

CONCLUSIONS

Tai-Ahom is a small group of people living in Assam and Arunachal. The census of India does not provide any figures for them. Tai-Ahom language is found only in written record called Buranji. Our study was based on text that was read out by the priests and transcribed for the present analysis. Recently, there are some efforts to revive this language as a spoken language.

The present study includes a detailed introduction giving historical, social and political background of Tai-Ahom people and some introduction to Thai.

We have attempted a descriptive and comparative study of both the languages at various levels of linguistic structure viz., phonology, morphology and syntax.

Tai-Ahom has 24 consonant phonemes and standard Thai has 21 phonemes. Tai-Ahom has voiced aspirated plosives /b^h, d^h, g^h/ and a voiced velar plosive /g / which were actually borrowed from Indo-Aryan sources in the history of this language. But this phonemes are absent in Standard-Thai. Palatal nasal /ɲ/ is found in Tai-Ahom but not in Standard-Thai. Standard-Thai has labio-dental fricative /f/ which is absent in Tai-Ahom. Rest of the consonant phonemes is very similar in both the languages. Both Tai-Ahom and Standard-Thai have initial consonant clusters as well. Tai-Ahom used /r/ and /w/ as second member of clusters but Thai, uses /r/, /l/, and semi-vowel /w/ as second member in initial consonant clusters.

Tai-Ahom has fourteen vowel system out of which nine are represented by single letter symbols. Five vowel symbols are sequences of vowels used in the script.

But Thai has eighteen vowel system plus six diphthongs and eight extra vowel symbols. Five extra vowels of Ahom and eight extra vowels of Thai form a very similar system of presentation. Tai-Ahom lacks the following vowels which are presented in Standard-Thai, /**uɔ**, **e**, **o**, **ɔɪ**, **ɛ**, **ɛɪ**, **ɔ**, **ɤ**, **ɤɪ**/. Standard-Thai has /**ia**, **iaɪ**, **ua**, **uaɪ**, **ua**, **uaɪ**/ as diphthongs but Tai-Ahom has simply a few vowel sequences represented by extra symbols. In addition standard Thai has borrowed two vocalic sounds /**r̥**/ and /**l̥**/ from Sanskrit sources that are not found in Tai-Ahom. This may be because Thais followed Buddhism from both Sanskrit and Pali texts translated into Thai and must have influenced Thai language system. But Tai-Ahom people did not have access to such contacts. Since Tai-Ahom text was found without any marking of tone symbols therefore, tones for Tai-Ahom are not analyzed. But Thai has five distinctive tones. We found that there are a number of homophonous words in Tai-Ahom. When we compared these words with Thai cognates we found that Thai words contain tones. It proves that Tai-Ahom must have had some system of tones just like many Tai languages.

It is well known fact that Tai group of languages are isolating in their morphological structure, and each element remains in its integral form. Each simple word is a monosyllable, which never changes its shape, which gives the idea of one or more root-meanings depending on its placements. Word forms are not inflected but for certain grammatical categories their placement is important.

Tai-Ahom and Standard-Thai are basically monosyllabic languages. But Thai contains a large number of bi-syllabic or polysyllabic words due to the influence of

borrowing. Both languages under study are devoid of inflection. Therefore, morphology takes into account compounds and some derivations that are used to form new word forms.

Tai-Ahom and Standard-Thai nouns are not inflected for number, gender, person, and case like many other languages for example, Hindi or English. Grammatical categories like number, case, tense and voice take some markers only. There is no agreement system between noun and adjective and subject and verb.

Classifier system classifies the nouns, depending on a number of factors, like human vs. non-human, animate vs. inanimate etc.

Both Tai-Ahom and Thai languages have another system of numeral classifiers classifying nouns with the help of classifiers. Every noun must take a given classifier to indicate its class.

In Tai-Ahom and Standard-Thai new nouns can be formed by the process of compounding. The formations of compound nouns permit maximum conjoining of several free morphemes.

The word order in the Ahom manuscripts is SVO structures and SOV structure is rarely found. A survey of the manuscripts revealed that in most cases where object was expressed, it is in post-verbal position. It seems the sentence structure of SOV type developed later in contact situation with Assamese. Standard-Thai follows SVO structure only.

Connectives like 'and' and 'but' are not found in our Tai-Ahom texts analyze to form compound sentences however Thai makes use of connective.

Relative pronouns in Tai-Ahom are different from interrogative pronouns whereas Thai uses interrogative pronouns (who, which) as relative pronouns.

Finally, our comparison at all levels of structures shows that typologically these two languages are isolating and very similar to each other.

Our comparative vocabulary shows that there are large numbers of cognate which may prove that Tai-Ahom and Thai are also genetically related.