Deletion of the Citation Prefixes \{mə-\} and\{a-\} in the Process of Compounding in Manipuri and Tangkhul

Abstract

In Manipuri and Tangkhul the two bound morphs /mə-/ and /a-/ respectively prefix four categories of noun, namely (i) certain countable and uncountable nouns, (ii) locationals, (iii) body parts, and (iv) kinship terms. These two prefixes, known as citation prefixes are deleted in the process of compounding. Certain operations also take place during the process of compounding at the level of morpho-syntactics and morpho-phonemics. These operations go along with the deletion of /ma-/ and /a-/ in the two languages. As a result the resultant compound is well-fitted to the natural rhythm of speech of Manipuri and Tangkhul.

I. Citation Form

The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics (OCDL) defines a citation form as the form ‘used to refer to a lexical unit’, the choice of which is ‘a matter of convenience and is often arbitrary’ [OCDL, 1997 p.34]. David Crystal defines it as ‘a linguistic unit when it is cited in isolation’ [Crystal, 1985, P.48], while R.L. Trask puts it as that particular form of lexical item ‘which is used to name it or when talking about it as a linguistic object or when entering it in a dictionary’ [Trask, 1993, P.43]. But the important thing is that citation forms belonging to a group of certain word class have an identical marker either prefix or suffix as in the citation forms of Latin nouns which are referred
to by the nominative singular (Trask,1993,P.43); Manipuri verbs which have the suffix /pa/ or /ba/ as the citational suffix; Tangkhul verbs which have either of these /ka-/, /khä-
/ /khämä-/, /khäŋə-/ as the citational prefix. But in the case of Fijian intransitive verbs, they are cited by subtraction of a final consonant of the verbal roots (Trask,1993,P.269), in which case it is not the presence of an affix but the absence of a consonant that cites a word class.

Though P.H. Mathews, David Crystal and R.L. Trask have duly defined a citation form in their own ways, they have not given a specific term to refer to the prefix or suffix attached to the citation form. S. Arokianathan calls this prefix plainly ‘prefix in citation’ while referring to the morphological link between the body parts in Tangkhul and ‘the third person singular marker a- as their prefix in citation’ [Arokianathan, 1987,P.37]. In the present paper the term ‘citation prefix’ rather than ‘prefix in citation’ is preferably used in view of its phonetic efficiency and comfortability.

1.1 Prefix /mə-/ as a citation marker of Nouns in Manipuri
In Manipuri there is a good many nouns being cited with (mə-) such as (mə-pu) ‘owner, God, custodian’, /məkhal/ ‘kind, classification’, /mə-ku/ ‘rind, bark, skin’, /mə-hi/ ‘liquid, fluid’, /mə-sak/ ‘physical appearance, look’, /məhai/ ‘learning, education, skill’ etc. These nouns are distinct from the other nouns in Manipuri lexicon since: (i) all of them have a phonologically identical prefix i.e. /mə-/, (ii) they all have two elements – the prefix and a root, either verbal or nominal, (iii) the non-pronominal prefix /mə-/ can be reconstructed as the third person pronominal.

Of the three points given above regarding the distinctiveness of these nouns prefixed with /mə-/ the first one needs no elaboration. Regarding the second, it may be reminded that while the second elements in the given compounds like /-hi/, /-ku/ and /-sak/ are nominal roots, meaning ‘liquid’, ‘skin’ and ‘appearance’ respectively, others like /-pu/, /-khal/ and /-hai/ are verbal roots, meaning ‘to carry’, ‘to select’ and ‘to be good at’ respectively. Regarding the possibility of reconstructing /mə-/ as the third person pronominal it may be recalled that the third person prefix /mə-/ of Manipuri is the remnant of the proto-Tibeto-Burman verbal pronominal marker (Yashawanta,2001, p.24). Because of this fact nouns like /mə-pu/ ‘owner’, /mə-khal/ ‘classification’ can also be structurally analysed as (mə+ Verbal Bound Root) in which /mə-/ stands for verbal pronominal marker, thereby /mapu/ being rendered the meaning ‘he carries (something)’, in which the agent ‘he’ is an obligatory valent and the covert patient ‘something’ is an optional valent, and /mə-khal/ is rendered the meaning ‘he selects’, in which the covert patient ‘something’ is an obligatory valent and the agent ‘he’ an optional valent. Therfore, /mə-pu/ stands for the carrier of something, meaning the possessor of something i.e. the legitimate owner; and /mə-khal/ stands for something selected or classified, meaning the act of classification or kind/class. This prefix /mə-/ is being referred to as generalized /mə-/ by B. Premabati Devi [Premabati 2017, p.29] in the sense that the so-called citation form is nothing but a generalized form.
1.2 Prefix /a/ as a citation marker in Tangkhul:

In Tangkhul also there is a group of nouns with the prefix /a-/ which is found phonologically identical with the third person pronoun in Tangkhul i.e. /a/. To name a few of them, they are /a-thəi/ ‘fruit’, /a-cəm/ ‘manners’, /a-minj/ ‘name’, /a-hui/ ‘skin’, /a-khən/ ‘sound, voice, tone’, /a-khəvə/ ‘owner, ruler, God’, /a-yur/ ‘kind, class’, /a-tan/ ‘vicinity, neighbourhood’ etc.

In Tangkhul also the prefix /a-/ has the covert meaning of the third person pronominal. This can be proved by the fact that there are compounds which are constituted by a noun, combined with a nominal bound root, isolated from {(a-)+NBR}, for example, /mik-kor/ ‘eyelid’ which is constituted by /mik/ ‘eye’ combined with /a-kor/ ‘rind’.

If we compare /mik-kor/ and /a-kor/, we find that both /mik-/ and /a-/ have an analogous function of possessivity, whereby /mik-kor/ literally denotes /mik-wui kor/ meaning ‘eye’s rind’ and /a-kor/ denotes /a-wui kor/ meaning ‘his/her rind’.

II. /mə-/ and /a-/ with nominal roots in Manipuri and Tangkhul respectively

Both in Manipuri and Tangkhul there are four categories of noun which are generally cited by /mə-/ in the case of Manipuri, and /a-/ in the case of Tangkhul. They are (i) Certain countable and uncountable nouns, (ii) Locationals, (iii) Body parts, (iv) Kinship terms.

2.1 Prefixation of nominal roots with /mə-/ in Manipuri:

Examples are given below of /mə-/ as citation prefix with the four categories of noun in Manipuri –

A. Certain Countable and Uncountable Nouns

(a) Countable Nouns

(i) [mə+Nominal Root] Countable Noun

mə + kən ‘kun ‘hole, cavity’ > mə-kun ‘hole, cavity, tunnel’

mə + həi ‘liquid, fluid’ > mə-hi ‘liquid, fluid, juice’

(ii) [mə + Verbal Root] Countable Noun

mə + kon (bə) ‘embrace, enclose’ > mə-kon ‘abode’

mə + kum (bə) ‘close, shut’ > mə-kum ‘lid, cover’

(b) Uncountable nouns

(i) [mə + Nominal Root] Uncountable Noun

mə + tik ‘quality, capability, worth’ > mə-tik ‘one’s caliber, worth’

mə + sil ‘duty, responsibility’ > mə-sil ‘one’s duty or responsibility’

(ii) [mə + Verbal Root] Uncountable Noun

mə + hai (bə) ‘to be good at’ > mə-hai ‘skill, learning, education’

mə + lan (bə) ‘to commit a mistake’ > mə-lan/lal > mə-ral

‘guilt, wrong-doing’

B. Locationals
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[man + Nominal Root ] N (Locational)
mə + thak ‘the place above’ > mə-thak ‘the place above’
mə + kha ‘the place below’ > mə-kha ‘the place below’
mə + nuŋ ‘the inside’ > mə-nuŋ ‘the inside’

C. Body Parts
[man + body part ] N (body part)
mə + məi ‘tail’ > mə-məi ‘tail (of animals and birds)’
mə + ləi ‘tongue’ > mə-ləi > mə-ləi ‘tongue’
mə + tu ‘body hair’ > mə-tu ‘body hair, fur, feather’

D. Kinship terms
[man + Nominal Root of kinship term] > N (kinship terms)
mə + məu ‘daughter-in-law’ > mə-məu ‘daughter-in-law’
mə + nem ‘mother-in-law’ > mənem ‘mother-in-law’
mə + ca ‘son and/or daughter’ > mə-ca ‘son and/or daughter’

2.1.1 Body parts in Manipuri with and without citation prefixes

In Manipuri there are three kinds of body parts in regard to prefixation with citation prefix. They are as follows:-

(i) The body parts, generally cited by /mə/ and rarely used in isolation without /mə/:
These body parts are particularly used with birds, animals and insects. For example, /mə-məi/ ‘tail’ but not */mə/i/, /mə-sa/ ‘wings’, but not */sa/, /mə-tok/ ‘crest, hood’, but not */tok/; /mə-soŋ/ ‘mane’, but not */soŋ/; /mə-wun/ ‘skin’, but not */un-wun/. The word /mə-sa/ with a falling tone meaning ‘body’ cannot be used without /mə/ in isolation; and it is referred to both species of man and animal.

(ii) The body parts with which /mə/ is optional that can either be cited by the citation prefix /mə-/ or not at all: They are generally monosyllabic. Examples are /məi-/məmai/ ‘tail’, /kok~məkok/ ‘head’, /na~məna/ ‘ear’, /səm~məsəm/ ‘hair’, /mit~məmit/ ‘eye’, /khoŋ~məkhoŋ/ ‘foot, leg’ etc.

(iii) The body parts that are not generally prefixed with /mə-/: These are body parts that normally not affixed with a pronominal, due most probably to their polysyllabic forms. They are /lukhəm/ ‘back side of the head’, /pisum/ ‘eyebrow’/cai-runj/ ‘jaw’, /cakkhao/ ‘stomach’, /thabombi/ ‘lung’ etc.

Amongst the polysyllabic ones also some are not usually cited with the citation prefix /mə-/ e.g. /tha-moi/ ‘heart’, prefixed with the pronominals, according to a given context. Other body parts belonging to this category are ‘/khə-jai/ ‘cheek’, ‘/cim-ban/ ‘lip(s)’, ‘/leng-ban/ ‘shoulder’, etc. There are some body parts monosyllabic or polysyllabic which generally take neither a pronominal marker nor the citation prefix /mə-/ viz. /pa/ ‘eyelash’, /ŋəu/ ‘palate’, for example, */i-pa/, */nə-pa/, */mə-pa/ (either as a third person pronominal or citation prefix.

2.1.2 /i-/ and /mə-/ as citation prefix to kinship terms in Manipuri

While citing a Manipuri kinship term, either /mə-/ or /i-/ can be used as citation prefix. But at a closer examination it is found that the first person pronominal /i-/ is more
commonly used with the nearest kins such as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, otherwise /mə-/ is more commonly used, that is to say that /i-ma/, /i-pa/, /i-ca/ is more common as a citation form in general practice than /mə-ma/, /mə-pa/, /mə-ca/ etc., but /mə-məu/, /mə-nem/, /mə-ku/is more common than /iməu/, /inem/, /i-ku/ in general.

In all the four categories of nouns given above, the citation prefix /mə-/ functions as a nominaliser. It is phonemically identical with the third person pronominal marker /mə-/.

2.2 Prefixation of Tangkhul nominal roots with /a-/  
The four categories of nouns viz. certain countable and uncountable nouns, locationals, body parts and kinship terms take /a-/ as a citation prefix in Tangkhul. Examples are given below:-

(i) /a-/ with certain countable and uncountable nouns
(a) Countable Nouns
[a- + Nominal Root] Countable > Noun
1. a + thəi > a-thəi ‘fruit’
2. a + khur > a-khur ‘hole, cave, cavity’
3. a + nao > a-nao ‘the young one of living beings’
(b) Uncountable Nouns
[a + Nominal root] > Uncountable Noun
1. a + cəm > a-cəm ‘manners’
2. a + wor > a-wor ‘ability, wisdom’
3. a + Σan > a- Σan ‘length’
(ii) /a-/ with locationals
[a + Nominal Root of LCN] > N (locational)
1. a + tuŋ > a-tuŋ ‘the place above’
2. a + ziŋ > a-ziŋ ‘the place below’
3. a + luŋ > a-luŋ ‘centre, middle’
(iii) /a-/ with body parts:
[a + Nominal Root of body part] > N (body part)
1. a + kui > a-kui ‘head’
2. a + phəi > a-phai ‘foot, leg’
3. a + ha > a-ha ‘hair’
(iv) /a-/ with kinship terms
[a + Nominal root of kinship terms] > N (kinship term)
1. a + va > ava ‘father’
2. a + vЩ > avЩ ‘mother’
3. a + mai > a-məi ‘brother’

It may be noted down here that /mə-/ is more or less productive in Manipuri as a citation form of nouns, whereas /a-/ in Tangkhul is less productive as well as comparatively few in number against the other citation prefixes such as /kə, khə, khəmə, khəŋə/.

It is also notable that the citation prefix [mə-] in Manipuri cites noun categories only, giving the form [mə+NBR] N; and in the like manner the prefix /a-/ in Tangkhul
also cites noun categories only, giving the form [a+NBR]N. But in the case of [mə+ Verbal Root] N the function of /mə/ is not a citation prefix to a noun but a subject nominative of a verb, thereby giving the meaning ‘his or her manner of v-ing’. The same is true in Tangkhul with /a-/ e.g. /a-rə/ ‘liquid or fluid’ and /a-cət/ ‘the manner of one’s walking’.

III. Deletion of /mə-/ in Manipuri and /a-/ in Tangkhul Compoundings

It is observed that the citation prefix takes a significant role, either by retention or deletion, in the formation of compounds, wherein retention or deletion is subject to the nature of the compound. First, we may take up countable and uncountable nouns in Manipuri.

3.1 With Countable and Uncountable Nouns

3.1.1. The constructional process is [(mə) NBR+VBR (pə~bə)] N, which means that the citation prefix /mə-/ is deleted from the free form of the noun, and at the same time the nominaliser (pə~bə) of the second component (the verb) is also deleted, so that the remaining nominal bound root and a verbal bound root together constitute a compound. Examples are given below-

(a) Manipuri:

1. (mə) ku ‘rind, bark’ + jom(bə) ‘enclose’ > ku-jom ‘outer covering or layer’
2. (mə)teŋ ‘help’ + paŋ(bə) ‘offer’ > teŋ-baŋ, ‘assistance, support’

The deletion of /mə-/ along with the deletion of /pə~bə/ has a substantive role in that it facilitates the effective combination of the words into compound that fits well into the rhythmic pattern of Manipuri.

3.1.2 In Tangkhul the construction is (a-)NBR + (kə-) VBR, of which the resultant compound is [VBR-NBR] rather than [NBR-VBR]. Here /a-/ is the citation prefix corresponding to /mə-/ in Manipuri, and /kə-/ is the nominaliser corresponding to /pə~bə/ in Manipuri. Examples are given below-

Tangkhul:

1. a- mən ‘price, worth, value’ + kəsa ‘make, do’ > sa- mən ‘reward’
2. a-neŋ ‘remnant’ + kə-za ‘to eat’ > zaneŋ ‘food remains’
3. a-neŋ ‘remnant’ + kə- məŋ ‘to drink’ > məŋ –neŋ ‘remains of drinks’

3.1.3 In Manipuri deletion of /mə/ can also take place on both sides of the components wherein the two components are both nouns, as shown below-

(a) Manipuri:
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1. (mə) NBR + mə (NBR) > [NBR + NBR] Compound Noun
   assigned work course (of action) ‘scheduled programme’

2. (mə) sil + (mə) rəm > sil-ləm
   concern, job course (of action) ‘course or systematic regulation of one’s job’

3. (mə) ku + (mə) rol > kurol
   rind, skin layer ‘layer of skin’

3.1.4 In Tangkhul a corresponding structure exists as (a-) NBR + (a-) NBR > Compound Noun. Examples are given below:-

(b) Tangkhul:
1. (a) ıə + (a) rəm > ıə-rəm
   fruit liquid, fruit ‘fruit juice’

2. (a)nao + (a) pəm > naopəm
   young one place ‘womb’

3. (a) və + (a) ıə > və-ıə ‘(characteristics of) blood lineage’

3.1.5 There are some compounds with a slight difference in which /a/ of the first unit is retained as in the following example:-

(c) Tangkhul :
1. a- NBR + (a) NBR > [ a NBR + NBR] Compound Noun.
   blood fruit ‘genealogy’

2. a-ıə + a- pəm > athəi-pəm
   fruit place ‘orchard’

3. a-ha + a-khur > aha-khur
   body hair hole ‘pore’

3.1.6 There are also compounds with a slight difference in which the citation prefix of the first unit is not /a/-, but either /kə- khə/ or /ŋə/, which is generally deleted in the formation of a compound, along with the (a-) of the second unit, as in the following examples:-

(d) Tangkhul:
1. (kə-/khə-/ŋə-) NBR + (a) NBR > [NBR +NBR] Compound Noun
   mouth hair ‘beard, moustache’

2. (ŋə) luŋ + (a) khur > luŋ-khur
   stone hole, cavity ‘cave’

3. (kə)ziŋ + (a) mik > ziŋ-mik > zi-mik
   sky eye ‘sun’
In Tangkhul /mor-ha/ ‘beard or moustache’ may be compared with /na-ci-ha/ ‘whisker’, whereas the latter may be analysed as a compound of three words /khəna/ ‘ear’ + /acithek/ ‘corner’ + /aha/ ‘hair’.

In fact, in Tangkhul the compound of the structure (a)NBR + (a) NBR > [NBR+NBR] is not found in plenty compared to the compounds of other structure in the category of [N+N]N.

3.1.7 In Manipuri deletion of (mə) can also occur in another form of compounding where [(mə-) NBR] is preceded by a noun whose first element, usually the first syllable, retains in the combination, as shown below:

(a) Manipuri:

{1st element (2nd element)} N + (mə) NBR > Compound Noun

1. ləi (bak) + (mə) nil > ləi-nil
   earth vapour, fume ‘dampness of the earthen ground’

2. i(siŋ) + (mə) nil > i-nil
   water vapour, fume ‘water vapour, body temperature’

4. ləm (bi) + (mə) taŋ > ləm-daŋ
   road stage, specified place ‘accessibility to a given place or destination’

The contraction of the two units into a disyllabic compound attributes a prosodic quality to the resultant compound.

3.1.8. In Tangkhul a compound having similar structure as above is rarely found. However there is one in Tangkhul that can be analysed as a compound being constructed in the same way.

Examples:

(b) Tangkhul:

{1st element (2nd element)} N + (a) NBR > Compound Noun

1. thing roŋ + (a) na > thiŋ-na
   tree leaf ‘leaf of tree’

2. thiŋ roŋ + (a) kor > thiŋ-kor
   tree rind ‘bark’

3. thiŋ roŋ + (a) phəi > thiŋ-phəi
   tree leg, foot ‘foot of the tree’

The other compounds that can be constituted in the like manner is /thiŋ-hun/ ‘peg, stake’, /thiŋ-phan/ ‘pole’, /thiŋ-junŋ/ ‘log’, /thiŋ-təp/ ‘wedge’ etc. There is also a compound e.g. /soŋ-flə-nao/ ‘alley’ which is a compound of /soŋ-flə/ ‘path’ and /ənao/ ‘young one, a miniature’, in which the second element of the first constituent unit /flə/ is still retained unlike the ones given in the examples 1,2,3 of 1.4.1.8.

3.1.9 In Tangkhul compounding compound words of the structure [N+(a) NBR] N are found productive, as for example:

(b) Tangkhul:

N + (a) NBR > [N+NBR] Compound noun
1. tui ‘word’ + (a) khon ‘voice’ > tuikhon ‘pronunciation’
2. mai ‘face’ + (a) ha ‘hair’ > mai-ha ‘beard or moustache’
3. Σim ‘house’ + (a) pam ‘place’ > Σim-pam ‘foundation’
4. mai ‘fire’ + (a) won ‘flower’ > maiwon ‘flame’
5. hən ‘curry’ + (a) ŋə ‘liquid’ > hən-ŋə ‘gravy’
6. phai ‘foot’ + (a) khon ‘sound’ > phai-khon ‘sound of footsteps’
7. ma ‘paddy’ + (a) hik ‘husk, chaff’ > ma-hik ‘empty rice pods’.

3.1.10. In Manipuri a way of compounding by the deletion of [mə-] from {(mə) NBR} is specially found with the root /(mə) kon/ ‘abode’, where a monosyllabic word for domestic animal precedes it to give the word meaning of the particular animal’s abode. For example-
(a) Manipuri:
1. sən + (mə) kon > sən-kon > sən-gon > səŋ-gon
cow abode ‘cow-shed’
2. ok + (mə) kon > ok-kon
pig abode ‘pigsty’
3. yen + (mə) kon > yen-kon > yen-gon > yeŋ-gon
chicken abode ‘chicken-house’

3.1.11. In Tangkhul also the pattern follows as in Manipuri; so the underlying structure [animal GEN+ abode] gives the compound [animal +abode], which is characterized by a shorter length of quality in its phonetic representation implying its single entity. Examples are given below:-
(b) Tangkhul:
1. hər wui Σim > hər- Σim
chicken GEN abode ‘chicken-house’
2. hok wui Σim > hok- Σim
pig GEN abode pigsty
3. sai wui Σim > sai- Σim
cow GEN abode cow-shed

3.1.12. It is notable that in Tangkhul /athip/ ‘nest’ is also used with some animals to give a semantic variation. For example, /hok athip/ means the shelter or abode of a pig that is made by the pig itself by selecting a comfortable place where it stays, whereas ‘hok-Σim’ invariably means the one made by its owner. Another significant difference between /hər-Σim/ ‘chicken house’ /hər-cai/ ‘chicken house’ is that the latter denotes the specific place generally smaller in size, with or without roof, where a hen sits and lays eggs.

3.1.13. Interestingly in Manipuri compounding a compound with the nominal bound root to form an animal’s abode or shelter occurs with the domestic animals only. It does not occur with any of the wild animals, whether the word is a monosyllabic or not, for example-
Manipuri:

kəi ‘tiger’ + (mə)kon ‘abode’ > *kəi-gon ‘tiger’s den’
ləmhui ‘fox’ + (mə) kon ‘abode’ > *lm-hui-kon ‘covert’

For the wild animals the compound words for ‘abode’ is expressed in phrase, constructed with genitive case, for example-
1. kəi ‘tiger’ + gi GEN + mə- kon ‘abode’ > kəi gi makon ‘tiger’s den’
2. ləmhui ‘fox’ + gi GEN + mə-kon ‘abode’ > ləmhui-gi makon ‘covert’

In the above examples, it is seen that where GEN operates as an essential element of phrase, the citation prefix /mə-/ is not deleted as is done in compounding.

3.1.14. It is to be noted that there is primarily no difference between the domestic animal and wild animal so far the compounding process is concerned to give the meaning of their respective abodes. The process is [animal/bird+abode] Compound Noun, as in the case of domestic animal. But a significant point is that since /Σim/ is a referent denoting a construction made by human agents, it is used for domestic animals only, whereas /θiŋ/ ‘nest’ is used for wild animal apart from bird. And for animals like rabbits and foxes the word for abode is /(a)khur/ ‘hole, tunnel’ and for the deer it is /pet/ ‘bed’. This is something totally different from Manipuri Examples are given below-

Tangkhul

animal + abode > the animal’s abode
1. saŋ-khə ‘tiger’ + (a) thip ‘nest’ > səŋkə-thip ‘tiger’s den’
2. rəmfəl ‘fox’ + (a) khur ‘hole/tunnel’ > rəmfəl-khur ‘covert’
3. thebə ‘rabbit’ + (a) khur > thebə khur ‘burrow’
4. cao ‘deer’ + pet ‘bed’ > cao pet. ‘deer’s shelter’

3.1.15 /kon/ with human agent in Manipuri:

/kon/ is also used with human agents. But the use is restricted to a few nouns only as given below-
1. mə-sa ‘one’s own self, body’ + gi GEN + mə-kon ‘abode’ > mə-sai-kon ~ mə-sai-gon ‘one’s home’
2. ləi-mə-səŋ ‘ladies of the royal family’ + gi GEN + mə-kon ‘abode’ > ləi-mə-kon ‘palatial complex where ladies of royal family live. /səŋ/ is the plural marker.
3. Nıŋ-thou ‘kın’ + gi GEN + mə-kon ‘abode’ > nıŋ-thou-kon ‘palatial complex where the king along with the members of a royal family live.

In Tangkhul the word /Σim/ ‘house’ pertains to both man and animal. It is also used with /awu-ŋə/ ‘king, village chief’ to denote ‘king’s house’. The resulting compound word is /wuŋ-nao-Σim/ ‘king’s house’, where /wuŋ/ is derived from /wu-ŋə/ and the suffixed noun /nəo/ ‘the young one or the little one’ denotes a term of endearment. Tangkhul has no semantically equivalent compound word of Manipuri words such as /nıŋ-thou-kol, ləi-ma-kol, mə-sai-kol/. Even /wuŋ-nao-Σim/ is semantically different from /nıŋ-thau-
kol/ so far as the former stands for the ‘king’s house’ which is essentially unique and therefore distinguishable from the houses of the commoners, whereas the latter has a larger connotation, encompassing not only the associating power of the king but also the popular image of the royal atmosphere such as its sophistication and the pomp and pleasure associated with it.

3.2 Locationals:

The locationals in Manipuri may be classified into two, based on the criterion that the first group can be used without the prefix /mə-/ in the making of a phrase; but the second group cannot be used so. The first group comprises of: /mə-thək/ ‘the place above something’, /mə-khal/ ‘the place or spot below’, /mə-manj/ ‘the place in the front’, /mə-tuny/ ‘the place behind something’, /mə-nak/ ‘the place nearby’, /mə-pan/ ‘the outside of a structure’, /mənuŋ/ ‘the inside of a structure’. The second group consists of: /mə-rək/ ‘the place in between two things or two places’, /mə-jai/ ‘the central part or place’, /mə-tai/ ‘the border or the periphery’.

The first group can be used without the citation prefix /mə-/ i.e. /(mə)thək/ → /thək/, /(mə)-kha/ → /kha/, /(mə)manj/ → /manj/ etc. in a phrase, for example, /thək-tə ɲənba/ ‘shining above’, /khaɗə ɭə pomdəba/ ‘having no younger sibling’ (metaphorical use), /manj-də deŋ-ba/ ‘looking forward’, /naŋ-gi nak-tə/ ‘beside you’, /pan-da-nə ɭəmə nuŋ-də-nə ɭəma/ ‘outward manifestation contrasting with the inner reality’ etc.

The second group of locationals cannot be used without the citation prefix /mə/.

For example, phrases like the following ones without (mə-) are considered ungrammatical: */ləktə-rəktə laiba/ ‘to be in between two things’, */jaiɗə phəmba/ ‘sitting in the middle (occupying a central position)’, */tai-da ɭənba/ ‘running on at the border line’, */niŋ-ciŋ/, grammatically meaning the hills in the rear, but semantically meaning the hills in the western side’. It may be noted that /məniŋ/ has two meanings – one as a part of a body, animate or inanimate e.g. /gari məniŋ/ ‘the back or rear of a vehicle’, /məniŋ caobi nupi/ ‘a lady with a broad hip and another one as a location e.g. /səŋ dugi məniŋdə ɭəub ɭəu/ ‘a tree standing behind the building’ or /məniŋ ciŋ/ ‘the hills in the western side’ etc.

3.2.1 Deletion of /mə-/ of locationals in compounding:

The locationals can combine with a NP to form a compound, wherein the locational occurs as a bound root without its citation prefix /mə-/ following the NP, as in the examples given below:

Manipuri:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[N + (mə) locational]</th>
<th>&gt; Compound Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. jum ‘house’ + (mə) thək ‘the space above’ &gt; jum-thək ‘roof’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. thoŋ ‘bridge’ + (mə) kha ‘the space below’ &gt; thoŋ-kha ‘the space under the bridge’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. khun ‘village’ + (mə) jai ‘the centre’ &gt; khun-jai ‘the central part of a village’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3.2.2. In the above examples the compounds are endocentric and the locationals have a definable role of modifying the head noun. Similar construction are found in Tangkhul. Examples are given below:

Tangkhul:

N + (a) LCN > [N+LCN] compound Noun
1. Σim + (a) tuŋ > Σim-tuŋ
house the place on the top ‘the roof’
2. kəphuŋ + (a) ton > kəphuŋ-ton
hill top ‘hill-top’
3. khЩ + (a) luŋ > khЩluŋ
village the inside of ‘the locality situated at
some place the centre of a village’

Other compounds constituted in the same way are /θiŋ-ton/ ‘tree-top’, /Σim-luŋ/ ‘the interior of a house, indoor’ etc. Some compounds retain /a-/ as in /khЩ aton/ ‘the highest point of a village in the hills’. It may be noted down here that /khЩluŋ/ means ‘the locality situated at the centre of a village’, whereas /khЩ aluŋ/ means ‘the interior of a village’. Here juncture has a role in the creation of semantic variations.

3.2.3 There are compounds both in Manipuri and Tangkhul in which body parts take the place of LCN, as found in the examples below:

a) Manipuri:

N + Body part > Compound Noun
1. ciŋ ‘hill, mountain’ + (mə) khoŋ ‘foot, leg’ > ciŋ-khoŋ ‘foot hill’
2. u ‘tree’ + (mə) khoŋ ‘foot, leg’ > u-khoŋ ‘foot of a tree’
3. khun ‘village’ + (mə) cin ‘mouth’ > khun-jin ‘any spot or locatoin
along the village boundary’

b) Tangkhul :

N + Body part > Compound Noun
1. kəphuŋ ‘hill, mountain’ + (a)phəi ‘foot, leg’ > kəphuŋ-phəi ‘foot hill’
2. thiŋ ‘tree’ + (a)phəi ‘foot, leg’ > thiŋ-phəi ‘the foot of a tree’
3. khЩ ‘village’ + (a)khamor ‘mouth’ > khЩ khamor ‘the
lowest point along the village boundary, where
generally the village entrance is’.
4. koŋ ‘river’ + (a) phai ‘foot,leg’ > koŋ-phai ‘river bank, embarkment’.

3.2.4 Occurrence of deletion in the first unit: In the above examples deletion of /mə-/ from the locationals in Manipuri occurs in the second unit of the compound only. But it can also occur in the first unit as well –

1. (mə) tuŋ + (mə) rəm + cat(ə) > tuŋ-ləm-cat
the back course to move ‘future course of action’
2. (mə) manŋ + (mə) rəm + cat (ə) > manŋ-ləm-cat

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the front course to move ‘past course of action’

3. (mə) maŋ + coŋ(bə) > maŋ-əŋ

the front to jump loŋ-jump

4. (mə) jai + toŋ(bə) > jai-toŋ, as in ‘jai-toŋ’

the centre to sit on khəm-donŋ-bo’ ‘the one who occupies a prominent position in social strata, thereby earning high esteem in public life’.

Here, a special mention is to be made that /mə-tuŋ/ and /mə-maŋ/ in the above examples 1,2,3 are not functioning as a noun but rather as an adverb. Therefore they deserve to be treated as a LOC rather than a LCN. But /mə-jai/ of the example no.4. is a noun, therefore a locational.

The compounds given in the examples above are different from the ones given in 1.4.2.1 and 1.4.2.3 in the sense that-

(i) Here, the locationals occur in the first unit of the compound, unlike the ones in 1.4.2.1 and 1.4.2.3, where they occur in the second (final) unit.

(ii) The lexical morpheme that the locational is compounded with is a verb here e.g. /cət/ ‘go’ ‘ʒəŋ-coŋ/ ‘jump or leap’, /toŋ/ ‘to perch or sit on’, unlike the one in 1.4.2.1 and 1.4.2.3, where it is a noun e.g. /ciŋ/ ‘hill’, /u/ ‘tree’, /jum/ ‘house’, /khun/ ‘village’ etc.

(iii) The locationals featuring in 1.4.2.4 express an adverbial meaning, denoting the manner, the time or the place of action etc.

3.3 Deletion of /mə/ from body parts:

In Manipuri the structure [mə+body part] is optional with human, and obligatory with animals. For example, both /mə-kok/ or /kok/ ‘head’ are acceptable in the phrases /migi məkok/ and /migi kok/ ‘human’s head’. However only /makok/ but not ‘kok’ is acceptable as in the phrase /sagi makok/ ‘animal’s head’ not */sagi kok/ ‘animal’s head’.

Therefore /mə+body part/ in the case of human argument has two meanings – (a) body part in general, wherein /mə/ functions as a citational prefix, and (b) his or her body part, wherein /mə/ functions as a third person pronominal marker. The non pronominal status of /mə/ in the case of animal body parts is equally applicable to non-living objects too.

3.3.1. Deletion of /mə-/ in compounds with /mi/: 

If a phrase [mi kok] ‘human’s head’ is ungrammatical, then a compound /mikok/ ‘human-head’ is grammatical. Likewise /mik-hut/ ‘human-hand’ /mi-sa/ ‘human body’ etc. written as single words are grammatically acceptable compounds, but /mi khut/, /mi sa/ etc. written as two words are neither grammatically acceptable phrases nor conventionally acceptable compounds.

One important thing about the compounds /mi + (mə) body part/ is that they have extended meanings in Manipuri. This is shown in the following tabulation-

- Manipuri
  mi + (mə) body part compound extended meaning
1. mi + (mə) kok > mi-kok ‘human-head’ household member, member
2. mi + (mə) khet > mi-khet ‘human-hand’ influence of or interruption by other people or outsiders
3. mi + (mə) mai > mi-mai ‘human face’ relational status of a person as in the phrase /mi-sək mi-mai jeŋ-bə/ ‘in consideration of or acknowledgement of one’s status.’

It is notable that /mi/ ‘human being’ has another semantic variation that it denotes an unfamiliar face or stranger or simply somebody either known or unknown. Therefore the phrase in example no.3 /mimai/ literally means not ‘human face’ but ‘somebody’s face’.

Similar constructions with similar meanings are found in Tangkhul too.

Examples-

b) Tangkhul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Part</th>
<th>Compound</th>
<th>Extended Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mi + (a) kui</td>
<td>mi-kui ‘human head’</td>
<td>member as in /mikui kəsəm/ ‘census’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi + (a) paŋ</td>
<td>mi-paŋ ‘human hand’</td>
<td>interruption by other people as in the phrase /mipan kəsə/ ‘an evidence of other people’s interruption or influence’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi + (a) mai</td>
<td>mi-mai ‘human face’</td>
<td>relational status of a person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above examples it is clear that a phrase with a body part with its citation prefix and a compound with a body part without its citation prefix have different meanings and therefore different semantic roles. So in Manipuri the phrase /mi məkok/ means ‘human head’ whereas the compound /mikok/ means ‘household member’. Likewise in Tangkhul /mi akhui/ means ‘human head’ and ‘mi-kui’ means household member.

3.3.2 Combination of {animal + (mə) body} to denote meat:

In Manipuri compounding, regarding the deletion of [mə-] it is also notable that a compound constituted as {animal + (mə) /sə/ ‘body’} denotes meat of the animal, either cooked or uncooked.

For example:
a) Manipuri

jen + (mə) sa > jen-sə ‘chicken meat’
sən + (mə) sa > sən-sə ‘beef’

But (animal+ mə-sa) means the animal’s physical body.

For example:

jen + masa > jen məsa ‘a hen’s body’
ok + masa > ok məsa ‘a pig’s body’.

3.3.3. Similar constructions are found in Tangkhul too, that is to say that it also has the construction: animal + body, but the difference with Manipuri is that ‘body’ in Tangkhul does not have /a/, the counterpart of Manipuri /mə/, but another citational prefix /pə-/, as in the following examples-

b) Tangkhul:
Animal + /(phə)sa / ‘body’  animal -/sa/ ‘the meat’
1. hər + (phə) sa > hərsa ‘chicken meat’
2. hok + (phə) sa > hok-sa ‘pork’
3. cao + (phə) sa > cao-sa ‘deer-meat’

Animal + /phə-sa/ ‘body’  > animal /phə-sa/ ‘the animal’s physical body’, as for example -
1. hok + phə-sa > hok phə-sa ‘the body of a pig’
2. cao + phə-sa > cao phə-sa ‘the body of a deer’
3. hər + phə-sa > hər phə-sa ‘the body of a chicken’.

3.4.4 /mA-/ with kinship terms in Manipuri:
The kinship terms in Manipuri are generally used with one of the pronominal markers affixed to the kinship bound forms, otherwise they never occur in free form independently. The majority of kinship terms in Manipuri are therefore found as bound forms, such as /-ma/ ‘mother’, /-pa/ ‘father’, /-ce/ ‘elder sister’, /-ca/ ‘younger sister’, /-kubok/ ‘father-in-law’, /-məu/ ‘daughter-in-law’, /-mək ‘son-in-law’, /-ben/ ‘grandmother’, /-budhəu/ ‘grandfather’, /-ton/ ‘younger paternal uncle’ /-pəl ‘elder paternal uncle’. But three of the kinship terms /məu/ ‘daughter-in-law’, /khura/ ‘paternal uncle’, and /mama/ ‘maternal uncle’ can occur without any of the three pronominal markers. Of the three, /khura/ and /mama/ are loan words actually.

3.4.4.1. Two citation prefixes of kinship terms in Manipuri namely {i-} and {mə-}:
In Manipuri there seems to be no rigid system of citing a kinship term as to the selection of the citation prefix, whether it should be {i} or {mə}. However it can so far be observed that both the prefixes {i-} and {mə-} are used in this case. And both are derived from the pronominal markers i.e. the first person and the third person pronominal markers /i/- and /mə-/

(a) /i/- with the nearest kinship terms:
It has been observed that in most cases [i-] is the more favoured citation prefix with the biologically nearest kinship terms such as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister as in /i-ma/ ‘mother’, /i-pa/ ‘father’, /i-ca/ ‘son or daughter’, /i-yambə/ ‘elder brother’, /i-nao/ ‘younger brother’, /i-ce/ ‘elder sister’, /i-ca/ ‘younger sister’, although /mə-ma, mə-pa, mə-ca, mə-yambə, mə-nao, mə-ce, mə-ca/ are also used. And with kinship terms beyond the biologically nearest ones, such as daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, etc. /mə-/ is the more favoured citation prefix as in /mə-məu/ ‘daughter-in-law’, instead of /i-məu/ ‘daughter-in-law’, /mə-ku-bok/ ‘father-in-law’ instead of /i-ku-bok/ ‘father-in-law’, /məsen-məbai/ ‘brother-in-laws’ in cross-referencing terms etc.

It is also to be noted that the three pronominals /i-, /nə- and /mə- can prefix all the kinship terms except /ma-mə/, therefore */i-ma-mə/ ‘my uncle (maternal)’, */nə-ma-mə/ ‘your uncle (maternal), */mə-ma-mə/ ‘his uncle (maternal) are not acceptable. We cannot find out the reason. It cannot be ascribed to the fact that it is a loan word borrowed from Bengali, because another loan word from Bengali /khura/ ‘paternal
uncle’ can be prefixed with any of the pronominal markers, for example, /i-khura/ ‘my uncle’, /mə-khura/ ‘your uncle’ and /mə-khura/ ‘his/her uncle’.

(b) Some compounds with kinship terms in Manipuri:
In Manipuri not many compounds are found with kinship terms. A few words considered to be single words or groups of word are found, when analysed, to be compounds consisting of kinship terms. The following are the list of words generally considered to be single words which are in fact constituted with kinship terms like /ipu/ ‘grandfather’, /ipa/ ‘father’, /maça/ ‘child’, /ima/ ‘mother’.

Examples:
1. /ipa-ipugi wari/ ‘stories about our forefathers’ > /i-pu + wa-ri/ > /pu-wari/ ‘history’,
2. /ipa ipun caɪłambo ləmcaɪ/ ‘behaviours once followed by our forefathers’ > /pu-ləmcaɪ purəmcaɪ/ ‘traditional custom’,
3. /imagi məsək oɪɾəbə laɪbək ‘the earth equivalent to our own mother’ > /laɪbək + ima/ > /ləi-mə ‘mother earth’,
4. /i-pu-siɪn-na hɪn-lək-khi-bə mi-rol-siɪn/ ‘number of generations our grand fathers lived through’ > /i-pu + mi-rol > pu-rol ‘past generations that (have)witnessed grandfathers’.
5. /ipa-ɪpu-ɡi həu-ɾək-phəm mə-kok oɪbə mı-sək/ ‘the one who is the originator of the familial blood-line’, > /i-pu + mə-kok > /pu-kok ‘progenitor’,
6. /ləi-bak-ki mə-ma sək-la-bi/ ‘the one in the role of the country’s (kingdom’s) mother > /ləi-bək+mamə/ > /ləi-mə ‘the queen’,
7. /mə-pa-bu mə-sək khə-ŋə-bə nupa/ ‘the man who knows his father’s identity’ > /məpa + khəbə + nupa > /pa-khən-ба/ ‘name of the first historical king of Manipur’, also the name of a deity of the Meitei community’.
8. /khunda pokpa məca/ ‘one who was born in a village’ > /khun+məca > /khunca > /khun-ja/ ‘a villager’.

In the above examples, the nos. 6,7 and 8 contain the citation prefix /mə-/ and they are found deleted in the compounds.

3.4.4.2. Productivity of /-ca/: When /mə-/ is deleted form /məca/ ‘child, son or daughter’, and suffixed to NBR a compound is constituted. This kind of /-ca/ is productively used in Manipuri compounding, for example, /irəi-bak-ca/ ‘countrymen’, /khunnai-ca/ ‘compatriots’, /kəŋəica/ ‘compatriots of Kangleipak’, /ikhuŋgəŋ-ca/ ‘villagers of my own village’, /miranca/ ‘one who is coming from a foreign country’, /mi-ca-bok/ ‘one who is born of parents belonging to other families’, etc.

3.4.4.3. (a) vЩ in Tangkhul: Unlike in Manipuri, Tangkhul uses /vЩ/ ‘mother’ in specifying a particular body part like the thumb and the big toe, and uses /va/ ‘father’ and /vЩ/ ‘mother in specifying a matured male or female of a species of animal’.

Examples:
a) Tangkhul:
paŋ ‘hand’ + vІІІ ‘mother’ > paŋ vІІІ ‘thumb’
phái ‘foot’ + vІІІ ‘mother’ > phаіvІІІ ‘big toe’
simuk ‘cow’ (the species’) + vІІІ ‘mother’ > simuk vІІІ ‘cow’
      (the female of the species’)
іІІ ‘dog’ + vІІІ ‘mother’ > іІІ vІІІ ‘bitch’
simuk ‘cow (the species’) + ava ‘father’ > mukva/ simuk ava ‘ox’

3.4.4.4. In Manipuri, the same referents namely ‘thumb’ and ‘big toe’ as given above are
denoted by ʦіng /pi~bi/ mə-pi/, a referential expression for ‘mother’ in case of
animals. In order to refer to a fully natured male and female of a particular species of
animal the referential expression /labə/ ‘male sex’ and /məpi/ ‘mother animal, or a
matured female are used. Examples are given-

b) Manipuri
khut ‘hand’ + məpi ‘mother’, female head’ > khutpi → khubi ‘thumb’
khоŋ ‘foot, leg’ + məpi ‘mother, female head’ → khоŋbi ‘big toe’
hui ‘dog’ + məpi ‘mother’ > huipi → huibi ‘bitch’
sən ‘cow’ (the species’) + məpi ‘mother’ > sənpi → sanbi ‘matured
female cow’
sən ‘cow (the species’) + labə ‘the male sex among the animals’ → sən
      labə → səllabə
‘ox’.

IV. CONCLUSION

The two prefixal morphs {mə-} and {ə-}, commonly used as citation prefixes in
Manipuri and Tangkhul are deleted in compounding. And it is observed that the
deletion of the citation prefix /mə-/ in Manipuri has a substantive role in compounding
as it facilitates the process of effective combination of words into a compound in the
sense that the resultant compound readily fits into the natural rhythm of Manipuri. When
we compare a noun phrase with its corresponding compound, for example /u-gi məthək/
with /u-thək/, or /mə-sa-gi mə-kon/ with /mə-sai-kon/ or /mə-mаŋ-thək-ki ləm-da cət-
krə-bə-siŋ/ with /mən-ləm-cət/ etc., we come to know the feasibility of /mə-/ deletion in
constituting a compound that will fit into the natural a rhythm of Manipuri. Along with
the deletion of /mə-/ other operations like vowel mutation, consonant mutation,
assimilation, dissimilation, deletion etc. occur contributing to the harmonic domain of
the different segments or syllables of the endproduct i.e. the compound. The features are
not much different in Tangkhul too. Deletion of /mə-/ and /ə-/ in Manipuri and Tangkhul
compounding testifies the claim that Manipuri and Tangkhul share more similarities
than dissimilarities.

V. REFERENCES
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