CHAPTER 6

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On the basis of the analysis done in the preceding chapters, we can conclude that Liangmai language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language under Naga Bodo section family. They are mongoloid stock who for a considerable period lived in South-west China and migrated to Northern South East Asia and East India around one thousand years before Christ. Liangmai is an indigenous and minority language. It is one of the 33 recognized tribes by the government of Manipur which includes Aimol, Anal, Hmar, Maram, Mao, Paite, Simte, Thangal, Thangkhul, Thadou, etc. In Nagaland Liangmais are recognized as Zeliang which comprises of Zeme and Liangmai. Liangmai and Zeme are referred to collectively as Zeliang. The language spoken by the people of Liangmai is known as Liangmai language. It is mainly spoken in Manipur and Nagaland states of Northeast India. The area of their domination spreads across Tening sub-division, Jaluke town of Paren district Nagaland, Tamei sub-division of Tamenglong and Sadar Hill of Senapati district of Manipur.

It is a community of about 41, 100 populations. No Liangmai in Manipur follow any other religion but Christianity because all the Liangmais got converted to Christianity in the year 2007. There are still non-Christians in Nagaland but very less in number. Liangmais are obsessed to socializing which could be one reason why they are not conservative but broadminded. They are known for good hospitality in their homes. The trend of living at the high altitude still continues
though some have moved at the foothills. The Liangmais even today enjoy the maximum luxury of nature- pollution free air, spring water, organic food and blue mountain range that don’t seem to end.

This language is mutually intelligible in both Manipur and Nagaland even though the language has slight variation from place to place and village to village. Liangmai language has not been introduced for teaching in any government educational institutions except in some mission schools in Manipur whereas in Nagaland this language is taught at the primary level. Educated Liangmais are multilinguals. They have the ability to speak at least three or four languages- English, Manipuri, Nagamese and the mother tongue; apart from this they have the capacity to speak Hindi to some extent.

Some books and articles are published in learned journals and these dealt with some specific aspects of the Liangmai culture. There are just a handful of books by non-linguists on Liangmai dictionary “Faringki Liyangmai Naga Campicamrakeng 2000 Millennial Dictionary” compiled by Niumai Lungkingbou RTD. A.I., and “English-Liangmai Sentence Dictionary” written by Dee Abonmai 2007. These books made the first ever attempt and tried to note down the Liangmai lexicon. Namthiubuiyang Pamei (2001) in his The Trail from Makuilongdi: The continuing Saga of the Zeliangrong People made an interesting account of the origin and migration, way of life of the zeliangrong people. He discussed the term zeliangrong and said that it is a collective name given to the zeme, Liangmai, Rongmei and puimei peoples even though ‘pui’ is not included in the nomenclature. He discussed about the migration of Zeliangrong people. They are said to have migrated from South-West China. The Liangmai has
not got its own written historical documents to show the migration and origination. But the folksong, folk tale and legends of different tribes of Naga are the same kind of Naga history from which we can trace the origin of the Nagas.

The phonemic inventory of Liangmai spoken in Manipur consists of twenty nine phonemes of which six are vocalic phonemes, twenty are consonantal phonemes and three are supra-segmentals. The majority of the monosyllabic words of Liangmai have the CV structure, that is, they are open-ended syllables. All the vowels can occur in all the three position of the words i.e. initially, medially and finally. But the initial occurrence of /e/ and /o/ are very rare in comparison with the other remaining four vowels. Like other Tibeto-Burman languages, the occurrences of velar nasal in all positions are very common. Liangmai is an agglutinative language having the characteristics of SOV language. It is also a tonal language. A significant feature of Tibeto-Burman languages is that most of the languages are tonal. Generally, meaning distinction between words is made by tones in TB languages. Liangmai has this characteristic. That is why, it is called a tonal language. Liangmai has three contour tones. The tones are rising, level and falling.

There are nine diphthongs in Liangmai language. Vowel sequences are also present in this language. Liangmai has consonant clusters and they occur in word initial, medial and final positions. Liangmai permits up to three consonant as part of consonant sequence.

Being a Tibeto-Burman language, Liangmai is having the characteristics of the morphological features as commonly found in this family of languages. In Liangmai, noun can be defined as a class of words that can be inflected for the
categories of gender, number and case. A limited number of words are also inflected in Liangmai to show gender distinction. But gender is not a grammatical category in Liangmai because it does not have any impact on the structure of the language.

Noun can be classified as proper noun, common noun, collective noun, and abstract noun, countable and uncountable noun which are semantically defined as subclass of noun (referring to general concepts) in traditional grammar.

In this language there is no grammatical gender but has natural gender. The absence of grammatical gender is one of the typological features of the Tibeto-Burman languages shared by Liangmai. Gender distinction in Liangmai is determined on the natural recognition of sex. Therefore Liangmai has only natural genders. For example, human and animate nouns are referred to as masculine or feminine on the basis of natural sex. The gender of animate nouns in case of human beings [+human-inanimate] in Liangmai is denoted by the marker –/piu/ ‘male’ and –/pui/ ‘female’. In the case of animals, the lexical item /-ci/ male and /-pui/ female are used for denoting the natural sex. However in the case of pigs the suffix -/kiu/ is used to denote male and –/nee/ for female which haven’t given birth to young ones.

Liangmai has two numbers-singular and plural. Plural in Liangmai is usually formed at the morphological level by suffixation of plural morphemes, such as /liu/, /dung/ and /ramai/ to the root or stem to form plural. The suffix –/liu/ is added to personal pronoun to form plural. While singular is not marked overtly.
A number of classifiers are found in this language. Liangmai makes use of classifiers for denoting the semantic classification of the referent on the basis of the qualities of the noun, i.e. its physical shape, size and state etc. Classifier in this language has predominantly mono-syllabic structure. Classifiers usually follow the noun. For examples, the human nouns take the classifier-/khāŋ/, The nouns denoting animals take the classifier-/khou/, The noun denoting insects and bird take the classifier-/pui/, Noun indicating plants and tree take the classifier-/baq/, The noun denoting days take the classifier-/zeg/, Noun indicating long things take the classifier-/taŋ/, Noun denoting creeper, rope etc. things take the classifier-/riaŋ/.


The pronoun in Liangmai does not distinguish genders but it distinguishes three persons. All of these take case suffixes, but gender and number are not marked. In Liangmai, pronouns can be classified into the following categories:

7. Personal Pronouns
8. Demonstrative pronouns
9. Interrogative Pronouns
10. Reflexive Pronouns
11. Possessive pronoun
12. Indefinite Pronouns
A three way distinction of person is made in personal pronoun. They are the first person, second person and third person. The first person refers to the speaker, the second person pronoun to the listener and the third person pronoun to others. In Liangmai, Personal pronouns distinguish three persons. This is illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>/i/ ‘I’</td>
<td>/aliu/ ‘we’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>/nən/ ‘you’</td>
<td>/naliu/ ‘you’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(plural)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>/pa/ ‘he/she/it’</td>
<td>/paliu/ ‘they’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The personal pronouns do not show any gender distinction. The personal pronouns are used either independently or in suffixed form, i.e. the plural forms are formed by adding the suffix /liu/ to the singular pronouns. Liangmai has no articles – definite or indefinite. But it has two determines, namely /haise/ ‘this’ and /uise/ ‘that’. /haise/ indicates that the object or person being spoken of is near or currently seen or known to the speaker or topic of conversation, /uise/ indicates something or someone not present at the time of speech. Liangmai has two interrogative pronouns. They are /sao/ ‘who’ /de/ ‘what’. The interrogative pronoun /de/ ‘what’ is hardly used in asking the name of a person, instead –/sao/ ‘who’ is used for the purpose. In this language, reflexive pronouns are derived by prefixation of respective pronominal markers i.e. /i/ ~ /a/ for 1st person, /nə/ ~ for 2nd person, and /pa/ for 3rd person. Some examples are cited below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liangmai</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Possessive pronouns are, in fact the genitive forms of personal pronouns. Thus, possessive pronouns are formed by adding the suffix /gu/ to the oblique bases of the personal pronouns. There is no clear distinction between definite and indefinite pronouns in Liangmai. The same form /məthiu/ and /pskhiaw/ can be used for "everything", "all" and "anything".

The numeral system has the following: Cardinal numerals, Ordinal numerals, Multiplicative numerals, Aggregative numerals, approximate numerals, Measurements, Fractional numerals, System of units, distributive numeral and numeral classifiers. Cardinal numerals in the language function as an adjective. It is of two classes- viz. basic and compound numeral. The compound cardinal is further classified into two i.e. i) additive compound ii) higher multiplicative compound.

Case is a grammatical category which expresses the semantic relation between a noun phrase and predicate. The case in Liangmai is affected by using suffixes. The suffixes and post positions are added to the nouns and pronouns or to the number affixes to denote case relations and when these are used after stem, it does not affect the phonetic shape of the stem. In Liangmai language, there are nine cases. nominative -/niu/, accusative - /tu/, instrumental-/niu/, dative-/leŋ/,
locative -/ga/-/ləm/, Genitive- /gu/, ablative -/gəsu/ ~ /ləmsu/, sociative-/səisui/, and benefactive-/len/.

The adjective cannot stand independently without the words which they have to modify. In Liangmai, adjective is formed by using three groups that is, attributive /ka/ along with nominalizer suffix /bol/. Adjective expresses the inherent states, including quality, quantity, test, color etc. Different types of adjectives found in this language are dimensional adjective, adjective of number, demonstrative adjective, possessive adjective and reduplication of adjective. The comparative and superlative adjectives are also present in this language.

Like other Tibeto-Burman Languages, Liangmai also has no tense. Aspect is more predominant than tense in this language. The following types of aspect are found in Liangmai: (i) progressive. It shows the nature or continuity of an action. This may be present, past or future. (ii) Perfect. An action which is completed is regarded as perfect aspect. The marker for this aspect in Liangmai is /mide/ and it is used just after the subject but before the main verb. (iii) completive: When the objective of an action is completed, it is said to be a completive aspect. It refers to the object of the action. In Liangmai, /lo/ is used before the verb to indicate the completive aspect. (iv) inceptive. It refers to the aspectual relationship in which the beginning of the action is specified. This is indicated in Liangmai by using /su/ before the verb.

In Liangmai, all verbal roots are bound roots; the exact verb forms are derived by affixation of modality, aspect markers etc. There are many suffixes
which are added to the verbal roots. From the grammatical point of view, the verbs can be divided into two types, viz. (i) Transitive (ii) Intransitive.

Liangmai has six mood, they are: imperative mood, capability, necessity, probability, conditional mood and permissive. Interrogatives in Liangmai can be classified into two types Yes/No questions which ask for the confirmation or negation of the statement, and Wh- questions. Yes/No question in Liangmai is formed by adding the question marks- /ma/ to the verb. An affirmative statement can be converted into an interrogative sentence without the question markers- /ma/, /lo/ but by means of intonation. These markers /ne/ and /ge/ may be optionally used when the interrogative is expressed by the rising intonation.

An adverb is a class of word that specifies the mode of action of the verb or modifies the adjectives. In Liangmai, most of the adverb is formed by suffixing /ziu/ to the verbal root. The following are the kinds of adverb found in Liangmai, they are:

1. Adverb of manner
2. Adverb of place
3. Adverb of time
4. Adverb of degree/ quantity
5. Reduplicative adverb
6. Durative adverb

In Liangmai language post- position fairly marked the syntactic group of invariables semantically serving the group of invariables, semantically serving the same purposes as is served by a case suffix. They invariably take their place after
the substantives, some of these follow adverbial stems as well. In such a construction they form a part of an adverbial phrase. Semantically, the use of a post - position is of a great significance. The language use position with locative, genitive and ablative suffix. It can be divided into directional and non- directional.

Negative markers in Liangmai follow the verb and precede the aspect marker. There are five negative markers- (i) mak (ii) lak (iii) du (iv) /ma/ (v) mane (vi) tukhe. All these negative markers precede the aspect marker. The negative copula-/haye/ is used to express negation in existential constructions, locative predicates and possessive sentences. /hai/ and /umh/ are used only in informal conversation.

The term word formation refers to the whole process of morphological variation in the constitution of words that is including the two main divisions of inflection (word variation signaling grammatical relationship) in a restricted sense; word formation refers to the later process only." Crystal (1985)

The common morphological processes used in word formation of Liangmai are compounding, derivation and reduplication. Compound nouns are the most common type of compounds in this language. This may be classified in the terms of semantic relationship held by the constituent nouns. Affixation is a kind of strategy of the formation of word. Here, a dependents element (affix) is attached to an independent one. The study of word-formation through affixation can be divided into two:

(a) Derivational from bound roots and (b) Derivation from free roots.
Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, verbal nouns in Liangmai are derived from the verbs by adding the derivative suffix /zai/ is productive and can be prefixed to any action oriented bound root. It indicates the manner, or the way of, or the act of and the nature. Reduplication is the repetition of lexical item. It is the morphological process and it allows the native speakers to form new words by adjoining the latter in its entirety or some recognizable and definable part of it’s to itself. Reduplication thus, can either be partial or complete (Abhi, 1992). The Liangmai reduplication can also be divided into the following types: (i) complete reduplication and (ii) partial reduplication. Complete reduplication means repeating of base word completely. Complete reduplication refers to the phenomenon when a single word or clause is repeated once in the same sentence without any phonological or morphological variations. Expressive belongs to the category of morphological reduplication. It always refers to the minimally meaningful and segmentally indivisible morphemes which are constituted of iterated syllable. It includes onomatopoeias, sound symbolism, idiophones and imitative. Expressive in Liangmai are used to emote all the five senses of perception, i.e. of smell, sight, touch, hearing and taste. The echo word formation is a very productive phenomenon in Liangmai, and makes use of this feature in order to form words. Word reduplication is one of the most important and intriguing types of reduplication under lexical reduplication. “From the functional point of view complete word reduplication can be sub-divided into: (i) class maintaining and (ii) class changing.

Liangmai is an agglutinative language having the characteristics of SOV language. The word order of Liangmai, like other Tibeto-Burman language is a
subject (S), object (O) and verb (V). Though Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) is the normal and most commonly used word order in Liangmai, other alternative orders like OSV and SVO are also possible in Liangmai language. However, the SOV order is the most popular and common one.

The noun phrase (NP) consists of an obligatory noun which is called the head noun and that may be followed or preceded by one or more modifiers. The modifiers, which are basically optional elements, may be an adjective, a case marker, a post position, classifier, numeral etc. When the head noun is modified by an adjective with nominalizer /bo/ and a case marker, the order is that the adjective always precedes the noun and the case marker follows the noun. The verb phrase (VP) in Liangmai may consist of a lexical verb or a “be” verb which is obligatory in the verb phrase. Apart from the obligatory verb in the verb phrase, some other optional elements like noun phrase, Adverb phrase etc. are also found in the VP which may follow or precede the main verb. However, there are some instances of simple sentence in Liangmai in which the VP consists of only the verb followed by nominalizer /bo/. The adjective is the nucleus in an adjectival phrase. The adjective phrase consists of at least one adjective and it may or may not be accompanied by an intensifier. The adjective of the adjectival phrase either precedes or follows the noun in Liangmai. The adverb in an adverb phrase modifies the verb. An adverb always occurs before the verb in Liangmai. Hence, it can be called ‘sentential adverb.

There are two types of clauses that can be identified in Liangmai. They are main clause and subordinate clause. The main or principal clause is independent and can occur on its own in a sentence. In fact, the main clause in Liangmai is always identical.
with a simple sentence. In contrast, the subordinate clause can never occur on its own and is always dependent on the main clause.

The sentences in Liangmai can be classified into three types Viz. (1) Simple, (2) Complex and (3) Compound. These three types of classification are made at the surface level structure of the sentences. Liangmai has some different kinds of negative markers. The following are the negative markers found in Liangmai:

1) /-mak/ negative marker is used in realized aspect and it is non-future.
2) Negative marker /-lak/ is used in unrealized aspect and it is associated with future marker.
3) /-takhe/ ~ /-tukhe/ are used as ‘let’ negative.
4) /-mane/ ~ /-du/ are used in prohibitive sentence.
5) /mak/ ~ /hai/ are used as lexical negation.

As No in English is free negative, /mak/ and /hai/ are also free negation in Liangmai. /hai/ is used only in informal conversation and not permits to use in written form. The interrogative sentences in Liangmai can be classified into four types. They are Yes/no questions, Wh- questions, Alternative questions and Tag questions.

In Liangmai, there are different kinds of imperatives are constructed through the suffixation of command markers to the verbal roots or stem which are generally regarded as imperative sentences. There are four kinds of imperatives:

d) Let imperative
e) Permission
f) Conditional imperative
g) Wish imperative

Passivization is not grammatical process in Liangmai. However, some kind of semi-passive sentences are available in Liangmai. Exclamatory sentences in Liangmai is formed by Wh- words like as /deziu/ ‘how’, /de/ ‘what’ ‘how many’, ‘how much’ in sense of what and how. Only these two wh- words appear to occur in exclamatory sentences in this language.

As far as our knowledge is concerned, no linguistic work has been done on Liangmai. This will be only work on the Grammar of Liangmai language; the proposed study will throw important findings on the nature of this language. Further, there is no original script of Liangmai language. Roman script is used by Liangmai people for literary purposes till today. Liangmai language has not been introduced for teaching in any government educational institutions, at least in Manipur.