

3. BASIC STRUCTURAL FEATURES

Temiar has a well-defined grammatical structure, expressed largely in terms of its use of prefixes and suffixes. The use of these prefixes and suffixes has in the past led to considerable confusion. For example, the Temiar word for "to eat" might be listed variously as *yamchak*, *chechak*, *imchak* and so on; and it was thought that variations of dialect explained these differences of form. But in fact these are purely grammatical variants — the result of the Temiar use of prefixes — in this

case concerned with the conjugation of verbs. These misunderstandings arose from the fact that the Temiar do not recognize a purely abstract form of a verb such as "to eat"; their language is too concrete for that and any verbal form must be specified according to person, time and location. Once this is realized, the grammatical structure of the language is seen to be logical, consistent and essentially simple.

Two further basic characteristics of Temiar should at once be mentioned, since we shall constantly meet them. First, Temiar uses a *dual plural* in addition to the normal plural; and secondly, in Temiar one cannot for example say "this man" without specifying his geographical location. These two features are explained in more detail below.

LOCATIONAL SPECIFIERS

It is convenient to deal first with the second of the two characteristics just mentioned, i.e. the question of specifying location. The way this works is best made clear by a consideration of demonstratives, i.e. *this*, *that*, and so on.

There are five suffixes specifying location, and since these are constantly encountered, it may be useful to describe them in some detail. It should be noted that these specifiers cannot stand alone, but must be joined to other words. By themselves these suffixes of location have no meaning. They cannot be regarded as words in their own right, and they should, therefore, in writing always be joined to the word that they qualify.

The following five suffixes of location must be distinguished:

(1) The suffix *-doh* is best translated by *right here*. It is used to specify something that is in actual reach on one's arm.

(2) The suffix *-naq* is best translated by *just there*. It is used to describe something in your immediate vicinity, for example in the same room, that you cannot actually touch.

(3) The suffix *-tui* may be translated as *there at your side*. It is used to refer to something a little further away, but still perceived by the naked eye, such as for example a man across the river. The suffix *-tui* specifies anything at your *side*, and the word “side” is in the first place defined with reference to a river, in contradistinction to “up-stream” and “down-stream”. But it should be noted that *-tui* by itself does not mean “across the river”, for which there is a separate expression; and *-tui* is also used even if *no* river is in fact in the vicinity. Fundamentally *-tui* therefore specifies something which you can see at your side; it always indicates *position at side*.

(4) The suffix *-teh* may be translated by “there up-stream”, and it specifies anything geographically placed *above* you.

(5) The suffix *-reh* may be translated by “there down-stream”, and it specifies anything placed *below* you.

All these suffixes are joined to the word they qualify. For example: —

Papööd-doh	The child <i>right here</i> (within my reach)
Papööd-naq	The child <i>just there</i>
Papööd-tui	The child there at my <i>side</i>
Papööd-teh	The child there <i>above</i>
Papööd-reh	The child there <i>below</i> .

It should be noted that in all these cases the person or thing specified must, strictly speaking, be seen by the naked eye.

When this is not the case, an actual geographical location should be used, such as "the child in village X". Finally, it must be emphasised that these locational specifiers are *not* grammatical niceties or luxuries, but that they are in constant and daily use. It is hence essential to understand them.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

It may be useful next to turn to a consideration of personal pronouns, since these illustrate another characteristic of Temiar, the use of dual plurals, as well as the use of locational specifiers. These personal pronouns are shown in Table I. It will at once be seen that locational specifiers are used *only* in connection with the *third* person. This is a matter of common sense, since one cannot for example say "I, being upstream, tell you this". The same is true of the *second* person since the location of someone you are actually talking to is irrelevant.

The next thing to note about Table I is the use of *dual plurals*. If you ask a Temiar the meaning of "you are walking", he will probably ask you to say whether you are referring to only one person; or to two persons; or to more than two persons. It should be emphasized that this distinction is again in no sense a grammatical nicety, but that it is in constant use. Failure to understand it leads to confusion.

One further point must be mentioned. In addition to the use of a dual plural and to locational specifiers, the Temiar distinguish between an *inclusive* and an *exclusive* use in regard to the plural and the dual plural of the first person. The inclusive form is used if for example you say to a friend: "Let us (you and me) go fishing". The exclusive form would be used to inform him that "We (I and another, but not you) are going fishing".

For obvious reasons, the distinction between an inclusive and an exclusive usage can of course only apply to the plurals of the first person.

TABLE I

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

		POSITION						
		Inclusive	Exclusive	"Right here"	"Just here"	"At side"	"Above"	"Below"
First Person Singular	I, me	YEEQ	--	--	--	--	--	--
First Person Dual	We two, us two.	ARR	YARR	--	--	--	--	--
First Person Plural	We, us (more than two)	ÁÁQ	KANÁQ	--	--	--	--	--
Second Person Singular	You	HAAQ	--	--	--	--	--	--
Second Person Dual	You two	KAQAN	--	--	--	--	--	--
Second Person Plural	You (more than two)	NYOB	--	--	--	--	--	--
Third Person Singular	He, she, it,	--	--	NA-DOH	NA-NAQ	NA-TUI	NA-TEH	NA-REH
Third Person Dual	They two, these two,	--	--	WE-DOH	WE-NAQ	WE-TUI	WE-TEH	WE-REH
Third Person Plural	They, them (more than two)	--	--	UN-DOH	UN-NAQ	UN-TUI	UN-TEH	UN-REH

TABLE II

<u>THE TEMIAR VERB</u>		<u>PRESENT OR PAST</u>	<u>FUTURE</u>
<u>1st Person Singular</u>	I am walking	Yeeq i-chiib	Yeeq im-chiib
1st Person Dual Inclusive	You and I are walking	Arr a-chiib	Arr am-chiib
1st Person Dual Exclusive	We two (but not you) are walking	Yarr ya-chiib	Yarr yam-chiib
1st Person Plural Inclusive	We all (including you) are walking	Ääq ä-chiib	Ääq äm-chiib
1st Person Plural Exclusive	We all (excluding you) are walking	Kanäq ki-chiib	Kanäq kim-chiib
2nd Person Singular	You are walking	Haaq ha-chiib	Haaq ham-chiib
2nd Person Dual	You two are walking	Kaqan kaqa-chiib	Kaqan kaqam-chiib
2nd Person Plural	All of you are walking	Nyob nyob-chiib	Nyob nyom-chiib
3rd Person Singular	He right here is walking	Na-doh na-chiib	Na-doh nam-chiib
	He just there is walking	Na-naq na-chiib	Na-naq nam-chiib
	He at my side is walking	Na-tui na-chiib	Na-tui nam-chiib
	He above is walking	Na-teh na-chiib	Na-teh nam-chiib
	He below is walking	Na-reh na-chiib	Na-reh nam-chiib

MODIFICATION OF PROCESS WORDS

Under certain circumstances the stem of Temiar process words — both verbs and adjectives — is repeated in a modified form. It is somewhat difficult to describe precisely how this is done, although the underlying procedure is simple enough. The process may best be illustrated by means of the following examples.

SIMPLE STEM	MODIFIED FORM	
-tuug	teeg-tuug	(to fear, be afraid)
-muh	mäh-muh	(to bathe)
-gööl	gäl-gööl, gäl-nööl	(to live, stay)
-liuu	läo-niuu	(to remain)
-ried	redied	(to wash clothes)
-nee	näh-nee	(to see)
-shlog	shelog	(to sleep, to marry)
-jiq	jejiq	(sick)
-chaq	chechaq	(to eat)
-chiib	chep-chiib	(to walk, to come)
-roh	reroh	(to clear grass)
-guu	göh-guu	(to fell trees)
-bod	bedbod	(lazy)
-haq	henghaq	(fit, healthy)
-käq	käq-käq	(to search, look for)
-tap	ten-tap	(to plant)
-joog	jeeg-joog	(to move, change house)
meedy	meg-meedy	(good, nice, fine)

When does Temiar use the simple stem of a process word and under what conditions is the modified form employed? There is no very clear distinction, but in general terms we may say that the *modified* form refers to the general and the unspecified, while the *simple* stem is used with single events and well-defined states or conditions. Again, repeated events or actions call for a use of the modified form of the Temiar process word, while single events or actions call for a use of the simple form. The following examples may help to make this clearer.

SIMPLE FORM

MODIFIED FORM

(1) Yeeq *i-loi* ma-Chabai pedi-ish. (I arrived at Chabai mid-day)

The simple form is always used when a *single* event or action, which is not repeated, is indicated.

(2) Ashuu na-käq na-shlog menaleh meedy. (Ashuu is looking for a pretty girl, in order to marry her)

The simple stem is used when one process word is *immediately followed* by another.

(3) Hody ööl na-chaq. (He has finished eating)

(1) Ki-*chep-chiib* ma-teh näi ish näi ish. (We go there every day)

Modified form is employed when action is *habitual* or *repeated*.

(2) Litau che-chaq. (The young man is eating)

When the stress is on an *action* rather than on the actor or his object, the modified form is usually employed.

(3) Tuaaq, hody i-lah *chep-chiib*. (Headman, I am going)

The simple form is used after words indicating a *completed* action.

When the object or end of an action is *not clearly specified* the modified form is used.

(4) Ashuu *na-chiib* ma-teh ma-Bog Krääl. (Ashuu goes upstream to Bog Krääl)

(4) Deeg *sheg-log* senoi *jejiq*. (A sleeping place for the sick)

The simple form is used when the actor and the ends of his action are clearly *specified*.

The modified form is always used in such comparatively *abstract*. Constructions.

(5) *Chiib* ma-doh! (Come here!)

(5) Toq *bedbod*
(Not lazy) BUT
Ashu *na-bod*.
(Ashu is lazy)

The Simple stem is always used for the *imperative* mood.

The modified form enables a process word to *stand on its own* whereas its simple stem (in this case *-bod*) would not be understood in isolation.

(6) Malay loan-words are not normally modified.

(6) meedy BUT *meg-meedy*.
(good) (very good)

The modified form sometimes indicates *emphasis*.

4. MISCELLANEOUS

Possession in Temiar is expressed by word order. Thus:—

Deeg Along : Along's house

Deeg-doh deeg yeeq : This house is mine.

When personal pronouns are used, these are repeated in a modified form. For example: na-doh lebeh ayam-öh : he has many chickens. The full list of pronouns together with their modifications is as follows:—

1st Person Singular	Yeeq	yeeq
1st Person Dual Inclusive	Arr	ah
1st Person Dual Exclusive	Yarr	yaq
1st Person Plural Inclusive	Ääq	äq
1st Person Plural Exclusive	Kanäq	kanäq
2nd Person Singular	Haaq	haaq
2nd Person Dual	Kaqan	kaqan
2nd Person Plural	nyob	nyob
3rd Person Singular	na-doh	öh
3rd Person Dual	we-doh	wäh
3rd Person Plural	un-doh	un

The following construction is used in connection with the word *-heed* which may be translated as “only”, but which in part seems to be a type of numeral coefficient as well:—

Yeeq <i>näi ä-heed</i> ayam yeeq	I have (only) one chicken
Yeeq <i>narr we-heed</i> ayam yeeq	I have (only) two chickens
Yeeq <i>näq un-heed</i> ayam yeeq	I have (only) three chickens

Comparison in Temiar is expressed in the following ways:—

Along tataa *paaq* yeeq : Along is older *than* I am.

Deeg-doh rayah *lebeh paaq* deeg-yeeq : This house is bigger *than* mine.

Finally, to avoid confusion, it should be noted that the

(Continuation of Table II)

<u>THE TAMIAR VERB</u>		<u>PRESENT OR PAST</u>	<u>FUTURE</u>
3rd Person Dual	The two right here are walking	We-doh we-chiib	We-doh wem-chiib
	The two just there are walking	We-naq we-chiib	We-naq wem-chiib
	The two at my side are walking	We-tui we-chiib	We-tui wem-chiib
	The two above are walking	We-teh we-chiib	We-teh wem-chiib
	The two below are walking	We-reh we-chiib	We-reh wem-chiib
3rd Person Plural	They all right here are walking	Un-doh un-chiib	Un-doh mu-chiib
	They all just there are walking	Un-naq un-chiib	Un-naq mu-chiib
	They all at my side are walking	Un-tui un-chiib	Un-tui mu-chiib
	They all above are walking	Un-teh un-chiib	Un-teh mu-chiib
	They all below are walking	Un-reh un-chiib	Un-reh mu-chiib