



RESEARCH ARTICLE



CLASSIFIERS IN REANG

Rotnojoy Reang^{1*}, S. Ganesh Baskaran²¹(Research Scholar, Dept. of Linguistics, Assam University, Silchar.)²(Professor, Dept. of Linguistics, Assam University, Silchar.)Email Id : rotnojoyreang@gmail.com<https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2023.10406>

ABSTRACT



Article history:

Received on : 27-10-2023

Accepted on : 15-10-2023

Available online: 30-11-2023

Language is an identity as well as a means of passing down knowledge from one generation to the next, serving as the foundation for a particular native speaker's understanding. The Reang is one of the languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family (Reang, 2021). It is spoken in Mizoram, Tripura, and Assam. It is also spoken in neighbouring nations, particularly Bangladesh and Myanmar. According to the Census of India 2011, Reang has a total population of 1,88,080. The study area of this present work focuses on the Reang spoken in the west, south, and northern regions of Tripura. Reang is a Tibeto-Burman language, and it has numerous classifiers for virtually anything or every shape, just like other Tibeto-Burman languages, including Boro, Garo, Rabha, Dimasa, and Kokborok. There are very scanty linguistic works done on the classifiers of Reang. The current work makes an effort to discuss the range of classifiers in Reang. "Classifiers are affixes that are used in various languages to indicate the grammatical or semantic classification of words." The term 'classifier' is commonly used for a wide range of noun categorization devices. Classifiers are generally defined as morphemes that classify and quantify nouns according to semantic criteria. Classifiers classify a noun inherently. They designate and specify semantic features inherent to the nominal denotatum and divide the set of nouns in a certain language into disjunct classes. "(Senft 2000: 21).

Keywords: Reang, Tibeto Burman, Classifier in Reang.



INTRODUCTION

Reang is one of the Tibeto-Burman indigenous languages of Northeast India, spoken in Mizoram, Tripura, and Assam, as well as bordering countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar. According to the 2011 Census of India report, the total population of Reang is 1,88,080. The study area focuses on the west, south, and northern parts of Tripura. The Reang language is used in the home domain and also in the local village markets. However, it is not used in the administration and judiciary levels; otherwise, Bengali is used as a substitution for other levels as Bengali is the official language of Tripura. The Reang language is not taught in schools or colleges as a medium of instruction or as a subject. The last 'kaiskau' king among the Bru community name was Reang (Reang, 2021). The correct nomenclature of this ethnic group of Reang/Riang among people is 'Bru' (Reang, 2021). Etymologically, the word "Bru" might have come from the word "Beraiha," which means "wanderer" (Reang, 2021). "This connotation certainly brings to mind that the 'Bru' community has been dependent on shifting cultivation. The Bru community had been wandering in the jungle because they had to rely on relocating their cultivation for their survival. The livelihood of the people depends on shifting cultivation; they frequently relocate from one location to another in search of virgin forest after a certain number of years.

METHODOLOGY

Both written and oral sources were used to gather the data for this study. The study takes into account both sexes in a range of age ranges. Both direct and indirect methods were used to collect the data. The spoken forms used in the direct method, such as word lists and discussions, were documented, and a detailed assessment of the literature was also conducted. The information was cross-checked with speakers of various ages, sexes, and professions. The secondary sources of information were books, refereed journals, theses, and other library materials.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To describe and document the Reang language spoken in Tripura State
- (ii) To study one of the important character of the semantical beauty of the Reang Language; Classifier

CLASSIFIER IN REANG LANGUAGE

Languages of Tibeto-Burman origin are typically abundant in classifiers. Reang, being a member of this group, uses classifiers and quantifiers to indicate the semantic categorization of the reference according to the amount of the noun, such as its physical characteristics, form, and state, etc. Classifiers occur first and are placed before the numerals. In Reang, monosyllabic classifiers are predominant.

**PROPERTIES OF NUMERAL CLASSIFIERS**

Every classifier in Reang is bound and is only used during classifier development. A number in Reang is also a confined morpheme and cannot appear without a classifier. However, Allan (1997) stated that this does not mean that all nouns are classified in all their occurrences in speech. Any noun can be used without a classifier, unless in the context of counting. The following examples are nouns without classifiers.

(1) /buŋ snuŋ +nouh-wo t^haŋ-ha/
 he study+house (school)-LOC go-PAST
 'He went to the school.'

(2) /msu-le sam tʃa-wo /
 cow- NOM grass eat-PERF
 'Cow eats the grass.'

(3) / sinkruŋha-le tʃomlai t^huŋ-wo /
 Sinkruŋha -NOM hide and seek play-PERF
 'Sinkruŋha plays hide and seek every day.'

It is clear that in the above sentences (1-3) no classifiers are found occur along with any of the nouns. However, classifier is obligatory with a numeral if it is enumerated as shown (4-5)

(4) /ai-ni tao ma-t^ham toŋ-wo /
 ISG-GEN bird CLF -three be-PERF
 'I have three birds'

(5) /mp^haŋ mdei dei- ha gəbai-ha /
 tree branch CLF -one broken-PAST
 'One branch has broken'

NUMERAL CLASSIFIERS.

In Reang, classifiers always precede a numeric, creating an intimately bound syntactic unit that takes the following order. Classifier + number.

(6) /taokraŋ kaŋ-ha /
 feather CLF -one
 'One feather'

(7) /msa ma-ha /
 tiger CLF -one
 'One tiger'

(8) /speŋ p^haŋ-ha /
 sesame CLF -one
 'One sesame plant'

(9) /rai tuŋ-ha /
 cane CLF -one
 'One cane'

Overview of Reang Classifier Subtypes

Reang Classifiers are primarily divided into (i) sortal (ii) mensural subtypes. While the functional basis for the distinction is ultimately semantic.

SORTAL CLASSIFIER

A sortal classifier is 'the one which individuates whatever it refers to in terms of the kind of entity it is' (Lyons 1977). Sortal classifier categorizes nouns in terms of their inherent properties such as animacy, shape and consistency. The sortal classifier is typically abundant in Tibeto-Burman languages and Reang is one of these languages. It uses classifiers to indicate the semantic classification of the referent based on that noun's physical properties, such as dimension (flat, thin, wide, or broad), shape (long/linear/round), size (large



or small), consistency (flexible/rigid), as well as constitution/state (liquid, solid, or semi-solid). The principle classifiers in Reang are as follows:

The classifier */ma-/* is being used to categorize animate nouns like animals, birds, insects and fish, as well as humans and ghosts.

(10) */ma-ha taoma /*
CLF-one hen
'One hen'

(11) */ma-broi mok^hra /*
CLF -four monkey
'Four monkeys'

(12) */ma-ba korai /*
CLF -five horse
'Five horses'

The morpheme */ke-/* used for inanimate objects as a classifier in Reang.

(13) */ke-ha mdei /*
CLF -one branch
'One branch'

(14) */ke-noi toisa /*
CLF -one stream
'Two streams'

(15) */ke-t^ham wa /*
CLF -one bamboo
'Three bamboos'

The morpheme */kuŋ-/* is used to categorize materials that are lengthy or powerful.

(16) */msu mgronj kuŋ-noi /*
cow horn CLF -two
'Two horns of cow.'

(17) */lat^ha kuŋ-t^ham /*
stick CLF -three
'Three sticks.'

(18) */wa kuŋ-broi /*
bamboo CLF -four
'Four bamboos'

The classifier */tuŋ-/* is used to categorize long things like; rope, road and strips and other things.

(19) */mdu tuŋ-noi /*
rope CLF -two
'Two ropes.'

(20) */lama tuŋ-t^ham /*
road CLF -three
'Three roads'

(21) */waruk tuŋ-ba /*
bamboo strip CLF -five
'Five bamboo strips'

To categorize speech word the classifier */t^hai-/* is utilized.

(22) */t^hai-ha kaot^hai /*
CLF -one word
'One word'

(23) */t^hai-noi kaot^hai /*
CLF -two word
'Two words'

To categorize sound the classifier */poŋ-/* is utilized.

(24) */poŋ-ha k^horanj /*
CLF -one sound
'One sound'

(25) */poŋ-noi k^horanj /*
CLF -two sound
'Two sounds.'

The classifier */kuŋ-/* has been used to quantify things like hands, legs and bamboo in numbers.

(26) /*kuŋ-noi jak/*

CLF -two hand

'Two hands'

(27) /*kuŋ-noi jakuŋ/*

CLF -two leg

'Two legs'

(28) /*kuŋ-t^ham wa/*

CLF -three bamboos

'Three bamboos'

To count the fruits in Reang, the classifier /*t^hai-/* is appended to the numerals. The classifier is derived from the /*mt^hai-* /word for fruits.

(29) /*t^hai-ha mt^hai/*

CLF -one fruit

'One fruit'

(30) /*t^hai-noi t^hai p^hloi/*

CLF -two elephant apple

'Two elephantapples'

(31) /*t^hai-sniŋ t^haili/*

CLF -seven bananas

'Seven bananas'

In Reang, the morpheme /*kaŋ-/* is also employed as a numerical classifier to categorize the leaf of a tree, plant, or other leaf-like items. The classifier is derived from the word /*mkraŋ-/*, which means feather, piece of paper or leaf.

(32) /*mkraŋ kaŋ-ha /*

feather CLF - one

'One feather'

(33) /*mblai kaŋ-t^ham /*

leaf CLF - three

'Three leaves'

(34) /*lek^hamkraŋ kaŋ-ba /*

page CLF - five

'Five pages'

In case of skin the prefix /*ku-/* is used. The classifier is derived from the noun /*mkur-/* which means 'skin.'

(35) /*mkur ku-noi /*

skin CLF -two

'Two skins'

The classifier /*k^hoŋ-/* is prefixed with the noun for counting car, house, basket etc.

(36) /*nok^hai k^hoŋ-ha /*

basket CLF -one

'One basket'

(37) /*malk^hoŋ k^hoŋ-noi /*

car CLF -two

'Two cars'

(38) /*nouh k^hoŋ-t^ham /*

house CLF -three

'Three houses'

The classifier /*k^hor-/* is attached to count in pond, well etc.

(39) /*toik^hor k^hor-ha /*

pond CLF -one

'One pond'

(40) /*hak^hor k^hor-t^ham /*hak^hor CLF -t^ham

'Three holes'

The classifier /*k^ho-/* is used to categorize a hole, etc.

(41) /*hak^hor k^ho-ha /*

hole CLF -one

'One hole'

(42) /*toik^hor k^ho-ba /*

well CLF -five

'Five wells'

The classifier /*ko-* / used for seeds, coins, and so on.



(43) /mkloi ko-ha /

seed CLF -one

'One seed'

(44) /maiklam ko-ba /

paddy CLF -five

'Five grains of paddies'

(45) /hloŋt^hai ko-sku /

stone CLF -nine

'Nine stones'

To categorize trees and plants, the classifier /p^hoŋ-/ is used.

(46) /mp^hoŋ p^hoŋ-ha /

Tree CLF -one

'One tree'

(47) /t^haili mp^hoŋ p^hoŋ-broi /

banana tree CLF -four

'Four banana trees'

To indicate wood or bamboo pillars for house construction or any other purpose the classifier /t^hoŋ-/ is used.

(48) /nouh t^hoŋla t^hoŋ-broi /

house post CLF -four

'Four posts of a house'

To identify any flower, the morpheme /bar-/ is used as a classifier.

(49) /mba bar-ha /

flower CLF -one

'One flower'

The classifier /p^hui-/ is utilised to count pieces of meat that have been sliced or one location of shifting crops.

(50) /taoha p^hui-noi /

chicken CLF -two

'Two pieces of chicken'

In order to count blows or hits, the classifier /p^hoŋ-/ is utilised. As an illustration, punch, slap, etc.

(51) /t^hapra p^hoŋ-ha /

slap CLF -one

'One slap'

In Reang, the morpheme /t^hu-/ is also employed as a numerical classifier to categorize the packed items. The classifier is derived from the word /mt^hu-/, which means packed with a paper, polythene and packed with leaf.

(52) /mai mt^hu t^hu- t^ham /

rice pack CLF -three

'Three packets of rice'

The classifier /k^hoŋ-/ is used to classified for counting the basket,house,aeroplane etc.

(53) /birk^hoŋ k^hoŋ-noi /

Aeroplane CLF -two

'Two aeroplanes'

In Reang, the morpheme /muŋ-/ is also employed as a numerical classifier to categorize the variety items. The classifier is derived from the word /mmuŋ-/, which means the items of variety items of dishes,plant etc.

(54) /mui mmuŋ muŋ-t^ham /

curry name CLF -three

'Three types of curries'

MENSURAL CLASSIFIER

A mensural classifier is 'the one which individuates in terms of quantity' (Lyons 1997). Measurement of countable and mass nouns is done with mensural classifiers. The amount, or measurement of an entity including its outside characteristics (permanent or,



more frequently, transient ones), influence the choice of a mensural classifier.

The classifier /*tʃro-*/ occurs in the pair of the animate. As exemplified below:

(55) /*tao tʃro-ha* /

bird CLF-one

'One pair bird'

(56) /*taoma tʃro-ha* /

hen CLF-one

'One pair of hen'

In Reang, the morpheme /*dei-*/ is also employed as a numerical classifier to categorize branch of a plant or tree. The classifier is derived from the word /*mdei-*/, which mean branch of a plant or tree.

(57) /*tʰaipʰloŋ mpʰaŋ mdei dei-ha* /

jackfruit tree branch CLF-one

'One branch of jackfruit tree'

(58) /*tʰaipʰloi mpʰaŋ mdei dei-tʰam* /

elephantapple tree branch CLF-three

'Three branches of elephant apple tree.'

In Reang, the morpheme /*taŋ-*/ occurs with noun denoting series of fruits or things. The classifier is derived from the word /*mtaŋ-*/, which mean the series of fruits or things.

(59) /*kuai taŋ-ha* /

arecnut CLF -one

'A sheaf of betelnut'

(60) /*maiso i taŋ-ha* /

millet CLF -one

'A sheaf of millet'

The classifier /*tʃo-*/ occurs with noun denoting things which are in bunches or in bundle. As illustrated in the following examples:

(61) /*kutai tʃo-noi* /

shirt CLF -two

'Two bundles of shirt'

(62) /*lai tʃo-tʰam* /

leaf CLF -three

'Three bundles of leaves'

The classifier /*mtʰu-*/ occurs with noun denoting a group of people, animal or flock of birds. More than one person or animal is considered as a group in Reang Language.

(63) /*broi- rao mtʰu-noi* /

girl-PL CLF -two

'A group of girls'

(64) /*korai mtʰu-ha* /

horse CLF -one

'Herd of horses'

(65) /*taokʰom mtʰu-ha* /

duck CLF -one

'A waddling of ducks'

This classifier /*tʰo-*/ occurs with noun denoting any liquid substances, like drop of water, drop of dew, drop of oil, drop of tear, drop of blood etc.

(66) /*pantoi tʰo-ha* /

dew CLF -one

'One drop of dew'

(67) /*klomtoi tʰo- noi* /

sweat CLF -two

'Two drops of sweat'

This classifier /*la-*/ occurs with noun denoting pieces of wood or anything which is made of wood.

(68) /*waŋ la-noi* /

window CLF -two

'Two pieces of windows.'



- (69) / *jeisai la-ha* /
split bamboo CLF –one
'One piece of split bamboo'

This classifier /*k^ho-*/ occurs with noun denoting a sip of water or watery object while eating and morsel of eating.

- (70) / *maisoi k^ho-ha* /
millet CLF -one
'A morsel of millet'

- (71) / *toi k^ho-two* /
water CLF -two
'Two sip of water'

The classifier /*mtjom-*/ occurs with noun denoting a handful of eatable or anything

- (72) / *hatjeij mtjom -ha* /
sand CLF -one
'A handful of sand'

- (73) / *som mtjom-ha* /
salt CLF -one
'A handful of salt'

In Reang, the morpheme /*bu-*/ is also employed as a numerical classifier to categorize the hole and the stream. The classifier is derived from the word /*mbu-*/, which means the different hole and the branches of stream.

- (74) / *hak^hor mbu bu-noi* /
hole branch CLF -two
'Two holes'

- (75) / *toisa mbu bu-snij* /
stream branch CLF - seven
'Seven streams'

In Reang, the morpheme /*du-*/ is also employed as a numerical classifier to categorize, rice ball etc. The

classifier is derived from the word /*mdu-*/, which means piece of rice ball.

- (76) / *maidu mdu du-t^ham* /
rice ball ball CLF -three
'Three pieces of rice ball'

In Reang, the morpheme /*du-*/ occurs with noun denoting things which are in bundle or in bundle. The classifier is derived from the word /*mdo-*/, which means the bundle or in bundle.

- (77) / *lai do-noi* /
leaf CLF -two
'Two bundles of leaves'

In Reang, the morpheme /*bu-*/ occurs with noun denoting the confluence of stream. The classifier is derived from the word /*mbu-*/, which means the confluence of stream or hole.

- (78) / *toi mbu bu-t^ham* /
Water confluence CLF -three
'Confluence of three streams'

- (79) / *mk^ho mbu bu-broi* /
hole interconnected CLF -four
'Four interconnected holes'

In Reang, the morpheme /*jeij-*/ is also employed as a numerical classifier to categorize, bamboo tube.

- (80) / *wa sun jeij-noi* /
bamboo tube CL-two
'Two bamboo tube'

- (81) The classifier /*p^hai*/ is used to classify counting the weaving cloth.
/ *rinai p^hai-noi* /
Bru traditional women cloth CL-two
'Two piece Bru women traditional cloth'



CONCLUSION

- Reang has a rich source of classifiers.
- The classifiers, assigns the nouns to different categories based on their physical characteristics which are realized with the numerals.
- Typically, classifiers appear as prefixes to the numerals.
- The classifiers always precede the nouns in Reang language.
- Almost all of the classifier roots are monosyllabic in general.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbi, A. (2001). *A Manual of Linguistic Field Work and Structures of Indian Languages*. Munich: Lincom
- Europa.Baskaran, S. (2016). *An Introduction to Reang Phonology*. Silchar: Natun Diganta Prakashani.
- Brahma, D. (2017). *Word Formation in Bodo: Affixation*. Guwahati-14, Assam, India: Purbayon Publication.
- Daimai, K. (2020). *Classifiers in Liangmai*. Guwahati: DVS Publishers.
- L.Bybee, J. (1985). *Morphology.A Study of the Relation between Meaning and Form*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Jhon Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Reang, L. (2021). *Arag.A social drink prevalent among the Reang (Bru) community*. Agartala: Niharika Publishers.
-