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| pALACKÝ UNIVERsITY, OLOMOUC |
| Markedness of Personal Pronouns in Pali |
| Language Universals and Typology Course |
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**Introduction**

Pali language is classified as a Middle Indo-Aryan language. Nowadays dead, Pali had been used as a literary language in earlier times in Theravada Buddhist canon to be replaced by New Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi or Bengali. It was wrongly believed that Pali developed from Sanskrit. As Šefčík (2016, 20-21) argues in his book, Sanskrt was a codified language based on Vedas while Pali, showing major discrepancies in phonology, dialects and archaisms, is not even a direct continuant of Vedas, much less Sanskrit.

Questions about geographical and temporal origin of Pali are still being asked and no definite answers exist. In order to be brief, we can assert that the language belongs to Middle Indo-Aryan language family, originated in the East, was archaized under influence of Sanskrit in the West, was transferred to Ceylon and then further to South-East Asia.

**Prounouns**

Pronouns in Pali appear in seven cases. As was mentioned earlier, Sanskrit had an influence on Pali. Evidence on this can be found when inspecting grammar of pronouns of Pali.

**Personal Pronouns**

Pali contains four distinguishable instances of personal pronouns loosely translated as "I", "you" (sg), "we" and "you" (pl). Here, some authors differ in opinion. Šefčík (2016, 79) claims that these pronouns are not distinguished by number, there is no singular or plural distinction as well as no gender distinction. Tilbe (1899, 59) is of opposite view and categorizes them in their singular and plural forms in his Pali Grammar publication. Mason (1868, 77) also notices a resemblance in pronoun declensions with Greek in most instances (redundant in two forms – *no* and *vo*).

1. Pronoun "I"

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| nominative | aham |  |
| accusative | maṁ | mamaṁ |
| instrumental | mayā |  |
| ablative | mayā |  |
| genitiv | mama | mamaṁ aṁhaṁ mayhaṁ |
| dative | mama | mamaṁ aṁhaṁ mayhaṁ |
| locative | mayi |  |

1. Pronoun "you" (reference to one person)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| nominative | tvaṁ | tuvaṁ taṁ |
| accusative | tvaṁ | tuvaṁ tvaṁ taṁ |
| instrumental | tvayā | tayā |
| ablative | tvayā | tayā |
| genitive | tava | tavaṁ tuyhaṁ tuṁhaṁ |
| dative | tava | tavaṁ tuyhaṁ tuṁhaṁ |
| locative | tvayi | tayi |

1. Pronoun "we"

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| nominative | aṁhe | mayaṁ vayaṁ |
| accusative | aṁhe | aṁhākaṁ asme |
| instrumental | aṁhe(b)hi |  |
| ablative | aṁhe(b)hi |  |
| genitive | aṁhaṁ | asmākaṁ aṁhākaṁ |
| dative | aṁhaṁ | asmākaṁ aṁhākaṁ |
| locative | aṁhesu | asmāsu |

1. Pronoun "you" (more than one)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| nominative | tuṁhe |  |
| accusative | tuṁhe | tuṁhākam |
| instrumental | tuṁhe(b)hi |  |
| ablative | tuṁhe(b)hi |  |
| genitive | tuṁhaṁ | tuṁhākaṁ |
| dative | tuṁhaṁ | tuṁhākaṁ |
| locative | tuṁhesu |  |

**Discussion**

In this section, markedness of personal pronouns in e) - h) will be concluded in regard to both structural coding and inflectional potential. As was stated earlier, there is some uncertainty whether category of number should be considered when looking at grammar of personal pronouns in Pali. It was decided not to dismiss any of the possibilities, therefore the categories in which we conduct the comparison are both person and number.

**Structural Coding**

Number of overt morphemes is main subject of structural coding approach. The rule can be expressed as follows: "The marked value of grammatical category will be realized by atleast as many morphemes as the unmarked value of the category."

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | singular | plural |
| 1st person | aham | aṁhe  mayaṁ  vayaṁ |
| 2nd person | tvaṁ  tuvaṁ  taṁ | tuṁhe |

Rewriting the rule into formula yields the following:  
**#m (uM) ≤ #m (M)**

tab. 5

1. Markedness of person

From the table above (tab. 5), we see that there is the same amount of morphemes in both categories of person.

This leaves us with the following:

**4 morphemes (1st person) = 4 morphemes (2nd person)**

meaning that the unmarked category of number has the same number of morphemes as the marked one which is in accordance with the general formula for structural coding.

1. Markedness of number

Comparison of the data from the tab. 5 in regard with number gives us equal number of morphemes for both instances of the number as well.

**4 morphemes (sg) = 4 morphemes (pl)**

which means that the singular has an unmarked value whereas plural is marked, partly because of the linguistic universal saying that *plural can never be morphologically unmarked*.

**Inflectional Potential**

Inflectional potential deals with syncretisms in the marked value of grammatical category. The rule would be interpreted as: "Number of syncretisms in the unmarked value of grammatical category is at least as high as the number of syncretisms in the marked value of the grammatical category."

Again, formula derived from the written rule is:

**#Syn (uM) ≤ #Syn (M)**

1. Markedness of person

Contrasting the forms of 1st and 2nd person in terms of inflectional potential, we see that there are four distinctions in both categories.

**4 distinctions/1 syncretisms (1st person) = 4 distinctions/1 syncretism (2nd person)**

We count a total number of four distinctions in 1st person and four distinctions in 2nd person, each containing a single syncretism (*"aham"* in 1st person, *"tuṁhe"* in 2nd person)

1. Markedness of number

Referring back to tab. 5, category of number contains four distinctions in singular and also in plural category.

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Tilbe, H. H. (1899). *Páli Grammar.* Rangoon: American Baptist Press. ark:/13960/t75t84h0z