

# Pronouns in Pochuri (Meluri) – Ms. Keneisenuo Mepfhuo



<https://selindia.org/>

ISSN: 2426-2149

Mepfhuo, K. & Singh, L. B.: Pronouns in...

## Pronouns in Pochuri (Meluri)

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### Abstract

This paper is an attempt to describe the pronouns in Pochuri (ISO 639-3 npo), a Tibeto-Burman language under Angami-Pochuri group. It is spoken by the Pochury tribe of Nagaland, north east India. Pronouns in Pochuri such as personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns, reciprocal pronoun, interrogative pronouns and demonstrative pronoun are discussed. This study is concerned with Meluri variety of Pochuri, which is considered the lingua franca among the tribe. There are ten different dialects spoken by the Pochury tribe. The personal pronouns in Pochuri exhibits three numbers; singular, dual and plural. There is no gender distinction in the first- and second-person pronouns; the words *hih* 'I' and *nas* 'you' is used to refer to both genders respectively. However, the third person singular pronouns have separate words for females *jimcawaw* 'she' and male: *jimrawaw* 'he' other than the gender neutral third person pronoun *mas* 'she'.

**Keywords-** Pochuri, Pronoun, Phek, Meluri, Tibeto-Burman.

### 1. Introduction

Pochuri<sup>1</sup> is spoken by the Pochury tribe of Nagaland northeast India. The Pochury tribe inhabits the Meluri sub-division of Phek district in Nagaland. Meluri is 166km away from the state capital Kohima. Its geographical coordinates are 25°41'0" North, 94°38'0" East. The Pochury tribe is believed to be a composition of different ethnic groups who came from different parts to the present location. The term 'Pochury' is an acronym formed by compounding the second syllables of the words *sapo*, *aichu* and *Khoiry* (Po+chu+ry). Sapo group consist of Sangtam, Kichu and Khoiry groups were from Myanmar<sup>2</sup>. The Pochury tribe were described by Britishers as 'Eastern Sangtam' or 'Eastern Rengma' due to the establishment of five Sangtam villages and three Rengma villages in the Pochury area in the past. There are thirty recognized villages of the Pochury tribe (Mepingthü, 2016). The census of India recognized Pochury as a separate scheduled tribe in 1991. Pochury is now the 15th recognized tribe of Nagaland.

Burling (2003:183) places Pochuri under the Angami-Pochuri group along with Rengma, N Rengma, Simi, Angami and Chakeri of the Eastern Border languages in his classification of the Tibeto-Burman languages of the North East India.

There are as many as ten dialects spoken by the Pochury tribe: Miluozhü<sup>3</sup>, Mipfizihi, Tshiyüwü, Yisyüwü, Akkezü (Apokah dialect), Lirathäna, Sangphuyü, Mikuri, Kuki, and Kuzha (Khezha)<sup>4</sup>. The dialects are not mutually intelligible except Yisyüwü and Tshiyüwü<sup>5</sup>. Other than the first six dialects mentioned above, the others are spoken by other tribes as well. Kuzha (Khezha) is spoken by the Chakhesang tribe in Pintsoro area, Kuki by the Kuki tribe. This study is concerned with the Meluri (Miluozhü) variety spoken in Meluri. This variety is chosen as it is the standardised variety and the lingua franca of the tribe.

<sup>1</sup> The name of the language is spelled 'Pochuri' which is differentiated with the name of the tribe 'Pochury'

<sup>2</sup> In an interview with Nyuletho (native speaker from Meluri)

<sup>3</sup> Also known as Meluri

<sup>4</sup> From Pochury Women Organisation 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary souvenir, 1992-2017, p.60

<sup>5</sup> In an interview with Lingochu (Asst. language officer of Pochuri)