Chapter-6

Constituent order

6.1. Basic constituent order

As in many other languages of Southeast Asia, the basic order of words in Zeme in an unmarked sentence is subject, object and verb (SOV). Consider the following exemples:

(205) *i* *tiŋku* *təiyu-ləi*

I bread be eat-DECL

'I eat bread'.

(206) *pa* *nəmrui-du* *kap-ləi*

he bird-ACC be hit-DECL

'He hits the bird'

(207) *i* *ləisiki* *tet-ləi*

I school be go-DECL

'I went to school.'

6.2. Order of subject and verb:

The order of subject and verb in intransitive sentences in Zeme is: [S V]. In other words, the subject always precedes the verb as can be seen in the following examples:

(208) *daina* *lim-ləi*

Daina be dance-DECL

'Daina danced'

(209) *lily* *duŋ-ləi*

Lily be sit-DECL

'Lily sits'

(210) *pa* *hap-ləi*

he be cry-DECL

'He is crying'

(211) *alex* *pak-ləi*

Alex be run-DECL

'Alex ran'

6.3. The order of noun and adjectival:

In Zeme, all adjectival are derived from the stative verbs, the adjectival usually follows the head noun, however adjectival may also precede the head noun as most of the SOV languages do. The order of noun and adjectival is illustrated in the following examples:

(212) *həgəi-be* *tiŋmui*

be cold-NMZ night

'Cold night'

(213) *ŋəmči* *pui*

be shy F

'Shy girl'

(214) *həčiŋ* *ci-be*

wood be hard-NMZ

'Hard wood'

(215) *keluwa* *poine*

village small

'Small village'

(216) *aize* *mənəiju* *di-be-ləi*

this leaf be large-NMZ-DECL

This is a large leaf.

(217) *int^{h}ui* *di-be-ləi*

basket be big-NMZ-DECL

'The basket is big'

6.4. Order of noun and demonstratives:

The order of Noun and demonstrative in Zeme is: [N DEM]. In other words, the demonstrative always precedes the noun in a clause or a sentence. It is also observed that the reverse order is not possible as can be seen in the following examples.

(218) *aize* *mənəiyu* *di-be-ləi*

this leaf be big-NMZ-DECL

'This is a large leaf.'

(218) a. * *mənəiyu* *aize* *di-be-ləi*

Leaf this be big-NMZ-DECL

'This is a large leaf.'

(219) *čipəu pui ri-ləi*

DEM F be lean-DECL

'That girl is lean'

(219) a. **pui čipəu ri-ləi*

F DEM be lean-DECL

'That girl is lean'

(220) *i aipəu leisi məŋəiju məca-ləi*

I DEM book five be like-DECL

'I like these five books.'

(221) *ai henapoine-rəme*

DEM child-PL

'These children'

(222) *ai imbači-rəme*

DEM mango-PL

'Those mangoes'

6.5. Order of numerals and noun:

In Zeme, the order of numerals and noun is [NUM N]. In other words, the numeral always follows the noun. It is also observed that the reverse order is not possible in the language as can be seen in the following examples:

(223) *həki* *kena*

house two

'Two houses'

(223) a. **kena* *həki*

two house

'Two houses'

(224) *imbači* *kərəiyu*

mango ten

'Ten mangoes'

(224) a. **kərəiyu* *imbači*

ten mango

'Ten mangoes'

(225) *nəmrui* *mədai*

bird four

'Four bird.'

(225) a. **mədai* *nəmrui*

four bird

'Four bird.'

(226) *buisəŋ* *peke* *kena* *la-ləi*

bull horn two EXIST-DECL

'The bull has two horns'

(226) a. * *buisəŋ* *kena* *peke* *la-ləi*

bull two horn EXIST-DECL

'The bull has two horns'

(227) *cige* *hətəi* *kəčum* *la-ləi*

DEM dog three EXIST-DECL

'There are three dogs'

(227) a. **cige kəčum hətəi la-ləi*

DEM three dog EXIST-DECL

'There are three dogs'

6.6. Order of genitive and noun

The order of genitive and noun in Zeme is [GEN N]. In other words, the genitive follows the noun as can be seen in the following examples:

(228) *aize ə-gu ləisi-ləi*

DEM 1-GEN book-DECL

'This is my book.'

(229) *pinky-gu ləisi səiyudəi-ləi*

pinky-GEN book be thick-DECL

'Pinky's book is thick.'

(230) *ə-gu həki-poine kəčum la-ləi*

1-GEN house-small three EXIST-DECL

'I have three small houses.'

6.7. Order of specifier and adjectival:

In Zeme, the order of scecifier and adjectival is: [SPEC ADJ]. In other words, the specifier always follows the adjectival as can be shown in the following examples:

(231) *məkui* *čok-səŋ-be*

hole be deep-SPEC-NMZ

'Very deep hole'

(232) *intukaŋ* *rit-səŋ-be*

Stone be heavy-SPEC-NMZ

'Very heavy stone'

(233) *nəmai* *həlum-səŋ-ləi*

today be hot-SPEC-DECL

'Today is very hot'

(234) *ləisiki* *di-səŋ-ləi*

school be big-SPEC-DECL

'The school is very big.'

(235) *məpa* *i-səŋ-ləi*

flower be beauty-SPEC-DECL

'The flower is very beautiful.'

6.8. Order of verb and adverb:

In Zeme, the order of verb and adverb: [V ADV] i.e., the adverb always precedes the verb. It is observed that the reverse order is not possible as can be seen in the following examples:

(236) *i* *kʰoine* *tet-ləi*

I slowly be go-DECL

'I go slowly.'

(236) a. **i* *tet-ləi* *kʰoine*

I be go-DECL slowly

'I go slowly.'

(237) *muhindro* *kʰoine* *təiyu-ləi*

Muhindro slowly be eat-DECL

'Muhindro eat slowly.'

(237) a. **muhindro* *təiyu-ləi* *kʰoine*

Muhindro be eat-DECL slowly

'Muhindro eat slowly.'

(238) *henapoine* *pəsui-siya* *zəi-ləi*

child cryingly be sleep-DECL

'The child sleeps cryingly.'

(238) a. **henapoine* *zəi-ləi* *pəsui-siya*

child be sleep-DECL cryingly

'The child sleeps cryingly.'

(239) *gaikin* *səmtize* *kak-ləi*

Gaikin lengthily be answer-DECL

'Gaikin answer lengthily.'

6.9. Order of verb and negative particle:

The order of verb and negative particle in Zeme is negative particle always follows the verb as can be seen in the following examples:

(240) *i* *tak* *təiyu-mak-bəm-ləi*

I rice be eat-NEG-PROG-DECL

'I was not eating rice.'

(241) *john* *university* *tet-mak-ləi*

John university be go-NEG-DECL

'John doesn't go to university.'

(242) *pa* *kirket* *int^{h}a-ra-mak-ləi*

he cricket be play-IRS-NEG-DECL

'He will not play cricket.'

(243) *aize* *ə-gu* *čiyaka-mak-ləi*

DEM 1-GEN bag-NEG-DECL

'This is not my bag.'

6.10. Order of verb and question particle:

The order of verb and question particle in Zeme is that the question particle always follows the verb and occurs at the end of the sentence as can be seen in the following examples:

(244) *nəŋ* *kənra-məi*

you be ill-Q

'Are you ill?'

(245) *tiŋkaisəmze* *kəsaŋ-məi*

news be true-Q

'Is the news true?'

(246) *nəŋ* *əsa/ča* *sək-ra-məi*

you tea be drink-IRS-Q

'Will you take tea?'

(247) *nəŋ* *ləisi* *kiya-gu-məi*

You book be read-IRS-Q

'Will you read book?'

6.11. Order of noun, numeral and adjectival:

The order of noun, numeral and adjectival in the language is as noun may precede or follow the adjectival however the numerals always follow the noun as can be seen in the following examples:

(248) *čige* *siya-be* *kelo* *kena* *la-ləi*

there be bad-NMZ village two EXIST-DRCL

'There are two bad villages.'

(249) *čige* *kelo* *siya-be* *kena* *la-ləi*

there village be bad-NMZ two EXIST-DRCL

'There are two bad villages.'

(250) *pa* *məčuwa* *ŋəu-i-be* *kena* *la-ləi*

she shirt be beauty-NMZ two EXIST-DECL

'She has two beautiful shirts.'

(251) *pa* *ŋəu-i-be* *məčuwa* *kena* *la-ləi*

she be beauty-NMZ shirt two EXIST-DECL

'She has two beautiful shirts.'

(252) *aize* *timriyaŋ* *di-be* *məŋəiyu-ləi*

DEM cart be big-NMZ five-DECL

'These are five big carts'

(253) *aize* *di-be* *timriyaŋ* *məŋəiyu-ləi*

DEM be big-NMZ cart five-DECL

'These are five big carts'

6.12. Order of noun plus adjectival and quantifiers

The usual order of noun adjectival and quantifiers in Zeme is: [ADJ N QUNT]. In other words, the adjectival precedes the noun then followed by quantifiers as in (254). However the reverse order is that the adjectival follows the noun then followed by the quantifier as in (255)-(259):

(254) *kəčak* *həka* *kəsa*

golden fish QUNT

'Some golden fish'

(255) *həki* *di-be* *kəsa*

house be big-NMZ QUNT

'Few big houses'

(256) *hərasəm* *i-be* *kəsa*

Story be good-NMZ QUNT

'Some good stories'

(257) *hərapa* *pəlui-i-be* *nisuwaŋga-be*

flower be beauty-NMZ QUNT-NMZ

'Many beautiful flowers'

(258) *həki* *kəsa* *di-be*

house QUNT be big-NMZ

'Few big houses'

(259) *hərasəm* *kəsa* *i-be*

story QUNT be good-NMZ

'Some good stories'

6.13. Order of relative clause and noun

In Zeme, the relative clause usually precedes the relativized noun. In other words, the relative clause occurs in the pre-nominal positions as can be seen in the following examples:

(260) *ma* *təiyu* *pəiyu-du* *nəŋ* *lak-ləi*

eatable things be eat man-ACC you be beat-DECL

REL N

'You beat the man who eats'

(262) *hələiyu* *təiyu-be* *pui-ze* *i-ləi*

song be sing-NMZ F-DET be good-DECL

REL N

'The girl who sings the song is good.'

(263) *inzimai* *i* *kahədəu-be-ze* *əzanpəiyu-ləi*

yesterday I meet-NMZ-DET man-DECL

REL N

'This is the man whom I met yesterday.'

(264) *aipəu* *təi-ze* *rahəŋnapoine-du* *kaŋki-be* *təi-ləi*

DEM dog-DET boy small-ACC be bite-NMZ dog-DECL

REL N

'This is the dog that bite the boy'

6.14. Order of verb and imperative marker

The order of verb and imperative marker in Zeme is that the imperative marker always follows the verb in the language as can be seen in the following examples:

(265) *iŋkʰəm* *kai-ləu*

door be close-IMP

'Close the door'

(266) *inčet* *ket* *luŋ-ge* *waŋ-ləu*

hour one under-LOC be come-IMP

'Come within an hour'

(267) *kʰoine* *təiyu-ləu*

slowly be eat-IMP

'Eat slowly'

(268) *hap* *či-ləu*

cry be loud-IMP

'Cry loudly'

6.15. Zeme and Greenberg Universals

Zeme conform almost all the characteristic features of SOV languages as described by Greenberg (1963).

6.15.1. *Universal 1.* In declarative sentences with nominal subject and object, the dominant order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object. Zeme conform ***Universal 1*** of Greengerg as in a declarative sentence with nominal subject and object, the subject always precedes the object.

(269) *i-ne* *ketum-du* *lak-ləi*

I-NOM cow-ACC be beat-DECL

'I beat the cow'.

(270) *hetəi* *taŋ-ləi*

dog be bark-DECL

'The dog bark'

(271) *nəmrui-rəme* *liyam-ləi*

bird-PL be fly-DECL

'The birds fly'

(272) *pa* *hečaiki* *tet-ləi*

he market be go-DECL

'He goes to market.'

6.15.2. *Universal 4.* With overwhelming greater than chance frequency, langauges with normal SOV order are postpositional.

Like other verb final languages of the world, adpositions in Zeme is postpositional as can be seen in the following examples:

(273) *raikiam* *hiŋbaŋ* *kaŋ-ge* *zəi-ləi*

Raikiam tree under-LOC be sleep-DECL

'Raikiam slept under the tree.'

(274) *čige* *ləisikaira* *pəirəi-ge* *ləisitaŋ* *la-ləi*

there table on-LOC pen EXIST-DECL

'There is a pen on the table.'

(275) *pa* *Manipur-ge* *luŋ-ləi*

She Manipur-LOC live-DECL

'She lives in Manipur.'

(276) *i* *hiŋbaŋ-gene* *dəiyu-ləi*

I tree-ABL far-DECL

'I am far from the tree.'

6.15.3. *Universal 7.* If in a language with dominant SOV order, there is no alternative basic order, or only OSV as the alternative, then all adverbial modifiers of the verb likewise precede the verb.

As described by the Greenberg that a language with SOV has an alternative order like OSV, Zeme being an SOV language the alternative word order is OSV as can be seen in the following examples:

(277) *i* *dui* *sək-ləi*

I water be drink-DECL

'I drink water.'

(278) *dui* *i* *sək-ləi*

water I be drink-DECL

'I drink water.'

(279) *ə-gu* *ləisi* *ket* *la-ləi*

1-GEN book one EXIST-DECL

'I have a book.'

(280) *ləisi* *ə-gu* *ket* *la-ləi*

book 1-GEN one EXIST-DECL

'I have a book.'

6.15.4. *Universal 9.* With well more than chance frequency, when question particles or affixes are specified in position by reference to the sentence as a whole, if initial, such elements are found in prepositional languages, and, if final, in postpositional.

Like many other SOV languages, the question markers occur in sentence final position as can be seen in the following examples:

(281) *nəŋ* *ča* *piya* *ket* *sək-ra-məi*

you tea cup one be drink-IRS-QM

'Will take a cup of tea?'

(282) *nəŋ* *pə-ču* *iŋgiya-məi*

you 3-ACC be love-QM

'Do you love him?'

(283) *nəŋ* *məpa* *inča-məi*

you flower be like-QM

'Do you like flower?'

(284) *pa* *dai-ge* *luŋ-ləu*

pa what-LOC live-Q

'Where does he live?'

6.15.5. *Universals 14*. In conditional statements, the conditional clause precedes the conclusions as the normal order in all the languages.

The conditional clause in Zeme also precedes the conclusions as many other SOV languages do as can be seen in the following examples:

(285)	*nəŋ*	*hap*	*dina*	*i-ne*	*lak-gu-ləi*
	you	be cry	COND	i-NOM	be beat-IRS-DECL

'If you cry, I will beat.'

(286)	*nəŋ*	*hap*	*dizaine*	*i-ne*	*lak-gu-ləi*
	you	be cry	COND	i-NOM	be beat-IRS-DECL

'If you cry, I will beat.'

(287)	*pa*	*waŋ*	*dina*	*i-ne*	*tet-gu-ləi*
	he	be come	COND	i-NOM	be go-IRS-DECL

'If he comes, I will go'

(288)	*pa*	*waŋ*	*dizaine*	*i-ne*	*tet-gu-ləi*
	he	be come	COND	i-NOM	be go-IRS-DECL

'If he does not come, I will go'

6.15.6. *Universal 22*. If in comparisons of superiority the only order, or one of the alternative orders, is standard-marker-adjective, then the language is postpositional. With overwhelming more than chance frequency if, the only order is adjective-marker-standard, the language is prepositional.

Zeme follows the order of standard-marker-adjective and conforms to Greenberg's universal 22. The standard marker in Zeme is *soge* 'than' as can be seen in the following examples:

(289) *ragui-ne* *cem-sone* *kelak-i-ləi*

Ragui-NOM cem-than be rich-DECL

'Ragui is richer than Cem'

(290) *aring-ne* *raikiam-sone* *hələiyu-i-ləi*

Aring-NOM Raikiam-than be beauty-DECL

'Aring is more beautiful than Raikiam.'

(291) *shillong-ne* *silchar-sone* *hegəi-ləi*

Shillong-NOM silchar-than be cool-DECL

'Shillong is cooler than Silchar.'

(292) *anil-ne* *muhindro-sone* *hu-ləi*

Anil-NOM muhindro-than be tall-DECL

'Anil is taller than Muhindro.'

6.15.7. *Universal 27.* If a language is exclusively suffixing, it is postpositional; if it is exclusively prefixing, it is prepositional.

Zeme is exclusively affixing with more suffixes than prefix like many other postpositional languages do. Some of the suffixes include aspect, mood, plural, nominalising suffix etc. as can be seen in the following examples:

(293) *waŋ-ləi*

be come-DECL

'Came'

(294) *int^{h}a-bəm-ləi*

be play-PROG-DECL

'Playing'

(295) *təiyu-ra-ləi*

be eat-IRS-DECL

'Will eat'

(296) *hap-ləu*

be cry-IMP

'Cry!'

(297) *heradi-rəme*

tiger-PL

'Tigers'

6.15.8. *Universal 36.* If a language has the category of gender, it always has the category of number.

Zeme conform Greenberg universal 36 as Zeme has both the categories of gender and number system. Zeme lacks grammatical gender, but the language has natural gender. Gender distinction of some nouns in Zeme is made lexically while in case of human nouns, the male and female is expressed by adding marker *-pəiyu* for male and *-pui* for female respectively. There are different gender markers for non-human nouns.

Masculine	**Feminine**
*mi-pəi*yu 'father'	*mi-pui* 'mother'
mina-pəiyu 'son'	*pəna-pui* 'daughter'

Masculine	**Feminine**
kətum-səi 'bull'	*kətum-pui* 'cow'
kemə̄i-səi 'he-goat'	*kemei-pui* 'she goat'

Masculine	**Feminine**
inrui-re 'cock'	*inrui-pui* 'hen'
uyeŋ-re 'male peacock'	*uyeŋ-pui* 'peahen'

Zeme has two numbers namely singular and plural. Singular number is unmarked while the plural number is marked by the plural suffix *-rəme.* There is no separate plural marker for inanimate nouns in Zeme however, the marker *-nui* occurs with personal pronouns in Zeme as illustrated below.

(298) *nəmrui-rəme*

bird-PL

'Birds'

(299) *hiŋbaŋ-rəme*

tree-PL

'Trees'

(290) *ləisi-rəme*

book-PL

'Books'

(291) *nəpoine-rəme*

child-PL

'Children'

(292) *ə-nui*

1-PL

'We'

(293) *pə-nui*

3-PL

'They'

6.15.9. *Universal 39.* Where morpheme of both number and case are present and both follow or precedes the noun base, the expression of number almost comes between the noun base and the expression of case.

Like many other SOV languages, both the morphemes and suffixes follow the noun base in which the number comes between the noun base and the expression of case as can be seen in the following examples:

(294) *hənapoine-rəme-du*

child-PL-ACC

'To Children'

(294) *dəiraŋ-rəme-ne*

spade-PL-INST

'With Spades'

(295) *aring-nai-raikiam-həŋ*

Aring-ASS-Raikiam-DAT

'To Aring and Raikiam'

6.15.10. *Universal 40*. When the adjective follows the noun, the adjective express all the inflectional categories of the noun. In such cases the noun may lack overt expression of one or all of these categories.

Like many other SOV and Kuki-Naga languages, all the inflectional categories of noun are taken by the adjectivals when it follows the nouns by missing the overt expression as can be seen in the following examples:

(296) *nəmrui tik-be-rəme*

bird be black-NMZ-PL

'Black birds'

(297) *hətui ti-be-ne*

stick be long-NMZ-INST

'With long stick'

(298) *intu* *di-be-rəme-ne*

stone be big-NMZ-PL-INST

'With big stones'

6.15.11. *Universals 41.* If in a language the verb follows both the nominal subject and nominal objects as the dominant order, the language always has a case system.

Like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, the verbs in Zeme follow both the nominal subject and the nominal object, that is, both the nominal subject and the nominal object precedes the verbs with various case morphemes as shown below.

(299) *John* *čiŋrumki-ne* *čiŋbaŋ* *kui-ləi*

John saw-INST tree be.cut-DECL

'John cut the tree with a saw.'

(230) *Albert* *ketum-du* *lak-ləi*

Albert cow-ACC be.beat-DECL

'Albert beat the cow.'

(231) *awan* *Manipur-ge* *luŋ-ləi*

Awan Manipur-LOC live-DECL

'Awan lives in Manipur.'

(232) *i* *Saran-nai* *tet-ləi*

I Saran-ASS be.go-DECL

'I go with Saran.'

6.15.12. *Universlas 42*. All langauges have pronominal categories involving at least three persons and two numbers.

Like all the languages of the world, Zeme has pronominal categories showing three way distinctions in person: first, second and third person and showing two way contrast in number i.e., singular and plural as illustrated below.

Persons	**Pronominal forms**	**Pronouns**	
		Singular	**Plural**
First	*ə-*	*i* 'I'	*ə-nui* 'we'
Second	*nəŋ-*	*nəŋ* 'you'	*nəŋ-nui* 'you' (PL)
Third	*pə-*	*pa* 'he'	*pə-nui* 'they'

Table no.17: Pronominal categories in Zeme