NEGATION IN RANGLONG

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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 mak 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 ŋ 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.

Data 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 required2.

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 Rangkhol-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

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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 Pipalpunjee, 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 mak 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 mak 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: mak, 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 and plural 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 mak 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-mak-ŋ
   1SG rice eat-NEG-PV-1SG
   ‘I don’t eat rice.’

2. koini bu nek-mak-me
   1PL rice eat-NEG-1PL
   ‘We don’t eat rice.’

3. naŋ bu nek-mak-če
   2SG rice eat-NEG-2SG
   ‘You don’t eat rice.’

4. naŋni bu nek-u-mak-če
   2PL rice eat-PL-NEG-2PL
   ‘You (pl) don’t eat rice.’

5. ama bu nek-mak
   3SG rice eat-NEG
   ‘He doesn’t eat rice.’

6. amani bu nek-u-mak
   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 their future tense marker (Haokip 2018: 174). Examples of unrealized negation are cited from 7-12.

Unrealized negation

7. koi bu nek-no-niŋ
   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. naŋ se-no-ta-ni
   2SG go-NEG-2SG-IRR
   ‘You will not go.’

10. naŋni tan-u-no-ta-ni
    2PL run-PL-NEG-2PL-IRR
    ‘You (pl) will not run.’

11. ama hoŋ-no-ni
    3SG come-NEG-IRR
    ‘He will not come.’

12. amani nek-u-no-ni
    3PL eat-PL-NEG-IRR
    ‘They will not eat.’

2.2 Negator mak

The postverbal negative construction which we will consider is postverbal mak (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 Northwestern2 languages, but we also find it in some of the Naga languages (Delancey 2014). The negative marker mak in Ranglong is used to negate both the verbal and non-verbal declarative predicates which includes declarative, interrogative, existential, possessive and locative construction.

2.2.1 Negation of declarative predicate

The negator mak 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 apʰak ka-buŋ
   1SG tea 1SG-drink
   ‘I drink tea.’

14. koi apʰak buŋ-mak-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-mak-u-ŋ (declarative non-verbal)
    1SG good-NEG-PV-1SG
    ‘I am not good.’

2.2.2 Negation of Interrogative clauses

The general negator mak 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. naŋ English čoŋ-tʰai-mak-če-mo
    2SG english speak-MOD-NEG-2SG-Q
    ‘Don’t you speak English?’

18. ama Mary-ni-mak mo
    3SG Mary-COP-NEG-Q
    ‘Isn’t she Mary?’

2.2.3 Existential construction

The common negative marker mak 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 kʰat-ŋal om-mak
   class-LOC student-PL one-NMLZ EXIST-NEG
   ‘There are no students in the class.’
20. zoo-na varaho-ŋal om-mak
    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 mak as mentioned above in 2.1. The negative
marker mak 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 mak 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-mak-ŋ
    1SG money-AUX-NEG-PV-1SG
    ‘I don’t have money.’
22. naŋ sum-don-mak-če
    2SG money-AUX-NEG-2SG
    ‘You don’t have money.’
23. ama sum-don-mak
    3SG money-AUX-NEG
    ‘She doesn’t have money.’

Locative

24. koi Delhi-na om-mak-u-ŋ
    1SG Delhi-LOC EXIST-NEG-PV-1SG
    ‘I am not in Delhi.’
25. Koini Mumbai-a om-u-mak-me
    1PL Mumbai-LOC EXIS-PL-NEG-1PL
    ‘We are not in Mumbai.’
26. naŋ Shimla-na om-mak-če
    2SG Shimla-LOC EXIS-NEG-2SG
    ‘You are not in Shimla.’
27. raju in-a om-mak
    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. naŋ andai-no-ro

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2SG play-NEG-IMP
‘You don’t play.’

Hortative negative
31. ama hɔŋ-no-rase
3SG come-NEG-HORT
‘Let him not eat.’
32. əma ni in-u-ŋai-mak
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 ə- is attached to the verb root followed by the morpheme ŋai and the common negative marker mak along with its respective agreement particle in the language. Example 33-36 shows the negative strengthening in Ranglong.

33. nə me əla-sak-ŋai-mak-če
2SG meat VBZ-eat-never-NEG-2SG
‘You never eat meat.’
34. əmani in-u-ŋai-mak
3PL football VBZ-play-PL-never-NEG
‘They never play football.’
35. Koi sier-ŋai-mak-u-ŋ
1SG read-NMLZ-never-NEG-PV-1SG
‘I don’t read at all.’
36. əma zu nek-ŋai-mak
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” (Jasperson 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 (Jesperson 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 mak to the verb. Example 37-38 shows the use of double negation in the language.

37. koini nei-nek -nok-ni-mak
1PL 1PL-drink-NEG-AUX-NEG
‘It is not that we don’t drink.’
38. əmani ei-nek-u-nok-ni-mak
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 mak 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 mak in first and second person are: ŋ for 1SG, me for 1PL;  će 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 mak. It can be seen that all the three negative markers: mak, no and nok are attached post-verbally in the negative construction of Ranglong. The morpheme nai 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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