
LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 13:11 November 2013
ISSN 1930-2940

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Affixation in Liangmai

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1.0 Introduction

Liangmai belongs to the mongoloid group of race and speak the Tibeto-Burman languages. Liangmai language is one of the 33 languages recognized by the government of Manipur. Liangmai spoken by around 34,000 is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Tamenglong District of Manipur and parts of Nagaland. The language belongs to the Kuki-Chin-Naga sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman family (Grierson 1903). However, Burling 2003 grouped it under Zeme group along with Zeme and Rongmei.

Jaimie Saul of Gauteng, a South African scholar, mentioned that the *Hamai* (Zeliangrong

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ancestors) traveled to *Chawangphungning* from *Ramtingkabin*, before they reached *Makuiluangdi*. Here they dwelt for a long time. After the population increased so much, reaching the mark of 7777 household, the village was divided into areas of settlement sectors: -north, south and central sector. From here they began to divide among themselves and called them separately as Zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and Puimei. There are different versions of how they got names based on folk tales and folklores and some songs.

1.2 Affixes

Affixes are bound morphemes which can only occur by attached to a root. It is a kind of strategy for the formation of word. Prefixation and Suffixation are very common principle in the Liangmai language. But Infixation is not found in Liangmai. In this language, which is an agglutinative language, affixes are very important as they take part in the formation of various words and in deriving several word classes, namely, verb, noun, adjective and adverb. The two types of affixes found in Liangmai are prefix and suffix which are discussed below.

1.2.1 Prefixes

In Liangmai uses lots of Prefixes for its word formation. But it has limited number as compared to the suffixes, as they are used in word class formation. It can be classified into two- 1) Pronominal and 2) Nominalizer, on their grammatical functions.

1.2.1.i Pronominal Prefixes

Liangmai has three persons, namely, *a-* first person, *na* 'second person' and *pa-* third person which function as a possessive prefix. The following are the examples (from 1-3) which show how each of the possessive prefixes is used to *təzu* 'face' to form possessive nouns. It may be noted here that when the possessive noun is formed with the help of possessive prefixes, the initial syllable gets deleted. There is no clear explanation as to how the first syllable of *təzu* 'face' gets deleted, but for the purpose of the present exposition, it may be the case that the language prefers short syllables especially when possessive nouns are formed.

Example 1

təzu	‘face’
əzu	‘my face’
nəzu	‘your face’
pəzu	‘his face’

Example 2

čəki	‘house’
əki	‘my house’
nəki	‘your house’
pəki	‘his house’

Example 3

čəpi	‘head’
əpi	‘my head’
nəpi	‘your head’
pəpi	‘his head’

1.2.1.ii Nominalizing Prefix

Liangmai has a Nominalizer prefix *-pə* which is prefixed to verbal root to derive the manner of performing an action. The prefix *-pə*, when prefixed to the verbal root nominalize the root.

Examples;

pə	sək	>	/pəsək/	‘manner of his drinking’
NOZ.	‘drink’			
pə	pək	>	/pəsək/	‘manner of his running’
NOZ.	‘run’			
pə	wi	>	/pəwi/	‘the degree of goodness’

NOZ. 'good'

1.2.2 Suffixation

Both inflectional and derivational affixes are found in the Liangmai. Plural marker and tense marker, which compose the important grammatical rules in a language, are indicated in Liangmai by suffixation. In Liangmai suffixes are more common than prefixes. Some illustrations are given below.

1.2.1.i Inflectional Suffixes

Noun Inflectional Suffixes

The suffix *-duŋ* is attached to a noun stem or root in Liangmai to represent its plurality.

čəki	'house'
čəkiduŋ	'houses'
čəlu	'field'
čəluđu	'fields'

Tense Marker

The suffix *-de* functions as the past tense marker in Liangmai.

zi	'sleep'
zide	'slept'
tiu	'eat'
tiude	'ate'

The suffix *-ra* when attached to a verb becomes a future tense. It indicates the action that will follow.

waŋ	'come'
waŋra	'will come'
pək	'ran'

pəkra 'to ran'

Aspect Marker

Suffix *-bəmme* is attached to a verb to mark its progressive aspect or incomplete action.

rao	'write'
raobəmme	'writing'
zi	'sleep'
zibəmme	'sleeping'

1.2.1.ii Adjective inflectional suffixes

The suffixes *-bi* and *-karan* functions as the comparative marker in Liangmai. They occur in free variation. The illustrations are given below:

di	'big'
dibi	'bigger'
wi	'good'
wikaran	'better'

Liangmai uses *-t^hu* and *-lan* as superlative degree. They are in free variation.

di	'big'
dit ^h u	'biggest'
hum	'sweet'
humlan	'sweetest'

1.2.3 Derivational Suffixes

In Liangmai, agentive nouns are derived by suffixing derivational suffix *-mai* to the verb.

pak	'run'
pakmai	'runner'
rao	'write'

raomai 'writer'

Liangmai has a derivational suffix *-sui* which is attached to a verb as in *ken* 'read' and *ken + sui* 'readable'. For example:

tiu 'eat'

tiusui 'eatable'

sək 'drink'

səksui 'drinkable'

Adverbs are derived by suffixing a derivational suffix *-ziu* to the adjectives.

dun 'short'

dunziu 'shortly'

pum 'round'

pumziu 'rounded'

1.2.4 Case Suffixes

Case is a grammatical category which establishes a relation that a noun or pronoun has with some other word in a sentence or a phrase. The case in Liangmai is affected by using suffixes. There are seven case suffixes/markers in Liangmai.

Liangmai has seven case markers. Among them nominative, genitive and locative case ending are not obligatory sometimes, they can be dropped or deleted.

The case endings present in Liangmai are:

1. Genitive *-gu, -leŋ*
2. Nominative *-niu*
3. Accusative *-tu*
4. Locative *-k^hu, -gə, -ləm*
5. Instrumental *-niu*
6. Ablative *-gəsu, -ləmsu*

7. Associative *-nai*

(1) Genitive

-gu and *-lej* are the two genitive case marker found in Liangmai. The case ending *-gu* is used to indicate the ownership/ possessor of an object whereas the case ending *-lej* is used to denote the beneficiary of an object. It is expressed by adding case ending *-gu* and *-lej* to the object of a sentence.

Example:

haise əgu tani ye
this-DET 1p-GEN pant-ASP
'This is my pant'

haibo arriakse ram lej ye
This- NOM book-DET ram-GEN-ASP
'This book is for ram'

(2) Nominative

The nominative case is use to mark the subject of a sentence. In Liangmai, the subject takes a case ending *-niu* and is found not obligatory.

Examples:

pə niu rose tu kuŋ ye/
he-NOM rose-ACC love_ASP
'He loves rose'

Saoniu kamlo haisi
who-NOM do-QMK this-DET
'Who did this?'

(3) Accusative

Accusative case is used to mark the object of a verb. It is expressed by adding case ending *-tu*.

Example:

i niu pə tu luŋsa ye
i NOM 3P-ACC love- ASP
'I love her'

nəpui nətu ku-bam-me
Your mother you-ACC call-PROG-ASP
'Your mother is calling you'

(4) Locative

The place of location of an object, event and time is expressed by locative case. Liangmai have three locative case marker, they are *-gə*, *-k^hu* and *-ləm*.

Example:

cəwan wəncak sum gə
evening hour three LOC
'At 3.0' clock in the evening'

pə k^hugə rankaŋ pik^hai lo
he-LOC-LOC money give ASP
'Give him money'

ram sonnai imphal ləm tət ne
ram tomorrow imphal LOC go fut
'Ram will go to imphal tomorrow'

(5) Instrumental

-niu which is homophonous to nominative marker is used to express the instrumentality of an object with which an action of a verb is performed. It is expressed by case-ending *-niu* to the object.

Example:

i məri niu tasiŋ bi ye
i axe INST wood cut-ASP
'I cut the wood with axe'

ram pensilniu ariak rao ye
ram pencil INST letter write-ASP
'Ram wrote a letter with a pencil'

(6) Ablative

The ablative case-ending *-gəsu* and *-lamsu* is suffixed to the object to expressed separation, expulsion and direction of movement from one to another. The ablative case is the case of separation from source.

Example:

cəmik gəsu mikdui luaŋ kiu ye
eye ABL tear fall down ASP
'Tears fall from the eye'

tiŋban lamsu siŋgiu luaŋ kiu ye
north ABL river fall down ASP
'River is flowing from the north'

(7) Associative

-nai is associative case marker found in Liangmai which is used to denote that the action has been performed in conjunction with another.

Example:

ram nai pət^hi
ram ASSOC 3p dog
'Ram and his dog'

təthi nai kəbak
dog ASSOC pig
'Dog and pig'

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 13:11 November 2013

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