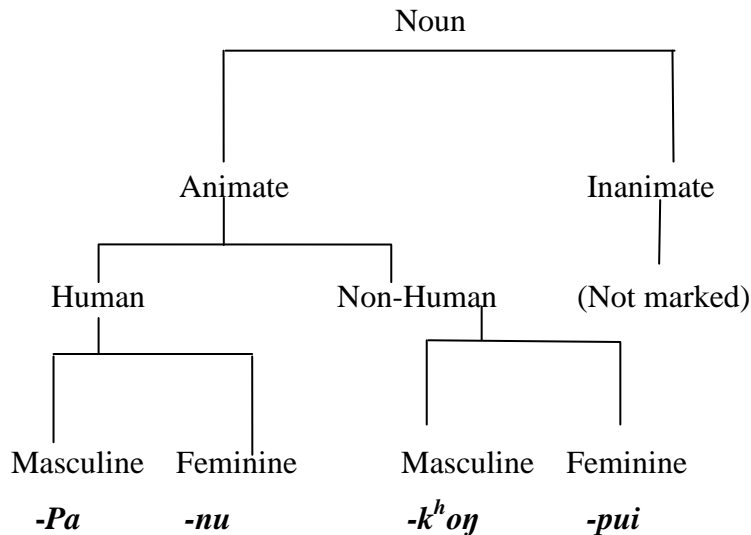
ui + swən > /uiswən/ ‘puppy’
 dog small

3.1.2 Categories of Noun

There are three categories of noun in Inpui which are explained below.

3.1.2.1 Gender

Inpui has natural gender. It has no grammatical gender. Human and animate nouns are referred to as masculine and feminine on the basis of natural sex. For human being the suffix -pa indicates ‘male’ and the suffix -nu indicates ‘female’. In the case of animals, the suffixes -k^hoŋ and -pui indicate male and female respectively. A few kinship nouns also inflect for masculine and feminine gender. Gender agreement is absent in the language. It is explained in the following examples. Inpui gender can be illustrated as



Gender in humans: it is marked by -pa for male and -nu for female as in

| Masculine | Feminine |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>mən-pa</i> ‘man’ | <i>mən-nu</i> ‘woman’ |
| <i>ə-pa</i> ‘my father’ | <i>ə-nu</i> ‘my mother’ |
| <i>kə-sa-pa</i> ‘good man’ | <i>kə-sa-nu</i> ‘good woman’ |
| <i>kə-bum-pa</i> ‘black man’ | <i>kə-bum-nu</i> ‘black woman’ |
| <i>heknu-pa</i> ‘writer’ | <i>heknnunu</i> ‘writer’ |

The absence of gender agreement is shown in the following examples.

1. *ə-pa huŋ-ŋe*
1S-M come-SASP
‘My father comes’
2. *man kə-sa-nu-me*
3F ADJ-good-F-SASP
‘She is a good woman’

2.1.2.2 Gender in Animals: In animals masculine is marked by *-k^hoŋ* and feminine by *-pui*.

| Masculine | Feminine |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>an-k^hoŋ</i> ‘cock’ | <i>an-pui</i> ‘hen’ |
| <i>sen-k^hoŋ</i> ‘ox’ | <i>sen-pui</i> ‘cow’ |
| <i>ui-k^hoŋ</i> ‘dog’ | <i>ui-pui</i> ‘bitch’ |

There are many Kinship Nouns that do not inflect for gender. They are as follows:

| Masculine | Feminine |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>təŋ</i> ‘brother’ | <i>wa</i> ‘sister’ |
| <i>əu</i> ‘brother-in-law’ | <i>əu/məu</i> ‘sister-in-law’ |
| <i>təzwənbəsən</i> ‘son-in-law’ | <i>məu</i> ‘daughter-in-law’ |

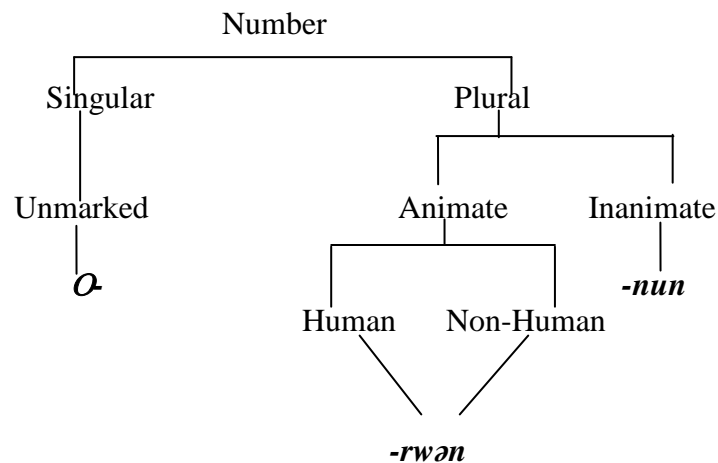
| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| po ‘father-in-law’ | ni ‘mother-in-law’ |
|--------------------|--------------------|

Inanimate objects such as paper, chair, table, glass are treated as neuter gender and they are unmarked as

| |
|---------------------------|
| ce-O paper-unmarked |
| oŋhai-O chair-unmarked |

3.1.3 Number

Number is a two way distinction in Inpui, i.e., singular and plural which is marked by nominal suffixes. Number agreement is absent in Inpui. Singular is unmarked while plural is marked by *-rwən* in animate object and *-nun* in inanimate object as in which is illustrated in the following examples



3.1.3.1 Singular

Basic morph: O

Label : s

Singularity of noun is unmarked. It is marked by the <-O> morph in the paradigm.

nausən-O

child-s

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toksa-O

cat-s

3.1.3.2 Plural

Plural is formed in the language by adding the suffix *-rwən* to the noun. This suffix is used in both human as well as non-human to form plural. Inanimate noun takes the suffix *-nun* to form plural. It is shown in the following examples.

| Animate | | Inanimate |
|---|---|--|
| Human | Non-human | |
| <i>nausən-rwən</i> child PL 'children' | <i>toksa-rwən</i> cat-PL 'cats' | <i>ben-nun</i> pot-PL 'pots' |
| <i>kətəŋpa-rwən</i> bachelor PL 'bachelors' | <i>ui-rwən</i> dog-PL 'dogs' | <i>sumthən-nun</i> broom-PL 'brooms' |
| <i>mənpa-rwən</i> man PL 'men' | <i>rəy-rwən</i> flower-PL 'flowers' | <i>dip-nun</i> book-PL 'books' |

Plural agreement is absent in the language as shown in the following example

3. *nausən-rwən cəp-əmai*

child PL cry-CASP

'Children are crying'

4. *əy oŋhai-nun bət^hai-e*

1S chair PL want-SASP

'I want chairs'

2.1.3.3 Person

Inpui personal pronoun differentiates three persons: first person, Second person and third person. These three persons can be distinguished into three numbers: Singular, plural and dual.

| Person | Numbers | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | singular | Plural | dual |
| First person | <i>əy</i> 'I' | <i>ərwəy</i> 'we' | <i>əni</i> 'we two' |
| Second person | <i>nəŋ</i> 'you' | <i>nərwəy</i> 'You all' | <i>nəni</i> 'You two' |
| Third person | <i>man</i> 'He/she' | <i>bərwəy</i> 'they' | <i>bəni</i> 'they two' |

Their occurrence in the sentence is given below:

5. *man kədai-əmai*

I play-asp

'he is playing'

6. *bəni kədai-əmai*

we play-asp

'We are playing'

3.1.4 Case

The following eight cases in Inpui shows inflected forms for nouns. The eight cases of Inpui are as follows.

| Case | Case suffix |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Nominative | <i>-nə</i> |
| 2. Accusative | <i>-diŋ</i> |
| 3. Instrumental | <i>-nə</i> |
| 4. Locative suffix | <i>-bi/lə</i> |
| 5. Genitive suffix | <i>-om</i> |
| 6. Associative suffix | <i>-le</i> |

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- | | | |
|----|----------|-----------------|
| 7. | Ablative | - <i>binə</i> |
| 8. | Dative | - <i>khəunə</i> |

2.1.4.1 Nominative

When a noun or a pronoun is used as the subject of a verb, it is said to be in the nominative case. The main function of the nominative case is to mark the subject of the sentence. In Inpui nominative case marker is *-nə* and this suffix is added to the noun or pronoun to form nominative.

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------|-----------|
| 7. | man-nə | tombə | boi-ye |
| | 3S NOM | tomba | beat-DECL |
| | ‘He beats Tomba’ | | |
| 8. | əy-nə | bu | swəŋ-ŋe |
| | 1S NOM | rice | cook-DECL |
| | ‘I cook rice’ | | |
| 9. | ram-nə | pwən | kəsin-ne |
| | ram NOM | cloth | wash-DECL |
| | ‘He washes cloths’ | | |

2.1.4.2 Accusative

When a noun or a pronoun is the object to a verb, it is said to be in the accusative case. The accusative marker is used to differentiate an object noun from a subject noun of a sentence. In Inpui accusative case is denoted by the suffix *-diŋ*.

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------|----------|-----------|
| 10. | əy | tom-diŋ | kəryaŋ-ŋe |
| | 1S | tom-ACC | love-DECL |
| | ‘I love Tom’ | | |
| 11. | man | mery-diŋ | bəthai-ye |
| | 3S | mary-ACC | like-DECL |

‘He like Mery’

12. bəni-na k^həuriŋ-diŋ kəryaŋ-ŋe

3P-NOM animal-ACC love-DECL

‘They love animal’

2.1.4.3 Instrumental

In Inpui the suffix *-nə* which is homophonous with nominative marker is used to form Instrumental case. The primary function of this case is to denote the instrument that the subject uses while carrying out an activity.

13. əy rəy-nə rua tu-e

1S axe-INS. bamboo cut-DECL

‘I cut bamboo with an axe’

14. əy cem - nə həynəu lep-e

1S knife-INS. mango cut-DECL

‘I cut mango with a knife’

15. man-nə rua-nə ənkwət bəcai-e

3S NOM bamboo-INS. garden fence-DECL

‘He fenced the garden with bamboo’

2.1.4.4 Locative

Locative case indicates the location of an object or an event. In Inpui there are two kinds of suffixes ‘*bi*’ and ‘*lə*’ which indicates locative case. The two suffixes perform different functions as the suffix ‘*bi*’ indicates a nearby object while the suffix ‘*lə*’ indicates a distant object.

16. gil-as-gə tebəl-bi əm-me

glass-DET table-LOC be-DECL

‘The book is on the table’

17. bəni ləu-lə si-droy
3P field-LOC go-PER

‘They have gone to field’

18. əy mənipur-lə se-ləŋmai
1S Manipur-LOC go-FUT

‘I will go to Manipur’

2.1.4.5 Genitive

This case marks the nouns or noun phrases which are dependents of another noun. In Inpui the suffix *-om* is used to form genitive case. This suffix is added to nouns or pronouns and it shows the possessive relationship.

19. ə-om dip

I-GEN book

‘my book’

20. man-om təkwen

3S-GEN horse

‘His horse’

2.1.4.6 Associative

In Inpui, the associative suffix *-le* is used to denote an individual or object in whose association the agent is carrying out an activity.

21. əy tom-le sinema p^haŋ-nu se-ye
1S tom-ASC cinema watch go-DECL

‘I go with Tom to watch film’

22. tom-le ram-le ban-ne
tom-ASC Ram-ASC friend-DECL

‘Tom and Ram are friends’

2.1.4.7 Ablative

This case indicates movement away from some location. In Inpui the suffix *-binə* is used to denote ablative case and this suffix is added to noun or pronoun to express a range of locative meanings.

23. əy mənipur-binə -ye

1S Manipur-ABL-DECL

‘I am from Manipur’

24. əy tom-binə məyri ŋainu-roy

I tom -ABL story hear-PER

‘I have heard story from Tom’

2.1.4.8 Dative

In Inpui the suffix *-khəunə* is used to denote dative case and this case distinguishes the recipient of something given.

25. əy-nə man-khəunə dip khət pi-ye

1S-NOM 3S -DAT book one give-DECL

‘I give him one book’

26. nəŋ man-khəunə se-ro

2S 3S DAT go-COM

‘You go to him’

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Waikhom Pinky Devi, Ph.D. Research Scholar
C/O Dr. Pauthang Haokip
Assistant Professor
Department Of Linguistics
Assam University
Silchar-788011
Assam
India
Waikhompinky91@Gmail.Com