



# Pronouns of the Lisu Language: A Structural Language

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Morphology is a branch of Linguistics that deals with the internal structure of words. Morpheme is the basic foundation of morphological study. Morphology is the study of morphemes and their arrangements in forming words.<sup>1</sup> In short we can say that morphology is the study of morphemes, it includes the study of words or parts of speech which are constructed by the combination of morphemes. After all how prefix, suffix and infix helps in the process of derivation and inflection-all these grammatical aspects are discussed detail in morphology.

Comparing the other states of India Arunachal Pradesh is a connecting-land of various ethnic languages and groups. A large number of languages are belonging to three language families-Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan and Austric are found in the state. But the languages from Sino-Tibetan are large in numbers. According to the Census of 2011, the population of Arunachal Pradesh was 13,82,611.<sup>2</sup> More than 28 tribes and 128 sub-tribes dwell in this state. These tribes anthropologically possess to the greater Mongoloid group and in linguistic substantiation these belong to the Sino-Tibetan language family. Within the tribe many clans are found which have their own languages. Even these languages are intelligible within the clans. So, they use Hindi, English and Assamese to communicate with outsiders. These languages have no script. According to the EGIDS report of UNESCO these languages are included in the endangered language lists.

Changlang is one of the major districts of Arunachal Pradesh. It is also a precious store land for linguistic research and so that it strikes the linguists for possessing the variety. The district became a full-fledged

<sup>1</sup> E.A Nida: Morphology, p.1

<sup>2</sup> www.censusindia.gov.in/2011

district on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1987. Lisu, Tutsa, Chakma, Tangsa, a few Adibasi etc. are constituted in the district.

Lisu is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken mainly in China, Myanmar, Thailand and North-East India. In India the Lisu are situated mainly in Vijay Nagar Circle. A few are also situated in the Miao and Kharsang circle of Changlang district. Vijay Nagar is an impassable land, it covers with dense forests. Due to the impassability of the land it does not attract the attention of the scholars, linguists. No scientific study has been adopted till now as to the varied aspects of the Lisu language. Hence the topic **Pronouns of the Lisu Language: A Structural Analysis** has been chosen for study.

### 0.1 Objectives of the Study:

The objective of the study is to inquire and describe all features of Morphology in Lisu language to examine how these features are operating in the language. The topic is important not only because it deals with an important role of linguistics but because the study of this kind is also theoretically justified since morphology is immensely significant in the description of any language at structural level.

Depending upon many inherent properties of Lisu Morphology the present study proposed to examine many aspects of Morphology in Lisu. And also said above the Lisu in general has not provoked much attention of the scholars let alone its morphology and about the language. So, in this prospect the topic has proposed. Some objectives are as follows-

- To enlighten the word structure of the Lisu language
- To discuss about the derivational and inflectional process of the Lisu language
- To discuss the current status of the Lisu language to avert its endangerment and to provide steps for development of the language.
- To preserve the language through scientific study.

### 0.2 Importance of the Study:

The research work **Pronouns of the Lisu Language: A Structural Analysis** have some importance. These are as follows-

- Scientific study can establish or preserve a language which will be a future document for the tribe that would help them in making of language guide book, grammar book etc. So it is important to study in a scientific way.
- The Lisu language belongs to the Loloish group of Sino-Tibetan language family and further it will help to study about these languages. It is important to enlighten the characteristics of Lisu language as Tibeto-Burman language.

### 0.3 Methods of the study:

**Pronouns of the Lisu Language: A Structural Analysis-** for this seminar field study method is taken for data collection and in data analysis Descriptive, Analytical and Historical methods are used.

#### 0.4.1 Methods of Data collection:

For this paper field study method has been used. The primary data or raw data are collected using various methods of field study.

##### 0.4.1.1 Sampling method:

Interview method is one of the conventional techniques used for data collection in field linguistics. Topic related data are collected through interview from the Lisu respondent. In collecting data different aged respondents have been chosen as sample.

##### 0.4.1.3 Observation Method:

For this paper the data are collected through anonymous observation. In collecting topic related data the linguistic varieties are observed as an observer in different natural linguistic setting.

##### 0.3.1 The data Analysis:

For data analysis descriptive linguistic method, cognitive morphological approach, structural approach, Analytical methods are used. Analytical method is used while discussing the internal structures of words.

#### 0.4 Data Collection:

##### 0.4.1 Source of Data:

For the paper data are collected from two sources-

- Primary source
- Secondary source

Primary data are collected through field study and the secondary data are collected from books, internet, magazine, survey etc.

##### 0.4.2 Tools for data collection:

For the research work both audio and video recorder are used as tools. In order to record the data the following tools or measures have taken.

- (wav.) format are used to save audio recording
- PCM Digital audio recorder has been used.

#### 1.0 Introductory note on the Lisu tribe

The Lisu are located mainly at the present circle Vijaynagar of Arunachal Pradesh, Changlang district. Vijay nagar is the home land of the Lisu. Vijay nagar circle is situated in an altitude of about 8000 feet in extreme east of Changlang district. Its three sides are covered by international border and the hill traits of Myanmar.

The name of the Lisu community is apparently controvertial. Lisu people are known with different names- Lisu, Lisaw, Yobin, Lishifa, Khinu etc. The neighbouring communities don't use the term 'Lisu' to identify them. Singhpho community use the term 'yawjin' or 'yobin' to identify them. The

Lisu were first sighted by the Britishers through a Singpho interpreter. By the help of a Singpho interpreter the Lisu were came in contact with the Britishers. The interpreter introduced them as ‘Yawyin’ or ‘Yoyin’. Later another Singpho interpreter introduced Lisu to the Indian military officers, who had first visited at the Lisu land as yoyin. The term –yobin is simply a spelling mistake or a mistake in the pronunciation of the word yawyin or yoyin.<sup>3</sup>

### Etymology of the word ‘Lisu’:

There are many myths and beliefs are found regarding the word ‘Lisu’. These are-

- i) Li means ‘four’ and ‘su’ means fold or folding of clothes round the waist or belly in Lisu. Therefore the people or the persons having four folds of a cloth around the waist are known as Lisu.
- ii) According to their myth- a male person adorned with showrd , bow and arrow, floding of piece of cloth around the waist, who came out from the mythical pumpkin or gourd is called Lisu.<sup>4</sup>
- iii) Another myth- the term ‘li’ means ‘four’ and ‘su’ means person quarrelling. It means four persons quarrelling. It denotes that the Lisu had the tendency to quarrel or gossip. But now it has been proven wrong form the field study.

According to informant the word ‘Lisu’ also denote the meaning of leather belt, made by them. Therefore they have got the name ‘Lisu’.

### Migration history:

Originally the Lisu lived on the both sides of the China-Burma border. During the third decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century a large group of Lisu people were migrated from their place towards Putao. Putao is 100 k.m far from India border. According to an informant the Lisu migrated from their place towards Putao as the Putao was a suitable land for cultivation.

The Burma was restless for a long time during the third decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the movement between Chinese communists and nationalists forces. In 1965 General Newin took control on Burma and he formed ‘Revolutionary Government of the Union of Burma’. General Newin tightened his rule and keep eye on the tribal people who were busy in forming independent unit to create movement against the Government. These units were operated by the Burma government and this led the Lisu migration from Putao to present Arunachal Pradesh.

On the way of March Eugene Morse tried to get the permission from India government to enter India. At that time in 1970-71, India and Burma were busy in negotiations to mark the Indo-Burma

<sup>3</sup> Asim Maitra, *A little known Ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh: An Ethnographic Silhouette*, p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Asim Maitra, *A little known Ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh: An Ethnographic Silhouette*, p. 9

boundary. Therefore the Morse family along with the Lisu families started marching until reaching the ‘zi-yu-di’ valley in north-west Burma. Long before this march, some Lisu had already migrated across the Himalayas into India between 1950 and 1959. Although we can say the Lisu were the last Mongoloid group who entered India through Chaukan Pass during the time of Second World War. Moreover during the time of British Governance some Lisu were coming from Myanmar through the way of Ledo, to work at the coal minerals.

Before 1972 the Lisu tribe was not under Indian government. The Lisu were first discovered by a team of Assam rifles, who had made an expedition on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1961. The military team show consolation in protecting them from enemy and they told that they would be under Indian government soon. At present the Lisu are located at Vijay Nagar circle, Miao and Kharsang circle of Changlang district Arunachal Pradesh. Due to impassable environment of Vijay nagar many Lisu people come Miao town for education and trade purpose.

## 2.0 Pronouns in Lisu:

Chapter fifth deals with the classification and formation of pronouns in Lisu.

### 2.1 Personal Pronoun:

- All the singular personal pronouns are different in Lisu. For Example-

#### Singular

ᵐᵃ ‘I’

#### Plural

ᵐᵃ nu ‘we’

- No separate forms are used in terms of honorific and non-honorific pronoun in Lisu language.

#### Singular

nu ‘You’

#### Plural

nuua ‘You are’

The personal pronoun of the Lisu language can be shown in terms of person and number graphically as follows-

Person	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> Person	ᵐᵃ ‘I’	ᵐᵃ nu ‘we’
2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	vu ‘you’	vu ᵐᵃ ‘you are’
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	φᵢ ‘he/she’	φᵢ ᵐᵃ ‘they’

## 2.2 Demonstrative Pronoun:

The demonstrative pronouns are used to point out far and nearer objects, places or persons. Two kinds of demonstrative pronouns are found-

### 2.2.1 Near demonstrative:

To point out nearer persons, things or places the classifiers {-ma} and {-tu} are used.

#### Singular

t<sup>h</sup>i            ma            this

This            CLSF.

#### Plural

t<sup>h</sup>i            tu            these

This            CLSF.

### 2.2.2 Far and Indirect demonstrative:

i) g<sub>↓</sub> μα            γ<sub>↓</sub>μα 'that is/that'

that CLSF.

ii) g<sub>↓</sub> τυ            γ<sub>↓</sub>tu 'these'

that CLSF.

#### Uses in sentences:

i) ji g<sub>↓</sub> ma mi je- tial<sub>↓</sub>

he that CLSF. work do-ASPT. PRES (PROG)

'he is doing the work'

**2.3 Reciprocal Pronoun:** In Lisu this pronoun is used instead of many animals or name of things. Example-

#### Singular

azi 'all'

#### Plural

azi nje 'all are'

#### Uses in sentences:

i) azinje zi - al<sub>↓</sub>

all are good-ASPT. PRES (HAB)

‘all are good’

ii) mivu azinje nisi kal┘

sky whole blue ASPT. PRES (HAB)

‘whole sky is blue’

## 2.4 Indefinite Pronoun:

Indefinite Pronouns are used instead of indefinite things. Example-

t<sup>h</sup>ij┘ someone

ama mi anyone

### Uses in sentences:

i) t<sup>h</sup>ij┘ li |ua nali te zi┘

someone AUX. I watch take ASPT. PRES (PERF)

‘someone has taken my watch’

ii) hi k<sup>h</sup>u kua ama tia la

house LOC. Someone ASPT. PRES (HAB)

‘Is anyone in the home?’

## 2.5 Interrogative:

Interrogative pronouns are used to ask questions. The interrogative pronouns of the Lisu language can be divided into two kinds-

2.5.1 Primary Interrogative Pronoun

2.5.2 Compound Interrogative Pronoun

### Primary Interrogative Pronoun:

The primary interrogative pronouns of Lisu are mono-syllabic. These can't be segmented into smaller parts. Example-

Lisu

English

asi

what

alima

who

at<sup>h</sup>e

when

**Compound Interrogative Pronoun:**

Compound interrogative pronouns are formed through two morphemes. These are formed by adding suffixes to the primary root. Example-

Root	Bound morpheme	Interrogative Pronoun
alima 'who'	{-te}	alimate 'whom'
ali	{-kua}	alikua 'where'
ali	{-kuats-ɿ}	alikuas-ɿ 'where from'

**Uses in sentences:**i) t<sup>h</sup>euma aci |α

this what ASPT. PRES (HAB)

'what is this'

ii) nu mi ali mja

you name what

'what is your name?'

iii) nu alima |αλ-ɿ

'who are you?'

- The interrogative pronouns are started with {-a} phoneme.
- The interrogative pronouns are used between sentences.

**2.6 Genitive Pronoun:**

The genitive pronoun creates relation with other morphemes in a sentence. Examples in Lisu-

Lisu

English

t<sup>h</sup>izu

who

**Uses in the sentences:**t<sup>h</sup>izu ma la si la l-ɿ

əthe men who came, all has gone'

## 2.7 Reflexive Pronoun:

Reflexive pronouns are objects that refer to the subject. Example-

ι) Πα te Πα nu du le┘

I μψεελφ injure ASPT. PRES (PERF)

'I injured myself'

ι) ji teji su ka┘

he-himself burn ASPT. PRES (PERF)

'he burn himself'

The {-cice} from is used to emphasise the reflexive pronoun in Lisu. Example-

ι) Πα cice Πα je du┘

I myself do ASPT.FUT (PRES)

'I will do myself'

ιι) φι cice le bal┘

she herself tell ASPT. PAST (HAB)

'she said herself'

## 3.0 Conclusion:

- All the singular personal pronouns are different in Lisu.
- No separate forms are used in terms of honorific and non-honorific pronoun in Lisu language.
- To point out nearer persons, things or places the classifiers {-ma} and {-tu} are used.
- The primary interrogative pronouns of Lisu are mono-syllabic.
- Compound interrogative pronouns are formed through two morphemes.
- The {-cice} from is used to emphasise the reflexive pronoun in Lisu.

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