

Deictic suffixes in Manipuri¹

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1. Manipuri deictic suffixes:

The Manipuri language makes use of four deictic suffixes: *rə*, *ru*, *rək*, and *kʰə*. These are used for denoting the location or orientation of an event or state, primarily with reference to the speaker's location. There are three different semantic parameters which help to differentiate one from the other. They are (1) motion or orientation of the event (towards or away from the speaker), (2) place of occurrence of the event (at the place of the speaker or at a place which is away from him), and (3) relative positions of these two (event preceding or following the motion or orientation). The following table will give a clear picture.

<i>Suffixes</i>	<i>Motion or orientation</i>	<i>Place of occurrence</i>	<i>Relative position of the two</i>
<i>rə</i>	toward the speaker	at the speaker's place	event follows the motion
<i>ru</i>	away from the speaker	away from the speaker's place	event follows the motion
<i>rək</i>	toward the speaker	away from the speaker's place	event precedes the motion
<i>kʰə</i>	away from the speaker	at the speaker's place	event precedes the motion

Table 1

The use of these four suffixes can be illustrated with the help of the following paradigms and sentences.²

¹ This paper is part of the research on Manipuri being done by D. N. S. Bhat and M. S. Ningomba. It was given at the 24th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics, Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok (1991).

² The verbal forms given in these examples to illustrate the various uses and meanings of these deictic suffixes end in the non-future tense suffix which has the alternant *y* after the suffixes *rə* and *ru*, and the alternant *i* after the suffixes *rək* and *kʰə*. The vowel *ə* of the suffix *kʰə* gets deleted when the non-future tense suffix is added.

2. Allomorphy.

The initial consonant *r* of the first three of these suffixes, namely *rə*, *ru*, and *rək*, is found to show the following sandhi changes.

It might be noted in this connection that the meanings of the suffixed forms in the case of some of the examples given below are somewhat different from the primary meanings mentioned above. The nature of such semantic differences is discussed in detail under section 3 below.

(1) The initial consonant *r* of these three deictic suffixes assimilates completely to the preceding consonant when that consonant is *m*, *ŋ*, or *p*. For example:

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|-----|------------------------|----------|---|---|
| 8. | <i>p^həm</i> | 'sit' | <i>p^həmmēy</i>
<i>p^həmmūy</i>
<i>p^həmmək-i</i> | 'came and sat here'
'went and sat there'
'came sitting (as on a bus)/
sat sometime (somewhere
else) and came' |
| 9. | <i>t^hēŋ</i> | 'touch' | <i>t^hēŋŋəy</i>
<i>t^hēŋŋūy</i>
<i>t^hēŋŋək-i</i> | 'came and touched'
'went and touched'
'touched from the
opposite direction/
touched and came' |
| 10. | <i>lep</i> | 'decide' | <i>lēppēy</i>
<i>lēppūy</i>
<i>lēppək-i</i> | 'came and decided'
'went and decided'
'decided and came' |

(2) The *r* changes to *l* when the preceding consonant is *t* or *n*; if the preceding consonant is *n*, it also changes to *l* by assimilation to the suffix. For example:

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|-----|------------|------------------|---|---|
| 11. | <i>sot</i> | 'take on credit' | <i>sotlēy</i>
<i>sotlūy</i>
<i>sotlək-i</i> | 'came and took on credit'
'went and took on credit'
'took on credit and came' |
| 12. | <i>tan</i> | 'earn' | <i>tallēy</i>
<i>tallūy</i>
<i>tallək-i</i> | 'came and earned'
'went and earned'
'earned and came' |

(3) If the preceding consonant is *k*, the first two suffixes (*rə* and *ru*) delete their initial consonant, whereas the third one (*rək*) changes it to *l*. For example:

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|-----|-----|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| 13. | lok | 'harvest' | lok-ēy | 'came and harvested' |
| | | | lok-ūy | 'went and harvested' |
| | | | lok-lək-i | 'harvested and came' |

(4) The suffix $k^hə$ drops its final vowel when followed by the nonfuture tense suffix i . For example:

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|-----|-----|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 14. | lok | 'harvest' | lokk ^{hi} | 'harvested and went away' |
| | | | lokk ^{hre} | 'has harvested and gone away' |
| | | | lokk ^{hregəni} | 'will have harvested and gone' |

3. Semantic variations.

There are certain semantic variations that are shown by these deictic suffixes, which are primarily dependent upon the meaning of the verbal bases with which they occur. These semantic variations are discernible by examining the two classes of verbs: the dynamic and the stative.

3.1. *Dynamic verbs.*

In the case of dynamic verbs, the first two suffixes, $rē$ and $rū$, are rather uniform in providing the following meanings:

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|------|---|
| $rē$ | 'to come (or bring something) and do something' |
| $rū$ | 'to go (or take away something) and do something' |

Examples:

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|-----|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 15. | lāw | 'cry' | lāwrēy | 'came and cried' |
| | | | lāwrūy | 'went and cried' |
| 16. | t ^h ōŋ | 'cook' | t ^h ōŋŋēy | 'came and cooked' |
| | | | t ^h ōŋŋūy | 'went and cooked' |
| 17. | sī | 'die' | sīrēy | 'came and died' |
| | | | sīrūy | 'went and died' |
| 18. | yok | 'rear up' | yok-ēy | 'brought someone and reared up' |
| | | | yok-ūy | 'took away someone and reared up' |