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Word Order in Inpui

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Abstract:

This paper gives a detailed description of the word order pattern found in Inpui, a Tibeto Burman language falling in the Naga-Bodo subgroup of Naga group which is mainly spoken in Tamenglong district of Manipur. It is an SOV language. The paper highlights about the various word order features such as the order between Adjective and Noun, relative expression and Noun, Demonstrative and Noun, numeral and Noun, degree word and Adjective, Negative and Verb and the relation between subordinate clause and main clause. Inpui Nouns can be proceeds as well as follows by adjective, Relative expression, demonstrative and numeral. Unlike English language degree word always follows Adjective. Verbs are bound in the language as they require an affix to stand alone. Therefore negative in the language is formed by suffixing the negative particle to the verb root. So negative follows the verb in the language. Subordinate clause precedes the main clause in the language. The above mentioned points have been discussed in the paper with illustrative examples.

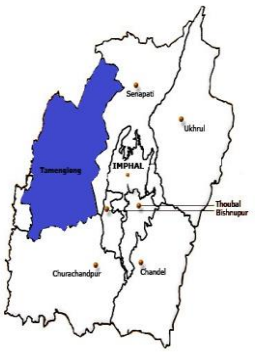
Key words: Inpui, Tibeto-Burman, Word-Order, Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives.

1. Introduction

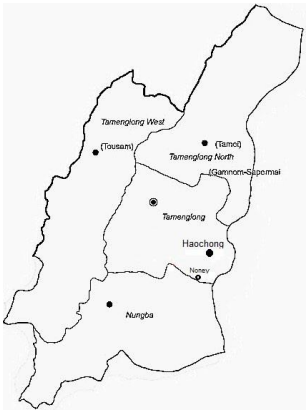
The aim of this paper is to study the word order pattern found in Inpui, a Tibeto Burman language of the Naga-Bodo subgroup (Grierson Linguistic Survey of India, volume-III, part-II, 1903). Inpui is the name of the language as well as the name of the tribe. The name signifies *'In'* means *'house'* and *'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. It has thirteen Inpui villages namely 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 Imphal valley (changangei, Tamphagei and Yurembam) and Senapati District (Waphong and Makuilongdi).The neighboring tribes are mainly Zeliangrong Nagas i.e, Rongmei, Liangmei and Zeme. Out of 39 Schedule Tribe of Manipur, Inpui is one among 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 characteristics of word order and try to shows that word order constitute an important role in the syntax of the language. The present paper is divided into two sections. Greenberg's Word order Universals and Inpui is shown in the first section. The second section discusses eight word order features found in the language.

India Map Showing North-East India



Manipur Map Showing Tamenglong District



Tamenglong District Map Showing Haochong Area

Word order is a common means of signaling grammatical relations (Van Valin 2004). There are six possible word orders that can potentially occur in human language i.e SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS and OSV (Tomlin 1986). Some languages, such as Latin, have a relatively free word order while others such as English have a fixed one (Comrie 1981).

2. Greenberg's Word order Universals (S=Subject; V=Verb; O=Object) and Inpui

In this section, I will look into some of the relevant word order

universals[1] suggested by Greenberg (1966) and see how far the language substantiate with the arguments.

2.1 Universal 1: In declarative sentences with nominal subject and object, the dominant order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object.

Inpui agrees with the first universal as the language has an SOV order where nominal subject precedes nominal object and it is the most dominant order. It is explained from the following example:

tom tui in-ne
tom water drink-asp
"Tom drinks water"

2.2 Universal 2: With overwhelmingly greater than chance frequency, languages with normal SOV order are postpositional.

Inpui agrees with the second universal is shown from the following examples:

dip-gə tebəl bəsaŋ-bi əme
book-DET table above-LOC is
'The book is on the table'

ram in-suŋ-bi əme
ram house-inside-LOC stay
'Ram is inside the house'

2.3 Universal 3: In languages with prepositions, the genitive almost always follows the governing noun, while in languages with postpositions it almost always precedes.

[1] Greenberg (1966b) works with a sample of thirty languages and proposes forty-five universals of the three kinds- i) Word Order Universals ii) Syntactic Universals iii) Morphological Universals

Inpui support with this third universal as the language has postposition.

ə-om dip
my-GEN book
'My book'

tom-om dip
tom-GEN book
'Tom's book'

2.4 Universal 4: Languages with dominant VSO order are almost always prepositional

As mentioned above, Inpui doesn't support with this universal as the language is an SOV language and it has postposition.

2.5 Universal 5: If a language has dominant SOV order and the genitive follows the governing noun, then the adjective likewise follows the noun.

Inpui support with this universal is shown in the following examples

tom'om pʰəŋsa təlatʰu
tom-GEN beautiful shirt
'Tom's beautiful shirt'

2.6 Universal 6: All languages with dominant VSO order have SVO as an alternative or as the only alternative basic order.
Inpui doesn't agree with this universal as it has SOV order.

2.7 Universal 7: If, in a language with dominant SOV order, there is no alternative basic order, or only OSV as the alternative, then all adverbial modifiers of the verb likewise precede the verb.

The language agrees with this universal and it is explained with the following examples below:

i) SOV
ramnə tui-yə in-ne
ram-NOM water-DET drink-asp
'Ram drinks this water'

ii) OSV
tui-yə ram-nə in-ne
water-DET ram-NOM drink-ASP
'Ram drinks this water'

iii) AdvV
man bərəp-gə sa-ye
he quick-ADV eat-ASP
'He eats quickly'

3. Word Order features

In this section eight word order features which are not mentioned in the above discussion will be observed. What is explained mainly here is the order between noun and its modifiers namely descriptive adjectives, numerals, relative clauses; the order between adjective and the degree words; the order between negative and Verb; the order between subordinate clause and main clause and the order between conditional clause and main clause which is explained with its appropriate example in the following section.

3.1. Adjective and Noun

In this language 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.

Example:
Adjective + Noun
bəronu + ben
big pot

'Big pot'

Noun	+	Adjective
ben	+	bəronu
pot		big

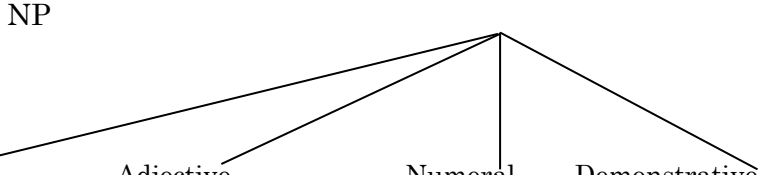
'Big pot'

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

Adjective	+	Noun		Noun-Adjective	
kəsennu	+	pwən	>	pwənsen	'red cloth'
red		cloth			
kəpaknu	+	kut	>	kutpak	'palm'
wide		hand			
kətʰənnu	+	tʰa	>	tʰatʰən	'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:

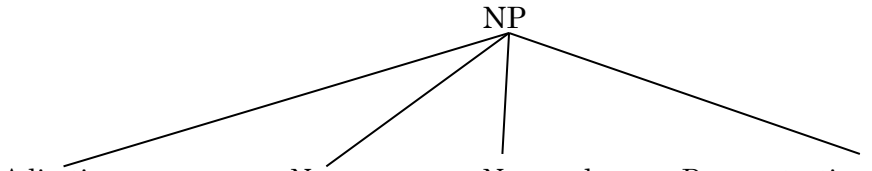
i) When Adjective follows the Noun, the order is **Noun-Adjective-Numeral-Demonstrative**. This is explained in the following example



Noun	Adjective	Numeral	Demonstrative
dip	sanu	intʰum	həyə
book	good	three	this

'This three good books'

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



sanu dip int^{h}um həyə
'This three good books'.

3.2. Relative expression and Noun

In the language, the order of relative expression in respect to Noun is that relative expression can precedes or follows Noun. It relates with the order of Object and Verb. In Inpui, relative is formed by the addition of nominalizer-nu to the embedded verb and a determiner -gə is used as a correlative marker. The noun is internally headed in the language. The possible orders are explained in the following examples:

[kəbomnu təlathu bəthu-nu] mənpa-gə tom-ye
black shirt wear-REL man tom-ASP
Relative expression *Noun*
'The man who wear black shirt is Tom'

[təlathu kəbomnu bəthu-nu] mənpa-gə tom-ye
shirt black wear-Rel man tom-Asp
Relative expression *Noun*
'The man who wear black shirt is Tom'

[mənpa kəbomnu təlathu bəthu-nu-gə] tom-ye
man black shirt wear-Rel tom-Asp
Noun *Relative expression*
'The man who wear black shirt is Tom'

[mənpa təlathu kəbomnu bəthu-nu-gə] tom-ye
man shirt black wear-Rel tom-Asp
Noun *Relative expression*
'The man who wear black shirt is Tom'

3.3. Demonstrative and Noun

The demonstrative in Inpui may be pre nominal as well as post nominal. The order of demonstrative elements may simultaneously precede and follows noun. The order of demonstrative and noun does not correlate with the order of object and verb. The order of DemN is more common in Tibeto Burman languages. Inpui has both DemN and NDem. It is explained in the following examples.

i) The order of DemN

həyə	dip	sa-nu-we
this	book	good-Nom-Asp
DEM	N	ADJ

'This book is good'

ii) The order of NDem (in case of NDem, the first syllable 'hə'of the demonstrative 'həyə' is omitted when demonstrative follows Noun)

rəy	yə	pʰaŋsa-ye
flower	this	beautiful-asp
N	DEM	ADJ

'This flower is beautiful'

iii) The order of DemNDem

həyə	dip-yə	sa-we
this	book-this	good-asp
Dem	N-DEM	ADJ

'This book is good'(particularized)

həyə	rəy	yə	pʰaŋsa-ye
this	flower	this	beautiful-asp
DEM	N	DEM	ADJ

'This flower is beautiful'(particularized)

In such order, the post nominal demonstrative is optional but when it is added it gives a definite meaning and the object becomes more particularized. The resulting word order is:

(Det)-Noun-det- Adj - degree word

(həyə)	rəy	yə	pʰaŋsa-tək-ye
this	flower	this	beautiful-very-asp
DEM	N	DEM	ADJ

'This flower is very beautiful'(particularized)

3.4. Numeral and Noun

The order of numeral and noun in the language is NNum, numerals following noun. Ordinal number can precede or follows noun. While classifiers in the language is very few and the order in respect of classifier and noun is NCls ie, classifier following Noun. This is explained with the following examples.

i) The order of Cardinal Number and Noun,

ui kʰət
dog one
'one dog'

bəsa som
bird ten
'ten birds'

ii) the order of ordinal number and Noun, NNum or NumN

kəninu nausen
second child
'Second child'
or
nausen kəninu
child second
'Second child'

kəmanu məy
first wife
'first wife'
or
məy kəmanu
wife first
'first wife'

iii) The order of classifier and Noun, NCls followed by the cardinal number.

tʰiŋ kuŋ khət
tree CLS one
'A tree'

rəy gon kʰət
flower CLS one
'A bunch of flower'

3.5. Degree word and Adjective

'Degree word' here refers to the words like 'very', 'more' and 'a bit', which are traditionally terms as adverbs which indicate the degree denoted by the adjective. The order of degree word with respect to adjective in this language is that, degree words follows Adjective ie, AdjDeg. This order does not correlate with the order of object and Verb. This is explained below:

i) phəŋsa təke
very beautiful
DEG ADJ
'very beautiful'

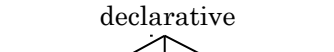
ii) həyə bəron-tək-e
this big-DEG
dem Adj-DEG
'this is too big'

3.6. Negative and Verb

Before coming to the order of negative and verb, the negative in the language need to be discussed. In Inpui negation is mainly constructed by suffixing negative marker to the main verb. The negation is mainly indicated by the negative suffix. There are only two negative markers in Inpui. The one is *'-mək'* which is used for indicating declarative, prohibitive, interrogative negative, let negative and the second one is *'-ləy'* which is only used for indicating a future negative sentence. These two markers always follow the Verb in the language and therefore the order is definitely VNeg. This order is consistent in all

kinds of sentences mentioned above which is explained in the following examples:

Declarative :



S	O	V-NEG
man	zu	in-mək-e
he	liquor	drink-NEG-ASP

'he doesn't drink liquor'

Prohibitive:

O	V-Neg
tək^{h}u-gə	t^{h}ət-mək-o
tiger-det	kill-NEG-COM

'don't kill the tiger'

Interrogative negative:

S	O	V-NEG-INT
nəŋ	p^{h}utbol	kədəy-mək-bo
you	football	play-neg-I

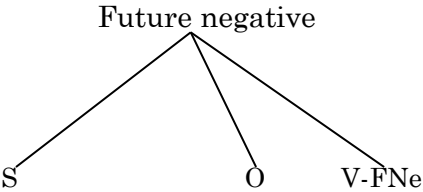
'don't you play football?'

Let Negative (Proposal):

S	O	V-NEG
əni	p^{h}utbol	se-mək-co

we football go-neg-Sugg
'let us not play football'

Future negative:



əy inswən iskul se-la-e
I tomorrow school go-NEG-ASP
'I will not go to school tomorrow'

3.7 **Subordinate clause and main clause**

The order of sub ordinate clause in respect to main clause in the language is that subordinate clause precedes main clause.

i) Subordinate clause main clause

mery-nə bəzar se-nubi ŋa kələy-ye
mary-NOM bazaar go-when fish buy-ASP
'When Mary went to bazar(she) bought fish from there'

ii) Subordinate clause main clause

man-nə lam-oŋbi bəni se-droy
she-NOM dance-while they go-PRF
'They had gone while she was dancing'

3.8. Conditional clause and main clause

In Inpui, the order of conditional clause in respect to main clause is that conditional clause precedes the main clause which is explained in the following example:

man huŋ-nubi əy se-ləŋzoy
he come-if I go-FUT
'If he comes, then I will go"

əni sa-nubi man sa-ləŋzoy
we eat-if he eat-FUT
'If we eat, then he will eat"

4. Conclusion

The above discussion concludes that Inpui is a verb final language having SOV order and OSV as the only alternative word order. The language has postposition with genitive preceding noun. Subordinate clause and conditional clause precedes the main clause in the language. Adjective can precede as well as follows noun in the language. The demonstrative can be pre nominal as well as post nominal in the language. Adverb precedes the verb while degree word follows the adjective in the language. Relative expression can precede as well as follows Noun in the language. Regarding Numerals in the language, cardinal number follows noun whereas ordinal number can precedes well as follow noun. Classifier follows Noun and precedes the Cardinal number in the language. Negative markers always follow noun in this language. It has been observed that most of the word order features in Inpui agree Greenberg's universals of Word order. The word order characteristics of Inpui can be given as SOV/Po/GN/NAdj(AdjN)/NDem(DemN)/NNum/RelN/NRel.
Finally word order is rule governed. This is the initial stage of exploring this language. There is more room for further in depth analysis.

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Abbreviations used

Adj- Adjective
Adv- Adverb
Asp- Aspect
Cls- Classifier
Com- Command
Deg - Degree
DemN- Demonstrative Noun
Det- Determiner
Fut- Future
Gen - Genetive
Loc- Locative
NDem – Noun Demonstrative
NDemN- Noun demonstrative Noun

NCls – Noun Classifier
NNum- Noun Numeral
Nom- Nominative
Rel -Relative
NRel- Noun Relative
RelN- Relative Noun