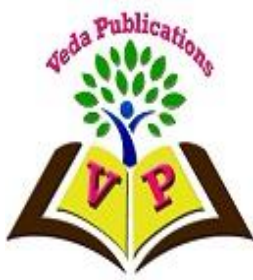


**NEGATION MARKING STRATEGY IN HRANGKHOL**

Krithika Barman

*Department of Linguistics*DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2022.9106>**ABSTRACT**

The present paper attempts to discuss the negation marker of Hrangkhol. Hrangkhol is a sub branch of Kuki-Chin language of Tibeto-Burman language family. Hrangkhol language is mainly spoken in Dima Hasao and Karmiganj districts of Assam and Dholai district of Tripura. This paper focuses mainly on Hrangkhol speakers of Dima Hasao district of Assam. In Hrangkhol most of the negations are expressed by means of suffixation. The present paper will attempt to explore different strategies of negation marking of Hrangkhol.

Keywords: *Hrangkhol, Kuki-Chin, Tibeto-Burman, Negation*



1.0. INTRODUCTION

Hrangkhoh or Rangkhoh is one of the endangered Tibeto-Burman languages of Northeast India (UNESCO, 2009). The term Hrangkhoh is a compound word *hrang* 'courageous warrior' and *khol* 'gathering group' which literally mean 'a group of courageous warrior staying together'. Hrangkhoh language is spoken mainly in Dima Hasao and Karmiganj districts of Assam and Dholai district of Tripura. According to Ethnologue, the total population of Hrangkhoh speakers in India is estimated about 18,700 (2000). Hrangkhoh belongs to the Kuki-Chin subgroup of Tibeto-Burman language family (Grierson 1903). Hrangkhoh community is Mongoloid by race. Hrangkhoh is lesser known and lesser researched Tibeto-Burman language of northeast India as it has very less speakers therefore, very little documentation. So, there is a need of extensive or systematic research, i.e., description and documentation of the language in order to promote, preserve and protect the language.

¹The Hrangkhoh data presented in this paper was collected by the author during the field work, from Dima Hasao district of Assam. Data for the language was collected using Zoom H4 recorder along with written data. Informants from different age group and sex were part of the data collection.

¹ The Hrangkhoh data used here in the present paper is collected from Haflong town, Zion village, Molphong village, Buonkhun village of Dima Hasao district of Assam, India. Valienril Hrangkhoh, Late Joichunsiak Pena, John Phoithong, Lalbiakchung Hrangkhoh, Lalphirthoi Hrangkhoh, Bulthoikhup. Dumkar, Andronika Phoithong helped me during my field work in Dima Hasao district. They help me in introducing to Hrangkhoh speakers and many villages in the district. I am very much thankful to all of them and speakers of the community for their help.

There has been some works on Hrangkhoh, such as '*Tribes of N. C. Hills*' by Ramdina Lalsim (2005) and '*A Short Account of The Kuki-Lushai Tribes on The North East Frontier with an Outline Grammar of The Rangkhoh-Kuki-Lushai Language*' by C A Soppitt (2007) which provided me information on Hrangkhoh language and its background. In these two books some of the section discusses about the historical background of the language. Recently there were some publications on Hrangkhoh by some research associates of Tezpur University, Tezpur, Assam, India. Research scholar Surath Debbarma from Assam University Silchar, completed his PhD thesis on Hrangkhoh of Tripura, India in the year 2018.

The following section 2 discusses about the negation in Hrangkhoh, section 3 is an overview on the role of negation in different clause construction, section 4 discusses about other formation of negation in different context and section 5 is conclusion, which gives a brief detail of the study.

2.0. NEGATION IN HRANGKHOL

In Hrangkhoh negation is expressed by means of affixation and negative morpheme follows the main verb. Hrangkhoh has different negative morphemes based on the realis and irrealis aspect. There are three negative morphemes in Hrangkhoh, such as *ma* or *mak*, *no* and *loi*.

**3.0. CLAUSAL NEGATION**

Negation in Hrangkhoh is described by the negative particles, which are mostly occurring as sentence final position. Hrangkhoh has agreement particles with the 1st person, 2nd person and 3rd person, as *-ŋ* occurs with 1st person singular, *-ce* occurs with 2nd person singular. However, unlike other Kuki-Chin languages like Thadou, Koireng, there is no agreement marker for 3rd person in the negative clause formation in Hrangkhoh. The negation markers are discussed in different types of clauses, namely, declarative clause, imperative clause, interrogative clause and hortative clause.

3.1. Declarative Clause:

In declarative clause, the negative marker *ma* or *mak* which is a general negative morpheme is used by the Hrangkhoh speakers. Some languages are reported as having postverbal *-ma*, with no final consonant; in some cases this may simply be a case of failing to transcribe a final glottal stop, or it could represent further phonological erosion *-mak > -maʔ > -ma* (DeLancey, 2015 p.no: 206). Realis aspect in Hrangkhoh is unmarked and irrealis aspect is marked by *-ti* in the language. Realis event formation with negative morpheme in declarative clause is shown in the following examples:

(1) *ki-fe*

1SG-go

"I go."

(2) *fe-ma-u-ŋ*

go-NEG-PV-1SG

"I didn't go."

(3) *kin-fe*

1PL-go

(4) *fe-ma-kin-ni*

go-NEG-1PL-TNS

"We didn't go."

(5) *naŋma ni-fe*

2SG 2SG-go

"You go"

(6) *naŋma fe-mak-ce*

2SG go-NEG-2SG

"You didn't go."

(7) *nin-fe*

2PL-go

"You (pl) go."

(8) *nin fe-mak-ce*

2PL go-NEG-2PL-TNS

"You(pl) are not going."²(9) *a-fe*

3SG-go

"He goes."

(10) *ama-pa fe-ma*

3SG-male go-NEG

"He didn't go."

(11) *an-fe*

3SG-go

"We go."

(12) *anni fe-ma-hai*

3PL go-NEG-PL

"They are not going."

² In realis aspect in the example (4) it is seen that no plural agreement is added to the negative morpheme. Instead the speakers use 2nd person plural morpheme *nin* to signify the 2nd person plurality in the clause unlike the example (10) of irrealis aspect event in the language.



In the examples (2),(4), (6), (8), (10) and (12) this can be seen that in the negative construction in the clause with the realized formation is done by adding the negative morpheme *-ma* or *-mak*. In the example (2) negative morpheme *-ma* precedes the post verbal particle *-u* and 1st person agreement *-ŋ*. However, in example (4) negative *-mak* precedes 1st person plural pronominal morpheme *kin* and no agreement or post verbal particle is suffixed to the verb, only prefixed to post verbal tense marker *-ni*. Again, in example (6) negative morpheme *mak* precedes 2nd person agreement *-ce* in the clause. Likewise example (6), the 2nd person plural form remains same, the only difference found is that the 2nd person plural pronominal *nin* is added to pluralize the clause as in example (8) and no agreement is added to the negative morpheme. However, in the example (10), no 3rd person agreement is following the negative morpheme *ma* and in example (12) plural morpheme *-hai* follows negative morpheme *ma*. Post verbal *-u* is added to the negative *-ma* when 1st person singular agreement *-ŋ* is present.

However, when the clause is in negative construction irrealis aspect marker *-ti* got deleted in the clause and replaced by the negative morpheme *no*. In unrealized negative formation also person agreement is added to the negative morpheme *-no*. Agreement marker for the 1st person singular and plural is *-ŋ*, the 2nd person singular is marked by *-ci* and the 3rd person singular is unmarked in this case also and plurality is marked by adding plural marker -

hai. This illustration can be discussed with the following examples:

(13) *ki-fe-ta-hraŋ*

1SG-go-ASP-FUT

"I will go."

(14) *fe-no-ni-ŋ*

go-NEG-TNS-1SG

"I will not go."

(15) *kin-fe-ta-hraŋ*

2PL-go-ASP-FUT

"We will go."

(16) *fe-no-ni-u-ŋ*

go-NEG-TNS-PV-1SG

"We will not go."

(17) *ni-fe-ta-hraŋ*

2SG-go-ASP-FUT

"You will go."

(18) *fe-no-ci-ni*

go-NEG-2SG-TNS

"You will not go."

(19) *nin-fe-ta-hraŋ*

2SG-go-ASP-FUT

"You (pl) will go."

(20) *fe-no-cin-ni*

go-NEG-2PL-TNS

"You (pl) will not go."

(21) *a-fe-ta-hraŋ*

3SG-go-ASP-FUT

"He will go."

(22) *fe-no-ni*

go-NEG-TNS

"He will not go."



(23) *an-fe-ta-hran*

3PL-go-ASP-FUT

"They will go."

(24) *anni fe no-ni-hai*

3PL go NEG-TNS-PL

"They will not go."

The examples (14), (16), (18), (20), (22), (24) this can be seen that in the negative construction in the clause, the irrealis marker is replaced by the negative morpheme *-no*. In the unrealized negative construction, the 1st person agreement marker *-ŋ* is used in both singular and plural constructions with the negative *-no* as shown in the example (14) and (16). 1st person agreement marker follows negative morpheme *no* and tense marker *-ni* and post verbal particle *-u* is added before 1st person plural construction. The 2nd person singular *-ci* and the 2nd person plural *-cin* follows negative morpheme *-no* and precedes tense marker *-ni* which is shown in the examples (18) and (20). The 3rd person singular and plural is unmarked, where plural marker *-hai* is added to the negative morpheme *no* and tense marker *-ni* to pluralize the clause, as shown in the examples (22) and (24).

3.2. Imperative clause:

Imperative clause in Hrangkhoh is formed by adding imperative marker *-ro* to the verbs. The imperative clause is ungrammatical without the imperative marker *-ro*. In Hrangkhoh, the negative marker *no* is used to negate the imperative clause which follows the verb and precedes imperative marker *-ro*. The negative marker *-mak* or *-ma* is not

used to negate the imperative clause. Some examples are shown below:

(25) *hoŋ-ro*

come-IMP

"Come here."

(26) *hoŋ-no-ro*

come-NEG-IMP

"Do not come here."

(27) *k^hak^ha fa-ro*

that eat-IMP

"Eat that."

(28) *k^hak^ha fa-no-ro*

that eat-NEG-IMP

"Do not eat that."

(29) *milak t^ho-ro*

lie do-IMP

"Tell lies."

(30) *milak t^ho-no-ro*

lie do-NEG-IMP

"Do not tell lies."

(31) *inruk-ro*

steal-ro

"Steal."

(32) *inru-no-ro*

steal-NEG-IMP

"Do not steal."

In the examples (26), (28), (30) and (32), this can be seen that negative morpheme *-no* is added to the verb, whether the imperative clause is polite, request, order or command in Hrangkhoh.

3.3. Interrogative clause:

Interrogative clause is negated by negative markers -



mak and *-loi* in Hrangkhoh. This can be discussed in the two types of interrogative constructions such as *wh-* question and yes or no question, as shown below:

3.3.1. *Wh-* question:

In *wh*-question interrogative construction the negative morpheme *-mak* and *-loi* is suffixed to verb and no question particle is added after it. In this case, the difference can be seen in terms of time. The negative morpheme *-mak* or *-ma* is used when the clause is in non-future construction and *-loi* is used when the clause is in future construction, this is illustrated in the following examples:

(33) *itinmo horŋ-mak-ce-a*
why come-NEG-2SG-NMZ

"Why aren't you coming?"

(34) *ama-nu-k^{ha} it^homo fa-mak-a*
3SG-female-FOC why eat-NEG-NMZ

"Why is she not eating?"

(35) *it^homo anni-le fe-ma-u-ŋ-a*
why them-ASS go-NEG-PV-1SG-NM

"Why am I not going with them?"

(36) *itinamo nir-ziek t^hei-loi*
how 2SG-write can-NEG

"How can you not write this?"

(37) *it^homo ei lam-loi*
why 1PL dance-NEG

"Why are we not dancing?"

The examples (33) to (35) are non-future sentences and negative morpheme *-mak* and *-ma* is suffixed to the verbs and these negative morphemes get nominalized in this

construction. Agreement is present for 1st person and 2nd person agreement in the examples (33) and (35), but no agreement is occurring in terms of 3rd person as seen in the example (34). The negative morpheme *-loi* is used when the sentence or clause indicates future time as in examples (36) and (37). In this construction no agreement marker is used in the clauses. The sentences are in irrealis aspect but the difference is found in terms of space and time. Thus, the negator *-mak* is added to the non-future sentences and negator *-loi* is added to the future sentences.

3.3.2. *Yes or No* question:

In Hrangkhoh, yes or no question is formed by suffixing negative morpheme *-mak* and *-loi* to the verbs and followed by the question particle in the clause. The former is used to negate the non-future event and the latter is used to negate the future event in the clause as shown in the following examples:

(38) *school fe-ŋai-mak-ce-mo*
school go-PROG-NEG-2SG-QP

"Don't you go to school?"

(39) *school ni-fe-loi-hraŋ-mo*
school 2SG-go-NEG-FUT-QP

"Will you not go to school?"

The example (38) show the negative morpheme *-mak* is suffixed to the verb along with second person agreement *-ce* and question particle *-mo* follows the negator in the non-future event in



Hrangkhol. Again, in the example (39) negative morpheme *-loi* is suffixed to the verb as it is in future event. In this case the future morpheme *-hraj* follows the negative morpheme along with question particle *-mo*.

3.4. Hortative clause:

In Hrangkhol *-rei* is added to the verbs to form hortative constructions. Hortative clauses are negated by adding negative morpheme *-no* to the verb and to the hortative marker *-rei*. Some examples are given below:

(40) *ama-pa k^hopui a-fe-rei*
3SG-male market 3SG-go-HORT

"Let him go to the market."

(41) *ama-pa k^hopui fe-no-rei*
3SG-male market go-NEG-HORT

"Let him not go to the market."

(42) *fe-rei*

go-rei

"Let's go."

(43) *fe-no-rei*
go-NEG-HORT

"Let's not go."

From the above examples (41) and (43), it can be stated that negative morpheme *-no* is added to the verb and hortative marker *-rei* follows *-no* in the hortative clause.

4.0. OTHER NEGATIVE PARTICLES:

4.1. Negative Polarity item:

Negative polarity items are those words or phrases which can appear only in a negative environment in a sentence (Crystal 2008: in Daimai and Singha 2020, p.no: 124-146). In

Hrangkhol, there is no exact term for nobody, no one etc. instead the speakers use someone and in this case verb is negating the clause. In negative polarity the negative morpheme *ma* is suffixed to the verb to negate the clause. Following are some examples of negative polarity item:

(44) *tute hoŋ-ma-hai ki-hmun-a*
someone come-NEG-PL 1SG-house-LOC

"Nobody comes to my place."

(45) *tute om-ma-hai*
someone exist-NEG-PL

"No one is there."

(46) *ama-pa ite inhre-ma*
3SG-male something know-NEG

"He knows nothing."

The examples (44) to (46) shows that nobody, no one, nothing all these items are used as someone and negative morpheme *-ma* is suffixed to the verb for negative construction as polarity items cannot make the environment of the clause negative in Hrangkhol.

4.2. Double negation:

In Hrangkhol, double negation is formed by adding negative morpheme *loi* to the verb and *ma* is suffixed to the tense particle *ni*. The function negation in realis or irrealis aspect use same construction in double negation in Hrangkhol. The following are the examples of double negation:

(47) *ki-fe-loi-hraj-ti-na ni-ma*
1SG-go-NEG-FUT-IRR-NMZ TNS-NEG

"It is not that I am not going."



(48) *ni-fe-loi-hran-ti-na* *ni-ma*
 2SG-GO-NEG-FUT-IRR-NMZ TNS-NEG
 "It is not that you are not going."

(49) *ei* *sak-loi-hran-ti-na*
 1PL sing-NEG-IRR-NMZ
ni-ma
 TNS-NEG
 "It is not that we will not be singing."

Thus, from the above examples (47)-(49) of double negation it is clear that in Hrangkhoh there are no different constructions for realis and irrealis event. In both the aspect both negator *-loi* which indicates future and *-ma* which indicates non-futurew is used to negate the clause with double negation.

5.0. CONCLUSION

The present paper mainly focuses on the primary usage of negation formation in different clauses and different negative constructions. The general negative marker in Hrangkhoh is *-mak* or *-ma*. In declarative clause negative morpheme *mak* or *ma* is used when the sentence or clause construction is in realized event. Negative morpheme *-no* occurs with the unrealized event in the clause. The negative morpheme *-no* is also used in hortative clause and in imperative clause, which precedes hortative marker and imperative marker respectively. The negator *-loi* is used in interrogative clause when it is in future time and *-mak* is used when the structure is in the non-future time in *wh*-construction and in yes or no question constructions. In negative polarity items, the

negative *-ma* is used to negate the construction. Double negation is formed by the negatives *-loi* and *-ma* and occurrence of these two negatives remains negative in the sentences. Furthermore, more depth study is mandatory in terms of nominalized clause, relative clause, negative strengthening, conditional negative particle, double negation in imperative clause and negative coordinator to have more brief details on the negation marking strategy in Hrangkhoh.

Abbreviation:

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 1 | first |
| 2 | second |
| 3 | third |
| ASP | aspect |
| FOC | focus |
| FUT | future |
| HORT | hortative |
| IMP | imperative |
| IRR | irrealis |
| LOC | locative |
| NEG | negative |
| NMZ | nominalizer |
| PL | plural |
| PV | post verbal |
| QP | question particle |
| SG | singular |
| TNS | tense |

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