

Demonstrative Reference in Manipuri

Huiningshumbam Surchandra Singh, Research Scholar
Department of Linguistics, Manipur University

=====

Abstract

The Manipuri demonstratives which are usually found to occur at the sentence level are *asi-masi* and *adu-madu*. They can be used at the discourse level with the sense of proximal and distal. The Manipuri demonstrative *asi-masi* is used to refer to something or someone which is in front of the speaker himself and *adu-madu* to refer to something or someone which is far away from or beyond the eyesight of the speaker. The Manipuri demonstratives can be used to refer to person in certain context. A crucial point to note regarding the use of the demonstrative reference for person is that they are mainly adopted in the derogatory speech only. An extended use of these demonstratives is that the demonstrative *asi-masi* can be used to refer to the part of the utterance of the speaker himself whereas *adu-madu* to refer to the utterance made by another speaker. Now the demonstratives which are making reference contribute a lot to the making of a cohesive Manipuri discourse.

Keywords: Manipuri, demonstrative, proximal, cohesive, derogatory speech, reference.

Introduction

Manipuri which is locally known as Meiteilon is mainly spoken in the state of Manipur which is situated in the North-eastern India. It is also spoken in other Indian states like Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and in the countries like Burma and Bangladesh. Manipuri has become the lingua franca among the speakers speaking different dialects of Manipur. Since 20th August, 1992 Manipuri had become the first TB (Tibeto-Burman) language which had got the recognition as an eighth scheduled language of India.

In the classification of TB languages of the Sino-Tibetan family, Manipuri is placed in Kuki-Chin proper separately by Grierson-Konow (Grierson-Konow 1903-1928), in Meitei branch of Kukish section by Shafer (Shafer 1974), Manipuri is placed in Kuki-Naga (Benedict 1972). According to Benedict, Manipuri, the state language, shows the significant points of contact with Kachin as well as with Kuki-Naga. In the classification of DeLancey, Manipuri is the part of a distinct sub-branch in TB which he calls Mikir-Meitei where both the languages Mikir and Meitei are closely related to the Naga and Kuki-Chin branches (DeLancey 1987).

Manipuri shares genetic features of TB languages. Some genetic rather than areal features shared by the Tibeto-Burman languages include phonemic tone, SOV (SUBJECT-OBJECT-VERB) word order, agglutinative verb morphology and the tendency to reduce disyllabic forms to monosyllabic ones (DeLancey 1987). Even though Manipuri exhibits many of these features, it is a typical language in some ways, i.e. pronominal marking on verb, which is considered to be an original TB trait is not present in Manipuri. However there is nominal pronominal marker which is regarded as the TB pronominal feature. Manipuri has the extensive verb morphology with a great number of

suffixes and there is no watertight compartment between morphology and syntax. And in word-formation compounding is more productive.

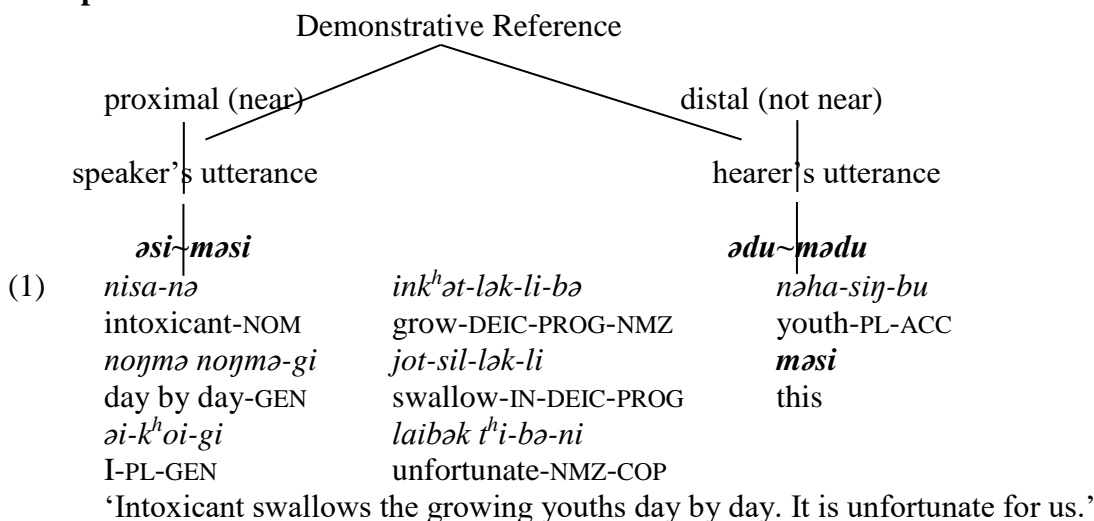
Demonstrative Reference

Reference indicates a relationship of identity which exists between the two grammatical units. In terms of linguistic system, it is a relation on the semantic level. Reference is derived from the general underlying notion of recoverability of meanings from the environment. Demonstrative reference is essentially a form of verbal pointing. The speaker identifies the referent by locating it on the scale of proximal and distal. The Manipuri demonstratives are *asi~masi* ‘this’ (proximal) and *adu~madu* ‘that’ (distal). Both of them have the sense of proximal and distal as demonstratives generally have either in space or time. Now these demonstratives are used to refer to the referent i.e. referring endophorically to something which is in the discourse itself but not to the referent i.e. the existing person or thing available in the physical world and which is exophorically referred. They show the meaning relation between the two linguistic elements i.e. the demonstrative and the referent. The demonstrative *asi~masi* is to denote that the person or object being spoken of is nearer or currently seen or known to the speaker or a topic of the conversation whereas the demonstrative *adu~madu* is denoting someone or something not present or far away from the speaker at the time of the speech. Here these demonstratives are studied mainly focusing on how they are endophorically referring to a referent which is available within a particular discourse and how they are contributing to the making of a discourse.

Proximal and Distal

The demonstratives *asi~masi* and *adu~madu* refer anaphorically or cataphorically to the referent mentioned somewhere within the discourse. Now the demonstratives are studied from the perspective that they are employed to refer endophorically to the referent within the discourse but not exophorically referring to the referent of physical entity which is outside the discourse. Even when they are used to refer endophorically to the referent that is available somewhere within the discourse, the sense of proximal and distal is still accompanied with them. For the purpose of referring to the immediate utterance produced by the speaker himself only the demonstrative *asi~masi* (proximal) has been used whereas the demonstrative *adu~madu* (distal) to refer to the immediate utterance made by another interlocutor. It is shown in the following figure.

Figure 1
Manipuri demonstrative reference



- (2) *əi-di* *tʰəbək-si* *jam-nə* *tʰu-nə* *paŋtʰok-pə*
 I-PART work-DET very-ADV quick-ADV perform-NMZ
pam-i *məsi-də* *nəŋ-gi* *kəri* *mot* *ləi-φ*
 like-SAM this-LOC you-GEN what opinion have-SAM
 ‘I like to do the work very soon. What is your opinion in it?’
- (3) *i-ca-nupa* *əni-mək* *tʰəbək* *təu-re*
 1P-offspring-man two-EMP job do-PERF
əsi-mək-ni *əi-nə* *məŋ-jə-bə* *məŋ-su*
 this-EMP-COP I-NOM dream-REF-NMZ dream-too
 ‘Both of my sons have got job. This is what I have dreamt too.’

The examples (1-3) are the excerpts of little discourse which are made by the combination of different utterances made by a single speaker. Now it is clearly revealed that the demonstrative *əsi~məsi* is used to refer proximally to the utterance which is in the preceding part of the discourse that is produced by the speaker himself. In the example (1) *məsi* refers to the preceding utterance i.e. *nisanə inkʰətləklibə nəhasiŋbu noŋmə noŋməgi jotsilləkli* ‘Intoxicant swallows the growing youths day by day’. In the same way *məsi* in the example (2) also refers to the preceding utterance *əidi tʰəbək-si jamnə tʰunə paŋtʰokpə pami* ‘I like to do the work very soon’ which is made by the speaker himself. In the case of example (3) the demonstrative *əsi* is referring to the utterance *icanupa ənimək tʰəbək təure* ‘Both of my sons have got job’ that is in the preceding part of the discourse.

- (4) A- *həujik-ti* *nəha-siŋ-si* *nisa* *jam* *ca-nə-re*
 now-PART youth-PL-DET intoxicant very eat-REC-PERF
 ‘Now the youths eat intoxicant very much.’
 B- *mədu* *ə-pʰə-bə-di* *nətte*
 that ATT-good-NMZ-PART not
 ‘That is not good.’
- (5) A- *ŋərəŋ-di* *pulis-nə* *satrə-siŋ-du* *pʰu-kʰə-re*
 yesterday-PART police-NOM student-PL-DET beat-DEF-PERF
 ‘Yesterday the police had beaten the students.’
 B- *mədu* *təu-roi-də-bə-ni*
 that do-NPOT-NEG-NMZ-COP
 ‘That should not be done.’

The examples (4) and (5) are the excerpts of discourse in which the two speakers are interacting in each of the conversational discourses. In the case of the example (4) the speaker B uses the demonstrative *mədu* in his utterance to refer back to the utterance of the speaker A i.e. *həujikti nəhasiŋsi nisa jam canəre* ‘Now the youths eat intoxicant very much’. Here the demonstrative *mədu* is referring back to the speaker A’s utterance. In example (5) the speaker B uses the demonstrative *mədu* to refer back to the speaker A’s utterance i.e. *ŋərəŋdi pulisnə satrəsingdu pʰukʰəre* ‘Yesterday the police had beaten the students’. These two examples show that the demonstrative *mədu* is always used to refer distally to the referent that is present in the utterance of a discourse made by another speaker. In such way these demonstratives are used for making demonstrative reference by bringing a meaning relation between the demonstrative and the referent being referred to. Both of them are functioning anaphorically to refer to another element in the discourse in terms of showing meaning relation.

Another important use of these demonstratives is to indicate whether something to which the presupposed item (referent) refers is within the eyesight of the speaker or not. The demonstrative *əsi~məsi* is mainly used to refer to the referent representing something or someone which is in front of the speaker whereas *ədu~mədu* is employed to refer to the referent representing someone or something which is beyond the eyesight of the speaker. Exophorically the demonstrative *ədu~mədu* is used to refer to something which is within the eyesight of the speaker but far away from him. The exophorical use of these demonstratives is not discussed here because they refer to the referent which is outside the discourse. Only the endophorical use of these demonstratives is discussed because they are deployed to bring cohesion to the discourse. Some examples are illustrated here as follows.

- (6) *a-dəgi* *lai-si-nə* *kəna-gi* *məsi-su*
 there-ABL picture-DET-CONT who-GEN this-also
ibuŋo-nə *jek-pə* *nəttə-ra*
 man-NOM draw-NMZ not-INTR
 ‘Whose is that picture? Is it not drawn by you?’
- (7) A- *əsi-nə* *nəŋ-gi* *gari* *ə-nəu-bə* *əmə*
 I-NOM you-GEN vehicle ATT-new-NMZ one
ləi-rək-lə-bə-ni
 buy-DEIC-PERF-NMZ-COP
 ‘I have bought a new car for you.’
 B- *əsi-nə* *əsi-ŋon-də* *kəri* *kannə-gəni*
 this-NOM I-DIR-LOC what useful-NREAL
əsi-gi-di *əmə-su* *ləi-ri*
 I-GEN-PART one-also have-PROG
 ‘What is it useful to me? I have one too.’
- (8) A- *ŋəraŋ-di* *əsi-k^hoi* *siruilili* *jeŋ-lu-i*
 yesterday-PART I-PL shirui lily look-DEIC-SAM
 ‘We had gone to see shirui-lily yesterday.’
 B- *mədu* *jam* *p^həjə-rəm-lə-gəni*
 that very beauty-AC-PERF-NREAL
 ‘That would be very beautiful.’
- (9) A- *əsi-di* *ŋəraŋ-gi* *p^hurit-tu* *pam-i*
 I-PART yesterday-GEN shirt-DET like-SAM
 ‘I like yesterday’s shirt.’
 B- *əsi-di* *mədu* *pam-de*
 I-PART that like-NEG
 ‘I don’t like that.’

The role of the demonstratives as demonstrative reference in the above given examples (6-9) are described here. In the example (6) *məsi* which is in the second utterance is referring to the referent (antecedent) *lai* ‘picture’ that functions as presupposed item in that discourse and at the time of his speech the referent *lai* which is the physical entity is in front of the speaker. The same thing happens in the example (7) that *əsi* in the utterance of the speaker (B) is referring to the referent *gari ənəubə əmə* ‘a new car’ that is in the utterance of the speaker (A) and it is also in front of the speaker (B). In the examples (8) and (9) different things happen that *mədu* in the utterance of the speaker (B) of example (8) refers to the referent *sirui lili* ‘shirui lily’ which is in the utterance of the speaker (A) and beyond the eyesight of the speaker (B) at the time of his speech. The demonstrative *mədu* in the

utterance of the speaker (B) in the example (9) is referring to the referent *p^hurit* ‘shirt’ in the utterance of the speaker (A) which is not in front of the speaker at the very moment of speaking.

Referring to Person

Generally, the demonstratives *asi~māsi* and *ādu~mādu* are used to make reference to non-human things. Now they can be employed to refer to person in a certain context. The demonstrative *asi~māsi* is used to refer to the person who is within the range of the speaker’s eyesight whereas the demonstrative *ādu~mādu* intends to refer to those which are beyond the eyesight of the speaker. Even though they are exophorically referring to the person, at the same time they are anaphorically (endophoric) referring to the referent that is in the preceding part of the discourse. A very important point to note regarding the use of the demonstrative reference for person is that they are employed only in the context of making a derogatory speech. As they have such a function of making reference, they are treated as one of the cohesive devices which bring cohesion in a discourse. In such a way they play a vital role in making a cohesive discourse. For a more vivid illustration of the above given fact, some examples are here as follows.

- (10) A- *tomba-si som-dā lak-le ai-di cāt-lā-ge*
 Tomba-DET this side-LOC come-PERF I-PART go-PERF-INT
 ‘Tomba has come to this side. Let me go.’
 B- *māsi lak-lā-bādi wājau ŋaŋ-lā-rā-gāni*
 this come-PERF-CPART boastful speech speak-PERF-DEIC-NREAL
 ‘If this man comes, boastful speech will be delivered.’
- (11) A- *nā-ca-nupa-du lāmbi-dā ju ŋau-hāu-re*
 2P-offspring-man-DET way-LOC wine drunkard-INC-PERF
 ‘Your son was on the way being drunk.’
 B- *mādu-dā si-rāgā ai pel-lā-gāni*
 that-LOC die-CPART I satisfy-PERF-NREAL
 ‘I will be satisfied if he dies.’

From the above given two examples it has been clearly seen that the demonstratives *asi~māsi* and *ādu~mādu* are anaphorically referring to their respective referents in the discourse. In the example (10) *māsi* in the utterance of the speaker (B) refers to the noun *tomba* that is the referent in this discourse. Normally it is not decent to use the demonstrative to refer to the person. Here the speaker B uses the demonstrative *māsi* to refer to the referent *tomba* as his speech is a derogatory and a disrespectful one. So, *māsi* is interpreted by recourse to the referent *tomba* which is in the utterance of the speaker A. The demonstrative *mādu* in the utterance of the speaker (B) of the example (11) is anaphorically making reference to the referent *nācanupa* ‘your son’ in the utterance of the speaker (A). Here the speaker B is making an insulting speech by using the demonstrative *mādu* for the referent *nācanupa* which refers to the person. It is the way of showing anger to his son by using this demonstrative. This demonstrative has got its interpretation with the help of the referent (antecedent) *nācanupa*. Both of them show a meaning relation between each referent and demonstrative.

Extended Reference

Demonstratives can refer to the extended text, including text as ‘fact’. They can be used to refer to the utterance that is the part of a discourse i.e. the referent of the demonstrative is the text itself. They can function either cataphorically or anaphorically to refer to the referent that is available somewhere in the discourse. For example:

- (12) A1- *məsi* *t^hok-nəbə* *nəŋ-nə* *sil-li-bə-ni*
 this happen-PUR you-NOM organize-PROG-NMZ-COP
 ‘You are planning to happen this.’
 B- *ədubu* *kəidəurəge* *əmuk-tə-di* *han-nə*
 but what happen once-only-PART first-ADV
 hai-u
 say-COM
 ‘But tell me first what has happened.’
 A2- *nə-ca-nupa-du* *jum* *t^hadok-ləgə* *cət-k^hə-re*
 2P-offspring-man-DET home leave-CPART go-DEF-PERF
 ‘Your son had gone leaving home.’
- (13) A- *ram-du* *jam-nə* *p^hə-bə* *ə-cəm-bə*
 Ram-DET very-ADV good-NMZ ATT-innocent-NMZ
mi-ni *hai-φ*
 person-COP say-SAM
 ‘It is said that Ram is a good and an innocent man.’
 B- *mədu* *əi-di* *t^həjə-de*
 that I-PART believe-NEG
 ‘I don’t believe that.’
- (14) *nəŋ-nə* *əi-gi* *t^həbək* *əsimə-təŋ* *təu-bi-u*
 you-NOM I-GEN work this one-only do-HON-COM
məsi *ja-rə-bədi* *əi-nə* *nəŋ-gi* *mətəŋ*
 this agree-PERF-CPART I-NOM you-GEN help
soi-də-nə *paŋ-gəni*
 mistake-NEG-ADV help-NREAL
 ‘Please do this work for me. If you agree with this I will surely help you.’

In the example (12) the demonstrative *məsi* is cataphorically referring to the referent that is in the second utterance of the speaker A2. The referent of *məsi* is the utterance made by the speaker A2 i.e. *nəcanupadu jum t^hadokləgə cət-k^həre* ‘Your son had gone leaving home’. The demonstrative *mədu* in the utterance of the speaker (B) of the example (13) is anaphorically referring to the text of the speaker A’s utterance i.e. *ramdu jamnə p^həbə əcəmbə mini* ‘Ram is a good and an innocent man’. The demonstrative *məsi* in the example (14) is also anaphorically referring to the preceding text of the utterance of the speaker. Here, the referent of the demonstrative is the text *nəŋnə əigi t^həbək əsimətəŋ təubiu* ‘Please do this work for me’. From the above given examples, it is truly clear that the demonstratives *məsi* and *mədu* can refer to the text. That means the text should be the referent of the demonstratives. They can be used either anaphorically or cataphorically. In this way also, the demonstrative reference can function as one of the cohesive devices. In fact, they have taken a great role in making a cohesive Manipuri discourse.

Conclusion

The Manipuri demonstratives *əsi~məsi* (proximal) and *ədu~mədu* (distal) which are exophorically used are now endophorically referring to the linguistic item (referent) which is available in the discourse itself. The demonstrative *əsi~məsi* is used to refer endophorically to the utterance made by the speaker whereas the demonstrative *ədu~mədu* is referring to the immediate utterance of another interlocutor. Still the sense of proximal and distal is accompanied with these demonstratives even when they are endophorically used. These demonstratives cannot be interchangeably used; otherwise the sense of proximal and distal has to be misinterpreted. In fact the

demonstratives are usually referring to the linguistic item which represents the non-human thing but in the context of the derogatory speech they are used to refer to the referent which represents the person (human being). Here comes out the fact that the demonstratives are also used to refer to the utterance which is the part of the discourse within which they are used. The fact that comes out from the present study as a conclusion is that the Manipuri demonstratives which are usually used exophorically are again used endophorically. This is the new dimension of the distribution of the demonstratives in Manipuri discourse which was not explored so far.

Abbreviations

1P	first person	DEF	definitive
2P	second person	DEIC	deictic
ABL	ablative	DET	determiner
AC	action coordinator	DIR	directive
ACC	accusative	EMP	emphatic
ADV	adverb	GEN	genitive
ATT	attributive	HON	honorific
COM	command	IN	inward
CONT	contrastive	INC	inceptive
COP	copula	INT	intensive
CPART	conjunctive particle	INTR	interrogative
LOC	locative	PERF	perfective
NEG	negative	PL	plural
NMZ	nominalizer	PROG	progressive
NOM	nominative	PUR	purposive
NPOT	non-potential	REC	reciprocal
NREAL	non-realisation	REF	reflexive
PART	particularization	SAM	simple aspect marker

References

1. Benedict, Paul K. 1972. *Sino-Tibetan: A Conspectus*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
2. Chelliah, Shobhana Lakshmi. 1997. *A Grammar of Meithei*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
3. DeLancey, Scott. 1987. Sino-Tibetan Languages. In Comrie, Bernard (ed.), *The World's Major Languages*, 693-702. London: Routledge.
4. Grierson, G.A. 1904. *Linguistic Survey of India*. Vol.III, Part III.
5. Halliday, M.A.K. & Hasan, Ruqaiya . 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London, Longman.
6. Halliday, M.A.K. & Matthiessen, C.M.I.M. 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London, Edward Arnold.
7. Hasegawa, Y. 2012. Deictic and anaphoric uses of the Japanese demonstratives ko-so-a. *Journal of Japanese Linguistics* 28. 43-59.
8. Lyons, John. 1977. *Semantics I*. London: Cambridge University Press.
9. Madhubala, P. 1979. *Manipuri Grammar*. Poona, University of Poona. (Ph.D Thesis)
10. Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. & Leech, G. & Svartvik, J. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.
11. Shafer, Robert. 1974. *Introduction to Sino-Tibetan*. Otto Harrassowitz Wiesbaden.
12. Yashwanta, Ch. 2000. *Manipuri Grammar*. New Delhi: Rajesh Publication.

Huiningshumbam Surchandra Singh
Research Scholar
Department of Linguistics
Manipur University
Imphal
Manipur
India
boinao86@gmail.com

