Mood in Tinkar lo

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Abstract

This paper presents the grammatical category of mood in Tinkar lo, a lesser known West Himalayish Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the last village Tinkar of the Byans valley of Province no.7, Sudurpashchim Pradesh in Nepal. Tinkar lo is an SOV language and the verb stems are inflected for tense, aspect, mood and agreement. Both mood and modality manifest in Tinkar lo but this paper presents only the types of mood attested in the language. The findings discussed in this paper pertain to the analysis in my Ph.D. research.

Keywords: mood, Tinkar lo, West Himalayish, lesser known

1.1   Introduction

Byansi (also called Byangsi) , an exonym, is a cover term for three languages: Tinkar, Kuti and Jyunkhu spoken in the Byans valley which extends from the Pithoragarh district in the state of Uttarakhand in India and the Darchula district of Sudurpashchim province in Nepal. In Byans valley, there are seven villages in India: Budi, Garbyang, Gunji, Napalchyo, Rongkang, Nabi and Kuti ; and two villages Chhangru and Tinkar in Nepal. Tinkar lo and Kuti lo are spoken in the last villages Tinkar and Kuti respectively on the either sides of Nepal and India. Jyunkhu lo is spoken in the rest of the seven Indian villages and Chhangru in Nepal. It is also spoken in three lower elevation villages Dumlin, Rapla, Sitola in the Darchula district of Nepal. Byansi, Chaundangsi and Darma are spoken by an indigeneous tribe 'Rung' hailing from Byans, Chaundans and Darma valley. These languages belong to the West-Himalayish language subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Byansi is listed in the 6b threatened category by the Ethnologue. Previous work done on Byansi (or Byangsi) is limited only to the sketch grammars of Jyunkhu lo as Byansi. Tinkar lo is underdocumented (I worked on it in my M.phil) and Kuti lo is undocumented so far. The population of Tinkar is less then 500 and the number of speakers is lesser.

The available work on Byansi does not deal with the grammatical categories of TAM (Tense, Aspect and Mood) in depth. This paper is primarily based on the data collected during my Ph.D. research using questionnaire method. The data was collected from the informants in Darchula, where the transhumance practicing Tinkari people live in winter. The data presented in this paper was recorded, transcribed in IPA and then analysed.

1.2   Mood

Mood indicates the reality of an event, that is, whether the occurrence of the event is a reality or only a possibility (Bhat 1999). Palmer (1986:21) has pointed out that cross-linguistically, mood manifests in verbal morphology, whereas modality is analytic and periphrastic. Tinkar lo is a verb-final language. There is no grammatical gender in Tinkar lo, hence person-number agreement is attested in the language. Verbs

inflect for the following categories: Agreement, Tense, Aspect and Mood. Tinkar lo is primarily suffixal in nature. The mood morphemes are suffixed to the verb stem. The only prefixes used in Tinkar lo are : Negative, Prohibitive and Perfective. The types of mood found in the Tinkar lo are discussed below.

1.2.1 Realis (Indicative mood)

The real is mood describes the actions that are underway at the time of the utterance, are habitual or have already been finished at the time of speaking. It is not just concerned with temporal relations but also denotes the actuality or the realization of an act. In Tinkar lo, the verb stem is suffixed with the morpheme /-t/ in all persons of a transitive verbs, but in case of an intransitive verb, the indicative mood marker in third person is /-ni/. I have glossed the realis marker as IND, that, is, indicative mood. The examples below show a generic truth in (1) , present and habitual event in (2) present ongoing event (3) and past event that has been realized (4).

(1) ni   renəm   rɯ-kʰ-ni

     Sun   west   set-IPFV- IND.3TR

     The sun rises in the east.

(2) ku-dʒɛ   lən   ləŋ-ɡ-ta

     3SG-ERG   work   do-IPFV- IND.3TR

     He does his work.

(3) ram   l̥ən-ka   ja-ni

     Ram   play   COP.EX-IND.3TR

     Ram is playing.

(4) ɡe   pɯ-dde-tɛ

     1SG   PFV-go-IND.1SG

     I went /I left.

1.2.2 Irrealis mood

It refers to the situations that have not yet happened or that an act or a state of being is not a fact or restricted to our actual world. An irrealis mood marker denotes future time reference as well as present time reference provided that the reference is not restricted to our actual world. The suffix /-ja/ is used as an irrealis marker in Tinkar lo. For example,

(5) nən   ninto   kimuŋ   de-ja-nu

     2SG   later   home.LOC   write-IRR-2SG

        You will go home later

(6) ko   tʃila   kʰura   kədʒadɛ   ni-ja

     3SG   childhood   buckwheat   chapati   be-IRR

        He must/might have eaten buckwheat chapati before.

1.2.3 Conditional

The conditional mood expresses a proposition dependent on some condition. The verb root is suffixed with /-nəŋ/ for conditional mood. For example,

(7) duləŋ   dʒa-nəŋ   dʒe

     market   go-COND   eat

        If you want to have food, eat.

(8) ge   nəm   ra-nəŋ   bədʒar   mɯ-di-ji-kɛ

     1SG   rain   come-COND   market   NEG-go-IRR-1SG

        If it rains, I will not go to the market.

1.2.4. Imperative mood

Imperative moods refer to the commands and requests directed to the second person. In second person singular, an intransitive verb root is zero marked, a transitive verb root is suffixed /-tə/ and /-jə/ to direct a command. In second person plural, the 2PL suffix /-ni with a rising intonation serves as the imperative marker. /The suffix /-te/ is used for making a request.
For example,

(9) nɛ   libin   r̥ə-jɔ

     2SG.POSS   book   bring-IMP

        Bring your book!

(10) dʒe-∅

eat

Eat!

(11) dʒa-ni

eat-2SG.imp

Eat (you all)!

Negative imperatives are formed by prefixing the infinitival form of verb with the negative morpheme /ma/. For example,

(12) mə-lən-tʃjɛ

NEG-do-INF

Don't do it!

(13) mə-dʒə-tʃtʃjɛ

NEG-eat-INF

Don't eat!

1.2.5 Prohibitive mood
The prohibitive mood is morphologically different from the negative imperative mood. Prohibition is marked by the prefix /-tʰə/ in Tinkar lo. For example,

(14) tʰə-tuŋ!

PROH-drink

Don't drink! (You are prohibited from drinking)

(15) tʰə-di

PROH-go

Don't go!

1.2.6 Optative mood

The Optative mood expresses the speaker's hope and desire for the fulfilment of the situation .The morpheme /-lɔ/ is suffixed to the verb or copula for optative mood.

(16) ko pas l̥i-lɔ

3SG pass happen-OPT

May he pass his exams!

(17) tʰərəŋ əŋ ra-lɔ

today snow come-OPT

I wish it snows today!

1.3 Conclusion

Mood markers are suffixed to the verb stems in Tinkar lo. There is a binary realis vs irrealis mood distinction. The present and past events (of which the speaker comes to know from some other person) are associated with realis mood, while future events or the past events being extrapolated from the present are associated with the irrealis mood. The other moods related to the irrealis: conditional, imperative, prohibitive and optative are also present on Tinkar lo.

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