

Verbal Suffixes in Inpui

Dr. L. Bijenkumar Singh & Dr. W. Pinky Devi
Nagaland University

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to study the role of verbal suffixes in Inpui, a Tibeto-Burman language of the Naga-Bodo subgroup spoken in the state of Manipur. The term *Inpui* refers to 'In' means 'house' and 'Pui' means 'big or large'. So the literal meaning of the language is 'Big House'. Inpui Naga inhabits in the easternmost region of Tamenglong district of Manipur. It has fourteen Inpui villages, viz. Kabuikhulen (Lwanjang), New Kabuikhullen (Lamjang Namthan), Haochong (Pantong), Oktan (Puichi), Nungtek I, Nungtek II, Bakua, Tamenglong Headquarter, Ijeirong (Tulimowan), Pungmon (Chingchen), Noney and Lukhambi Bazar, Karwangmon Lower, Karwangmon Upper and Pungmon (Chingchen). According to its native speakers, the population of Inpui is approximately 13,000. The present discussion reveals that different grammatical properties are indicated by their respective suffixes. Moreover, the present analysis shows that declarative, negative, interrogative and imperative sentences are all constructed by the suffixation of respective markers to the verbal roots or stems. The present study makes an attempt to show that verbal suffixes play an important role in the morphological system of Inpui.

2.0 Verbal Suffixes

In this language verbal suffixes occupy a large role. All the verbs in this language are mainly formed by adding suffixes. In such type of agglutinative language the number of verbal suffixes is more than that of the nominal suffixes. The verbal suffixes in the language are listed under the following headings.

2.1 Tense and Aspect

Tense is a category used in the description of verbs referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the time at which the action denoted by the verb took place. In the language there are two types of tense i.e. future and non-future. Future marker is *lənzoi* and non-future markers are *ye~ we~roi* etc.

Future

1. əy sa-lənzoi
1SG eat-FUT
'I will eat'

Non-future

2. əy sa-ye
1SG eat-NON.FUT
'I eat'

In general, tense in the T.B languages is not well distinct as it is found in the languages like English, Hindi and Sanskrit. Aspect is more feasible than tense in the language. Holt (1943) says ‘aspects are a different way of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation’. Aspect in grammar is concerned with the temporal distribution or contour of an event. It is the status of action whether action is complete or incomplete. It is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other point of time, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation. There are four suffixes which denote an event or situation in the language. They are explained below.

2.2 Simple Aspect Suffix

-e is a simple aspect marker in the language. It has many allomorphs. They are *ye~we~ye~me* which occur under phonological condition. The suffix *-e* occurs when the preceding sound ends with a voiceless velar stop /k, p/. The suffix *-ye* occurs when the preceding sounds end with the vowel /i, a/. The suffix *-we* occurs when the preceding sounds ends with the vowel /o, u/. The suffix *-ye* and *-me* occurs when the preceding sound ends with the velar sound /ŋ/ and nasal sound /m/. It is explained with the following example.

3. *man nət tək-e*
3SG strong very-ASP
‘He is very strong.’

4. *əy bu sa-ye*
1SG rice eat-ASP
‘I eat rice.’

5. *man lato-we*
3SG sing-ASP
‘He sings.’

6. *man huŋ-ye*
3SG come-ASP
‘He comes.’

2.3 Progressive Aspect Suffix

The suffix *-əmai* is the progressive aspect marker in the language. This suffix indicates that the action is continuing at the moment of speaking.

7. *man lam-əmai*
3SG dance-PROG
‘He is dancing.’

8. *man pa-əmai*
3SG read-PROG
‘He is reading.’

2.4 Perfect or Complete Aspect Suffix

The suffix *-roi* is the perfect marker in the language. This suffix describes that the action has been completed, finished or done.

9. *man in-roi*
 3SG sleep-PRF
 ‘He has slept.’
10. *man se-roi*
 3SG go-PRF
 ‘He has gone.’

2.5 Future/Irrealised Aspect

The suffix *-ləηzoi* is the future marker in the language. It indicates near future.

11. *əy se-ləηzoi*
 1SG go-FUT
 ‘I will go.’
12. *əy tui in-ləηzoi*
 1SG water drink-FUT
 ‘I will drink water.’

2.6 Mood Suffix

The language has two suffixes *-nom* and *-mai* which indicates mood in the language. The suffix *-nom* indicates wish or desire. It is generally added to the dynamic verbs. Certain stative verbs like *bəron* ‘big’, *toi* ‘short’, *kəsin* ‘small’ etc. also takes this suffix. It is always followed by their respective aspect markers. The suffix *-mai* indicates the intended meaning or the sense of permission seeking. It indicates the action which is not yet performed as well as the action which is to be performed in the later moment. It will be explained from the following examples.

13. *əy tʰəkra sa-nom-me*
 1SG fruit eat-MOOD-ASP
 ‘I want to eat fruit.’
14. *əy bəron-nom-me*
 1SG big-MOOD-ASP
 ‘I want to be big.’
15. *əy se-mai*
 1SG go-MOOD
 ‘Let me go.’

In 13, the suffix *-nom* with the action verb *-sa* ‘eat’ indicates the speaker’s desire or want to eat fruit while in 14, the suffix *-nom* with the stative verb *bəron* ‘big’ shows the speaker’s desire

to be big. In 15, the suffix *-mai* shows the speaker's permission to let him go. These suffixes are used only with the action verb.

2.7 Definitive Suffix

The suffix *-ləm* is the definitive suffix in the language. It expresses the action completed with definiteness. This suffix is followed with the simple aspect marker *-me*.

16. *man cəp-ləm-me*
3SG cry-DEF-ASP
'He has cried'

17. *man se-ləm.me*
3SG go-DEF-ASP
'He has gone'

2.8 Suggestive Suffix

The suffix *-zo* is the suggestive marker in the language and performed the action in the next moment. *-zo* means 'let'.

18. *əni la to-zo*
we song sing-SUGG
'Let us sing.'

19. *əni ca in-zo*
we tea drink-SUGG
'Let us drink tea.'

2.9 Command Suffix

Command in the language is formed by the suffixation of *-o~ŋo~ro* to the action oriented verb root. The suffix *-o* and *-ro* is used elsewhere while *-ŋo* is used only when the preceded sound ends with the velar sound /ŋ/.

20. *nəŋ se-ro*
2SG go-COMM
'You go.'

21. *tui in-ro*
water drink-COMM
'Drink water.'

23. *nəŋ huŋ-ŋo*
2SG come-COMM
'You come.'

2.10 Honorific Suffix

'-t^hañ' is the honorific suffix in the language. It is added to the verb root followed by the command suffix -ŋo as in the following examples.

24. *ca in-t^hañ-ŋo*
 tea drink-HON-COMM
 'Please have tea.'
25. *sa-t^hañ-ŋo*
 eat-HON-COMM
 'Please have it.'

2.11 Directional Suffixes

There are four type of directional suffixes in the language namely -k^hut 'inside', -sok 'outside', -ka 'upward', -ta 'downward'.

-k^hut 'inside'

This suffix indicates the inward direction.

t^hañ + k^hut + nu 'to put inside'

26. *upu-du* *pwən* *t^hañ-k^hut-o*
 cupboard-DEM cloth put-inside-COMM
 'Put the cloth inside'

-sok 'outside'

This suffix indicates outside direction.

pək+sok+nu 'to cary outside'

27. *man* *insuŋ-binə* *pək-sok-roi*
 3SG house-ABL run-outside-ASP
 'He ran out from the house'

-ka 'upward'

This suffix indicates the upward direction.

p^hañ-ka-nu 'to look upward'

28. *təmbala-bi* *p^hañ-ka-o*
 sky-DEM look-up-COMM
 'Look up at the sky.'

-ta 'downward'

This suffix indicates downward direction.

p^hun+ta+nu 'to carry downward'

29. *man-nə dip-gə p^hun-ta-roi*
 3SG-NMZ book-DEM carry-down-SA
 ‘He carried the book down.’

2.12 Interrogative Suffix

The suffix *-bo* is the interrogative suffix in the language. This suffix is attached to the action as well as stative verb to indicate question. This suffix is used in both yes/no Question and Wh- question.

30. *nəŋ zu in-bo*
 2SG alcohol drink-INT
 ‘Do you drink alcohol?’
31. *həy toi-bo*
 this small-INT
 ‘Is this small?’
32. *nə-in-bi tu huŋ-bo*
 your-house-LOC who come-INT
 ‘Who comes in your house?’

2.13 Negative Suffix

Inpui has two types of negative suffixes. They are *-mək* and *-ləy*. The two suffixes are used in the following ways:

-mək: This suffix is used in indicating non future, prohibitive, interrogative negative, let negative and negative strengthening.

2.13.1 Non-future Negative

Non future can be negated by *suffixing -mək* to the verb root.

33. *man zu in-mək-e*
 3SG liquor drink-NEG-ASP
 ‘He doesn’t drink liquor.’
34. *əy bu sa-mək-e*
 1SG rice eat-NEG-ASP
 ‘I do not eat rice.’

2.13.2 Prohibitive Marker

By suffixing *-mək* to the verbal root followed by the command suffix *-o*, it indicates prohibition in the sentence.

35. *tək^hu-gə t^hət-mək-o*
 tiger-DEM kill-NEG-COMM

‘Don’t kill the tiger.’

36. *zu in-mək-o*
liquor drink-NEG-COMM
‘Don’t drink liquor.’

2.13.3 Interrogative Negative

When the interrogative suffix *-bo* is suffixed to the negative suffix *-mək*, it gives the meaning of interrogative negative.

37. *nəŋ mək-bo*
2SG NEG-INT
‘Isn’t it you?’
38. *nəŋ p^hutbol kədəy-mək-bo*
2SG football play-NEG-INT
‘Don’t you play football?’

2.13.4 Let Negative (Proposal)

In Inpui when the suggestive suffix *-zo* is added to the negative suffix *-mək*, it gives a let negative meaning.

39. *əni se-mək-zo*
we go-NEG-SUGG
‘Let us not play.’
40. *əni bənui-mək-zo*
we laugh-NEG-SUGG
‘Let us not laugh.’

2.13.5 Future Negative

The suffix *-ləy* when added to the verbal root it gives a future negative sentence.

41. *əy inswən iskul se-la-e*
1SG tomorrow school go-NEG-ASP
‘I will not go to school tomorrow.’
42. *əni inswən kədəy-la-e*
we tomorrow play-NEG-ASP
‘we will not play tomorrow.’

2.14 Adverbial Suffix

There are two adverbial suffixes *-gə* and *-tək* in the language. The suffix *-gə* can be added to stative as well as to an action verb. This suffix is used in denoting adverb of manner while the suffix *-tək* is used in expressing adverb of degree. It is added to the root verb followed by its

respective aspect marker. Besides adding to the verbal root this suffix can also be added time adverbial like *inzan* ‘yesterday’, *nəkum* ‘last year’ to indicate adverb of time as well as to the lexical point of time like *puŋ som* ‘10 O’clock’ to indicate goal or source.

2.14.1 Adverb of Manner

In forming such adverb, this suffix is added to the stative verb like *bəzaŋ-gə* ‘slowly’, *inkəm-gə* ‘quietly’, *pao-gə* ‘loudly’ etc. it is explained in the following examples.

43. *man bəzaŋ-gə se-ye*
 3SG slow-ADV go-ASP
 ‘He goes slowly.’

44. *ram inkəm-gə cəp-e*
 ram quiet-ADV cry-ASP
 ‘Ram cries quietly.’

2.14.2 Adverb of Degree

The suffix *-tək* followed by its respective aspect marker is attached to the root verb to form degree adverbs. Consider the following example.

45. *man sa-tək-e*
 3SG good-DEG-ASP
 ‘He is very good.’

46. *ka-DEM bəron-tək-e*
 room-DEM big-DEG-ASP
 ‘This room is too big.’

2.14.3 Nominalizing Suffix

-nu is the nominalizing suffix in the language. It is immediately added to the verbal roots. The verbal root may be action verb or stative verb. To explain, the following examples are given below.

action verb + Nominalizer > verbal noun
sa nu sanu ‘to eat’
se nu senu ‘to go’

state verb + Nominalizer > verbal noun
səy nu səynu ‘to be tall’
rip nu ripnu ‘to be heavy’

Conclusion

From the above preliminary study, it can be put that the role of suffixes in this language is very significant. In the present paper, only the verbal suffixes have been discussed. The other suffixes are not discussed. The present discussion reveals that different grammatical properties are

indicated by their respective suffixes. Moreover, the present analysis shows that declarative, negative, interrogative and imperative sentences are all constructed by the suffixation of respective markers to the verbal roots or stems. There are four aspect markers in the language -*e*, -*mai*, -*roi*, -*lajzoi*, two mood suffixes -*nom* and -*mai*, one definitive suffix -*lam*, one suggestive suffix -*zo*, three command suffixes -*o*, -*ŋo*, -*ro*, one interrogative suffix -*bo*, two negative suffix -*mək* and -*ləy*, two adverbial suffixes -*gə* and -*tək* and one nominalizing suffix -*nu*. It may be concluded that verbal suffixes play an important grammatical function in the structure of this language. The suffixes proved that the language is an agglutinative one. This is the initial stage of exploring this language. There is more room for further in-depth analysis of the language.

References

1. Chelliah Shobhana L., 1997, *A grammar of Meithei*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, New York.
2. Devi, W. Pinky, 2014, *Word order in Inpui*, European Academic Research, Vol. I, Issue 11.
3. Devi, W. Pinky, “*Nominal Morphology in Inpui*”, *Language in India*, ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 13:5 May 2013.
4. Devi, W. Pinky, “*Inpui Adverbs*”, *International Journal of English and Education*, ISSN: 2278 4012, Volume:2, Issue:3, July 2013.
5. Devi, W. Pinky, “*A Study of Inpui Adjective*”, *European Academic Research*, ISSN 2286-4822 Vol.II, Issue 11/February 2015.
6. Devi, W. Pinky, “*Challenges and revitalization of Inpui*”, Kala-Khwanbaang, Annual Publication of Inpui Students’ Union Delhi, ISUD-KK/Vol III/Issue I/2015
7. Givon.T,2001, *Syntax An introduction*, John Benjamin Publishing Company, Amsterdam.
8. Singh, Ch. Yashwanta, 2000, *Manipuri Grammar*, Rajesh publications, New Delhi.
9. Shopen Timothy,2007, *Language typology and Syntactic structure*, Cambridge University Press, New York.Valin.
10. Van D. Robert, 2004, *An Introduction to Syntax*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
11. Anderson, M James and Malmkjær Kirsten, 2007, *The linguistics encyclopedia*, Taylor and Francis Group, New York.
12. Khumba Alung K (2012), ‘*The Inpui Nagas : Traditional culture and Christianity*’

13. Lieber Rochelle, 2009, *Introducing Morphology* , Cambridge University Press, New York.

14. Mathews, P.H. (2007), *Concise Dictionary of Linguistics*, Oxford University Press

Dr. L. Bijenkumar Singh

bijen.laishram@nagalanduniversity.ac.in

Centre for Naga Tribal Language Studies (CNTLS)

Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema

Kohima, Nagaland, India

Dr. W. Pinky Devi

Waikhompinky91@gmail.com

Department of Linguistics

Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema

Kohima, Kohima, India