

# **Morphological Change and Fast Speech Phenomena in the Manipuri Verb**

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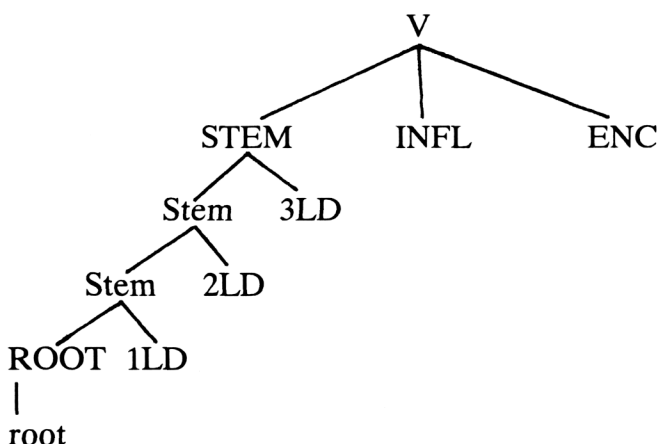
## **1 Introduction**

The Tibeto-Burman language Manipuri exhibits an elaborate verbal morphology: it consists of 31 derivational and 8 inflectional morphemes. This synchronic result is brought about by two favored patterns of diachronic development. First, lexical stems form the basis for affixes and are gradually reduced to affixal status. Second, fast speech rules have the effect of obliterating word and morpheme boundaries. Phonological sequences resulting from the merger of syntactic units through such processes are lexicalized and function as affixes.

## **2 The Manipuri verb**

(1) provides a schematic representation of the Manipuri verb. To be free standing, the verb must minimally consist of a root and a single inflectional marker (INFL). There are three derivational categories which may optionally precede the final inflectional suffix. These are: the first level derivational suffixes (1LD), which signal adverbial meanings; the second level derivational suffixes (2LD), which have evidential values, signal the deictic reference of a verb or indicate the number of persons an action is performed by; and the third level derivational suffixes (3LD), which signal meanings of aspect and mood.

## (1) Structure of the M verb



These three levels of derivational morphology are determined on the basis of the distribution and ordering of morphemes within each category. At 1LD only one 1LD suffix may appear on a verb and this suffix must occur directly to the left of the verb root. At 2LD up to ten 2LD suffixes may occur in a verb; these suffixes must occur directly after the 1LD suffixes. The order of suffixes at this level is controlled solely by semantic scope. Opposed to this, the order of 3LD suffixes (there may be up to 3 of these and they occur directly after 2LD suffixes), is fixed.

The possibility of variable ordering with 2LD suffixes, which corresponds to scope differences, is illustrated in (2a-h)<sup>1</sup>. For example, (2a) can be opposed with (2b) where the evidential -ləm combines with -khi 'still': in the sequence -khirəm where -ləm has scope over -khi, the meaning obtained is 'probably still V', and with the sequence -rəmkhi the meaning obtained is 'still seems V'.

- (2a) mēhak                      čák    čákhirəmmoy  
 mə -hak                      čák    čá    -khi -ləm -loy  
 3P -here                      rice eat -still -evd -npot  
 he                              food not seem to still eat  
 He probably still did not eat.

- (2b) mēhak                      čátləmkhiroy  
 mə -hak                      čát    -ləm -khi -loy  
 3P -here                      go    -evd -still -npot  
 he                              still seems to not have left  
 It still seems that he has not left.

In (2c) the marker -khi 'still' has scope over the directional marker -lək whereas in (2d) -khi does not have scope over -lək.

- (2c) purəkmənkhre  
 pu            -lək -mən    -khi -lə            -e  
 carry    -dist -excess -still -perf    -asrt  
 has carried too much from a distance

- (2d) paythokpihənkhirəʔəmmí  
 pay -thok -pi            -hən -khi -lək -ləm -í  
 fly -out -rec            -caus-still -dist -evd -nhyp  
 Someone set it free/let it fly before I could get  
 there to make that happen myself.

Similarly, in (2e) the causative marker -hən has scope over -niŋ 'wish' signalling 'wish to cause to V' as opposed to (2f) where the meaning 'cause to wish to V' is signalled.

- (2e) mēhaknə                      əybu            čániŋhəllí  
 mə-hak-nə                      əy-pu            čá -niŋ -həl -í  
 3P-here-CNTR I -pat            eat-wish-caus-nhyp  
 he                              I                      cause to want to eat  
 He made me feel like eating.

- (2f) páhənniŋǵí  
 pá -hən -niŋ -í  
 read -caus -wish -nhyp  
 (I) wished to cause him to read.

Also compare (2g) with (2h): in (2h) the causative marker -hən has scope over the directional -lək whereas in (2g) it does not. In (2h) the action is instigated at a distance and continues to the place of speech whereas in (2g), the action is instigated and completed at a distance after which the speaker moves towards the place of speech.

- (2g) čáhəlləʔe  
 čá -həl -lək -e  
 eat -caus -dist -asrt  
 I was made to eat when I was there.

- (2h) chiti ədu purəkhənkhre  
 chiti ə -tu pu -lək -hən -khi -lə -e  
 letter att -ddet carry -dist -caus -still -perf -asrt  
 letter that caused to carry  
 (Tomba) caused him (when over there) to bring the  
 letter here (at an earlier time).

### 3 Patterns of lexicalization

Verb morphology in Manipuri is derived through two processes. 1LD and 2LD affixes are historically derived through the reduction of stems into affixes. Evidence will be provided that 3LD affixes are derived differently: stems are reduced phonologically through fast speech rules and are reanalyzed as affixes.

#### 3.1 The historical origin of 1LD and 2LD affixes

1LD and 2LD affixes have a diachronic relationship with a stem which is still in use in the language; that is, the affix has been derived from the stem. In (3a) and (3b) the left



LD2:      Suffix                      Related Stem

-mín 'comitative'	mín 'be together'
-pí 'V to or for someone other than self'	pí 'give'
-čə 'V for sake of self'	sá 'body'
-hən 'causative'	hán 'advance/push ahead'
-niŋ 'desire to V'	niŋ 'dream, wish'
-mən 'V in excess'	mán 'greedy'
-kən 'V repeatedly, habitually'	kən 'save'
-həw 'inceptive'	háw 'begin, grow'
-ləm 'indirect evidence'	ləm 'path'
-lək 'distal'	lak 'come'

In many languages of the world there is no evidence for the grammaticization of stems to affixes (e.g., with one or two exceptions, in Eskimo a stem is always a stem and a suffix is always a suffix far on into the past (Tony Woodbury (personal communication))). However, in Tibeto-Burman languages it is not unusual for a stem to gain a more abstract meaning and to be reduced to an affix (for example, see Matisoff 1989 for a discussion of such grammaticization in Lahu).

It is my contention that LD1 affixes are derived through Verb + Verb compounds where the second stem of the compound provided adverbial modification for the first stem. Likewise LD2 affixes are derived from Verb + Verb compounds where the second stem acted like an adjective modifying the first stem. Evidence supporting this

hypothesis comes from the synchronic grammar of Manipuri: although there are Noun + Verb; Noun + Noun; Noun + Noun (dvandva); Verb + Noun and Verb + Verb (dvandva) compounds, there are no Verb + Verb compounds (Chelliah, 1992). This gap in the compound inventory can be explained if Verb + Verb compounds were, at some point, reanalyzed as Verb + affix concatenations.

### 3.2 The origin of 3LD affixes

As listed in (4), there are seven 3LD affixes, these signal meanings of mood or aspect.

(4)	Mood 1	-kə	'potential'
		-loy	'nonpotential'
	Mood 2	-tə	'necessity'
		-təw	'obligation, probability'
		-toy	'intention'
	Aspect	-li	'progressive'
		-lə	'perfect'

The origin of 3LD affixes is less transparent than 1LD and 2LD affixes. In the case of 1LD and 2LD affixes, the meanings of the affixes are semantic bleachings (in the sense of Givón (1979)) of the stem they are derived from. Although the precise semantic features are reduced so that the form can have a more generalized use, the meaning of the resultant affix is not so abstract that it cannot be clearly related to the stem it is derived from. In the case of the 3LD affixes the derived meaning is not relatable to a stem in any obvious fashion. I will now explain by what process these affixes have been derived.

### 3.2.1 Origin of 3LD affixes through fast speech rules

The origin of all seven of the 3LD affixes cannot be traced to grammatization. I assume that four of these affixes have an older Tibeto-Burman pedigree. In this section, I concentrate on tracing the origin of -loy 'nonpotential', -təw 'obligation, probability' and -toy 'intention'. Evidence for the origin of these 3LD affixes comes in the synchronic grammar from the application of fast speech rules to nominal complement - main verb sequences where the main verb functions like a modal or aspectual marker. Examples of such constructions are given in (5)

- (5a)     $\eta\text{əsi}$        $\text{má phubə}$                        $\text{tare}$   
           $\eta\text{əsi}$        $\text{má phu}$      $-\text{pə}$                $\text{ta } -\text{lə} \quad -\text{e}$   
          today    he beat     $-\text{nom}$             fall-pro  $-\text{asrt}$   
          today    he to beat                      will fall out  
          Today he is going to be beaten for sure.
- (5b)     $\text{məhak}$     Hindi  $\text{pábə}$                        $\eta\text{əmmí}$   
           $\text{mə-hak}$     Hindi  $\text{pá}$      $-\text{pə}$                $\eta\text{əm} \quad -\text{í}$   
          3P-here    Hindi read  $-\text{nom}$             can  $-\text{nhyp}$   
          he            Hindi to read                      can  
          He can read Hindi.
- (5c)     $\text{má}$     Hindi  $\text{pábə}$                        $\text{yáy}$   
           $\text{má}$     Hindi  $\text{pá}$      $-\text{pə}$                $\text{yáy} \quad -\text{í}$   
          he    Hindi read  $-\text{nom}$             can  $-\text{nhyp}$   
          He can read Hindi.

First, through a common morpheme deletion rule (Chelliah, 1992), the nominalizer can be omitted. This results in a phonological merger between the main verb and verb of the complement. Thus (5c) may also be páyáy. The indication is that if this process which is evidenced in the language right now had been present at an earlier stage of the language, the 3LD mood marker -təw could be derived



through the same process. That is, the stem təw was used as the main verb to signal modal meaning in nominal complement-main verb sequences; through the morpheme deletion rule which allows the nominalizer to be omitted, the main verb and verb of the nominal complement, were merged; təw was then reanalyzed as a modal marker instead of a stem used to signal modal meaning. A similar pattern of grammaticization can be postulated for loy.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the application of fast speech rules can cause the grammaticization of a stem into an affix.<sup>3</sup> In the synchronic grammar of Manipuri, there are alternate forms attested for nominal complement-main verb sequences, forms where one or more fast speech rule has applied and a corresponding form where no such rules have applied. Through a combination of fast speech rules and the morpheme deletion rule described above, the main verb and the verb of the complement merge.

As seen in (6) the verb of the nominal complement cətpə and the main verb dərkə oy may occur as individual phonological and morphological units as in (6a). A variant of this sequence is given in (6b) where the main verb is phonologically merged with the verb of the complement and appears as an affix instead of an independent verb (6b).

- (6a) nəŋ    cətpə        dərkə        oy  
       nəŋ    cət -pə      dərkə        oy  
       you go -nom need        be  
       you to go        necessary is  
       You intend (and so need) to go.

- (6b) cəttəy        'intend (and so need) to go'

The derivation of (6a) from (6b) can be traced through two intermediate forms. A commonly attested variant to the careful speech form given in (6a) is cətpə dəgar oy. To

derive this form the rk cluster in dərkar is reduced to k, following a restriction on rC clusters. For example, consonant clusters of the form rC may be broken up by the insertion of schwa between the two consonants. Thus Mənipurdə 'at Manipur' may be pronounced as Mənipurədə.

Thus dərkar becomes dəkar. Furthermore, the intervocalic k become voiced: dəkar becomes dəgar. Voicing of stops across particular morpheme boundaries is a lexical process (Chelliah, 1992). However, there is an additional optional rule of voicing which takes place word internally. For example, although voiced aspirated stops are never derived lexically, voicing of such stops can be observed in fast speech:

- |      |                         |      |                           |
|------|-------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| (7a) | Dhimapur <b>bh</b> aw   | (7b) | láyru <b>gh</b> ini       |
|      | Dhimapur - <b>ph</b> aw |      | láy -lu - <b>kh</b> i -ni |
|      | Dhimapur -up to         |      | be -adir-still -COP       |
|      | up to Dhimapur          |      | still being there         |

I am assuming that it is this rule of voicing that applies here.

A second intermediate alternant between (6a) and (6b) exists: cátpə dəoy. In this case, a fast speech rule applies whereby intervocalic g is deleted. Evidence of this rule is provided in examples (8a-d). In (8a) the initial g of the suffix -kum 'like' is deleted. Since in Manipuri like vowels coalesce, [ə-du-um-bə] surfaces as [ə-dum-bə]. Example (8b) illustrates a second pattern of the obliteration of word/morpheme boundaries. Here the deletion rule described for (8) applies resulting in a sequence of two non-identical vowels which then become a diphthong. For example in (8d), the g of the morpheme -təgi 'ablative' deletes; the resulting sequence əi becomes əy.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(8a) ədumbə<br/>         ə -tu        -kum    -pə<br/>         att-ddet    -like    -nom<br/>         being like that</p> | <p>(8b) kədaydəyno<br/>         kəday   -təgi -no<br/>         where   -abl -INQ<br/>         From where is it?</p>                                       |
| <p>(8c) əduydo<br/>         ə        -tu        -ki    -tə<br/>         att    -ddet    -gen -loc<br/>         at that</p>   | <p>(8d) kəydəwbəyno<br/>         kəri   -təw-pə -ki -no<br/>         what -do -nom-gen-INQ<br/>         Oh, what is the reason<br/>         for that?</p> |

Thus dəgar oy becomes dəar oy. Although it is hard to motivate in terms of fast speech rules observed in the language, it also appears that the sequence ar deletes. There is then a merger between the two free forms of which the final verb is composed: dəar oy becomes dəoy.

Finally, I trace the derivation of cətpə dəoy to the variant given in (6b). First, there is the omission of the nominal marker from the verb of the nominal clause, following the morpheme deletion rule discussed above, and a subsequent merger of the final verb with the verb of complement. The final verb is further reduced phonologically with the deletion of ə. Thus cətpə dəoy → cətdoy.

The fact that the final verb has gained affixal status in (6b) is supported by the fact that it participates in the lexical phonology that all other suffixes undergo (Chelliah 1990, 1992): the initial stop of this form is voiceless, the attested form is cəttoy not cətdoy, showing that the lexical rule of voicing assimilation by which syllable-initial voiceless unaspirated stops are voiced between voiced segments, is operative. This is further supported by forms like cədəoy 'need to eat' (cə 'eat'), where the initial consonant of the affix, following the rule of voicing assimilation, is voiced. Finally, morphological evidence that dərkəar oy is reanalyzed as the affix -toy is that the nominalizer may occur after the

affix: céttoybə 'to need to go' and cádoybə 'to need to eat'.

## 4 Conclusion

In this paper I have argued for the existence of two patterns of diachronic development for the creation of new verbal morphology in Manipuri: (1) the formation of affixes through the semantic bleaching of stems in compounds and their subsequent morphological reduction to affixes and (2) the application of fast speech rules which obliterate word boundaries and initiate the grammaticization of stems to affixes.

## Notes

### <sup>1</sup> List of Abbreviations

<u>Gloss</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Morpheme</u>
adir	action away from place of speech	-lu
asrt	assertive	-e
att	attributive	ə-
caus	causative	-hən
CNTR	contrastive	-nə
COP	copula	-ni
ddet	distance determiner	-tu
dist	distal	-lək
evd	indirect evidence	-ləm
excess	V to excess	-mən
gen	genitive	-ki
here	participant present	-hak
INQ	inquisitive	-no
loc	locative	-tə
nhyp	nonhypothetical	-í
nom	nominalizer	-pə
npot	non-potential	-loy
pat	patient	-pu
perf	perfect	-lə
pro	prospective	-lə

rec	action done for sake of others	-pi
still	still	-khi
wish	wish to V	-niŋ
1P	first person	i-
3P	third person	mə-

<sup>2</sup> The semantic relationship between the verb 'finish' and the meaning of the nonpotential affix is not clear. However, a similar extension of meaning has been observed for Japanese. Ono and Suzuki (1992) note that the Japanese verb shimau 'put away, finish' has, in spontaneous informal conversation, several grammaticized uses including one which indicates the speaker's attitude that a situation should not (have) occur(ed).

<sup>3</sup> Fast speech rules can be distinguished from lexical and other post-lexical rules in that they apply (1) optionally, (2) in an unordered fashion, and (3) are not lexically conditioned and (4) may apply across or within words.

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