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CASE MARKERS IN KARBI LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Case is a grammatical category, which is used to show the relationship among different words used in a sentence. In most branches of Tibeto-Burman language group, case is post-position. In Karbi language, the case is realized in the form of post-positions. The present study deals with the case markers in Karbi language spoken among the Karbi tribe of Karbi Anglong district. The information was collected through semi-structured questionnaire and interview schedule among the common people of different localities of the district. The study has highlighted the structure and the types of cases in Karbi language.

KEYWORDS:*Case, Karbi language, Tibeto-Burman language.*

1.INTRODUCTION :

The North-Eastern region of India comprises the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Geographically, Assam is situated between 90-96' E Longitude and 24 - 28' N Longitude. It is surrounded by six states of the North-Eastern India. It is bounded in the North by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. Nagaland and Manipur in the East. Mizoram, Tripura, Bangladesh and Meghalaya in the South and South-West. West Bengal is in the West. Assam also shares international borders with Bhutan and Bangladesh. Assam is a land of various tribes and languages. The Karbi is prominent hill tribe among the tribal communities of Assam. The term Karbi stands for the meaning of both the tribe and language. Racially the Karbis belongs to the Indo-Mongoloid group and linguistically, they belong to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Geographically, the Karbis are found mainly in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. Besides Karbi Anglong district, the Karbis inhabited areas are such as North Cachar Hill , Kamrup, Nagaon, Morigaon ,Golaghat, Lakhimpur and Sonitpur district of Assam ; Balijan Circle of Papumpare district in Arunachal Pradesh; Jaintia hills ,Ri Bhai and East-Khasi Hill district in Meghalaya and Foothills around Dimapur district in Nagaland. Apart from Assam, the Karbis are also recognised as scheduled tribe in Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

2. LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Karbi Anglong district is situated in the central part of Assam. It is bounded by Golaghat district in the East, Meghalaya and Morigaon district in the West, Nagaon and Golaghat district in the North and North Cachar Hills district and Nagaland in the South. The total geographical area of Assam is 78438 sq. Km. and out of which, the area of Karbi Anglong district is 10,434sq.kilometers. It is the largest district of Assam on the basis of area. As per the census of India (2011), the total population of Assam is 31169272, of which the total population of Karbi

Anglong district 9, 65,280. According to the Census of India (2011), the population density (person per sq. km.)Of Karbi Anglong district are 93.This district is the second lowest district in Assam from the view point of density of population.

The population of the district is predominantly tribal. The major tribal ethnic groups of this district are namely Karbis, Bodos, Kukis, Dimasas, Hmars, Garos, Rengma Nagas, Tiwas, Man(Tai language Speaking), Mizo, Monipuri, Khasi etc. Besides, a large number of non-tribal also live together in this hill region. The Karbis constituted 10.7% of the total tribal population (33, 08,570) in the state of Assam in 2001 Year. The estimated population of Karbis according to Census of India (2001) is 4, 60,000. With this population, the Karbis constituted the third largest tribal community in Assam after the Bodos and Mishings.

3. THE KARBI LANGUAGE

In Assam, languages belonging to different language families are found namely, Indo-Aryan, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman. The Karbi language belongs to the Mikir group of the Tibeto-Burman sub-group of the Sino-Tibetan language family. It has pointed out the similarities between Karbi language and the Kuki-Chin languages. However, in accordance to Linguistic Survey of India, conducted under the supervision of Sir George Abraham Grierson, the Karbi language has been categorized between the Bodo language group on one hand and the Kuki-Chin and Naga language group on the other. Linguistically, they are generally bilingual. Karbi and Assamese are two prominent languages, which play a significant role in their society. They speak in Karbi language to their own community in their domestic life. But, they speak state language Assamese in their social life. They have also adopted Assamese for educational purpose. Like most languages of the hill tribes of the North-east India, Karbi does not have their own script and is written in the Roman alphabet. Occasionally, they have written in Assamese script. Assamese is the main language used for communication in the Karbi Anglong district. So, the Karbi language is highly influenced by Assamese language.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present paper attempts to investigate or analyse the case system in Karbi language spoken in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. It examines the types and structure of case available in the language. The present investigation was based on field survey undertaken in different localities Karbi Anglong district of Assam. The survey was undertaken among the respondents randomly selected from different locations. The data were collected through interview and semi-structured questionnaire schedule.

5. CASE

Case is considered to be an inflectional category, basically of nouns and pronouns, which typically marks their role in relation to other parts of the sentence. It is 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. (A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, David Crystal 1980,47). It is a way of showing the grammatical relationship between words and phrases and each form is analyzed in terms of a specific range of meaning.

5.1 Case in Karbi Language

In the Karbi language, case is indicated by post positional case marker of the words. In this language, case relationship is realized by four ways:

1. in the absence of case-marker
2. by the addition of case-marker
3. by the addition of prefix
4. by the addition of definite article

From the traditional grammarian's point of view, seven cases can be recognized in Karbi language, but the case markers are few. The case markers are used as post-positional affix. The seven cases are such as nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive and locative. Each of these cases has different

suffixes, which known as case endings or case markers. Though post-positions are syntactically bound elements, when they take place with nouns and pronouns, they constitute phrase instead of words.

The case and case markers of Karbi language are is given below in the following table:

Case	Sign
Nominative	zero element (Ø)
Accusative	-phan,-aphan
Instrumental	-pen,-pensi
Dative	-phan,-aphan
Ablative	-pen,-pensi
Genitive	Ø, a-
Locative	Ø, -si, - alo ŋ ? ?

5 . 1Nom1native

The nominative case is the case of the doer of the action indicated by the verb. The nominative case is used to mark the subject of a sentence. Generally in the Karbi language, the nominative case has no overt case marker and it is realized as zero morph. For example:

/chainÁŋ - Ø bap cho/
Cow- NOM grass eat
'The cow eats grass.'

/Tharwe alaŋ - Ø cho-et lo/
The mango he-NOM eat-PAST
'He ate the mango.'

Sometimes '-si' and '-ke' are used to indicate nominative case. Actually, these are not case indicative marker of nominative. These are called definitive article. For example:

/ Alaŋ si dam-ji /
He-indeed go-FUT
'He will go indeed.'

/ Ne-si kitap apak ketok /
I-indeed book-DEF write
'I write the book indeed.'

/ Kajir ke an ketun /
Kajir-indeed rice cook
'Kajir cooks rice indeed.'

5.1.2 Accusative Case

The accusative case is the case used with the object of the verb or to mark the object of a verb. In Karbi language, when the noun refers to a particular thing or person, the accusative case marker is use as suffix. It is expressed by the addition of suffix {-phan} and {–aphan} with the object of a sentence. For example:

• The case marker {-phan} is used with first and second person singular number of the personal pronouns.

/KadÁm-Ø naŋphan kehaŋ /
Kadom-NOM you-ACC call
'kadom call you.'

/Ne phan tharwe epum pitha/
Me- ACC mango–DEF give-IMP
'Give me a mango.'

• {-aphan} used with first, second and third person plural number and third person singular number of personal pronouns.Generally –aphan is used karbi when it refers to animate objects .For example:
/ pijo aphan so-ri /
Bees- ACC disturb-NEG
'Don't disturb the bees.'

/ Keduk aphan raptha /
Poor- ACC help- IMP
'Help the poor.'

/ Netum aphan kitap epak pi tha /
We- ACC kitap-DEF give- IMP
'Give me a book.'

/ chainÁŋaphan teke nepsek /
Cow- ACC tiger killed
'The tiger killed the cow.'

5.1.3 Instrumental case

The Instrumental case is the case of the Instrument with the help of which the action mentioned by the verb is performed. It is expressed by the post-posing case marker {–pen} and {-pensi}. While {-pen} is used with nouns functions as mediums. Suffix –pensi is used in instrumental case in doing the action by human-being. For example:

/Ne kÁlÁm pensi ketok /
I pen-INS Write
'I write with pen.'

/Arwi pen an cho-ri /
Left hand- INS rice eat-NEG
'Don't eat rice by left hand.'

/Hilepen teke apbab-nÁn /
Gun- INS tiger kill- IMP
'Kill the tiger by gun.'

/tharwe tari-pen rot-nÁn /
Mango knife-INS cut- IMP
'Cut the mango with knife.'

/ Ram pensi baŋcho akam pataŋlo/
Ram INS the (definitive) work has been done
'The work has been done by Ram.'

5.1.4 Dative case

The dative case is used to mark the direct or indirect object of the verb. The case marker is added with the noun and pronoun to refer definite place, direction or purpose etc. Sometimes in karbi language, no case marker is used for dative case, it realized as zero morph. For example:

/ Ne hem damji /
I home-Ø go-FUT
'I will go to home.'

In Karbi language, the dative case marked by the suffixes {-phan and–aphan} with the act of giving. These are just like the accusative case maker .e.g.

/ Keduk aphan n pi naŋji /
Poor- DAT donation give- FUT
'Poor should be given donation.'

/wo aphan chaŋ pi-tha /
Hen- DAT rice give-IMP
'Give rice to the hen'

/ Ne nang phan tharwe-epum kewan /
I you- DAT mango-DEF bring
'I bring a mango to you'

5.1.5 Ablative Case

The ablative case is the case of separation from the source in performing the action mentioned by the verb. It specifies the point in space to where the subject is transferred at the culmination of the action identified by the verb. The ablative case is marked by Suffixes {-pen} or {-pensi} to the noun. For example,

/Ram pen kitap apak antha /
Ram-ABL book-DEF bring-imp.
'Bring the book from Ram'

/alaŋ ne hem pen dam po /
He my home- ABL go-FUT
'He will go from my house.'

/ne dokan pen phurui an-et lo/
I the shop- ABL Potato bring-PAST
'I brought potato from the shop.'

/ Arve aŋchaŋ penchi kezaŋ /
Rain above- ABL falls
'The rain falls from the above.'

/ Neli Diphu pensi kevaŋ /
I Diphu- ABL Come
'I come from Diphu.'

5.1.6 Genitive case

The genitive case is the case which indicates the relationship between the nouns. The construction of the genitive is a peculiar feature of the karbi language. No case-suffixes are used in genitive, where as the genitive is prefixed to the noun. The genitive marker /a-/ is not given with first, second and third person singular number of personal pronouns of this language. Except these the genitive marker /a-/ are given other personal pronouns.

/ne kitap/ 'my book'
/naŋli kitap/ 'your book'
/alaŋ kitap/ 'his book'
Prefix a-is added to the plural personal pronoun and other proper nouns. For example,
/naŋlitum a-inar/
Your-PLU GEN-elephant'
'Your elephant'

/Alaŋ aphak /
Their GEN –pig
'Their pig'

/Ram a-hem/
Ram GEN-house
'Ram's house'

/ Iŋnar a-so/
Elephant GEN -teeth
'Elephant's teeth'

/Ne pinu a-men sika/
My aunt GEN -name Sika'
'My aunt's name is Sika.'
/Jadu Madhu a-ik/
Jadu Madhu GEN –brother
'Jadu Madhu's brother.'

/Netum a-rÁŋ a-men jeng arÁŋ /
Our GEN-village GEN-name Jeng village
'Our village's name is Jeng village.'

5.1.7 Locative case

The locative case indicates the particular location of the event or action identified by the verb.
There is no separate case marker in Karbi language for locative case. For example:

/ Alaŋ hem baduta awe /
His home- Ø anybody-NEG
'Nobody at his home'

/ Ne rideŋ taŋka do /
I hand- Ø money have

'I have money in my hand.'

Sometimes it is expressed by post posing –si and –alÁŋ . For example:

/ LaŋalÁŋ Ak do/
Water- LOC fish have
'There is fish in water.'

/ Hem alÁŋ komat do?/
Home LOC Who is?
'Who is present at home?'

CONCLUSION

From above discussion, the Karbi case system shows some peculiarities which are not common other Tibeto-Burman languages of Assam. Such as in genitive case, Karbi has special characters which are generally absent in other Tibeto-Burman languages of Assam. In karbi language Dative and Accusative case–markers are common and Instrumental case markers are equal to the ablative case form. Zero elements stand for nominative, genitive and locative case. It becomes clear that Karbi has a simple system of using case markers.

Abbreviations ABL Ablative
INST Instrumental
DAT Dative
GEN Genitive
LOC Locative

GEN Genitive
ACC Accusative
DEF Definite
IMP Imperative
FUT Future

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