

Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area

Conjoined Structures with /əməχuŋ/ in Meiteiron

Purna C. Thoudam
Jawaharlal Nehru University

0. /əməχuŋ/ 'and'¹ in Meiteiron conjoins constituents. It can join phrases, clauses, and sentences as well as single words. In this paper a short account of the various structures which can be joined by /əməχuŋ/ is given. Although /əməχuŋ/ conjoins structures in Meiteiron, there are other conjuncts which also join structures such as the complex conjunction /...gə...-gə/ and /...-gə/.

1. Phonologically each occurrence of /əməχuŋ/ is attached to the immediately preceding noun phrase and after each occurrence of /əməχuŋ/ it is possible to pause.

- (1) cawbə əməχuŋ/ tombə cak cari
Chaoba and Tomba meal eat(continue)

1.1 All the constituents may have /əməχuŋ/ attached to them except the last member of a series.

- (2a) cawbə əməχuŋ/ tombə əməχuŋ/ ibeton əməχuŋ/ əy cak cari
Chaoba and Tomba and Ibeton and I meal eat

1.2 All the occurrences of /əməχuŋ/ can be optionally deleted except the last in the series. Thus, (2a) above can be transformed into:

- (2b) cawbə tombə ibeton əməχuŋ/ əy cak cari
Chaoba Tomba Ibeton and I meal eat

Here, (2a) and (2b) are grammatical variants of each other.

2. /əməχuŋ/ joins different NPs and different VPs:

- (3a) tombə nəkpi cawbə nəkpi mənina nokyi əməχuŋ əy nək lawri
Tomba weeps Chaoba runs Mani laughs and I shout

- (3b)² tombə nəkpi cawbə celli mənini nokyi əməχuŋ əy(nə) lawri
Tomba weeps Chaoba runs Mani laughs and I shout

¹Meiteiron /əməχuŋ/ is only approximately the same in meaning as the English and.

²Since (3b) differs from (3a) morphologically, they do not constitute an ideal minimal pair, but (3b) shows some of the possible variation.

(3c) tombəṇə kəppi əməchuŋ cawbəṇə celli əməchuŋ məniṇə nokyi əməchuŋ
 Tomba weeps and Chaoba runs and Mani laughs and

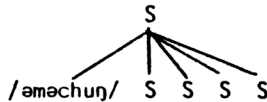
əyṇə lawri
 I shout

Here (3a) and (3b) are grammatical and are acceptable as meaningful sentences in this language, and they can be treated as variants. Sentence (3b) is meaningful but it is unacceptable to speakers of the language. Here we may point out that in cases where the constituents are sentences only the next to the last constituent in the series is followed by /əməchuŋ/.

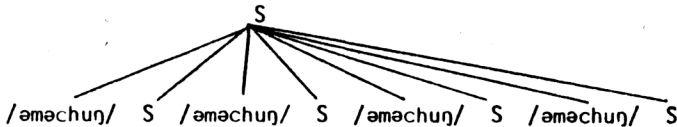
(4) cawbə celli əməchuŋ əy tummi
 Chaoba runs and I sleep

In (4) above only two sentences are joined by /əməchuŋ/. (4) is grammatical as well as meaningful and is acceptable to speakers of the language.

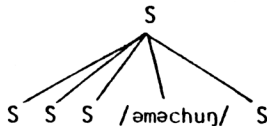
The structure /tombəṇə kəppi, cawbəṇə celli, nokyi əməchuŋ əyṇə lawri/ can be represented by the following tree:



A transformation copies /əməchuŋ/ before each S, and we get:



A set of transformations then deletes all occurrences of /əməchuŋ/ except the last leaving the following tree:



The structure is (3a) which, as has already been pointed out, is grammatical as well as meaningful and is acceptable to speakers of the language.

3. Co-referentiality. In case there are only two sentences with coreferential NPs, we have



The conjunction transformation will place /əməχun/ between the two sentences. [Note: This tree requires no additional transformations. The transformations mentioned above are sufficient to generate this structure.]

- (5a) cawbəṇə kəppi əməχun cawbəṇə celli
 Chaoba weeps and Chaoba runs

Sentence (5b) shows the deletion of the repeated NP (Equi-NP deletion):

- (5b) cawbəṇə kəppi əməχun celli
 Chaoba weeps and runs

The pronoun /məhak/ could be used in place of the second NP but it is ambiguous in this case, because it could mean someone other than Chaoba.

- (5c) cawbəṇə kəppi əməχun məhakṇə celli
 Chaoba weeps and he runs

In (5c) above /məhakṇə/ does not necessarily refer to /cawbə/, although it may. It could also refer to someone other than /cawbə/. Hence, deletion is the best alternative to avoid this sort of confusion.

4. Gapping.

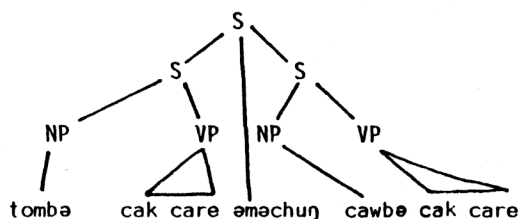
- (6a) tombə əməχun cawbə cak³ care⁴
 Tomba and Chooba meal eat/have/take

- (6b) tombə cak care
 Tomba meal have(completive)

- (6c) cawbə cak care
 Chaoba meal have(completive)

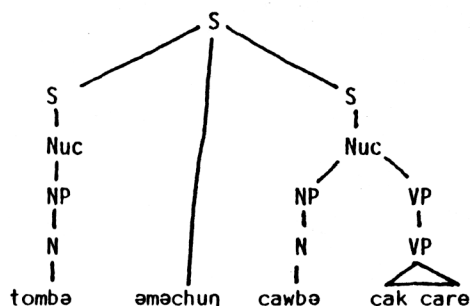
³/cak/ also means 'cooked rice'. Here the appropriate sense is 'a meal'.

⁴/care/ means 'eat'. Here /care/ is used to mean 'taking (a meal)' or 'having (a meal)'.



Tomba meal taken and Chaoba meal taken

Through a transformation, we get:



Tomba and Chaoba meal taken

(7a) ibemhəl əməchun ibeton channəri
Ibemhal and Ibeton play (continue)

(7b) ibemhəl channəri
Ibemhal plays

(7c) ibeton channəri
Ibeton plays

In mutual action the preferable form is /-gə/. In (7a) above the meaning may be Ibemhal and Ibeton are playing separately or it can mean they are playing different games. Thus the preferred construction is:

(8a) ibemhəlgə ibetongə channəri
Ibemhal with Ibeton with play

(8b) ibemhəl ibetongə channəri
Ibemhal Ibeton with play

(8b) is a variant of (8a) and both are grammatical, meaningful, and acceptable in cultivated speech.

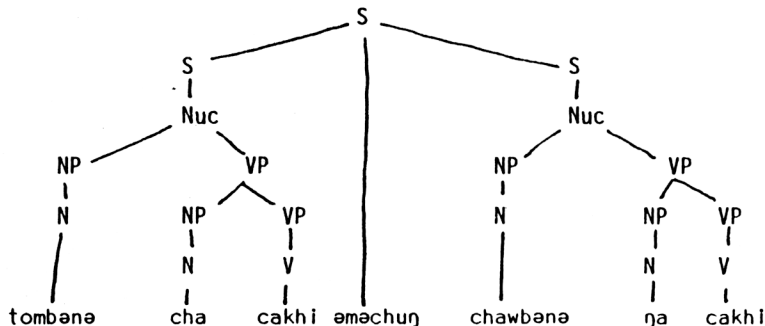
5. Special reduction rule:

(9a) tombəne cha əməchuŋ ɲa cakhi
Tomba meat and Chaoba fish eat (definite)

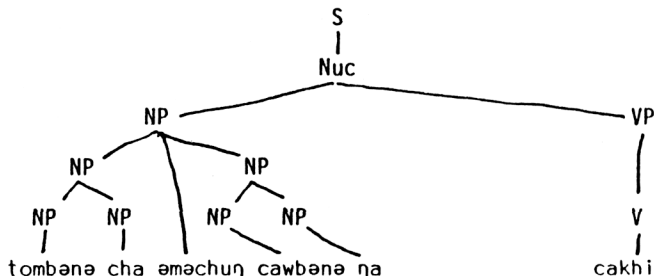
(9b) tombəne cha cakhi
Tomba meat eat (definite)

(9c) cawbəne ɲa cakhi
Chaoba fish eat (definite)

In (9b) and (9c) the action /cakhi/ 'eat' is common to both conjuncts. In (9a) the first occurrence of /cakhi/ 'eat' has been deleted and only the second one is retained. Deletion, like other transformations, alters the syntactic structure. Starting with the tree below



a transformation changes the structure to produce:

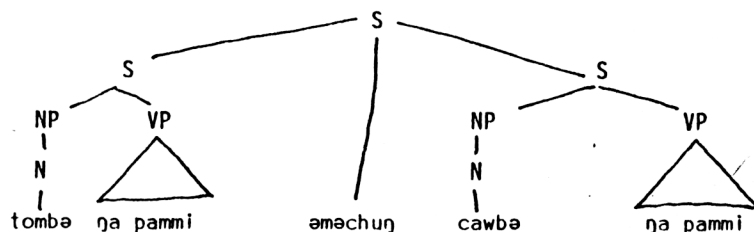


6. Correferential verb phrases:

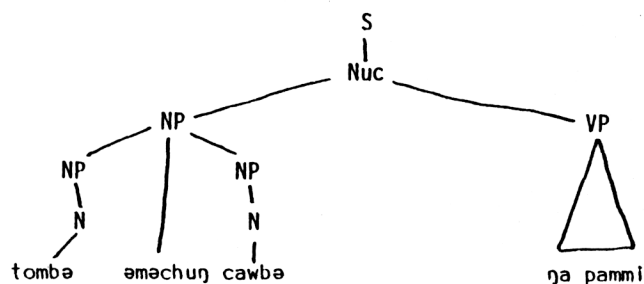
(10a) tombə əməchun cawbə ɲa pammi
Tomba and Chaoba fish fond (habitual)

(10b) tombə ɲa pammi
Tomba fish fond (habitual)

(10c) cawbə ɲa pammi
Chaoba fish fond (habitual)



A transformation changes this tree to produce the following structure:



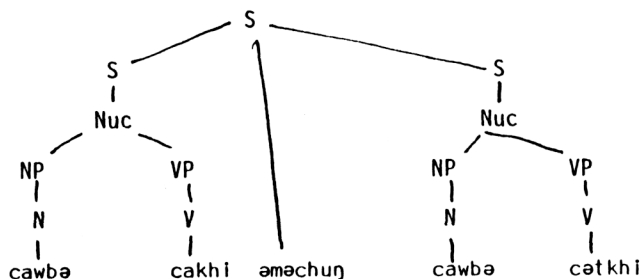
7. Correferential nouns:

(11a) cawbə cakhi əməchun cawbə cətkhi
Chaoba eat and Chaoba go (definite)

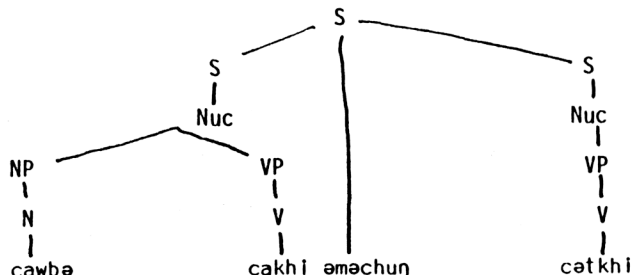
(11b) cawbə cakhi əməchun məhak cətkhi⁵
Chaoba eats and he goes

(11c) cawbə cakhi əməchun cətkhi
Chaoba eats and goes

⁵This sentence has a different semantic interpretation. Hence it is not a variant of (11a) or (11c).



The repeated NP is deleted to give the following:



8. Conclusion. This paper has been confined to describing conjoined structures formed with the conjunction /əməchuŋ/ 'and' and the different syntactic rules affecting those structures. In cases of constructions using symmetric predicates, noun phrases are not joined with /əməchuŋ/; instead, the complex conjunction /-gə...-gə/ is used. The first /-gə/ will follow the preceeding NP and the second /-gə/ the following NP. Illustrations:

(12a) tombəgə cawbəgə cak cay
Tomba Chaoba meal have (inf./habitual)

(13a) nəmbul turelgə imphal turelgə tinnərə
Nambul river Imphal river join (completive)

(12b) tombə cawbəgə cak cay
Tomba Chaoba meal have (inf.)

(13b) nəmbul turel imphal turelgə tinnərə
Nambul river Imphal river joined

In this case (13b) the conjunction /-gə/ following the first NP has been deleted while the /-gə/ with the second NP has been retained. (12b) and (13b) can be taken as variants of (12a) and (13a), respectively.

Another form for this type of structure is:

- (14) nambul əməchuŋ imphal turel tinnəre
Nambul and Imphal river join
- (15) nambul əməchuŋ imphal turel əni⁶tinnəre
Nambul and Imphal river two joined

There are other conjunctions which can join constituents but besides /-gə/, /-gə...-gə/, and /əməchuŋ/ they are not discussed here.

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