ASPECTS IN MANIPURI

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ABSTRACT

The present paper contributes to the study of the aspects in Manipuri. It analyses the morphological and semantic features of the aspects in Manipuri. In Manipuri, it would be more feasible to discuss 'Aspect' instead of 'Tense'. An event or a situation in Manipuri can be divided into four units. The first is the simple habitual expression of the event (Simple Aspect); the second discusses about the event is going on (Progressive Aspect); the third express the event is completed (Perfect Aspect); and the fourth talks about the event will be performed in the next moment (unrealized Aspect).

Keywords: Tense, aspect, simple, progressive, perfect and unrealized.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aspect is concerned with the temporal distribution or contour of an event. The term aspect (which is a translation of the Russian word **vid**) was first used to refer to the distinction of 'Perfective' and 'Imperfective' in the inflexion of verbs in Russian and other Salvonic languages. The term 'perfective'(or perfect) is reminiscent of that used by the Stoic grammarians for the somewhat similar notion of 'completion' found in Greek (Lyons, 1968).

Tense is a deictic category i.e. locates situations in time, usually with reference to the present moment, though also with reference to other situations. Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation. One could state the difference as one between situation –internal time (aspect) and situation – external time (tense). Tense locates the event in time while aspect characterizes the internal temporal structure of the event (Chung and Timberlake, 1985). In fact, tense is not found in all languages. Its essential characteristic is that it relates the time of action, event, or state of affairs refer to in the sentence to the time of utterance (Hockett, 1958).

In short 'tense is a grammaticalized expression of location in time' (Comrie, 1985). Tibeto-Burman languages are generally found to give greater prominence to mood than to tense and aspect.

Some of them, like Burmese, have been described as 'tenseless' languages. The primary distinction that their Verbs make is between realis and irrealis i.e. forms which indicates an event that the speaker considers to be real, on the one hand, the one that denote hypothetical, possible, proposed or yet to be realised (future) events on the other, (Bhat and Ningomba, 1997).'Tenses typically show different locations of an event in time' (Hockett, 1958). Tense is a category used in the grammatical description of verbs along with aspect and mood, referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the time at which the action denoted by the verb took place (Crystal, 1985). With the concept of the above linguists, this paper presents that in Manipuri, it would be more feasible to discuss 'Aspect' instead of 'Tense' as described in the following sections.

2. ASPECTS IN MANIPURI

In Manipuri, it would be more feasible to discuss 'Aspect' instead of 'Tense'. An event or a situation in Manipuri can be divided into four units: the first is the simple habitual expression of the event (Simple Aspect); the second discusses about the event is going on (Progressive Aspect); the third express the event is completed (Perfect Aspect); and the fourth talks about the event will be performed in the next moment (unrealized Aspect). They are discussed below.

2.1. Simple Aspect

It expresses simple statement, habitual meaning and universal truth. The markers – **y~ mi~ ni~ŋi~li** are occurred under phonological conditions. (The suffixes are attached to the verb root when the suffix/-y/ is attached after vowel and only the consonant /k/; the suffix-**mi** occurs only after the consonant/ **m/;** the suffix –**ni** is attached after the vowel; the suffix '-**ŋi'** is attached only after the consonant **/ŋ/** and the suffix –**li** is attached only after the consonant /**t/** and /**l/** respectively as shown in (1) to (3).

(1).   numit-n∂ noŋpok-ta tʰok-y   'The sun rises in the east'
       sun –nom. east-loc. rise-asp.simp.

(2).   m∂hak iskul c∂t –li   'He goes to school'
       he school go-asp.simp.

(3).   ∂y cak tʰoŋ-ŋi   'I cook rice'
       I rice cook-asp.simp.

Sentences containing verbal forms with future and non-future suffix can provide habitual (or generic) meaning. In order to specify this meaning unambiguously in a sentence, Manipuri uses the suffix –**g∂n~g∂l** which may be followed by future, non-future, perfect and progressive as shown in (4) and (5).

(4). m∂hak nuŋdaŋ-d∂ i-g∂l-li   'She usually writes at night'

     she night-loc.   write-hab.-nfu

(5). m∂hak tum-g∂n-g∂ni   'He will usually sleep'

     he sleep-hab.-fu

2.2. Progressive Aspect

It expresses the action is continuing. This is indicated by –**ri~li** (**-ri** occurs after vowels while –**li** after consonants) as shown in (6) and (7).

(6). m∂hak lay yek-li   'He is painting'

     he   picture draw.aps.prog.

(7). ∂y   is∂y ta-ri   'I am hearing the song'

     I   song   hear-asp.prog.

There is a suffix **kʰi** 'Progressive' used only with suffixes denoting future such as **g∂ni** 'future'; **loy** 'future negative'; **lu** 'imperative'; **lo** 'Persuasive' (both or which drop l after it) **g∂nu** ' prohibitive' **s∂nu** 'concessive' and **ge** desiderative. In the case of negative contexts, however, it has the sense of 'not starting' an activity as shown in (8) and (9).

(8). ∂y lam-mi   ca-kʰi-g∂ni   'I am still hungry. So I will continue to eat'

     I hungry-dur. eat-proh.-fu.

(9). m∂hak lak-tri-pʰaw ca-kʰi-g∂nu   'Do not start eating until he comes'

     he come-neg nfu-inf. eat pro.-proh.

2.3. Perfect Aspect

Manipuri uses the suffixes –**re~le~me~ŋe~pe** for denoting the notion of 'Perfect'. These suffixes indicate that a given event has been completed but its effect or relevance persists at the time of speaking

(Present) or at some other specified time (Past or future) as shown in (10) and (11).

(10). m∂kʰ*oɣ* b∂zar-d∂ c∂t-le   'They have gone to the market'

       they market-loc. go-asp.perf.

(11). m∂kʰ*oɣ* cak ca-re   'They have taken their meal'

       they   meal eat-asp.perf.

There is a suffix -kʰ*re* 'perfect' used to indicate certainly of the completion of an action as shown in (12).

(12). m∂hak cak ca-kʰre   'He has taken his meal'

       he meal eat-asp.perf.

This aspect marker can also be used in a very specific situation, say reporting an action and informing of departure as shown in (13).

(13). m∂hak ∂si-d∂   c∂t-le   'He has gone there'

       he   this-loc. go-asp.perf.

2.4.   Unrealized Aspect

The suffix – **g∂ni ~k∂ni** is treated as unrealized aspects. This is used for action, which will take place in the near future as shown in (14) and (15).

(14). ∂y iskul c∂t-k∂ni   'I will go to school'

       I school   go-asp.un.

(15). ∂y h∂yeŋ cak   thoŋ-g∂ni   'I will cook the food tomorrow'

       I tomorrow food cook-asp.un

3. CONCLUSION

In Manipuri, it would be more feasible to discuss 'Aspect' instead of 'Tense'. An event or a situation in Manipuri can be divided into four units: the first is the simple habitual expression of the event (Simple Aspect). The markers are **– y~ mi~ ni~ŋi~li.** The second discusses about the event is going on (Progressive Aspect). This is indicated by the markers **–ri~li (-ri** occurs after vowels while **–li** after consonants).   The third express the event is completed (Perfect Aspect). The markers are – **re~le~me~ŋe~pe** for denoting the notion of Perfect and the fourth is the event will be performed in the next moment (unrealized Aspect). The marker – **g∂ni ~k∂ni** is treated as unrealized aspects.

ABBREVIATIONS

asp.	aspect
asp.perf.	perfect aspect
asp. prog	progressive aspect
asp.simp.	simple aspect
asp. un.	unrealised aspect
fut.	future
inf.	indefinite
loc.	locative
neg.	negative
n. fut.	non. Future
perf.	perfect
prog.	progressive
proh.	prohibitive

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