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## Compound Verbs in Manipuri

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### Abstract

The present paper contributes to the study of the compound verbs in Manipuri. It analyses the morphological and semantic features of the compound verbs in Manipuri. In Manipuri, compound verbs are formed by a combination of two or more roots. Compound verbs are very limited in number. They are formed by the suffixation of **-t<sup>h</sup>ok** 'out' and **-niŋ** 'wish or want' with a verbal root and they must end with the aspect markers. Another formation of compound verb can be made by a combination of three roots with aspect markers.

### Keywords

Morphological, semantic, aspect markers and suffixation.

## 1. Introduction

A compound verb or complex predicate is a multiword compound that acts as a single verb. One component of the compound is a light verb or vector, which carries inflections, indicating tense, mood or aspect, but it provides only the shades of meaning (Abraham, 2009).

*Compounding* is a term widely used in descriptive linguistic studies to refer to a linguistic unit which is composed of elements that function independently in other circumstances. Of particular currency are the notions of ‘compounding’ found in ‘compound words’ and ‘compound sentences’, but other applications of the term also are found, as in ‘compound verbs’ (David, 1985).

Compounding is a reanalysis involving the weakening and often the loss of the boundary between words or morphemes. Sometimes the result is a derivative morpheme (Hopper and Traugott, 2008).

Manipuri is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the North-Eastern state of Manipur in India. Manipuri compound verbs are formed by the combination of two or more roots which end with aspect markers. Manipuri compound verbs, as treated by Bhat and Ningomba (1997) and Yashawanta(2000), are made by the suffixation with aspect markers to the bound root. Taking the concept of compound verb presented by the above modern linguists of Manipuri, this paper presents a description of Manipuri compound verbs which are formed through suffixation with aspect markers to the bound root.

## 2. Compound Verb

In Manipuri, compound verbs are very limited in number. They are formed by the suffixation of **-t<sup>h</sup>ok** ‘out’ or **-nij** ‘wish/want’ with a verbal root and they must end with the aspect markers. That is, in the compound verb, one aspect marker is added. Formation of the two types of compound verbs is discussed below.

### 2.1. The suffix -t<sup>h</sup>ok

It has another allomorph **-tok~dok**. The suffix **-t<sup>h</sup>ok** occurs elsewhere but the suffix **-tok** occurs when the initial of the verbal base is an aspirated sound and **-dok** occurs if the final sound preceding verbal root is a voiceless one. These suffixes indicate the meaning of ‘come out’ or ‘out’. Such a kind of compound verb is formed in the following way.

Bound root + t<sup>h</sup>ok + asp. → Compound verb

- (i) cət + t<sup>h</sup>ok + le → cət-t<sup>h</sup>ok-le            ‘has moved out’  
go-out-asp.perf.
- (ii) tum + t<sup>h</sup>ok + le → tum-t<sup>h</sup>ok-le            ‘has started sleeping’  
sleep-out-asp.perf.
- (iii) t<sup>h</sup>ək + tok + le → t<sup>h</sup>ək-tok-le            ‘has drunk out’  
drink-out-asp.perf

## 2.2. The suffix -niŋ

It indicates ‘Wish or want or desire.’ This kind of compound **verb** formation is very productive, i.e., it can be added to any verb. This compound verb is formed in the following way:

Bound root + niŋ + asp. → compound verb

- (i) cət + niŋ + li → cət-niŋ-li            ‘still want to go’  
go-want-asp.prog.
- (ii) tum + niŋ + le → tum-niŋ-le            ‘has felt sleepy’  
sleep-want-asp.perf.
- (iii) t<sup>h</sup>ək + niŋ + ŋi → t<sup>h</sup>ək-niŋ-ŋi            ‘Wish to drink’  
drink-wish-asp.simp.
- (iv) t<sup>h</sup>ək + niŋ + gəni → t<sup>h</sup>ək-niŋ-gəni            ‘Will wish to drink’

drink-wish-asp.un.

Another formation of compound verb can be made by the combination of three roots with an aspect marker. The formation is in this way:

Bound root + t<sup>h</sup>ok + niŋ + asp. → Compound verb

- (i) ca + t<sup>h</sup>ok + niŋ + le → ca-t<sup>h</sup>ok-niŋ-le 'want to eat out'  
eat-out-want-asp.perf.
- (ii) pa + t<sup>h</sup>ok + niŋ + le → pa-t<sup>h</sup>ok-niŋ-le 'want to read out'  
read-out-want-asp.perf.
- (iii) pi + t<sup>h</sup>ok + niŋ + le → pi-t<sup>h</sup>ok-niŋ-le 'want to give out'  
give-out-want-asp.perf.

### 3. Conclusion

In Manipuri, a Tibeto-Burman language, compound verbs are formed mainly by suffixes. Suffixes are very large in number. However compound verbs are formed by adding the suffix markers **-t<sup>h</sup>ok** or **-niŋ** to the verbal root with aspect markers. The suffix **-niŋ** is very productive and it can be added to any verb. Another formation of compound verb can be made by the combination of three roots, namely, **-t<sup>h</sup>ok + niŋ +** aspect markers. This finding does not include the analysis of Transformation Generative Model. Such an analysis will be the basis for the study of aspect in subsequent studies.

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#### Abbreviations

asp.	aspect
asp.perf.	perfect aspect

asp.prog.	progressive aspect
asp.simp.	simple aspect
asp.un.	unrealised aspect

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