Abstract
The present paper attempts to highlight the case structure in Poumai. Poumai is the name of the community and the language they speak is called Poula. It belongs to Naga Kuki group of the Tibeto-Burman language family. It is one of the 34 recognised schedule tribe of Manipur, India. The Poumai was recognised as a separate tribe from that of Mao tribe under the constitution of India in 2002. Earlier they are considered as Mao tribe. The speakers of Poumai are found in the Senapati District of Manipur and also in the Phek district of Nagaland. The Poumai are inhabitant in many villages of Senapati District of Manipur like Khoide, Maiba, Thiba, Ngairi, Phuba, Purul, Saranamai, Tiwa, Oinam etc. But the present paper attempts to describe the Poumai which is spoken at Purul (Senapati District), of Manipur. The Senapati District is located on the northern part of Manipur. It is surrounded by Tamenglong District in the west, Imphal District in the south, Urkhuil District in the east, and Kohima and Phek District of Nagaland in the north. Poumai do not have a script of their own so they used Roman script for writing. In Poumai, 8 (eight) types of cases are established such as, Nominative case (-ni), Accusative case (-je), Genitive case (-vəi), Dative case (-hi), Instrumental case (-ni), Locative case (-hi), Associative case (-kwa) and Ablative case (-hini). Nominative case is denoted by suffix marker (-ni) – ‘rita -ni kəvə tou – rai’ means ‘Rita eats fish’, Accusative case by suffix marker (-je) – ‘piutau -ni piu - je da – rai’ means ‘They beat him’, Genitive case by suffix marker (-vəi) – ‘co –hai raju -vəi – je’ means ‘This is Raju’s cow’, Dative case by suffix marker (-hi) – ‘piu -ni o -hi səi poi – rai’ means ‘She gives me a dog’ and so on.

1. Introduction
Case: Case is a grammatical category whose value reflects the grammatical function performed by a noun or pronoun in a phrase, clause, or sentence. Case is a grammatical category determined by the
syntactic or semantic function of a noun or pronoun. “Cases are inflected forms of nouns which fit them for participation in key constructions relative to verbs”, (Hockett, 1985).

In Poumai language, there are eight types of case are found. The case relation is inflected by using the suffix and is postpositions to the noun or pronoun. These eight cases is analysed as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>Nominative</th>
<th>:</th>
<th>/-nǐ/</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>/-je/</td>
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<td>(c)</td>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>/-vəi/</td>
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<td>(d)</td>
<td>Dative</td>
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<td>(e)</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
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<td>(f)</td>
<td>Locative</td>
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<td>/-hi/</td>
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<td>(g)</td>
<td>Associative</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>/-kwa/</td>
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<tr>
<td>(h)</td>
<td>Ablative</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>/-hini/</td>
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2. Description of all eight types of cases

(a) Nominative case

The nominative case is the case used for a noun or pronoun which is the subject of a verb. The main function of the nominative case is to mark the subject of the sentence. It is expressed by the suffix -nǐ and is added to the subject of a sentence. Examples:

1. i -nǐ piu -hì da -rai
   i NOM he DAT beat ASP
   ‘I beat him’.

2. piutau -nǐ lòu sāu -rai
   they NOM song sing ASP
   ‘They sing a song’.

3. sa -nǐ jau tāu -rāi
   cat NOM rat eat ASP
   ‘The cat eats a rat’.

4. piu -nǐ kʰau sāuʰ -a -re
   he NOM tiger kill ASP
   ‘He killed a tiger’.

(b) Accusative case

The accusative case is used for a noun or pronoun which is the object of a verb. Accusative case is denoted by the suffix marker ‘-je’ to the object. Examples:

5. john -nǐ sāi -je da -rai
   John NOM dog ACCU beat ASP
   ‘John beats the dog’.

6. i -nǐ piu -je jōpā -rai
   i NOM she ACCU like ASP
   ‘I like her’.

7. tom -nǐ sita -je sō -rai
   Tom NOM sita ACCU know ASP
   ‘Tom knows Sita’.
8. i do piu -je ŋau -we
i yesterday he ACCU see ASP
‘I saw him yesterday’.

(c) Genitive case
The genitive case suffix in Poumai is -vəi which is added to the noun or pronoun. It is used to express belongingness or possessiveness. Examples:
9. hai o -vai kolom -je
this i GEN pen COP
‘This is my pen’.
10. lili -vai jau voiso -rai
lily GEN dress beautiful ASP
‘Lily’s dress is beautiful’.
11. ki -hai o -vai -je
house DET i GEN COP
‘This is my house’.
12. sai -haitom -vai -je
dog DET tom GEN COP
‘This is tom’s dog’.

(d) Dative case
The dative is a noun or pronoun which is used as an indirect object of a verb and it is usually associated with the act of giving. This case is denoted by the suffix -hi. Examples:
13. kolom -hai piu -hi poi -o
pen DET he DAT give COM
‘Give this pen to him’.
14. piu -ni i -hi ju -rai
she NOM i DAT look ASP
‘She looks at me’.
15. nimi -ni sai -hi da -rai
nimi NOM dog DAT beat ASP
‘Nimi beats the dog’.
16. i -ni lili -hi sana ruəu poi -rai
i NOM lily DAT rupees fifty give ASP
‘I give Rs 50 to Lily’.

(e) Instrumental case
The instrumental case marks the instrument used by the agent with which the action is performed. It is indicated by the suffix -ni. This suffix -ni is homophonous with the nominative suffix. Examples:
17. piu -ni pəu -ni dəi he -rai
he NOM hoe INST earth dig ASP
‘He digs the earth with a hoe’.
18. piu -ni poi -ni sa ra -rai
she NOM needle INST cloth stitch ASP
‘She stitches the cloth with a needle’.
19. rosy -ni sai -hi sora -ni da -rai
rosy NOM dog DAT stick INST beat ASP
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“Rosy beats the dog with a stick”.

20. piutau -ni vou -ni ki sou -rai
she NOM bamboo INST house make ASP
‘They make the house with the bamboos’.

21. piu -ni kone -ni li sau -rai
he NOM mud INST pot make ASP
‘He makes pot with the mud’.

(f) Locative case

The function of the locative case is to indicate the location of an object, time, event or place name. The suffix marker -hi is used to indicate the location of a place.

Examples:

22. piu deli -hi ta -lai
she delhi LOC go U ASP
‘She will go to Delhi’.

23. i lu -hi tu -rai
i field LOC go ASP
‘I go to the field’.

24. sai hai -hi biu -rai
dog here LOC stay ASP
‘The dog is here’.

25. lairavə -hai tebəl -pəu -hi biu -rai
book DET table on LOC stay ASP
‘The text book is on the table’.

26. piu baji əsə -hi ve -lai
he hour three LOC come U ASP
‘He will come at three o’ clock’.

27. tina baji kirəu -hi skul ta -lai
tina hour ten LOC school go U ASP
‘Tina will go to school at 10 o’ clock’.

(g) Associative case

The associative case expresses accompaniment or togetherness. It is indicated by the associative suffix -kwa. Examples:

28. i tomba -kwa lairə pəu -rai
i tomba ASSO book read ASP
‘I read a book with Tomba’.

29. i jeni -kwa laiduki ta -lai
i jenny ASSO school go U ASP
‘I will go to school with Jenny’.

30. piu bina -kwa ve -rai
she bina ASSO come ASP
‘She comes with Bina’.

(h) Ablative case
In Poumai, ablative case is indicated by the suffix -hini. It shows the direction from which the action is taking place. It is a combination of the two elements i.e., locative plus nominative or instrumental (hi) + (ni).

Examples:
31. piu senapati -hini ve -rai
    she senapati ABL come ASP
    ‘She comes from the Senapati’.
32. i doso ñi -hini ve -lai
    i tomorrow village ABL come U ASP
    ‘Tomorrow I shall come from the village’.
33. sabe -hini həu -taudekəu -rai
    tree ABL leave PL fall ASP
    ‘The leaves fall from the tree’.
34. i -ni ko -hai jon -hini cou -re
    i NOM news DET john ABL hear ASP
    ‘I have heard the news from John’.

3. Conclusion

In this paper, the detail of case structure is studied and there are eight types of case found in this language. They are- Nominative case (-ni), Accusative case (-je), Genitive case (-vəi), Dative case (-hi), Instrumental case (-ni), Locative case (-hi), Associative case (-kwa) and Ablative case (-hini). The Poumai shows a clear system of case. All the case suffixes are inflected to the noun or pronoun. So, the case system in this language is postpositional. As Poumai is one of the Tibeto- Burman Language, it follows the common features of the Tibeto- Burman Language family like SOV, postpositional etc.

4. Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>‘nominative’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCU</td>
<td>‘accusative’</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>‘locative’</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>‘genitive’</td>
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<td>DAT</td>
<td>‘dative’</td>
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<td>INST</td>
<td>‘instrumental’</td>
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<td>‘associative’</td>
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<td>‘ablative’</td>
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<td>COM</td>
<td>‘command’</td>
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<td>DET</td>
<td>‘determiner’</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>‘aspect’</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNR ASP</td>
<td>‘unrealised aspect’</td>
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References