

A Suffix Based Morphological Analysis of Assamese Word Formation

Bipul Roy

Scientist-B, Kokrajhar Extension Centre of NIELIT Guwahati
Research Scholar, Department of Computer Science
Assam University,
Silchar, Assam, India
bipul.roy@nielit.gov.in

Bipul Syam Purkayastha

Professor, Department of Computer Science,
Assam University
Silchar, Assam, India
bipul.syam@rediffmail.com

Abstract— Languages have several important features such as part-of-speech, tenses, prefixes and suffixes etc. which play major roles to solve the purpose of the language. In Assamese language suffixation is a very sensitive and unavoidable factor in the formation of Assamese words. Suffixes are letters or group of letters placed right after the nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs etc to intensify the meaning contextually of the newly formed words due to suffixation. Because of the inflectional nature of suffixation, it often creates new words differing in part-of-speech and meaning from the original words, it is attached with. Hence suffixation is morphodynamic process through which new words are generated from old words changing their forms, function and meaning thus increasing the lexical inventory of Assamese language. This particular study can create a theoretical base about the nature of lexical generativity of suffixes in the formation of Assamese words.

Keywords-part-of-speech, prefixes, suffixes, derivational, inflectional

I. INTRODUCTION

Suffixes are one of the most important parts of Assamese language and its part-of-speech as well. Suffixes play vital role in term of meaning of the word. As the main purpose of any language is to express one's feelings to others, so without suffixes Assamese language or conversation in Assamese language may remain intransparent or inappropriate with respect to the meaning. Hence it is very essential to have proper knowledge about the suffix of the Assamese language. Here, in this work, we are going to analyze about Assamese suffixes specifically and their contribution in the Assamese word formation. There is a wide range of Assamese suffixes which help one to express his/her feelings appropriately.

A. Suffixes:

In Assamese language, the affixes which are attached to the end of the root word in order to enhance the meaning or to indicate indefiniteness, definiteness, possibility, nil request, doubt, wish of the speaker of writer, are termed as suffixes. But in Assamese language, there are some suffixes like দেই, দেখোন, চোন, সৈতে, দি, বা, etc which may be attached to root word or sometimes just placed after the nominal or verbal only as a separate word.

For example, মই আজিলৈ আহোঁ দেই ।

Here “দেই” is a suffix which appears separately in the sentence. But in the Assamese grammar books titled “Axomiya Rachana Sangkalan” (অসমীয়া ৰচনা সংকলন) written by Dr. Nagen Thakur and “Axomiya Bhaxar Ruptatwa” (অসমীয়া ভাষাৰ ৰূপতত্ত্ব) by Leelawatee Saikia Bora, such morphemes are treated as separate part from suffix and are termed as “Anupad” that is “post-positions” and not suffix.

Usually suffixes are one to three letters long. Suffixation can affect the root words semantically. Though individual suffixes are meaningless until attached to an appropriate root word, still they bear certain semantic senses, thus enhancing the

meaning of the root word contextually. For example, to indicate “particular place for something”, “শাল” suffix is attached to appropriate root words such as “ঢেঁকীশাল// a shed where rice is clean”, “জুইশাল// a fire place”. A thorough knowledge of Assamese suffixes can provide a strong foundation for the better hold and understanding of Assamese language [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10].

Some time suffixes are used in Assamese language to distinguish between male and female, to convert singular number to plural number and also to indicate something distinctly. There are a huge number of suffixes present in Assamese language. Multiple suffixes can be attached to a root word one after another.

For example. কৰিছিল = কৰ-ইছ-ইল-আ,

খেতিয়কসকলৰ = খেত -ই -অক -সকল-অৰ etc.

Suffixes can be attached after nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs as well. For example

1. Noun + suffix
মানুহ + বিলাক = মানুহবিলাক
2. Pronoun + suffix
মি + জন = মিজন
3. Adjective + suffix
সৰু + জনী = সৰুজনী
তপত + আ = তপতা
4. Verb + Suffix
আহা + চোন = আহাচোন
নাচ + উৰা = নচুৰা
5. Adverb + Suffix
অথনি + কৈ = অথনিকৈ

II. TYPES AND FORMS OF ASSAMESE SUFFIXES

When an appropriate suffix is attached to a root word, then the word is considered as a single word. Assamese language has a large stock of suffixes making it morphologically very rich.

Depending on the use and the semantic influence on the root word, suffix can be categorized as derivational suffix, inflectional suffix, plural suffix, verbal suffix, definitives, indefinitives and emphasizing suffix.

(a) **Derivational Suffix:** Those Assamese suffixes which change the meaning of the root word after suffixation are termed as derivational suffix.

For example (i) বুদ্ধি + অক = বুদ্ধিয়ক
Intellect (Noun) Intelligent (Adjective)

(ii) ফুল + অনি = ফুলনি
Flower (Noun) Flower garden (Noun)

Here, is the above example (i), ‘বুদ্ধি’ means intellect but the suffixation ‘ অক’ it becomes “ বুদ্ধিয়ক” which means “intelligent” and in the example (ii) ‘ ফুল’. So such suffixes on the basis of their function, are termed as derivatives or derivational suffixes.

In the example (i), suffixation produces adjective out of noun. While in this example (ii) it produces noun out of noun after suffixation.

So, from the above two examples, we can say that there are some derivational suffixes which change the class of the root word whereas some derivational suffixes maintain the class of the root word after suffixation. So those derivational suffixes which produce a derived form of the same class i.e. they do not change the class of a part of speech are termed as class maintaining derivational suffixes. Again the class changing derivational suffixes are those which produce a derived form of another class after the suffixation [6, 7].

Again, depending on the root word to which the derivational suffix is attached, it can be broadly divided into two categories viz (i) Primary suffix and (ii) Secondary suffix.

(i) **Primary suffix:** The derivational suffixes which are added to the root or to verb-stems only are called Primary suffixes. e.g. জ্বল + অন্ত = জ্বলন্ত
To burn (Verb) burning (Adjective)

(ii) **Secondary Suffix:** The derivational suffixes which are added to a noun-stem or an adjective-stem are called Secondary Suffixes. E.g. নাও + অৰীয়া = নাৱৰীয়া
Boat (Noun) boatman (Noun)

(b) **Inflectional Suffix:** Inflectional Suffix is attached to the root word in order to make semantic relationships between the words in a sentence which make the sentence contextually meaningful and grammatically correct converting the root word into an inflected word (a part of speech), but never changes the case of the root word. Let us consider the following two Assamese sentences: (i) হৰিয়ে মোহনক খবৰটো দিলে | Hari gave the news to Mohan. (ii) হৰিয়ে মোহনৰ খবৰটো দিলে | Hari gave Mohan’s news. In the first sentence “মোহনক”

– মোহন + অক (Inflectional suffix) is added which means “to Mohan” whereas in the second sentence “মোহনৰ”-মোহন+ অৰ (Inflectional suffix) is added which means “about Mohan / Mohan’s”. So inflectional suffixes are attached to express the appropriate meaning according to the contexts of the sentence. In other words Inflectional suffix changes the grammatical properties of a word within its syntactic category. In Assamese language, there are seven categories of inflectional suffixes as given below:

TABLE 1: INFLECTIONAL SUFFIX MARKERS, TYPE AND APPLICATIONS.

Sl.No	Case	Inflectional suffixes /Case Markers	Applications
1	Nominative	অ,এ,ই	সময়,সময়ে
2	Accusative	ক	সময়ক
3	Dative	ৰে,দি, দ্বাৰা	সময়েৰে,সময়ৰদ্বাৰা
4	Genitive	লৈ	সময়লৈ
5	Ablative	ৰ,পৰা	সময়ৰপৰা
6	Instrumental	ৰ	সময়ৰ
7	Locative	ত	সময়ত

(c) **Verbal Suffix:** Those suffixes which are particularly added to a verb stem only are termed as verbal suffix. Some of the Assamese Verbal suffixes are –ইছিলোঁ, –ইছিলি, –হবি, –ইম, –আ, etc. Like কৰ্ + ইছিলোঁ=কৰিছিলোঁ, লিখ্ + আ = লিখা, etc

(d) **Plural Suffix:** In Assamese language, those suffixes which when added to root words, they mean a particular group or unit of something, are termed as plural suffixes. Some of the Assamese Plural suffixes are: –বোৰ, –হত, –মথা, –সোপা, –সমূহ, –গন, etc. Like ল’ৰা + হত=ল’ৰাহত, গছ + বোৰ = গছবোৰ, etc.

(e) **Definitives:** In order to make a specific or definite reference to nouns, adjectives and numerals to qualify its class property like singularity or plurality or generality, gender etc, Assamese uses some particles as morphemes such as জন, জনী, টো, ডাল, খন, খিনি, আখি, থোপা etc. These are called definitives. Though in modern linguistics, these suffixes are termed as classifiers which mean “শ্ৰেণীনির্দেশক” in Assamese, so this term is not appropriate in the context of Assamese Language. In Assamese language more than sixty (60) definitives

are present. Let us illustrate some examples to show the contrast of the root word with and without the definitives.

- (i) 'শিক্ষক' (Teacher) in general but 'শিক্ষক-জন' indicates "a particular teacher".
 - (ii) 'পুখুৰী' (Pond) in general but "পুখুৰীটো" means a particular pond.
 - (iii) 'চাউল' (Rice) in general but "চাউলখিনি" reflects "the very quantity of rice".
- (f) Emphasizing suffix: Sometimes to indicate special importance or intense value to some work or something or person, in Assamese language "ই"/ "ও", etc are tagged after nouns, adjectives, pronouns, case makers, verbs, definitives, etc. These morphemes are called Emphasizing suffixes. e.g. সি খাবই (খাব + ই) // He will definitely eat.
ময়েই (মই+এ+ই) যাম // Only I will go. Emphasizing suffix can follow definitives and case markers but once the emphasizing suffix is tagged, no other suffix can be attached.
- (g) Indefinitive Suffix: Indefinitive suffix refers to, or introduce, an unspecified noun. In other words, an indefinite suffix is used before or sometimes after definitives when not referring to a particular person, place, thing or idea, but we want to convey that we're talking about any one person, place, thing or idea. For example, if we tag 'এ' before the definitive 'জন' and placing it before and after a nominal 'মানুহ' it becomes 'এজন মানুহ' and 'মানুহ এজন' respectively. Here the 'মানুহ' (man) is singular that is definite, but that man is already known or not is not clear.
-মান,-চেৰেক,-দিয়েক,-বা,-এক,-কেই,-কেত, etc are used as indefinite suffixes in Assamese language

III. DERIVATION OF WORDS FROM ONE GRAMMATICAL CLASS TO ANOTHER AFTER SUFFIXATION.

Word-derivation in morphology is a word-formation process by which a new word is built from a stem – usually through the addition of a suffix – that changes the word class and / or basic meaning of the word [1.2, 5, 8, 9, 10]. Let us analysis the fact with the help of following conversion in Assamese:

(1) Conversion of Verbs to Nouns:

To derive nouns from verbs, the noun forming suffixes are added to the verb and new words are formed.

For example.

বহ + উৰা =বহুৱা

to seat down a mimic

বস্ + অতি =বসতি, etc.

to seat residence

(2) Conversion of Verbs to Adjectives:

The following suffixes are added to verbs to form adjectives in Assamese language.

For example.

কান্দ + উৰা =কান্দুৰা

to cry incessantly crying

জ্বল + অন্ত =জ্বলন্ত, etc.

To burn burning

(3) Conversion of Adjectives to Nouns:

Adjectives are converted to nouns by use of the following Assamese suffixes.

For example.

ডাঙৰ + জনী =ডাঙৰজনী

big elder/eldest one (feminine)

ধিতিঙা +আলি =ধিতিঙালি, etc.

Idle Laziness

(4) Conversion of Nouns to Adjectives:

Some of the Assamese suffixes for converting nouns to adjectives are:

For example.

ৰস্ +আল =ৰসাল

taste juicy

ডাল +উৰা =ডালুৱা, etc.

a branch relating to a branch

(5) Conversion of Nouns to Verbs:

Some nouns can be converted to verbs by the addition of the following suffixes in the Assamese language.

For example.

আঙুলি +আ =আঙুলিয়া

finger to point at

আগ্ + উৰা =আগুৱা, etc.

The front to go forward

(6) Conversion of Adjectives to Verbs:

Some adjectives can be converted to verbs by adding suffixes.

For example.

বহল + আ = বহলা

width to widen

(7) Conversion of Adjective to Adverb:

In Assamese language some adjectives can be converted to adverbs by adding suffixes.

For example.

কেচাঁ +ই =কেঁচাই

unripe in raw state

থৰ + কৈ = থৰকৈ, etc.

Quick Quickly

(8) Conversion of Nouns to Adverbs:

Some nouns can be converted to verbs by the addition of the following suffixes. There are some Assamese suffixes which can convert nouns to verbs.

For example.

বেগ + আই = বেগাই
speed speedily

ধিতিঙালি + কৈ = ধিতিঙালিকৈ
Laziness Lazily

পথালি + কৈ = পথালিকৈ, etc.

Width Crosswise

(9) Conversion of Pronoun to Adverb:

Some pronouns can be converted to adverbs by the addition of the following suffixes.

For example.

তেনে + কৈ = তেনেকৈ
such of thus

এনে + কৈ = এনেকৈ
such in this manner

(10) Conversion of Verb to Adverb:

Some verbs can be converted to adverbs by the addition of the following suffixes.

For example.

যায় + মানে = যায়মানে

কওঁ-কওঁ+কৈ = কওঁ-কওঁকৈ

(11) Conversion of Adverbs to Adjectives:

Some adverbs can be converted to adjectives by the addition of suffixes.

For example.

অনুপদ + ঙ্গি = অনুপদী

Searching Searching for

A. Grammatical change after suffixation:

One of the indispensable facts of suffixation in Assamese language is that it can change the grammatical properties of the word, it is attached to (though not always). Such grammatical changes due to suffixation make appropriate interpretation of the Assamese sentences exchanging the charm of the language. To reflect tense, suffixes are attached to verbs. Also for converting gender, number, case, degrees suffixes are attached to nouns, pronouns, adjectives. etc. Some examples of such, morpho-syntactic change of Assamese words due to suffixation can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 2: GRAMMATICAL CHANGE AFTER SUFFIXATION

Suffix	Grammatical Change	Examples	
		Original Word	Suffixed Word
-বোৰ	Plural	ফুল (Flower)	ফুলবোৰ (Flowers)
-অন্ত	Progressive	ঘুম (Sleep)	ঘুমন্ত (sleeping)

-ওৱা	Causative	পঢ় (to read)	পঢ়োৱা (one who causes to read)
-ইছোঁ	Present Continuous tense	গা (Sing)	গাইছোঁ (is/am/are Singing)
-ইছিলোঁ	Past Imperfect/Past Continuous	ধৰ (Held)	ধৰিছিলোঁ (Hold/was (were) Holding)
-ইলোঁ	Past perfect tense	ধৰ (Held)	ধৰিলোঁ (Had held)
-ইলোহেঁতেন	Past Perfect Continuous Conditional tense	আহ (Come)	আহিলোহেঁতেন (would have come)
-ইম	Future tense	পঢ় (Study)	পঢ়িম (will read)
-ইবা-চোন	Future Conditional tense	আহ (to come)	আহিবাচোন (do come)
-তৰ	Comparative	গুৰু (Instructor)	গুৰুতৰ (heavier)
-তম	Superlative	ক্ষুদ্ৰ (small)	ক্ষুদ্ৰতম (smallest)
-নী	Masculine to feminine	গৃহস্থ (Householder)	গৃহস্থনী (Woman Householder)
-ই	Infinite Verb	খা (Eat)	খাই (Having eaten)
-ইছে	Finite verb	কৰ (Do)	কৰিছে (Done)

IV. CONCLUSION

This particular work shows that suffixation has immense contribution in the morphosemantic and morphosyntactic richness of the Assamese language. This paper gives a clear concept of the Assamese suffixes, their uses and their role in the formation of new words in Assamese Language. Such an elaborated concept about suffixation in Assamese language helps to understand the language in general and also for linguistic research works, students and any individual willing to learn the Assamese language and its grammatical features. A lot of research scope is present in the field of Assamese language. As a future work, we may try to study more elaborately and in more details manner, so that it can help in tagging of Assamese sentences more accurately in order to solve NLP applications and to solve some of the fundamental questions on Assamese grammar.

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