

## Aspect Marker in Sihai (Tangkhal)

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### Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to highlight the aspect marker in Sihai Language. Sihai Language belongs to the Naga groups of the Tibeto-Burman language Family (Grierson, 1904 vol. iii, part iii). It is spoken in the northern side of Ukhrul District, 32 km away from Ukhrul town. The number of speaker of this language is about 1200 (Census of India 2011).

The present paper discusses the following aspect markers in Sihai language: simple aspect, progressive aspect, perfective aspect and irrealis or unrealise aspect. These aspects markers are suffixes which are attached to the verb roots.

Simple aspect expresses the habitual or universal truth of an event which is indicated by the morphemes *-e* and *-i*. These two morphemes have the following allophones *-ke*, *-mi*, *-pe*, *-ye*, and *-ni*.

Progressive aspect expresses an event which is going on and is indicated by the morpheme *-lile*.

Perfective aspect expresses an event which is completed and is indicated by the morpheme *-ne*. Irrealis or unrealise aspect expresses an event which will be carried out in the near future and is indicated by the suffix *-nuroi*.

**Key words:** *simple, progressive, perfective, irrealis or unrealized.*

### Introduction

The term 'aspect' designates the perspective taken on the internal temporal organisation of the situation, and so 'aspects' distinguish different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of the same situation (Comrie 1976:3ff, after Holt 1943:6; Bybee 2003:157). The

'situation' is meant here as a general term covering events, processes, states, etc., as expressed by the verb phrase or the construction.

Four types of aspect in Sihai Language are discussed as below.

### Simple Aspect

It expresses simple statement, habitual meaning and universal truth. Sihai language has two simple aspect markers –e and –i. These two aspect marker have the following allophones *-ke*, *-mi*, *-pe*, *-ye*, *-yi*.

Examples:

1. *e p<sup>h</sup>u ce φ*  
I rice eat-SIM  
“I eat rice.”
2. *e skul ke φ*  
I school go-SIM  
“I go to school.”
3. *me p<sup>h</sup>u p<sup>h</sup>a i*  
He rice cook-SIM  
“He cooks rice.”
4. *caobə ofis t<sup>h</sup>oi φ*  
Chaoba office go-SIM  
“Chaoba goes to office.”
5. *e ca ma i*  
I tea drink-SIM  
“I drink tea.”
6. *e -nə bol kət<sup>h</sup>ək ke*

I NOM ball kick –SIM

“I kick the ball.”

### Progressive Aspect

It is used for expressing continuation of an action and is indicated by the aspect marker –*lile*.

Examples:

7. *e əhu ce lile*

I now eat-PROG

“I am eating.”

8. *e oho wəttə se lile*

I my work do-PROG

“I am doing my work.”

9. *jek əhu lərikkə pa lile*

Jack now book read-PROG

“Jack is reading now.”

### Perfective Aspect

It expresses the completion of an action. The aspect marker is –*ne*. This morpheme –**ne** changes to –**ane** in verb roots ending with vowels.

Examples:

10 *meri skul ke ane*

Marry school go-PERF

“Marry has started going to school.”

11 *e p<sup>h</sup>u ce ane*

I rice eat-PERF

“I ate rice.”

12 *e oho wəttə se ane*

I my work do-PERF

“I have done my work.”

If this perfect marker goes with definite marker **-kappa**, then it indicates the certainty of completion of an action, as shown below:

Examples:

1: *me əri lo kappa ne*  
He medicine take-DEF-PERF  
“He has taken the medicine”.

The semantic difference between the following two sentences can be observed:

1: *meri skul ke ane*  
Mary school go-PERF  
“Mary has started going to school.”

1: *meri skul ke kappa ne*  
Mary school go-DEF-PERF  
“Mary has gone to school.”

Example 14 expresses that Mary has started going to school after her absence from school for a few days. There is no indication as to whether she went to school or not today, whereas example 15 is an indication of an event “that she has gone to school today”.

### **Irrealis/Unrealise Aspect**

It is indicated by the marker **-nuroi**. This aspect marker indicates an action that will take place in the near future.

Example:

16 *e ce nuroi*  
I eat-IRRE  
“I will eat.”

17 *e oho wəttə se nuroi*

I my work do- IRRE  
“I shall do my work.”

18 *tʰənəme ənɾə kəpʰuŋ ke nuroi*  
Tomorrow we hill climb-IRRE.  
“We will climb the hill tomorrow”.

19 *əsi ənɾə skul ke nuroi*  
Today we school go-IRRE  
“We will go to school today.”

### Conclusion

The present work gives a preliminary findings on the use of aspect markers in Sihai language. The aspect markers are – *e/-i* (five allophones *-ke, -mi, -pe, -ye, -ŋi*), *-lile, -ne* and *-nuroi*. The present work will hopefully serve as a basis for further research.

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### Abbreviations

SIM : SIMPLE ASPECT  
NOM : NOMINATIVE CASE  
PROG: PROGRESSIVE ASPECT  
PERF : PERFECTIVE ASPECT  
DEF : DEFINITIVE MARKER  
IRRE : IRREALIS ASPECT

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