

Coining of Words in Manipuri

Mayengbam Bidyarani Devi, Ph.D.

Senior Fellow, ICSSR

Department of Linguistics, Manipur University, Canchipur, Manipur, India

Abstract: The present paper contributes to the study of Coining of words in Manipuri, a Tibeto-Burman language. Coining of words in Manipuri is the creation or invention of new words or phrases in which they are formed for a new semantic representation. This creation of new words helps a language to develop new technologies. Manipuri has a good numbers of coined words in their lexicon. Most of the coined words seem to have been created to fill a lexical gap for new objects that were introduced to Manipuri speakers. Coining of words is mostly found in local daily newspapers, journals, literature, media and day today conversation. The best way to coin a new word in Manipuri is to describe an object or a phenomenon. New coin words which are predominantly reflect the social, political, economical and cultural changes. Most of coined words in Manipuri are in the field of literature and conversations. Many of the coined words exist for a long time while some of them survive only for a short period. Coining of words will enrich the lexical development in Manipuri.

Keywords: Coining, social, cultural, vocabulary and lexical

1. Introduction

Neologisms are newly coined terms, words, or phrases that may be commonly used in everyday life but have yet to be formally accepted as constituting mainstream language. Neologisms represent the evolving nature of the English language. Over time people create new words that express concepts or ideas that were previously expressed using other words or use words that may not have existed at all. Neologisms can be completely new words, new meanings for existing words or new lexemes in existing words. Here are some examples of neologisms that are finding their way into modern-day English language. Here are examples of Washington Post neologisms such as **Testicle** (n.), a humorous question on an exam. **Circumvent** (n.), an opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men. Examples of Social Networking and Technology Neologisms such as **Google**: To use an online search engine as the basis for looking up information on the World Wide Web. **Tweet cred**: social standing on Twitter. **App**: Software application for a smart phone or tablet computer. **Noob**: Someone who is new to an online community or game. Examples of Popular Culture Neologisms **Tebowing**: description of a prayerful victory stance derived from NFL quarterback Tim Tebow. **Brangelina**: used to refer to supercouple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. Trademark that are genericized such as Band-aid, Xerox, Tupperware.

A coined word (or neologism) is a word that has been inspired by a person or event such as Metrosexual - a man who dedicates a lot of time and money to his appearance, Webinar - online seminar, Banana Republic - politically unstable country that depends on exports, Butterfingers - clumsy person, Oxbridge = Oxford + Cambridge, Yahoo - primitive people with materialistic ways of thinking.

Coined words come in many varieties. Almost all new words, from tech company names to political insults, result from a handful of processes familiar to linguists. Most of these processes are green: they reuse or recycle existing words. Here are seven common ways to build a new word: Reuse an existing word (*Apple*, *spam*), Create a new compound word by sticking two words together (*YouTube*, *website*), Create a blend by combining part of a word with another word or word part (*Technorati*, *Defeatocrat*), Attach a prefix or a suffix to a word (*Uncola*, *Feedster*), Make something up out of arbitrary syllables (*Bebo*), Make an analogy or play on words (*Farecast*, *podcast*), Create an acronym (*GUBA*, *scuba*).

New words in a language can come from either one of the two sources. They are Internal/ coining of words and External/ Borrowing. Internal is the creation of new words by utilizing the indigenous resources that the language already has their own. While External is the borrowed new words by utilizing the sources from another language.

In the case of bilingual speakers, words may also be borrowed if the speaker retrieves the words of second language (language learned after the native language) faster than native language words (Haugen, 1953).

Coined words cannot be completely new in form; they have to conform to the phonological rules of the language, being made up of phonemes of the language ordered in ways consistent with old words (Hudson, 2000).

In European states, language has commonly been used as an instrument of nation building that is languages were identified and codified in single forms while minority language in part eliminated in Europe in 19th century (Nigel HERRIS, 1990).

Creation of new word helps a language to flourish in a world full of new technologies. There are certain reasons for coining of words. The need to refer to objects or concepts or ideas that are newly invented or introduced to a speech community is the main reason for coining of words.

2. Coining of Words in Manipuri

Coining of words in Manipuri is the creation or invention of new words or phrases in which they are formed for a new semantic representation. This creation of new words helps a language to develop new technologies.

Manipuri has a good numbers of coined words in their lexicon. Most of the coined words seem to have been created to fill a lexical gap for new objects that were introduced to Manipuri speakers. Coining of words is mostly found in local daily newspapers, journals, literature, media and day today conversation. Some of the coined words are for a short period of time and only at their proposal level.

Use of different styles in literature is also a significant reason for coining of words. Manipuri has significantly been influenced by language contact as well as cultural and religious contacts. Coining of words will be discussed in different ways. The best way to coin a new word in Manipuri is to describe an object or a phenomenon. New coin words which are predominantly reflect the social, political, economical and cultural changes. Most of coined words in Manipuri are in the field of literature and conversations. Many of the coined words exist for a long time while some of them survive only for a short period. Coining of words will enrich the lexical development in Manipuri. There are four kinds of coining of words in Manipuri. They are discussed below:

- i) Coining of words based on the description of the object, concept or phenomenon,
- ii) Coining of words based on the attraction of listeners,
- iii) Coining of words based on youth/ youngsters,
- iv) Coining of words based on analogical paradigm.

2.1 Coining of words based on the description of the object, concept or phenomenon:

Coining of words based on the description of the object, concept or phenomenon is the most common process in most of the languages. In Manipuri the best way to coin a new word or new creation of words is to describe an object, a concept or a phenomenon according to the appearances of the particular terms. Examples are as follows:

Object/ Concept/ Phenomenon	Description	Gloss
Ce-r ^h ŋ	Ce 'paper' r ^h ŋ~l ^h ŋ 'glitter' It means a paper that glitters.	polythene
m ^h ŋr ^h ŋk mik ^h ŋl	m ^h ŋr ^h ŋk 'between' mik ^h ŋl 'election' It means the election that held between regular elections.	By-election
noŋt ^h ŋ-meī	noŋt ^h ŋ 'lighting' meī 'fire' It means electricity	electricity
meira paibi	meira 'torch' paibi 'woman bearer' It refers to a woman torch bearer who guard their locality society against the unwanted crimes. They fight for human right violation.	woman torch bearer

These kind of coining of words are based on the appearances or occurrences of the object, concept or phenomenon. These coined words are increased in vocabulary as well as flourished the language.

vi) l̄m~r̄ḍm ‘land/place’

2.4.1 -loi~-roi ‘suffix’:

In Manipuri roots are classified into two *i.e.* Free root and Bound root. Free roots are considered as nominal classes (noun) while Bound roots are all verbal. Verbal affixes are bound forms, which can only be attached to the verbal root. In this language, there are prefixes and suffixes only but no infix. In an agglutinative language like Manipur, affixes are very important. In affixation, in this language there are two process *i.e.* prefixation and suffixation.

Verbal suffixes are in large number in this language. All Manipuri verbs are mainly formed by adding suffixes.

The suffix **-loi~-roi** is added to Noun, it gives the meaning of doer/ companion/ agentive. The suffix **-loi** is used when the noun is ended with consonant while **-roi** is used the noun is ended with vowels. The coined words made by adding the suffix **-loi~-roi** to the Noun are of two types. They are

- a) Noun + suffix -loi~-roi and
- b) Verbal Noun (Verb root + -bḍ~-pḍ) + suffix -loi~-roi.

a) Noun + suffix -loi~-roi:

Coined words are formed by adding the suffix **-loi~-roi** is attached to the Noun and they give the meaning of **Doer/Companion/Agentive**. Free root are considered as Nouns, they are all nominal classes and they are found freely without the support of affixes. The suffix **-loi~-roi** to the Noun, it functions as doer, companion or agentive. Such coined word increases the vocabulary of the language as well as flourished the language of Manipuri.

The examples of **Noun + suffix -loi~-roi** are as follows:

Noun + suffix -loi~-roi	Gloss (Doer/Companion/Agentive)
k ^h oŋ-loi = k ^h oŋloi foot	Journey partner
ita-roi = itaroi my female friend	my female friend
nata-roi = nataroi your female friend?	your female friend
mata-roi = mataroi her female friend	her female friend

The above examples are the coined words formed by adding the suffix **-loi~-roi** to the free Noun and they give the meaning of **Doer/Companion/Agentive**.

b) Verbal Noun (Verb root + -bḍ~-pḍ) + suffix -loi~-roi:

There are also Verbal Nouns (Verb root + -bḍ~-pḍ), the marker -bḍ~-pḍ is the nominal marker. In Manipuri Verbal Noun is formed by adding nominalizer/ nominal markers **-bḍ~-pḍ** to the verb root. The nominalizer **-pḍ** is added to the **verbal root** ended by **p,t,k** and **-bḍ** is added to the verb root of all the consonant and vowels except **p,t,k**.

Examples of **Verbal Noun (Verb root + -bḍ~-pḍ) + suffix -loi~-roi** are as follows:

Verbal Noun (Verb root + -bḍ~-pḍ) + suffix -loi~-roi	Gloss (Doer/Companion/Agentive)
hḍndok(pḍ)-loi = hḍndokloi translate	Translator
t ^h ijil(bḍ)-loi = t ^h ijilloi search	researcher
p ^h oŋdok(pḍ)-loi = p ^h oŋdokloi publish	publisher
waŋḍeŋ(bḍ)-loi = waŋḍeŋloi speak	speaker

The above examples are the coined words formed by adding the suffix **-loi~-roi** to the **Verbal Noun (Verb root + -bḍ~-pḍ)** and they give the meaning of **Doer/Companion/Agentive**.

2.4.2 lon~ron ‘language/ science’:

In Manipuri the word **lon~ron** ‘language/ science’ is attached to Noun, it gives the meaning of art/ science. The word **lon** is attach to the Noun which is ended by consonants and **ron** is attach to the Noun which is ended by vowels. Coined words are formed by attaching **lon~ron** ‘language/ science’ in Manipuri.

Examples of **Noun + lon~ron** are as follows:

Noun + lon~ron	Gloss (Art/ Science)
puŋ-lon = puŋ-lon drum	Language of drum
thaŋ-lon = thaŋlon sword	Language of sword
ta-ron = taron sword	Language of spear
punsi-ron = punsiron life	Art of living

The word **lon~ron** ‘language/ science’ is also found as a suffix marker **-lon~-ron** to use in the social titles for women in the earlier Meitei society where **-lon~-ron** refers ‘lady’ (Pramodini, 1989). Examples are as follows:

- waŋɔ̄m-lon = waŋɔ̄mlon ‘ladies of Mangang clan’
- k^heiyoil-lon = k^heiyoilon ‘ladies of khuman clan’
- k^hɔ̄bɔ̄-lon = k^hɔ̄bɔ̄ron ‘ladies of khaba clan’
- noŋbal-lon = noŋballon ‘ladies of Angom clan’ etc.

The above examples are available only in the archaic literatures. Manipuri has seven clans. They are Mangang, Luwang, Khuman, Angom, Moirang, Khaba Nganba and Sarang leishangthem.

2.4.3 kon~gon ‘nest/ abode’:

In Manipuri the word **kon~gon** ‘nest/ abode’ is attached to Noun, it gives the meaning of nest/ abode. The word **kon** is attached to the Noun ended with vowels and the word **gon** is attached to the Noun ended with consonants. Coined words are formed by attaching **kon~gon** ‘nest/ abode’ in Manipuri.

Examples of **Noun + kon~gon** are as follows:

Noun + kon~gon	Gloss (Nest/ Abode)
u-con = ucon wood	A place where trees are grown for commercial use.
hei-kon = heikon fruit	garden
ŋa-kon = ŋakon fish	A den of fish
lei-kon = leikon flower	garden

The above examples are the coined words formed by adding the **kon~gon** to the **Noun** and they give the meaning of nest/ abode.

2.4.4 -len~-ren ‘biggest/highest’:

In Manipuri the suffix **-len~-ren** ‘biggest/highest’ is attached to the Noun and it gives the meaning of biggest/highest. The suffix **-ren** is attached to the Noun ended with vowels and the suffix **-len** is attached to the Noun ended with consonants. Coined words are formed by attaching **-len~-ren** ‘biggest/highest’ in Manipuri.

Examples of **Noun + -len~-ren** are as follows:

Noun + -len~-ren	Gloss (biggest/highest)
lai-ren = lairen god	python
t ^h aŋ-len = t ^h aŋlen sword	great sword

p ^h i-ren = p ^h iren cloth	best cloth
nɪŋ ^h ɔw-ren = nɪŋ ^h ɔwren	great king

The above examples are the coined words formed by adding the suffix marker **len~-ren** to the Noun and they give the meaning of biggest/highest.

2.4.5 kei~gei ‘stock/granary’:

In Manipuri the word **kei~gei** ‘stock/granary’ is to attach to Noun, it gives the meaning of stock/granary. The word **kei** is attached to the Noun ended with vowels and the suffix **gei** is attached to the Noun ended with consonants. Coined words are formed by attaching **kei~gei** ‘stock/granary’ in Manipuri.

Examples of **Noun + kei~gei** are as follows:

Noun + kei~gei	Gloss (stock/granary)
lon-gei = longei language	dictionary
p ^h ɔw-gei = p ^h ɔwgei paddy	granary of paddy
siŋ-gei = siŋgei firewood	Granary of firewood
lɔn-gei = lɔngei wealth	Property

The above examples are the coined words formed by adding the word **kei~gei** to the Noun and they give the meaning of stock/granary.

2.4.6 lɔm~rɔm ‘land/place’:

In Manipuri the word **lɔm~rɔm** ‘land/place’ is attached to Noun, it gives the meaning of land/place. The word **rɔm** is attached to the Noun ended with vowels and the word **lɔm** is attached to the Noun ended with consonants. Coined words are formed by attaching **lɔm~rɔm** ‘land/place’ in Manipuri.

Examples of **Noun + lɔm~rɔm** are as follows:

Noun + lɔm~rɔm	Gloss (land/place)
loiya-lɔm = loiyalɔm village	Village area
k ^h oŋ-lɔm = k ^h oŋlɔm foot	Footpath
k ^h oŋ-lɔm = k ^h oŋlɔm canal	Canal
hi-rɔm = hirɔm boat	boat ways

The above examples are the coined words formed by adding the word + **lɔm~rɔm** to the Noun and they give the meaning of land/place.

3. Conclusion

Coining of words in Manipuri is the creation of new words or phrases in which they are formed for a new semantic representation. Manipuri has a good numbers of coined words in their lexicon. Most of the coined words seem to have been created to fill a lexical gap for new objects that were introduced to Manipuri speakers. Coining of words is mostly found in local daily newspapers, journals, literature, media and day today conversation. Manipuri has significantly been influenced by language contact as well as cultural and religious contacts. The best way to coin a new word in Manipuri is to describe an object or a phenomenon. New coined words which are predominantly reflect the social, political, economical and cultural changes. Most of coined words in Manipuri are in the field of literature and conversations. Many of the coined words exist for a long time while some of them survive only for a short period. There are four kinds of coining of words in Manipuri. They are i) Coining of words based on the description of the object, concept or phenomenon, ii) Coining of words based on the attraction of listeners, iii) Coining of words based on youth/ youngsters, and iv)

Coining of words based on analogical paradigm. Coining of words helps to increase the vocabulary of Manipuri language.

References:

- [1]. Bidyarani Mayengbam (2011), **Manipuri Verbs**, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG.
- [2]. Crystal, D. (1985), **A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics**. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- [3]. Haugen, Einar. (1953). **The Norwegian Language in America: a study in bilingual behavior**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [4]. Hudson, G. (2000), **Essential Introductory Linguistics**. Oxford Blackwell.
- [5]. Nigel Herris. (1990). **National Liberation**, I.B. Tauris and Co.Ltd. London.
- [6]. Trask R. L. (2000), **The Dictionary of Historical and Comparative Linguistics**, Edinburgh University Press.
- [7]. **“Neologism”** retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neologism> Pramodini, N. (1989). **Social Grammar of Meiteilon**. Unpublished thesis, Manipur University, Canchipur.