MORPHOPHONEMIC CHANGES IN MEITEIRON COMPOUNDING

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The aim of this paper is to show the modification of bases in Meiteiron. The paper deals about the changes of consonants and vowels in the process of compounding.

Introduction

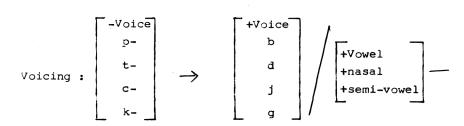
The general characteristics of the morphophonemic changes in Meiteiron roots are very irregular. The sound changes which occur in compounding can be discussed in the following headings. They are (1) voicing, (2) deaspiration, (3) change of lateral sound, (4) changes of nasals, (5) changes of vowels, (6) loss or delation and (7) addition of semi-vowels.

1. Voicing

In the process of voicing, the voiceless sounds change into voiced sounds. The type of process is of progressive assimilation. The unaspirated voiceless stop sounds p,t,c,k are found to have changed into their voiced counterpart b,d,j,g, respectively, when the second root is preceded immediately by a voiced sound (i.e., a nasal, a vowel) or a semi-vowel. It is shown in the following table.

Table 1

| lst root ends in a nasal, or a se- mi-vowel or a vowel | + 2nd root begins with p- | = Compound [-Voice] > [+ Voice] p > b |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| ends in a nasal or a vowel or a semi vowel | begins with t- | t > d |
| ends in a nasal or a vowel, or a vowel, or a semi-vowel | begins with c- | c > j |
| ends in a nasal or a vowel, or a semi-vowel | begins with k- | k > g |



Examples:

| lem + pan | = | lemban | 'wild arum' |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------------|
| land arum | | | |
| huy + pu | = | huybu | 'owner of dog' |
| dog owner | | | |
| san + pu | = , | sənbu | owner of cow |
| cow owner | | | |
| l a y + pak | = ; | l ə ybak | 'clay' |
| land + broad | | | |
| caw + pan | = | cawbaŋ | 'fool' |
| big to be foo | 1 . | | |
| t > d | | | |
| p ^h i + ta | = | p ^h ida | 'type of cloth' |
| cloth type | | | |
| khon + ta | = 1 | k ^h onda | 'shape of leg' |
| leg shape | | | |
| k ^h oy + ton navel high | = | k ^h oydoŋ | one having big |
| t ^h aw + taw | = | t ^h əwdəw | 'mode of doing' |
| duty + to do | | | |
| sen + ton | = | sendon | 'debt' |
| money to debt | | | |
| lam + ton | = | l ə mdoŋ | 'high land' |
| land to be hi | gh | | |
| cin + ton | = | cindon | 'high hill' |
| hill to be high | h | | |

sword to be curved

Exception: In some compounding there is no changes of p,t,c,k if the 2nd root is immediately preceded by a nasal or semivowel or a vowel.

Examples:

| p remains as | в р —— | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|--------------------|
| l∂m + pak | = | ləmpak | 'meadow' |
| land to be | oroad | | |
| cen + pak | = ' | cenpak | 'flattened rice' |
| rice to be | oroad | | |
| law + pu | = | l əw pu | owner of the paddy |
| paddy field | owner | | field' |

| t remains as | t | | |
|-------------------------|----------|----------------------|---------------------|
| paw + tak | = | pawtak | 'advice' |
| news to indic | ate | | |
| u + ton | = | uton | 'top of the tree' |
| tree top | | | |
| mi + top | = | mitop | 'outsider' |
| man others | | | |
| ya + ton | = | yaton | 'tip of the tooth' |
| teeth tip | | | |
| lay + ton | = | 1 a yton | 'tip of the tongue' |
| tongue tip | | | |
| c remains as | С | | |
| k ^h on + cat | = | k ^h oncet | 'journey' |
| leg to go | | | |
| lam + cat | = | lamcat | 'character' |
| land to go | | | |
| mi + cəm | = | micəm | 'layman' |
| man simple | | | |
| m ə y + cak | = | maycak | 'pang of sorrow' |
| fire to burn | | | |
| k remains as | <u>k</u> | | |

wa + kat

word to give

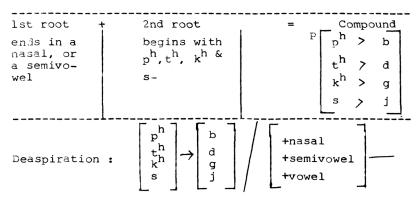
= wak≥t

'complain'

2. Deaspiration

In deaspiration process, voicing rule will apply first and in the second step deaspiration will apply to the aspirated sounds. So, the voiceless aspirated stop p^h , t^h , k^h and voiceless fricative s become unaspirated voiced b,d,g and j, respectively, when the second is preceded by a vowel or a semi-vowel or a nasal. After applying voicing rule the initial of the second root p^h , t^h and k^h are deaspirated.

Table 2



Examples:

$$p^h > b$$

$$p^h i + p^h am = p^h ibam$$
 'condition'

cloth place

$$sa + p am = sabam$$
 'place where thing to be made'

to make place

$$t^h > d$$

$$p^{h}_{aw} + t^{h}_{oy} = p^{h}_{aw}doy$$
 'interest as paddy'

paddy more

money more

$$k^h > g$$

$$p^{h}i + k^{h}a = p^{h}iga$$
 'lining'

cloth under

money bag

hair to be dress

Exception: In some compounding there is no changes of p^h , t^h , k^h and s if the second root is preceded

by a vowel, or a semi vowel or a nesal and also voiceless stop p,t and k.

p^h remains as p^h

thaw + sin = thawsin 'mode of arrangeduty + to arrange

cak + ta = cakta 'kind of rice /
mode of rice'

rice + mode

yot + pak = yotpak 'spade'

iron + to be broad

Nasal change

The three nasals m,n, & n are found to undergo irregular changes while compounding. These changes can be studied under two categories - (1) changes of nasals and (2) loss or deletion of nasals (details will be under the heading of loss or deletion).

3.1 Changes of nasals

In the process of changing the two elements are affected. So, the nasal changes is of reciprocal nature. In the first step voicing rule will be applied to the initial voiceless sound of the second root and correspondingly it will affect the preceding sound of the first root final. It is shown by the following table.

| Table : | 3 |
|---------|---|
|---------|---|

| Table 3 | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1st Root | + | 2nd Root | = Compound |
| ends in -m | | begins with k- | (k)g correspond- ing to the preced- ing sound and also myn corresponding to the following velar sound g) |
| ends in | | begins with p- | <pre>(p > b correspond- ing to the preced- ing voiced sound & also n > m corresp- onding to the fol- lowing bilabial sound b)</pre> |
| ends in | | begins with k ^h - | (kh > g, the initial of the second root aspirated kh is deaspirated and changes corresponding to the preceding voiced sound and also n > g corresponding to the following velar sound g) |
| RECIPROCAL: | -Voice k- p- kh- +Nasa | → g b g | |

Examples:

Ends in -m

Ends in -n

Ends in -n and begins with k^{h} in the second root:

$$sen + k^h aw = sengaw$$
 'purse'

money + bag

 $sen + k^h om = sengaw$ 'milk'

 $sen + k^h om = sengaw$ 'milk'

The above examples have exceptions. There is no change of \underline{n} and \underline{m} , Only voicing rule applied to the 2nd initial sound. The nasals remain as it is.

Examples :

m remains as m

n remains as n

cow + mother

hen + mother

$$pan + k^h a = pank^h a$$
 'south of the barrier'

barrier+south

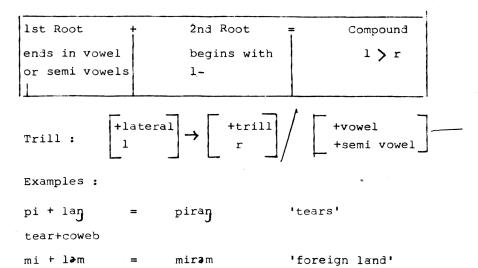
$$sen + k^h ay = senk^h ay$$
 'to contribute money + to contribute one's share'

4. Changes of lateral sound

The lateral $\underline{1}$ changes into \underline{r} , if it is preceded by a vowel or a semi vowel.

Table 4

man + land



Exception: The lateral $\underline{1}$ remains as $\underline{1}$ when it is preceded by voiceless stop (p,t,k) and also by nasal sounds.

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 \end{bmatrix} / \begin{bmatrix} \text{Voiceless} \\ p, t, k \\ \text{and + nasal} \end{bmatrix}$$

'requirements'

Examples:

pot + ləm = potləm 'requirements'

thing+way

$$p^h$$
 > k + len = p^h > klen 'big mat'

mat best

 k^h on + lək = k^h on lək 'space between leg + between

potla m

4.1 In the process of changing the initial of the second root $\underline{1}$ changes into \underline{r} , \underline{f} it is preceded by \underline{a} vowel, or a semi vowel. Then the preceding low vowel of the first root \underline{a} changes into central mid vowel 3.

Examples:

a > 8

sa + lu = saru

'bone'

animal+bone

ma + lon

m**ə**ron

'his/her language'

his/her+language

4.2 However, there is one exception that the lateral $\underline{1} > \underline{m}$ after \underline{m} . The process involved is to assimilate to \underline{m} and become gemminated.

Example : 1 > m

 $p = p + len = p^h$

'main seat in a house'

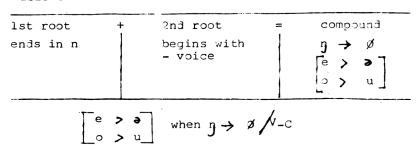
place+best

Changes of vowels

In some compounds certain vowels are found change in Meiteiron. The changes took place in three ways and can be discussed in two sections. I. Changes of e>a and e>u, 2. Changes of e>a and e>u, 2. Changes of e>a.

5.1 e>and o>u

Table 5



rice⁺small

$$k^{h}$$
on + k^{h} a = k^{h} uga sole

leg + below

5.2 The vowel $a > \partial$ only in the four roots e.g. $\frac{t^h a}{t^h a}$ 'chest', $\frac{t^h a}{t^h a}$ 'body', $\frac{t^h a}{t^h a}$ 'rice' and $\frac{t^h a}{t^h a}$ 'he/she'. Out of four roots, again a root having $\frac{t^h a}{t^h a}$ in the final will also deleted.

Table 6

| lst | + 2nd | = Compound |
|----------------------|---------------------|--|
| ends in -a and -k | begins with - voice | i) $a > 0$ ii) $a > 0$ and also $k \rightarrow \emptyset$ |

Example :

chest+to be broad

body to be round

$$cak + k = c c e$$
 'rice without curry'

rice + to be dry

he/she+father

However, there are exceptions for all the above changes. Examples are on the next page.

ceg + pak = cegpak 'flattened rice'
rice+to be broad

khog + pak = khogpak 'foot'
leg + to be broad
sa + phi = saphi 'dress for hunting'
body+cloth
cak + len = caklen 'dinner'
rice+best
cak + sag = caksag 'kitchen'
rice+house

6. Loss or deletion

The loss of a consonant is usually related to articulatory processes in order to make pronunciation easier. The deletion may be discussed under the following categories: (1) loss of voiceless t & k (2) loss of nasals.

6.1 Loss of voiceless t & k

The final sound of the first root gets deleted when a voiceless sound as its initial of the second root and also the initial voiceless sound of the second root is changed into voiced sounds.

Table 7

| lst root | + 2nd root = | <pre>compounding</pre> |
|------------|--------------------------|--|
| ends in -t | begins with voiceless t- | t → Ø V1 > Vd |
| ends in -k | begins with voiceless k- | $k \rightarrow \emptyset$ $v1 > va$ |
| | | (in such cases the preceding vowel of the first root is shorten as a>a) |

Example: $t > \emptyset$

$$k^{h}ut + tag = k^{h}udag$$
 'Part of the hand between wrist & elbow'

 $k^{h}ut + top = k^{h}udop$ 'ring'

 $k > \emptyset$: when k- is deleted the vowel of the first root \underline{a} is shorten and changes into $a > \delta$.

Examples :

hand * add

Exception : There are some compounding which have no deletion of \underline{t} and \underline{k} .

Example :

6.2 Loss of nasals

The nasal sound of the 1st root final gets deleted when a nasal sound is in the initial position of the second root.

Table 8

| lst root | + 2nd root = | compounding |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ends in -m | begins with n- | $m \rightarrow \emptyset$ |
| | | n > m |
| ends in -n | begins with n-, p-,t-,c | ŋ → Ø o > u e > ə |
| ends in -n | begins with 1- | n → Ø |
| ends in -n | Segins with 1- | 1 > r |

6.2.1 m→Ø

When the masal sound \underline{m} of the 1st root is deleted and also the initial of the second root n>m. Example:

$$p^{h}$$
 am + nun = p^{h} ammun 'bed' place+inside

6.2.2
$$\eta \rightarrow \emptyset$$

rice+small

The masal sound n of the first root final is deleted and also the vowel of the first root o>u and e>o.

Exception: In some environments the nasal n remains intact and also there is no change of the 1st root vowel.

$$6.2.3 \quad n \rightarrow \emptyset$$

The masal sound \underline{n} of the 1st root final is deleted and also the initial of the second root 1 > r due to the preceding vowel.

Example:

7.0 Loss of vowels

The vowel $\underline{\mathbf{a}}$ gets deleted while compounding in two instances.

[+Vowel a]
$$\rightarrow \emptyset / [V_{a-}]$$

Example:

8.0 Addition of semi vowel

While compounding the semivowel \underline{w} and \underline{y} are added. The semi vowel \underline{w} is added (1) between semivowel & and mid back vowel (2) low vowel \underline{a} or high front vowel \underline{i} and mid back vowel \underline{o} . The semi vowel \underline{y} is added between \underline{a} - o. It is shown in the following table.

Table 9

| lst root | 2nd root | Compound |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| ends in semi vowel -w, -y | begins with o- | +w |
| ends in -a or | begins with | +w |
| ends in -a | begins with | + y |

Addition:
$$\emptyset \to \begin{bmatrix} w \\ y \end{bmatrix} / \begin{bmatrix} w \to 0 \\ a \text{ or } i \to 0 \\ a \to 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Example :

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