Deictic suffixes in Manipuri

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1. Manipuri deictic suffixes:

The Manipuri language makes use of four deictic suffixes: \( \text{r} \), \( \text{ru} \), \( \text{r} \text{ak} \), and \( \text{k} \text{ho} \). 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffixes</th>
<th>Motion or orientation</th>
<th>Place of occurrence</th>
<th>Relative position of the two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\text{r}</td>
<td>toward the speaker</td>
<td>at the speaker's place</td>
<td>event follows the motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\text{ru}</td>
<td>away from the speaker</td>
<td>away from the speaker's place</td>
<td>event follows the motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\text{r} \text{ak}</td>
<td>toward the speaker</td>
<td>away from the speaker's place</td>
<td>event precedes the motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\text{k} \text{ho}</td>
<td>away from the speaker</td>
<td>at the speaker's place</td>
<td>event precedes the motion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

The use of these four suffixes can be illustrated with the help of the following paradigms and sentences.\(^{2}\)

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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 \( \text{y} \) after the suffixes \( \text{r} \) and \( \text{ru} \), and the alternant \( \text{i} \) after the suffixes \( \text{r} \text{ak} \) and \( \text{k} \text{ho} \). The vowel \( \text{a} \) of the suffix \( \text{k} \text{ho} \) gets deleted when the non-future tense suffix is added.
1. tēw 'do' tēvrēy 'came here and did something'  
tēvrūy 'went there and did something'  
tēvrēk-i 'did something and came here'  
tēwkhi 'did something and went away'

2. ca 'eat' carēy 'came and ate'  
carūy 'went and ate'  
carēk-i 'ate and came'  
cakhēi 'ate and went away'

3. Johnnē Peterkho ye ca cak carūy  
John-NOM Peter-PL-LOC cooked rice eat-dSFX3-nonfut.  
John went to Peter's place and dined.

4. John meyumdegi cā thēk lék-i  
John his house-ABL tea drink-dSFX-nonfut.  
John took tea in his place and came here.

5. Johnnē sal pūrek-ēgē Peterde pirēy  
John-NOM shawl bring-dSFX- Peter-Loc give-dSFX-nonfut.  
PERF-ASSO  
John brought a shawl and gave it to Peter.

6. Johnnē yāmne sāwne thebēk tokkhi  
John-NOM very angry-ADV job resign-dSFX-nonfut.  
With great anger, John resigned from his job and went away.

But when the speaker himself is carrying out an activity, he would be referring to a motion which is related to the location in which he is speaking rather than to himself, as in the following example:

7. ey carēgēni 'I will come here and eat'  
ey carūgēni 'I will go and eat (somewhere else)'  
ey carēk-i 'I ate (somewhere else and came here)'  
ey cakhēgēni 'I will eat here and go'

3 "Deictic suffix." [Ed.]
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, n, or p. For example:

8. phəm 'sit' phəmməy 'came and sat here'
   phəmmuy 'went and sat there'
   phəmmək-i 'came sitting (as on a bus)/sat sometime (somewhere else) and came'

9. thəŋ 'touch' thəŋŋəy 'came and touched'
   thəŋŋuy 'went and touched'
   thəŋŋək-i 'touched from the opposite direction/touched and came'

10. lep 'decide' leppəy 'came and decided'
    leppuy 'went and decided'
    leppək-i '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:

11. sot 'take on credit' sotləy 'came and took on credit'
    sotluy 'went and took on credit'
    sotlek-i 'took on credit and came'

12. tan 'earn' talləy 'came and earned'
    talluy 'went and earned'
    tallək-i '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:
13. lok 'harvest' lok-∅y 'came and harvested'
     lok-∅y 'went and harvested'
     lok-∃k-i 'harvested and came'

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

14. lok 'harvest' lokkʰi 'harvested and went away'
     lokkʰre 'has harvested and gone away'
     lokkʰragani 'will have harvested and gone'


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:

rē 'to come (or bring something) and do something'

rū 'to go (or take away something) and do something'

Examples:

15. lāw 'cry' lāwrēy 'came and cried'
     lāwrūy 'went and cried'

16. thōn 'cook' thōnŋēy 'came and cooked'
     thōnŋūy 'went and cooked'

17. sī 'die' sīrēy 'came and died'
     sīrūy 'went and died'

18. yok 'rear up' yok-∅y 'brought someone and reared up'
     yok-∅y 'took away someone and reared up'