

A Study of Inpui Adjective

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Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to describe the formation and role of adjectives in 'Inpui', an endangered and undocumented language of Manipur. The language belongs to the Naga-Bodo sub group of Kabui section of Tibeto-Burman family (cf: Grierson, LSI Volume III, part II). Inpui is an SOV language. Inpui adjectives are derived through the affixation of the attributive derivational prefix -kə to the verbal noun. For example, the adjective 'kəsinnu' 'small' is derived from the stative verb 'sin' 'be small' as in 'kəsinnu naupəŋ' 'small boy' where naupəŋ is 'boy'. In this language the position of adjectives and nouns are interchangeable i.e. adjectives may appear before or after the nouns they modify as in 'kəsinnu naupəŋ' 'small boy' or 'naupəŋ kəsinnu' 'small boy'. Five types of adjective will be discussed in this paper viz. Adjective denoting quality ('kəsanu nausen' 'good child'), Adjective denoting quantity ('bu kəsem' 'some rice'); Adjective denoting numerals ('dip kəni' 'two books'), Adjective denoting demonstrative ('həgə təlatʰu' 'this shirt') and Adjective of comparison ('kə-bum-dom-nu ben' 'blacker pot'). The paper will also throw a light on the area of prototypical adjectives (size, colour, auditory qualities, shape, taste and tactile) and less prototypical adjectives (evaluative, transitory states and states of living). Adjectives reduplication will also be discussed at the end of the paper. The above mentioned points will be discussed with illustrative examples in the paper.

Keyword: Inpui, Tibeto-Burman, Adjective, SOV, Derivation, Reduplication

1.0 Introduction

Inpui is a Tibeto Burman language of the Naga-Bodo subgroup (Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India, volume-III, part-II, 1903) spoken in Northeast India (Manipur and Nagaland). Inpui is the name of the language as well as the name of the tribe. The name

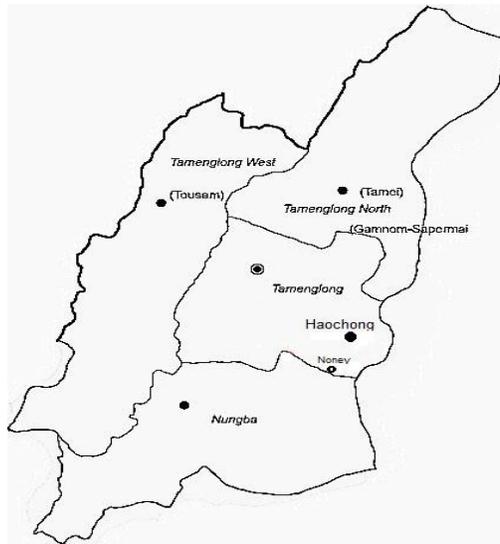
Inpui signifies 'In' means 'house' and 'Pui' means 'big or large'. So the literal meaning of the name of the language is 'Big House'. Inpui Naga inhabits in the easternmost region of Tamenglong district of Manipur. According to 2011 census report, Tamenglong has a total population of 1, 40,143 with an area of 4391 sq.km. It lies between 24°30'N and 25°27'N latitudes and of 93°10'E and 94°54'E longitudes. The district is bounded by Nagaland in the North, Churachandpur district in the South, Senapati district in the East and in the West by the state of Assam. There are thirteen Inpui villages viz. Kabuikhulen (Lwanjang), New Kabuikhullen (Lamjang Namthan), Haochong (Pantong), Oktan (Puichi), Nungtek I, Nungtek II, Bakua, Tamenglong Headquarter, Ijeirong (Tulimowan), Pungmon (Chingchen), Noney and Lukhambi Bazar, Karwangmon Lower and Karwangmon Upper. Haochong being in the middle with most of the Inpui villages around served as a big center since the time of the British regime. Some villages are also found in the the pocket of Imphal valley (Changangei, Tamphagei and Yurembam) and Senapati District (Waphong and Makuilongdi). The immediate neighboring tribes of *Inpui* are mainly Zeliangrong Nagas i.e, Rongmei, Liangmei and Zeme. Out of 39 Schedule Tribe of Manipur, Inpui is one them and it got its schedule tribe status in 20th December 2011. However, the population of Inpui has not yet been updated in the census report of 2011; the total population of Inpui is considered to be approximately 13,000 speakers, as told by a native speaker Rev. Achun (58 years old) of Haochong Village. The present paper attempts to show the various nature of adjective and try to shows that Adjective constitutes an important major lexical class in the morphology as well in the syntax of the language.



Map Showing North-East India



Map Showing Tamenglong District



Tamenglong District Map Showing Haochong Area

2. Typological Features

Inpui is a tonal language. Agreement is not a feature of this language. As compared with the English Verbs which are always free roots, the verbs in this language cannot stand alone without affixation, so they are considered to be bound in nature. This language is an agglutinative language. The process of suffixation is very rich. It has post verbal negative. The word order of the language is SOV. The direct object precedes the indirect object in this language. Adjectives, determiners and numerals follow the noun; the order of Adverb precedes the verb while degree of words like ‘very’ are added to the root verb. The language has postposition. Word connectives like ‘also’ ‘and’ are suffixed to the respective noun and pronoun.

3. What is Adjective?

Traditional Grammmarian define adjective as a word class which is used to modify noun or which adds meaning to the noun. In the words of George Yule (2006), adjective are words used typically with nouns, to provide more information about the things referred to. P.H. Mathew (2007) also defines adjectives as a word of a class whose most characteristic role is as the modifier of a noun as in ‘*tall man*’. In its widest sense, adjective can be used of any constituent that modifies a head noun within a noun phrase.

4. Formation of Inpui Adjective

Like English free adjectives ‘big’, ‘small’, Inpui doesn’t have a free form of adjective that can stand alone. Independent Adjective in the language is formed by the process of derivation through affixation of the attributive derivational prefix *-kə* to a verbal noun. Verbal nouns are formed through the suffixation of a nominalizer *-nu* to a verb root. Thus *se* ‘go’ become *senu* ‘to go’. The adjective *kəsanu nausen* ‘good child’ is derived from the stative verb *sa* ‘be good’: thus *kəsanu nausen* ‘good child’ where *nausen* is ‘child’. Similarly prefix can be found in Meithei of the T.B family e.g. *əcəwbə mi* ‘big man’ where *ə-* is the attributive prefix, *cəwbə* ‘to be big’ and *mi* ‘man’. Adjectives can appear before or after the noun they appear. It is to be noted here that only monosyllabic verbal root take the attributive prefix *-kə* as shown below.

<i>kəsanu nausen</i>	‘good child’	<i>nausen kəsanu</i>	‘good child’
<i>kək^hanu ləu</i>	‘bitter medicine’	<i>ləu kək^hanu</i>	‘bitter medicine’
<i>kət^humnu t^hakra</i>	‘sweet fruit’	<i>kət^humnu t^hakra</i>	‘sweet fruit’

However the polysyllabic verbal root doesn’t take the attributive prefix *kə-*. Here the shaded portion indicates the verbal root and *-nu* is the nominalizer in which the combination of it forms adjective.

<i>bə-ron-nu ui</i>	‘big dog’
<i>ri-əŋ-nu maikum</i>	‘weary face’
<i>cəŋ-t^hai-nu kəmaisa</i>	‘beautiful girl’
<i>mən-si-ya-nu kəmaisa</i>	‘ugly girl’

It is also possible to insert a progressive morpheme *-oŋ-* and a perfect morpheme *-ləm-* in between the verbal root and the nominalizer *-nu* so as to modify the noun in whose case the entire construction gives the meaning of a relative clause.

<i>sa-oŋ-nu kəpəysa</i>	‘the eating child’ (the child who is eating at the present)
<i>in-oŋ-nu kəpəysa</i>	‘the drinking boy’ (the boy who is drinking at the present)
<i>swaŋ-ləm-nu bu</i>	‘the cooked rice’ (the rice which is already cooked)
<i>t^hu-ləm-nu ŋa</i>	‘the rotten fish’ (the fish which become rotten)

This can be put into sentences to give a more illustrative meaning as in

1. *bu saonnu kəpəisa-gə ə-om nausen-ne*
 rice eat-PROG-NLMZ boy-DET 3SG-GEN child-DECL
 ‘The boy who is eating is my child.’

2. *tui in-on-nu kəpəysa-gə tom-me*
 Water drink-PROG-NLMZ boy- DET Tom-DECL
 ‘The boy who is drinking water is Tom.’

3. *swaŋ-ləm-nu bu-gə pi-o*
 cook-PFV-NMLZ rice-DET give-COM
 ‘Give the cooked rice.’

4. *həyə t^hu-ləm-nu ŋa-ye*
 DEM rot-PFV-NMLZ fish-DECL
 ‘This is rotten fish.’

5. Adjective and its word order

Being a Tibeto Burman language, Inpui is a verb final language having the word order of SOV. Inpui agrees with the *Greenberg’s Universal 5* which states that “*If a language has dominant SOV order and the genitive follows the governing noun, then the adjective likewise follows the noun*”.

5. *tom-om p^həŋsa təlathu*
 Tom-GEN beautiful shirt
 ‘Tom’s beautiful shirt.’

Universal2: When any or all of the items (demonstrative, numeral, and descriptive adjective) precede the noun, they are always found in that order. If they follow, the order is either the same or its exact opposite.

6. *həyə kəint^humnu bəron-nu in-ne*
 this third big-NMLZ house- DECL
 ‘This is the third big house.’

7. *in-yə* *kəinthumbnu* *bəron-nu -ye*
 house-DEM third big-NMLZ-DECL
 ‘This is the third big house.’

Considering the order of adjective and Noun in the language, it can be said that the position of adjective and noun are interchangeable i.e. adjective can precede as well as follows the noun. The order of AdjN and NAdj are equally common form as used by the speaker. It doesn't correlate with the order of object and verb.

Examples:

Adjective + Noun

bəronu + *ben*

big pot

‘Big pot’

Noun + Adjective

ben + *bəronu*

pot big

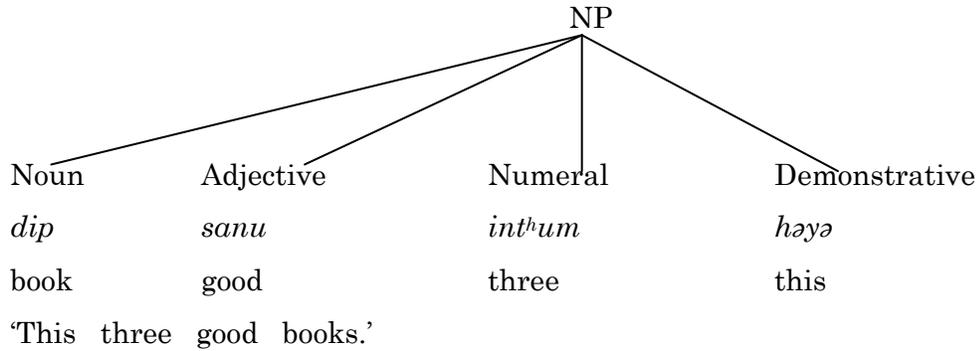
‘Big pot’

When Noun and Adjective combine to form a compound word, Adjective always forms the final constituent in the language.

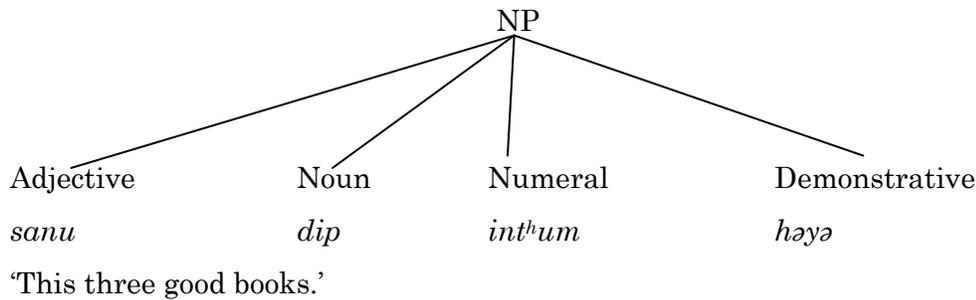
Adjective +	Noun	>	Noun-Adjective
<i>kəsennu</i>	+ <i>pwən</i>	>	<i>pwənsen</i> ‘red cloth’
red	cloth		
<i>kəpaknu</i>	+ <i>kut</i>	>	<i>kutpak</i> ‘palm’
wide	hand		
<i>kəthənnu</i>	+ <i>tʰa</i>	>	<i>tʰatʰən</i> ‘new moon’
new	moon		

The relation between adjective and Noun can be well observed by seeing the word order within a noun phrase. In a Noun Phrase that contains the three modifiers i.e. Descriptive Adjective, Demonstrative and Numeral, the usual word order is explained below:

i) When Adjective follows the Noun, the order is **Noun-Adjective-Numeral-Demonstrative**. This is explained in the following example.



ii) When the Adjective precedes the Noun, the order is **Adjective - Noun - Numeral-Demonstrative**.



Moreover if more than one adjective occur in a sentence they occur in a sequence (8) or may occur on either side of the head noun (9). Three adjectives can occur in a noun phrase.

8. *kə-sin-nu* *kə-ri-nu* *kə-son-nu* *naupəŋ-gə* *cəp-oŋ-e*
 ATT-small-NMLZ ATT-dirty- NMLZ ATT-weak- NMLZ child-DET cry-PROG-DECL
 ‘A small, dirty, weak boy is crying.’

9. *kə-sin-nu* *kə-ri-nu* *naupəŋ* *kə-son-nu-gə* *cəp-oŋ-e*
 ATT-small-NMLZ ATT-dirty-NMLZ child ATT-weak-NMLZ-DET cry-PROG-DECL
 ‘A small, dirty, weak boy is crying.’

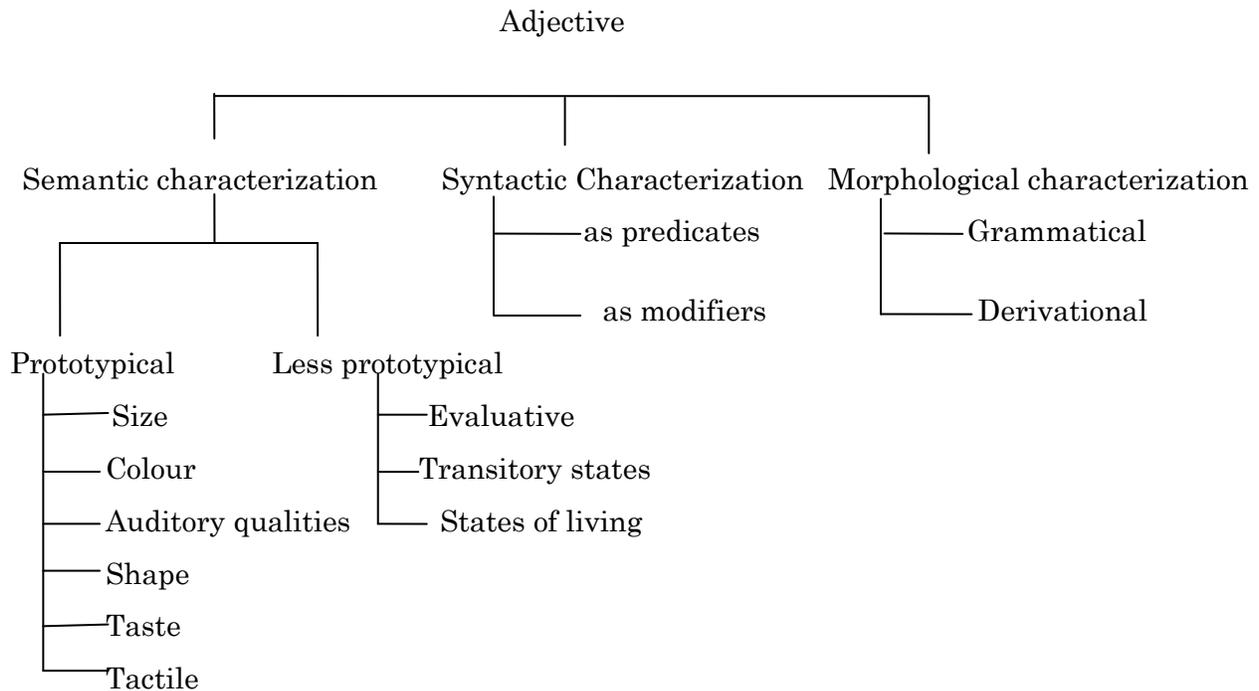
When an adjective and a quantifier occur before the noun, quantifier always precedes the adjective.

10. *kəsem bəron-nu gilās-gə p^hun-o*
 some big-NMLZ glass-DET bring-COM
 ‘Bring some big glass.’

6. Kinds of Adjective

Adjective in Inpui can be divided into three groups depending on semantic characterization, syntactic characterization and morphological characterization. The semantic characterization can be parted into prototypical ones that code inherent, concrete, relatively stable qualities of entities and less prototypical one that code more temporary or less concrete states group.

Inpui adjectives can be schematized as below.



6.1 Semantic Characterization

a) Prototypical

Size	Colour	Auditory qualities	Shape	Taste	Tactile
<i>bəronnu</i> 'big' <i>sinnu</i> 'small'	<i>ziṅnu</i> 'dark' <i>bannu</i> 'bright'	<i>rəkənnu</i> 'loud' <i>bənemnu</i> 'soft'	<i>bəzenu</i> 'straight' <i>inkwannu</i> 'crooked'	<i>tʰumnu</i> 'sweet' <i>kətʰunnu</i> 'sour'	<i>pəratnu</i> 'rough' <i>bənimnu</i> 'smooth'

b) Less prototypical

Evaluative	Transitory states	States of living
<i>sanu</i> 'good' <i>siənu</i> 'bad'	<i>rainu</i> 'angry' <i>riaṅrenu</i> 'tired'	<i>kətʰən</i> 'young' <i>bran</i> 'old'

6.2 Syntactic characterization

Adjectives tend to appear in two main syntactic contexts in clauses

1. As predicates in copular clauses
2. As modifier in the noun phrase

As predicates in copular clauses

In the words of Givon (2001) copular clause represent permanent or temporary states. It can also be conclude that most of the lexical semantic load of the predicate is not carried by the copular verb itself but rather by its nonverbal predicate i.e. either an adjective (or Adjectival phrase; AP) or a noun (or noun phrase; NP)

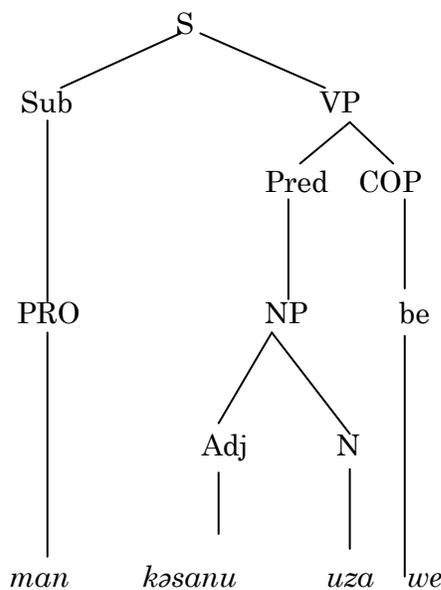
a) Nominal (NP) predicate

11. *man (kəsanu) uza-we*
 he good teacher-COP
 'He is a (good) teacher.'

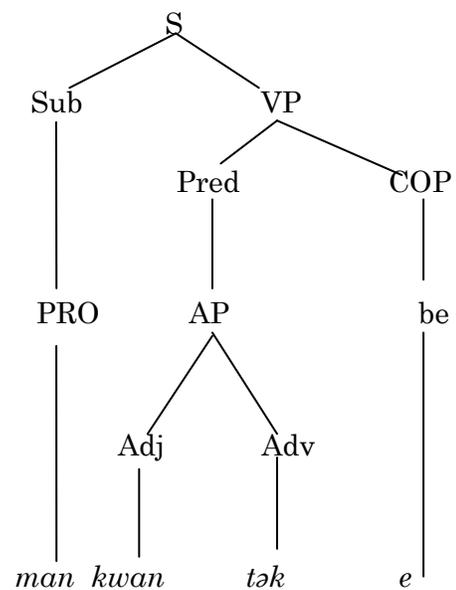
b) Adjectival(AP) predicate

12. *man kwan-(tək)-ye*
 she tall-very-COP
 ‘She is (very) tall.’

Copular verb behave as a syntactic head of the verb phrase but it carries a reduced lexical semantic head. The phrase structure tree diagram of the two predicate is presented as below.



‘He is a good teacher.’



‘She is very tall.’

The copular suffix *-we* is used with predicate nouns and adjectives denoting permanent inherent quality

Permanent-Inherent Quality	Predicate type
<i>man uza-we</i> ‘She is a teacher’	Noun
<i>təmban-gə səŋban-we</i> ‘the sky is blue’	Adjective

The copular suffix *e~ye~ne* is used to code temporary states as below.

Temporary states	Predicates type
<i>man sunsja-ye</i> ‘She is angry’	Adjective
<i>həyə sa-tək-e</i> ‘it’s very hot’	Adjective

Some adjective also allow both a permanent and a temporary sense, which is coded by the two copulas

Temporary state (*e~ye~we*)

13. *man kəro-e*
 She happy-COP
 ‘She is happy(now).’

Permanent condition

14. *man kəro-nu mi-we*
 She happy-NMLZ person-COP
 ‘She is a happy person’

As modifier in the noun phrase

Chelliah (1997) explained that in Manipuri, a TB language, noun phrase may consist of a noun followed by derivational and inflection morphology of a noun and adjectives, numerals or quantifiers. As explained above in section 5 the order of these constituents within the noun phrase is relatively free in Inpui also.

NP → N (Adj) (Num/Quant)

6.3 Morphological characterization

The morphological characteristics includes of grammatical morphology and derivational morphology. Like English comparative marker *-er* and superlative marker *-est* which is considered as one type of grammatical morphology that may appear on adjectives, Inpui too, uses the comparative morpheme *-dom-* and superlative morpheme *-kətək-* which lies in between the verbal root and the nominalizer *-nu* as illustrated below

Positive	comparative	Superlative
<i>kə-sa-nu</i> ‘good’	<i>kə-sa-dom-nu</i> ‘better’	<i>sa-kətək-nu</i> ‘best’
<i>kə-səy-nu</i> ‘tall’	<i>kə-səy-dom-nu</i> ‘taller’	<i>səy-kətək-nu</i> ‘tallest’
<i>kə-bum-nu</i> ‘black’	<i>kə-bum-dom-nu</i> ‘blacker’	<i>bum-kətək-nu</i> ‘blackest’

Derivational morphology includes of derivation of Adjective from verbal noun, by adding the prefix *-kə* and derivation by adding progressive suffix *-oŋ*, perfective suffix *-ləm* to the verb root as explained above.

Verb root	<i>-kə</i>	<i>-oŋ</i>	<i>-ləm</i>
<i>innu</i> 'to drink'	<i>kəinnu mi</i> 'drinking man' (one who drink)	<i>inoŋnu mi</i> 'the drinking man' (one who is drinking at the present)	<i>inləmnu mi</i> 'the drunk man' 'one who already drank'

7. Reduplication in Adjective

In adjective repetition only the qualitative adjective are repeated. Adjective are duplicated by adding a nonsense suffix(NS) which when added to the qualitative adjective produces meaning indicating excessive quality. Inpui have suffixes like '*-trik*', '*-dron*', '*-driŋ*', etc. It emphasized the degree of its quality as in.

14. *sen-trik sen-trik sen-ye*
 red-NS red-NS red-ASRT
 'Excessively red.'

15. *səy-driŋ səy-driŋ səy-ye*
 tall-NS tall-NS tall-ASRT
 'Excessively tall.'

16. *bum-trik bum-trik bum-ye*
 Black-NS black-NS black-ASRT
 'Excessively black.'

Adjectival form consisting of an attribute undergoes partial repetition. The attributive prefix *-kə* along with the verbal root undergoes partial repetition.

17. *kə-tʰəy* *kə-tʰəy-nu* *hiyək-o*
 ATT-know ATT-know write-COM
 'Write what you know.'

18. *kə-tʰum* *kə-tʰum-nu* *tʰəkra*
 ATT-sweet ATT-sweet-NOM fruit
 'Sweet fruit'

8. Conclusion

From the above analysis it can be concluded that adjective occupy a major word class in the morphology of the language as well it takes an important role in phrase and clause structure of the language. The attributive marker *-kə* helps in forming independent adjective. Adjective can precede as well as follows the head noun in the language. Semantic, syntactic and morphological characteristics of the adjectives are obtained in the language. Adjective reduplication also holds an interesting feature found in the language. Finally this is the initial stage of exploring the language and I would like to conclude that there are many more to explore in this language in the near future research.

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