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Formation of Derived Noun Words of Mising Language

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1. Introduction

The linguistic landscape of the state of Assam, located in the northeastern part of India, is very diverse. There are many different ethnic groups living in the mountains and plains of Assam. One of the most notable of these ethnic groups is the Mising ethnic group. The Mising People belong to the Mongolian ethnic group living along the rivers and tributaries of the Brahmaputra Valley in upper Assam. The classification of the Sino-Tibetan language family by linguists Benedict, Jackson Tianshin Sun, Robert Shafer, James Matisoff, David Bradley, Nagen Thakur, Upendranath Goswami, Bhimakanta Barua, Pramod Chandra Bhattacharyya, etc. places the Mising language in the North Assam subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman branch. They also claim to be descendants of the Abotani clan of the Adi, Galo, Nyishi, Apatani, etc., who are now living in Arunachal Pradesh. Historically, the Mising are believed to have resided in the Hwangho and Ya-chi-kiang river basins of northwestern China before migrating via Tibet to the Abor Mountains, and eventually settling in the plains of Assam, predominantly on both sides of the Brahmaputra River. At present, according to the latest geographical map of Assam, the migrants are mainly living in the districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Sonitpur, Majuli, etc. There are 11 clans in the Mising language. Seven of these clans, Pagrh, Minyong, Dambug, Da:lu, Chahyang, Ayan, and Padam, speak the Mising language, whereas four clans, Chamuguria, Bangkwai, Tamar, and Bihia, do not. They speak Assamese as their mother tongue. The Mising is the second-largest ethnic group in Assam. The total Mising population of Assam is 6, 80,424 according to the

2011 census.¹ Dhemaji district in Assam is the home to a large number of people belonging to the Mising community.

The Mising people use the Mising language in their domestic lives. However, they use Hindi and English for business and education purposes. There is a decline in the use of Mising language among the current younger generation. As a result, the language has become endangered. According to UNESCO's EGIDS (Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) special measure, the Mising language is currently endangered.²

0.2 Objectives:

The main objective of this paper is to discuss the various formation processes of derived noun words of the Mising language.

0.1 Sphere of the study:

The process of noun word formation is unique to each language. The Mising language also has its own characteristics of noun word formation. This paper only discusses the various processes of derived noun word formation in the Mising language.

0.4 Sources of data:

In this paper, data has been collected mainly from two sources: primary sources and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through field studies in Mising-inhabited areas, while secondary data were sourced from books, journals, research papers, articles, and the internet.

0.5 Methodology of the study:

In this paper, different methods have been used for data collection and data analysis.

0.5.1 Methods of Data Collection:

In this paper, field study methods associated with field linguistics have been used to obtain data. The following methods have been adopted in the field study:

- Sampling Method
- Interview method

Sampling Method:

The sampling method has also been adopted while collecting the data required for the topic. Samples of some words and sentences have been collected from different content sources. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and unstructured questionnaires to collect samples of words and sentences.

Interview method:

The interview method has been used to obtain the required data related to the topic. An interview method has been used to fill out the questionnaire. Interviews have been conducted based on structured questionnaires and specific topics while collecting data. Repeated interviews have also been conducted through unstructured questionnaires when necessary.

0.5.2 Methods of Data Analysis:

Two main methods have been adopted for data analysis in this paper. They are-

- Descriptive method
- Analytical method

¹ <https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/43017>

² <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/mri/11.03.2023,8.5pm>.

1.0 Analysis and Results:

A word is the smallest meaningful unit of a language. Morphology also includes discussions of word formation. Word formation is the process of forming new words. New semantic words are formed by the process of word formation. The process of word formation includes the formation of nouns, adjectives, pronouns and verbs. New words are usually formed by combining free and bound forms with the root forms. In addition, words are sometimes formed by combining basic forms with other basic forms, sometimes by combining basic forms with affixation and sometimes by reduplication. The process of constructing new words by such various processes is called word formation. Derivation is one of the processes of word formation.

Like other languages of the world, the Mising language also has its own process of word formation. However, there are some similarities in the word formation process of the Mising language with the languages belonging to the north-Assam sub-branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. The noun words in the Mising language are formed through the processes mentioned below.

- A] In connection with two or more free-forms
- b] In the connection of the bound form with the free-form
- c] Through Specific/functional form connections after categorized/Generic free-form
- d] Through habituation or Reduplication

A] Nouns formed in connection with two or more free-forms:

In the Mising language, noun words are formed in conjunction with two or more free forms. In this process, the meaning of each free form that is connected while forming a word is different, although the newly derived word conveys a distinct meaning. The nouns are formed through two free-forms through the following processes:

- 1] Noun + noun
- 2] Verb + noun
- 3] Noun + verb root
- 4] Noun + adjective

1] Nouns formed by combining nouns and noun words:

When two free noun forms are combined to form a noun word, the initial syllable of both combined forms is deleted. Example-

Noun	Noun	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□□□ 'duck'	□□□□ 'mother'	□□□□□□□□	'female duck'
□□□□ 'eye'	□□□□ 'water'	□□□□□□□□	'tear'
□□□□ 'elephant'	□□□□ 'male'	□□□□□□□□	'male elephant'
□□□ 'rice'	□□□□ 'yam/tuber'	□□□□□□□□	'seed corn'

2] Nouns formed by combining verbs and noun words:

The derived noun words are formed by connecting the noun word to the verb. In this process, no syllables are disappeared in both forms that are connected while forming a noun. Example-

Verb	Noun	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□□□ 'built/cooked'	□□□□ 'rice'	= □□□□□□□□□□	'cooking rice'
□□□□□ 'plant'	□□□□ 'paddy'	□□□□□□□□□□ □	'sown paddy'
□□□□□□ 'food'	□□□□□ 'fruit'	□□□□□□□□□□□□	'eaten fruit'

3] Nouns formed by combining nouns and verbs:

In this language, derived new nouns words are formed by combining nouns with verb forms. Example-

Noun	Verb	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□□□ ‘food’		□□□□□□□□□□ ‘being less’	□□□□□□□□□□ ‘famine’
□□□□□ ‘ear’		□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ ‘don’t listen’	□□□□□□□□□□ ‘deaf’

However, in this process, the two forms that are connected have disappeared the syllables. Moreover, when words are formed by this process, they are formed without losing any of the syllables of the combined noun and verb forms. For example –

Noun	Verb	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□ ‘paddy’ boiled paddy’	□□□□ ‘to burst’	= □□□□□□□□	‘flattened rice made out of half
□□□□□ ‘sun’	□□□□□ ‘to rise’	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	‘east’
□□□□□ ‘sun’	□□□□□□ ‘to set’	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	‘west’

4] Noun words formed by combining nouns and adjectives:

In Mising Language, a derived noun word is formed by combining an adjective word with a noun word. Example:

Noun	Adjective	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□□ ‘eye’	□□□□□□ ‘big’	= □□□□□□	‘big eye’ □
□□□□ ‘land’	anu □ ‘new’	= □□□□□	‘new land’
□□□□□ ‘a bush’ branches/bushy’	□□□□□□□ ‘big’	= □□□□□□	‘full of leaves and

It is noteworthy that in this process, the initial syllable of the noun and adjective words connected while forming the word are disappeared.

b] In the connection of the bound form with the free-form:

In Mising, nouns formed by the addition of free-forms after bound forms can be divided into two categories. They are:

- 1] Through the connection of the bound form after the free-form
- 2] By connecting two free-forms followed by a bound form

1] Through the connection of the bound form after the free-form:

In this language, the noun word that gives the idea of the gender of animals is formed by connecting the bound form after the animal-oriented forms. Thus, in the process of formation, the initial syllables of the basic noun denoting animals disappear. Example–

Free form	bound form	Dev. Noun	Gloss
□□□□□□ ‘a fowl’	{□□□}	= □□□□□□	‘a cock’
□□□□□□ ‘a fowl’	{□□□}	= □□□□□□	‘a hen’
□□□□□□ ‘a duck’	{□□□}	= □□□□□	‘male duck’
□□□□□□ ‘a duck’	{□□□}	= □□□□□□	‘female duck’
□□□ ‘a dog’	{□□□}	= □□□□□	‘male dog’
□□□ □ ‘a dog’	{□□□}	= □□□□□	‘female dog’

The nouns are formed by adding a {□□□} bound form after the verb root to represent a person in the Mising Language.

Verb	bound form	Dev. noun	Gloss
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□□□‘to give’	{□□□}	= □□□□	‘the giver’
□□□‘to eat’	{□□□}	= □□□□	‘the eater’
□□□□□□‘to read’	{□□□}	= □□□□	‘the reader’

2] By connecting two free-forms followed by a bound form

In the Mising language, the noun is formed through the connection of a bound form after two free-forms. In this process, none of the three forms that are connected to the structure of the noun disappear. Example –

Noun	Verb	bound form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□‘paddy’ reaper’	□□ ‘to □□□’	{□□□}	= □□□□□□□□	‘a
□□□□‘cow/bull’ cowherd/a buckaroo’	□□ ‘□□□□□□’	{□□□}	= □□□□□□□□	‘a
□□□□‘fish’	□□ ‘□□□□□□□□□□’	{□□□}	= □□□□□□□□	‘a fisherman’

c] Through Specific/functional form connections after categorized/Generic free-form

The formation of the specialty is one of the features of noun word formation in the Mising language through the association of various specific forms after the categorical (Generic prefix) free-form. In this way, other related nouns of the same type or class, such as animals, insects, or plants, are formed by adding a functional form after the prefix of a categorial noun. The prefixes of such nouns are categorical [Generic prefix] and the second part of the noun is a Specific form or functional form. Below is a discussion of the nouns that are formed by the prefixes of various nouns. Example–

• Nouns describing birds:

In the Mising language, the categorial free-form of birds are defined as birds {□□□□□□□□} after this, a variety of bird-like positive nouns are formed by adding {□□□} initial form of other special or functional forms. Example–

Categorical [Generic prefix]	□	Special or functional form	□	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□	□	□□□□	□□	□□□□□	‘a duck’
□□□	□	□□□	□□□	□□□□	‘a dove’
□□□	□	□□□	□□□	□□□□	‘an owl’
□□□	□	□□□	□□□	□□□□	‘a parrot’
□□□	□	□□□□	□□□	□□□□□□	‘a fowl’
□□□	□	□□□	□□□	□□□□	‘a falcon’

• Noun denoting animals:

The basic noun form denoting animals in Mising is {□□□□□}.The {□□□} form of this animal noun {□□□□□} is taken as the categorial [Generic prefix] and then various functional or special forms are added to form other animal nouns. Example –

Categorical [Generic prefix]	□	Special or functional form	□	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□	□□	□□□	□□	□□□□	‘elephant’
□□□□	□	□□□	□□□	□□□□□	‘monkey’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□□□	□□□□□	‘tiger’
□□□□	□□	□□□□	□□	□□□□□□	‘bear’

□□□□	□	□□□	□□	□□□□□	‘wild boar’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□□	□□ □□□□□□	

‘swamp deer’

• **Insect Nouns:**

The insect basic denoting noun in the Mising language is {□□□□□}. Other insect nouns are formed by adding other functional forms after the initial form {□□□□} of the basic noun {□□□□□□}.

Categorical	[Generic prefix]	Special or functional form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘louse’
□□□	□	□□□□	□□ □□□□□	‘mosquito’
□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘bee’
□□□	□	□□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘rice gandhi bug’
□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘hairy caterpillar’
□□□	□	□□□□	□□ □□□□□	‘leech’

• **Nouns denoting fish:**

The noun for fish in the Mising language is {□□□□}. The final form of {□□□□} forms another noun by joining other functional forms after {□□□□}. For example:

Categorical	[Generic prefix]	Special or functional form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘catfish’
□□□	□	□□□	□□ □□□□	‘Asian stinging catfish’
□□□	□	□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘a variety of eel’
□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□□	‘labeo’
□□□	□	□□□	□□□ □□□□	‘a variety of labeo’
□□□	□	□□□□	□□ □□□□□	‘megarasbora elanga’

• **Hand and other hand-related nouns:**

Many nouns are formed in the Mising language by combining the {a} prefix. The prefix {a} is added to the formation of nouns describing various parts of the body, numerals, etc. In Mising, the word {alak} is formed by combining the prefix {a}. This {alak} noun form is followed by other functional forms to form noun words related to different hands. When forming in this way, the initial syllable {a} of the form {alak} disappears.

Categorical	[Generic prefix]	Special or functional form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□	□	□□□	□□□ □□□□□	‘the palm of the hands’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□□	‘the nails of the hands’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□□	‘the right hand’
□□□□	□	□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘the left hand’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘the fingers of the hands’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘arm’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□□□ □□□□□□□	‘the hair of the hands’
□□□□	□	□□□	□□□ □□□□□□	‘the thumb of the hands’

□□□□ □ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ ‘the elbow’

• Leg and other leg-related nouns:

The noun {a□□} in Mising Language is formed by joining the prefix {a} to denote leg. This {a□□} noun is followed by other functional forms to form nouns related to different legs. The initial syllable {a} of the form {a□□} disappears when formed this way. Example-

Categorical	[Generic prefix]	Special or functional form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘knee’
□□-	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘toes’
□□□□	□	□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘the big toe’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘the hair of the legs’
□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘lame’
□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘the nails of the legs’
□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘The footsteps’
□□□	□	□□□	□	□□□□□ ‘ankle’
□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘the palm of the legs’

• Fire and other nouns related to fire:

The noun word to denote fire in the Mising language is {□□□□}. This {□□□□} noun is followed by other functional or special forms to form other noun words related to fire. The initial syllable {a} of {□□□□} disappears in the process. For example:

Categorical	[Generic prefix]	Special or functional form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘The fire-place’
□□□	□	□□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘A piece of burning wood’
□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘ash’
□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘The ashes of the fire’
□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘tongs’
□□□	□	□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘coal’
□□□	□	□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘a kind of homemade torch’

• Nouns associated with the eye:

In Mising language, the noun {□□□□□} denoting eye is followed by other functional or special forms to form nouns related to eyes. When formed in this way, the initial syllable {a} of {□□□□□} is deleted. Example:

Categorical	[Generic prefix]	Special or functional form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□	□	□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘tear’
□□□□	□	□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘blind’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘eyebrow’
□□□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘the bones of the eye’
□□□□	□	□□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘eye dirt’

• Head and other nouns related to head:

The noun word for a head in Mising is {□□□□□□}. This head categorical {□□□□□□} is followed by other special forms to form other nouns related to the head. When formed in this way, the initial syllable {□□□□} of the noun {□□□□□□} is deleted. For example:

Categorical	[Generic prefix]	Special or functional form	Dev. noun	Gloss
□□□□□	□	□□□	□	□□□□□□ ‘forehead’
□□□□	□	□□□□□	□	□□□□□□□□ ‘bald -headed’

□□□□	□	□□□□	□ □□□□□□□	'bald'
□□□□	□	□□□□	□ □□□□□□□	'the skin of the forehead'
□□□□	□	□□□□	□ □□□□□□□	'the long head'

d] Nouns derived through habituation or reduplication:

The Nouns are also formed by habituation or reduplication in the Mising language. The nouns formed by this process can be divided mainly in two ways. These are:

- i] By complete reduplication of meaningful words
- ii] Through partial reduplication of meaningful words

i] By complete reduplication of meaningful words

New words are formed through the complete reduplication of meaningful words in the Mising language. When forming in this way, the form {□□□} is added to the reduplicated last noun. For example-

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	Ear to ear
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	Water to water
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	Hand to hand
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	Way to way
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	Leaf to leaf

ii] Through partial reduplication of meaningful words

Nouns are also formed by partial repetition of meaningful words. Partially reduplication is the slight repetition of the root word having partial morphological or phonological changes. In this process, the initials of the repeated nouns are different but the rest of the parts are the same. Example-

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	house-sause
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	□□□□□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	Fruit
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	love-sove
□□□□□□□□□□□□□□	work-swark

2.0 Findings

Mising is a language belonging to the second-largest Sino-Tibetan language family in the world. The Mising speakers live in Assam with their own language and culture but the use of the Mising language is declining among the younger generation. As a result, the Mising language is listed as endangered in the UNESCO report. Although there have been some studies of the Mising Language recently, there is a need to preserve and expand the language through further scientific study.

After studying the paper entitled '**Formation of Derived Noun Words of Mising Language**' the following conclusions were reached:

- Derived nouns in the Mising language are formed by four different processes. They are:
 - a] In connection with two or more free-forms
 - b] In the connection of the bound form with the free-form
 - c] Through Specific/functional form connections after categorized/Generic free-form
 - d] Through the habituation or reduplication of the basic noun form.
- In the Mising language, nouns are formed by combining special forms or functional forms with Categorical/Generic prefixes denoting animals, insects, vegetables, birds, various parts of the body, relatives, etc. These nouns have two parts: special forms or functional forms

