Delctic suffixes in Manipuri

M. S. Ningomba
Manipur University
Imphal, India

1. Manipuri delctic suffixes:

The Manipuri language makes use of four delctic suffixes: ṛə, 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.

<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>ṛə</td>
<td>toward the speaker</td>
<td>at the speaker’s place</td>
<td>event follows the motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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>rək</td>
<td>toward the speaker</td>
<td>away from the speaker’s place</td>
<td>event precedes the motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰə</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 delctic suffixes end in the non-future tense suffix which has the alternant ų after the suffixes ṛə and ru, and the alternant i after the suffixes rək and kʰə. The vowel a of the suffix kʰə gets deleted when the non-future tense suffix is added.
1. tēw  'do'  tēwṛēy  'came here and did something'
tēwṛūy  'went there and did something'
tēwṛēk-i  'did something and came here'
tēwkhī  'did something and went away'

2. ca  'eat'  carēy  'came and ate'
carūy  'went and ate'
carek-i  'ate and came'
cakhī  'ate and went away'

3. Johnne Peterkhoide cak  carūy  
John went to Peter's place and dined.

4. John meyumdegi ca theelek-i  
John his house-ABL tea drink-dSFX-nonfut.
John took tea in his place and came here.

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

6. Johnne yāmne sāwne thebēk tokkhī  
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 carek-i  'I ate (somewhere else and came here)'
ey cakhīgēni  'I will eat here and go'

3 "Deictic suffix." [Ed.]
2. Allomorphy.

The initial consonant ṛ of the first three of these suffixes, namely ṛe, ṛu, and ṛek, 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 ṛ of these three deictic suffixes assimilates completely to the preceding consonant when that consonant is m, n, or p. For example:

8. ṕhēm ‘sit’
   ṕhēmmēy ‘came and sat here’
   ṕhēmmūy ‘went and sat there’
   ṕhēmmēk-i ‘came sitting (as on a bus)/sat sometime (somewhere else) and came’

9. thēṇ ‘touch’
   thēṇṇēy ‘came and touched’
   thēṇṇūy ‘went and touched’
   thēṇṇēk-i ‘touched from the opposite direction/touched and came’

10. lep ‘decide’
    leppēy ‘came and decided’
    leppūy ‘went and decided’
    leppēk-i ‘decided and came’

(2) If the ṛ 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’
    sotlēy ‘came and took on credit’
    sotlūy ‘went and took on credit’
    sotlēk-i ‘took on credit and came’

12. tan ‘earn’
    tallēy ‘came and earned’
    tallūy ‘went and earned’
    tallēk-i ‘earned and came’

(3) If the preceding consonant is k, the first two suffixes (ṛe and ṛu) delete their initial consonant, whereas the third one (ṛek) changes it to l. For example:
13. **lok** ‘harvest’  
lok-ôy  ‘came and harvested’ 
lok-ûy  ‘went and harvested’ 
lok-1êk-i ‘harvested and came’

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

14. **lok** ‘harvest’  
lokkhî  ‘harvested and went away’ 
lokkhâre  ‘has harvested and gone away’ 
lokkhâragâni  ‘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, rê and rû, are rather uniform in providing the following meanings:

rê  ‘to come (or bring something) and do something’
rû  ‘to go (or take away something) and do something’

Examples:

15. **lāw** ‘cry’  
lâwrêy  ‘came and cried’ 
lâwrûy  ‘went and cried’

16. **thôŋ** ‘cook’  
thôŋrêy  ‘came and cooked’ 
thôŋrûy  ‘went and cooked’

17. **sî** ‘die’  
sîrêy  ‘came and died’ 
sîrûy  ‘went and died’

18. **yok** ‘rear up’  
yok-ôy  ‘brought someone and reared up’ 
yok-ûy  ‘took away someone and reared up’
19. sat 'blossom' satlēy
   satlūy 'a plant that had been
   brought and blossomed'
   'a plant that had been taken
   away and blossomed'

3.1.1. The above two suffixes are somewhat infrequent after non-volitional
intransitive verbs like pōp 'swell', pom 'bud', sōw 'boil', etc., and in the
case of some of them the suffixes show certain extended or metaphorical
connotations. For example:

20. cak 'burn' cak-ōy 'sad thoughts came and burnt the heart'
    cak-ūy 'sparks flew off and burnt something
    at a distance'

3.1.2. The suffix rēk has the primary sense of doing something and
coming towards the speaker (or the place where the speaking is taking
place), whereas the suffix kēk has the opposite sense of doing something
and going away from the speaker. In both these cases the motion generally
takes place after the action has been carried out, but in the case of the suffix
rēk the action takes place at a location that is away from that of the speaker
(and hence the motion is toward him), whereas in the case of the suffix kēk
the action takes place at the location of the speaker (and hence the motion
is away from him). For example:

21. lēy 'stay' lēyrēk-i 'stayed somewhere else and
came here'
    lēykhi 'stayed here and went away'

22. ca 'eat' carek-i 'ate somewhere and came
    here'
    cakhî 'ate here and went away'

23. thōŋ 'cook' thōŋkēk-i 'cooked and came'
    thōŋkhî 'cooked and went'

24. pā 'read' pārek-i 'read and came'
    pākhi 'read and went'
3.1.3. However, in the case of some of the durative verbs like kəp 'weep', cɛn 'run', pāy 'fly', iro'y 'swim', tāw 'float', etc., the action is shown to take place along with the motion (toward or away from the speaker), even though it is being assumed to have started at a distant place in the case of the suffix rək and at the speaker's place in the case of the suffix kʰə. For example:

25. kəp 'weep' kəppək-ı kəpkʰi 'came weeping' 'went away weeping'
26. cɛn 'run' celək-ı cɛnkʰi 'came running' 'went away running'
27. tʰāŋ 'carry' tʰāŋŋək-ı tʰāŋkʰi 'came carrying something' 'went away carrying something'

An interesting extension of this particular use is seen in the following instances in which the verb itself does not allow a simultaneous motion:

28. tʊm 'sleep' tummək-ı tumkʰi 'came sleeping (in a sleeper)' 'went away sleeping'
29. pʰəm 'sit' pʰəmmək-ı pʰəmkʰi 'came sitting (on a bus)' 'went away sitting'

3.1.4. In other instances, when the meaning of the verb does not directly involve any motion as such, one may obtain the sense of orientation from the use of these suffixes. In the case of the suffix rək the orientation is toward the speaker (from a place which is away from him), whereas with kʰə it is away from his location. For example:

30. yəŋ 'look' yəŋŋək-ı yəŋkʰi 'looked from the other side (toward the speaker)' 'looked from the speaker's side'
31. lāw 'cry' lāwərk-ı lāwkʰi 'cried from the other side' 'cried from the speaker's side'
3.1.5. In the case of some of the verbs which involve a beneficiary, these two suffixes are found to show an interesting exchange of meaning as far as the agent of the relevant action is concerned.

When the transaction involves an agent who is also the receiver, the suffix rək indicates the arrangement in which the speaker functions as the agent. However, when it involves a losing agent and a distinct beneficiary who gains from the transaction, the suffix rək indicates the arrangement in which the speaker functions as the beneficiary but not as the agent. On the other hand, the suffix khə denotes the exact opposite arrangement in the case of these two types of verbal bases.

The contrastive use of these suffixes in two different types of transaction verbs can be exemplified by the following pairs of verbal forms:

32. ləw 'take' ləwrək-i 'speaker took something from someone'
    ləwkhi 'someone took something from the speaker'

33. pi 'give' pirek-i 'someone gave something to the speaker'
    pikhi 'speaker gave something to someone'

34. kʰay 'collect' kʰayrək-i 'speaker collected from someone'
    kʰaykhi 'someone collected from the speaker'

35. yēn 'distribute' yēllek-i 'someone distributed (and the speaker received it)'
    yēnkhi 'speaker distributed (and someone else received it)'

In sentences 33 and 35 above, the suffix rək has the speaker as the beneficiary and someone else as the agent, with the situation being reversed for kʰə, whereas in sentences 32 and 34 the suffix rək has the speaker as the agent and the suffix kʰə has the speaker as the beneficiary.

The crucial point to be noted here is that the suffix rək has the primary meaning of denoting a motion toward the speaker, and the suffix kʰə has the opposite sense of denoting a motion away from the speaker. In the case of transactions, the motion involved is that of the object concerned,
which explains the fact that rek always indicates the receiver of the object, while khē marks the loser, irrespective of the actual case roles involved.

The case of the verb ni 'request' is rather interesting in that the suffix rek shows an ambiguity. It can indicate either (1) the orientation of the request itself toward the speaker, or (2) the benefit of the request toward him:

36. ni 'request' nirēk-i: (1) 'someone requested something of the speaker'  (2) 'speaker requested and obtained something from someone'

It may be noted in this connection that all these verbs show a uniform sense in the case of the suffix khē, which gives the additional temporal sense of 'past perfect', as pointed out in the following section.

3.1.6. The suffix khē is very frequently used in the temporal meaning of doing something in the past. This can be regarded as an extension of its spatial meaning, namely, doing something and going away. In this temporal meaning, the suffix can be used with almost all the verbal bases (including the stative ones).

37. thōn 'cook' thōnkhi 'had cooked'  tum 'sleep' tumkhi 'had slept'  sēw 'boil' sēwkhi 'had boiled'

3.1.7. The suffix rek can also be used in a comparable temporal meaning in the case of durative verbs such as yū 'leak', thēw 'drive', etc. However, the suffix rek indicates here an ongoing process or activity that had been started earlier (which is clearly an extension of the spatial meaning of someone starting an activity somewhere else and moving toward the speaker), whereas the suffix khē denotes an activity that had been completed or had ceased.

38. khēn 'think' khēlēk-i khēnkhi 'have been thinking'  'had thought earlier'

39. thēw 'drive' thēwrek-i thēwkhi 'have been driving for sometime'  'had driven earlier'

40. li 'narrate' lirēk-i likhi 'have been narrating'  'had narrated'
A somewhat different kind of temporal meaning is observed in the use of the suffix ṭēk in the following instances:

41. tīn 'meet' tīlēk-i 'have been meeting (from a fixed point of time)'

42. phēw 'expose' phēwrēk-i 'have been exposing in the sun (from a fixed point of time)'

43. phōn 'publish' phōnēk-i 'have been publishing (from a fixed point of time)'

In the case of certain intransitive verbs which denote non-volitional events (such as pom 'bud' and sat 'blossom'), the suffix ṭēk provides the temporal sense of the event taking place slowly or gradually. This particular meaning is quite common for this suffix in the case of stative verbs (see section 3.2 below). For example:

44. pom 'bud' pommēk-i '(the plant) started giving out buds slowly'

45. sat 'blossom' satlēk-i '(the flower) started blossoming gradually'

3.2. Stative verbs.

The suffixes ṭē and rū have roughly the same meanings after stative verbs as they do after dynamic verbs:

rē 'to come here and show the state or property denoted by the verb'

rū 'to go there and show the state or property'

Examples:
46. lam  'hungry'  laṃēy  'came here and is hungry'
lammūy  'went somewhere and was hungry there'

47. cīn  'busy'  cīḷōy  'came here and is busy'
cīllūy  'went there and was busy'

48. phē  'good'  phēṛōy  'came here and is good'
phērūy  'went there and is good'

49. iŋ  'cold'  iŋ̣ēy  'came here and feels cold'
iŋŋūy  'went there and feels cold'

The state or property is seen in the object rather than in the agent himself in the following examples:

50. cūm  'straight'  cūmṃēy  'came and straightened something'
cūmmūy  'went and straightened something there'

51. khōy  'be bent'  khōyṛōy  '(river) flows straight and bends here'
khōyrūy  '(river) flows straight and bends there'

3.2.1. In the case of color terms, the meaning of these suffixes may not involve any motion or orientation as such, but only the spatial distribution. For example:

52. ṇaŋ  'red'  ṇaŋŋ̣ōy  'is red here'
ţaŋŋūy  'is red over there'

53. mū  'black'  mūṛōy  'is black here'
mūrūy  'is black over there'

3.2.2. The suffixes rek and khe can also have the same kind of meanings here as they do with dynamic verbs:

rek  'to have had the property before coming here (or bringing something here)'
khọ 'to have had the property before going away from here (or taking something away from here)'

Examples:

54. pik 'small' piklek-i 'had been small before coming here' pikkhī 'had been small before going there'

55. sāŋ 'long' sāŋnek-i 'had been long before someone here received the object' sāŋkhī 'had been long before someone there received the object'

56. pak 'wide' paklek-i 'becomes wide here' pakkhī '(river) becomes wide over there'

However, these two suffixes show temporal connotations more frequently than spatial connotations in the case of these stative verbs. The suffix rek generally denotes that an individual or object attains the state or property slowly and gradually, whereas the suffix khọ indicates that they had shown this property in the past. For example:

57. ṇaŋ 'red' ṇaŋnek-i 'became red gradually' ṇaŋkhī 'had been red (but not any more)'

58. cik 'calm' ciklek-i 'became calm gradually' cikkhi 'had been calm'

59. sā 'hot' sārek-i 'became hot gradually' sākkhi 'had been hot'

60. hēy 'skillful' hēyrek-i 'became skillful gradually' hēykhi 'had been skillful'
REFERENCES
