Numerals of the Tai-Ahom language

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Abstract:

Numerical word is a significant part of each language. Numerical word are used to count any objects or things. 'Tai Kadai' is a significant language family like other language families of the world. The numerical word are used in each language of this family. Though the numerical words are formed by different processes like- multiplication, addition, multiplication plus addition methods but some separate words are also used for the numerals. Though the uses of the separate numerical words are limited, but it is used as basic cardinal number where other numerical words are formed after it. Among other tribes of North-East India the Tai tribe is significant. Tai Ahom is one of the Tai language communities of Assam. Linguistically, the Tai Ahom communities belongs to the 'Tai-Kadai' language family and anthropologically it is mongoloid stock. The Tai-Ahom language is spoken in the districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Shivsagar, Jorhat, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Golaghat of Assam. Tone is a significant characteristics of Tai Ahom language. The meanings of Tai-Ahom words change in terms of its Tone. Now-a-days, the scientific studies of the Ahom language have been increasing.

According to the formation the numerical words of the Tai-Ahom language can be divided into two groups-

    a)   Cardinal numeral and

    b)   Ordinal Numeral.

The numerical words formed by the cardinal numeral process are large in numbers.

The Grammar is the mirror of a language. Every language has its own grammar. Though the Tai Ahom is a tonal language but all the grammatical categories such as- Noun, Adjective, Pronoun, Verb, Gender, Affix, Number are also found. All morphological aspects are found in the Ahom language. Numeral is an important part of Morphology. It reflects the methods of counting thing, objects etc. of a language.

Key Words: *Tai-Kadai, Tai-Ahom, Numerals, Agglutinating, Multiplication, Quantity.*

Introduction:

Assam is a multilingual state of India. Different linguistic people migrated to Assam from ancient time. At present four language families are found in Assam. These families are- Indo-European, Austrick, Sinno-Tibetan and Dravir. Among these the Sinno-Tibetan languages are large in numbers in Assam. The Sinno-Tibetan family is strengthened with three groups. These are- Tibeto-Burman, Thai-Chin and Yenisi. Tai-Ahom language belongs to the Thai-Chin group. The Ahoms entered in to Assam from Patkai Hills in 1228 under the guidance of Syukafa. The Ahoms governed Assam for 600 years. The people who continuously ruled Assam for 600 years are known as Ahom. Though the Ahom lived in different places of Assam, later established their kingdom at charideo. The Tai Ahoms are rich in their culture. Now-a-days

only the people of the groups Mohon, Deodhai, Bailung use the Tai-Ahom language through religious traditions. Phonetics and Morphology are two important parts of a language. Numerical word is a part of Morphology. Numerical words play a vital role in counting objects, things in every language. In this article the structure of the numerical word of Ahom language will be enlightened.

Review of literature:

The book *'Linguistic Survey of India'* by G.A Grierson is a pioneer to the linguistic survey of North-East India. Therefore many discussions on Tai languages are found in this book.

The book *'The Tai Language of Assam : A Grammar and Text' by Stephen Morey* is an introductory account of the Tai languages. Many discussions on phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics are found in the book.

The book *'Ahom Buranji' by* Rai Sahib Gulap Chandra Boruh is a history book of Tai-Ahom and English language. In this book the Tai Ahom words are included and the writer has discussed the etymology of the Ahom scripts.

The discussions of Tai language, literature, culture are found in the book named *'Tai bhasa aru Sanskriti'* by Bhim Kanta Baruah. Moreover he added the history of migration of the Tai-Ahom and linguistic transference between Assamese language and Tai-Ahom language.

Morphological discussions on Tai Ahom language are found in the book *'Tai Bhasar Prathomik path Byakronor Xoite'* by Aimyakheng Gohain.

Discussions on Tai Morphology and script are found in the book *'Ahom Primer'* by Ghana Kanta Baruah.

Data Collection Method:

Different field linguistic methods are used to collect the required data. These methods are-

• Interview Method:

Datas are collected through interview. Tai-Ahom respondent areas are taken as field for the interview. Different methods like certain questionnaire method, uncertain questionnaire, repetition methods are taken as field study method.

• Observation Method:

Datas are collected through direct and indirect participation and direct observation and indirect observation method. Â

• Data Sampling Method: ?

Sentence and word samples are collected through this method.

Data Analysis Method: Different kinds of data analysis methods are used for the paper.

Data Analysis Method: While discussing on the languages the colloquial forms are taken. The formation of numerical words are discussed On the basis of colloquial form.

Historical Method: Population, migration are discussed through this method.

Numerical word of Tai-Ahom:

The numerical word formation of Tai Ahom language is significant. The numerical words can be divided into two groups-

    a) Cardinal Numeral
    b) Ordinal Numeral

• Cardinal Numeral:

The Cardinal numerals are formed through four processes. These are-

- ÂUsing Separate words

- By addition method

- ÂBy multiplication Method

- Multiplication and addition plus method.

•🔢Using Separate words:

Separate words are used to count number from one to ten. The separate words are also used for twenty, hundred, thousand, billion etc.Example-

Tai Ahom:

Tai Ahom	Assamese
líÎ	one
tsÁÎ	two
tsÁm	three
tsi:	four
ha	five
ruk	six
sit	seven
pɛt	eight
kau	nine
tsip	ten
tsau	twenty
pak	hundred
riÎ	thousand

• By Addition Method:

From eleven to nineteen, twenty one to twenty nine-these words are formed with this method. Example-

tsip + it	=	tsip it	'eleven'	10 + 1= 11
tsip + tsÁÎ	=	tsip tsÁÎ	'twelve'	10 + 2= 12
tsip + tsam=		tsip tsam	'thirteen'	10 + 3= 13
tsip + tsi:	=	tsip tsi:	'fourteen'	10 + 4= 14

tsip + ha	=	tsip ha	'fifteen'	10 + 5 = 15
tsip + ruk	=	tsip ruk	'sixteen'	10 + 6 = 16
tsip + kau	=	tsip kau	'nineteen'	10 + 9 = 19
tsau + ɕt	=	tsau ɕt	'twenty one'	20 + 1 = 21
tsau + tsⲀÎ	=	tsautsⲀÎÂ	'twenty two'	20 + 2 = 22
tsau + sit	=	tsau sit	'twenty three'	20 + 3 = 23
tsau + pɕt	=	tsau pɕt	'twenty eight'	20 + 4 = 23
tsau + kau	=	tsau kau	'twenty nine'	20 + 9 = 29

By Multiplication Method :

Some Numerical words are formed by multiplication method. In this method 'ten' is taken as basic cardinal number. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine words are multiplied with the basic cardinal numeral. Example-

Tai-Ahom Language-

tsam 'three' × tsip 'ten' = tsam tsip 'thirty'

tsi: 'four' × tsip 'ten'ÃÃ = tsi: tsip 'forty'

ha 'five' × tsip 'ten'ÃÃ = ha tsip 'fifty'

ruk 'six' × tsip 'ten'ÃÃ = ruk tsip 'sixty'

sit 'seven' × tsip 'ten'Ã = sit tsip 'seventy'

pɕt 'eight' × tsip 'ten' = pɕt tsip 'eighty'

tsao 'nine' × tsip 'ten'ÃÃ = sao tsip 'ninety'

• **Multiplication Plus addition Method:**

New numerals are formed by multiplied any number to ten and adding new number with that.

Tai Ahom Language:

tsam 'three' × tsip 'ten' + it 'oneⲀ' = tsam tsip it 'thirty one'

tsam 'three' × tsip 'ten' + tsⲀÎ 'two' = tsam tsip tsⲀÎ 'thirty two'

tsam 'three' × tsip 'ten' + tsam'three' = tsam tsip tsam 'thirty three'

tsam 'three' × tsip 'ten' + tsi: 'four' = tsam tsip tsi: 'thirty four'

tsam 'three' × tsip 'ten' + ha 'five' = 'tsam tsip ha 'thirty five'

tsam 'three' × tsip 'ten' + ruk 'sixþ' = 'tsam tsip ruk 'thirty six'

Ordinal Numerals of Tai Ahom:

Ordinal numerals are formed by addition method. Ordinal numerals are formed by adding 'ti'-prefix to the numerals. Example-

Tai Ahom:

ti: 'place ' +   líÎ 'one'   =   ti: líÎ   'first'

ti: 'place ' +   tsↃÎ   'two'   =   ti: tsↃÎ 'secondþ'

ti: 'place ' +   tsam   'three'   =   ti: tsam 'third'

ti: 'place ' +   tsi: 'four'   =   ti: tsi: 'fourth'

ti: 'place ' +   hɑ   'five'   =   ti: hɑ   'fifth'

ti: 'place ' +   rʊk   'sixþ'   =   ti: rʊk   'sixth'Â

ti: 'place ' +   sit   'seven'=   ti: sit   'seventh'

ti: 'place ' +   pↄt   'eight'   =   ti: pↄt   'eighth'

ti: 'place ' +   kaʊ   'nine'   =   ti: kaʊ 'ninth'

ti: 'place ' +   tsip   'ten'   =   ti: Ótsip 'tenth'

        Some Noun words are formed with numerical words. To count the name of month, from third month the word 'dín' is used after numerical words. Thus the months are determined of the languages.

Example-

Tai Ahom:

dín 'month'   +   tsam 'three'   = dín tsam 'magh-fagun'

                                                (in the month of January-February)

dín 'month'   +   tsi: 'four'   = dín tsi: 'fagun-chot'

                                                (in the month of February- March)

dín 'month'   +   hɑ   'five'   = dín hɑ   'chot- bohag'

                                                (in the month of March-April)

dín   'month'   +   rʊk   'sixþ'   = dín rʊk   'bohag-jeth'

                                                (in the month of April-May)

dín   'month'   +   sit   'seven'   = dín sit   'jeth-aahar'

                                                (in the month of May-June)

dín   'month'   +   pↄt   'eight '   = dín pↄt   'aahar-haun'

(in the month of June-July)

dín   'month'   +   kau   'nine'   = dín kau 'haun-Bhada'

(in the month of July-August)

dín '   'month'   +   tsip   'ten'ÃÃ   = dín tsip 'Bhada-Aahin'

(in the month of August-September)

The equation words are also formed by numerical words. Example-

Tai Ahom :

líÎ taÎ tsⱭÎ	$\frac{1}{2}$	'one upon two'ÃÃ Ã
líÎ taÎ tsam	$\frac{1}{3}$	'one upon three'ÃÃ
tsi: taÎ ha	$\frac{4}{5}$	'four upon five'ÃÃ
tsⱭÎ taÎ ruk	$\frac{2}{6}$	'two upon six'ÃÃ

Conclusion:

From the above discussions some significant findings are found. These are-

• Separate words are used to count number from one to ten. The separate words are also used for twenty, hundred, thousand, billion etc. These numericul words are monomorphemic.

• From eleven to nineteen, twenty one to twenty nine-these words are formed with Addition method.

• Some Numerical words are formed by multiplication method. In this method 'ten' is taken as basic cardinal number. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine words are multiplied with the basic cardinal numeral.

• New numerals are formed by multiplied any number to ten and adding new number with that.

• Some Noun are formed with numerical words. To count the name of month, from third month the word 'dín' is used after numerical words.

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