A Morphological Sketch of Sanenyo

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Abstract

The paper presents a morphological sketch of Sanenyo (ISO 639-3 crv) /sənɛːɲə/ (also called Chaura, or Tutet), spoken by the Chaura community of the Chaura island and is a part of the Nicobarese branch of the Austroasiatic language family and the language status is 6b (Threatened)[1]. Various characteristics like tense, number and gender agreement, phrasal structures, case, number system etc. are discussed. All the data mentioned are collected first hand from the fieldwork done in Port Blair and Teressa islands with the help of the native speakers. The findings are part of the ongoing project conducted by Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore under the Scheme for the Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL). No prior morphological study of the language has been done yet and hence this paper is the first attempt to bring out the morphological sketch of the language.

Keywords: Language Family, Endangered language, case, agreement

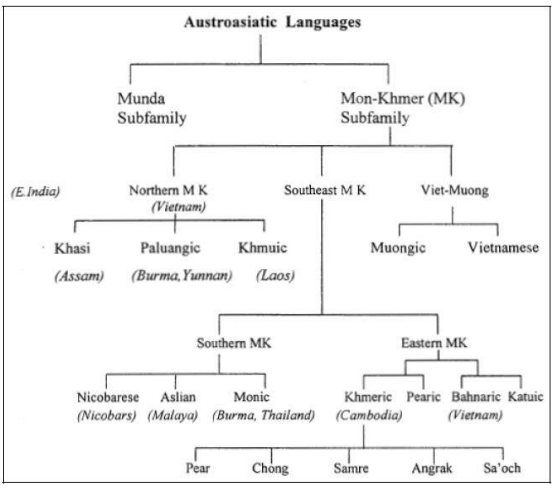
Language family and its further division

The term 'Austroasiatic' is derived from the Latin word *australis* meaning 'of the south' and the Austroasiatic (AA) family consists of almost 200 languages spoken in the East and North East India and Southeast Asia. Out of all, only two languages, Khmer and Vietnamese (which are also the largest spoken languages) are considered as national languages. The classification of the Austroasiatic (AA) language family has been through many controversies starting with William Schmidt in 1906 who proposed the idea of an 'Austric' language family consisting of both Austroasiatic and Austronesian languages. The knowledge that AA tribal possess the "the highest frequencies of the ancient east-Asian mtDNA HG-M" made the scholars argue that they are "the earliest inhabitants of India." (Basu et al, 2003: 2280). The Austroasiatic languages are distinctly grouped into three major sub groups, each spread

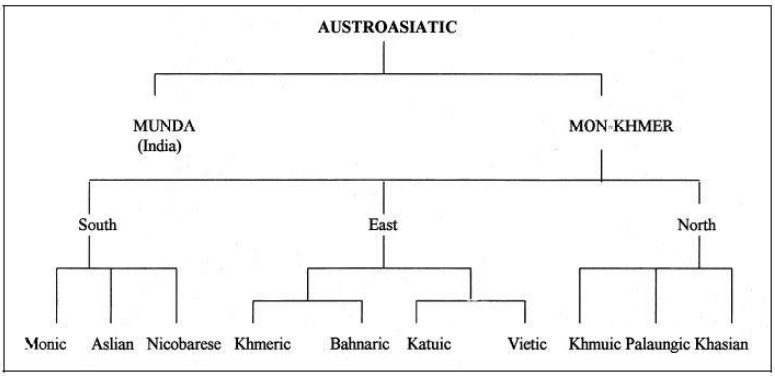
[1] Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). 2019. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World.* Twenty-second edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com.

over three different geographical locations. There are the Munda languages that are spread over eastern and some parts of central India in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. While the Northern Munda languages include the Khwerian languages- Ho, Bhumij, Santali (third largest Austroasiatic language after Vietnamese and Khmer), Mundari, Asuri, Birhor, Turi, Korwa and Korku. Some have developed scripts like Ol Chiki for Santali, Warang Chiti for Ho, etc. The Mon Khmer languages are spread all the way from Meghalaya in India to Bangladesh, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, and China. Mon Khmer has 12 main branches and almost 130 languages with Meghalaya housing the Khasi branch of North Mon Khmer languages, comprising of Khasi, Langrin Khasi, Mnar, Pnar, War, etc. The third group of languages called the Nicobarese languages, namely, Car Nicobarese, Chaura, Teressa, Central Nicobarese, Southern Nicobarese and Shompen are spread across the Nicobar Islands and named after the islands they are spoken. However, some scholars place the Nicobaric languages under the Mon Khmer branch and do not consider them as distinct group of languages. The existing typological study and research on Nicobari languages are not conclusive enough to see it as a separate branch, thus placing it under the Mon Khmer branch as it shares the geographical and some typological features with other Mon Khmer languages. Diffloth (1974) modified Pinnow model by introducing three families- Munda, Mon-Khmer and Nicobarese where the Mon-Khmer family was later sub divided based on the 'lexicostatistical' findings of Thomas and Headly in 1970. However, Diffloth himself merged the Nicobarese into Mon-Khmer with Aslian as its sister and later promoted 'Khasi-Palaungic-Khumic' as the third family (Sidwell, 2010).

- *Austroasiatic classification of Mon-Khmer branch done by Diffloth(1980)*



- *Austroasiatic Classification by Diffloth (reproduced by Chazee 1999)*



The **Munda** languages are generally divided into North Munda languages (or the Khewerian Languages) and the South Munda languages and are essentially Verb final languages with agglutinating properties allowing derivations with affixes. They show the flexibility of grammatical class where the morphemes are assigned to a various class based on the categories they get assigned and do not yield any affixes showing their status (Koshy, 2015). The **Mon Khmer** languages are generally Verb medial with some derivational processes but mostly are isolating. The name essentially comes from Khmer, the language spoken in Cambodia and Mon, the language of the Mon people of Myanmar. Out of all the languages in this branch, only Vietnamese (spoken in Vietnam) and Khmer have official status. The **Nicobarese** languages are generally Verb-initial (with a flexible word order) with the derivation and compounding along with affixation (prefixes suffixes, infixes and circumfixes). Unlike Munda and Mon Khmer languages, Nicobaric languages do not show the substantial influence of South Asian languages thus proving to be difficult in typological profiling and often claimed not to be distinctive enough for internal classification of the Austroasiatic language family in to three different groups.

The Nicobaric branch

The Nicobar Islands are an archipelagic island chain in the eastern Indian Ocean. They are located in Southeast Asia, 150 km north of Sumatra, and are separated from Thailand to the east by the Andaman Sea. Located in the southeast of the Indian subcontinent, across the Bay of Bengal, they form part of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. The Nicobaric branch is a small and poorly documented branch of the AA family. The earliest sources for the study are the dictionaries and grammars made by Man (1872), Roepstroff (1884), Temple (1903), Whitehead (1925) and some other grammarians like Braine (1970) and Radhakrishnan (1981). However, they mostly talk about only two

varieties- *Car* and *Nancowry* and hence the rest of the branch is almost untouched and not studied at all. The major language spoken in the Nicobaric islands is Car Nicobarese (caq) or simply Car or Pu, named after one of the most flourishing islands of Car Nicobar, which is situated in the northern-most of the twenty-two islands of Nicobar in the Andaman Sea. The rest of the languages/varieties spoken in the Nicobar are majorly constituted of six dialects which are also named after the island they are spoken-

1. Car
2. Chowra
3. Teressa and Bompoka
4. Central (Nancowry, Kamorta, Trinket, Katchall)
5. Southern (Great and Little Nicobar)
6. Shompen (interior of Great Nicobar Island)

It is important to note one of the earliest remarks made by Temple, as quoted in the *Linguistic Survey of India* (Vol. 4, p. 15) that 'the Nicobarese speak one language in six dialects so different as to be mutually unintelligible to the ear. These six dialects are, from North to South, *Car-Nicobar, Chowra, Teresa, Central, Southern* and *Shom Pen*.' Earlier the Nicobaric languages were seen to be part of the Shompen language (Blench & Sidwell, 2011) and seen as distinct branch of Austroasiatic but were later dismissed placing Shompen alone as a South Nicobaric language (Sidwell, 2017). The conclusion drawn was that Car was the northern most language, Shompen was the southernmost, and the rest rather form a central chain of dialects dominated by Nancowry or Muot. Among all the languages spoken in the Nicobar Islands, Car Nicobar/ Pu and Muot (spoken in Central Nicobar) are the only ones that has been properly documented. Nicobari has developed a writing system known as Nicobari script using Roman alphabets and have dictionaries made by Whitehead (1925) and Man (1889) respectively. In recent times, Das (1977) has done work on phonology and lexicon of Nicobari while Rajasingh (2017) has worked on Muot as part of Andaman commissioned project with CIIL, Mysore in which he has mentioned the phonology, morpho-syntactic aspects of the language along with a dictionary. Thus it is evident that the languages of the Nicobaric branch are in dire need of proper documentation and description for comparative and typological understanding of the same which will also allow a definite classification and categorization of the branch using solid data and findings.

Word Order

The basic word order of both the language is Verb-initial and subject final, although it is not strictly fixed.

1) *həjɔ* *suʈ̚* *ən* *məhɛːo*
play ball NOM boy
'The boy is playing with a ball.'

2) *lɛʈ̚* *həm* *hip̚u* *ən* *məhɛːo*
PFV eat banana NOM boy
'The boy has eaten banana.'

3) *lɛʈ̚* *ən* *məhɛːo* *ɛŋ* *həm* *hip̚u*
PFV NOM boy PST eat banana
'The boy had eaten banana.'

In (1), the verb comes at the initial position of the sentence while in example (3) the

verb comes before the object and the subject occurs before the verb. This kind of movement is

allowed in the language, especially in running speech or during narrations. The aspect marker in *Sanenyo* comes at the initial position as a free morpheme.

4) *lɛt* *ən* *məhɛːo* *ɛŋ* *həm* *hip̚u*
PFV NOM boy PST eat banana
'The boy had eaten banana.'

Phrasal structures

A. Adjective Phrase

The adjectives are attributive in nature preceding the noun category and sometimes a relative marker /cɑ/ is placed between the adjective and noun along with the indicative marker /ən/ to modify the noun. The indicative marker is optional and can be dropped in running speech, that is, the omission of the morpheme /ən/ will not make ungrammatical. Thus both (5) and (6) are acceptable.

5) *ʈəməwu* *ca* *ən* *kəʔɛʈ̚*
intelligent REL FOC child
'intelligent child'

6) *ʈəməwu* *ca* *kəʔɛt* *neəʔ*
intelligent REL child this
'This is an intelligent child'

Gradable adjectives are constructed using morphemes like /*kəru*/ 'big, more', /*fulŋə*/ 'very' where the adverbs are placed before the adjectives. *Sanenyo* adjectives also follow the classifiers; however, the indicative marker is placed between the classifier and the adjective for emphasis.

7) *roic -tək* *ən* *tə- mihoe* *liːpare*
three-CL IND OBJ –thin paper
'three thin sheets of paper'

Adjectives like 'big', 'small' or 'many' can also follow the numerals to provide emphasis on the amount or shape/size of the head noun.

8) *tə -hiəŋ* *pəmiɛc* *situn*
OBJ -one small bottle
'one small bottle'

B. Adverbial Phrase

Sanenyo adverbs usually come before the verb with a presence of nominal particle between the adverbial and verbal phrase and the adverbs are placed at sentence initial position. The same pattern is observed in adverbs of time or attitude where they are placed at sentence initial position which may or may not be followed by the main verb.

9) *hətrɜic* *re* *nə* *sut*
everyday play 3SG ball
'He plays football everyday.'

10) *heʔə* *ən* *mə̃* *rɨk*
surely FOC 2SG come
'You will surely come.'

Time adverbial precedes Place adverbials,

11) *t̪ə* *riːəiə* *ufɛ* *ən* *kəʔɛt̪* *ujɔhəre* *kaʔ park*
FOC evening PL NOM child play IND park
'In the evening, the children play in the park.'

C. Noun Phrase

Sanenyo is primarily head-initial language placing the modifiers after the categories they modify. Noun phrases with complements are observed to have the Compliment phrase following the Noun phrase and thus are right branching.

12) *ka* *məhɛːo* *wəhɛ* *t̪ə* *əloic* *lɛt̪* *lɛt̪ɛn* *ənrə* *kat̪*
FOC boy yesterday OBJ fever PFV well now EXP
'The boy who had fever yesterday is well now.'

The clauses, however, do not use an overt relative marker or a complementizer but do have head –initial participial/adjectival clause constructions where the adjectives are usually attributive preceding the nouns in simple sentences.

13) *pəməje ən kəʔɛt̪*
shy FOC child
'shy child'

14) *mənkəʔləse ən kəʔɛt̪*
naughty FOC child
'naughty child'

However, the adjectives can both precede as in (15) where 'shy' precedes and 'intelligent' follows the head noun 'child' or follow as in (16) where both the adjectives 'shy' and 'intelligent' comes after the head noun.

15) *pəməje ufɛ ka kəʔɛt̪ en t̪eməwu jəhnə*
shy PL FOC child 3SG intelligent and
'Her children are shy and intelligent.'

16) *ufɛ ka kəʔɛt̪ en pəməje jəhnə t̪eməwu*
PL FOC child 3SG shy and intelligent
'Her children are beautiful and intelligent.'

Genitival constructions are also observed to be head initial in *Sanenyo* where the head is followed by the dependent and the head-dependent constructions are not marked morphologically.

17) *t̪əʔ -ram [inalienable]*
mother -ram
'Ram's mother'

18) *li:pəre cə [alienable]*
book 1SG
'My book'

In Sanenyo, the morphemes /t̪əkɑ/ (for –visible) and /t̪ən/ (for +visible) can be used before the pronominal to emphasize the alienable possession such as in (19),

19) *roic -ca ka ufɛ kunrəpə t̪ən cə*
three -CL FOC PL shoe POSS 1SG
'I have three shoes.'

Else, it can also be dropped in case there is no focus as in (20),

20) *nijoʔ* *cə*

necklace 1SG

'My necklace'

D. Verb Phrase

Verb Phrases in *Sanenyo* are generally head-initial followed by the dependent phrase.

21) *həkəp lipərɛː ən ram*

read book NOM ram

'Ram reads book.'

Sanenyo places the auxiliary verb before the main verb and it is quite possible that the helping verb has lost its verbal character and has turned into an aspect marker. The aspect markers are usually placed at the sentence initial position as in (23) and object and subject can interchange their position based on the speaker's discretion to show focus or for pragmatic needs.

22) *həjɔ* *sut̄* *ən* *məhɛːo*

play ball NOM boy

'The boy is playing with a ball.'

23) *lɛt̲* *həjɔ* *sut̄* *ən* *məhɛːo* *ɛŋ*

PFV play ball NOM boy PST

'The boy had played with a ball.'

Adpositional Phrase: *Sanenyo* adpositional phrases show prepositions.

24) *ɛɔŋ ɔl cɔŋ*

go on ship

'go on a ship'

1. Agreement System

A. Tense: Sanenyo there are all three tenses- **present, past and future** and the present tense is not marked while the past and future tense are necessarily marked. We also do not observe any modification in verb forms with change in tense.

a. Simple Present tense

25) *əkŋɔk ən ram*
eat NOM ram
'Ram eats.'

b. Simple Past tense

26) *əkŋɔk ən ram* ***ɛŋ***
eat NOM ram PST
'Ram ate.'

c. Simple Future tense

27) *əkŋɔk ən ram* ***mʔə***
eat NOM ram FUT
'Ram will eat.'

B. Number: *Sanenyo* has three numbers; **singular, dual and plural** where it has separate morphemes only for dual and plural marking and because there is no change in verb forms with a change in number, there is also no number agreement marking in the language.

a. Singular

28) *əkŋɔk ən mahɛːo*
eat NOM boy
'The boy eats.'

b. Dual

29) *əkŋɔk* ***unə*** *ən məhɛːo*
eat DU NOM boy
'The boys(two) eat.'

c. Plural

30) *əkŋɔk* ***ufɛ*** *ən məhɛːo*
eat PL NOM boy
'The boys eat.'

C. Gender: Gender agreement is also not found in both the language. However, in Sanenyo the morphemes [koɪŋ] for male and [kɑːn] for female are used in order to differentiate natural genders of the nouns using compounding. [koɪŋ] means husband and [kɑːn] means wife separately. However, the following usage is also observed.

31) *[koɪŋ həiːəm]* 'cock' *[kaːn həiːəm]* 'hen'

32) *[koɪŋ kɛːiŋ]* 'male monkey' *[kaːn kɛːiŋ]* 'female monkey'

Sanenyo does have morphemes for 'boy' [*məhɛːo*] and 'girl' [*huliə̃*] in Sanenyo and these are also used to differentiate for gender in [+human].

33) *[kəʔɛːt̪ ən məhɛːo] 'boy child'*

34) *[kəʔɛːt̪ ən huliə̃] 'girl child'*

2. Pronominal system

Sanenyo also has an exhaustive system of Pronominal with first, second and third person marking along with singular, dual and plural forms.

	1	2	3
SG	cəʔ	ciʔɑi ~ cĩʔ	cuʔu ~ cuʔ
DU	Mẽ	inə	iːhɛ
PL	En	unə	ufɛ

The language is partially pro-drop where the pronominal can be dropped in 3person.

35) *ɔ̃icŋə cə kat̪*
hungry 1SG EXP
'I am hungry.'

36) *ɔ̃icŋə kat̪*
hungry EXP
'He is hungry.'

37) *ɔ̃icŋə ufɛ kat̪*
hungry PL EXP

'They are hungry.'

The language has separate morpheme /hĩː/ to show inclusiveness thus lacking distinct pronominal forms for the same, which is added before the pronouns or before the verb in case of dropping of pronominal.

For showing honorific/non honorific, visible/non visible, intimacy, politeness or any other social values, we see the addition of morphemes to signal any of the above value with no change in the pronominal morphemes. Possessiveness are obligatorily omitted in case of inalienable possession like shown in (38).

38) *t̪əʔ -sit̪a*

mother -sita

'Sita's mother'

The morphemes /t̪əkɑ/ (for –visible) and /t̪ən/ (for +visible) can be used before the pronominal to emphasize the alienable possession.

39) *kəɲuic͡ t̪ən cə*

pen POSS 1SG

'My pen'

Else, it can also be dropped.

40) kəŋuic̄ cə

pen 1SG

'My pen'

The demonstrative pronouns are /neəʔ/ 'this' and /ɑnə/ 'that' and is placed after the head noun.

41) *məhɛːo neəʔ jəhnə huliə̃ anə*

boy this and girl that

'This is a boy and that is a girl.'

The language does not have any dual or plural demonstratives and change in number is denoted by adding the number marker before the head noun.

The reflexive pronoun /t̪ənrɛ/ for 1person and 3person and /t̪ənme/ for 2person follows the personal pronoun.

42) *luʔt̪ao en t̪ənrɛ*

like 3SG REFL

'He likes himself.'

As stated earlier the 3SG/3PL pronouns can be dropped and simply the DU/PL can be used instead followed by the reflexive pronoun.

43) *luʔt̪ao ufɛ t̪ənrɛ*

like PL REFL

'They like themselves.'

The reciprocal pronoun is /t̪əŋ hiəŋ/ which follow dual marker as shown in (44).

44) *luʔt̪ao unə t̪ən hiəŋ*

like DU eachother

'They like each other.'

Interrogative Pronouns are /kun----kəʔ/ in case of second person, dual (2DU) and second person, plural (2PL)

[inə-kəʔ-ən]:

45) *kun lɛt̪ əkŋə̃k inə-kəʔ-ən*

Q PFV eat 2DU-Q -IND

'Did you two eat?'

- [iːhɛ-kəʔ-ən]:

46) *kun lɛ̰t əkŋɔ̃k iːhɛ-kəʔ-ən*

Q PFV eat 2PL-Q -IND

Did you three eat?'

Negation, Interrogative and Imperative constructions

I. Negative constructions

In Sanenyo, Negation is observed to be pre-verbal and has prohibitive marker used for prohibition.

47) *waʔ mə ɛːre*
PROH 2SG go
'You may not go.'

48) *waʔ mə jɔtni*
PROH 2SG outside
'Do not go outside.'

The language has separate negation marker for different persons always occupying the sentence-initial position.

49) *cḭt -mɛh cuː*
1P.SG NEG go
'I will not go.'

50) *cḭt -mɛh hɛːo lipare sita*
1P.SG NEG give book sita
'I will not give the book to sita.'

51) *mə̰t -mɛh cuː*
2P.SG NEG go
'You will not go.'

52) *hə̰t -mɛh cuː*
3P.SG NEG go
'He will not go.'

The negation of noun class is done in the same manner as the verb class, i.e., by adding the negative particle before the noun.

53) *siŋrol ʈən kəp̄ɔ*
horn POSS cow
'Cow has horn.'

54) *həʈ siŋrol ʈən kəp̄ɔ*
NEG horn POSS cow
'Cow does not have horn.'

II. Interrogative constructions

Sanenyo places question particle at sentence initial position along with using intonation to frame interrogative sentences. Following are the various types of interrogatives present in the language:

- **Time**- /kuhɛ/ 'when'

55) *kuhɛ mə̃ rɜk*
Q 2SG come
'When will you come?'

- **Place**- /ɑcʔcu/ 'where'

56) *acʔcu ka ɲi mə*
Q FOC house 2SG
'Where is your house? '

- **Thing**- /ku/, /cin/ 'what' , /ɑcʔcu/ 'which'

57) *cin liəŋ mẽ*
Q name 2SG
'What is your name? '

58) *ku ɛːrəŋ həm mẽ*
Q want eat 2SG
'What do you want to eat? '

59) *acʔcu cuk ka ɲi mə*
Q room FOC house 2SG
'Which is your house? '

- **Reason**- /kunse/ 'why'

60) *kunse nə rɜi ka wəməcare*
Q 3SG leave IND job
'Why did she leave the job? '

- **Person**- /ci/ ~ /cikɑ/ 'who' , /ciɻə/ 'whom' , /cun/ 'which'

  61) *ci anə*

  Q that

  'Who is that? '

  62) *ciɻə ŋop ɻənme*

  Q like 2SG

  'Whom do you like? '

- **Process**- /kɑh sen/ ~ /kɑse/ 'how'

  63) *kahsen εŋ nə ɻũhsi ram*

  Q PST 3SG fall ram

  'How did Ram fell?'

- **Quantity**- /kɑh rise/ 'how much'

  64) *kahrise ɻənəŋəse ən ram ɻə rupijə*

  Q get NOM ram OBJ money

  'How much money Ram get?'

The language also has both positive / həʔ/ and negative /həiʔ/ tag questions but does not have any polar question particle.

III. Imperative constructions

Imperatives in both the languages are formed as simple statements following the verb-subject order except that in Sanenyo, intimate or honorific forms are marked using separate morphemes.

65) *ɛːre mə̃*
go 2SG

'Go(order)'

But while addressing an elder person, /rohmə ɛːre/ is used while in case of intimate forms the morpheme /hulɔŋ/ 'friend' follows the verb /ɛːre/ and for addressing younger, /ɛːre məsu/ is used. Orders can be softened using the morpheme /hukuləsɛ/ 'please'. The first person imperatives are referred by using /hɑʔ/ for DUAL and /hĩ/ for PLURAL which is followed by the verb.

66) *haʔ ɛːre*
INCL.DL go
'Let's go.'

67) *hĩ* *ɛːre*
INCL.PL go
'Let's go.'

3. Case System

Cases in the language are marked using both separate morphemes or through the position of nouns in the sentence. Based on their morpho-syntactic alignment, *Sanenyo* like Vietnamese does not have any overt morphological case system. It, however, has nominative-accusative case system where the subject of both transitive and intransitive verb gets nominative case and the direct object gets accusative case.

The **Nominative Case,** also referred as the subjective case, is used to mark agent/subject of the verb in the phrase. The nominative marker in Sanenyo is */ən/* and */ka/* which is placed before the agent/subject of the sentence. */ən/* acts as the deitic, visible marker in the sentence to denote the visibility of the agent by the speaker while */ka/* denotes the non-visible aspect of the agent.

68) *iʈ̪i̯ək ən ram*
sleep NOM ram
'Ram is sleeping.'

69) *iʈ̪i̯ək ka ram*
sleep NOM ram
'Ram is sleeping.'

The **Accusative Case** marks the direct object of the transitive verb in a sentence. In *Sanenyo*, it is marked by */ʈ̪ə/*, which is also placed before the direct object in the sentence.

70) *ŋop ən ram ʈ̪ə en*
love NOM ram ACC 3SG
'Ram loves her.'

71) *ŋop ən ufɛ ʈ̪ə cə*
love NOM PL ACC 1SG
'They love me.'

The **Dative Case** marks the indirect object of a verb and often indicates the benefactor/ victim in a sentence. *Sanenyo* also does not have overt marking for dative case and observes positional case system.

72) *həwa man rahul ən ram*

buy toy rahul NOM ram

'Ram bought a toy for rahul.'

Here the noun 'rahul' gets dative case based on its position in the sentence, rather than any overt marking to show the dative case.

The **Genitive Case** marks the relation between the two nouns in a sentence which can be both abstract or physical in nature. *Sanenyo* does not mark genitives morphologically and the head-dependent order is observed to show the attributive relationship between the head and dependent noun/pronouns.

1) Genitive of Possession: The genitive case shows the relationship between the possessor and possessed.

73) *ʈəʔ -sita*
mother -sita
'Sita's mother'

74) *mes cə*
table 1SG
'My table'

2) Genitive of Material: It points out the specific material used to make something.

75) *ʈə uhɛɔŋ ən ɲi*
OBJ stone IND house
'house of stone'

76) *hətwa ən nat*
bamboo NOM rope
'rope of bamboo'

The **Instrumental case** is used to mark the noun acting as an instrument or mode using which the agent/subject of the action performes the action. Sanenyo uses morphemes like from, on, by etc. to indicate an instrument of an action.

77) *ə̃hti ʈə inluiŋ ən en nə -ɛtsi əphɔp*
from OBJ axe IND 3SG 3SG -cut tree
'He cut the tree with an axe. '

The morpheme '*ə̃hn̪ti'* imparts the instrumental case to the object 'axe' using which the agent 'he' cuts the 'tree'.

78) *ɛaŋ ɔl bəs cə ɛŋ*

go on bus 1SG PST

'I went by bus.'

The morpheme '*ɔl'* imparts the instrumental case to the object 'bus' on which the agent 'I' went.

Instrumental case is also used to specify something/someone accompanying an action and Sanenyo also uses morphemes like with, together to show the accompaniment of two nouns.

79) *hulɔŋsi ɛ:re unə ram unə sin̪ta*

with go DL ram DL sita

'Sita is going with ram.'

80) *hiəŋri cuk ufɛ ne sin̪un*

together keep PL REF bottle

'Three bottles are kept together.'

However, sometimes there is no overt marking and the relation is indicated using the word order.

81) *lɛn̪ cuh dilli unə ram unə ʃhyam*

PFV go delhi DL ram DL shyam

'Shyam had gone with ram to Delhi.'

The case also indicates reason, cause or situation of an action and morphemes like because of, for, only etc. are used to mark the case.

82) *hɛ:ʔɲun̪ao n̪ə ən pəuʔɲi:re nə wiu*

because of OBJ FOC family 3SG work

'He works because of his family.'

The **Locative Case** generally marks the location of the head noun and often uses adpositions to express the location, therefore performing the function of an adverb. Sanenyo has adpositional case system where the nouns are accompanied by words that mark case rather than they being inflected.

Sanenyo is a prepostional langugae and uses a variety of prepostions like in, inside, out, outside, near, right, left, behind, front, above, below etc. to mark the locative case.

83) *kaʈəʔəl iskul ka ʈao -cə*
in school NOM brother 1SG
'My brother is in the school.'

84) *hɛʔlu ful ən hiŋ nəsiəplə*
in east NOM sun rise
'The sun rises in the east.'

The **Ablative Case** is marked to show seperation or something that is moving away from something and is marked on nouns, pronouns and adjectives. Sanenyo uses morphemes like from to show seperation, which is different in different instances.

85) *hɛ̃ʔʈu dilli ən sita mʔə*

from dehli NOM sita FUT
'Sita will come from Delhi.'

86) *hɛ̃ːʔʈu-kui əphɔp ən nə tũhsi ən rai əphɔp*
from-height tree NOM 3SG fall NOM leaf-tree
'Leaves are falling from the tree.'

87) *hɛ̃ːʔsuɔl ən situn ən rak̚*

from NOM bottle IND water
'Water spill out from the bottle.'

Complex Predicates

Sanenyo being part of the Nicobari group of language family has selective complex predicate constructions and most often has the tendency to form simple predicates rather than the complex ones.

a. Compound Verb Constructions: In *Sanenyo*, we do not observe any compound verb constructions and like Car, individual morphemes are used to impart the action in the sentence.

88) *lɛʈ kəpɛʔ ən en*
PFV dead NOM 3SG
'He is dead.'

89) *t̪ũhsi ən en*
fall NOM 3SG

'He fell.'

Sanenyo also lacks any **Explicator compound verbs** and the Tense, Aspect and Mood is marked using a separate morpheme either at sentence initial or final position and has no relation with the verbs.

90) *lɛt̪ rɜk ən en*
PFV fall NOM 3SG
'He came.'

b. Converb constructions: *Sanenyo* does not have any converbs and morphemes like then, after, before etc. are used to signify the adverbial subordination. In some cases, the order of the verbs helps to establish verb-adverb relationship.

91) *rɛh əkŋɔk məl it̄ə̄k*

before eat then sleep
'Sleep after eating.'

92) *rɛh əkŋɔk ən en məlŋə hɛ -it̄ə̄k*

before eat NOM 3SG then CONT-sleep
'Having eaten his food, he went to sleep.'

c. Serial verb constructions: Sanenyo has serial verb constructions by concatenating two or more verbs or verb phrases often without any usage of subordinating conjugations or affixes.

93) *rɛː hərə*
go see
'Go and see.'

94) *hĩ ɛːre ɲu cah*
INCL.PL go drink tea
'Let us go and drink tea.'

However, for showing emphasis, the main verb is marked by placing it at sentence-initial position and using the conjugations like 'and' for further serialization.

95) *lɛt̪ rɜk ən en jəhnə pəicŋərɛ jəhnə ɛːre*
PFV come NOM 3SG and sit and go
'He came, sat and left.'

Passive constructions

Sanenyo does not mark any change in the verb, or any change in the subject-object dynamics in active and passive voice. Since inflection is absent in the language, we do not observe any change in the verb forms or any specific passive morpheme. The change is simply done by preposing the subject position for focus purpose only.

- Active voice

  96) *fut̚sica hɛːom ufɛ ən wəmihɛːom*
  burn garden PL NOM farmer
  'The farmers burned the garden.'

- Passive voice

  97) *fut̚sica ufɛ ən wəmihɛːom ən hɛːom*
  burn PL NOM farmer FOC garden
  'The garden was burnt by the farmers.'

- Active voice

  98) *kəpɛːʔ ən ram tiʔ haa̱ti*
  kill IND ram by elephant
  'Elephant killed ram.'

- Passive Voice

  99) *kəpɛːʔ tiʔ haa̱ti ən ram*
  kill by elephant IND ram
  'Ram was killed by elephant.'

Reduplication

The reduplication process in the language is present in adverbs and some verb stem but not on adjectives as seen in other South Asian languages. In addition, the process is not strictly observed in all scenarios and thus sometimes can be skipped.

The reduplication of adverbs conveys the role of intensifier and manner adverbs.

i. Intensifier

100) *həa̱ hɛcaʔ- həa̱ hɛcaʔ ka a̱əʔ- cə nə əkŋɔk*
NEG- fast NEG- fast IND mother-1SG 3SG eat
'My mother eats her food slowly slowly.'

101) *cətrɜic- cətrɜic hərə ən cə*

again again see NOM 1SG

'I saw her again and again. '

ii. Manner adverb

102) *həkiɲ- həkiɲ ən en jəhnə kurot*
laugh- laugh NOM 3SG and mad
'She kept laughing and went mad.'

103) *həŋ sirok- sirok nə ɛːre*

only jump jump 3SG go
'He only hoped and hoped and went.'

The adverbial reduplication is however not observed imparting distributive meaning.

104) *rire cuk ən ʈəʔ ɲi cə həlɛ ũh*

all room IND OBJ house 1SG collect firewood

'I collected firewood from house by house.'

The language does not have reduplication for onomatopoeic words and separate morphemes are used to refer to the sounds produced during the action.

105) cəhɛo *'sound made by dripping of water'*

106) wɔsi *'act of water running down through walls'*

107) liəŋu kətləp *'sound made by the throat while drinking water'*

108) liəŋu caka ən iəlsi *'sound made during crackling of fire'*

Gerundial Constructions

Gerunds are the verbs that functions as a noun, retaining the property of verbs but also functioning as the subject of the clause. In Sanenyo, the verbal noun too takes the subject place forming gerunds.

109) *lɛʈ wəniəca cə ən hənjənə*

PFV work 1SG NOM work

'Hunting is my work.'

110) *ənholə* *ɛ̃ːhəhi* *ənsehi* *jal*
health body for swimming
'Swimming is good for healthy body.'

111) *lɛ̰t wəniəca cə* *ne* *cəmih*
PFV work 1SG REF weaving
'Weaving is my work.'

Numeral system of *Sanenyo*

Sanenyo have maintained the indigenous numeral system and have a comprehensive number system for cardinal whole numbers having a decimal numeral system. The following table shows the counting system of the language:

Figure	Sanenyo
1	hiəŋ
2	ɛ̃ː
3	roic
4	fɛːn
5	t̰ɑɛ
6	t̰əfuəl
7	isɑt̰
8	ənfɛːn
9	kəlʔfɛːn
10	sɔm

11	sɔm hiəŋ
12	sɔm ɛ̃ː
13	sɔm roic
14	sɔm fɛːn
15	sɔm t̪ɑɛ
16	sɔm t̪əfuəl
17	sɔm isɑt̪
18	sɔm ənfɛːn
19	sɔm kəlʔfɛːn
20	ɛ̃ːt̪um
21	ɛ̃ː t̪um hiəŋ
22	ɛ̃ː t̪um ɛ̃ː
23	ɛ̃ː t̪um roic
24	ɛ̃ː t̪um fɛːn
25	ɛ̃ː t̪um t̪ɑɛ
30	roic t̪um
40	fɛːn t̪um

50	t̪ɑɛ t̪um
100	hiəŋ nɔŋ
200	ɛ̃ː nɔŋ
1000	məmiːləʔ/ hiəŋ məmiːləʔ
2000	ɛ̃ː məmiːləʔ

From the above table, we find that simple cardinal numerals 1-10 in *Sanenyo* are in the simple forms, monomorphemic with no derivations/ compounding taking place. *Sanenyo* morphemes for 'eight' and 'nine' are formed using the base 'four', thus are polymorphemic.

112) [ənfɛːn]'eight' - [ən-] + [fɛːn] 'four'

113) [kəlʔfɛːn] 'nine - [kəlʔ-] +[fɛːn] 'four'

The language expresses syntactic combinations for values after ten. This pattern of lower numeral being monomorphemic while the construction of higher numerals using some mathematical operations are 'crosslinguistically' frequent (Moravcsik 2013). Another crosslinguistic tendency is for higher numerals to go for 'larger-before-smaller' order of construction (cf. Greenberg 1978a: 273). *Sanenyo* uniformly follows the larger-before-smaller rule, that is, all higher numerals are derived by adding a lower numeral to the base, like 'two' [ɛ̃ː] is added to base 'ten' [sɔm] to make 'twelve' [sɔm ɛ̃ː]. For numbers like 20, 30, 40 etc. *Sanenyo* multiply the lower numeral to the base, such as [roic t̪um] 'thirty' (numeral 3 x base). This order is also present in case of higher numerals like hundred, thousand and so on.

Conclusion

To begin with, *Sanenyo* is observed to have quite low morpheme-per-word ratio with bare minimum inflections and thus can be considered as an isolating (or analytic) language. However, the language contains many polymorphemic words due to the presence of derivational morphemes. *Sanenyo* has a VOS word order that is flexible in case of running speech/narrations. Often the aspect marker in *Sanenyo* (if present) occurs strictly at sentence initial position. The language is primarily head-initial as observed in different phrasal constructions with head occurring before the dependents and modifying the same, except for cases like adjectival

constructions in which the adjectives can occur both before and after the noun for pragmatic purposes. In addition, the language is consistently right branching where all the branching categories are placed after the non-branching categories like the complement phrase following the noun phrase etc. Genitives are not marked and often in *Sanenyo*, the difference between the alienable and inalienable possessive constructions is optionally marked by using separate morphemes. In the case of adverbial constructions in *Sanenyo*, time adverb precedes place adverb and there is a possibility that the aspect markers are essentially the grammaticalized helping verbs occurring at sentence initial position. The language does not mark the present tense and there is no inflection observed in the language with respect to tense and aspect agreement. The language has all three person and number and no overt gender system and again no inflection is seen with respect to person, number and gender agreement. The pronominal category has a separate morpheme to show inclusiveness and for showing honorific, visibility, intimacy, politeness etc. we see addition of morphemes with no change in the pronominal morphemes, along with demonstrative, reflexive and interrogative pronouns (only in the second person). Negation is pre-verbal and pre-nominal. In addition, *Sanenyo* also exhibits separate negative pronominal for different numbers. In the case of interrogative constructions, question particles are placed at sentence initial position and forms tag questions. Imperatives also follow the basic word order of verb subject with separate morphemes to show honorific/intimate constructions. Case refers to "morphological marking on nouns" that encodes semantic and/or pragmatic information about the nominal arguments and is used to distinguish a noun from the other predicate arguments. *Sanenyo* show cases with nominative-accusative case system. Government, shown explicitly, uses a nominative marker to show the same. *Sanenyo* also marks accusative case placing the object marker before the direct object in the sentence. In case of Dative case marking where they do not have any overt marking and is encoded on the complements (indirect object). *Sanenyo* also lacks any genitive marking morphologically showing head-dependent order for the same. The peripheral case is marked using the analytic case markers (prepositions). However, the Instrumental case is marked using separate morphemes to show the mode or means of action. The language is prepositional in nature and imparts locative case using different morphemes to illustrate the direction/location of the subject. Ablative case is again marked with separate morphemes to show separation.

Coming to complex predicates, *Sanenyo* lacks any compound verb constructions and separate morphemes are used to convey the actions. There is also a lack of explicator compound verbs in language. Converbs are also absent and it has distinct morphemes to convey the verb-adverbial relation. In case of serial verb constructions, *Sanenyo* places

the verbs in order of their occurrence without any affixation, signifying the sequence of actions.

Sanenyo does not have any passive constructions and the interchange of subject and object position is done, in case the speaker intends to change the voice for focus/ narrative purposes.

Reduplication is often seen in *Sanenyo* in case of some verbs and adverbs to impart intensity and manner, though usage is optional in many cases. Gerunds are formed by pacing the verbal noun in the subject position. Finally, the paper also discusses the numeral system of *Sanenyo* where it is observed that it exhibits decimal number system and while simple cardinal numbers have basic forms, compounding is used in the formation of higher numerals using addition and multiplication processes.

The work has attempted to bring in newer insights into our understanding of the structure of Nicobaric languages and it may prove to be valuable for future research in the field. However, a lot of work still needs to be done. The morphological study of the language when compared to other languages of the Mon-Khmer branch will show the lack of proper findings which has constrained the linguistic researchers to study both the discrepancy and the preservation of proto-Mon-Khmer structures (if any). Thus, it becomes difficult to bring out proper typological profiling of the branch. The author hopes to fill out any gaps or lack of findings to bring out more exhaustive and comprehensive description of the language in near future.

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