



RESEARCH ARTICLE

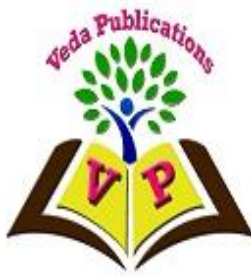


NEGATION IN RANGLONG

Kabita Singha

*(Ph.D Scholar, Assam University Silchar, 788011)*Email: oinamkabita1512@gmail.comDOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2022.9111>

ABSTRACT



Ranglong is one of the sub-tribes of Halam community of Tripura. Ethnically, they are Mongoloid and their language belongs to the Kuki-Chin sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman language family (Grierson 1903). The present paper attempts to explore the negative marking in Ranglong. The negative formation can be expressed by suffixing negative markers to the main verb. The negative marker *mək* is the common negative marker in Ranglong used with realis construction.

The present paper discusses the various negative construction in Ranglong which includes, agreement particles, declarative, interrogative, existential, possessive, locative, imperative, negative strengthening and double negation.

Keywords: *Negation, Ranglong, Tibeto-Burman.*



1.0 Introduction

The Kuki-Chin languages constitute one of the most important subgroups of the great Tibeto-Burman language family (VanBik 2009). Kuki-Chin languages are mainly spoken in Indian sub-continent particularly in Northeastern part of India, Chittagong Hills District in Bangladesh and Chin Hills of Myanmar. Ranglong is one of the sub-tribes of Halam community of Tripura. Ethnically, they are Mongoloid by race and their language belongs to Kuki-Chin subgroup of Tibeto-Burman language family (Grierson 1903). The speakers of the language has a very strong positive attitude towards their language. Ranglong has been registered as Langrong by UNESCO and declared it as critically endangered language. Therefore, in order to preserve the language there is a need of systematic research which would help in documenting the language.

The speakers of Ranglong are mainly concentrated in the Dharmanagar subdivision of the North Tripura district of Tripura. Ranglong speakers are also found in Karimganj district of South Assam and the Northwestern part of Mizoram. According to the Ethnologue Report (18th ed., 2015), the total number of Ranglong speakers in the North-Eastern India is 8000¹.

Some phonological features found in the language are: the initial velar nasal η which is common in Kuki-Chin languages and the labio-dental fricative v sound which most of the Kuki-Chin languages lack. The language has strong agreement

system. Gender distinction is not marked grammatically. It has only natural gender. Numeral system in the language is of decimal type. Ranglong is a verb final language, with dominant SOV word order. The paper presents the morpho-syntactic structure of negative construction in Ranglong.

²Data were collected using Zoom H4 recorder and along with it under some circumstances the data has to be pen down during the field work. The data were collected from different age group and sex which includes the older as well as the young generation. Informants were very helpful and they provided the data required³.

There are some works done on Ranglong and few books that have definitely helped in gathering more information about the language are: *A Short Account of The Kuki-Lushai Tribes on The North East Frontier with An Outline Grammar of The Rangkhoh-Lushai and a Comparison of Lushai with other Dialects* by C.A. Soppitt (2007) which provides the information on Ranglong language and its background. *A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF RANGLONG* by the Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram (Author- unknown), 1993. The book mentions the customary in the Ranglong society. *KHURPUITABUM, AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF RANGLONG*, written By Thomas Halam and published by Tribal Research & Cultural Institute Government of Tripura, Agartala, 2014. The book gives a brief idea about the history, social life and

¹ However, the population figure of Ranglong has not been given in the Census report of India and as per the policy of government of India the number of speakers whose mother tongues which are spoken by lesser than 10,000 person is not published.

² The data used in this paper has been collected during the field work for research purpose from Piplapunjee, Karimganj district of Assam in the year 2021.

³ I am indebted to Mr. K. Ranglong, for allowing me to stay at his place and also for the guidance. He has introduced me the Ranglong villages and also with the speakers. I would like to thank Mr. Joseph Tara and Cyril Ranglong for actively helping me with the data required. I am also thankful to Mr. Ringreiril Ranglong for providing me books and sharing his knowledge about the language. I feel blessed and at the same time grateful to be a part of the community.



also list of lexical items. One more book that gives a glimpse of linguistics features is the 'RANGLONG WRITERS HANDBOOK' published By Bibles International India Society, 2019.

The paper consist of different sections which includes an introduction followed by sections which discusses about negation and its agreement particle, the negative marker *mək* and *no* in Ranglong and section 3 is the conclusion.

2.0 NEGATION

Negation is a very important part of human language and so every languages in the world has a way to express it. There are different devices for different languages to convert affirmative construction to negative construction. Some languages employ separate negative lexeme before and after the verb; in some languages it is done by addition of affixes to the verb (Yashwanta Singh, 2010: 113). In Ranglong the negative marker is expressed by means of suffixation. The negative marker *mək* is only found in the non-future tense. To express the negative in future tense Ranglong uses different marker. Negation in the language can be formed only at the clausal level and not at the constituent level.

2.1 Negative markers

In Ranglong there are three negative markers: *mək*, *no* and *nok* all these three negative markers are used in different context. Ranglong has negative agreement particles occurring with the first person and second person. The agreement particle *ŋ* occurs with the first person singular along with a post verbal particle *u* and *me* with the first person plural; *če* occurs with the second person singular and for the second person plural *u* is prefixed with *če* but for the

third person singular and plural no such particle is attached. In realized negative construction the negative marker *mək* is attached post-verbally followed by the agreement particles. Examples of agreement particle in both realized (1-6) and unrealized (7-12) negation are cited:

Realized Negation

1. *koi bu nek-mək-u-ŋ*
1SG rice eat-NEG-PV-1SG
'I don't eat rice.'
2. *koini bu nek-mək-me*
1PL rice eat-NEG-1PL
'We don't eat rice.'
3. *naŋ bu nek-mək-če*
2SG rice eat-NEG-2SG
'You don't eat rice.'
4. *nəŋni bu nek-u-mək-če*
2PL rice eat-PL-NEG-2PL
'You (pl) don't eat rice.'
5. *ama bu nek-mək*
3SG rice eat-NEG
'He doesn't eat rice.'
6. *əmani bu nek-u-mək*
3PL rice eat-PL-NEG
'They doesn't eat rice.'

Similarly, in the unrealized negation it can be seen that the negator *no* is also attached post-verbally followed by the irrealis *-ni* and the agreement particles. The particle *ŋ* occurs with the first person singular and *ma* with the first person plural; *ta* occurs with both the second person singular and plural; with the third person singular and plural no such particle is attached while forming the unrealized negation. The difference between the number marking of 1PERS, 2PERS and 3PERS is that the 1PERS agreement clitic



occurs before the future tense and in the later it occurs postverbally and not after the future tense marker (Haokip 2018: 174). Examples of unrealized negation are cited from 7-12.

Unrealized negation

7. *koi bu nek-no-ni-ŋ*
1SG rice eat-NEG-IRR-1SG
'I will not eat rice.'
8. *Koini tan-no-ma-ni*
1PL run-NEG-1PL-IRR
'We will not run.'
9. *nəŋ se-no-ta-ni*
2SG go-NEG-2SG-IRR
'You will not go.'
10. *nəŋni tan-u-no-ta-ni*
2PL run-PL-NEG-2PL-IRR
'You (pl) will not run.'
11. *əma hoŋ-no-ni*
3SG come-NEG-IRR
'He will not come.'
12. *əmani nek-u-no-ni*
3PL eat-PL-NEG-IRR
'They will not eat.'

2.2 Negator mək

The postverbal negative construction which we will consider is postverbal mək (or a reduced version such as ma?). This is found in various groups up and down the Patkai Range; in Kuki-Chin it appears to be restricted to the Northwestern languages, but we also find it in some of the Naga languages (Delancey 2014). The negative marker mək in Ranglong is used to negate both the verbal and non-verbal predicates which includes declarative, interrogative, existential, possessive and locative construction.

2.2.1 Negation of declarative predicate

The negator mək is used to negate all the three person i.e, the first, second and third person in both the verbal and non-verbal declarative predicates for example

13. *koi əpʰək ka-buoŋ*
1SG tea 1SG-drink
'I drink tea.'
14. *koi əpʰək buoŋ-mək-u-ŋ* (declarative verbal)
1SG tea drink-NEG-PV-1SG
'I don't drink tea.'
15. *koi ka-sa*
1SG 1SG-good
'I am good.'
16. *koi sa-mək-u-ŋ* (declarative non-verbal)
1SG good-NEG-PV-1SG
'I am not good.'

2.2.2 Negation of Interrogative clauses

The general negator mək is used to negate the interrogative clause in Ranglong followed by the question particle –mo. Example 17 and 18 shows the negation of interrogative clause.

17. *nəŋ English čoŋ-tʰəi-mək-če-mo*
2SG english speak-MOD-NEG-2SG-Q
'Don't you speak English?'
18. *əma Mary-ni-mək mo*
3SG Mary-COP-NEG-Q
'Isn't she Mary?'

2.2.3 Existential construction

The common negative marker mək is used to negate the non-verbal existential, possessive and locative construction in Ranglong. In existential construction



the negative marker follows the existential *om*, as given in example 19 and 20.

19. *class-a anču-ŋai kʰət-ŋal om-mək*
class-LOC student-PL one-NMLZ EXIST-NEG
'There are no students in the class.'

20. *zoo-na varaho-ŋal om-mək*
zoo-LOC peacock-NMLZ EXIST-NEG
'There are no peacock in the zoo.'

2.2.4 Possessive construction/ Locative construction

Possessive construction in all the person is formed by using *mək* as mentioned above in 2.1. The negative marker *mək* is attached with the particle *-ŋ* for first person singular, *-me* for first person plural, *-če* for both second person singular and plural, for third person singular and plural only the common negative marker *mək* is used. The same is followed in locative construction for all the three persons. Few examples of both possessive (21-23) and locative (24-27) constructions are cited:

Possessive

21. *koi sum-don-mək-u-ŋ*
1SG money-AUX-NEG-PV-1SG
'I don't have money.'

22. *nəŋ sum-don-mək-če*
2SG money-AUX-NEG-2SG
'You don't have money.'

23. *əma sum-don-mək*
3SG money-AUX-NEG
'She doesn't have money.'

Locative

24. *koi Delhi-na om-mək-u-ŋ*
1SG Delhi-LOC EXIST-NEG-PV-1SG
'I am not in Delhi.'

25. *Koini Mumbai-a om-u-mək-me*
1PL Mumbai-LOC EXIS-PL-NEG-1PL
'We are not in Mumbai.'

26. *nəŋ Shimla-na om-mək-če*
2SG Shimla-LOC EXIS-NEG-2SG
'You are not in Shimla.'

27. *raju in-a om-mək*
raju home-LOC EXIS-NEG
'Raju is not at home.'

In example 24-27, it can be seen that the locative marker *-a* and *-na* both are used. In the sentences above, the suffix *-na* is used when the noun ends with a vowel sound, whereas, the suffix *-a* is attached when the noun ends with a consonant or a diphthong.

2.3 Negator no

The negative marker *-no* in Ranglong can be seen in imperative and hortative constructions. In imperative construction the negative marker *-no* is attached post-verbally followed by the imperative marker *-ro* as shown in example 28-30. A negative hortative construction in Ranglong is expressed by suffixing the negator *-no* to the root verb along with the hortative marker *-rase* as shown in example 31-32.

Imperative

28. *se-no-ro*
go-NEG-IMP
'Don't go.'

29. *bu nek-no-ro*
rice eat-NEG-IMP
'Don't eat rice.'

30. *nəŋ andai-no-ro*



2SG play-NEG-IMP

'You don't play.'

Hortative negative

31. *ama hoŋ-no-rase*

3SG come-NEG-HORT

'Let him not eat.'

32. *amani in-u-no-rase*

3PL sleep-PL-NEG-HORT

'Let them not sleep.'

2.4 Negative strengthening

A negative is strengthened by adding words like; never, at all in English (Yashwanta ch. 2010. 119). Similarly, in Ranglong it is strengthened by adding the morpheme *ŋai* post-verbally which indicates never or at all. The prefix *la-* is attached to the verb root followed by the morpheme *ŋai* and the common negative marker *mək* along with its respective agreement particle in the language. Example 33-36 shows the negative strengthening in Ranglong.

33. *nəŋ me la-sak-ŋai-mək-če*

2SG meat VBZ-eat-never-NEG-2SG

'You never eat meat.'

34. *amani football la-ndai-u-ŋai-mək*

3PL football VBZ-play-PL-never-NEG

'They never play football.'

35. *Koi sier-ŋal-ŋai-mək-u-ŋ*

1SG read-NMLZ-never-NEG-PV-1SG

'I don't read at all.'

36. *ama zu nek-ŋal-ŋai-mək*

3SG liquor drink-NMLZ-never-NEG

'He doesn't drink liquor at all.'

2.5 Double negation

In mathematics and algebra, there is a principle or formula that two negatives become a positive. But

"language is not mathematics" (Jespersen 1924).

What can be applied to mathematics cannot be applied to language. Whenever two negatives really refer to the same idea or word the result is invariably positive (Jespersen 1924). In Ranglong, double negation is formed by adding the negative marker *nok* and an auxiliary verb *ni* with the negator, followed by the common negative marker *mək* to the verb. Example 37-38 shows the use of double negation in the language.

37. *koini nei-nek -nok-ni-mək*

1PL 1PL-drink-NEG-AUX-NEG

'It is not that we don't drink.'

38. *amani ei-nek-u-nok-ni-mək*

3PL 3PL-drink-PL-NEG-AUX-NEG

'It is not that they doesn't drink.'

3.0 Conclusion

From the above analysis it can be said that *mək* is the common negative marker which is used to negate the declarative, interrogative, existential, possessive, locative construction, negative strengthening and to form double negation. The agreement particles that are attached along with the negative marker *mək* in first and second person are: *ŋ* for 1SG, *me* for 1PL; *če* for 2SG and 2PL whereas, no such particle is attached with the third person for both singular and plural. The second negative marker which is used in forming negative constructions in Ranglong is the marker *no* used in unrealized negation, imperative and hortative construction. Here, only in the unrealized negative construction the agreement particles are attached in the first and second person singular and plural such as: *ŋ* for the 1SG and *ma* for 1PL; *ta* for 2SG and 2PL,



but no such particle is attached in case of both 3SG and 3PL. The third negative marker *nok* is only used when the construction shows double negation along with the common negative marker *mək*. It can be seen that all the three negative markers: *mək*, *no* and *nok* are attached post-verbally in the negative construction of Ranglong. The morpheme *ŋai* is attached post-verbally which indicates 'never' or 'at all' in the language to strengthened the negative construction. Further, more intensive research is required to describe various constructions on negative in relation to negative indefinite, conditional statement and so on.

Abbreviations

1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
AUX	Auxiliary
EXIST	Existential
HORT	Hortative
IMP	Imperative
IRR	Irrealis
LOC	Locative
MOD	Modal
NEG	Negation
NMLZ	Nominalizer
PL	Plural
PV	Post verbal
Q	Question particle
SG	Singular
VBZ	Verbalizer

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