

GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This research is aimed at describing aspects of negation in Koenoem language. Koenoem language is a language spoken in Shendam Local Government Area of Plateau State of Nigeria.

In this chapter, we discussed the general background and socio - cultural profile of the Koenoem people. The genetic classification of Koenoem language as well as the aim and objectives of the research is discussed. We also included the scope and organization of the study.

1.2 Historical Background of Koenoem People

A popular legend of the Koenoem claimed that they were influenced by the attempt to link their origin to the universal respective and centers of old civilization. This legend claimed that they migrated from France to their present location for economic reason.

Koenoem means "to refuse", the reason why this utterance was rendered by the Koenoem speaking people was that there was a river dividing them with their neighbouring village, and the river belonged to them i.e. the Koenoem. In spite of that their neighbouring villages were claiming ownership because of the immense benefit from the river.

The Koenoem people because of this mess said they would not fold their arms and watched them; they presented all their problems to their ancestors to fight for them. As a result of this new born babies immediately after given birth to, will be strike to death by thunder from no where. When the villagers got to realized that all the happenings was as a result of their selfish interest, they call a meeting and resolve the issue immediately and handed over the land to the Koenoem people and that is why in both Shendam and Mikang land, today don't take this Koenoem for granted.

1.3 Geographical Location of Koenoem People

Koenoem people are located in northern part of Shendam Local Government Areas of Plateau State and Eastern part of Mikang Local Government Area of Plateau State. The Koenoem village was formally a ward under shendam province and later relocated to Mikang Local Government Area. The major towns around Koenoem are: Doka, Zomo and Piapun.

1.4 Socio - Cultural Profile of Koenoem People

Culture is defined as a total way of life of a group of people in a geographical setting. Koenoem people have their distinct cultural and traditional beliefs which are expressed in their mode of dressing, occupation, religion, festivals and marriage system.

Marriage System in Koenoem

The Koenoem people have their culture, norms, and values. When it comes

to marriage the person who wants to marry pay a specific amount of money and some traditional items for the kinsmen before contacting the father of the girl for bride price. The amount paid for bride price is not always much that is why they marry many wives.

The first step to marriage is to pay some certain amount of money and some items, other material things such as rappers shingginda, millet for local brint beerto the elders of the family. The second step is the bride going to the groom's farm to check his capability whether is capable of taking care of the wife he intends to marry. If the groom is capable they move to the third step which is the introduction of the two families to each other and after that the proper marriage.

In Koenoemland divorce does not take much time, they believe if a woman leaves a man the more he brings in another one to replace her. Some divorce are made in the court of law through the chief judge pronouncement and others in a traditional way, where the two families come together and settle amicably by paying back what they collected from the grooms family.

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Occupation of Koenoem People

The major occupation of Koenoem people is farming. Majority of the people are subsistence farmers though commercial farming is also practiced. They cultivate crops like maize, millet, guinea com, groundnut and rice as well. After harvesting all these crops, buyers come from urban centre and buy at the cheapest price and take it to the city.

Religion of Koenoem People

In Koenoemland the three (3) religions are observed i.e. Christianity, Traditional and Islamic religions. Christianity dominates followed by traditional religion then Islamic religion. Most of the people practicing Islamic religion are indigenes of the land. The general language use in the place of worship is Hausa except the traditional worshipers who used the local dialect to make their incantation.

Festivals of Koenoem Language

Festivals are organized to unite their kinsmen from far and near. The chief priest is regarded as the ruler of the tribe only, but without defined territory. There is a particular festival celebrated to commemorate the death of their heroes who had fought tirelessly to emancipate them from the shackles of invaders and other forms of oppressions. Their annual festival is celebrated on the 12th December, for this festival an Antelope must be casted to appease the gods.

4

Educational Background of Koenoem people

The Level of Education in Koeneom village is very low, because most of them believe that farming is the best way to make money.

Education as defined by one philosopher popularly known as Plato who said education is the production of sound mind to a sound body. In this definition we

are made to understand that the Koenoem people were not aware of the positive impact of education, but now they have realized the positive impact of education and they now send their children to school, so as to take active part in politics.

Administration in Koenoem Land

Koenoem people's administration is more or less a traditional system of administration. The people of Koenoem take orders from their chiefs. The chief is the administrative and ceremonial leader in the village.

There, the chief who is called long Koenoem dictates some certain things for them, and any other information which is to be relayed to the people must pass through the chief before disseminating it to the masses.

After the chief the second in command is referred to as angwa meaning halmet, he takes directives from the chief to the people.

ASPECTS OF NEGATION IN KOENOEM LANGUAGE

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