

## Phoneme Substitution of Borrowed Words in Manipuri

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### Abstract

This paper will deal about a brief study of changes in sounds in borrowed words of Manipuri. Manipuri is also known as Meiteilon is a language spoken in Manipur. It is an attempt to study the substitution of a phoneme by another, increase in the number of syllable, lose of aspiration, deletion and addition of phoneme. Many changes in sound are found in the loan words or borrowed words of Manipuri language. Substitution of sounds is found in both vowel and consonant. There are changes from /j/ > /ɟ/ , /v/ > /b/ , /č<sup>h</sup>/ > /c/ , /o/ > /u/ , /ə/ > /o/ , /u/ > /o/ , /a/ > /o/ , /e/ > /i/ , etc. Pull of mother tongue is one of cause of phoneme substitution in borrowed words of Manipuri.

**Key words:** Meiteilon, Manipur, borrowed words, phoneme substitution, Manipuri

### 1. Introduction

Manipuri is one of the Tibeto Burman languages in India. Manipur is a north eastern state of India. On the other hand Hindi and English are the two languages of Indo European language family. Manipuri also known as Meiteilon is a language spoken by the Meitei community. Due to contact with main land of India words from languages that belong to Indo Aryan languages are borrowed into Manipuri. The language from which borrowing is done is from Sanskrit, Bengali, Assamese, Hindi and English. Contact with Sanskrit, Bengali and Assamese is much older than English.

It is stated by Lyle Campbell (1999) that borrowing is not restricted only to lexical items but any other linguistic items can be borrowed such as sounds, phonological rules, etc. In order to borrow a loanword the people has to have at least some knowledge of both the donor language and the receiving language.

Loan words are usually modified whether slightly or very much to suit the phonological structure of the receiving language. This modification leads to phoneme

substitution of foreign sounds by native sounds or phoneme. It occurs when the receiving language does not have the particular phoneme sound. Phoneme substitution is also known as adaptation, where a foreign sound in a loan word is replaced by an equivalent phoneme in the borrowing language. This paper deals with borrowed words from two languages that are loan words from Hindi and English into Manipuri language.

## 2. Hindi and Sanskrit Loan Words

Many changes in sound are found in the loan words of Manipuri language. Some substitution is due to the pull of the mother tongue, which is a natural phenomenon. Some substitutions are in consonant sounds while some others are in vowel sounds. There occurs sound deletion and addition also.

### 2.1 Consonant Replacement

First replacement is from ‘j’ to ‘ɟ’ (voiced palatal approximant to voiced palatal plosive).

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
juvraɟ	ɟubəraɟ	‘prince’
jəntɾə	ɟəntɾə	‘instrument’
jəɡɡə	ɟəɡɡə / ɟəigə	‘religious sacrifice’
jatra	ɟətra	‘journey/travel’
jəmrəɟ	ɟəmrəɟ	‘God of death’

Secondly, from ‘v’ to ‘b’ (voiced labio dental fricative to voiced bilabial plosive).  
‘v’ to ‘b’

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
divəs	dibəs	‘day like birthday etc’
vilaijəti	bilaiti	‘foreign’
vər	bor	‘boon/bridegroom’
vən	bən	‘forest’
vida:i	bidai	‘farewell’
jiv	ɟibə	‘creature’
jivika	ɟibika	‘living/livelihood’
əndʰəvisʰvas	əndʰəbiswas	‘superstition’

əvtaɾ	əbətara	‘incarnation’
Sanskrit	Manipuri	Gloss
pr <sup>h</sup> vi	pr <sup>h</sup> ibi	‘earth’
vid <sup>h</sup> i	bid <sup>h</sup> i	‘creator/providence’
vicara	bicara	‘justice’
vindu	bindu	‘point/dot’
vides	bides	‘foreign’
vənvasa	bonbas	‘dwelling in forest’

Third example of substitution is from voiceless bilabial plosive ‘p’ to voiceless aspirated bilabial plosive ‘p<sup>h</sup>’.

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
papəɾ	pap <sup>h</sup> ora	‘papad’

Fourth example of replacement of sound is from ‘v’ to ‘p’ (voiced labiodental fricative to voiceless bilabial plosive).

‘v’ to ‘p’

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
b <sup>h</sup> ava	b <sup>h</sup> apa	‘sentiment’

Fifth example of sound substitution is from ‘p’ to ‘b’ (voiceless bilabial plosive to voiced bilabial plosive) and ‘d’ to ‘r’ (voiced alveolar plosive to voiced alveolar trill).

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
(S) peḍa	(M) bera	‘sweets’

Sixth example is phoneme substitution from ‘b’ voiced bilabial plosive to ‘p’ voiceless bilabial plosive.

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
t <sup>h</sup> at bat	t <sup>h</sup> at pat	‘luxury, pomp and show’
d <sup>h</sup> əb	d <sup>h</sup> əp	‘way/manner/fashion’

Seventh phoneme replacement is from ‘g’ to ‘k’ (voiced velar plosive to voiceless velar plosive) and ‘b<sup>h</sup>’ to ‘b’ (voiced aspirated bilabial plosive to voiced bilabial plosive).

Hindi	Manipuri	
gob <sup>h</sup> i (cauliflower)	kobi	‘cauliflower / cabbage’

Eighth example of substitution is from voiced alveolar lateral ‘l’ to voiced alveolar nasal ‘n’.

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
gulel	gulen	‘pellet bow’

Ninth example is from ‘g<sup>h</sup>’ voiced aspirated velar plosive to voiced unaspirated velar plosive ‘g’.

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
g <sup>h</sup> us	gus	‘bribe’

Tenth example is from ‘t<sup>h</sup>’ to ‘t’

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
j <sup>h</sup> ut <sup>h</sup> mut <sup>h</sup>	j <sup>h</sup> ut mut	‘falsely’

The following substitution is of single consonant ‘k’ (voiceless velar plosive) substituted by consonant cluster ‘kr’.

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
cækki	cækkri	‘mill/ pulverizer’

Next example is substitution from aspirated voiceless velar plosive ‘k<sup>h</sup>’ to unaspirated voiceless velar plosive ‘k’.

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
tarik <sup>h</sup>	tarik	‘date’

Thirteenth example is substitution of voiced labiodental fricative ‘v’ by semi vowel ‘w’.

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
təva	təwa	‘iron pan’

## 2.2. Consonant Deletion

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
bra <sup>h</sup> mən	bamon	‘priest’
u <sup>ɾ</sup> ra	u <sup>ɾ</sup> a	‘ruined’
bənd	bən	‘closed/blocked’
ɟəga <sup>h</sup>	ɟəga	‘place’
bara <sup>h</sup>	baro	‘twelve’
kenc <sup>h</sup> i	kati	‘scissors’
nənha	nəha	‘child/youth’
ɟ <sup>h</sup> anɟ <sup>h</sup>	ɟ <sup>h</sup> an	‘cymbal/sistrum’

## 2.3. Replacement of Vowel and Deletion of Consonant

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
p <sup>h</sup> əlar	p <sup>h</sup> ola	‘fruit custard’
kacija	koci	‘fastener/ hook’
bara <sup>h</sup>	baro	‘twelve’

## 2.4. Sound Substitution of Vowels

‘o’ rounded back close-mid vowel substituted by ‘u’ rounded back closed vowel.

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
d <sup>h</sup> olak	d <sup>h</sup> ulok	‘drum’
ɟora	ɟura	‘pair’
topi	tupi	‘cap’

The following examples are substitution of ‘ə’ mid central vowel by ‘o’ rounded back close-mid vowel.

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
ɟəta	ɟota	‘tangled/matted hair’

əmər	omər	‘immortal’
əinək	ənək / ənəp	‘spectacle’
andolən	əndələn	‘protest’
b <sup>h</sup> avək	b <sup>h</sup> abək	‘audience’
nərək	norək	‘hell’
kət <sup>h</sup> a	kot <sup>h</sup> a	‘story’
p <sup>h</sup> əl	p <sup>h</sup> ol	‘result’
k <sup>h</sup> ərca	k <sup>h</sup> orsa / k <sup>h</sup> rosa	‘expenditure’
besən	besən	‘gram flour’
bəndi	bondi	‘prisoner/captive’
vər	bər	‘boon/bridegroom’
vən	bon	‘forest’
qələm	koləm	‘pen’

The following vowel substitution is from ‘u’ rounded back closed vowel to ‘o’ rounded back close-mid vowel.

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
d <sup>h</sup> uri	d <sup>h</sup> ori	‘string’
k <sup>h</sup> ula	k <sup>h</sup> ola	‘open’
c <sup>h</sup> uri	sori	‘knife’

Below are examples of substitution of unrounded front open vowel ‘a’ by rounded close-mid back vowel ‘o’.

Examples:

(B) p <sup>h</sup> arsa	(M) p <sup>h</sup> orsa	‘flop’
(H) tan̪ga	(M) toŋga	‘horse cart’
(H) dak <sup>h</sup> il	(M) dok <sup>h</sup> on	‘’
(H) bara <sup>h</sup>	(M) baro	‘twelve’

The following example is replacement of mid central vowel ‘ə’ by rounded back close vowel ‘u’.

Example:

(H) ərhər                      (M) uron / urhon                      ‘pigeon pea’

Another substitution is from mid central vowel ‘ə’ to unrounded front open vowel ‘a’.

Example:

(H) ər<sup>h</sup>                      (M) ar<sup>h</sup>ə / at<sup>h</sup>rə                      ‘meaning’

Next vowel substitution is from mid central vowel ‘ə’ to unrounded close mid front vowel ‘e’.

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
vjəŋjən	bəŋjon	‘consonant’
dəsta	desta	‘quire of paper’

And the following vowel substitution given below is substitution of unrounded close front vowel ‘i’ by unrounded close mid front vowel ‘e’.

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
əbir	əber	‘colour powder’
ilaqa	elaka	‘region / area’

Replacement of unrounded close mid front vowel ‘e’ by unrounded close front vowel ‘i’.

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
t <sup>h</sup> eka	t <sup>h</sup> ika	‘contract’
t <sup>h</sup> ekedar	t <sup>h</sup> ikadar	‘contractor’
deh	dihe	‘body’

Another substitution is of mid central vowel ‘ə’ by unrounded close front vowel ‘i’.

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
nəʃa	nisa	‘intoxication’
nəʃabəndi	nisabən	‘prohibition of drugs’

## 2.5. Insertion or Addition of Vowel or Consonant

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
əŋk (number)	əŋkə	‘mathematics’
balti	batin	‘bucket’
əmrit	əmritə	‘nectar’
əlmari	əmbari	‘wardrobe’
kund	kundə	‘pool’
grə <sup>h</sup>	grəhə	‘planet’
dənd	dəndi	‘punishment’

## 2.6. Deletion of One Sound and Addition of Another

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
bartə	baton	‘invitation’
balti	batin	‘bucket’
əlmari	əmbari	‘wardrobe’
gaiti	gəjenti	‘pick axe’

Deletion of ‘w’ and ‘j’

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
viswərgo	bisərgo	‘a consonant sound’
vjəŋjən	benjon	‘consonant’

## 2.7. Substitution of Both Vowel and Consonant

Examples:

Sanskrit	Manipuri	Gloss
vjapari	bepari	‘merchant/businessman’
vjapar	bepar	‘business’
vjəŋjən	benjon	‘consonant’
Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss



kəŋtʃi	kati	‘scissors’
cəmməc	caməs	‘spoon’
ʃəlɪni	caloni	‘sieve / strainer –flour’
ʃətɾi	satin	‘umbrella’
ʃəɳna	səna	‘sieve / strainer- water’
ʃatrə	satrə	‘pupil/student’
ʃuri	sori	‘knife’
ʃeni	serni	‘chisel’
ʃutti	suti	‘holiday’

## 2.8. Substitution of Vowel and Addition

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
gʰətna	gʰotona	‘occurrence’
deh	dihe	‘body’

## 2.9. Substitution of Consonant and Addition

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
təmbu	dəmbur	‘tent’

## 2.10. Diphthong Substitution by Single Vowel - ‘ai’ to ‘a’

Example:

(H) cai	(M) ca	(tea)
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## 2.11. Single Vowel is Substituted by Diphthong

Substitution of rounded back close-mid vowel ‘o’ to ‘əu’

Examples:

Hindi	Manipuri	Gloss
coki (a low square seat)	cəukri	(chair)
cokidar	cəukidar	(watchman)

Next substitution of mid central vowel ‘ə’ to ‘oi’.

Examples:

pə <sup>h</sup> la	poila	‘first’
prələj	prəloi	‘’

## 2.12. Change in Syllable and Reduplication

Example:

Hindi	Manipuri
cuci (nipple/pap)	cucu / cici (breast/nipple)

## 3. Loan words of English came after British colonization in Manipur

### 3.1 Following are the examples of vowel phoneme substitution in English loan words.

First example is substitution of ‘æ’ open mid front unrounded vowel to ‘e’ close mid front unrounded vowel.

æ > e

Examples are as follows:

Manipuri	English	Gloss
kelendər	kælɪndə	calendar
bek	bæg	bag
bekteria	bæktɪəriə	bacteria
bej	bædʒ	badge
bekgraun	bækgraʊnd	background
blekbod	blækbɔ:d	blackboard
bendej	bændɪdʒ	bandage
belens	bælens	balance
betri	bætri	battery
beŋ	bæŋk	bank
b <sup>h</sup> en	væn	van
teŋki	tæŋk	tank
hebit	hæbɪt	habit
p <sup>h</sup> en	fæn	fan

Second example is substitution of ‘ʌ’ open mid back unrounded vowel by ‘ə’ mid central vowel.

ʌ > ə

Examples

Manipuri	English	Gloss
dəbəl	dʌbl	double
drək	drʌg	drug
bəs	bʌs	bus
brəs	brʌʃ	brush
kəp	kʌp	cup
kəmpəs	kʌmpəs	compass
trək	trʌk	truck
kəndəktər	kəndʌktə	conductor
kərəpsən	kəʀʌpʃn	corruption

Thirdly, ‘ɪ’ near close front unrounded vowel is substituted by ‘e’ close mid front unrounded vowel.

ɪ > e

Examples

Manipuri	English	Gloss
kolej	kɒlɪdʒ	college
kelender	kælɪndə	calendar
ekjəmpəl	ɪgza:mpl	example
eləben	ɪlevn	eleven
helmet	helmit	helmet

Next substitution is of vowel ‘e’ close mid front unrounded vowel by ‘ə’ mid central vowel.

e > ə

Example

Manipuri	English	Gloss
əit	eɪt	eight

Fifth example of phoneme replacement is replacement of ‘ɒ’ open front unrounded vowel by ‘o’ close mid back rounded vowel.

ɒ > o

Example

Manipuri	English	Gloss
boks	bɒks	box
bom	bɒm	bomb
botəl	bɒtl	bottle
colej	kɒlɪdʒ	college
doktər	dɒktə	doctor

Next replacement is ‘ə’ mid central vowel by ‘o’ close mid back rounded vowel.

ə > o

Example

Manipuri	English	Gloss
kerosin	kerəsi:n	kerosene

Next example is insertion ‘u’ close back rounded vowel between two consonants.

‘u’ insertion

Examples

Manipuri	English	Gloss
tuwelp	twelve	twelve

Another example of insertion is ‘ə’ mid central vowel inserted between two vowels.

insertion of ‘ə’

Examples

Manipuri	English	Gloss
botəl	bɒtl	bottle
bələp	bʌlb	bulb
dəbəl	dʌbl	double
dijel	di:zl	diesel
eləben	ɪlevn	eleven
p <sup>h</sup> iləm	film	film

The following example is addition of 'i' close front unrounded vowel after a consonant at the final position.

'i' addition

Example

Manipuri	English	Gloss
inci	intʃ	inch

### 3.2 Substitution of diphthong by single vowel also takes place in borrowed words of Manipuri.

Diphthong 'eɪ' closing in front is substituted by single vowel 'e' close mid front unrounded vowel.

Example

'eɪ' > 'e'

Manipuri	English	Gloss
p <sup>h</sup> rem	freɪm	frame
p <sup>h</sup> el	feɪl	fail
get	geɪt	gate
eɟukesən	edʒukeɪʃn	education

Diphthong 'əʊ' closing in back is substituted by 'o' close mid back rounded vowel.

'əʊ' > 'o'

Manipuri	English	Gloss
həlo	hələʊ	hello
motor	məʊtə	motor

### 3.3 Now, following are the examples of consonant phoneme substitution.

Phoneme 'v' voiced labio dental fricative is substituted by 'b' voiced bilabial plosive or 'p' voiceless bilabial plosive.

v > b or p

Examples

Manipuri	English	Gloss
p <sup>h</sup> aip	faɪv	five

səben	sevn	seven
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Next examples are substitution of ‘f’ voiceless labio dental fricative by ‘p<sup>h</sup>’ voiceless bilabial aspirated plosive.

‘f’ > ‘p<sup>h</sup>’

Example

Manipuri	English	Gloss
p <sup>h</sup> on	fəʊn	phone
p <sup>h</sup> oto	fəʊtəʊ	photo
p <sup>h</sup> ail	faɪl	file
p <sup>h</sup> iləm	fɪlm	film
p <sup>h</sup> el	feɪl	fail
p <sup>h</sup> ri	fri:	free
p <sup>h</sup> i	fi:	fee
p <sup>h</sup> ut	fʊt	foot
p <sup>h</sup> en	fæn	fan
p <sup>h</sup> ebuəri	febrʊəri	february

**3.4 In English phoneme ‘r’ voiced post alveolar approximant is not pronounced** when it is followed by a consonant sound in a sentence but this is not the same as how the words with ‘r’ sound at final position is pronounced by Manipuri speakers. The ‘r’ sound at final position is properly pronounced by the Manipuri speakers.

Examples:

Manipuri	English	Gloss
kar	ka:	car
kəmpʊtər	kəmpju:tə	computer
kukər	kʊkə	cooker
kərpət	ka:pɪt	carpet
kelendər	kælɪndə	calendar
kəndəktər	kəndʌktə	conductor
giər	ɡiə	gear
eksərsais	eksəsaɪz	exercise
enərɡi	enədʒɪ	energy

doktər	dəktə	doctor
draib <sup>h</sup> ər	draivə	driver
riguleṭər	regjuleṭə	regulator
sentər	sentə	centre
silindər	sɪlɪndə	cylinder
sərdibiget	sətɪfɪkət	certificate

#### 4. Conclusion

From the brief analysis of loan words in this paper it is observed that loan words in Manipuri have lots of phoneme substitution. Many vowel as well as consonant phonemes of donor languages has been substituted by equivalent phoneme which is available in Manipuri. On the other hand younger generations have adapted some phonemes like ‘f’ and ‘v’ as a result of English education.

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